

# **THE MIRACLE OF SAINT EUPHEMIA DURING THE FOURTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL**

**—Commemorated July 11th—**

The holy martyr Euphemia lived during the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (284-305 A.D.). She was from the city of Chalcedon in Asia Minor, and the daughter of Christian parents named Philophronos and Theodosiani. After being apprehended for preaching the name of Christ, she was punished through various instruments of torture; however, she was preserved unharmed from all of them with the grace of God. Subsequently, she was thrown into an arena to be devoured by wild beasts. Initially they did not harm her either, but finally she was bitten by a bear, and having prayed she gave up her soul into the hands of God within the arena on the 16th day of September.

More than a century later, during the reign of Theodosios, when the Christian faith had spread throughout much of the world, the following took place during the year 410 AD. A certain monk and priest named Eutyches started to preach that our Lord Jesus Christ had only one nature, namely that of the Divinity. Because he persisted in this erroneous teaching and continued disseminating this heresy, he was defrocked by Saint Flavianos the Patriarch of Constantinople. Despite this, Eutyches used the imperial eunuchs, whom he was closely acquainted with, to continue creating confusion within the Church of Christ, up until the time of Emperor Theodosios' death.

During the reign of Theodosios' successor, Emperor Markianos, the new monarch along with the Empress Poulcheria ordered that a Synod take place in the city of Chalcedon during the year 451 AD to clarify this matter. Six hundred and thirty bishops of the Orthodox Church gathered at this Fourth Ecumenical Synod to discuss this issue with the proponents of the Monophysite (mono = one + physis = nature) heresy founded by Eutyches. After much deliberation, each side drafted a book with their beliefs. They then proceeded to open the reliquary containing the body of Saint Euphemia, placed the two books upon her chest,

and then shut and sealed the reliquary. After an appointed number of days, they opened the reliquary once more. To their great surprise, they found the book of the heretical Monophysites lying under the feet of the Saint, while the book of the Orthodox bishops containing the terminology and decisions of the Holy Synod was found in the arms of the Saint. In this manner, God confirmed through His holy martyr Saint Euphemia the truth proclaimed by the holy fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council: namely that Jesus Christ has two natures, Divine and human, united in one hypostasis (person).

Behold how the holy Fathers expressed this truth:

*“We confess one and the same Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in His divinity, and perfect in His humanity. Truly God and truly human. Composed of a soul and body, and Who is at the same time consubstantial with the Father with respect to divinity and coessential with us with respect to humanity; in all respects like us, apart from sin. Though begotten before the ages from the Father with respect to divinity, in the latter days born from Mary the Virgin and Theotokos with respect to humanity... One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, composed of two natures unconfounded, inconvertible, indivisible, inseparable... the peculiarity of each nature being preserved and concurring in one person and one hypostasis. He is not divided or parted into two persons, but on the contrary He is one and the same Son and only-begotten God Logos, Lord Jesus Christ. This is precisely as the prophets formerly had prophesied concerning Him. This is explicitly as He Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ has taught us. And this is how the Symbol of the Faith or Creed of the fathers has imparted the matter to us.”*