Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian

On November 14th (the 1st, old style) the Church commemorates the holy wonderworkers and unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian.

Saints Cosmas and Damian were brothers from Mesopotamia (Asia). Their father was a pagan, while their mother, Theodota, was a Christian. She became widowed early on and led a pious life, teaching her children to do the same. She instructed them strictly in virtue and acquainted them with the Holy Scripture and church teaching.

From early childhood Cosmas and Damian exhibited obe- dience, meekness and a good character. In order to bring benefit to others, they studied medicine and the healing properties of herbs, and became expert physicians. The Lord blessed the kind doctors and granted them the power to heal illnesses miraculously and to expel the evil spirits. They gave aid not only to people, but also to animals.

The holy brothers, giving themselves and their know-ledge to the service of others, sought neither worldly fame, nor riches, and never took any money for their healing. For this the Church gave these altruistic brothers- physicians the name of unmercenaries.

After having lived peacefully, the brothers also died peacefully, and after their death were glorified by the Lord through many miracles. Thus, for example, during harvest time, one of the inhabitants of those parts went out to his fields. Feeling faint from the heat of the sun and desiring to have a rest, he lay down under an oak tree and fell asleep. While he slept, a snake slithered in through his open mouth. Upon waking up, the farmer did not immediately feel any pain and continued his work. However, when he came home in the evening and lay down on his bed after supper, he felt a horrible pain because the snake began to tear up his intestines. The farmer, unable to endure such terrible suffering, began to scream and woke up his household. His family members came running in, but were unable to help him in any way, because they did not even know what was the matter with him. Then the sick man prayed for help to the saints Cosmas and Damian. The saints responded immediately: the farmer fell fast asleep, and while he slept the snake crawled out of his mouth. All those who saw the miracle were awed and glorified the saints. After the snake came out, the farmer awoke immediately and with the help of the holy unmercenaries became completely well.

Another man by the name of Malchus lived near a church in honor of Saints Cosmas and Damian. Getting ready to set out on a long journey, he took his wife to the church and entrusted her to the holy unmercenaries, promising to send a trusted person for her later on. Several days later, the devil took on the form of one of their acquaintances and came to the wife, offering to take her to her husband. Moreover, the devil swore by the name of Saints Cosmas and Damian not to harm her along the way. Upon hearing such an oath, the woman believed the deceitful devil and went with him. Then the devil took her to a barren and desolate spot and attempted to kill her. The woman, seeing herself in such a desperate situation, called upon the holy unmercenaries, begging them for help. And the saints appeared immediately. Seeing them, the devil left the woman and fled; he scaled a high promontory, from which he leaped and disappeared into an abyss, while the saints led the woman back to her house. Thus the saints help all those who call upon them with faith.