

## **Introduction**

*by the Director of the Radio Station  
of the Church of Greece*

**A**mong the famous mosaics in the Church of Saint Apollinaris in Ravenna are two striking processions of Martyrs on either wall of the nave. Along the southern wall, there is a procession of male Martyrs, led by Saint Martin, making its way towards the enthroned figure of Christ, while along the northern wall there is a procession of Virgins, led by the Magi, making their way towards the Holy Child enthroned on the lap of the Mother of God.

Much could be said about Sainthood. Holiness, according to Orthodox theology, is not a property of the created order which exists in itself. Holiness has to do with the recognition by the created order and by every Saint that the cause of existence and the source of its life are not to be found in created nature but in the Triune God Himself.

The characteristic of all the Saints is precisely this, namely that they set God's will above any human fulfilment and certainty. The Saints therefore always show us that the only Holy One is our Lord Jesus Christ: *One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father*, as we sing in every Divine Liturgy.

By representing the Saints in processions turned towards the enthroned Christ of glory, the Ravenna artist wishes to emphasize this fundamental theological truth.

The city of Athens is able to present a similar procession of Martyrs and Saints who believed in the sermon of Apostle Paul. In these sacred processions the saints Dionysius the Areopagite and Damaris (*Acts 17.34*) lead the way, followed by Saints Hierotheos, Leonidas, Michael Choniatis, Philothea, Michael Paknanas, Nicholas Planas and Porphyrios Kavsokalivitis. And further Saints will be added continually until the Second Coming. Each, in their particular

and unique way, has made their path in life turned continuously towards Christ, and with their life they teach us this basic truth about holiness, which lies in the priority of the will of the Triune God over any historical challenges and circumstances.

We hope that this digital album will lead to a closer acquaintance with these «friends» of Christ, namely those saints who are connected with the city of Athens and who form a similar sacred procession towards the Lord who is coming swiftly, the Lord of Glory.

**Alexander Katsiaras**

*General Director of the Radio Station of the Church of Greece*



Ἅγιοι Ἀπόστολοι – Holy Apostles – Святые Апостолы