



**The Holy Great Martyr Theodore the Commander
Whom the Holy Church Celebrates on February 8.**

The holy Martyr Theodore was from Euchaita of Galatia and dwelt in Heraclea of Pontus. He was a renowned commander in the military, and the report came to the Emperor Licinius that he was a Christian and abominated the idols. Licinius therefore sent certain men to him from Nicomedia, to honour him and ask him to appear before him. Through them, however, Saint Theodore sent back a message that it was necessary, for various reasons, that Licinius come to Heraclea. Licinius, seeing in this a hope of turning Saint Theodore away from Christ, did as was asked of him.

When the Emperor came to Heraclea, Saint Theodore met him with honour, and the Emperor in turn gave Theodore his hand, believing that through him he would be able to draw the Christians to the worship of his idols. Seated on his throne in the midst of the people, he publicly bade Theodore to offer sacrifice to the gods. But Theodore asked that the Emperor entrust him with the most venerable of his gods, those of gold and silver, that he might take them home himself and attend upon them that evening, promising that the following day he would honour them in public. The Emperor, filled with joy at these tidings, gave command that Theodore's request be fulfilled.

When the Saint had taken the idols home, he broke them in pieces and distributed the gold and silver to the poor by night. The next day a centurion named Maxentius told Licinius that he had seen a pauper carrying the head of Artemis. Saint Theodore, far from repenting of this, confessed Christ boldly. Licinius, in an uncontrollable fury, had the Saint put to many torments, then

crucified. While upon the cross, the holy martyr was further tormented: his privy parts were cut off, he was shot with arrows, his eyes were put out, and he was left on the cross to die. The next day Licinius sent his men to take his corpse and cast it into the sea; but they found the Saint alive and perfectly whole. Through this, many believed in Christ. Seeing his own men turning to Christ, and the city in an uproar, Licinius had Theodore beheaded, about the year 320. The Saint's holy relics were returned to his ancestral home on June 8, which is also a feast of the Great Martyr Theodore.

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Dismissal Hymn of the Martyr. Fourth Tone
Thou Who wast raised up

IN truth enlisted with the King of the Heavens, * thou didst become for Him a noble commander, * O trophy-bearer and Great Martyr Theodore. * With the weaponry of faith* didst thou arm thyself wisely * and didst utterly destroy * all the hordes of the demons, * as a triumphant athlete of the Lord; * wherefore we ever do faithfully call thee blest.

Kontakion of the Martyr. Fourth Tone
Thou soughtest the heights

IN courage of soul, * and furnished with the arms of faith, * thou tookest in hand * the word of God as though a spear * and didst put thy foe to flight, thou great boast of Martyrs, O Theodore; * now together with them, O Saint, * cease not to entreat Christ God for all of us.

