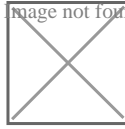


## Saint Filaretos the Charitable (1 December)

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Saint Filaretos was a fine example of virtue, especially that of performing good works. He lived at the time of Emperor Konstantinos Porphyroyennitos (Constantine Porphyrogenitus) and his mother, Eirini of Attica (joint reign 780-797). Filaretos was born in the village of Amnia in Gangra, Paphlagonia of devout parents. He married a woman called Theosevo and the couple had three children. He was a farmer and from his income gave alms generously to the poor. If he found someone hungry, he'd feed them; naked, he'd clothe them; orphaned or widowed, he'd help and comfort them.



At some stage, however, God, in His wisdom, allowed Filaretos to become very poor. His fields were seized by his neighbours and his belongings scattered. He bore all this without ever feeling sorry for himself, railing against God or despairing.

In the end, all he had left was his apiary, his 250 bee-hives, which were well-stocked and productive. If some poor person came to him, seeing as how he now had nothing else to give them, he'd take them to his apiary and give them honey from one of the hives to feed them. In this way, whether it was time to harvest the honey or not, he emptied the whole of his apiary.

God saw his incomparable faith and, in His providence, arranged that Emperor Konstantinos would take Filaretos' grand-daughter, Maria, as a bride, because she was so beautiful in both body and soul. The wedding was conducted in November 788 by the then Patriarch of Constantinople, Tarasios (later canonized, feast day 25 February). Filaretos was honoured by the emperor by being raised to the office of consul, at that point a largely honorary but noble rank. He thus came into the possession of great riches, which he shared even more abundantly with the poor.

Shortly before his demise, he gathered his relations and said to them: 'Never forget hospitality, never want things that aren't yours, never miss Church services and, generally, live your lives the way I lived mine'. Having said this, he departed this life, his last words being: 'Your will be done'.