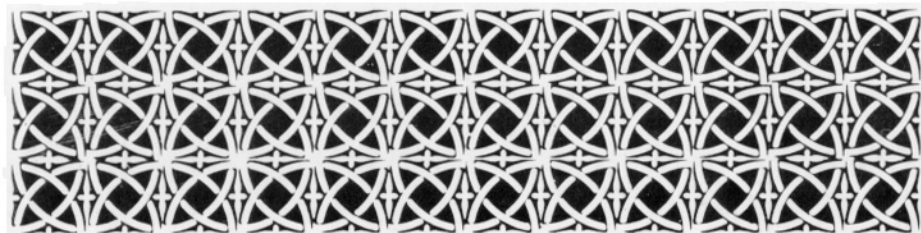


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**Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ King of Kings and
Lord of lords**

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**THE BEHOLDER OF GOD
MARK THE EVANGELIST
SAINT AND MARTYR**



*H.H. Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of
Alexandria and the See of St. Mark*

INTRODUCTION

“As this, O Lord, is the command of Thine Only-Begotten Son, that we share in the commemoration of Thy saints, graciously accord, O Lord, to remember all the saints who have pleased Thee since the beginning.” (The Liturgy of St. Basil)

We thank our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ for guiding, supporting, and enabling us to bring to your hands, dear reader, the fourth volume of the Coptic Synaxarium. This volume includes the blessed months: Baounah, Abib, Mist-a, and the little month (El-Nasi, Intercalary days).

As we put this fourth volume in the hand of our loving and benevolent God, we ask him to make it a blessing for everyone who reads it. The translation, preparation, and production of this text have been a great inspiration and blessing for us.

The index at the back of this volume is general and comprehensive; it covers the fourth volume as well as the previous three volumes.

We hope, dear reader, that we were able to provide you with a valuable addition to your spiritual library. We do not claim perfection but we will try to strive for perfection in future editions.

We have used many references to verify the names of persons and places. Some of these valuable texts were ‘The Saints of Egypt’ by De Lacy O’Leary, Coptic Encyclopedia, and the Ethiopian Synaxarium. Names that had more than one spelling are given with the less familiar spelling between parenthesis.

We ask Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to bless those who gave their time and effort translating, editing, proof reading, and producing the text. May the Lord reward them a hundred fold in this life and grant them a share and inheritance with His saints in the heavenly kingdom.

May the intercessions of the pure Virgin St. Mary, St. George, the Prince of the Martyrs, and all the Saints that are honored by the church in this text and the prayers of H.H. Pope Shenouda III be with us all. Amen

Feast of St. George,
Prince of the Martyrs
23rd of Baramoudah 1711 A.M.
1st of May 1995 A.D.

Publishing Committee

*In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit
One God. Amen*

**The Blessed Month of Tute
The First Day**

- 1. Feast of El-Nayrouz (Beginning of the Blessed Coptic Year).*
- 2. The Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew, the Apostle.*
- 3. The Departure of St. Melyos (Milius), the Third Pope of Alexandria.*

1. Today is the beginning of the blessed Coptic year. It is necessary to keep it a holy day with full purity and chastity. Let us start a new demeanor as St. Paul the Apostle says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Cor. 5:17-18) And Isaiah the Prophet says, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Isaiah 61:1-2) And David the Prophet says, "You crown the year with Your goodness; and Your paths drip with abundance." (Psalms 65:11)

We ask our God to keep us without sin and help us to act according to His will with the intercessions of the pure Saint Mary, all the Martyrs and Saints. Amen.

2. On this day also, the holy Apostle Bartholomew, one of the twelve disciples, was martyred. To this Apostle fell the lot to go to the oasis (the great oasis, Al-Khargah), in Egypt. He entered the city with Peter, who sold him as a slave. There he proceeded and preached to the people. He called them to the knowledge of God, after performing before them signs and wonders that amazed their minds.

He worked in the vineyards of a rich man and whenever he trimmed the vine branches, they immediately bore fruit.

It happened that the son of the governor of that city died, and Bartholomew the Apostle raised him up from the dead. The people believed and he strengthened them in the knowledge of God.

Later on, the Lord Christ, to Him is the glory, commanded St. Bartholomew to go to the land of the Berbers and sent St. Andrew, His disciple, to help him. The people of that city were exceedingly wicked, and would not accept any of the signs or wonders the disciples performed. Yet the two disciples continued to preach to them and teach them until they entered the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, they appointed priests over them, and built churches for them, and soon after they left.

St. Bartholomew went to the cities on the Mediterranean coast, where the inhabitants knew not God. He preached and converted them to the knowledge of God and the belief in the Lord Christ. He taught them to perform the works which were worthy of Christianity and commanded them to be pure and chaste. When King Agrippa heard of him, he was exceedingly enraged and commanded his servants to

put him in a hair sack, to fill the sack with sand, and cast it into the sea. And so were consummated the struggle and martyrdom of St. Bartholomew.

His blessings and prayers be with us all. Amen.

3. Also on this day in the year 98 A.D., St. Melyos (Milius), the third Pope of Alexandria after St. Mark, departed. This Saint was enthroned in the fifteenth year of the reign of Domitian, son of Vespasian, Emperor of Rome, and 55 years after the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. He pastured and guarded the flock of Christ well for 12 years and departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Second Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist.

22. The Martyrdom of St. Dasya the Soldier.

1. On this day, the forerunner and great prophet, St. John the Baptist, son of Zacharias the priest, was martyred by the order of King Herod. When St. John rebuked Herod because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Phillip whom he had taken as a wife, he said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." (Mark:6:18) Herod seized the Saint and cast him into prison; however, he feared John.

An opportune day came when Herod, on his birthday, gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced and pleased Herod. He promised her anything she might ask for, even as much as half of his kingdom. She went to her mother and asked her, "What shall I ask?" Her mother said, "Ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter." When Herod heard this, he was exceedingly sorry. But because of his promise and those who were sitting with him, he did not want to refuse her request. He therefore commanded his servants to cut off the head of Saint John and they gave it to the damsel and the damsel gave it to her mother. (Mark 6:20-28) There was great consternation that day, and their joy soon turned into sorrow.

It was said that when the holy head of St. John was cut off, it flew up off their hands into the air, and it cried out saying, "It is not right for you to take your brother's wife." It is also said that the head now is present at Homs in Syria.

As of the holy body, the disciples of St. John took it and laid it in a grave until the days of Pope Athanathius, when God Willed to uncover his body.

His blessings be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Dasya the soldier, who was a native of the city of Tanda, was martyred. Arianus, governor of Ansena, inflicted great tortures on this Saint because of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, he cut off his head, thus St. Dasya received the crown of martyrdom.

His blessings be with us all and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Third Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

- 1. A Council held in the city of Alexandria.*
- 2. A Great Earthquake took place in Cairo and Most of the Egyptian Cities.*

1. On this day of the year 243 A.D., a holy synod convened in the city of Alexandria in the second year of the Papacy of St. Dionysius, the fourteenth Pope of Alexandria. This council was convened because certain people in the Arabian countries believed that the spirit dies with the body, and that on the day of the resurrection, it shall be raised up with it. They composed articles on this belief and sent them to certain people in Alexandria.

When this reached Abba Dionysius he was exceedingly sorry, and he tried to return them from their erroneous opinion, but they would not hearken to him. Therefore, the council assembled, confronted them, and made manifest their perversion. They neither repented nor turned away from their false belief, the holy synod and the Pope excommunicated them.

He wrote an article for them and said in it, "The love of God for mankind is exceedingly great, and the spirit neither dies nor perishes, but abideth as the angels and the devil for it is spiritual, immutable, and incorruptible. When the spirit goes forth from the body it will return to God Who gave it. (Ecc. 12:7) Where it remains in the places of waiting according to its deservedness. And on the day of the resurrection, when the trumpet sounds, the dead bodies shall rise by the Word of God. The spirits reunite with the body it belongs, some to everlasting joy, and some to everlasting contempt." (Daniel 12:2)

2. On this day also a great earthquake took place in Cairo and most of the Egyptian cities at 9:00 a.m. On this day, a church named after Michael the Archangel, at El-Gazyra in Cairo, was destroyed, among many other places. It was said that certain ungodly people had asked the Christians for a bribe, but they did not yield; and when it was evening these men came and destroyed the church completely. This was in the ninth year of the Papacy of Abba Macarius in the year 828 of the Holy Martyrs (1112 A. D.).

Their intercession be with us all, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

The Departure of St. Macarius, 69th Pope of Alexandria

On this day, Abba Macarius II, the sixty-ninth Pope of the great city of Alexandria, departed in the year 1122 A.D. This father was pious and ascetic since his young age, and longed for the monastic life. He went to the desert of Scete and became a monk in the monastery of St. Macarius. He devoted himself to worship and spiritual struggle. He instructed himself by reading the Holy Scriptures, their interpretation and by contemplating on its meaning. He grew in virtues and was ordained a priest.

When Abba Mikhail, the sixty-eighth, Pope departed and the papal throne became vacant, a group of bishops and priests went to the wilderness of Scete. They assembled in the church with the elders of Scete. They remained there for many days, searching and scouting for who would be best for this position. Finally they unanimously agreed to choose this father for what was known of his good character and excellent attributes. They took him and bound him against his will, and he cried out and begged them with excuses to release him saying, "I am not fit to be raised to the dignity of the Papacy."

They brought him bound to the city of Alexandria and ordained him Patriarch. The deed of his appointment was read in the Church of Mu'allakah (The Church of the Holy Virgin) in the Greek, Coptic, and Arabic languages.

During his papacy, he added to his worship and piety. He taught and preached the people daily. He gave alms and did works of mercy to the poor and needy. During his papacy he never asked for any of the Church's money, but rather, he used to give a large portion of the contributions which he received to be spent on different righteous deeds. He completed 27 years in the papacy and departed in peace.

His prayers be with us all and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

The Martyrdom of Saint Sophia

On this day, St. Sophia, was martyred. She used to go to church with her Christian neighbors, so she became a believer in the Lord Christ. Longing to become Christian, she went to the Bishop of Manf. He baptized her in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Thereupon an accusation of becoming a Christian was brought against her before Claudianus, the Governor. The governor brought her, and questioned her. She confessed and did not deny her faith. He tortured her with many tortures. He whipped her, then burned her joints; however, she went on crying out, saying, "I am a Christian." The governor commanded to have her tongue cut off and then returned her to prison.

He sent his wife to her to dissuade her, and promise her with many rewards. When she would not be dissuaded, he commanded to have her head cut off. She prayed a long prayer and asked God to forgive the governor and his soldiers for what they had done to her. Then she bowed her head down and the executioner cut off her neck.

A Christian woman paid much money to the soldiers, took her pure body, and wrapped it with costly shrouds. She placed the body in her house and many signs were manifested through it. On her feast day, very bright lights and incense came out of her holy and pure body.

When the righteous Emperor Constantine heard the story of Saint Sophia, he carried her holy body to the city of Constantinople. He built a great cathedral and placed the body in.

Her blessing and prayers be with us all, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. *The Departure of Isaiah the Prophet.*
2. *The Martyrdom of Saint Basilissa.*

1. On this day, the great Prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, was killed by the hand of Manasseh the King who sawed him with a wooden saw.

This prophet prophesied in the days of five kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh. He prophesied to Ahaz saying, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14) He also prophesied that, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," (Isaiah 9:6), and the Lord will have mercy upon the world by offering Himself a sacrifice for all mankind as, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed..., and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:5-6)

He prophesied to Hezekiah and encouraged him when Sennacherib, King of Assyria, besieged Jerusalem. He informed Hezekiah that God would perish Sennacherib because of his blasphemy against Him. And that night the angel of the Lord went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrian 185,000 men (Isaiah 37:36), and those who were spared fled from the camp.

And when Hezekiah the King was sick, Isaiah told him to set his house in order, for he was to die. And when Hezekiah prayed to God, He sent to him Isaiah the prophet who made known to him that God had added to his days 15 years. And God showed him a sign so that he might realize the validity of his prophesy. (Isaiah 38:8)

Isaiah prophesied about what would befall Israel from calamities because of the hardness of their hearts, love for sin and their forsaken of the worship of God, and only a few of them would be believers. Because of his prayers God sprung water when the people were thirsty. On another occasion, when Isaiah himself was thirsty, God sprung for him the spring of Siloam.

When he rebuked Manasseh because of his evil deeds and worshipping idols, Manasseh ordered to have him sawed.

He prophesied for 70 years and he came 913 years before the advent of the Lord Christ.
His prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Basilissa was martyred in the days of Diocletian the infidel. This saint was a pious Christian, and she was only nine years old. They seized her and bound her hands and feet and cast her in the fire, but she was not burned by the might of God. Through her prayers, God sprung water, she drank, then committed her soul in the hand of God.

Her prayers be with us all, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

- 1. The Departure of St. Dioscorus, 25th Pope of Alexandria.*
- 2. The Martyrdom of Sts. Agathon, Peter, John, Amun and Amuna and Their Mother, Rebecca.*
- 3. The Departure of St. Severianus, Bishop of Gabala.*

1. On this day of the year 451 A.D., the blessed father and the great champion of Orthodoxy, Saint Dioscorus, 25th Pope of Alexandria, departed. His departure took place on the island of Gagra after he had fought the good fight defending the Orthodox faith.

When he was summoned to the Council of Chalcedon by the order of Emperor Marcianus, he saw a great assembly of 630 bishops. Saint Dioscorus asked, "In whom is the faith lacking that it was necessary to gather this great assembly?" They told him, "This assembly has been convened by the emperor's command." He replied, "If this assembly has been convened by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I shall stay and speak with what God may give me to say; but if this assembly has been convened by the emperor's command, let the emperor manage his assembly as he pleases."

When he saw that Leo, Archbishop of Rome, was teaching that Christ has two natures and two wills after the Union, he took the charge to refute this new belief. He stated that our Lord Jesus Christ is one, He who was invited to the wedding as a man and changed the water into wine as a God, and that the two natures were not separated in all of His works. Quoting Pope Cyril, he said, "The Hypostatic Union of the Word of God with the flesh is like the union of the soul with the body and like the union of fire and iron: even as they are of two different natures, by their union they became one. Likewise, our Lord Christ is one Messiah, one Lord, and one Nature." None of those who were gathered at that assembly dared to contradict him. Among them were some who had attended the Council of Ephesus, which had been convened against Nestorius.

Some informed the Emperor Marcianus and the Empress Belkarya that no one disobeyed their commands concerning the faith except Dioscorus, Patriarch of the City of Alexandria. They brought St. Dioscorus, and the leading bishops of the Council who debated and discussed the matter till it was evening, but St. Dioscorus would not deviate from his Orthodox belief.

The emperor and empress were irritated at this, and the empress commanded to smite St. Dioscorus on his mouth, and to pluck out the hair of his beard. He took the hair and the teeth that were knocked out and sent them to Alexandria saying, "This is the fruit of Faith."

When the rest of the bishops saw what had happened to Dioscorus, they agreed with the emperor, being afraid of undergoing the same fate. They signed the document of the belief that Christ has two distinct and separate natures. When St. Dioscorus knew this, he sent for the document and pretended that he wanted to sign it too. But when he read the document, he wrote at its foot that he excommunicated everyone who had signed it, as well as everyone who deviated from the

Orthodox Faith. The emperor was enraged and he commanded to banish St. Dioscorus to the island of Gagra, along with St. Macarius, the Bishop of Edko, and two others, and the Council of Chalcedon was resumed.

When they took St. Dioscorus to the island of Gagra, its bishop, because he was a Nestorian, met him with contempt and disdain. However, God performed at the hands of St. Dioscorus many great signs and wonders, so that all obeyed him, respected and revered him greatly, for God honors His chosen ones in every place. St. Dioscorus told St. Macarius, his companion in exile, "You shall receive the crown of martyrdom in Alexandria." He sent him with one of the believing merchants to Alexandria, where he received the crown of martyrdom.

St. Dioscorus, having ended his good fight, departed from this vain life and received the crown of eternal life. He departed on the island of Gagra where his body was laid.

His blessings and prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, Sts. Agathon, Peter, John, Amun, and Amuna and their mother, Rebecca, were martyred. They were from Kemola of the district of Kus. Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to them and informed them of what would happen to them, and that they would receive the crown of martyrdom in the city of Shoubra which is near Alexandria, and that their bodies would be carried to the city of Nakraha in the province of El-Bhairah. The Saints rejoiced at this vision, and they rose up early and gave all their possessions to the poor.

Agathon, their eldest brother, was a man of high position in the city and was loved by everyone. Rebecca, their mother, strengthened and encouraged them to endure the torture in the name of the Lord Christ.

They came to the city of Kus and confessed their faith in Christ before Dionysius, the Governor. He tortured them severely, starting with their mother who bore the torture patiently and with joy, and then he tortured her five children. When he was weary of torturing them, he was advised to send them to Alexandria so that they might not lead other people astray, for they were loved by everyone. Because of them, many confessed their belief in the Lord Christ and received the crown of martyrdom.

When they brought the saints before Armenius, the Governor of Alexandria, who was in a city called Shoubra, and learned about their case, he tortured them very severely. He hacked their bodies, cast them in a boiler, squeezed them with wheels, then crucified them head down. From all these tortures, the Lord Christ raised them whole until the governor and all his people were ashamed.

Finally, he ordered to have their heads cut off and to have their bodies drowned in the sea. They cut their heads off and placed their bodies in a boat to cast them in the sea. God sent forth His angel to a rich man from the city of Nakraha and commanded him to take the bodies of the saints and the man was exceedingly glad. He came to where the bodies were, gave the soldiers much silver and took the holy bodies. He laid them in the church, and he heard a voice saying, "This is the abode of the righteous." The bodies remained there till the end of the era of persecutions.

They then revealed the bodies and a big church was built for them. God made manifest from their relics, many signs and wonders. Then they transferred the bodies to the city of Sonbat, where there is now a church known as "The Five and Their Mother" or "El-Sitt Refka" (Lady Rebecca). Many visit this church every year to receive their blessings.

Their intercession be for us all. Amen.

3. On this day also, the righteous holy father, Abba Severianus, Bishop of Gabala in Greece, departed. The name of his father was Blaryanos. He studied the secular wisdom of the Athenians, then went to Caesarea to study at the hands of those who were there. He returned to Rome where he studied the doctrines of the Church, and learned the Old and New Testaments in a few years.

Later on, his parents departed and left him a great wealth. He wished to give it to Christ so that he might receive it back a hundred-fold. He built a hotel to house the strangers, the poor, and the afflicted, and planted gardens and appointed guardians to have the proceeds distributed to the poor. His name was given to these places a long time after his departure from this world.

His uncle, who was the governor of that city, informed Emperor Honorius that Severianus had squandered all his money for the name of the Lord Christ to receive from Him a hundred-fold as He had promised in His Holy Gospel. The emperor was pleased. He invited him and commanded him not to leave the palace. The emperor used to take the saint along with him to the church.

In those days Pope Einokendios was sitting on the chair of Rome, and it was revealed to him by God that Severianus would be in charge of a large group of people. The Pope loved and honored him, and wished not to be separated from him, as he was loved by everyone.

When St. Severianus (Sawiros) saw that everyone honored him, he worried about losing his labor, so he decided to escape from the vain glory of this world. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and commanded him to go to the city of Gabala where he would become a father to many souls. He departed by night with his disciple, Theodore, after having put on him the monastic eskeem. God sent to him a light to guide him to his destination. There was a monastery headed by a holy abbot who learned in a vision about the coming of St. Severianus. He went out, welcomed him and told him about his vision. His fame reached that region and a countless number of people came to him. Emperor Theodosius had one of the monasteries renewed for him to live in as the angel had determined for him. He became the comforter for many souls. He continued to teach and instruct the monks until they became saints, like angels.

God performed many wonders at his hands. The daughter of the governor of Gabala had an evil spirit dwelling in her and the spirit said to her father, "If you drive away Severianus from this place, I will get out of your daughter." When her father informed the saint about that, he wrote him a paper saying: "In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, get out of her." When he returned to his daughter with this paper straightaway the devil screamed and left her. Once some magicians agreed with some soldiers to break into his monastery. They were smitten with blindness and they remained like this for three days until the saint prayed for them to be cured.

Philatheus, the Bishop of the city of Gabala, learned in a vision from God that St. Severianus

(Sawiros) would succeed him on his chair and he said this to his people. When St. Severianus was ordained, he looked after his people in the best way.

There was in that city a Jew called Sektar who was proud of his knowledge. He came to the saint and debated with him until finally he was convinced of the correctness of Christianity and the faith in the Lord Christ; many other magicians also believed. During his days, Egypt became as proud of its monks as Constantinople was of Saint John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth).

When the Persians declared war against Honorius and Arcadius, they sent to St. Severianus asking for his prayers for the kingdom. He sent back to them saying, "If we belong to Christ, and our kingdom belongs to Christ, we have no need for armors or spears or troops." And he reminded them of what the Lord had done with those previous kings who pleased Him.

When Empress Eudoxia was angry with Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth), she brought St. Severianus among others for the trial of St. Chrysostom. He admonished her saying, "John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth) did nothing worthy of banishment," but she would not hearken to him.

He wrote many discourses and sermons which still exist in the church books till now. He waxed old reaching the age of 100 years. Ten days before his death, the angel of God appeared to him and informed him of the day of his departure from this world. He instructed his people and then departed in peace. His pure body was prepared as was meet and was placed in the tomb. His departure was two years before that of St. John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth).

His prayers be with us all, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. *The Martyrdom of Zacharias the Prophet.*
2. *The Departure of Moses the Prophet.*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Dimides (Diomedes).*

1. On this day St. Zacharias, the priest, was martyred by the hand of Herod the King. When the angel Gabriel announced to him the birth of John his Son, he did not believe his word and the angel made him dumb, unable to speak until the child was born. (Luke 1: 18-22) When they named the child, he asked for a writing table and wrote that his name would be John. Then he spoke, and praised God. (Luke 1:63-79) The Holy Gospel gave testimony concerning him, that he and his wife were righteous, walking in the Law of God without blemish.

When our Lord Christ was born, and the wise men came to worship Him, Herod was troubled and feared for his kingdom. Therefore, he gave the order to slay all the children of Bethlehem, from two years old and under, so he would kill the Lord Christ among them. The angel of God appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, "Take the child and flee to Egypt." St. Joseph took the child Jesus and St. Mary, His mother, and went to Egypt as the angel of the Lord had told him.

But John's mother took him and fled to the mountain where she dwelt, bringing him up for six years. After her departure to heaven, the child remained in the desert till the day of his appearance to Israel. (Luke 1: 80)

It was said that during the slaughter of the children, Herod thought that John was the Christ. He requested John from his father, Zacharias, who said, "I do not know where the child is." They threatened to kill him, but he did not heed. Herod ordered his soldiers to slay him.

It was also said that when Herod sought John to slay him, Zacharias escaped with him to the temple and put him on the altar and when they caught up with him, he told the soldiers, "From here I accepted him from the Lord," and thereupon the angel of God snatched away the child, and took him to the desert Zifana. When they did not find the child, they slew Zacharias between the temple and the altar. (Matthew 23:35)

Zacharias the priest, son of Bar-a-chi-as, is not Zacharias the prophet, who was one of the twelve minor prophets. Zacharias the prophet was not martyred but died and his body was found without decay.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the righteous Moses, the head of the prophets, departed. He labored on behalf of the people of God till his death and delivered up himself for them. It was he who worked miracles and wonders in Egypt and in the Red Sea. When he became of age, refused to be called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh.

She brought him up when his parents left him on the banks of the river because they were afraid of Pharaoh who had commanded the slaughter of all male children of the Hebrews. When the daughter of Pharaoh found him by the river, she took him and reared him as her own son. When he had completed his 40 years, he saw an Egyptian slaying one of the Hebrews and straightaway he avenged the Hebrew and slew the Egyptian. The next day he saw two of the Hebrews fighting and he attempted to make peace between them. He, who was in the wrong, told him, "Do you want to slay me as you did slay the Egyptian yesterday?" Because of this, Moses fled to the land of Midian where he married and begot two sons. (Exodus 2)

When he was 80 years old, a fire appeared to him in a bush, but the bush was not consumed. When he moved close to behold this great sight, the Lord spoke to him from the bush and commanded him to bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt.

