

## Ahmed, the muslim who encountered the power of Jesus Christ in the Orthodox church



Ahmed was born in the seventeenth century to a Muslim family in Constantinople. By profession he was a copyist in the Great Archives. In accordance with Ottoman law, since he did not have a wife, he had a slave instead, a Russian woman. There was also another captive from Russia that lived together with her. She was an old woman. Both of these women were very pious.

On the feast days of the Orthodox Church, the old woman would go to Church. Taking the blessed bread or antidoron\* from the priest, she would bring it home to give to the young woman to eat. The old woman would also bring her Holy Water to drink. Whenever this occurred and Ahmed was close to her, he would smell a beautiful and indescribable fragrance coming out of her mouth. He would ask her what she was eating that made her mouth smell so fragrant. Not realizing what was happening, the slave woman would say that she was not eating anything special. However, Ahmed persisted in asking her about this phenomenon that was happening. Eventually she told him that she was eating the bread which had been blessed by the priests which the old woman brought her whenever she returned from Church.

On hearing this, Ahmed was filled with longing to see the Orthodox Church and how Orthodox faithful received the blessed bread. Therefore he summoned an Orthodox priest and told him to prepare a secret place for him so that he could go when the Patriarch was serving the Divine Liturgy. When the appointed day arrived and dressed as an Orthodox Christian, he went to the Patriarchate and attended the Divine Liturgy. While he was in Church, he saw the Patriarch shining with Light and lifted up off of the floor as he came out of the altar and through the holy doors to bless the people. As he blessed, rays of Light came from his finger tips, but though the rays fell on the heads of all the Orthodox faithful, they did not fall on Ahmed's head. This happened two or three times and each time Ahmed saw the same thing. Thus,

Ahmed came to believe in the Orthodox Faith. Without hesitation he then sent for an Orthodox priest to be baptized in the faith. Ahmed kept his conversion to the Orthodox faith secret for some time, concealing his baptismal name which is why it is unknown to us today.

However, one day Ahmed and certain noblemen were eating together. Afterwards they sat talking and smoking, as is the custom amongst Muslims. In the course of the conversation they began to discuss what they thought was the greatest thing in the world. Each gave his opinion. The first guest said that the greatest thing in the world was for a man was to have wisdom. The second guest maintained that women were the greatest thing in the world. And then the third guest said that the greatest thing in the world, and by far the most delightful, was good food—for was this not the food of the righteous in paradise?

Then it was Ahmed's turn to give his opinion on the matter. Filled with holy zeal, Ahmed cried out that the greatest thing in the entire world was the Orthodox Faith of the Christian people. And then confessing himself to be a Christian, he boldly censured the falseness and deception of the Muslim faith. At first, on hearing this, the Muslims were aghast. Then, filled with unspeakable rage, they fell on Ahmed and dragged him off to the Muslim judge to be judged by sharia law so that he could be sentenced to death. He was beheaded, receiving the crown of martyrdom on the orders of the ruler on May 3, 1682.

\*Antidoron or bread offering for the Divine Liturgy is the bread that is used at the Eucharistic service. What is not consecrated in the Liturgy is cut up into small squares and is distributed to the faithful at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. The word antidoron literally means in place of the Gifts. In other words, all the faithful who attend the Divine Liturgy receive something that has been blessed at the service whether they receive Holy Communion or not. The Gifts is in reference to the Body and Blood of Christ, Holy Communion, so those who do not receive Holy Communion on that particular day still receive something that has been blessed at the service.

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