



Venerable St. John of Rila, a great

spirit-filled ascetic struggler of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, is the heavenly patron of the Bulgarian People.

He was born in the year 876 in the village of Skrino in Sardica Province (which today is Sofia). Orphaned at an early age, the boy hired himself out to strangers as a shepherd. It happened that a rich man beat him because a cow and its calf had gotten lost. For a long time, the little boy wept and prayed that God help him. At the time he located the cow and the calf, the water level of the Sturma River had risen sharply. The young shepherd prayed, made the sign of the cross over his outer clothing, laid it on the surface of the water, picked up the calf and carried it across, as if on dry land, to the other shore, where the cow was waiting for them. The rich man, who had been hiding in the woods, was terrified upon witnessing this miracle; giving the boy a generous reward, he released him from service.

The boy gave away his fortune, and went off to his native village. When and where he received monastic tonsure is unknown. ([περισσότερα...](#))