

# INTERVENTION DURING A CHOKING INCIDENT

On Sunday February 5th, 2023, after the Divine Liturgy, we were having a formal meal in the dining hall. During the meal, a gentleman named Theophanis Tsolisos, who is wheelchair bound, started coughing at the table. One of the monks, Father Michael, got up from the table and went to ask him if he was OK. But because Theophanis was struggling to breathe, he called me and another person named Elias to help him. When we went next to him, he was trying to cough but couldn't. It sounded like he had phlegm deep in his airway. Additionally, he had a facial expression of pain and distress, and I noticed that he also started to tear. Elias was suggesting we push him forward so he can tap on his back, in hopes of dislodging anything that may have been obstructing his airway.

At that moment, Geronda Joseph got up from the table and come over to Theophanis. Geronda placed the cross he was wearing (which contains a piece of fabric from Saint Nektarios' *omophorion*) on Theophanis' chest. As soon as the cross touched his chest, instantly, I saw Theophanis let out a sigh of relief and his face return to normal. He was no longer in pain or distress, and he stopped wheezing. In following, he continued eating without any further issues.

After the meal, Theophanis told us that he had felt like he couldn't breathe. He felt that he could not expand his lungs. But as soon as Geronda crossed him with the cross containing the *omophorion* of Saint Nektarios, he felt that his lungs expanded and he was able to breath freely.



One of Saint Nektarios' *omophorion*, a distinctive band of embroidered fabric worn by bishops of the Orthodox Church, symbolizing the lost sheep carried by the Good Shepherd Jesus Christ.