

A wide-angle photograph of a dirt road winding through a lush green valley. In the background, there are several large, rounded mountains under a cloudy sky. The foreground is filled with tall grass and small yellow and purple flowers.

St Nino,

Equal to the Apostles and Enlightener of Georgia

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Photo courtesy of Yvette Brown.

The road from Lake Paravani, where St Nino began her journey, over the mountain ridge headed to Mskheta in the country of Georgia.

Did you know that we have saints other than the Holy Apostles known as “Equal to the Apostles” because of the amount of people they brought to the faith? St Nino was a missionary in Iberia (modern day Georgia). Born in Cappadocia, Turkey in 280AD, she was taught the faith by her aunt (a nun) and her uncle (the Patriarch of Jerusalem). Her uncle blessed her pilgrimage to find Christ’s robe that was believed to be in Iberia. As she set out she had a vision from the Theotokos to:

“Go to Iberia and tell there the Good Tidings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and you will find favour before the Lord; and I will be for you a shield against all visible and invisible enemies. By the strength of this cross, you will erect in that land the saving banner of faith in My beloved Son and Lord.”

When she woke up she had a cross woven from grapevines in her hands. St Nino’s icon is often shown with her holding this special cross. Her pilgrimage took her through Albania where she survived persecution and the martyrdom of 35 Virgin companions, leading her to the Lake and mountain path you see on our front cover. Near Lake Paravani St Nino preached to a group of shepherds who welcomed her good news!

By 320AD she reached the capital of Iberia Mskheta. After miracles of healing both for the Queen Nana and protection for King Mirian both converted, along with other royal family members and neighboring royalty. St Constantine sent a delegate of bishops and priests at the request of King Mirian after his conversion by St Nino. Her teachings resulted in the Iberian kingdoms becoming Orthodox and remain heavily so today. At her death her two disciples, St Salome (daughter in law to the king) and St Perozhavra (a local queen herself) prayed with St Nino and recorded her life story as she told them in writing. She reposed in ca 338AD and a church dedicated to St George (a relative of hers) was build over her gravesite. Commemorated on Jan 14th.

Image on cover from Punks and Monks Books owner, Yvette Michelle Brown “It’s of the road from Lake Paravani (where St Nino began her journey) over the mountain ridge headed to Mskheta”

You can read more here: “The Life of St. Nina Equal to the Apostles and Enlightener of Georgia with the Service,” (Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1988).