God worked at his hands the ten plagues upon the Egyptians, the first was the river which turned into blood and the last was the slaughter of the first born of the Egyptians. (Exodus 7-12) He brought the people out, and he divided the Red Sea and made them pass through it, and then he brought back the water over their enemies. He brought down for them "Manna" in the desert for forty years, and he made the water flow from a rock, and in spite of that they grumbled against him and many times they wanted to stone him. But he was long suffering with them, and he prayed to God for them, and because he loved them greatly, he said to God, "If You will not

forgive this people their transgression, then blot out my name from Your book." (Exodus 31:32)

The Book testified that he spoke with God five hundred and seventy times as a man talks with his friend, and he was called the mouthpiece of God. When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai, after being with God, with the two tables of testimony in his hands, his face was shining. The children of Israel were afraid to come near him, so he put a veil on his face when he came near to talk to them. (Ex. 34:29-35)

When he was 120 years old, God commanded him to commit the leadership of the people to Joshua, the son of Nun, his disciple. (Deuteronomy 34:9) Moses called him and commanded him with the commands of God and His Law, and informed Joshua that he was the one to bring the people into the promised land. After Moses had made the Tabernacle of Witness and everything which was in it as God had commanded him, he died in the mountain. He was buried there, and God hid his body so the children of Israel would not find it and worship it because the Book testifies there never rose up a prophet in Israel as Moses. When Satan wished to reveal the body, Michael the archangel rebuked him, and prevented him from doing so as St. Jude testifies in his epistle. (Verse 9)

His prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, St. Diomedes (Dimides), was martyred. He was from Dershaba¹ of the chair of Dantu. He loved the church, was kind to the poor and visited the sick. A luminous man appeared to him and commanded him to go to receive the crown of martyrdom and promised him heavenly rewards. He rejoiced greatly and left his parents and went forth from the city. He prayed to God to help him to endure the torture for His Name's sake.

He came to the city of Attribis and confessed the Lord Christ before the governor, who tortured him severely. Then they sent him to Lucianus, the governor of Alexandria. When he was on the boat, the Lord Christ appeared to him, comforted him, encouraged him and promised him everlasting happiness and his soul rejoiced. Lucianus tortured him with different kinds of tortures, then gave the order to cut off his head, thus he received the crown of martyrdom. The people of his city came and took away his body and paid a great honor to it.

His blessings and prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

The Martyrdom of St. Pisora the Bishop

On this day, the holy father, the Bishop Abba Pisora, was martyred. He was the bishop of the God-loving city of Masil. When Diocletian returned to worshipping the idols and started persecuting the Christians, this holy man longed to shed his blood for the name of Christ. He gathered the people before the altar and commanded them with the commandments of the Lord,

¹Known as Shershaba (Tharshebi), Zeftah, Gharbiah governorate.

and then informed them that he wished to receive the crown of martyrdom for the sake of the name of Christ. They all wept, the young and the old, saying, "To whom will you leave us, Our Father, as orphans?" They wanted to prevent him from doing so, but when they could not, they let him go after he committed them to the Lord Christ. He left them bidding him farewell with much tears.

Three bishops agreed to go with him; they were Pisikhos, Fanalikhos, and Theodore, and they all went together to the city of the governor and confessed the Lord Christ. He tortured them cruelly, especially when he knew that they were bishops and fathers to the Christians. The courageous bishops endured the tortures with patience and the Lord Christ strengthened them. Finally the governor ordered that the heads of the four be cut, and they received the crowns of life in the kingdom of God. The body of Saint Pisora was in the city of Nasheen El-Kanater, Gharbia governorate, and at present is in St. George's Church in Old Cairo.

Their prayers preserve and guard us all, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Tenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. The Martyrdom of Saint Matruna.

2. The Commemoration of Sts. Basin and Her Children.

1. On this day St. Matruna, who was a maid-servant to a Jewish lady, was martyred. She was of Christian parents, and her mistress used to entice her to adopt the Hebrew religion, but she refused. Therefore her mistress used to humiliate her, ill treat her, and over-burden her with servitude.

One day she accompanied her mistress to the Jewish temple, then she went to the Christians church. And when her mistress asked her where she had been and why she did not enter their assembly, the Saint replied, "God had departed far from the synagogue that is yours, how shall I enter it? Whereas the place that should be entered is the church which the Lord Christ has bought with His blood." Her mistress became angry at this and beat her harshly, then imprisoned her in a dark place where she spent four days without food or drink. She then took her out and beat her painfully, then she returned her to her imprisonment where she died.

After her death, her mistress, because she feared that the authorities would hold her accountable for her blood, took St. Matruna to the top of her house and threw her down so that it would be said that she had fallen by accident. She was accursed by God, her feet slipped and she fell down, died and went to Hell. As for the Saint, she went to the eternal bliss.

Her intercession be for us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of St. Basin and her three children.

Their prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eleventh Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

The Martyrdom of Saint Basilides (Wasilides)

On this day, St. Basilides (Wasilides) who was a minister and counsellor for the Roman Empire, was martyred. He had many slaves and servants. Emperor Numerianus was the ruler, who was married to Basilides' sister, Patricia, and had a son called Yustus. Patricia was also the mother of Theodore El-Mishreke. Basilides had two sons: Awsabyos (Eusebyus) and Macarius.

When the Persians waged war against Rome, Emperor Numerianus sent to them his son Yustus and Awsabyos, Basilides' son. Then he went to fight another enemy and was killed in that war. His kingdom was thus left vacant without a ruler.

The people chose from among the soldiers a man called Agrippita, who was a shepherd, and they set him over the royal horses, stable. He was a mighty man in action, bold in his dealings. One of the emperor's daughters looked at him and took him as her husband. She made him emperor and called him, "Diocletian." Shortly after, he forsook the Lord God of Heaven and worshipped idols. When Wasilides heard this, he was sorrowful, and he did not return to the service of the new Emperor.

Meanwhile, Yustus, the son of Numerianus, and Awsabyos (Eusebius), the son of Basilides, returned from the war with triumphant victory. When they saw that the Emperor had renounced the faith, they were exceedingly sorry and drew their swords and wanted to slay Diocletian, the infidel Emperor, and to return the kingdom to its rightful owner Yustus, Numerianus' son. But Basilides prevented them from doing this. Then he gathered his army and slaves and informed them that he wished to lay down his life for the sake of Christ's Name. They all answered saying, "We also will die with you." They stood before Diocletian who feared them tremendously, for they were the rightful owners of the kingdom. So Romanus, Victor's father, advised him to banish them to Egypt to be tortured there. Diocletian sent them each to a different province: Abadir (Apatar) and Erae (Herai) his sister, Awsabyos (Eusebius), Macarius, Claudius, and Victor. Theodore El-Mishreke was nailed to a tree.

He sent Basilides to Masrus, the governor of the Five Western Cities (Pentapolis). When Masrus saw him, he wondered why he had left his kingdom and his glory. Our Lord Christ sent His Angel and lifted Basilides up by the Holy Spirit to heaven, and showed him the spiritual dwellings, and his soul was comforted. As for his slaves, some were set free and some were martyred with him.

St. Basilides endured severe tortures, on a squeezing machine (Hinbazeen) at times and at others his body was combed with iron combs. He was lifted onto a spiral device with a saw then thrustured him on a red hot iron bed. Masrus, the governor, did not leave out any means of torturing him. When he saw that Basilides remained steadfast in his faith, Masrus ordered to cut off Basilides holy head, thus he received the crown of martyrdom in the kingdom of heaven in return for the earthly kingdom which he had forsaken.

His intercession be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twelfth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. *The Assembly of the Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus to Judge Nestorius, Archbishop of Constantinople.*
2. *The Translocation of the Relics of Sts. Clemus (Aklimos) and His Companions.*

1. On this day of the year 431 A.D., the Holy Council at Ephesus which was attended by 200 bishops, was convened. It was the third of the Ecumenical Councils. That was in the twentieth year of the reign of Theodosius II, son of Arcadius, son of Theodosius the Great.

They assembled because of the heresy of Nestorius who was Archbishop of Constantinople. He believed that St. Mary did not give birth to the incarnated God, but only to a human being, and that afterwards the Son of God dwelt in him, not the dwelling of unity but just the dwelling of will, and therefore, Christ because of that reason, had two natures and two wills.

So these fathers convened, debated with Nestorius, and proved to him that He, who was born of the Virgin, was the incarnated God, as the angel said, "The Lord is with you; that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:28-32) And according to the saying of Isaiah, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel," (Isaiah 7:14) and also, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father." (Isaiah 9:6)

St. Cyril, 24th Pope of Alexandria, explained to Nestorius that, "Natures cannot be separated after they have become one by their union. Therefore we say that the Incarnated Word of God has only One Nature." Nestorius would not turn from his teaching nor change his opinion. St. Cyril along with the whole Council rebuked him and threatened that they would excommunicate him, but he was adamant. Therefore, they excommunicated him and banished him from his chair.

They confirmed that the Virgin St. Mary had given birth to the Incarnated God the Word, (Theotokos) or "The Mother of God". They drew up the Canons and laid down the Laws. These are the laws of the faithful till this day.

If it is said that the Nestorians do not say that today, we reply by saying that it is because they have mingled with the Christians of the East, and that some of them have turned from their erroneous opinion.

We beseech our God and our Lord and our Savior Jesus Christ to guide us in the path of salvation - to whom is the praise, glory, and worship now and ever. Amen.

2. On this day also we celebrate the translocation of the relics of the martyrs St. Clemus (Aklimos) and his companions to the city of Alexandria.
Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Thirteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. *The Departure of Pope Mattheos II, 90th Patriarch of the See of St. Mark.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Miracle performed by St. Basilus (Basil), Bishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia.*

1. On this day of the year 1182 of martyrs, the honored father Abba Mattheos (Matthias) the Second, 90th Pope of the See of St. Mark, departed. He was a monk in El-Muharraq monastery. He was chosen and enthroned in the year 1169 A.M. He sat on the throne of St. Mark for 13 years and then departed in peace.

The blessings of his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the great miracle performed by St. Basilus, Bishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia.

A young man, who loved his master's daughter, Satan, his enemy and the enemy of the human race, deceived him. Satan made him resort to a magician who made him write a covenant to deny the faith and to surrender completely to Satan, so that Satan might grant him his wish. Satan kindled lust in the heart of the girl, and she loved the young man exceedingly. She asked her father insistingly not to object to her marriage to that young man. Eager for his honor and fearing for her life, he married her to him.

When she had spent with him a long period of time, she noticed that he did not enter the church or partake of the Holy Sacraments, or make the sign of the Holy Cross over himself. She revealed to him her doubt about his faith and his love of God. He told her what had happened to him, and how he had written to Satan a covenant of obedience till death.

She cried much and rebuked him for his deed. She took him to St. Basilus, Bishop of Caesarea. He listened to the confession of the young man and saw his grief and desire to go back to the life of worship, fellowship, and righteousness. St. Basilus comforted him and asked him to stay with him for a while in seclusion, fasting and praying. He shut him up in a nearby room for three days. On the third day St. Basilus visited him and the young man told him that the evil spirits had not ceased disturbing and fighting him in many ways. He strengthened him, calmed him down, gave him food and prayed for him. St. Basilus asked him to remain in seclusion, praying and fasting. After a few days, he came back to visit him again. The young man told St. Basilus that he did not see the devils any more, but he still heard their cries and threats. St. Basilus fed him again and prayed for him and left him to the life of seclusion to fight and pray, and the bishop went to pray on his behalf also. And this went on until 40 days were completed. When the Saint came to him and asked him about his state, he told the Saint that he saw him (the Saint) fighting against Satan on his behalf, and he vanquished him and finally was victorious.

The Bishop gathered all the priests and the monks and prayed for the young man all that night. On the following morning he led him into the church while everyone was crying, "Lord have mercy

on us," and they continued to cry out until that writing, which the young man had written as a covenant to deny the faith and to surrender to Satan, fell down in the midst of all the people.

The Bishop, the young man and his wife, and all the people rejoiced exceedingly. The Bishop blessed that man and administered to him the Holy Sacraments. The man and his wife departed to their house full of joy for the peace and repentance they received. They praised God and thanked St. Basilius by whose prayers they were saved.

The blessings of his prayers be with us all, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

The Departure of St. Agathon the Stylite

On this day St. Agathon the Stylite, departed. He was from the city of Tenis. The name of his father was Matra and his mother's name was Mariam. They were righteous and feared God. They loved to give alms and be merciful to the poor and needy.

The thought of monasticism was always on his mind. When he was 35 years old, he was ordained priest, and he devoted himself to serve the holy church. He asked the Lord Christ by day and night to facilitate for him the parting from this world to go to the desert. The Lord Christ answered his request and he went out from the city and came to Ternot (Mareot) and from there went to the desert. The angel of God appeared to him in the form of a monk who journeyed with him and brought him to the monastery of St. Macarius in Scete.

He came to the holy old men Abba Abraham and Abba Gawargah, became their disciple and remained with them for three years. Then, they took him before the altar and in the presence of the Hegumen Abba Yoanis and for three days they prayed over the monastic garb. They then ordained him a monk and dressed him with the holy Eskeem. From that hour he exerted himself with many worships, in continuous fasting and prayer and fought a great fight. He slept on the ground until his skin cleaved to his bones. He read continually the biography of Abba Simon the Stylite, and he thought of leading a solitary life. He took counsel with the holy fathers concerning that, and they approved his wish and they prayed for him.

He left and came near the city of Sakha, province of Gharbia, where he dwelt in a small church. The believers built a place for him on a pillar and he went up on it.

During his days, a man appeared in whom dwelt an obstinate devil, who led many people astray. He sat in the middle of the church surrounded by people listing to him, carrying tree branches. Abba Agathon sent for the possessed and had him brought to him. He prayed over him and cast out the devil who led the people astray.

Similarly, a woman claimed that St. Mina conversed with her and she commanded the people of her city to dig a well in the name of St. Mina to heal everyone who bathed in it. St. Agatho prayed

over that woman until he cast out from her that unclean spirit and he commanded the people to fill up that well with earth.

At the hands of this holy man, St. Agathon, God worked many miracles, of healing sick people and casting out devils. The devils appeared to him in the form of angels, singing sweet songs and imparting blessings unto him, but by the might of the Lord Christ he knew their guile, he made the sign of the Cross over them, and they fled away defeated.

When God wished to repose him from the labors of this world, he fell sick for a short while and delivered up his soul into the hand of God. The people who had benefitted from his sermons and teachings gathered around him and wept bitterly.

This holy father lived for 100 years, of which he spent 40 years in the world and 10 years in the desert and 50 years in solitude upon that pillar.

His prayers guard us against all our enemies, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

Translocation of the Body of St. Stephen the Archdeacon

We celebrate on this day the translocation of the body of St. Stephen the Archdeacon and first Christian martyr. That was more than three hundred years after his martyrdom, the reign of Emperor Constantine and the spread of the noble worship.

St. Stephen, the striver and martyr, appeared several times to a man called Lucianus. He was from a village where the honored body was buried, known as the "Village of Gamaliel," near Jerusalem. He told him his name and where his body was buried.

That man went to the bishop of Jerusalem and informed him of what he had seen in his sleep. The bishop rose up, took with him two bishops and the people of the church and went to the place where the body was. They dug the ground, and a mighty earthquake took place. The coffin wherein the holy body was lying was revealed. Sweet and precious aromas came out from it. They heard voices of angels praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." This praise was repeated and the bishops bowed down before the coffin. They carried it away with songs, hymns and candles until they came to Jerusalem.

Later on, a man whose name was Alexander, and who was from Constantinople, built a church for St. Stephen in Jerusalem and placed the holy body in it.

Five years later, Alexander departed, and his wife buried him by the side of the coffin of the Saint. Eight years later, Alexander's wife decided to go to Constantinople and wished to take her husband's body with her. She came to the church, and she took the coffin wherein the body of St. Stephen had been laid thinking that it was the coffin wherein was her husband's body. She carried

it away to Ascalon, and from there she embarked with it in a ship to Constantinople. In the middle of the sea she heard singing and many praises coming from the coffin, and she marvelled. She rose up and examined the coffin and she realised that it was the coffin wherein was the body of St. Stephen, and this was the Will of God. She gave thanks to the Lord and went on her way until she arrived in Constantinople.

She went to the Emperor and informed him about what had happened. The Emperor, the Archbishop, priests and the people of the city went forth to the ship, and carried the coffin on their shoulders to the royal palace.

God made manifest many signs both on the ship and in the royal palace. They laid the holy body on a litter carried by two mules, and when they came to a place called Constantinous, the two mules stopped. When they beat the mules, they did not move but they heard the voice of one of them saying, "It is meet to place the Saint here." All those who saw and heard this, marvelled and they knew that He who had made the donkey of Balaam speak was He who had made this animal carrying the body of the Saint to speak. The Emperor ordered that a church be built for the Saint in that place. They laid in it the pure gem, the holy body of St. Stephen, the apostle and the martyr.

His prayers be with us all, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

- 1. The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Sanctuaries of the church of Resurrection in Jerusalem.*
- 2. The Translocation of the Relics of St. John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth).*

1. Today we celebrate the consecration of the sanctuaries of the church of Resurrection in Jerusalem in the year 326 A.D. In the twentieth year of the reign of Emperor Constantine and after the meeting of the Holy Council at Nicea, the saint Queen Helena told her son Constantine that she had vowed to go to Jerusalem to receive the blessings of the holy places and to search for the wood of the life-giving Cross. He rejoiced at this, gave her much money, and sent her in the company of a large number of soldiers.

When she arrived there and received the blessings of the holy places, she searched for the wood of the Cross and found it after much toil. She praised it with great veneration and paid to it much reverence and honor. She commanded the building of the sanctuaries of the Resurrection, the Golgotha, Bethlehem and the manger, the upper room of Zion, Gethsemane and other sanctuaries, and that they be inlaid with pearl and covered with gold and silver.

There was in Jerusalem a saintly bishop who advised her not to do that, saying, "After a while foreign people will come and seize this place and destroy it and take the precious stones and the silver and the gold. But it is preferable to construct the buildings well and give the remainder of

the money to the poor and the needy." She accepted his advice, gave him the money and set him in charge of the work.

When she returned to her son and told him what she had done, he rejoiced, and sent large sums of money and commanded to pay the workers their wages in full so they would not complain.

When the building of the holy places was finished in the thirtieth year of the reign of Emperor Constantine, he sent vessels and precious vestments for the altars. He sent word to the Archbishop of Constantinople and to St. Athanasius, Pope of Alexandria, to take their bishops and to go to Jerusalem where they would meet the Archbishop of Antioch and the Bishop of Jerusalem, to consecrate these sanctuaries.

They tarried there until the sixteenth of the month of Tute, when they consecrated all the altars that had been built. On the seventeenth day they marched with the Honorable Cross around all the holy places where they worshipped God, offered the offerings, and venerated the Cross and honored it. Then they returned to their chairs.

Their prayers be with us to the last breath. Amen.

2. On this day also the church commemorates the transfer of the relics of St. John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth) from the city of Komanah, where he departed in exile, to Constantinople, 30 years² after his departure. That was in the year 437 A.D. during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II.

His intercession be with us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Seventeenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. The Feast of the Consecration of the Church of the Honorable Cross.

2. The Departure of St. Theognosta.

1. On this day the church celebrates the consecration of the church of the Honorable Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Cross was uncovered by the lover of God, Queen Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, from under the pile of Golgotha, after she ordered its removal.

As for the reason of how this great pile of dirt came into being: the Jewish leaders, when they saw all the signs and wonders which were manifested from the sepulchre of the Savior, such as raising the dead and healing the sick, became angry, and they sent forth throughout Judea and Jerusalem ordering all the people to cast the sweepings of their houses and the dirt over the sepulchre of Jesus of Nazareth. They continued to do so for more than 200 years, until it became a very great heap.

²His biography and the commemoration of his departure is mentioned on the 17th day of the blessed month of Hatour.

When St. Helena came to Jerusalem, and asked the Jews about the whereabouts of the Cross, they did not inform her. Finally, some of them told her about an old Jew called Judas who knew the place. She called him, and he denied it at first, but when she urged him, he told her about that pile. She ordered its removal and the Holy Cross was found. She built a church for it, consecrated it and celebrated for the Honorable Cross on the seventeenth day of the month of Tute. Christians make pilgrimages to that place every year as they do on the feast of the Resurrection.

A certain Samaritan called Isaac, as he was travelling with his family among the people going to Jerusalem, reproved the people for taking such trouble in going to Jerusalem to worship a piece of wood. Among the people was a priest whose name was Okhidus. While travelling along the road, they became thirsty. They found no water and they came to a well where the water was foul and bitter. The people became dismayed. Isaac the Samaritan started mocking them, saying, "If I witness a power by the name of the Cross, I will become a believer of Christ." The priest Okhidus was moved with divine zeal and prayed over that foul water and made the sign of the Cross on it, and it became sweet. All the people and their animals drank, but when Isaac drank, the water was bitter and wormy. He regretted and cried and came to the saint, Father Okhidus, bowed down at his feet and believed in the Lord Christ. Then he drank from the water, and he found it sweet. The water of that well possessed the power of becoming sweet for the believers and bitter for the others. A cross of light appeared in the well and a church was built there.

When Isaac the Samaritan arrived in Jerusalem, he went to its bishop who baptized him and his family.

Because the feast of the appearance of the Honorable Cross, which is on the tenth of Baramhat, always comes during fasting, it was substituted by the fathers for the Seventeenth of Tute which is the day of consecration of its church.

Glory and worship be to Jesus Christ our Lord forever and ever. Amen.

2. On this day also, the blessed Theognosta, departed. She was contemporary of the righteous Emperors Honorius and Arcadius.

One day an envoy came with gifts from the King of India to the two emperors. On their way back, they found this Virgin Theognosta holding in her hand a book that she was reading. They seized her and took her back with them to their country. She became the head of the King's attendants and his wives.

One day, the son of the King fell sick with a grievous sickness. She held him in her arms and made over him the sign of the Cross, and he recovered immediately. This report spread throughout that land, and since that day she was set free.

Once the King went to war, there came upon him thick clouds and fog. Knowing of the sign of the Cross that St. Theognosta used to make, the King made the sign of the Cross over the fog and it cleared up. With the sign of the Cross he also vanquished his enemies.

When the King returned from war, he bowed down at the feet of the Saint, and asked her for the holy baptism for him and for the people of his city. She told them that it was not for her to

baptize. They sent to Emperor Honorius to inform him of their acceptance of the faith and asked him to send a priest to baptize them. He sent to them a priest who was a saintly anchorite, and he baptized them all and he gave them the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Christ. The virgin rejoiced for his coming and they blessed each other. She built a convent for herself and for the many virgins who desired the monastic life.

When the priest returned to the Emperor and related to him how the people of the city entered into the faith of our Lord Christ, he rejoiced exceedingly. The Emperor agreed with the Archbishop to ordain the priest a bishop and to send him back to them, and they rejoiced greatly.

There they built a big church and they needed pillars. There was a large temple for idols which had pillars so they took them to build this church. The rest of the people of this city joined the faith of the Lord Christ.

The virgin St. Theognosta rejoiced for all that had happened. Later on she departed in that convent and was surrounded by the virgins.

Her prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Eighteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. The Martyrdom of St. Prophorius (Porphyrius).

2. The Commemoration of Stephen the Priest, and St. Niceta (Niketa) the Martyr.

1. On this day, St. Prophorius, was martyred. He was a comedian and jester and was non-Christian. When Constance, the son of Constantine departed, Julian the Infidel, who was killed by St. Marcurius, reigned after him. This infidel and heretic was the nephew of Emperor Constantine, and he incited idol worshipping. Many of the believers were martyred on his hands.

On his birthday, he gathered jesters, comedians, and people of the circus; Prophorius was one of them.

The infidel emperor ordered him to imitate the Christians. When he came to the ritual of the holy baptism and made the sign of the Cross over the water in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Lord enlightened his mind and he perceived a divine grace coming down on the water and light shone from it. He immersed into the water three times, then went up and put on his clothes. He confessed that he became Christian.

The emperor rebuked and threatened him. Then the emperor promised to give him many gifts. In spite of that, the Saint went on saying, "I am Christian. I am Christian." Finally, the emperor ordered his neck to be cut off and he received the crown of martyrdom.

His intercession be for us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of Stephen the Priest, and St. Niceta (Niketa) the Martyr.

Their prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Nineteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

The Commemoration of St. Gregory, Patriarch of the Armenians

On this day we commemorate St. Gregory, Patriarch of the Armenians, who became a martyr without bloodshed. He made himself a slave in the country of Armenia in the days of King Tiridates about the year 270 A.D. This king was not Christian. When he came into the temple to offer up incense to the idols, he summoned the saint to offer up incense with him, but the saint refused. The king inflicted upon him severe tortures and finally cast him in an empty pit. The Saint lived there for 15 years.

Near the pit lived an old widow, and she saw in a vision someone telling her, "Make bread and cast it into this pit," and she continued to do this for 15 years.

