



## Saint Cosmas of Aetolia

Cosmas of Aetolia (Aitolia) was a Martyr born. He is considered to be Equal to the Apostles. He was born in Mega Dendron in 1714. He became a monk and lived on Mt. Athos for many years. While he was receiving his education at Mount Athos, he became a monk with the name Cosmas and soon was ordained a Hieromonk. He became dismayed by the lack of knowledge of the gospel among Orthodox people living under Turkish domination. So he studied rhetoric in Constantinople and received a blessing from Patriarch Seraphim II to go about preaching the Gospel. Then he traveled through many cities including the Greek cities of Thessaloniki, Veria, Chimera, Akarnania, Etolia, and the Greek islands of Kephalonia and other places preaching the Christian Faith. He preached in Macedonia, Serbia, Albania & Greece and established schools. Not only Christians came to hear him, but many Muslims as well. He was known to be a very holy man. He always sought the blessing of the local Orthodox Bishop before he preached in an area, as well as that of the Turkish authorities. His preaching against dishonest business practices and oppression of the poor raised the ire of both Jewish and Orthodox Christian businessmen. They falsely accused him to the Turkish authorities. The Turks strangled him and threw his body into a river in Albania. That was on August 24, 1779. He was 65. His body was thrown into the river and it was retrieved and buried in the village of Kolikontasi. The Orthodox Church celebrates his feast day on August 24 or on September 22. His relics were preserved, and have been working wonders since.

*If you want to find perfect love, go sell all your belongings, give them to the poor, go where you find a master and become a slave. Can you do this and be perfect?*

*You say this is too heavy? Then do something else. Don't sell yourself as a slave. Just sell your belongings and give them all to the poor. Can you do it? Or do you find this too heavy a task?*

*All right, you cannot give away all your belongings. Then give half, or a third, or a fifth. Is even this too heavy? Then give one tenth. Can you do that? Is it still too heavy?*

*How about this. Don't sell yourself as slave. Don't give a penny to the poor. Only do this. Don't take your poor brother's coat, don't take his bread, don't persecute him, don't eat him alive. If you don't want to do him any good, at least do him no harm. Just leave him alone. Is this also too heavy?*

*You say you want to be saved. But how? How can we be saved if everything we are called to do is too heavy? We descend and descend until there is no place further down. God is merciful, yes, but he also has an iron rod.*

*by St. Cosmas of Ætolia*