



## *Sts Sergius and Bacchus the Great Martyrs of Syria*



*Commemorated on October 7<sup>th</sup>*

Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus in Syria were appointed to high positions in the army by the emperor Maximian (284-305 AD), who did not know that they were Christians. Envious people informed Maximian that his two trusted counsellors did not honour the pagan gods, which was considered a crime against the state. The emperor ordered Sergius and Bacchus to offer sacrifice to the idols, but they replied that they honoured the One God and worshiped only Him. Maximian commanded that the martyrs be stripped of the insignia of military rank, and then dressed them in women's clothing. They were led through the city with iron chains around their necks, and the people mocked them.

Then the emperor summoned Sergius and Bacchus to him again and in a friendly manner advised them not to be swayed by Christian fables, but to return to the Roman gods. The Saints refuted the emperor's words, and demonstrated the folly of worshiping the pagan gods. The emperor commanded that they be sent to Governor Antiochus of the eastern part of Syria, who was a fierce hater of Christians. Antiochus had received his position with the help of Sergius and Bacchus. "My fathers and benefactors!" he said, "Have pity on yourselves, and also on me. I do not want to condemn my benefactors to cruel tortures". The holy martyrs replied, "For us life is Christ, and to die is gain". The enraged Antiochus ordered Bacchus to be scourged mercilessly, and the holy martyr surrendered his soul to the Lord. They shod Sergius with iron sandals with nails in their soles and sent him to another city, where he was beheaded with the sword.

### **Dismissal Hymn (Fourth Tone)**

Your Martyrs, O Lord, in their courageous contest for You received as the prize the crowns of incorruption and life from You, our immortal God. For since they possessed Your strength, they cast down the tyrants and wholly destroyed the demons' powerless presumption. O Christ God, by their

prayers, save our souls, since You are merciful.

**Kontakion (Third Tone)**

As we gather, let us crown with sacred hymns of laudation those two brethren in the Faith, the great and valorous martyrs Sergius, who was the Triune Godhead's most steadfast warrior, and with him, wise Bacchus resolutely suffered torments; and they both confessed Christ Saviour as God, the Maker and sacred Trainer of all.