It happened that the king ordered the killing of the virgins Arbsima and Agatha, and their friends. After the killing he became exceedingly sad, because he wanted to marry St. Arbsima. He suffered a serious illness from which he did not recover until his sister saw in a dream someone telling her, "Unless you bring up Gregory out of the pit, your brother will not be cured."

They brought the saint out of the pit, and he prayed over the king, and he was cured from his sickness³.

His intercession be for us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. The Departure of pope Athanasius the Second, the Twenty-Eighth Patriarch of the See of St. Mark.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Melitina the Virgin.

3. The Departure of St. Theopista.

1. On this day of the year 512 A.D., the righteous father St. Athanasius II, 28th patriarch of the See of St. Mark, departed. This father was the steward of the churches of Alexandria. When the holy father Abba Peter III departed, the bishops, elders and people agreed to ordain him patriarch for what was known of his Orthodox faith and knowledge.

He was a pious man, filled with the Holy Spirit and faith. When he became patriarch, he shepherded the flock of the Lord Christ exceedingly well, and he protected them from the snatching wolves with his teachings and prayers.

³His complete biography is under the fifteenth day of the blessed month of Kiahk.

He sat on the episcopal throne for three years and nine months, then departed in peace.
His prayers be with us. Amen

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Melitina the Virgin.
Her prayers be with us. Amen.

3. Also today we commemorate the departure of St. Theopista. She was married and had a son. Her husband died while she was still young. She took it upon herself to become a nun. She started to practice the spiritual life. She persisted in fasting and continual prayers and worshipping day and night.

She went to the holy father Abba Macarius, bishop of Nekios. She bowed to him, took his blessings, then she asked him to pray on her and put on her the garb of monasticism. The bishop advised her to try for a year and he promised her that he would put on her the garb of monasticism after that year.

She went to her house and shut herself in a small room. She closed its door, and made a small opening in it. Her son, who was then 12 years old, was taking care of her needs. She embarked in strenuous worships with asceticism and devotion. The year elapsed, and the bishop had forgotten that he had promised this saint that he would put on her the garb of monasticism.

He saw her in his sleep in a shining figure, telling him, "My father, how did you forget me till now, and I am passing away tonight?" The father the bishop saw that as if he was awake, he prayed on her the prayer for ordaining monks, and put on her the garb of monasticism. When he did not find a Kalansowa (cover for the head), he took off his own and put it on her head. Then he put on her the holy Eskeem. He asked his disciple for another Kalansowa and put it on. She had a silver cross in her hand which she gave to him saying, "Accept this from your disciple." And it was said that when he awakened, he found the cross in his hand and he looked attentively at the cross which was beautifully made. He was amazed and glorified God.

Early in the morning he went with his disciple to the house of this blessed woman. Her son received him crying with tears. When he asked him why he was crying, he replied saying, "My mother called me in the middle of the night and bid me farewell and told me whatever the bishop tells you, do and do not break it. I will depart this night to go to the Lord Christ. She prayed over me and advised me, saying, 'Keep all that I commanded you and do not disobey our father, the bishop, and here now I am in your hands.'"

The bishop came to where the saint was lying and knocked on the door, but she did not answer. He said, "This blessed saint had departed indeed," and he ordered his disciple to open the door. When the bishop entered, he found that she had given up her soul. She had on the Eskeem that he had put on her in his vision and also the Kalansowa that he had on.

His eyes were filled with tears. He praised and glorified God who works out the satisfaction of His saints. The bishop shrouded her as was the habit of the monks and called the priests who carried her to the holy church and prayed over her with great honor.

There was in the city a paralytic infidel man, suffering from evil spirits. When he heard the chanting of the priests, he asked his people to carry him and take him where the body of the saint was. When they brought him to the church, he drew near to the holy body with faith and he was cured instantly. The devil came out of him, and he became well. He and his people believed in the Lord Christ and the bishop baptized them.

And everyone who had a disease or a deformity would come to the church and touch the holy body and would be healed immediately. When the governor heard about these wonders, he and most of the city believed in the Lord Christ. He came to the church, carried the body and buried it with honor.

Glory be to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and His good Father and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-First Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. The Commemoration of the Virgin St. Mary, the Theotokos.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Cyprian (Cyprianus) and St. Justina.

2

1. The church celebrates on this day the commemoration of the pure Lady, the Virgin St. Mary, the Theotokos, through whom was the salvation of Adam and his posterity.

Her intercession be for us. Amen.

2. On this day also in the year 257 A.D. the honorable St. Cyprian (Cyprianus) and St. Justina, were martyred. Cyprianus was an infidel and a magician. He learned magic in the countries of northwest Africa until he excelled over his fellows. His excessive impudence and his arrogance made him go to Antioch to challenge the magicians there and to pride himself over them of his knowledge.

When he arrived there, his fame spread. A young man, the son of one of the nobles of the city, heard about him. This young man lusted for a Christian virgin who was called Justina. He saw her going to church and his heart became inflamed with her love. He was unable to obtain what he desired of her either by money, threat, or magic.

He sought Cyprian and complained to him about his condition, that he might make him gain favor with Justina's heart and fulfill his desire of her. Cyprian promised him the fulfillment of his desire. He used all the trickery of his sorcery but failed. Every time he sent her a host of demons, they found her praying, so they came back defeated.

When Cyprian failed, he called the demons and told them, "If you do not bring Justina to me, I shall adopt Christianity." The chief of the demons thought out a device to deceive him. He ordered one of his soldiers to disguise himself and to take the form of Justina and then go to Cyprian. He hastened and made it known to Cyprian her coming, so he rejoiced and waited for

her. Then Satan, disguised as Justina, came to him, and Cyprianus rejoiced, and rose up to embrace her. Because of his great joy in her, he told her, "Welcome, Queen of Women, Justina." Upon the mere mention of her name, Satan, disguised as her, melted away and disappeared like smoke, and an unpleasant smell spread out of him. Cyprianus knew that this was a deceitful trick of Satan who could not stand before the mentioning of her name.

Immediately Cyprian rose up and burnt his books of magic. He was baptized by the patriarch of Antioch who put on him the monastic garb. After a while he ordained him a deacon, then a priest. Later on, after he had grown in virtues and in the doctrine of the church, they ordained him bishop of Carthage in the year 351 A.D. He took St. Justina and made her the head of a convent there.

When the Ecumenical Council convened at Carthage, this saint was one of those who attended it.

When Emperor Decius heard of them he had them brought before him, and he demanded them to raise incense for the idols. When they refused, he inflicted upon them many tortures and finally cut off their heads with the sword.

Their prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Second Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. *The Martyrdom of Saints Cotylas (Kobtlas) and Axoua, his Sister, and Tatas, his Friend.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Julius of Aqfahs (El-Akfehasi), the Writer of the Biography of Martyrs.*

1. On this day, Saints Cotylas (Kobtlas) and his sister Axoua, the children of Sapor, King of Persia, and Cotylas' friend, Tatas, were martyred. Sapor worshipped fire and the sun. He inflicted many tortures on the believers, and no man throughout the country dared to mention the Name of Christ. His son, Cotylas, had a friend named Tatas who was a ruler over the country of Maydasayeen.

Certain people laid an accusation against Tatas before the king that he was a Christian. The king sent to him a governor named Tumakher to verify the validity of what was said and if it was true, to torture him. When Cotylas, the son of the king, heard that, he also went to that country, to his friend Tatas. When the governor arrived and found that he was Christian, he ordered his men to cast him in a furnace. St. Tatas made the sign of the Cross over the fire and the fire died out. Cotylas marvelled and asked him, "How did you learn this magic, O my brother?" He replied, "This is not magic but it is through faith in the Lord Christ." Cotylas asked, "If I believed, would I be able to do the same?" Tatas answered that with faith you can do more than this. Cotylas, the son of the king, believed in Christ, then he drew near the fire and made the sign of the Cross over it, the fire backed a distance of 12 cubits.

The governor sent to the king to inform him what had happened, and the king had them brought to him. He ordered to cut off the head of Tatas who thus received the crown of martyrdom. However, he tortured his son, Cotylas, with different kinds of tortures. He cast him in prison and

sent for his sister Axoua, so she might persuade him to return to his father's belief. St. Cotylas preached her and turned her heart to the belief in the Lord Christ. He sent her to a priest who baptized her secretly.

She returned to her father saying, "I wish that you had what my brother and I have, for there is no God but Jesus Christ." The king became angry and commanded to torture her, until she yielded up her soul in the hand of the Lord Christ.

They tied Cotylas to the tails of horses and dragged him over the mountains until he yielded up his spirit. Then they cut his body into pieces and they cast it out for the birds to consume it. When the soldiers departed, the Lord commanded saintly priests and deacons who went secretly at night and took the holy body which was shining as snow. They hid it in a place until the end of the days of persecution.

Their intercession be for us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Julius of Aqfahs⁴ (El-Akfehasi), the writer of the biography of martyrs, was martyred. The Lord Christ appointed him to care for the bodies of the holy martyrs, to shroud them and to send them to their hometown. The Lord brought blindness into the hearts of the governors, and no one objected to him. They also never forced him to worship idols. The Lord kept him to care for the martyrs. He used 300 young men for this purpose. They wrote the biography of the holy martyrs and sent it to their hometown. But he used to minister to the holy martyrs by himself and dress their wounds. The martyrs blessed him, saying, "You must shed your blood in the Name of our Lord Christ, so you can be counted among the martyrs."

When the reign of Diocletian the Infidel came to an end, Constantine the Righteous reigned. The Lord Christ wished to fulfill what the saints had prophesied to St. Julius; to be counted among the martyrs. The Lord commanded him to go to Arkanus, governor of Samanoud, and to confess the Lord Christ. St. Julius went there, and the governor tortured him with many tortures, but the Lord strengthened him. The governor ordered to bring him to worship the idols. This saint prayed and the earth opened and swallowed up the 70 idols and the 140 priests who were serving them. When the governor beheld the destruction of his idols and their priests, he believed in the Lord Christ.

The governor went with the Saint to the governor of Athribis who tortured Saint Julius with great severity, but the Lord Christ strengthened him.

Once there was a feast for the idols and they decorated the temple with ornaments, lamps, statues and with palm branches. They closed the gates till the following day to start celebrating the feast. The saint asked the Lord to blot out their idols. The Lord sent his angel who cut the heads of the idols, blackened their faces with ashes, burnt up all the palms, and all the idols in the temple. On the following morning when the people came dressed to celebrate the feast and saw what had

⁴The town of Aqfahs, district of El-Fashn, province of El-Minya.

happened to their gods, they recognized their weakness. The governor of Athribis⁵ and a large number of people believed in the Lord Christ.

The Saint then went to the city of Towa⁶ along with the governor of Samanoud and the governor of Athribis, and they met Iskandros its governor. First he refrained from torturing them, but later on he ordered his men to cut off their heads. Julius and his two sons, Tadros and Yunias; his slaves; and the governors of Samanoud and Athribis and many people were martyred. They numbered 1500. They took his body with the bodies of his sons to Alexandria for it was their hometown.

His intercession be for us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Third Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. *The Martyrdom of Sts. Eunapios (Onanius) and Andrew.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Martyrdom of St. Thecla.*
3. *The Re-Opening of the church of the Virgin in Haret El-Rum.*

1. On this day, the righteous Sts. Eunapios (Onanius) and Andrew, his brother, were martyred. These saints were the sons of one of the nobles of the city of Lydd. They agreed together since their young age to become monks. They went to one of the monasteries of Syria and became monks there. Later on, they went to the honorable saint Abba Macarius. They became his disciples and dwelt with him for three years. During which they lived with love and humility, fasted and prayed continually. Their asceticism became well known. They chose Eunapios (Onanius), bishop, and Andrew, priest. They shepherded the flock of Christ with the best care. They overcame their souls and bodies.

Julian, the infidel emperor, heard about them, and he had them brought to him. He commanded them to deny their faith in the Lord Christ, and to adopt paganism. When they refused his commands, he tortured them severely until they yielded up their spirits in the hand of the Lord Christ, to Him is the glory. Each received three crowns: one for monasticism, asceticism, and worship; one for the priesthood and guarding the flock against the devilish wolves; and a third one for martyrdom and shedding their blood for the Christian faith.

Their prayers and their blessings be upon us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the holy martyr, St. Thecla (Takla), the bride of Christ.

Her prayers be with us. Amen.

⁵the remains of the city of Athribis is nearby the city of Banha.

⁶The remains of the city of Towa is nearby the city of Tanta.

3. On this day also of the year 1029, of the martyrs, the Church of the Virgin in Haret El-Rum in Cairo was re-opened after having been closed for 11 years.

Her intercession be for us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

1. *The Departure of St. Gregory the Ascetic.*

2. *The Martyrdom of St. Quadratus, One of the Seventy Disciples.*

1. On this day, St. Gregory the monk, departed. He was the son of pious, Christian and exceedingly rich parents from one of the cities of Upper Egypt. They cared greatly to teach their son the art of speaking, medicine and also taught him the Church subjects. Next, they took him to the father Abba Isaac, bishop of their city who ordained him a psalter to serve the altar. When they wanted him to get married, he refused. Later on, the bishop promoted him to a reader. Gregory was devoted to praying and he was inclined to seclusion since his young age.

He used to pay many visits to Abba Pachomius (Pakhom). He took much money from his parents and brought it to St. Pachomius, beseeching him to spend it on building monasteries. The saint accepted his alms and spent it on building the monasteries of the holy Cenobitism.

Later on, he went to Abba Pachomius, where he became a monk. He struggled practicing all kinds of virtues to the point that just from his look and appearance the lustful person would learn purity. He dwelt there for 13 years.

When Saint Macarius came to visit St. Pachomius, Gregory asked St. Pachomius to permit him to go back with St. Macarius. He dwelt with St. Macarius for two years, then he asked him if he could live alone and St. Macarius allowed him. He dug out a small cave for himself in the mountain where he dwelt for seven years. He used to visit St. Macarius twice a year, on Christmas and on Easter, to consult him in his spiritual fight.

When he completed 22 years of strife, God wished to repose him. God sent to him an angel who informed him that after three days he would depart from the world. St. Gregory called the elders of the desert, bade them farewell and asked them to remember him in their prayers. Three days later, he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us to keep us from every evil. Amen.

2. On this day also was the martyrdom of St. Quadratus, one of the seventy apostles who were chosen by the Lord. He was born in the city of Athens, and was one of its wealthy and learned nobles. He believed in the Lord Christ and served him. Having received the grace of the Comforter on the day of Pentecost, he preached the life-giving Gospel in many countries.

He entered the city of Magnis and preached there. The people of the city believed; he baptized them and taught them the life-giving Commandments. Then he returned to Athens, to preach there also, but they stoned him and tortured him severely. Finally they cast him into the fire; thus, he received the crown of martyrdom.

His prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

The Departure of Jonah, the Great Prophet

On this day, the great prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai, departed. It was said that he was the son of the widow of Zar-e-phath whom Elijah the Prophet had raised from the dead. Jonah followed Elijah, served him and received the grace of prophesying. God inspired him to go to the city of Nineveh to admonish its people and to warn them that after three days the city shall be overthrown. Jonah pondered in his heart saying, "If God wished to destroy them He would not forewarn them. I fear that if I go to them and convey to them this warning, they might repent and God would not destroy them. I would be a liar and no one will listen to me and probably may be get killed because I conveyed to them a false message from God. So I will arise and flee."

What did this prophet think of? How could anyone flee from the face of God? By escaping, he wanted to get away from the city of Nineveh. He did not want to admonish them knowing that God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and repentant of the evil. He thought that by staying away from Nineveh the Lord would send another prophet to preach to this city.

The escape of Jonah the Prophet, and his having been cast into the sea are to make manifest the miracle of his remaining in the belly of the whale for three days and then coming out safely. This was a symbol of, and evidence for, the resurrection of our Savior from the sepulcher, unchanged, after three days.

Jonah rose up to flee from the presence of the Lord and went down to Joppa; he found a ship going to Tarshish and sailed on it. The Lord sent out a great wind and there was a mighty tempest in the sea and the ship was about to break. The people were all afraid, and cried every man to his god. They said everyone to his fellow, "Come and let us cast lots, that we may know because of whom this evil has befallen us." And when they had cast lots, it fell upon Jonah. They said to him, "What have you done that brought such an affliction on us?" He replied, "Cast me in the sea and you shall be saved." They begged the Lord's pardon, then they cast him into the sea, and a great whale swallowed him. He remained in its belly for three days and three nights and then he was cast out on the seashore.

He rose up straightaway and came into Nineveh. He preached to its people and they all repented: The King, the nobles, and the poor, the old and the young. They all cried to God with fasting and everyone turned from his way and the Lord accepted their repentance and had mercy upon them.

Jonah returned to the land of Israel and died there. He was more than 900 years before the advent of the Lord Christ. He prophesied in the days of Amos and his son Hosea. He lived nearly 100 years, out of which he prophesied more than 70 years.

His prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

The Angels' Annunciation of John the Baptist to Zacharias

On this day it was announced to Zacharias, the priest, the birth of John the Baptist. Zacharias was well advanced in years and his wife, Elizabeth, was barren and her time for begetting children had passed.

Zacharias was praying and beseeching God persistently to give him a child because the children of Israel reviled anyone without a son and treated him with ignominy. They would say about him that he was without the blessing that God had told Adam in these words: "Be fruitful and multiply."

The Lord had compassion on him and He hearkened to his petition. He sent him Gabriel the Angel to announce to him the birth of John. The angel came to him while he was in the sanctuary, as it is mentioned in the Holy Gospel (Luke 1:11), and announced to him the birth of the great prophet John, and that he should precede the Christ as it was said by the prophets, "He shall go before Him." He asked the angel, "Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well advanced in years." The angel told him that he was sent from God to announce that to him and it is not seemly for him to doubt. He then told him that he shall be dumb till the birth of the child.

On the day of John's circumcision, they asked him about the child's name. He asked for a tablet and wrote on it John and straightaway his mouth opened. Then he spoke and praised God and prophesied concerning his son John and the Lord Christ. He prophesied about his son that he would be a prophet and he should go before the face of the Lord.

The prayers of this priest be with us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

The Martyrdom of St. Eustathius and His Two Sons

On this day, St. Eustathius and his two sons were martyred. He was one of the ministers of the Roman Empire. Early in his life, he did not know God, but he used to give alms and charity in abundance, and the Lord did not wish that his toil should be in vain. While he was in the desert hunting wild animals, a figure of a cross, appeared to him between the horns of a stag, and it reached up to heaven. He chased the stag in the mountains to hunt it. The Lord spoke to him and told him about his new name which is Eustathius, for he was called, Ephlokidus, before. The Lord

ordered him to be baptized in the Name of the Lord Christ and told him that poverty should come upon him speedily.

When he heard that, he descended from the mountain and went to the bishop of the city who baptized him, his wife and his sons, and he changed his name to Eustathius as the Lord had ordered him. Right after that, he lost all what he had from slaves, handmaidens, cattle and money.

Then he took his wife and his sons, and went forth from the city of Rome and embarked on a ship. And as he could not pay the fare, they took his wife instead. He took his two sons and came to a river. He crossed over to the other side with one of them and returned to get the other, but he did not find him because a lion had taken him. He went back to get the first but he did not find him either because a wolf had snatched him. He felt deep sorrow because of the loss of his wife and his two sons.

St. Eustathius worked, for a period of time, as a guard in a garden until the Emperor of Rome died and another reigned instead who sent messengers to search for that saint. One of the messengers happened to enter the garden which the saint guarded. The two men recognized each other and St. Eustathius was taken back to the Emperor. The Emperor honored him and reinstated him to his former position.

It happened in that time that a war broke out and they recruited two men from every city to the army. The two sons of the saint were saved by the Divine Will from the lion and the wolf and were brought up in the same city. They remained for a long time not knowing each other. Then the Divine Will arranged that both would be recruited from that city. One day while they were walking, they reached a garden and sat there talking together, and they discovered that they were brothers.

As for their mother, the owner of the ship who had kept her in payment of the fare was a barbarian, but God protected her from him. He kept her in a garden which by the Divine Will was the same garden, where her two sons had gathered in, and she was close by her sons while they were talking and she recognized them. The two sons were assigned to guard the treasury of their father who did not recognize them.

When the Lord willed to gather this blessed family together, the wife entered the place where her husband was, and they recognized each other and rejoiced for reuniting unexpectedly. Then she told him that she had met their sons in the garden. While she was telling him so, the two sons joined them and she cried joyfully, "There are our two sons!" They embraced each other in tears of joy, and they praised God who fulfilled what he had promised and they lived in joy and peace.

Later on, the Emperor died and another reigned who worshipped idols. He summoned St. Eustathius and his wife and his sons. He ordered them to worship the idols but they refused. So he ordered his men to torture them with fire, but they were not harmed. Then he commanded to cast them into a brazen cauldron and set fire under it. Thus they delivered their souls into the hands of the Lord, and received the crowns of martyrdom from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Their prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

*The Martyrdom of Saints Abadir (Apatar)
and Eraee (Herai), His Sister*

On this day, Sts. Abadir (Apatar) and Eraee (Herai), his sister, the children of Wasilides, the minister of Antioch, were martyred. Abadir was appointed Esfeh-selar (*a high ranking governmental position*) in his father's position. He had a room wherein he prayed and the Lord Christ appeared to him in the middle of the night and told him: "Rise up and take your sister Eraee, and go to Egypt to receive the crown of martyrdom and I will instruct a man whose name is Samuel to take care of your bodies and prepare them for burial." He bid him peace then went up into heaven. This vision was seen by his sister also, in which she was told, "Hearken to your brother and do not transgress his command." When she woke up, she trembled, and she went to her brother and told him about the vision, declaring that she would not disobey him. They vowed to each other to go and shed their blood in the Name of the Lord Christ.

When his mother knew that, she and her handmaidens rent their garments, and came to St. Abadir. His mother pleaded with him not to become a martyr. He promised her that he would not go forward to Diocletian seeking martyrdom. Her heart was soothed, not knowing his intention of going somewhere else to become a martyr.

Every night he used to change his apparel and go disguised to give water to the prisoners and minister to them all night, and he asked the door-keeper not to tell anyone.

Later on, he saw a vision to remind him of travelling. He took his sister and went to Alexandria, then they came to Cairo. They met St. Abekragon who recognized them and blessed them. From there they came to Tomwah where they entered the church and prayed in it. Then, they went to El-Ashmunin where they met with Samuel the deacon. The following day Samuel went with them to Ansena, and they confessed our Lord Christ before Arianus the governor, who tortured them severely. Meanwhile, Saint Abadir prayed and entreated God to strengthen his faith and the faith of his sister Eraee. The Lord took their souls and carried them up to the heavenly Jerusalem and they saw the eminent ranks and the luminous habitations of the righteous; then he brought them back to their bodies.

The governor wrote their decree and then adjured Abadir by his God to tell him his name and who he was. The saint replied, "Swear to me that you shall not change what you have decreed," and when the governor swore to him, he said, "I am Abadir El-Esfeh-selar." The governor cried out, saying, "Woe to me, O my Lord why did you not let me know that you are my Lord and let me go so far as to condemn you to all these severe tortures?" The saint replied, "Fear not, for you are about to receive the crown of martyrdom. The emperor will seek me and will not find me, and he will hear that you have killed me. Then he will call you, torture you and you will die in the Name of our Lord Christ. And now hasten to finish us." Straightaway the governor ordered that their

heads be cut off. The believers wrapped up their bodies in fine apparels and Samuel the deacon took them to his house until the days of persecution were ended and a great church was built for them.

Their intercession be for us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

*The Martyrdom of St. Arbsima (Repsima) the Virgin
and Her Sisters the Virgins*

On this day, the holy virgins Arbsima (Repsima) and Agatha (Ghana) and their sisters, were martyred during the reign of Emperor Diocletian.

This infidel sought out the most beautiful damsel to marry. He sent artists to every country and ordered them to paint a portrait of the most beautiful damsel that their sights fell on and to give him an accurate description of her. When they arrived nearby Rome, they entered a convent for virgins and found Saint Arbsima and none was like her in beauty. They painted a portrait of her and sent it to the Emperor who rejoiced when he saw it. He sent to the kings and governors to invite them to the wedding celebrations.

When Arbsima and the virgins knew that, they wept, and left the convent fleeing, entreating the Lord Christ to help them and to keep their virginity. They fled to the country of Armenia, and entered the province over which Tridates was king. There they dwelt in a winery in a deserted garden. They had great trouble in getting their food, so one of them made glass, sold it, and with the money they bought their food.

