

St. Galaktion and his wife Episteme, the Martyrs of Emesa

November 5



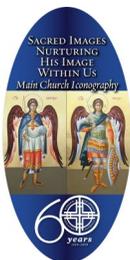
Both Galaktion and Episteme were born in the city of Emesa, in Phoenicia. Galaktion's mother was barren until she was baptized. After her baptism, she converted her husband [Cleitophon] to the true Faith, baptized her son Galaktion, and raised him in the Christian Faith. When Galaktion was old enough to marry, his good mother, Leucippa, entered into rest, and his father betrothed him to a pagan-born maiden named Episteme.

By no means did Galaktion want to enter into marriage, and convinced Episteme to be baptized, then to be tonsured a nun at the same time that he became a monk. Both of them withdrew to Mount Publion – Galaktion to a monastery and Episteme to a convent.

They proved to be shining lights in their monasteries. They were first in labor, first in prayer, first in humility and obedience, and first in love. They neither left their monasteries nor did they see one another until just before their death.

A fierce persecution began and both of them were brought before the tribunal. When the pagans mercilessly whipped Galaktion, Episteme wept. Then they whipped her. After that, they cut off their hands, their feet and then their heads. Their friend Eutolius took their bodies and honorably buried them. Eutolius had been a slave of Episteme's parents, and then a monk with Galaktion. He also wrote the life of these wonderful martyrs of Christ who suffered and received their wreaths in heaven in the year 253.

Apolytikion: Thy Martyrs, O Lord, in their courageous contest for Thee received as the prize the crowns of incorruption and life from Thee, our immortal God. For since they possessed Thy strength, they cast down the tyrants and wholly destroyed the demons' strengthless presumption. O Christ God, by their prayers, save our souls, since Thou art merciful.



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