Week 4 Italo Greek Traditions

St. Elias the Younger, also known as Saint Elias of Enna, was born in Enna Sicily on 823. He departed this world in Thessalonica, and is celebrated on Aug. 17 (d. 903).

While born into a rich family, John, as he was then known, was holy from an early age, receiving the gift of prophecy at age 8, and became well acquainted with prayer and Scripture studies at age 12. Thus, he devoted his life to asceticism and monastic spirituality. St. Elias life is filled with miracle working, and especially prophetic visions of Islamic invasions. He was consulted by bishops, the emperor, and enjoyed the hospitality of the pope. Those who listened to his warnings were often delivered and those who disobeyed his prophetic voice found themselves at the mercy of the Islamic hoards. St. Elias spends many years of his life in pilgrimage throughout Africa and Palestine.

In his later years he takes Daniel as his disciple. The Lord shows him a mountain in his homeland where he is to build a monastery. Thus, he returns to Reggio, in the area of Salinas, where he builds a monastery. It is here where the famous story of obedience transpires. He tells his disciple, Daniel, to throw his most prized possession, the Psalter, into a swamp, to test his detachment and obedience.

Later, he tells Daniel to go back to the swamp, Daniel finds the Psalter undamaged. Another story exemplifies the Fool for Christ: St. Elias wears his tunic up to his knees and strolls about the city. His vision is that the Reggio will be filled with blood from another attack by the Muslims. Elias thus fervently fasts for the city. This results in the death of the leader of the Islamic, Ibrahim and the defeat of the Islamic invaders. After his death, his incorrupt body was returned to his monastery, where he continued to work miracles.

See the Orthodox monastery of Seminara Turismo Reggio Calabria for the monastery dedicated to St. Elias. When we take a church-pilgrimage, this will certainly be a cite for us to consider visiting.