When Diocletian sought for Arbsima, he did not find her. Later on, he heard that she was in the country of Armenia so he sent to Tridates the governor to look for her. When the virgins heard that, they left their shelter and hid themselves in the city. But someone informed about them. Tridates then commanded to bring Arbsima to him and when she refused, they abducted her and brought her to him.

When he saw her beauty, he wanted to have her for himself, but she did not let him. He brought her mother to persuade her but instead she besought her to endure patiently. She comforted her, told her that she must not forsake her true Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that she must not defile her virginity. When he knew what her mother had done, he commanded to break her teeth.

God gave St. Arbsima power to overcome the governor; she pushed him forcefully and he fell on his back. She left him lying on the floor although he was well known by his might and bravery in war. Ashamed of having been vanquished by a virgin damsel, he ordered to cut off her head. The soldiers came and tied her, tore out her tongue, plucked out her eyes, and then cut her into pieces.

When the governor rose up from his fall and regained his senses, he was sorry for killing the saint. He ordered to slay the rest of the virgins. The soldiers pierced the soles of their feet, flayed them, cut them into pieces, and then cast them out. One of them was sick and was lying on a bed, and she cried out to the soldiers so she might join her sisters. So, they cut off her head also and thus, all the virgins received the crown of martyrdom. The soldiers also slew all who had come with them from Rome.

After their departure, the governor became mad and the physicians could not help him until Saint Gregory, Bishop of Armenia, came to him and prayed over him. By this he was healed of his affliction and believed in the Lord Christ. He took the bodies of the holy and pure virgins and laid them in a holy place.

Their intercession be for us, and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Tute

*The Commemoration of the Miracle that God Performed for
St. Athanasius the Apostolic*

On this day the Lord Christ performed a great miracle for the honorable Saint Abba Athanasius, 20th Pope of Alexandria. When Emperor Constantius, the son of the righteous Emperor Constantine, adopted the teachings of Arius who said that the Son was, after not being, and therefore not equal to the Father, he sent a man, whose name was Gawargios, to Alexandria. He also sent along with him 500 horsemen and letters appointing Gawargios patriarch of Alexandria instead of Abba Athanasius the Apostolic. He ordered Gawargios to support the faith of Arius and slay all who would not be obedient to him.

When this man arrived to the city, he preached the teachings of Arius but only a few people of the city accepted his teachings. Therefore, he killed a large number of people, and St. Athanasius hid himself for a period of six years. After which he went to the city of Constantinople, and asked Emperor Constantius either to restore him to his See or to slay him so he would receive the crown of martyrdom. But the Emperor ordered his men to place him in a small boat and to leave him in the sea without food or water or a guide. The Emperor thought that he would die of hunger or thirst or get drowned. In this way he hoped to get rid of the saint and his admonition to him for his heresy, and they did with the saint as the Emperor had ordered them.

The boat sailed along smoothly and in peace with the Lord's will and His care. St. Athanasius was surrounded and cared for by the Angels until he arrived in Alexandria three days later. When the believers heard that their shepherd had arrived, they rejoiced and went out to him and received him with candles and songs of praise. Then they brought him into the church and expelled Gawargios and his followers. St. Athanasius dedicated that day as a great feast to the Lord.

*May his prayers be with us and to our God is the glory and honor now and ever unto the end of ages. Amen. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
One God. Amen*

The Blessed Month of Babah The First Day

The Martyrdom of Saint Anastasia

On this day, St. Anastasia was martyred. This fighter was a native of Rome, and the daughter of Christian parents. They raised her well and taught her the Christian manners. When she grew up, her parents wanted her to get married, but she did not agree with them for she had forsaken the vanities of the world and its lusts.

She instead chose to lead a spiritual life and longed for the heavenly glories since her young age. She entered one of the convents of the virgins in Rome and put on the monastic garb. She subdued her body with devoutness and asceticism. She did not eat except once every two days. During the holy Lent she ate only on Saturdays and Sundays after the prayer of the sixth hour of the day. Her food during all the days of her monastic life was dry bread and salt.

It came to pass that some of the convents of virgins, nearby the convent where this saint was staying, were celebrating a feast. The abbess took St. Anastasia, with some of the virgins, and went to join in celebrating that feast. On their way, St. Anastasia saw the soldiers of Emperor Decius the Infidel torturing some Christians and dragging them. Her heart became inflamed with divine love and she shouted at them saying, "O you hard-hearted men is that what you do to those whom God created in His own form and image and for whom He gave Himself up?" One of the soldiers seized her and brought her to the Governor who asked her saying, "Is it true that you are a Christian, worshipping Him who was crucified?" She confessed the truth and did not deny it. He inflicted her with severe tortures, then he crucified her and lit a fire under her, but it did not harm her. When she did not give up her faith because of these pains, he commanded that her head be cut off. She said a long prayer, then she bowed her head and the swordsman cut off her neck and she received the crown of martyrdom.

Her intercession be for us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Second Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Coming of Saint Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, to Egypt

On this day St. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, came to Egypt in the days of Eustinos the Emperor. This Emperor opposed the Orthodox belief, following that of the council of Chalcedon. However Queen Theodora, his wife, was an Orthodox and she loved St. Severus because of his Christian virtues and his true faith.

The Emperor called him one day and many discussions took place regarding the faith, but the Emperor would not turn away from his wrong belief. The Emperor issued his orders to slay St. Severus. The Queen besought the saint to escape to save himself but he refused saying, "I am ready to die holding

the Orthodox faith." However, as the Queen and the God loving brethren insisted, he and some brethren left to Egypt.

When the Emperor sought St. Severus and did not find him, he sent soldiers after him. But God hid St. Severus from the soldiers and they did not see him although he was close to them. When he came to Egypt, he went disguised from place to place and from monastery to monastery, and God made many signs and wonders by his hands.

One day, he went to the desert of Scete, at Wadi-El Natroun, and he entered the church in a uniform of a stranger monk and a great miracle took place at that time. It came to pass, that after the priest had placed the bread (Kourban) on the altar and gone around the church offering the incenses, and after the reading of the Epistles and the Gospel, he lifted off the Ebrospharin (altar covering), and did not find the Kourban in the paten; so, the priest was disturbed and wept. He turned towards the worshippers saying, "O my brethren, I did not find El-Kourban in the paten, and I know not whether this thing has happened because of my sin or because of your sin." The people wept; and straightaway, the angel of the Lord appeared to the priest and told him, "This has happened not because of your sin or because of the sin of the worshippers but because you offered El-Kourban in the presence of the Patriarch. The priest replied, "And where is he, O my Lord?" The angel pointed towards St. Severus. St. Severus was standing in a corner of the church and the priest recognized him by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The priest came to Abba Severus, who commanded him to continue the liturgy after they brought him to the altar with great honor. When the priest had gone up to the altar he found the offering on the paten as before. They all praised God and glorified His Holy Name.

St. Severus went forth from that place and came to the city of Sakha where he dwelt with a noble, and righteous man named Dorotheus, and he remained there until his departure.

His prayers be with us all and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Third Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. *The Departure of St. Simon II, 51st Pope of the See of St. Mark.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. John the Soldier.*

1. On this day of the year 822 A.D., the pure father Abba Simon II, 51st Pope of the See of St. Mark, departed. This saint was the son of Orthodox Christian parents of the nobles of Alexandria. He nursed the milk of the faith from his childhood and he learned the doctrines of the church. He chose for himself the monastic life, so he went to the desert of Scete. He became a monk in the cell of his predecessor Abba Jacob, the Patriarch. He dwelt with Abba Jacob for many years during which he exhausted his body by strenuous ascetic life, and many worships.

When Abba Marcus II became a Patriarch, he requested St. Simon from his spiritual father Abba Jacob for what was known of his good reputation and his sound judgement. He stayed with Abba Marcus until his departure. When Abba Jacob, his spiritual father, became patriarch, he kept Abba Simon with him and he benefitted from him often. When Abba Jacob departed, the bishops, priests, and elders

unanimously agreed with a spiritual unity to bring forward this father for what they had seen of him (as to righteousness and Orthodox Faith) during his stay with the two Patriarchs who proceeded him. They seized him, bound him and ordained him a Patriarch. He perused an angelic life, which was well-pleasing to the Lord. And, as God wished to repose him, he did not stay on the throne but for five and a half months and departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also was the martyrdom of St. John the soldier, who was from the city of Ashrobah.

The blessing of his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Martyrdom of St. Bacchus, the Friend of St. Sergius

On this day, St. Bacchus, the friend of St. Sergius, was martyred. When Emperor Maximianus seized these saints, he tortured them severely. After having stripped them of their military ranks, he sent them to Antiochus, King of Syria, who imprisoned St. Sergius. However, he ordered St. Bacchus to be killed, his body made heavier by attaching stones to him, then cast into the River Euphrates.

The Lord protected the body and the waves brought it to the shore near two ascetic holy men who were brothers. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and commanded them to go and carry away the body of the Saint. When they came to where the body was, they found an eagle and a lion protecting it. The beasts spent a whole day and a night guarding it without harming it, although they were beasts of prey, for they had been commanded by divine providence to protect the body.

The two holy men took the body with great honor, singing hymns until they came to their cave where they buried it.

His prayers be with us and glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Martyrdom of St. Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople

On this day, St. Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople, was martyred. He was a disciple of Abba Alexandros, Patriarch of Constantinople. He was appointed to the patriarchy after the departure of Abba Alexandros. When he sat on the patriarchal throne, he expelled the followers of the Arian sect from Constantinople and its surroundings.

When Emperor Constantine, the Great, departed, his three sons reigned after him. Constantine II reigned over Constantinople, Constans reigned over Rome and Constantius reigned over France.

Constantine II held the same belief as Arius. He was sorry for what Abba Paul had done to the Arians. He asked him to stop excommunicating them, but the Patriarch did not listen to him. The Emperor became angry and exiled him from Constantinople as he had also exiled Abba Athanasius the Apostolic from Alexandria.

The two Patriarchs met in Rome, and went to stand before Emperor Constans to inform him of their concern. He wrote a letter to his brother on their behalf, ordering him to accept them and threatened him if he did not receive them - there would be no peace but war between them. When the two saints came to Constantinople, they gave the letter to Emperor Constantine, who accepted his brother's letter and returned them to their Chairs.

However, after the slaying of his brother, Emperor Constans, in Rome, Constantine II exiled St. Paul again to the country of Armenia. A few days later, he sent to one of the followers of Arius commanding him to catch up with St. Paul there and slay him. He went to him at night and strangled him, thus he received the crown of martyrdom. He stayed four years in office.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

*The Departure of the Righteous Hannah, the Prophetess
Mother of Samuel, the Prophet*

On this day, the righteous Hannah, the prophetess, and mother of Samuel the Prophet, departed. This just woman was of the tribe of Levi. Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, married her. He also had another wife whose name was Peninnah.

Hannah had no children because she was barren. Peninnah was always reviling her because she had no children. Hannah wept and did not eat. Elkanah, her husband, comforted her saying, "Why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" (1 Samuel 1: 8)

She did not accept his comfort and went up to the house of the Lord during the days of Eli the priest. She prayed and wept before the Lord. Then she made a vow, and said, "O Lord of hosts if you will give Your maid-servant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life." (1 Samuel 1: 11) Eli the priest was watching her as she stood silently, for she was praying in her heart.

Eli thought that she was drunk and he rebuked her but she told him, "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my spirit before the Lord." He answered her saying, "Go in peace and the God of Israel grant your petition." (1 Samuel 1:17) She believed his word, and went home.

Then she conceived and brought forth a son, and she called him Samuel, which is interpreted as "being asked for", because she said, "I have asked him of the Lord." When she weaned him, she took him to

the house of the Lord, as she had vowed. She brought the child to Eli the priest, and she said, " ... I am the woman who stood by you here praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord." (I Samuel 1:26-28) Then she praised God in that well-known praise attributed to her. She lived after this a life well-pleasing to God, and departed in peace.

Her prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Departure of St. Paul of Tamouh

On this day, Abba Paul (Paula) who was from Tamouh (El-Tamouhi) (Thmoui), departed. Since he was inclined since his young age to solitary life, he went to Ansena Mountain. There he lived with his disciple Ezekiel, who was the witness of his virtues.

For his exceeding love to the Lord Christ, to Whom is the glory, he exhausted his body with asceticism, forsaking earthly things, with fasting and many prayers in a way that exceeds human endurance. For this, he deserved that the Lord Christ appear to him and bless him for his conduct in this life, for such is the behavior of those who are perfect and who fight against the flesh, the world and the devil till they overcome them. St. Paul said to the Lord, "All that is due to Your care, O You creator and redeemer of the human race, by Your death on our behalf, we the undeserving sinners." The Lord Christ comforted and strengthened him.

When our father St. Bishoy went to Mount Ansena, he was joined by the saint Abba Paula. The Lord Christ told Abba Paul (Paula), "Your body will be buried with that of My chosen Bishoy." When Abba Paula departed, his body was placed with the body of St. Bishoy.

When they wanted to move the body of St. Bishoy to the wilderness of St. Macarius in Scete, they carried it onto a boat and left St. Paul's body behind; however, the boat would not move, until they brought the body of St. Paul and placed it beside St. Bishoy's body. Then they brought them to the wilderness of Sheheat (Scete).

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. The Martyrdom of St. Matra.

2. The Martyrdom of the Saints Abba Hor, Tosia (Susanna) and Her Children, and Abba Agathon, the Hermit.

1. On this day, St. Matra the elder, was martyred. He was a native of Alexandria, a believing Christian. When Decius reigned, he established the worship of idols. He afflicted the Christian people in every

place. When his edict reached Alexandria, its people began also to be persecuted.

Some brought accusations against this saint. The Governor brought St. Matra to question him about his faith. St. Matra confessed that the Lord Christ is a true God of true God. The Governor commanded him to worship the idols and promised him much money. When he refused, he threatened to punish him, but he did not give up his faith. He shouted at the governor, "I do not worship but the Lord Christ, the creator of heaven and earth." The Governor became angry with him, and ordered him beaten. He was severely beaten and then hanged up by his arms. They then imprisoned him and slit his face and his temples with a red hot rod. Finally, because he insisted on not giving up his faith, they cut off his head outside the city.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of St. Abba Hor, the commemoration of St. Tosia and her children, the martyrs at Tamouh; and Saint Agathon, the hermit.

Their prayers be with us all and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. *The Departure of St. Eumenius, the Seventh Pope of the See of St. Mark.*

2. *The Eclipse of the Sun in the Year 958 A.M.*

3. *The Commemoration of St. Simon (Simeon) the Bishop.*

1. On this day of the year 146 A.D., Saint Eumenius the seventh Pope of the See of St. Mark, departed. Pope Abremius, the fifth Pope, ordained him a deacon and he served 10 years in this position. When St. Yustus, the sixth Pope, was appointed, he saw how Eumenius excelled in knowledge and faith, so he ordained him a priest. He entrusted to him the teaching of the believers of the church of Alexandria, and asked him to look after them and to instruct them in the principles of the Orthodox faith.

When Pope Yustus departed, this father was chosen Patriarch. He handed down the care of the churches and the teaching of the believers to Father Marcianus who later became his successor. He continually restored the strayed sinners, explaining to the pagans plainly the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ and His being one in His divine essence. He stayed on the chair for 13 years and departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, in the year 958 A.M., during the reign of King El-Saleh Ayoub and the papacy of the father the Patriarch Abba Kyrillos III, 75th Pope of the See of St. Mark, a stupendous thing happened in the world which amazed those who beheld it or heard of it. The sun became gradually dark until darkness spread everywhere and the stars were seen in the daytime.

People lit lamps and were struck with great fear. They cried out to God the Almighty with all their hearts, asking for His compassion and mercy. The Lord had mercy upon them, removed their fear and

the darkness was lifted all at once and the sun appeared to light up the world, and the lamps were extinguished. That occurred from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

The people glorified God who was long suffering towards them and did not deal with them according to their sins but according to His mercy and patience.

To Him is the Glory in His church. Amen.

3. On this day also is the commemoration of Saint Simon the Bishop.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Tenth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Martyrdom of St. Sergius, the Friend of St. Bacchus

On this day, St. Sergius, the friend of St. Bacchus, was martyred. He was a high ranking soldier, advanced in the court of Emperor Maximianus, who showed him great favor. Because this Emperor was pagan and these two saints were people of faith, he sent them to Antiochus, King of Syria, to torture them and slay them if they did not forsake their faith.

Antiochus inflicted St. Bacchus with severe tortures and, when he did not dissuade him from his Christianity, he ordered his men to slay him. They killed him and cast his body into the River Euphrates. The waves brought him to the bank near two holy men. The Lord sent an eagle to guard the pure body and inspired the two saints to take it. They took the body with reverence and buried it⁷.

St. Sergius was sad for his friend Bacchus until he saw him in his sleep in a beautiful palace, shining brightly; so his soul was exceedingly comforted.

Later on, the Governor commanded to drive nails into St. Sergius' feet, and to send him to El-Rusafa⁸ tied to the tails of the horses; his blood flowed down on the ground.

On their way, they met a virgin damsel, who gave them water to drink. When she saw the condition the saint was in, she felt sad for him and she pitied his youth and his fine form. The saint told her, "Come, follow me to the city of El-Rusafa to take my body," and she followed him.

The Governor of El-Rusafa was a friend of St. Sergius, and it was through St. Sergius, that the Governor had this position. The Governor tried to convince him to change his mind to save his life. When St. Sergius did not accept his advice, he ordered his head cut off. That virgin came and received the blood which flowed from his holy neck and kept it in a clip of wool.

However, the holy body was kept until the end of the days of persecution when they built a church for

⁷As it is mentioned under the fourth day of the month of Babah.

⁸A city was east of Baghdad, Iraq, and it was destroyed.

him at El-Rusafa. The church was consecrated by 15 bishops. They laid his holy body in a coffin made of marble. Those who were present witnessed that a fragrant oil flew from his body and it healed the sick.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Eleventh Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. The Departure of St. James, Patriarch of Antioch.

2. The Departure of St. Pelagia.

1. On this day, the holy father Abba James, Patriarch of Antioch, departed. Great tribulations befell him, and he was exiled for the sake of guarding the Orthodox faith. After he remained in exile for a period of time, the people of the city gathered and brought him back. Then the Arians exiled him again and he stayed in exile for seven more years, then departed in peace.

His intercession be for us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Pelagia, departed. This righteous woman was born in the city of Antioch to pagan parents. Besides a corrupt faith, she had a corrupt manner of life also.

She met a holy bishop, whose name was Paul, who preached to her. She believed in the Lord Christ through him, and confessed to him everything she had done. He encouraged her and taught her not to despair but to repent with a true determination. Then he baptized her in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and she was illuminated by the grace of baptism. She led a penitent life with a firm heart and a pure determination. she exhausted her body with strenuous worship.

She dressed herself in the garb of men and went to Jerusalem where she worshipped in its sanctuaries. She met Abba Alexandros, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who sent her to one of the convents nearby Jerusalem. She dwelt there for 40 years and departed in peace.

Her prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twelfth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. The Departure of Abba Demetrius I, 12th Pope of Alexandria.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Matthew the Evangelist.

3. The Commemoration of the Archangel Michael.

1. On this day of the year 224 A.D., the pure and celibate father, the fighter of lusts, and the vanquisher of nature, Abba Demetrius I, 12th Pope of Alexandria, departed. This saint was an illiterate farmer, and was married. He lived with his wife 47 years until he was chosen a Patriarch.

They did not know one another as married people, but remained throughout that period in their virginity and chastity, a fact which no one knew.

When the departure of St. Yulianus, 11th Pope, drew near, the angel of the Lord appeared to St. Yulianus in a vision and told him about this saint and that he was to be the Patriarch after him. He gave him a sign saying, "Tomorrow a man shall come to you having a cluster of grapes, seize him and pray over him." Then he woke from his sleep, he told the bishops and the priests who were with him about this vision.

So it happened on the next day that St. Demetrius found a cluster of grapes that was out of season. He carried it to St. Yulianus, to receive his blessing. The father, the Patriarch, took him by the hand and told those who were present, "This is your Patriarch who will be after me." Then he prayed over him; they held him and kept him until the departure of Abba Yulianus, whereupon they finished the prayers of ordination over him and he was filled with heavenly grace. The Lord enlightened his mind and he learned reading and writing. He studied the church books and their interpretations. Words of grace flew from his mouth when he preached.

He established the reckoning of the Epacts, by which the dates of fasting were determined on a fixed basis. Christians used to fast the holy 40 days, Lent, right after the feast of Epiphany, as the Lord Christ fasted after His baptism. Then they fasted the Passion week separately, celebrating the Christian Passover on the Sunday that followed the Jewish Passover.

Some of the Christians used to celebrate Easter on the fourteenth of Neesan (April) and that meant they celebrated with the Jews, not recognizing that the Christian Passover was to be in memory of the Resurrection of the Lord Christ which was after the Mosaic Passover. For that reason, Pope Demetrius took interest in establishing a fixed bases for fasts and Christian holy days. He appended the Holy Fast to the Passion Week.

Pope Demetrius wrote in this respect to Agabius, Bishop of Jerusalem; to Maximus, Patriarch of Antioch; to the Patriarch of Rome and to others. All approved of it and continued to follow his rules up until the present. The Church of Rome deviated from that and followed, since the 16th century, the Gregorian Calendar. To the Popes of the Coptic Church was the prime credit in determining Easter Day; and they thus sent their Easter messages all over the world, so that the Christians would celebrate Easter on the same day forming a universal joy.

God was with Abba Demetrius because of his purity. God granted him a gift that after he finished the Liturgy and the people came forward to partake of the Holy Mysteries, he used to see the Lord Christ pushing forward with His Hand those who were worthy. But if one came forward who was not worthy of partaking of the Holy Communion, the Lord would reveal to the Pope his sins and the Pope would not allow him to partake of it until he confessed his sins. The Pope would admonish him for them and would say to him, "Turn away from your sin and repent, after that come and partake of the Holy Mysteries." His flocks conduct was straightened during his time.

Because he rebuked the sinners much, and urged them on repentance and purity, some of them

murmured and said, "This man is married, how can he rebuke us?" The Lord Almighty wished to reveal to them his virtues, so the angel of the Lord came to him at night and told him, "O Demetrius, do not seek your salvation and let others be destroyed with their doubt." The father asked him to clarify his statement and the angel told him, "You must reveal the mystery which is between yourself and your wife to the people that you might remove the doubt from them." On the following morning, after he had celebrated the Divine Liturgy, he ordered the people not to leave the church. He took red-hot coal and placed it in his wife's shawl and his pallium, then they went around in the church and their clothes did not burn. The people were amazed at this miracle. He told them that he and his wife did not know each other as married people. The doubt was removed from the people and they realized the purity of this father and his virginity.

During his time, some opposing men appeared whose names were Aklemos, Origen, and Orianus and others who wrote forbidden books, so he excommunicated them.

During the days of his papacy, he did not stop teaching and confirming the believers in the Orthodox Faith. When he had grown old and became weak, they carried him on a litter to the church to teach the people. He was 105 years old, having spent 15 years unmarried, 47 years until he became Patriarch and 43 years in office, then departed in peace.

The blessings of his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Matthew the Evangelist, was martyred. He was one of the Twelve Disciples and his name was Levi. He was the one sitting at the receipt of custom outside the city of Capernaum, when the Lord Christ said to him, "Follow Me." He left all, rose up, and followed Him. He made for the Lord Christ a great feast in his own house. That made the Pharisees murmur against Him saying to His disciples, "Why do your teacher eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:27-32)

He preached in the land of Palestine and Tyre and Sidon. Then he went to Ethiopia. He entered the city of priests and converted them to the knowledge of God. When he wished to enter the city, he met a young man who told him, "You will not be able to go in unless you shave off the hair of your head and carry palm branches in your hand." He did as the young man told him. And, as he was thinking about that, the Lord Christ appeared to him in the form of the young man who had met him earlier, and after He encouraged and comforted him, disappeared. He realized that this young man was the Lord of Glory Himself.

He then entered the city as one of its priests. He went to the temple of Apollo and found the high priest, and talked with him concerning the idols that they were worshipping. He explained to him how those idols did not hear or sense anything and how the true Mighty Lord is He who created the Heaven and Earth. The Lord made through him a wonder: a table came down to them from Heaven and a great light shone around them. When Hermes the priest saw this wonder, he asked him, "What is the name of your God?" The apostle replied, "My God is the Lord Christ." Hermes, the priest, believed in Christ and many people followed him.

When the Governor of the city knew that, he ordered them burned. It happened at that time that the son of the Governor died. St. Matthew the Apostle prayed and made supplications to God to raise the son and the Lord answered him and raised the child from death. When the Governor saw that, he and the rest of the people of the city believed. St. Matthew baptized them and ordained a bishop and priests, and built a church for them.

