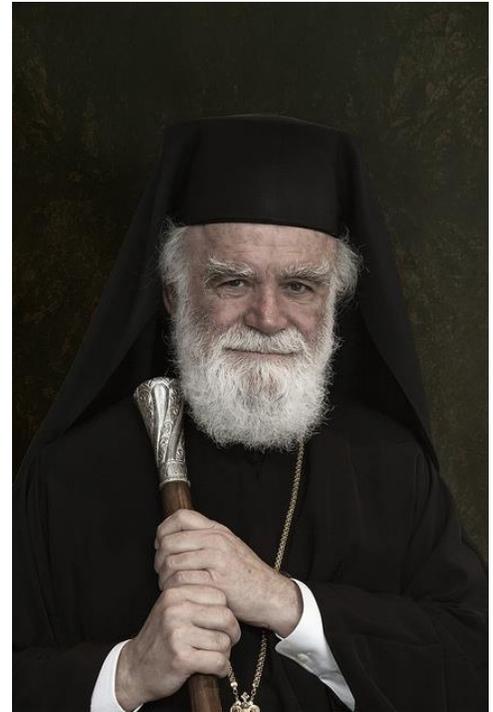


My Beloved Ones,

Though summer is not yet finished, many of our schools in the Atlanta area are beginning their new academic year. To honor this fact, I would like to speak of a great saint who understood that education is a valuable way to grow in our understanding of the Lord.

St. Eugenios the Aitolos was born near Patras in 1597, and even as a young man, he felt drawn to God, and to education. After spending time studying with Elders in the Monasteries of Panagia Vlochou and Trovatou, Eugenios was ordained a deacon at the age of 19 in the Monastery of Tatarna.

Eugenios eventually visited the Holy Mountain, staying in the Monastery of Xeropotamou, learning from Bishop Haralambi. After a time, Eugenios departed for Alexandria, where he was ordained a priest at age 22, by Patriarch Cyril Loukaris. From there, the Priest Eugenios served as in the Holy Land, for several years, before he returned to Greece.



Saint Eugenios never lost his love for his studies, and so he continued to learn with many teachers, in places such as Zakynthos and Kefalonia. One of these teachers, Theophilos Corydalleus was appointed to the Great School of the Nation by Patriarch Cyril Loukaris, and so Theophilos took Eugenios with him, where Eugenios served as a Priest. During his time in Constantinople, however, Eugenios witnessed the cruel persecution of Patriarch Cyril Loukaris. When the Patriarch was eventually martyred, Eugenios spoke out boldly against the next Patriarch, Cyril Kontaris, who Eugenios considered responsible for Loukaris' death. Kontaris even deposed St. Eugenios, and the Turks later imprisoned the Saint.

Even during these many persecutions, the Saint took his love of education even further—by building schools. He founded schools and churches throughout Greece, teaching in Arta, Aetoliko, Messolongi, Agrinio, Karpenisi, and in Vrangianon, Euratania. His greatest legacy, apart from these churches and schools, which still exist, are those students, who grew in their love of knowledge and built schools themselves.

He fell asleep in the Lord on August 5<sup>th</sup> 1682, surrounded by many of his beloved students. In recognition of his illumination and defense of the Orthodox faith through the education of future generations, St. Eugenios was recognized as a Saint on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1982. To this day, there still two chapels dedicated to his memory in Karpenisi.

**+ALEXIOS**

Metropolitan of Atlanta