

The Departure of St. Dioscorus, 25th Pope of Alexandria. (7TH. Tout)

On this day of the year 451 A.D., the blessed father and the great champion of Orthodoxy, Saint Dioscorus, 25th Pope of Alexandria, departed. His departure took place on the island of Gagra after he had fought the good fight defending the Orthodox faith.

When he was summoned to the Council of Chalcedon by the order of Emperor Marcianus, he saw a great assembly of 630 bishops. Saint Dioscorus asked, "In whom is the faith lacking that it was necessary to gather this great assembly?" They told him, "This assembly has been convened by the emperor's command." He replied, "If this assembly has been convened by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I shall stay and speak with what God may give me to say; but if this assembly has been convened by the emperor's command, let the emperor manage his assembly as he pleases."

When he saw that Leo, Archbishop of Rome, was teaching that Christ has two natures and two wills after the Union, he took the charge to refute this new belief. He stated that our Lord Jesus Christ is one, He who was invited to the wedding as a man and changed the water into wine as a God, and that the two natures were not separated in all of His works. Quoting Pope Cyril, he said, "The Hypostatic Union of the Word of God with the flesh is like the union of the soul with the body and like the union of fire and iron: even as they are of two different natures, by their union they became one. Likewise, our Lord Christ is one Messiah, one Lord, and one Nature." None of those who were gathered at that assembly dared to contradict him. Among them were some who had attended the Council of Ephesus, which had been convened against Nestorius. Some informed the Emperor Marcianus and the Empress Belkarya that no one disobeyed their commands concerning the faith except Dioscorus, Patriarch of the City of Alexandria. They brought St. Dioscorus, and the leading bishops of the Council who debated and discussed the matter till it was evening, but St. Dioscorus would not deviate from his Orthodox belief. The emperor and empress were irritated at this, and the empress commanded to smite St. Dioscorus on his mouth, and to pluck out the hair of his beard. He took the hair and the teeth that were knocked out and sent them to Alexandria saying, "This is the fruit of Faith."

When the rest of the bishops saw what had happened to Dioscorus, they agreed with the emperor, being afraid of undergoing the same fate. They signed the document of the belief that Christ has two distinct and separate natures. When St. Dioscorus knew this, he sent for the document and pretended that he wanted to sign it too. But when he read the document, he wrote at its foot that he excommunicated everyone who had signed it, as well as everyone who deviated from the Orthodox Faith. The emperor was enraged and he commanded to banish St. Dioscorus to the island of Gagra, along with St. Macarius, the Bishop of Edko, and two others, and the Council of Chalcedon was resumed.

When they took St. Dioscorus to the island of Gagra, its bishop, because he was a Nestorian, met him with contempt and disdain. However, God performed at the hands of St. Dioscorus many great signs and wonders, so that all obeyed him, respected and revered him greatly, for God honors His chosen ones in every place. St. Dioscorus told St. Macarius, his companion in exile, "You shall receive the crown of martyrdom in Alexandria." He sent him

with one of the believing merchants to Alexandria, where he received the crown of martyrdom.

St. Dioscorus, having ended his good fight, departed from this vain life and received the crown of eternal life. He departed on the island of Gagra where his body was laid.

His blessings and prayers be with us all. Amen.