After he had preached in other countries, he went back to Jerusalem. Some of the Jews which had been preached to, and had believed and been baptized by him, asked him to write down what he had preached to them. He wrote the beginning of the Gospel attributed to him in the Hebrew language but he did not complete it. It was said that he finished it during his preaching in India, in the first year of the reign of Claudius and the ninth year of the Ascension.

His martyrdom was consummated by stoning by the hands of Justus the Governor, and his body was buried in Carthage of Caesarea by some believers, in a holy place.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On the twelfth day of each Coptic month we celebrate, commemorating the honorable Michael the Archangel, the head of the Heavenly Hosts, who stands at all times before the throne of the Divine Majesty on behalf of the human race.

His intercession be for us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Thirteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Departure of Saint Zacharias, the Monk

On this day, St. Zacharias the monk, departed. His father's name was Karyos. He was married, but he longed for the monastic life. He told his wife about what was on his mind and she agreed to it. Karyos had a son, called Zacharias and a daughter. He left them with their mother and went to the desert of Scete and became a monk at the hands of a holy old man.

Shortly after, there was a great famine in the country and the wife took the two children and came to the desert where their father Karyos was. She complained to him about the tribulation which had come upon her through the famine and handed him the children. But Karyos told her, "God has divided the two children between us. You take the girl and leave the boy with me." She took her daughter and departed. Karyos took his son Zacharias and brought him to the elders who prayed over him and they prophesied that he would become a perfect monk.

Zacharias was brought up well in the desert, and advanced in every virtue. Because he was exceedingly handsome and his fair look, there were many murmurs in the desert because of him and they said, "How is it, a boy like that dwells in the desert among the monks?" When St. Zacharias heard that, he went to lake El-Natroun (which was very salty) without telling anyone. He took off his apparel, plunged his body into the lake, and remained in it for many hours. The color of his body became black and he looked like a leper. Then he went forth from the water, put

on his apparel and came to his father who did not recognize him until he had stared at him closely. When he asked him about what had changed his appearance, he told him what he had done.

When it was Sunday, he went with his father to the church to partake of the Holy Mysteries. The Lord revealed to St. Isidore, the priest of Scete, what St. Zacharias had done. He marvelled and said to the monks, "Zacharias received the offering last Sunday as a man, but now he has become an angel."

This saint possessed many virtues, especially the virtue of humility in which he had reached such a degree of perfection that his father said about him, "I have labored greatly in the fight, but I have never attained the extent of my son Zacharias."

St. Zacharias lived a strenuous life and strove exceedingly hard for 45 years. When he came to the desert, he was seven years old and all the days of his life numbered 52 years, then he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen

The Fourteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Departure of St. Philip, One of the Seven Deacons

On this day, St. Philip, one of the Seven Deacons, departed. He was from Caesarea, Palestine. When the Lord Christ, to Him is the glory, went through this area, this saint heard Him teaching and followed Him immediately. When the Lord chose the 70 Disciples and sent them forth to preach and heal the sick, this disciple was one of them. The Twelve Apostles chose him as one of the Seven Deacons appointed to serve.

This Apostle preached in the cities of Samaria and baptized its people. He also baptized Simon the magician who perished when he tried to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit with money.

One day the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." He rose and went and behold a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury and had come to Jerusalem to worship. As he was returning and sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the spirit said to Philip, "Go near and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the scripture which he read was this, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb before its shearer is silent. So He opened not his mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away. And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth."

So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water; What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, if you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

But Philip was found at Azotus and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea. (Acts 8:26-40)

He went around the countries of Asia and preached the living Gospel there. He had four daughters who preached the word of God with him. He brought many of the Jews, the Samaritans and others to the faith, and departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Martyrdom of Saint Panteleimon, the Physician

On this day of the year 405 A.D., St. Panteleimon (Bandleamon), who was from the city of Nicomedia, was martyred. His father worshipped idols but his mother was a Christian. They educated him well and taught him the profession of medicine. He met a priest whose name was Hermolaus (Armolas) who taught him the facts of the faith of the Lord Christ and baptized him.

He reached a high standard of virtuous life. God wrought great wonders through him. Once, a blind man came to him to be treated by his medicine. He made the sign of the Cross over his eyes in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and his eyes were healed and he regained his vision completely.

When the Emperor heard the news of his healing this blind man, he had the blind man brought to him and asked him about how his eyes were healed. He told him St. Panteleimon healed them by laying his hand on them and by saying, "In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." He confessed before the Emperor that he was a Christian, so the Emperor immediately had his neck cut off.

The Emperor ordered that St. Panteleimon be brought to him and asked him about his belief. He confessed that he was a Christian. He tried to persuade him by all means and promised him many

things, but he would not change his confession. Then he shouted out to him and threatened to inflict upon him different kinds of tortures. But he did not move. The Emperor inflicted upon him severe tortures on different days, sometimes beating and suspending him and often times casting him into the sea or into the fire. The Lord Christ appeared to him in the form of Hermolaus, the priest who baptized him and taught him the facts of faith, to strengthen him, and walked with him as if He was sharing with him every punishment which befell him.

Later on, the Emperor ordered to behead him. When St. Panteleimon went to the place of execution, he prayed to the Lord Christ and supplicated Him. He heard a voice from heaven announcing to him what had been prepared for him from heavenly joy. The soldiers also heard that voice and immediately believed. They went forth to the Emperor and confessed their faith in the Lord Christ. The Emperor ordered his men to cut off their necks, too, and they all received the crown of martyrdom.

Their intercession be for us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. *The Departure of St. Agathon, 39th Pope of Alexandria.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Sts. Carpus, Apollos (Papyrus) and Peter.*

1. On this day of the year 673 A.D., the holy father, the Patriarch Abba Agathon, 39th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was a disciple to the holy father Abba Benjamin, 38th Pope. Abba Benjamin disappeared for a period of time from the face of his Chalcedonian persecutors and left Agathon to preach to the believers and establish them in the Orthodox faith. Agathon went around the streets and markets in the daytime wearing a carpenter's apparel, and during the night wearing a priest's uniform. He went around the houses also preaching and instructing the believers. He kept doing this till the Arab conquest of Egypt and the return of the father the Patriarch Abba Benjamin to his chair.

When Pope Benjamin departed, this saint was chosen to the honorable rank of Patriarch. He faced great tribulations for the sake of keeping the Orthodox faith. For example, a man whose name was Theodosius, a Malachite, went to the city of Damascus and came before Yazeed-Eben-Moawia, the Arab Governor of Damascus. He gave him much money and took from him an order to appoint him the Governor of Alexandria, Behira and Marriot. When he became in charge of this position, he afflicted our father the Patriarch and levied great taxes on him. Because of the excessive evil of the Governor, and what he did to the father the Patriarch, the people hated and avoided him. He put forth an order that any man who might find the Patriarch on his way should slay him. The Patriarch remained in his cell until God destroyed that evil Governor.

In the days of this father, the building of St. Macarius' church in his monastery at Wadi-El Natroun was completed.

One night the angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him about a holy monk from the

monastery of St. Macarius whose name was John and who lived in Fayyum. The angel ordered him to bring him to help in preaching and teaching the people. The angel told him that he would be Patriarch after him. Abba Agathon sent and brought him and delivered to him the work of the churches, their organization, teaching the believers and preaching to them.

Abba Agathon remained in the papacy for 19 years and departed in peace.
His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the saints Carpus, Apollos (Papyrus) and Peter the disciple of Abba Isaiah the Anchorite.
Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Seventeenth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

*The Departure of St. Dioscorus II
31st Pope of Alexandria*

On this day of the year 511 A.D., the holy father Abba Dioscorus II, 31st Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was chosen Patriarch by the guidance of the Holy Spirit after the departure of his predecessor, St. John. This father was gentle in disposition, his work and knowledge were outstanding, and he was perfect all his days; no one was like him in his generation.

His first work after his enthronement to the See of St. Mark was writing an epistle to the holy father Abba Severus, Patriarch of Antioch. This epistle contained the faith in the Holy Trinity as equal in essence and divinity, and an explanation of the Incarnation. He said that the Word of God was incarnated in a human body perfect in everything, and united with it and became one Son, one Christ, one God, in inseparable unity and that the Trinity is one before and after this unity and no addition was effected to Him by the Incarnation.

When this epistle reached Abba Severus, he read it and rejoiced and made it known to the people of Antioch. He felt optimistic with it and wrote to St. Dioscorus a reply to the epistle congratulating him on his Christian presidency and on the Orthodox faith. He commanded him not to turn aside from it, neither to the right nor to the left, and to depend in all his sayings and works on the Orthodox faith which was established by the Three Hundred and Eighteen Fathers in Nicea and according to what they commanded in the Canon and the Law. When the message reached Abba Dioscorus, he joyfully received it and commanded that it be read from the pulpit to be heard by all the people.

This father read and taught continually, and urged and commanded the priests in every city to shepherd and guard their flocks. Having ended his course, he departed in peace.
His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Eighteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Departure of the Honorable Father Saint Theophilus 23rd Pope of Alexandria

On this day of the year 404 A.D., the holy father Abba Theophilus, 23rd Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was a disciple of St. Athanasius the Apostolic. He was brought up by him and learned all the spiritual doctrine from him.

When Pope Timothy I departed, this father was chosen to take his place. Abba Theophilus was knowledgeable, well read in the church books with full understanding of their interpretation. He wrote many discourses and works of exhortation urging on the works of charity and mercy, and warnings to the people about receiving the Divine Mysteries without being prepared, and concerning the Resurrection and the punishment which is prepared for sinners and many other useful teachings.

The holy father Abba Kyrillos⁹ was his nephew and Abba Theophilus took care of his education by sending him to Abba Serapion in the desert of Scete. There Kyrillos studied the books of the church and all its subjects and stayed there five years, then went back to his uncle.

When Abba Theophilus was with Abba Athanasius the Apostolic, he heard him one day saying while looking at the hills before his cell, "If I find time, I will clear away these hills and build a church in their place for St. John the Baptist and Elisha the prophet."

When Abba Theophilus became Patriarch, he remembered that saying and he talked about it often. In the city of Rome, the husband of a rich woman died and left her with two sons. She took them and much money and an icon of the Archangel Raphael and came to Alexandria. When she heard about the interest of the father the Patriarch in removing those hills, she went to him with true zeal and gave him enough money to fulfill his desire. After the work was done, a treasure appeared under the hills and was covered with a slab of stone engraved in Coptic, with three characters of theta, 0. When Abba Theophilus saw them, he knew, guided by the Holy Spirit, the secret of these three letters and said, "Behold the time has come for this treasure to be uncovered because these three thetas were gathered together at the same time and they are: Thoes, that of God; and Theodosius the Emperor, son of Arcadius, son of Theodosius the Great; and Theophilus the Patriarch - meaning himself. He found that this treasure dated to the Era of Alexander, the son of Philip the Macedonian which was 700 years before.

The Patriarch sent to the Emperor to inform him about the treasure and asked him to come. The Emperor came and saw the treasure, and gave a large sum of money to Abba Theophilus. He built many churches. He began by building a church in the name of St. John the Baptist and Elisha the

⁹24th Pope of alexandria known as the "Pillar of faith".

Prophet, and he transferred their relics that church. That church was known at that time by the Demas. Then he built a church by the name of our Lady the Virgin Mary, then a church in the name of the Archangel Raphael at El-Gizira and seven other churches.

As for the two sons of the woman who came from Rome, he ordained them bishops. When the Emperor saw the love of the Abba the Patriarch for building churches, he gave him all the houses of idols and Abba Theophilus changed them to churches and lodging houses for strangers, and endowed them with land.

Having fulfilled his days in a life pleasing to God, he departed from this world in peace.
His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Nineteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. *The Assembly of the Council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata.*
2. *The Martyrdom of Sts. Theophilus and His Wife in Fayyum.*

1. On this day of the year 280 A.D. a Holy Council assembled in an Antiochian church to judge Paul of Samosata. He was a native of Samosata, and he was chosen a Patriarch of Antioch.

Satan sowed in his mind the belief that the Lord Christ was a simple, ordinary man whom God had created and chosen to redeem the human beings; and that Christ was entirely Mary's offspring and that Divinity did not unite with Jesus but joined Him by the will only and that God is one person, so he did not believe in the Son or the Holy Spirit.

Because of him, a council assembled in the city of Antioch during the reign of Emperor Valerian and the papacy of Abba Dionysius, 14th Pope of Alexandria, which was 45 years before the Council of Nicea. Because Abba Dionysius was old, he was not able to convene with them, so he wrote a letter stating the belief that the Lord Christ is the Word of God, and His Son, and is equal to Him in essence, in divinity and in being eternal. The Holy Trinity is Three Persons by character, in one God-head. One Person of the Trinity is the Son incarnated and became in Hypostatic Union, a complete man. Abba Dionysius testified concerning these things using many testimonies from the Old and the New Testaments and he sent this letter with two priests of the church scholars.

Thirteen bishops and the two priests assembled in that council. They brought that Paul and asked him about the heresy that he was teaching. He declared it to them and did not deny anything. They debated the matter with him and read to him the letter of Abba Dionysius and made him listen to what the Apostles said about the Lord Christ the Word of God that He is, "The brightness of His glory. And the express image of His person." (Hebrews 1:3) But he did not accept their words, and he would not turn from his infidel opinion. They excommunicated him, and all those who believed his words, and they exiled him. The fathers put forth the Canons, which are still in the hands of the believers who follow them to this day.

The blessings of their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Theophilus and his wife in Fayyum, was martyred, in the days of Emperor Diocletian the infidel.

Some brought accusation against them before the Governor of being Christians. The Governor brought them and questioned them. They confessed our Lord Christ, to Him is the glory, before him. He commanded that a deep pit be dug for them, that they be cast into it, and covered by stones. They did so and St. Theophilus and his wife received the crown of martyrdom.

Their intercession be for us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Departure of the Great St. John Colobos (the Short)

On this day, the great light and saint, the hegumen Abba John (Yoannis) Colobos (the Short), departed. He was a native of Betsa in upper Egypt and he had one brother. His parents were righteous and God-fearing people, rich in faith and good deeds.

When he was 8 years old, his heart turned away from the futility of this world, its lusts and its glory, and he desired the monastic life. The grace of God moved him to go to the desert of Scete and there he came upon a tried and holy man whose name was Abba Pemwah from El-Bahnasa.

John asked Abba Pemwah to allow him to stay with him. The old man answered, trying him, "My son, you cannot stay with us for this is a very hard desert and those who dwell in it eat from the work of their hands, besides observing many fasts, prayers, and sleeping on the floor and many other forms of asceticism. Go back to the world and live in the fear of God." Abba John told him, "Do not send me away, for God's sake, because I came to be in your obedience and prayers. If you accept me, I believe that God will make your heart well-pleased with me."

Abba Pemwah was in the habit of not doing anything hastily. He asked the Lord Christ to reveal to him the matter of this young man. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "Accept him, for he shall become a chosen vessel." Abba Pemwah brought him and he shaved the hair of his head. He laid out the garb of the monk, and he prayed over it for three days and three nights and when he put the garb on him, he saw an angel making the sign of the Cross over it.

Saint John started his monastic life with great asceticism and splendid works. One day Abba Pemwah wanted to test him, so he expelled him from his cell saying, "I cannot live with you." Abba John stayed out by the door of his cell for seven days. Every day Abba Pemwah went out and smote him with a palm branch and Abba John bowed down before him saying, "I have sinned." On the seventh day, the old man went out to go to the church and he saw seven angels with seven crowns placing them on the head of Abba John. Since that day, he was held by him in honor and reverence.

One day Abba Pemwah found a piece of dry wood and gave it to Abba John and said to him,

"Take this wood, plant and water it." St. John obeyed and went on watering it twice a day even though the water was about 12 miles from where they lived. After three years, that piece of wood sprouted and grew into a fruitful tree. Abba Pemwah took some of that fruit and went around to all the elder monks saying, "Take, eat from the fruit of obedience." This tree still exists in its place in his monastery.

Abba Pemwah fell sick for 12 years and Abba John ministered unto him all this time during which he never heard from his teacher that he fell short in his service. Abba Pemwah was an experienced old man who had been tried much, and sickness had emaciated him until he became like a piece of dry wood, so that he would be a chosen offering.

When Abba Pemwah was about to die, he gathered together the elder monks and he held the hand of Abba John and gave him to them saying, "Take him and keep him, for he is an angel, not a man." He commanded Abba John to stay in the place where he had planted the tree. After that Abba John's older brother came to the monastery and was ordained a monk with him. He also became an honorable monk.

It happened when the father the Patriarch Abba Theophilus was ordaining Abba John hegumen and abbot over his church, and as he placed his hand over his head, a voice from heaven was heard by the people present saying, "Axios, Axios, Axios (That is to say he is worthy)." When this saint consecrated the offering, he was able to know those who were worthy to partake of it and those who were not worthy.

Abba Theophilus the Patriarch built a church for the Three Young Men in Alexandria, and he wished to bring their bodies and place them in it. He brought Abba John and asked him to travel to Babylon, and to bring the holy bodies. After much forebearing, Abba John accepted to go on this mission. When he left the Patriarch, a cloud carried him away to Babylon. He entered the city and saw its monuments, rivers, and palaces and found the bodies of the saints. When he started moving them from their place, a voice came out from the holy bodies and said to him, "This is the Will of God that we do not leave this place until the day of the Resurrection. Nevertheless, because of the love of Abba Theophilus the Patriarch, and your labor, too, you should inform the Patriarch to gather the people in the church and to put oil in the lamps without lighting them and we will appear in the church and a sign will be made manifest to you."

Then Abba John left and went back to Alexandria and told the Patriarch what the saints had said. It happened when the Patriarch and the people were in the church, the lamps were lit up suddenly and they all glorified the Lord.

One day, a monk came into the cell of Abba John. He found him lying down with angels waving their wings over him.

Later on, the Berbers attacked the desert of Scete and he left it. When he was asked why he left, he replied that he did not leave because he was afraid of death, but because he feared a Berber would slay him and go to hell, for though he is against his worship, he is his brother in form. Then he went to the mountain of Abba Anthony on the Red Sea. There he dwelt by the side of a village and God sent him a believer who served him.

When the Lord wished to grant him rest and to end his strife in this world, He sent him His two righteous saints Abba Macarius and Abba Anthony to comfort him and to inform him about his departure. On the eve of Sunday, he fell sick and sent his attendant to bring him something from the village. The angels and the host of saints came and received his pure soul and took it up to heaven.

At that time, his servant came back and saw the soul of the saint surrounded by the host of saints and angels singing before them. Before them all, there was one shining like the sun and singing. The servant marvelled at this magnificent sight. An angel came to him and told him the name of each one of the saints. Then the servant asked the angel, "Who is this one in front of them all, who is shining like the sun?" The angel replied, "This is Abba Anthony, the father of all the monks."

When the servant went into the cell, he found the body of the saint kneeling to the ground, as he had given up his soul while kneeling. The attendant wept sorrowfully over him and went in a hurry to the people of the village and told them what had happened. They came and carried his holy body with great honor. When they brought him into the village, great wonders and miracles were performed through his body.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-First Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. *The Commemoration of the Theotokos.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Relocation of the Body of Lazarus.*
3. *The Departure of Joel the Prophet.*
4. *The Departure of St. Freig (Abba Tegi, Anba Roweiss).*

1. On this day we celebrate the commemoration of our holy lady, the Mother of Light, the Virgin St. Mary. Salutation to you O Mary, the Mother of God, the eternal Word, because through you was the salvation of the human race.

Her intercession be for us. Amen.

2. On this day also we celebrate the commemoration of the relocation of the body of Lazarus, whom our Lord raised from the dead. It was relocated by one of the Christian Emperors to Constantinople. When he heard that the body was on the island of Cyprus, he sent some of the trusted bishops to the island where they found the holy body laid in a sarcophagus buried under ground.

The inscription on the coffin read, "This is the body of Lazarus, the friend of the Lord Christ, whom He raised from the dead, after he had been buried for four days." They rejoiced at it and carried it to the city of Constantinople. The priests went out and received the body with great honor and veneration, and with prayers and incense. They laid it in a sanctuary until they built a

church for it and then relocated the body to the church where they celebrated a holy day for him.
His intercession be for us. Amen.

3. Today also, the great Prophet Joel, the son of Phanuel, from the tribe of Reuben, departed. He prophesied in the days of Abya the son of Jeroboam the son of Solomon the King. He taught the people and admonished them and prophesied concerning the dwelling of God in Zion, His passion, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the comforter upon the holy Apostles on the day of Pentecost. He prophesied that their sons and daughters will prophesy and their young men will see visions and their old men will dream dreams.

This prophet prophesied also concerning the going forth of the law of the Gospel from Zion when he said, "A fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord and water the valley of Acacias." (Joel 3:18) And he revealed that wars will break out on the earth after the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. He spoke also concerning the day of Resurrection more than a thousand years before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "The sun and the moon will grow dark and the stars will diminish their brightness." (Joel 3:15) He pleased God and departed in peace.
His prayers be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also in the year 1405 A.D. (1121 of martyrs) St. Freig, who is known as Abba Roweiss, departed. This saint was from a village called Miniet-Yamin (about 130 kilometers north of Cairo). His father's name was Isaac and his mother's name was Sarah. When he was born, they called him Freig. He worked with his father in farming and he had a small camel on which he carried salt and sold it. He called the camel "Roweiss" (i.e. small head). The camel used to put his head against his cheek as if he was kissing him. Because of his humility, he called himself after his camel.

Persecutions befell the Christians, so he came to Cairo and not having a house or shelter, he went from one place to another. He spent most of his nights in prayers and wailing. He did not own a coat or any clothes or a cover for his head. He was naked except for that with which he covered his loins, and his head was uncovered. He looked like the hermits of the desert; his eyes were red because of much weeping and he never cut the hair of his head. He was a man of few words - once an evil man smote him severely but he did not open his mouth. St. Marcus El-Antoni was present at that time and he rebuked the evil man.

During the later part of his life, he used to say, "O Virgin, take me because my burden is heavy." He meant the burden of carrying the sin of the people for which he often rebuked them though they did not listen to him.

He lived in the days of the holy father Pope Mattheos, 87th Patriarch, and St. Marcus El-Antoni, in the days of El-Sultan El-Zaher Barkuk.

He shut himself up in a small storeroom at the place of his disciple Michael the builder, in Meniet Syreg. He stayed in that place for 9 years until his departure on the twenty-first of Babah of the year 1121 of the martyrs. He was buried in the church of the Virgin, in Deir El-Khandaq. He

performed many wonders such as healing the sick, prophesying and saving many from their troubles.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Second Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Martyrdom of Saint Luke the Evangelist

On this day, St. Luke the Evangelist and physician, was martyred. He was one of the 70 disciples mentioned in the tenth chapter of his gospel. He accompanied the Apostles Peter and Paul and wrote their account.

After the martyrdom of these two Apostles, he went through Rome preaching. Those who worshipped idols and the Jews in Rome agreed among themselves and went to Nero the Emperor accusing St. Luke of attracting many men to his teaching with his sorcery. Nero commanded that St. Luke be brought before him. When St. Luke knew that, he gave all the books he had to a fisherman and told him, "Take these and keep them for they will be useful to you and will show you God's way."

When St. Luke came before Nero the Emperor, the Emperor asked him, "How long will you lead the people astray?" St. Luke replied, "I am not a magician, but I am an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God." The Emperor commanded his men to cut off his right hand saying, "Cut off this hand which wrote the books." The saint replied to him, "We do not fear death, nor the departure from this world, and to realize the power of my Master." He took up his severed hand and made it reattach to its proper place, then he separated it. Those who were present marvelled and the head of the Emperor's cabinet and his wife believed as well as many others and it was said that they numbered 276. The Emperor wrote their decree and ordered that their heads be cut off together with that of the Apostle St. Luke; thus their martyrdom was completed.

They placed the body of the saint in a hair sack and cast it in the sea. By God's will, the waves of the sea brought it to an island. A believer found it, took it and buried it with great honor.

This saint wrote the Gospel bearing his name and the "Acts of the Apostles" addressing his words to his disciple Theophilus who was a gentile.

His blessings be upon us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Third Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. *The Departure of St. Yousab, 52nd Pope of Alexandria.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth.*

1. On this day of the year 841 A.D., the holy father Abba Yousab (Joseph), 52nd Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was the son of one of the rich nobles of Menuf. When his parents departed and left him, certain believers raised him. When he grew up he gave most of his money as alms, then went to the desert of St. Macarius and became monk with a holy old man.

When Abba Marcus II became the 49th Pope of Alexandria and heard about Yousab's conduct, he called him. When Yousab wished to go back to the desert, Abba Marcus ordained him a priest and sent him back. He stayed in the desert for a period of time till the departure of Abba Simon II, 51st Pope.

