

The Tradition of Saint Fanoúrios and the Fanourópita

From time to time certain of the faithful, especially those who grew up in Greece, bring a *Fanourópita* (bread of Saint Fanoúrios) or Kóillyva on the feast day of a saint asking the parish priest to offer the customary prayer of intercession.

This is customarily done as a simple service at which after the Trisagion Prayers, the priest reads the *Prayer of Blessing*, and then the short dismissal. The Prayer might also be read at the end of Vespers, and perhaps at the end of Matins or after the Divine Liturgy.

In particular, many people ask Saint Fanoúrios to intercede for them, especially when they have lost some item of value. The *Fanourópita* may be offered either when asking his intercessions or in thanksgiving for his prayers to the Lord for our salvation.

The holy Martyr Fanoúrios is commemorated on August 27. He was a previously unknown saint, who appeared to people on the island of Rhodes in 1500. Not long after, an icon was found in a church that had been destroyed by the Ottomans and left in ruins for many years. The icon was of a saint named “Fanoúrios” who was depicted as a young soldier holding a sword in one hand and a lit candle in the other. Nothing else was known of this saint, but a number of people to whom he had appeared said that the image exactly resembled him.

There is a tradition concerning him and his mother, who was a harlot and great sinner. His love for his mother caused him to pray for her incessantly. At the time of his martyric death by stoning, he could not even then forget his mother, but with the boldness that is typical to athletes of Christ, he prayed: “For the sake of these my sufferings, O Lord, help all those who will pray to You for the salvation of Fanoúrios’ sinful mother.” On the feast day of the Saint, there is a tradition followed by some of the faithful who bake a special bread, the *fanourópita*, and give it to the poor as alms in the name of his mother.

The name of this saint, Fanoúrios, and the lit candle he is shown to be holding in his icon, give us some basic information about him. In Greek the word “*faneró*” means “I reveal.” Thus Saint Fanoúrios reveals the fundamental dogmatic truth that Jesus, for Whom he died as a martyr, is indeed our Saving Lord. The saint additionally reveals to us the things we are seeking for our souls, especially faith, hope, and love in Christ. He also shows us the things necessary for this life, and the faithful therefore appeal to him to intercede with God to help them find lost items, especially those necessary for salvation and sustaining life.

Suggested Simple Recipe for Baking the Fanourópita

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup oil
- 2 cups orange juice
- 3/4 cup raisins
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 4 cups flour