

SAINT IOTAM ZEDGENIDZE (†1465)



Memory 30 October

In 1446 Giorgi VIII was crowned ruler of a united Georgian kingdom. Filled with every virtue, the valiant warrior and God-fearing king dedicated the twenty years of his reign to a ceaseless struggle for the reunification of his country. He was constantly warding off foreign invaders, surmounting internal strife, and suffering the betrayal of his fellow countrymen.

One of the separatists was the ruler of Samtskhe, the atabeg Qvarqvare Jakeli II (1451–1498). In 1465 King Giorgi led his troops toward southern Georgia to attack the rebellious atabeg. Near Lake Paravani the traitors dispatched assassins to the king's camp.

Among those who served in the royal court was a certain Iotam Zedgenidze, a man deeply devoted to his king. He heard about the dreadful conspiracy and warned the king, but the noble and fearless Giorgi did not believe that such a loathsome betrayal could ever take place.

Desperate to convince the king of the very real and imminent danger, the devoted Iotam told him, “Allow me to spend this night in your bed and prove the truth of my words!”

Certain that his beloved courtier was mistaken and that his unmeasured love and dedication were the reasons for his suspicions, King Giorgi permitted him to spend the night in the royal bed.

The next morning King Giorgi entered his tent and found his beloved Iotam lying in a pool of blood. Immediately he began weeping bitterly over his error. He arrested and executed the conspirators and buried his faithful servant with great honor.

The Georgian Church numbers Iotam Zedgenidze among the saints for his devotion to God's anointed king.

O right-believing and divinely crowned Martyr Iotam, pray to God on behalf of us all!

Archpriest Zakaria Machitadze

For further information on the book **THE LIVES OF THE GEORGIAN SAINTS** by Archpriest Zakaria Machitadze contact **St. Herman Press:**
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