The papal throne remained unoccupied until some of the bishops agreed with some of the laymen of Alexandria to choose a married man who had bribed them. When the rest of the bishops knew that, they detested their action and prayed to God to guide them to whom He choose. The Lord guided them to Abba Yousab and they remembered his good conduct and management while he was with the father Abba Marcus.

They sent some of the bishops to bring him. They prayed to God saying, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, if Thou have chosen this father for this honor, let the sign be that we find his door open upon our arrival." When they arrived they found his door open, for he was bidding farewell to some visiting monks. When he was about to close his door, he saw them coming, so he received them with joy and welcomed them to his cell. When they entered, they seized him and told him, "Axios" (i.e He is worthy). He cried out and wept. He started to reveal to them his shortcomings and sins. But they did not accept his excuses and they took him to Alexandria and placed their hands over him.

When he sat upon the throne of St. Mark, he greatly cared for the churches. He bought, with what remained of his own income, properties and bestowed them on the churches. He continually taught the people and did not neglect any of them.

However, Satan became envious and brought much sorrow upon him. The bishops of Tanes and Miser (Cairo), angered the people of their parishes (because of the matter of dues). Abba Yousab condemned their actions and asked them often to be merciful to their flocks, but they would not accept his behest. Their flocks cried out to him saying, "If you force us to obey them, we shall turn to another denomination." He exerted a great effort to reconcile between them, but it was in vain. He called the bishops from their parishes and told them about these two bishops and repudiated their works. The bishops excommunicated them.

When they were excommunicated, they went to the Governor in Cairo and brought a false

accusation against this father. The Governor sent his brother, the Prince, with some soldiers to bring the Patriarch to him. When they came to the Patriarch, the Governor's brother drew his sword to kill him. But the Lord thrust aside his hand and the sword struck a pillar and was broken. The Prince became furiously angry, so he drew his dagger and drove it with all his might into the side of this father. The dagger did not do any harm to him other than cutting his apparel, and it did not reach his flesh.

The Prince realized that the Patriarch had divine grace, and heavenly protection guarded him from being slain. He respected him and brought him to his brother and told him about what had happened. The Governor also respected and feared him. The Governor asked the Patriarch about the accusation that was made against him. The Patriarch proved to him the falsehoods of these accusations and informed him about the matter of the two bishops. The Governor was convinced and honored the Patriarch and ordered that no one should disobey him in any ordination or removal of any bishops or in any other work concerning the church.

He continually preached to the sinners and admonished the disobedient, establishing the people in the Orthodox faith which he had received from his fathers. He interpreted to them what was hard for them to understand, guarding them with his teachings and prayers. God made manifest great signs and wonders through this holy father.

Having finished this pleasing life to God, he departed in peace after having sat on the throne of St. Mark 19 years and having been a monk for 39 years, before which he had lived about 20 years.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, who became a martyr in the days of Diocletian and Maximianus. He endured many severe tortures for the sake of his faith in Jesus, to Whom is the Glory, until finally they cut off his neck, and he received the crown of eternal glory.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. The Departure of the Righteous Father Abba Hilarion.

2. The Martyrdom of the Sts. Paul, Longinus and Deenah (Zena).

1. On this day in the year 472 A.D. the righteous father, Saint Hilarion, the Anchorite, departed. He was a native of Gaza, the son of pagan parents. They taught him the Greek literature and culture. He excelled and surpassed his peers, but he wished still to master it. Since there was no one in his city who could help him to fulfill his desire, he went to the city of Alexandria and joined its school. There he acquired many kinds of knowledge.

The divine zeal moved him to learn also the Christian doctrines and books. He asked for the books of the church and read them, and Abba Alexandros explained to him what was difficult for

him to understand. In a short time Abba Hilarion believed in the Lord Christ, to Whom is the Glory, and the father, the Patriarch, baptized him and he received the Divine Grace.

Abba Hilarion stayed with Abba Alexandros for a short time, then went to the great St. Anthony. When Abba Hilarion saw St. Anthony, he marvelled at his profound reverence and his fair appearance that was shining with the grace of the Holy Spirit. His heart was deeply moved and he desired to join the monastic life. He took off his worldly clothes and put on the monastic garb. He started practicing the monastic works with a diligent devotion, following the footsteps of his teacher.

Shortly after, he learned that his parents had died, so he went back to his city and took whatever they had left and gave it to the poor and needy. Then he joined one of the monasteries of Syria and followed the path of asceticism with great devotion. He fasted for the whole week, eating grass and legumes. God enlightened his mind, gave him the gift of prophecy, and of working signs.

Later on, St. Epiphanius became a monk in the same monastery, and the abbot handed him to St. Hilarion. St. Hilarion taught him the ways of the monastic life and the doctrines of the church and prophesied that St. Epiphanius would become the bishop of Cyprus.

The days of this father were 80 years: 10 years were spent in the house of his father, 7 years in the city of Alexandria and 63 years in worship. He pleased God and departed at a good old age. St. John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth) praised him in some of his articles and St. Basil mentioned him in some of his homilies.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of Sts. Paul, Longinus and Deenah (Zena).

Their intercession be for us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. The Departure of the Saints Apollo and Abib.

2. The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of Saint Julius El-Akfahsee (Aqfahs).

1. On this day, the righteous saints Abba Apollo, who was like the angels, and Abba Abib, the pious worshipper, departed.

Abba Apollo was born in the city of Akhmim. His father's name was Amani (Hamai) and his mother's name was Eyse (Isa). They were righteous before God, walking in His way, and loving to the strangers and saints.

They did not have a son. One night Abba Apollo's mother saw in a dream a shining man, who had a tree with him. He planted it in her house and it grew and bore fruit. He told her, "Whosoever shall eat of this fruit shall live forever." She ate from it and found it sweet and she said, "I wonder if I would have a fruit?" When she awoke from her sleep, she told her husband about what she had seen. He told her that he had seen the same vision, and they glorified the Lord. They added to their works of righteousness and to their striving. They fasted for two days on only bread and salt. After a while she conceived, and she prayed fervently until the child was born. They called him Apollo and they advanced in their piety.

When the boy had grown up and studied theology, he longed for the monastic life. This longing grew when he met a friend called Abib. They went together to one of the monasteries and became monks there. They practiced many ascetic works. They lived a good life that was pleasing to God.

The saint Abba Abib departed on the 25th of Babah.

Thereupon St. Apollo went to Ablug Mount and many gathered around him. He taught them the fear of God and the acceptable worship. On the 25th of Babah they celebrated the commemoration of the saint Abba Abib to fulfill the saying of the Holy Bible, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." (Psalm 112:6) Abba Apollo lived for many years after that and he had monasteries and many brethren.

He was a contemporary of St. Macarius the Great who, when heard about St. Apollo, rejoiced. St. Macarius wrote him a letter to comfort him and the brothers and to confirm them in their obedience to the Lord. Abba Apollo knew by the spirit that St. Macarius was writing them a letter. There were many around him speaking the Word of God. He said to them "Listen my brethren, behold the great Abba Macarius is writing to us a letter full of comforting and spiritual teachings." When the brother arrived with the letter, they received him with joy then read it and their hearts were consoled.

St. Apollo was the one who went to St. Ammonius and saw the holy woman who stood in the middle of the fire but did not burn.

When the Lord Christ wished to relieve him from the labor of this world, he departed in peace.
His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also was the consecration of the church of St. Julius El-Akfahsee (Aqfahs). This saint was martyred in the city of Tewa. This took place after the perishing of Diocletian and during the reign of Constantine, a short while before he was baptized. When Constantine was baptized, the Christian kingdom spread and the churches were built in the names of the martyrs that were slain by the infidel Emperors.

Emperor Constantine heard the reports of St. Julius and how the Lord had chosen St. Julius and preserved him along with his men to care for the bodies of the martyrs. He carried their bodies, shrouded them, wrote their biographies and how they were finally martyred. He sent each martyr to his home town.

The Emperor praised the strife of this saint and blessed his work. He sent much money to Egypt, and commanded that a church be built for him in Alexandria. The church was built and his body was transferred to it. The church was consecrated by the Patriarch Abba Alexandros with some bishops. A feast was arranged on this day.

His intercession be for us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. The Martyrdom of Saint Timon the Apostle.

2. The Commemoration of the Seven Martyrs on the Mount of St. Antonius.

1. On this day, St. Timon the Apostle, was martyred. He was one of the 70 Apostles, who were chosen and distinguished by the Lord. This saint had the gifts and the ability to heal the sick and to cast out devils. He followed the Lord until His Ascension into heaven and after that, he continued to minister unto the disciples till the grace of the Holy Spirit came upon them all. The Disciples elected him one of the Seven Deacons who were appointed to serve tables. The Bible testified that they were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. (Acts 6:2-6)

After he had remained in the deaconate for a period of time, they laid the hands on him, a bishop of the city of western Besra, in Greece. He preached the Lord Christ to them and baptized many of the Greeks and the Jews. The Governor seized him, and inflicted on him many tortures. He finally burned him and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the Seven Martyrs. They were martyred by the hand of the Barbers on the mount of the great Saint Abba Antonius, the father of all monks.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Martyrdom of the Righteous Father Saint Macarius

Bishop of Edkow (Tkoou)

On this day, the blessed father St. Macarius, Bishop of Edkow, was martyred. In this holy man, the words of David the Prophet were fulfilled saying, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law he meditates day and night." (Psalms 1:1-2) This saint kept the commandments of His Master; traded with his talents and gained. Many were the signs and wonders God did through his hands.

In the city of Edkow, every time he went up on the pulpit to preach to the people, he wept. When one of his disciples asked him the reason for his weeping, he answered that he saw the sins of the people and their ungodly works. On another occasion he saw our Lord Christ at the altar, and the angels bringing unto Him the works of the people, one after the other. Anba Macarius heard a voice saying, "Why, bishop, are you slack in preaching to your people?" He replied, "My Lord, they do not accept my words." So the Lord said to him, "It is meet for the bishop to preach to the people and if they do not accept his words, their blood be upon their own heads."

He was invited to go to the council of Chalcedon with Abba Dioscorus. On arriving at the royal palace, the guards prevented him from entering because of his modest clothes, until Abba Dioscorus told them that he was the bishop of Edkow. When he had gone in and heard what the infidels were saying about the Lord Christ, he excommunicated the Emperor in the council. He was ready to deliver himself to death for the sake of keeping the Orthodox faith. They exiled him with Abba Dioscorus to the island of Gagra. From there Abba Dioscorus sent him with a believing merchant to Alexandria saying to him, "There you have a crown of martyrdom awaiting you."

Shortly after, he arrived in the city of Alexandria, the messenger of the Emperor arrived with the new Chalcedonian creed which stated the two natures of Christ. The Emperor had commanded him saying that, "He who writes his name first on this creed will be the Patriarch of the city." In the city, the head of the priests was Brotarios. He took the paper to write his name first but St. Macarius the Bishop reminded him of what Abba Dioscorus had told him before he went to the council saying, "You shall possess my church after me." Brotarios remembered that and refrained from writing.

When the Emperor's messenger knew that the Bishop disagreed with the creed of the Emperor and did not write his name also, he jumped over the Bishop and kicked him. St. Macarius died on the spot and thus received the crown of martyrdom. The believers took his holy body and buried it with the bodies of St. John the Baptist and Elisha the Prophet. That fulfilled what these two saints had told this father, the Bishop, in a vision, that his body would be with their bodies. He departed to the Lord Christ winning the crown of glory.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

Martyrdom of the Sts. Marcian (Marcianus) and Mercurius

On this day of the year 351 A.D., the great saints Marcianus and Mercurius became martyrs. They were disciples of St. Paul the Martyr, Patriarch of Constantinople. When Emperor Constantine II, the son of Constantine the Great, adopted the belief of Arius, Abba Paul the Patriarch opposed him - so he exiled him to Armenia, where he was killed by strangulation.

These two saints cried over St. Paul on the day he was exiled. They characterized the Emperor, saying that he was a follower of the belief of Arius the Infidel. A certain Arian man made an

accusation against them to the Emperor when he was on one of the plantations. He had them brought to him and ordered them slain with the sword. They were killed and buried, and their bodies remained there until the time of St. John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth). When he heard their history, he sent and brought their honorable bodies to the city of Constantinople. He built a church for them and transferred their bodies to it and celebrated a feast for them.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Martyrdom of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica

On this day, the great St. Demetrius, was martyred, in the days of Maximianus the Emperor. He was a pious Christian young man from the city of Thessalonica. He learned various subjects, and most of all, those of the Orthodox Church. He taught and preached diligently in the Name of the Lord Christ. He converted many to the faith.

Some made accusations against him to Emperor Maximianus who ordered that he be brought to him. It happened that when he came before the Emperor, a wrestler whose body was strong and huge, and who surpassed the people of his time in strength, was present. The Emperor loved this man and was proud of him to the point that he specified a large sum of money for whoever could vanquish him. A Christian man whose name was Nostor came from among the people who were present at that time and asked St. Demetrius to pray for him and to make the sign of the Cross with his holy hand over his body. The saint prayed and made over him the sign of the Holy Cross which makes those who believed therein invincible.

Nostor went and asked to fight that fighter about whom the Emperor was boasting. Nostor fought him and vanquished him. The Emperor was very sorry and ashamed. The Emperor wondered how Nostor conquered him. He asked the soldiers for the secret behind that. They told him that a man called Demetrius prayed over him and made the sign of the Cross over his face.

The Emperor became angry with the saint and ordered that he be beaten until he offered incense to his idols and worshipped them. When St. Demetrius disobeyed them the Emperor ordered his men to thrust spears at him until his body would be torn to pieces and he would die. They told the saint that to frighten him and make him turn away from his faith in the Lord Christ and worship the idols. He told them, "Do whatever you please, for I will neither worship nor offer incense except to my Lord Christ the True God." The soldiers drove the spears into him until he delivered his pure soul.

When they threw away his holy body, some Christians took it and laid it in a coffin made out of marbles. The body remained hidden until the end of the days of persecution, when the one who had hidden it revealed it. A great church was built for him in Thessalonica, and they laid his body therein.

Many great signs were made by his name. Each day, sweet oil was distilled from his body which cured those who used it with faith, especially on the day of his feast. On his feast day, the oil flowed in a larger quantity than on any other day, and it dripped from the walls of the church and the pillars. Though the gathering was huge, they all received their share, from what they took off the walls and put in their containers. Those of the righteous priests who had seen this told and testified to that.

His intercession be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of St. Mark the Evangelist and the Appearance of His Holy Head.

2. The Departure of St. Ibrahim (Ibrahim) the Hermit.

1. On this day is the commemoration of the consecration of the church of the pure St. Mark the Evangelist, the founder of the church in Egypt, and the appearance of his holy head in the city of Alexandria.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the great saint, the worshipper and fighter St. Ibrahim, the hermit, departed. This father was from the city of Menuf, a son of rich, Christian parents. When he grew up he longed for the monastic life. He went to Akhmeem and from there he came to St. Pachomius, who put the monastic garb on him. St. Ibrahim exhausted his body with ascetic practices and worship. He stayed with St. Pachomius for 23 years, then he wished for the solitary life in some of the caves. St. Pachomius allowed him to do so.

He made nets to catch fish. One of the laymen used to come, take the work of his hands to sell it, buy beans for him, and give the rest of the money as alms on his behalf. He led this life for 13th years; his food each evening was a handful of salted beans soaked in water. Because the apparel that he went forth with from the monastery was worn out, he covered himself with a piece of sackcloth (Khaish). He went to the monastery every two or three years to partake of the Holy Communion.

The devil fought with him much at the beginning of his dwelling in that cave. They disturbed him with strange voices and terrified him with fearful images. But with the grace of God he used to overcome them and drive them away.

When his departure drew near, he sent the lay brother who used to serve him to the monastery to bring Abba Tadros, the disciple of St. Pachomius. When Abba Tadros came to him, he bowed down and asked him to remember him in his prayers. Then St. Ibrahim rose up and prayed with St. Tadros. He laid down facing the east and gave up his soul. When St. Tadros sent the news to

the monastery the monks came and carried him. Then they all prayed over him, were blessed by him and laid him with the bodies of the saints.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-First Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. *The Commemoration of the Theotokos.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Relocation of the Body of Lazarus.*
3. *The Departure of Joel the Prophet.*
4. *The Departure of St. Freig (Abba Tegi, Anba Roweiss).*

1. On this day we celebrate the commemoration of our holy lady, the Mother of Light, the Virgin St. Mary. Salutation to you O Mary, the Mother of God, the eternal Word, because through you was the salvation of the human race.

Her intercession be for us. Amen.

2. On this day also we celebrate the commemoration of the relocation of the body of Lazarus, whom our Lord raised from the dead. It was relocated by one of the Christian Emperors to Constantinople. When he heard that the body was on the island of Cyprus, he sent some of the trusted bishops to the island where they found the holy body laid in a sarcophagus buried under ground.

The inscription on the coffin read, "This is the body of Lazarus, the friend of the Lord Christ, whom He raised from the dead, after he had been buried for four days." They rejoiced at it and carried it to the city of Constantinople. The priests went out and received the body with great honor and veneration, and with prayers and incense. They laid it in a sanctuary until they built a church for it and then relocated the body to the church where they celebrated a holy day for him.

His intercession be for us. Amen.

3. Today also, the great Prophet Joel, the son of Phanuel, from the tribe of Reuben, departed. He prophesied in the days of Abya the son of Jeroboam the son of Solomon the King. He taught the people and admonished them and prophesied concerning the dwelling of God in Zion, His passion, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the comforter upon the holy Apostles on the day of Pentecost. He prophesied that their sons and daughters will prophesy and their young men will see visions and their old men will dream dreams.

This prophet prophesied also concerning the going forth of the law of the Gospel from Zion when he said, "A fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord and water the valley of Acacias." (Joel 3:18) And he revealed that wars will break out on the earth after the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. He spoke also concerning the day of Resurrection more than a thousand years before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "The sun and the moon will grow dark and the stars will diminish their brightness." (Joel 3:15) He pleased God and departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also in the year 1405 A.D. (1121 of martyrs) St. Freig, who is known as Abba Roweiss, departed. This saint was from a village called Miniet-Yamin (about 130 kilometers north of Cairo). His father's name was Isaac and his mother's name was Sarah. When he was born, they called him Freig. He worked with his father in farming and he had a small camel on which he carried salt and sold it. He called the camel "Roweiss" (i.e. small head). The camel used to put his head against his cheek as if he was kissing him. Because of his humility, he called himself after his camel.

Persecutions befell the Christians, so he came to Cairo and not having a house or shelter, he went from one place to another. He spent most of his nights in prayers and wailing. He did not own a coat or any clothes or a cover for his head. He was naked except for that with which he covered his loins, and his head was uncovered. He looked like the hermits of the desert; his eyes were red because of much weeping and he never cut the hair of his head. He was a man of few words - once an evil man smote him severely but he did not open his mouth. St. Marcus El-Antoni was present at that time and he rebuked the evil man.

During the later part of his life, he used to say, "O Virgin, take me because my burden is heavy." He meant the burden of carrying the sin of the people for which he often rebuked them though they did not listen to him.

He lived in the days of the holy father Pope Mattheos, 87th Patriarch, and St. Marcus El-Antoni, in the days of El-Sultan El-Zaher Barkuk.

He shut himself up in a small storeroom at the place of his disciple Michael the builder, in Meniet Syreg. He stayed in that place for 9 years until his departure on the twenty-first of Babah of the year 1121 of the martyrs. He was buried in the church of the Virgin, in Deir El-Khandaq. He performed many wonders such as healing the sick, prophesying and saving many from their troubles.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Second Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Martyrdom of Saint Luke the Evangelist

On this day, St. Luke the Evangelist and physician, was martyred. He was one of the 70 disciples mentioned in the tenth chapter of his gospel. He accompanied the Apostles Peter and Paul and wrote their account.

After the martyrdom of these two Apostles, he went through Rome preaching. Those who worshipped idols and the Jews in Rome agreed among themselves and went to Nero the Emperor accusing St. Luke of attracting many men to his teaching with his sorcery. Nero commanded that St. Luke be brought before him. When St. Luke knew that, he gave all the books he had to a

fisherman and told him, "Take these and keep them for they will be useful to you and will show you God's way."

When St. Luke came before Nero the Emperor, the Emperor asked him, "How long will you lead the people astray?" St. Luke replied, "I am not a magician, but I am an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God." The Emperor commanded his men to cut off his right hand saying, "Cut off this hand which wrote the books." The saint replied to him, "We do not fear death, nor the departure from this world, and to realize the power of my Master." He took up his severed hand and made it reattach to its proper place, then he separated it. Those who were present marvelled and the head of the Emperor's cabinet and his wife believed as well as many others and it was said that they numbered 276. The Emperor wrote their decree and ordered that their heads be cut off together with that of the Apostle St. Luke; thus their martyrdom was completed.

They placed the body of the saint in a hair sack and cast it in the sea. By God's will, the waves of the sea brought it to an island. A believer found it, took it and buried it with great honor.

This saint wrote the Gospel bearing his name and the "Acts of the Apostles" addressing his words to his disciple Theophilus who was a gentile.

His blessings be upon us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Third Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

- 1. The Departure of St. Yousab, 52nd Pope of Alexandria.*
- 2. The Martyrdom of St. Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth.*

1. On this day of the year 841 A.D., the holy father Abba Yousab (Joseph), 52nd Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was the son of one of the rich nobles of Menuf. When his parents departed and left him, certain believers raised him. When he grew up he gave most of his money as alms, then went to the desert of St. Macarius and became monk with a holy old man.

When Abba Marcus II became the 49th Pope of Alexandria and heard about Yousab's conduct, he called him. When Yousab wished to go back to the desert, Abba Marcus ordained him a priest and sent him back. He stayed in the desert for a period of time till the departure of Abba Simon II, 51st Pope.

The papal throne remained unoccupied until some of the bishops agreed with some of the laymen of Alexandria to choose a married man who had bribed them. When the rest of the bishops knew that, they detested their action and prayed to God to guide them to whom He choose. The Lord guided them to Abba Yousab and they remembered his good conduct and management while he was with the father Abba Marcus.

They sent some of the bishops to bring him. They prayed to God saying, "We beseech Thee, O

Lord, if Thou have chosen this father for this honor, let the sign be that we find his door open upon our arrival." When they arrived they found his door open, for he was bidding farewell to some visiting monks. When he was about to close his door, he saw them coming, so he received them with joy and welcomed them to his cell. When they entered, they seized him and told him, "Axios" (i.e He is worthy). He cried out and wept. He started to reveal to them his shortcomings and sins. But they did not accept his excuses and they took him to Alexandria and placed their hands over him.

When he sat upon the throne of St. Mark, he greatly cared for the churches. He bought, with what remained of his own income, properties and bestowed them on the churches. He continually taught the people and did not neglect any of them.

However, Satan became envious and brought much sorrow upon him. The bishops of Tanes and Miser (Cairo), angered the people of their parishes (because of the matter of dues). Abba Yousab condemned their actions and asked them often to be merciful to their flocks, but they would not accept his behest. Their flocks cried out to him saying, "If you force us to obey them, we shall turn to another denomination." He exerted a great effort to reconcile between them, but it was in vain. He called the bishops from their parishes and told them about these two bishops and repudiated their works. The bishops excommunicated them.

When they were excommunicated, they went to the Governor in Cairo and brought a false accusation against this father. The Governor sent his brother, the Prince, with some soldiers to bring the Patriarch to him. When they came to the Patriarch, the Governor's brother drew his sword to kill him. But the Lord thrust aside his hand and the sword struck a pillar and was broken. The Prince became furiously angry, so he drew his dagger and drove it with all his might into the side of this father. The dagger did not do any harm to him other than cutting his apparel, and it did not reach his flesh.

The Prince realized that the Patriarch had divine grace, and heavenly protection guarded him from being slain. He respected him and brought him to his brother and told him about what had happened. The Governor also respected and feared him. The Governor asked the Patriarch about the accusation that was made against him. The Patriarch proved to him the falsehoods of these accusations and informed him about the matter of the two bishops. The Governor was convinced and honored the Patriarch and ordered that no one should disobey him in any ordination or removal of any bishops or in any other work concerning the church.

He continually preached to the sinners and admonished the disobedient, establishing the people in the Orthodox faith which he had received from his fathers. He interpreted to them what was hard for them to understand, guarding them with his teachings and prayers. God made manifest great signs and wonders through this holy father.

