

St. Brancoveanu & his four sons

August 16



The holy Prince Constantine Brancoveanu, the son of Prince Matthew Basarab, was born in 1654. When his parents died, he was raised and educated by his uncle, Constantine Cantacuzino. When another uncle, Prince Serban Cantacuzino died on on October 19, 1688, Constantine was chosen to succeed him as Prince of the Romanian Land (Wallachia). Saint Constantine was a wise and just ruler who was guided by Christian principles, and worked for the benefit of his people. He also built and restored many churches and monasteries. His philanthropy extended even into Transylvania and Moldavia, which were ruled by others.

In 1714, after a reign of twenty-five years, Saint Constantine, his sons, and his sons-in-law were arrested by soldiers sent to Bucharest by Sultan Ahmed III (1703-1730) The prisoners were brought to Constantinople, where they were tortured for four months. Prince Constantine was told that if he and his sons wanted to escape death,

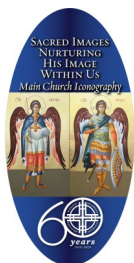
they would have to convert to Islam and pay a large sum of money. Constantine did not have the money required by the Turks, and he did not wish to convert to the Muslim faith.

Seeing that neither tortures nor threats would induce the prisoners to forsake Christ, the Turks sentenced them to death. Before his own execution, Saint Constantine had to watch as his sons were beheaded before his eyes.

On the Feast of the Dormition (August 15), the sixty-year-old prince, his sons, and his counsellor, Ianache Vacarescu, died as martyrs for Christ. Their bodies were left unburied for three days, then thrown into the sea. Their relics were recovered by Orthodox Christians who brought them to the Monastery of the Theotokos on the island of Chalki.

Saint Constantine's wife, Marica, brought his holy relics back to Bucharest and placed them in the church of Saint George the New, which he had founded. He was glorified by the Orthodox Church of Romania in 1992.

Apolytikion: Being worthy to suffer a martyrical death for the true faith and for your people together with his sons Constantin, Ștefan, Radu, Matei and with the counselor Ianache, Oh, right-faithful Voievod (Prince) Constantin, pray to Christ God to save our souls!



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