



The Importance and Meaning of Koliva

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the work of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. –1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

Isn't it nice to be remembered? Isn't it nice for someone to call you on your birthday? Or maybe to bring a gift? Offering koliva to be blessed liturgically in connection with a Memorial Service or Saturday of Souls in the church is how we let those that have fallen sleep know they are remembered.

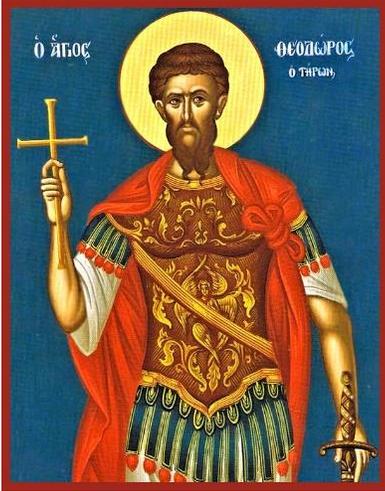
It is important to remember and pray for those who have fallen asleep to keep their memory alive and to help us heal since we are a church made up of both the living and the dead. How many times do we hear in the communion hymn, "Remember me, Lord, when You come into Your kingdom"? We want the Lord to remember us in His Kingdom!

Koliva is boiled kernels of wheat mixed with dried fruit, nuts, spices, and many other ingredients, such as pomegranate seeds, that is covered with powdered sugar to resemble a tomb. It is symbolic of the resurrection of the dead on the day of the Second Coming of Christ; it symbolizes the circle of death and rebirth.

The ingredients in the koliva have significance:

- **Wheat** represents the Earth and the souls of those who have fallen asleep and the promise of everlasting life.
- **Pomegranate** represents the shining beauty and splendor of paradise.
- **Jordan almonds** represent our bare bones; how we will return to dust.
- **Spices** represent the plethora of aromas of this world.
- **Basil and parsley** represent the prayer which is read by the priest which states the reposed to have rest in a place of green pasture.
- **Nuts** represent life that is renewed again.
- The **topping** used is said to symbolize "light soil".
- **Raisins** represent the sweetness of life in Christ Who is the vine.
- **Sugar** represents sweet Paradise.





Greatmartyr Theodore the Tyro "the Recruit"

Did you know that according to tradition, koliva is connected to Great Lent because of a miracle by Greatmartyr Theodore the Tyro in the year 362?

In the 4th century, after the death of St. Theodore in the early 300's, the emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363), knew that Christians would be hungry after the first week of strict fasting in Great Lent. This would make the people go to the markets to buy food.

Wanting to force Christians to paganism, he ordered the city commander of Constantinople to sprinkle with blood from pagan sacrifices all the food that was sold there. St. Theodore appeared in a dream to Archbishop Eudoxius, telling him to inform all the Christians that no one should buy anything at the marketplaces, but rather to boil wheat (koliva) from their homes and sweeten it with honey to avoid the tarnished foods.

Therefore, in memory of this great miracle, we commemorate this event on the Saturday of the first week of Great Lent.

For you, O Christ our God, are the resurrection, the life and the repose of your departed servants, who have fallen asleep and you we glorify together with your eternal Father and your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Memory eternal, memory eternal, may his (her, their) memory be eternal!

Αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη, αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη, αἰωνία αὐτοῦ (αὐτῆς, αὐτῶν), ἡ μνήμη!