Having finished this pleasing life to God, he departed in peace after having sat on the throne of St. Mark 19 years and having been a monk for 39 years, before which he had lived about 20 years.
His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, who became a martyr in the days of Diocletian and Maximianus. He endured many severe tortures for the sake of his faith in Jesus, to Whom is the Glory, until finally they cut off his neck, and he received the crown of eternal glory.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. The Departure of the Righteous Father Abba Hilarion.

2. The Martyrdom of the Sts. Paul, Longinus and Deenah (Zena).

1. On this day in the year 472 A.D. the righteous father, Saint Hilarion, the Anchorite, departed. He was a native of Gaza, the son of pagan parents. They taught him the Greek literature and culture. He excelled and surpassed his peers, but he wished still to master it. Since there was no one in his city who could help him to fulfill his desire, he went to the city of Alexandria and joined its school. There he acquired many kinds of knowledge.

The divine zeal moved him to learn also the Christian doctrines and books. He asked for the books of the church and read them, and Abba Alexandros explained to him what was difficult for him to understand. In a short time Abba Hilarion believed in the Lord Christ, to Whom is the Glory, and the father, the Patriarch, baptized him and he received the Divine Grace.

Abba Hilarion stayed with Abba Alexandros for a short time, then went to the great St. Anthony. When Abba Hilarion saw St. Anthony, he marvelled at his profound reverence and his fair appearance that was shining with the grace of the Holy Spirit. His heart was deeply moved and he desired to join the monastic life. He took off his worldly clothes and put on the monastic garb. He started practicing the monastic works with a diligent devotion, following the footsteps of his teacher.

Shortly after, he learned that his parents had died, so he went back to his city and took whatever they had left and gave it to the poor and needy. Then he joined one of the monasteries of Syria and followed the path of asceticism with great devotion. He fasted for the whole week, eating grass and legumes. God enlightened his mind, gave him the gift of prophecy, and of working signs.

Later on, St. Epiphanius became a monk in the same monastery, and the abbot handed him to St. Hilarion. St. Hilarion taught him the ways of the monastic life and the doctrines of the church and prophesied that St. Epiphanius would become the bishop of Cyprus.

The days of this father were 80 years: 10 years were spent in the house of his father, 7 years in the city of Alexandria and 63 years in worship. He pleased God and departed at a good old age. St.

John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth) praised him in some of his articles and St. Basil mentioned him in some of his homilies.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of Sts. Paul, Longinus and Deenah (Zena).

Their intercession be for us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. The Departure of the Saints Apollo and Abib.

2. The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of Saint Julius El-Akfahsee (Aqfahs).

1. On this day, the righteous saints Abba Apollo, who was like the angels, and Abba Abib, the pious worshipper, departed.

Abba Apollo was born in the city of Akhmim. His father's name was Amani (Hamai) and his mother's name was Eyse (Isa). They were righteous before God, walking in His way, and loving to the strangers and saints.

They did not have a son. One night Abba Apollo's mother saw in a dream a shining man, who had a tree with him. He planted it in her house and it grew and bore fruit. He told her, "Whosoever shall eat of this fruit shall live forever." She ate from it and found it sweet and she said, "I wonder if I would have a fruit?" When she awoke from her sleep, she told her husband about what she had seen. He told her that he had seen the same vision, and they glorified the Lord. They added to their works of righteousness and to their striving. They fasted for two days on only bread and salt. After a while she conceived, and she prayed fervently until the child was born. They called him Apollo and they advanced in their piety.

When the boy had grown up and studied theology, he longed for the monastic life. This longing grew when he met a friend called Abib. They went together to one of the monasteries and became monks there. They practiced many ascetic works. They lived a good life that was pleasing to God.

The saint Abba Abib departed on the 25th of Babah.

Thereupon St. Apollo went to Ablug Mount and many gathered around him. He taught them the fear of God and the acceptable worship. On the 25th of Babah they celebrated the commemoration of the saint Abba Abib to fulfill the saying of the Holy Bible, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." (Psalm 112:6) Abba Apollo lived for many years after that and he had monasteries and many brethren.

He was a contemporary of St. Macarius the Great who, when heard about St. Apollo, rejoiced.

St. Macarius wrote him a letter to comfort him and the brothers and to confirm them in their obedience to the Lord. Abba Apollo knew by the spirit that St. Macarius was writing them a letter. There were many around him speaking the Word of God. He said to them "Listen my brethren, behold the great Abba Macarius is writing to us a letter full of comforting and spiritual teachings." When the brother arrived with the letter, they received him with joy then read it and their hearts were consoled.

St. Apollo was the one who went to St. Ammonius and saw the holy woman who stood in the middle of the fire but did not burn.

When the Lord Christ wished to relieve him from the labor of this world, he departed in peace.
His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also was the consecration of the church of St. Julius El-Akfahsee (Aqfahs). This saint was martyred in the city of Tewa. This took place after the perishing of Diocletian and during the reign of Constantine, a short while before he was baptized. When Constantine was baptized, the Christian kingdom spread and the churches were built in the names of the martyrs that were slain by the infidel Emperors.

Emperor Constantine heard the reports of St. Julius and how the Lord had chosen St. Julius and preserved him along with his men to care for the bodies of the martyrs. He carried their bodies, shrouded them, wrote their biographies and how they were finally martyred. He sent each martyr to his home town.

The Emperor praised the strife of this saint and blessed his work. He sent much money to Egypt, and commanded that a church be built for him in Alexandria. The church was built and his body was transferred to it. The church was consecrated by the Patriarch Abba Alexandros with some bishops. A feast was arranged on this day.

His intercession be for us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

1. *The Martyrdom of Saint Timon the Apostle.*

2. *The Commemoration of the Seven Martyrs on the Mount of St. Antonius.*

1. On this day, St. Timon the Apostle, was martyred. He was one of the 70 Apostles, who were chosen and distinguished by the Lord. This saint had the gifts and the ability to heal the sick and to cast out devils. He followed the Lord until His Ascension into heaven and after that, he continued to minister unto the disciples till the grace of the Holy Spirit came upon them all. The Disciples elected him one of the Seven Deacons who were appointed to serve tables. The Bible testified that they were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. (Acts 6:2-6)

After he had remained in the deaconate for a period of time, they laid the hands on him, a bishop

of the city of western Besra, in Greece. He preached the Lord Christ to them and baptized many of the Greeks and the Jews. The Governor seized him, and inflicted on him many tortures. He finally burned him and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the Seven Martyrs. They were martyred by the hand of the Barbers on the mount of the great Saint Abba Antonius, the father of all monks.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

*The Martyrdom of the Righteous Father Saint Macarius
Bishop of Edkow (Tkoou)*

On this day, the blessed father St. Macarius, Bishop of Edkow, was martyred. In this holy man, the words of David the Prophet were fulfilled saying, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law he meditates day and night." (Psalms 1:1-2) This saint kept the commandments of His Master; traded with his talents and gained. Many were the signs and wonders God did through his hands.

In the city of Edkow, every time he went up on the pulpit to preach to the people, he wept. When one of his disciples asked him the reason for his weeping, he answered that he saw the sins of the people and their ungodly works. On another occasion he saw our Lord Christ at the altar, and the angels bringing unto Him the works of the people, one after the other. Anba Macarius heard a voice saying, "Why, bishop, are you slack in preaching to your people?" He replied, "My Lord, they do not accept my words." So the Lord said to him, "It is meet for the bishop to preach to the people and if they do not accept his words, their blood be upon their own heads."

He was invited to go to the council of Chalcedon with Abba Dioscorus. On arriving at the royal palace, the guards prevented him from entering because of his modest clothes, until Abba Dioscorus told them that he was the bishop of Edkow. When he had gone in and heard what the infidels were saying about the Lord Christ, he excommunicated the Emperor in the council. He was ready to deliver himself to death for the sake of keeping the Orthodox faith. They exiled him with Abba Dioscorus to the island of Gagra. From there Abba Dioscorus sent him with a believing merchant to Alexandria saying to him, "There you have a crown of martyrdom awaiting you."

Shortly after, he arrived in the city of Alexandria, the messenger of the Emperor arrived with the new Chalcedonian creed which stated the two natures of Christ. The Emperor had commanded him saying that, "He who writes his name first on this creed will be the Patriarch of the city." In the city, the head of the priests was Brotarios. He took the paper to write his name first but St. Macarius the Bishop reminded him of what Abba Dioscorus had told him before he went to the

council saying, "You shall possess my church after me." Brotarios remembered that and refrained from writing.

When the Emperor's messenger knew that the Bishop disagreed with the creed of the Emperor and did not write his name also, he jumped over the Bishop and kicked him. St. Macarius died on the spot and thus received the crown of martyrdom. The believers took his holy body and buried it with the bodies of St. John the Baptist and Elisha the Prophet. That fulfilled what these two saints had told this father, the Bishop, in a vision, that his body would be with their bodies. He departed to the Lord Christ winning the crown of glory.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

Martyrdom of the Sts. Marcian (Marcianus) and Mercurius

On this day of the year 351 A.D., the great saints Marcianus and Mercurius became martyrs. They were disciples of St. Paul the Martyr, Patriarch of Constantinople. When Emperor Constantine II, the son of Constantine the Great, adopted the belief of Arius, Abba Paul the Patriarch opposed him - so he exiled him to Armenia, where he was killed by strangulation.

These two saints cried over St. Paul on the day he was exiled. They characterized the Emperor, saying that he was a follower of the belief of Arius the Infidel. A certain Arian man made an accusation against them to the Emperor when he was on one of the plantations. He had them brought to him and ordered them slain with the sword. They were killed and buried, and their bodies remained there until the time of St. John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth). When he heard their history, he sent and brought their honorable bodies to the city of Constantinople. He built a church for them and transferred their bodies to it and celebrated a feast for them.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

The Martyrdom of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica

On this day, the great St. Demetrius, was martyred, in the days of Maximianus the Emperor. He was a pious Christian young man from the city of Thessalonica. He learned various subjects, and most of all, those of the Orthodox Church. He taught and preached diligently in the Name of the Lord Christ. He converted many to the faith.

Some made accusations against him to Emperor Maximianus who ordered that he be brought to him. It happened that when he came before the Emperor, a wrestler whose body was strong and huge, and who surpassed the people of his time in strength, was present. The Emperor loved this

man and was proud of him to the point that he specified a large sum of money for whoever could vanquish him. A Christian man whose name was Nostor came from among the people who were present at that time and asked St. Demetrius to pray for him and to make the sign of the Cross with his holy hand over his body. The saint prayed and made over him the sign of the Holy Cross which makes those who believed therein invincible.

Nostor went and asked to fight that fighter about whom the Emperor was boasting. Nostor fought him and vanquished him. The Emperor was very sorry and ashamed. The Emperor wondered how Nostor conquered him. He asked the soldiers for the secret behind that. They told him that a man called Demetrius prayed over him and made the sign of the Cross over his face.

The Emperor became angry with the saint and ordered that he be beaten until he offered incense to his idols and worshipped them. When St. Demetrius disobeyed them the Emperor ordered his men to thrust spears at him until his body would be torn to pieces and he would die. They told the saint that to frighten him and make him turn away from his faith in the Lord Christ and worship the idols. He told them, "Do whatever you please, for I will neither worship nor offer incense except to my Lord Christ the True God." The soldiers drove the spears into him until he delivered his pure soul.

When they threw away his holy body, some Christians took it and laid it in a coffin made out of marbles. The body remained hidden until the end of the days of persecution, when the one who had hidden it revealed it. A great church was built for him in Thessalonica, and they laid his body therein.

Many great signs were made by his name. Each day, sweet oil was distilled from his body which cured those who used it with faith, especially on the day of his feast. On his feast day, the oil flowed in a larger quantity than on any other day, and it dripped from the walls of the church and the pillars. Though the gathering was huge, they all received their share, from what they took off the walls and put in their containers. Those of the righteous priests who had seen this told and testified to that.

His intercession be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Babah

- 1. The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of St. Mark the Evangelist and the Appearance of His Holy Head.*
- 2. The Departure of St. Ibrahim (Ibrahim) the Hermit.*

1. On this day is the commemoration of the consecration of the church of the pure St. Mark the Evangelist, the founder of the church in Egypt, and the appearance of his holy head in the city of Alexandria.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the great saint, the worshipper and fighter St. Ibrahim, the hermit, departed. This father was from the city of Menuf, a son of rich, Christian parents. When he grew up he longed for the monastic life. He went to Akhmeem and from there he came to St. Pachomius, who put the monastic garb on him. St. Ibrahim exhausted his body with ascetic practices and worship. He stayed with St. Pachomius for 23 years, then he wished for the solitary life in some of the caves. St. Pachomius allowed him to do so.

He made nets to catch fish. One of the laymen used to come, take the work of his hands to sell it, buy beans for him, and give the rest of the money as alms on his behalf. He led this life for 13th years; his food each evening was a handful of salted beans soaked in water. Because the apparel that he went forth with from the monastery was worn out, he covered himself with a piece of sackcloth (Khaish). He went to the monastery every two or three years to partake of the Holy Communion.

The devil fought with him much at the beginning of his dwelling in that cave. They disturbed him with strange voices and terrified him with fearful images. But with the grace of God he used to overcome them and drive them away.

When his departure drew near, he sent the lay brother who used to serve him to the monastery to bring Abba Tadros, the disciple of St. Pachomius. When Abba Tadros came to him, he bowed down and asked him to remember him in his prayers. Then St. Ibrahim rose up and prayed with St. Tadros. He laid down facing the east and gave up his soul. When St. Tadros sent the news to the monastery the monks came and carried him. Then they all prayed over him, were blessed by him and laid him with the bodies of the saints.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

*In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit
One God. Amen*

**The Blessed Month of Hatour
The First Day**

- 1. The Martyrdom of the Saints Maximus, Numitius, Victor (Boctor), and Philip (Philopus).*
- 2. The Commemoration of Saint Cleopas the Apostle and His Companion.*

1. On this day, the striver Saints Maximus, Numitius, Victor (Boctor), and Philip (Philopus) were martyred. They lived in the days of Decius the Emperor. During his reign, the seven young men disappeared in a cave in a mountain in Ephesus.

These four saints were from Africa, and they were brethren in spiritual love. The desire for Christ gathered them together. When Emperor Decius was torturing the Christians, they agreed together to declare their faith.

They went before the Prefect and confessed that they were Christians and only worshipped and bowed to Christ. He ordered them beaten, and they were many times, with whips and sticks. Their backs were burned with red-hot rods. Their bodies then were rubbed with rags made of hair steeped in vinegar and salt.

In spite of all this severe torture they remained steadfast in the faith. Some of the people present believed in the Lord Christ when they saw their patience and endurance. Finally, the Prefect ordered the heads of some of the saints to be cut off and the sword to be used on the others. Thus they all received the crown of martyrdom.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of St. Cleopas the Apostle and his companion who were traveling to a village called Emmaus.

So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them. When they did not know Him, He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" Later, as He sat at the table with them, He took bread, blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. Then, their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished from their sight. (Luke 24:13-31)

These two Apostles were among the 72 Apostles.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen

The Second Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

*The Departure of St. Peter the Third
27th Pope of Alexandria*

On this day in the year 481 A.D., the Great Saint Abba Peter III, 27th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was chosen patriarch after the departure of St. Timothy, 26th Pope.

Shortly after his enthronement upon the apostolic throne, he received a letter from St. Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople, confessing in it the one nature of Christ, according to the faith of St. Cyril and St. Dioscorus. He also stated clearly that it is not right to recognize two separate natures for Christ after the union, otherwise, the usefulness of the union would be futile.

Abba Peter replied by a letter declaring his acceptance of Abba Acacius into the Orthodox Faith. He sent it with three learned bishops to Abba Acacius, who received them with respect and asked them to join him in the prayers of the Divine Liturgy.

Abba Acacius read the letter to his particulars and to those who followed him. He then wrote another Catholic epistle to Abba Peter. When Abba Peter received it, he gathered the bishops and the fathers and read the letter to them. They rejoiced exceedingly and they admired the words and the explanations therein. They then recognized Abba Acacius' fellowship with them in the Orthodox Faith.

This father suffered many tribulations from those who opposed his religion and opinion. Abba Peter was exiled from his chair once, but was restored later. In his exile he continually taught the flock. He preached to them by means of written messages and, whenever he was present, by his spoken words. He stayed on the See of St. Mark for eight years then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Third Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

- 1. The Departure of St. Cyriacus.*
- 2. The Departure of St. Athanasius and His Sister, Irene.*

1. On this day, the holy father, St. Cyriacus, departed. This striver was brought up in the city of Corinth in Greece. He was the son of Orthodox Christian parents, who taught him the church subjects. They brought him to Abba Peter, Bishop of Corinth, who was his cousin, and he ordained him a reader. Cyriacus read continually and searched in the interpretations of the Holy Scriptures until he surpassed many in it. Abba Peter appointed him to read to the people in the church and to him in his cell, and he was pleased with him.

When he was 18 years old, his parents asked him if he wished to marry, but he refused. He asked them for permission to visit one of the monasteries in order to be blessed by the saints therein. He continued to visit the monastery from time to time and he longed for the monastic garb.

He went to the Holy city, Jerusalem, and met its bishop, Abba Cyril. He presented to him his wish to become a monk. Abba Cyril approved his wish and prophesied of him saying that he would become a great father, would have many accomplishments, and many souls would be enlightened by his teachings. He blessed him and sent him to the great father Euthymius (Otimus), the father of the monks of Palestine.

Father Euthymius accepted him with joy and put the garb of the monk on him. He handed him to one of the elders of the monastery who taught him the ways of worship and revealed to him the artifices of Satan. Abba Cyriacus lived a virtuous life with much asceticism besides humility, godliness and devoutness. God bestowed upon him the gift of healing. He healed all those who came to the monastery with all kinds of sicknesses or infirmities. His virtues and his holiness spread everywhere.

This holy man accompanied Abba Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, to the Ecumenical council of the hundred and fifty that gathered at Constantinople because of Macedonius, the enemy of the Holy Spirit. Abba Cyriacus opposed his arguments and vanquished him by evidences and proofs.

He departed at a good old age. The Lord made manifest from his body after his departure, many signs and miracles. His body still rests in one of the monasteries of the city of Jerusalem, without any change or corruption, to the extent that anyone who sees him today would think that he just died only a short time ago. More than 700 years have passed from the time of his departure till the writing of his biography. He lived at the time of Theodosius the Great in the later part of the fourth Christian century.

His intercession be for us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Athanasius and his sister, Irene, departed. They suffered many tortures at the hands of Maximianus. When he failed to turn them away from their faith in Christ, he ordered to cast them into an empty pit, and to shut over them, wherein they departed.

Their intercession be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Martyrdom of Saints John and James, Bishops of Persia.*

2. *The Martyrdom of Saints Epimachus and Adrianus (Azarianus).*

1. On this day, Sts. John and James, Bishops of Persia, were martyred by the hands of Shapur, the son of Hormuzd (Hermez), King of Persia.

When the King demanded them to worship the sun and fire, and to offer sacrifices to them, they

did not obey him. Instead, they continued teaching and confirming the people in the faith of the Lord Christ, to Whom is the glory. Therefore, the King ordered them be tortured severely. When they would not turn from the faith, and would not cease from teaching the people and strengthening them, in spite of their torture, he ordered them be cast into the fire. They gave up their souls into the hand of the Lord Christ, thus received the crown of glory with all the saints.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, Sts. Epimachus and Adrianus (Azarianus), who were from the city of Rome, were martyred. Some people accused them of being Christians to the Governor, who was appointed by Maximianus the Emperor.

He brought them and questioned them about their belief. They confessed that they were Christians. Then they reproved him for having forsaken the worship of God, who created the Heaven, the Earth, and all that is therein. They also admonished him for worshipping man-made idols which could neither see nor hear and wherein dwelt Satan, who led men astray by worshipping these idols. The Governor marvelled at their audacity and commanded their necks to be cut off. Thus they received the crown of martyrdom.

Their intercession be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. The Appearance of the Head of St. Longinus, the Soldier.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Timothy and the Relocation of the Body of St. Theodore, the Prince, to Shotb.

1. On this day was the appearance of the head of St. Longinus the Soldier who pierced the side of our Savior, when He was on the Cross. Emperor Tiberius Caesar sent a soldier to Cappadocia to cut off the head of this saint, as it is written in the 23rd day of the month of Abib. The soldier fulfilled the order and brought the head to Jerusalem, and handed it to Pontius Pilate. Pilate showed the head to the Jews, who rejoiced at his deed. Pilate commanded that the head be buried in some of the piles of dirt outside Jerusalem.

There was a woman who had believed at the hands of St. Longinus when he preached in Cappadocia. During his execution, she stood, weeping, and witnessed his martyrdom. Later on she became blind. So, she took her son and departed to Jerusalem to be blessed by the holy places, and the holy sepulchre, hoping that she might regain her sight. When she arrived in Jerusalem, her son died. She became very sad and grieved because of her condition and there was no one to take her back to her own country.

During her sleep she saw St. Longinus, and with him, was her son who had died. He directed her to whereabouts his head was buried and ordered her to remove it. When she woke up, she looked for the place until she found it. She dug in the ground and a sweet aroma of incense came out.

When she reached the head of the saint, a great light shone from it and straightaway her eyes were opened and she was able to see.

She glorified the Lord Christ, kissed the head, perfumed it, and placed it with the body of her son. Then she returned to her own country glorifying the Lord Christ Who performed wonders through His saints.

The prayers of this saint be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Timothy and also the commemoration of the relocation of the body of St. Theodore the Prince, to the city of Shotb, in the province of Assiut (His martyrdom is on the 20th of the Coptic month of Abib).

Their blessings be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. The Departure of St. Felix, Pope of Rome.

2. The Consecration of the church of the Virgin in the Mouharaque Monastery in Quosquam Mount.

1. On this day, the holy father St. Felix, Pope of Rome, departed. He was born of Christian parents in Rome in the year 210 A.D. They raised him with high principles and he gradually advanced in the clerical ranks. Astasius, Pope of Rome, ordained him a deacon. Pope Justus, seeing his righteousness and virtues, ordained him a priest.

When Abba Dionysius, Pope of Rome, (who was contemporary of St. Thaouna, Pope of Alexandria) departed, this father was chosen for the Roman See. He shepherded the flock of Christ with the best of care. When Aurelianus Caesar reigned, he incited persecution against the believers of the Lord Christ. He tortured them using very painful methods, and many of them were martyred by his hands. Since great tribulation befell St. Felix from the Emperor, he entreated God to take these tribulations away from His people. Because of his prayers, the Emperor died in the second year of his reign.

When Diocletian reigned, he also persecuted the Christians and started torturing them. Pope Felix prayed to the Lord to spare him from witnessing the torture of the Christians. So, he departed in the first year of the reign of Diocletian, after he had sat upon the Apostolic throne for five years. He left many sayings and discourses, some of which were useful teachings and others were about the doctrines.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also was the consecration of the church of the Holy Virgin, in the Mouharaque Monastery, in Quosquam Mount. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ blessed this church with His presence along with His disciples, during the time of its consecration, as was testified to by the Saints Philotheos and Kyrillos, Popes of Alexandria.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our Lord forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Martyrdom of St. George of Alexandria.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Nehroua.*
3. *The Departure of St. Mina, Bishop of Tamai (Thmoui).*
4. *The Consecration of the Church of St. George of Cappadocia.*

1. On this day, St. George (Gawargios) of Alexandria, was martyred. His father was a merchant in the city of Alexandria and had no son. It happened that he travelled to the city of Lydd and attended the feast of the consecration of the Church of St. George the martyr. He prayed to God, interceding with His great saint that he might have a son. God answered his prayers, and gave him a son, and he named him George. His mother was the sister of Armenius, the Governor of Alexandria.

His parents died when he was 25 years old. George was merciful, loving and kind to the poor and loved the church. He stayed with his uncle who had only one daughter. One day she went with some of her friends for an outing. While they were walking nearby a monastery outside the city, she heard its monks singing sweet hymns. She was touched by what she had heard and asked her cousin George about it. He replied that those monks had forsaken the world to worship and he guided her to believe in the Lord Christ. He told her about the share of the sinners of the final punishment and the share of the righteous of felicity.

When she returned to her father, she told him that she was a believer of Christ. He tried to reason with her, to dissuade her, and to lure her with great promises. Then he threatened her. When she did not hearken to his words, he ordered that her head be cut off, thus she received the crown of martyrdom.

Later on, the Governor knew that George was responsible for her conversion. He seized him and tortured him severely. Then he sent him to Ansenia where they also tortured him and finally they cut off his holy head, thus he received the crown of martyrdom. A deacon whose name was Samuel, took his holy body and carried it to the city of Manf, El-Giza province.

When the wife of his uncle Armenius knew about it, she sent for the body and placed it with the body of her martyred daughter in Alexandria.

