

## **St. Sava**

St. Sava watches over his Serbian people and prays for them before the throne of God even to this day. In his lifetime, he turned down fame, wealth, and earthly power as a Serbian prince to follow God's calling in his life. God would lead him to Mt. Athos, where he would stay for many years learning the spiritual life from the Athonite elders. This would benefit him greatly when he returned to his native Serbia and there taught the people the spiritual life he learned on Mt. Athos. He even convinced his father to abdicate his throne and come to Mt. Athos and follow the spiritual life with him. Following St. Sava's example, his father, Grand Prince Stefan, would go on to become a Saint himself, St. Simeon the Myrrh-Gusher. This is a true sign of a Saint, that they can also make Saints of those around them through the power of the Holy Spirit. Together, St. Sava and his father would revive the abandoned Hilander monastery on Mt. Athos and make it a center for Serbian monasticism and spirituality, even to this very day.

However, not only did St. Sava build his country spiritually, but he also built it ecclesiastically, obtaining autocephaly for the Serbian Orthodox Church, so it could appoint its own bishops. St. Sava also wrote the first nomocanon of law for both the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian Kingdom. Throughout his life, he was always known as a teacher and his feast day is still a school holiday in Serbia, in honor of his being the father of Serbian education.

After his death, many miracles took place in the presence of his relics. However, due to an uprising of the Serbian people, the Turks would burn St. Sava's relics in the 16th century, trying to destroy his legacy among the people as the spiritual unifier of the Serbian people. Ultimately, though, from the place where his relics were burnt, eventually the largest Orthodox Church in the Balkans would be built, dedicated to St. Sava. May the building of this church remind us that St. Sava continues to live even today and that he prays for his people that they too may be raised to new life in Christ.