

# Annunciation of the Virgin Mary

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The well-known cell of the Annunciation of the Theotokos belongs to the monastery of Hilandar. It had been constructed in XI century (about 1200), presumably by St. Savva.

Father Parthenius (Peter Konstantinovich Gvozdev) was born on June, 29th, 1840 in St. Petersburg. Being twenty three years old he had arrived to the Sergiev hermitage and 7 years later to the Mount Athos. The elder Makariy didn't let his novice to go to the Holy Mountain but after his death there was no other barrier on a way to the Mount Athos . But the monk Parthenius was sad realizing the fact that he went to the Holy Mountain without the elder's permission.

On the way to the Holy Mountain Parthenius dozed off on the ship and saw the elder Makariy in his dream. Parthenius had fallen to knees apologizing for going to the Mount Athos without the elder's permission. The elder didn't say a word but kissed his novice. It meant that he had forgiven the future Athos monk.

The novice initially had arrived in Russik and wished to remain there, but on the divine will the elders of the monastery did not accepted him but blessed to address other athonite monasteries. At this time the celibate priest of Russian monastery of Panteleimonas (Sapozhnikov) who have left notes that served as a base for the book by Antonius Svatogorets «Athos devotees of piety of XIX century» was visiting athonite hermits on the blessing of the elder Ieronimos. The great Russian elder asked him to gather information on the Georgian celibate monk Ilarion, athonite confessor. As the assistant he had elected the monk Vissarion, the apprentice of Father Theofan. Vissarion knew Greek well and was familiar with many local elders. Parthenius occupied Vissarion's place as Theofan's apprentice for a while but soon the elder had learnt that a Russian monk Makariy was ill and sent Parthenius to help him. Having read many books about hermits and knowing the fact that many of them ate only ordinary grass, Parthenius made a meal from the grass he found near the cell. But after trying a bit of the meal he saw a beast at the doors of the cell but what seemed a door to him turned out to be a window with a steep outside. Scared of the monster he rushed to the door and fell in the steep. Amazingly, he did not die, just harmed his legs and remained lame for the rest of his life.

Russian monk Pavel living high up the mountains noticed a dying person in the depth of the steep and informed the elder Makariy who was already worried about his novice. When the elders saw the meal eaten by Parthenius everything became clear. They had brought him to Hadji-Georgios. The experienced elder gave Parthenius 3 glasses of olive oil to stop the action of the poisonous meal. But the patient was too weak. With the permission of his mentor, father

Theofan, Æ Parthenius was made a monk and then a miracle followed, Parthenius didnâ€™t die and recovered in two months.

The monk Parthenius stayed on the Holy Mountain, he had not chosen his road, the Lord has put him on the Athos path. The new temptation followed Æ“ Parthenius made a decision to move to Panteleimonas monastery but elder Ieronim told the Russian monk: Æ«You should die where you became a monkÆ». Parthenius had to return to elder Georgios who had already had big brotherhood of 40 Greeks, he was elderâ€™s only Russian novice and had to learn Greek. In the course of time the other Russians arrived looking for elders like Georgios whose cell had the most severe chart on Athos. The monks didnâ€™t eat oil, wine, fish, cheese, eggs even on Easter. Some elders accused Georgios that many young novices died unable to cope with such a charter.

Following Hadji-Georgios death in 1886 Parthenius took his place. By that time the brotherhood of Hadji-Georgios settled in the cell of the Annunciation of the Theotokos having changed many places. The cell was well-known for its publishing house and charity.

As well as many other Athonite cells the monks were engaged in painting of icons and the cell had become famous for the icons not only in Russia but also abroad. The icons painted by the monks of the Annunciation were to be met in Berlin and even in America. The Archbishop of Riga thanked Parthenius for the icons painted by his brotherhood for the church of St. Trinity.

Partheniuscharity became legendary; he used to get 30 letters every day from Russian poor men. With extraordinary naivety that can be met in children he found ways to feed those who were hungryÆ», - one of visitors of the cell writes. Æ« Do not forget poor and remember that the Lord will give you twice as much if you give; remember that we poor inhabitants of the cell depend on everything, on accidents but you are the person writing for newspapers. Donâ€™t write a lie Æ»- these words said by the monk at farewell were especially memorable to a pilgrim.

Parthenius was well-known far outside Mount Athos. He had sent four icons with relics in Japan and received written gratitude from the prelate Nikolay.

Nowadays the cell of the Annunciation belongs to the Serbian monastery of Hilandar. The main building is recently restored.

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