

## The last day of Saint Paissios the Athonite

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Eventually, Elder Paissios got cancer and was taken into hospital in Thessaloniki. At the hospital, they looked after him as best they could. Nevertheless, his cancer spread so much that the end was very near. His departure for Heaven was a matter of time. He had been preparing himself for this journey all his life.



Thus, for whatever time was left, he wished to stay at the monastery of St John the Apostle in Souroti. Mr. Christofer Oikonomou, now deceased, was near him and he describes in a letter geronta's departure from the hospital.

Today, Fr Paisios left the hospital. There were many people there. We were told that he would give his blessing in the reception. Lots of people, women, doctors, nurses, even the ailing, were swarming besides him. He lifted up his hand and said goodbye to those sick in the other rooms. There was this man, who had the drip on his hand, bowed to kiss Fr Paisios's hand, but Fr. Paisios kissed his instead. read more...While standing in front of the lift, he blessed us all. He went into the lift to go down in the street. We all run down the stairs to see him for the last time. People surrounded the car while snowflakes danced on the street. The nurse was admonishing us so that people would let him get in the car, because he was sick and very weak.

He finally got in the car after crossing himself. Everyone was trying to touch him, some were holding his hand, and some were touching the glass of the window. The car began leaving very slowly because there was a lot of traffic. Even then, doctors, nurses, all came down to say goodbye and were touching the car's windows, since the car was moving very slowly. His car passed in front of my house".

And Mr Christopher continues:

What was that all about? People were following him as if he was the Messiah. It was like something out of Palm Sunday, except that we had a car instead of the donkey! Everyone was moved, some women were crying. He, himself was also touched because of the abundant love that people were showering him with. It was as if he was saying that he would pay everyone back with a lot of praying.

Finally, Mr Christopher went on to reflect:

Does our generation owe little to the prayers of this man? He is a saint amongst us. He is the incarnation of the fulfillment of the Gospel.

Fr Paisios died on the 12th July 1994.