Their intercession be for us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Nehroua, was martyred. He was from the district of Fayyum and he feared God. When he heard the accounts of the martyrs, he went to Alexandria to die for the Name of the Lord Christ.

He was told in a vision that he must go to Antioch. While he was thinking of how to go there and looking for a ship to embark on, God sent to him His angel Michael, who carried him on his wings

from Alexandria to Antioch and set him down before Diocletian. There he confessed the Lord Christ. Diocletian asked him about his name and his country, and when he knew Nehroua's story, he marvelled at the manner in which he had come.

Diocletian offered him much money and many prizes to turn him away from his faith, but Nehroua refused. Then Diocletian threatened him, but could not frighten him. Therefore the Emperor ordered that he be tortured in many different ways.

One time they tortured him by releasing lions to attack him, once by burning him in a fire, another by squeezing him in the wheel, and still another time by casting him in a cauldron with fire under it. Finally, they cut off his holy head with a sword and he received the crown of martyrdom.

St. Nehroua became a counterpart for those from Antioch who were martyred in the land of Egypt.

It happened that St. Julius El-Akfahsee was present at the time of his martyrdom, so he took his body and sent it with two of his men to St. Nehroua's country with great honor.

Their intercession be for us. Amen.

3. Today also, St. Mina, bishop of the city of Tamai (Thmoui) El-Amdid in Sinbelawain, departed. His father was from the city of Samannoud. He was the only son of God-fearing parents. They practiced the works of the monks such as fasting, prayers and asceticism until their report was heard throughout the country.

They made their son marry against his will. But he agreed with his wife on keeping their virginity. They remained so, doing many worships as practiced by monks, wearing sackcloth and spending most of their nights in prayer and reading the word of God. This saint longed to be a monk and he discussed it with his wife saying, "It is improper for us to practice the monastic works while we are in the world."

She agreed with him, and he went to the monastery of Anba Antonius, to be far away from his parents. They looked for St. Mina to return him back to his wife and they knew not where he was. From there he went with Anba Mikhail, who became later on the 46th Pope of Alexandria, to the monastery of St. Macarius, where they became monks. That was during the time of the two bright stars Anba Abraam and Anba Gawargah. Father Mina became their disciple, he learned from them, followed the way of their worship and increased in his angelic works until he surpassed in his worship many of the fathers.

Satan envied him for his strenuous fight and afflicted him in his legs and he laid flat on the ground for two months. After that the Lord Christ healed St. Mina, who overcame Satan with the might of God.

Later on, he was called for the rank of episcopate. When the messengers of the Patriarch came to him and he knew the reason for their visit, he wept and was sorrowful to leave the desert. The

fathers convinced him that this was the will of God. He obeyed and went with the messengers to the Patriarch who ordained him Bishop of the city of Tamai (Thmoui).

The Lord granted him the gift of healing the sick, the gift of knowing the hidden things and he knew what was in the minds of people. The bishops of the surrounding districts used to come to him for counselling. People from everywhere came to listen to his teachings. He was the father of four Patriarchs and he laid his hand upon them when they were ordained. They were: Anba Alexandros II, Anba Cosma, Anba Theodore, and Anba Mikhail I.

When the Lord Christ wished him to depart from this transient world, He informed him. Anba Mina called the people of his diocese and commanded them to be strong in the Orthodox faith and to keep the divine commandments. Then he committed them to their true shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ and departed from this transitory world and came to Christ, Whom he loved. The people wept and mourned the loss of their shepherd and their father after the Lord, who cared for their souls. They buried him in a fitting manner and laid him in the place, as he had directed beforehand.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

4. Also on this day, is the commemoration of the consecration of the Church of the honorable saint and great martyr St. George in the city of Lydd. We also commemorate the great wonders and signs, the Lord has done therein which became known throughout the land and sea.

When Emperor Diocletian heard the reports of this church, he sent Eukheius, the head of his army, with soldiers to destroy it. Eukheius came with arrogance to where the icon of St. George was and he began to scoff at the Christians and at the Saint. He had a staff in his hand with which he struck the lamp, which was burning before the icon of St. George and he broke it. A fragment of the lamp fell on his head. Fear and great trembling came upon him and he fell prostrate on the ground. The soldiers carried him, to take him back to his country, for they knew that this had happened to him because of his mockery towards this great martyr. Eukheius died on the way back with disgrace, and they cast him into the sea.

When Diocletian heard this, he became angry and decided to go himself to this church and destroy it. The Lord bore no longer with him to do what he had determined to do and He smote him with blindness and the men of his kingdom rose up against him. The Lord took the kingdom away from him and placed Constantine, a righteous Emperor, in his place. Emperor Constantine closed pagan temples and opened the churches. The churches and the universe rejoiced, especially the church of the great martyr, the star of the morning, St. George.

His intercession be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

The Commemoration of the Four Incorporeal Beasts

On this day is the commemoration of the four Incorporeal Beasts who carry the throne of God. As it is mentioned by St. John who witnessed this in his Revelation saying, "Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardine stone in appearance: and there was a rainbow around the throne in appearance like an emerald: ... and in the midst of the throne and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. The four living creatures each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty who was, and is, and is to come.'" (Revelation 4:2-8)

Isaiah the Prophet said: "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.'" (Isaiah 6:1-3)

Ezekiel the Prophet said: "Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the North, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself, and brightness was all around it, and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man... and each one had four wings. Their legs were straight; and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze..." (Ezekiel 1:4-7)

St. John the Evangelist said: "After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, belong to the Lord our God,' ... and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God who sat on the throne, saying, 'Amen, Alleluia... for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give Him glory.....'" (Revelation 19:1-7)

The Lord set them near His throne in order for them to make supplications on behalf of all the creation. The beast with the man's face makes supplications on behalf of the human race, the one with the lion's face makes supplications on behalf of the beasts, the one with the bull's face makes supplications on behalf of the cattle, and the one with the eagle's face makes supplications on behalf of the birds. The teachers of the church built churches in their names and commemorated them on this day.

Their intercession be for us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Departure of the Holy Father Anba Isaac, 41st Pope of Alexandria.*
2. *The Assembly of the Ecumenical Council at Nicea.*

1. On this day, of the year 679 A.D., the great holy father Anba Isaac, 41st Pope of Alexandria, departed. This father was born in El-Borolos from rich, God-fearing parents. They begot him long after their marriage. When they took him for baptism, the bishop who baptized him saw a cross of light over his head. The bishop laid the boy's hand over his head and prophesied concerning him saying, "The church of God will be entrusted to him." Then he told his parents, "Take care of him, for he is a chosen vessel of God."

When he grew they taught him writing, the Christian doctrine and church subjects. He read extensively in the biography of saints and he was filled with their pure life. He longed for the monastic life, so he left his parents and went to the desert of St. Macarius. He became a monk and disciple of Anba Zacharias, the Hegumen. The angel of the Lord had informed the elder father beforehand of his coming and the father received him with joy. One day, one of the holy elders saw him in the church and prophesied about him saying, "The church of Christ will be entrusted to him."

Pope John, the Patriarch of that time, asked for a monk to be his scribe and private secretary. The people who were present recommended this honorable father Isaac. The Pope had father Isaac brought to him. He gave him a book to scribe. Anba Isaac made mistakes in his writing deliberately, hoping that the Pope might send him back, for he had forsaken the glory of men. When the father knew his intention he said to him, "You have written well, do not leave this place."

When Fr. Isaac realized that the Patriarch would not let him return, he used all his knowledge and writing ability and his virtues became known. The Patriarch rejoiced in him exceedingly. Nevertheless, because Fr. Isaac was still longing for solitary life, the Patriarch allowed him to return to the desert.

When the departure of Pope John drew near, he asked the Lord Christ to let it be known to him who would be his successor. In a vision, he was told that his disciple Isaac would sit on the chair after him. The Pope commanded the people that, with a divine revelation and by the order of the Lord, Isaac would sit on the chair after him.

When this father was enthroned to the See of St. Mark, the church was illumined. He restored many churches, especially the church of St. Mark the Evangelist, and the patriarchal cell. He suffered many tribulations and sat upon the throne for three and a half years, then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. Also on this day, of the year 325 A.D., 318 fathers assembled in the city of Nicea, in the days

of Emperor Constantine, the righteous Emperor. Among them were the heads of the four Sees and they were: Anba Alexandros, the 19th Pope of Alexandria, who was accompanied by Athanasius, his Archdeacon and private secretary; Estasius, archbishop of Antioch; Macarius, Archbishop of Jerusalem. Sylvestros, archbishop of Rome, because of his old age did not attend and sent two priests in his place.

The reason for their assembly was to judge Arius who was a priest in Alexandria. He blasphemed against the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ by saying that he was not equal in essence to God, His Father, and there was a time when the Son did not exist.

Among those who attended this council were holy fathers, who were, in the rank of the Apostles, able to raise the dead, heal the sick and work great wonders. Among them also were those who were tortured for the sake of their faith, lost their eyes, or had their hands or feet cut off, or had their teeth smashed or their nails pulled out or their ribs broken. One of them was the fighter St. Bepnhotius, the confessor, one of the bishops of upper Egypt who was tortured much during the days of Diocletian. They plucked out his right eye, burnt the flesh of his left leg, bound him in chains and took him to cut marble in a stone quarry. He was called the martyr among priests. He was a holy old man, loved by God and the people. The Lord worked many wonders through his supplications and prayers.

When the fathers convened, they sat on the chairs prepared for them. Then the righteous Emperor Constantine came and greeted them, starting with St. Bepnhotius, the Bishop, whom he respected much. The Emperor kissed with honor the scars of his wounds. Then he placed his royal scepter and his sword before them saying: "Behold, this day, you have the power of the priesthood and the Kingdom, to loosen and to bind as the Lord said, 'Whosoever you wish to exile or to keep, that will be in your authority.'"

The Holy Spirit enlightened the minds of those present and they were counted and there were found to be 319 but when they counted the visible chairs, they counted 318! This fulfilled the saying of the Lord Christ, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)

They had Arius brought before them and asked him to state his faith. He blasphemed saying, "The Father was when the Son was not." When they explained to him his error and he did not change his opinion, they excommunicated him and all those who shared his opinion and belief. Then they wrote the Canon of the Christian faith which is known as the "Nicene Creed". It states:

1. Truly we believe in one God, God the Father, the Pantocrator, Who created heaven and earth, and all things, seen and unseen.
2. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light; True God of True God; Begotten not created, of One Essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made.
3. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary and became Man.
4. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; suffered and was buried.
5. And the third day He arose from the dead, according to the Scriptures.

6. Ascended into the heavens; He sits at the right hand of His Father.

7. And He is coming again in His glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end.

Later on, when the council of one hundred and fifty assembled in the city of Constantinople to judge Macedonius, the enemy of the Holy Spirit, they formulated the remainder of that creed saying:

8. Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father; Who, with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified; Who spoke by the prophets.

9. And in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

10. We confess one Baptism for the remission of sins.

11. We look for the resurrection of the dead.

12. And the life of the coming age. Amen.

They forbade to add to or take away from the Creed and commanded all the believers, priests, laity, old and young, men and women, to recite it and to have it said during the Holy Liturgy and in all prayers.

After the fathers of the council of Nicea had excommunicated Arius and established the Creed, they issued other decisions as follows:

I. With regards to Melitus, Bishop of Assuit, who had resisted his superior St. Peter the martyr, the Alexandrian Pope, the council confirmed the authority of the Pope of Alexandria over his subjects in the ordinances 5, 6, and 7.

II. They settled the controversy between the bishops of Africa and Asia Minor and the bishop of Rome regarding the baptism of heretics. The council decided that the baptism performed by heretics was worthless in contrast to what the Bishop of Rome and his followers had thought.

III. They also established the Resurrection feast day. It was decided that it would be on the Sunday that followed the full moon, on which was the Passover of the Jews. Thus, they would not celebrate before the Jews or with them. They authorized the Popes of Alexandria, because of their knowledge and accuracy in calculating the dates, to notify all the churches about the day on which they would celebrate the feast.

The holy fathers confirmed the church, they established the light of the faith and then departed to their parishes.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our Lord forever. Amen.

The Tenth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. The Martyrdom of St. Sophia and the Fifty Virgins with her.

2. The Assembly of a Council in Rome because of the Feast of Theophany and Lent.

1. On this day, the holy, and pure fifty virgins and their mother Sophia, were martyred. These saints were from different countries. Divine love and ascetic life had brought them together and

they lived in a convent for virgins in El-Raha. St. Sophia, the head nun, was filled with every wisdom and grace. She raised them with a spiritual upbringing until they became as angels on earth. They continually prayed, fasted and read the holy Books and chronicles of the monks and saints. Among them were some who had dwelt in the convent for 70 years and some were young in age but firm in faith and of strong conviction.

When Emperor Julian the Infidel heard that Shapur, King of Persia, intended to fight him, he prepared his army and set out against Shapur. The city of El-Raha was on his way and when he passed by the convent of these virgins, he ordered the soldiers to kill everyone in it and to rob the convent. The soldiers carried out the order, they cut the nuns with swords into pieces and took everything they found.

The Lord took vengeance on this evil Emperor by having him stabbed by the spear of a knight at war. (It was said that he was Saint Marcurius) The Emperor fell down from his horse and died in the year 363 A.D. As for the holy virgins, they received the crown of martyrdom.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also a holy council assembled in Rome in the days of Victor, Pope of Rome and Anba Demetrius, Pope of Alexandria. The reason for the assembly of this council was because the Christians used to celebrate the Epiphany, then start 40 days of fasting on the following day and end the fast on the 22nd day of the month of Amshir. After a few days they would fast the Passion week, then celebrate the honorable feast of the Resurrection.

When St. Demetrius the Patriarch was chosen for the Alexandrian throne, God illumined his mind with divine grace. He studied the church books and interpreted most of them. He formulated the basis for calculating the days of the fast and the changeable feasts which we celebrate to the present time. He sent copies of it to Abba Victor, Patriarch of Rome; Abba Maximus, Patriarch of Antioch; and Abba Agapius, Bishop of Jerusalem.

When Abba Victor received this message he read it and appreciated it very much. He gathered fourteen of his learned bishops and many of the learned priests. They examined it, accepted it, and spread it in their countries.

Since then the holy fast and the feast of Resurrection have been regulated as they are now in our Coptic Orthodox Church.

To our Lord is the Glory forever. Amen.

The Eleventh Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Departure of St. Anna (Hannah), the mother of the Theotokos.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Martyrdom of St. Archelaus and the Martyrdom of Elisha the Hegumen.*

1. On this day, the pious and righteous St. Anna (Hannah), the mother of our Lady, the holy virgin St. Mary, the Mother of God, departed. This holy woman was the daughter of Matthan, the son of Levi, the son of Melki, who was a descendant of Aaron the priest. Her mother's name was Mary (Mariam) and she was from the tribe of Judah.

Matthan had three daughters. The first was called Mary after her mother, and she was the mother of Salome, the midwife. The second was Sophia, the mother of Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist. The third was St. Anna (Hannah), the wife of the righteous man Joachim, who was of the tribe of Judah. She was the mother of our Lady, the holy virgin St. Mary, the Mother of the Savior of the world. That makes our Lady the Virgin St. Mary, Salome, and Elizabeth cousins.

Although we know little about St. Anna, having been chosen to be the mother of the Mother of God in the flesh is an indication of her virtues and righteousness, which distinguished her from other women to have this great grace.

Because she was barren, she entreated God to take away her shame. So the Lord gave her a daughter that delighted her eyes and the eyes of all mankind; she is the Virgin St. Mary, the Mother of the Savior of the world.

Her intercession be for us all. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Archelaus and the martyrdom of Abba Elisha the Hegumen.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Twelfth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

The Commemoration of the Honored Archangel Michael

On this day the church celebrates the feast of the honored Archangel, Michael, the head of the hosts of heaven, who stands at all times before the great throne of God, interceding on behalf of the human race.

Joshua, the son of Nun, saw him in great glory and was frightened by him and fell on his face to the earth and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" So he said, "No; but as

Commander of the army of the Lord... I have given Jericho into your hand, ... and its king."
(Joshua 5:13-15, 6:2)

The Archangel Michael was with all the saints and martyrs. He strengthened them and enabled them to endure patiently until they finished their strife. Festivals of commemoration are held and alms offered in his name on the twelfth day of each Coptic month.

An example of one of his wonders: A God-fearing man whose name was Dorotheus and his wife Theopista, held a festival of commemoration for the honored angel Michael on the twelfth day of each month. It happened that this righteous family fell on hard times and had nothing to celebrate with for the commemoration of the honored Michael. They took their clothes to sell so that they might have a feast. Michael the Archangel appeared to Dorotheus and commanded him not to sell his clothes, but to go to a sheep-master and to take from him a sheep worth one-third of a dinar. He was also to go to a fisherman and to take from him a fish worth one-third of a dinar but Dorotheus was not to slit open the fish until he came back to him. Finally, he was to go to a flour merchant and to take from him as much flour as he needed.

Dorotheus did as the Angel commanded him. He invited the people, as was his custom, to the feast honoring the Archangel Michael. When he went into his storeroom looking for wine for the offering, he found that all the containers had been filled with wine and many other good things. He marvelled and was astonished.

After they had finished the celebration and all the people had departed, the Archangel appeared to Dorotheus as before and commanded him to cut open the belly of the fish. He found 300 dinars of gold and three coins each is a third of a dinar. He told him these three coins were for the sheep, the fish and the flour, and the 300 dinars were for him and his children. God had remembered them and their oblations and had rewarded them here, in this world and in the kingdom of heaven on the last day. As Dorotheus and his wife were astonished at this matter, the Archangel Michael said to them, "I am Michael the Archangel who delivered you from all your tribulations and I have taken your oblations and alms up to God, you shall lack no good thing whatsoever in this world." They prostrated themselves before him and he disappeared and went up into heaven.

This was one of the innumerable miracles of this honored Angel.
His intercession be for us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Thirteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Departure of St. Timothy, Bishop of Ansena (Antinoe).*
2. *The Departure of St. Zacharias, 64th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, the saint Abba Timothy, Bishop of Ansena, departed. He was righteous and chaste from his youth. He became a monk at a young age and lived a righteous life. Because of his chastity, righteousness, knowledge and his good character, he was chosen bishop for the city of

Ansena (Antinoe). He preached to the believers and guided the people to believe in Christ. The Governor however, seized him and tortured him in various ways, inside the prison and outside it, for three consecutive years. There were many others with him in prison who were seized because of their faith. The tyrant Governor continued to bring several of them out of prison and shed their blood after torturing them, until only a few remained in prison, this father was one of them.

When the Lord destroyed Diocletian, and Constantine (the Emperor who loved Christ) reigned, he ordered all the prisoners who were persecuted for the sake of their faith in Christ to be set free, in all the countries under his authority. Father Timothy was also released and went to his diocese and gathered all the priests of his diocese. They prayed to the Lord all night. Father Timothy asked for the salvation of the soul of the Governor who had tortured him saying, "Because O Lord, he is the one who has brought me great blessing by bringing me close to You, be good to him so he might become close to You." The people who were gathered marvelled at the purity of this father's heart, who was fulfilling his Master's words, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44)

When the Governor heard that, he marvelled saying, "I had thought that he would curse me for what I inflicted upon him, for I had ill treated him greatly, but instead he is blessing me. Truly the faith of these people is a 'Divine Faith'." He sent for Abba Timothy. He inquired about the principles of the Christian faith. The father revealed to him the cause of the Incarnation of the Son of God and what the prophets had spoken many years before, concerning Him and how their prophesies were fulfilled, giving him proofs from the scriptures.

Consequently, the Governor believed in Christ and the father the Bishop baptized him. The Governor subsequently resigned the governorship and became a monk.

As for St. Timothy, he continued to teach his flock, guarding them until he departed in peace.
His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 1027 A.D., the great St. Abba Zacharias, 64th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was a native of Alexandria and was an ordained priest there. He was chaste and gentle in disposition.

When St. Philotheus, 63rd Pope, departed, the bishops assembled to choose, with God's guidance, the person who was fit to succeed him. While they were gathered in the church of St. Mark, discussing who was the most suitable man, they were informed that a rich man from Alexandria called Ibrahim Ben-Bishr, who was close to El-Khalifa (Governor) had given him a bribe and obtained a decree from him to be appointed Patriarch. El-Khalifa sent him, accompanied with some soldiers, to Alexandria. The bishops were saddened and they entreated God in one accord to keep away from His church the one who was coming to shepherd His church through bribery and the sultan's influence. They asked God to choose the person who was fit for this honor.

While they were on this subject, Abba Zacharias came down the stairs of the church carrying a vessel. His foot slipped and he fell and came tumbling down the stairs to the floor while

still holding the unbroken vessel in his hand. The bishops and the priests marvelled at this and they asked the opinion of the people of Alexandria. Everyone agreed on Abba Zacharias' righteousness and his knowledge. They all agreed, along with the bishops, to ordain him Patriarch.

When Ibrahim Ben-Bishr arrived, he found that they had already ordained Abba Zacharias as Patriarch. When the bishops read the King's letter, they appeased Ibrahim and ordained him priest, then hegumen. They promised to ordain him bishop when one of the dioceses became available.

Abba Zacharias, had suffered many tribulations. As an example, a monk had made many accusations against him before El-Hakem (Be-Amr-Allah) who became El-Khalifa (Governor) in the year 989 A.D. El-Hakem seized the Pope and cast him to the lions, but they did not harm him. The Governor was angered with the keeper of the lions and thought that he had taken a bribe from the Pope. The Governor kept the lions for a period of time without food, then he slaughtered a sheep and smeared the clothes of the Patriarch with its blood. He then cast him a second time to the lions, but again, they did not harm him, for the Lord had domesticated them. The Governor marvelled and ordered that he be lifted up.

The Governor then cast him into prison for three months during which he threatened him with death and casting in fire if he did not forsake his Christian faith. The Patriarch was not afraid. The Governor tried again bribing him by promising to appoint him a judge with jurisdiction over all other judges but he was not impressed with these earthly ranks and did not hearken to the order of the Governor. Finally, because of the mediation of one of the princes, he released him.

Abba Zacharias went to the desert of Scete, stayed there for nine years during which the people suffered great tribulations and experienced many troubles. Also, several churches were destroyed during that time.

Christ the Lord had compassion on His church and removed these tribulations from the people. He also turned the Governor away from his injustice. Subsequently, the Governor ordered the churches that were destroyed to be rebuilt. He also ordered that everything that was taken from them be returned and that the bells of the churches ring again.

Abba Zacharias lived 12 years, after his return from the desert, during which he took interest in building churches and restoring those that were destroyed. He remained in the papacy for 28 years and departed to the Lord in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God, forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

*The Departure of St. Martinus (Martin)
Bishop of Tours (Thrace)*

On this day, the great St. Martinus (Martin), Bishop of Tours (Thrace, in France), departed. He

was born to Christian parents in a city called Sorpeia. He grew up to be gentle and a worshipper who kept the Orthodox faith. He did not spare any effort in resisting the followers of Arius, who were enraged by him. Consequently, they waited for him on a road several times and beat him. When they continued chasing him, he left the city. He went to live in a cave near the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. There, he sustained himself by eating plants.

When his reputation spread throughout the country, he was chosen to be Bishop of Tours (Thrace). He lived an apostolic life, and grew in charity and mercy towards many people. The Lord performed many miracles through him.

Once when he was passing by, he saw a person stopping a funeral and preventing the deceased person's family from burying him, claiming that the deceased owed him 400 dinars. This holy father entreated him to release the dead body, but the man refused. St. Martinus prayed and entreated God to make the truth known. The dead man was raised immediately and he rebuked the man who falsely accused him, exposing his lies before those present. Subsequently, the unjust man died and the man who was raised up from death through the prayers of St. Martinus, went back to his home and lived many years.

This holy father completed his distinguished life and departed in peace.
His prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

The Martyrdom of Saint Mari-Mina, the Wonder Worker

On this day St. Mina, who is called the blessed faithful, was martyred. His father, Eudoxius, was a native of the city of Nakiyos (Nikiu) and was its Governor. His brother was envious of him and he brought charges against him before the Emperor. The Emperor transferred him to Afrikia and appointed him Governor over it. The people were pleased with him because he was merciful and God-fearing.

His mother Euphemia had no children. One day she went to church on the feast of our Lady, the Virgin, the Mother of God, at Attribes. She saw the children in the church wearing their beautiful clothes with their parents. She heaved a sigh and wept before the icon of Our Lady St. Mary, entreating her to intercede for her before her beloved Son, in order that He would give her a son. A voice came from the icon saying, "Amen." She rejoiced in what she had heard and realized that the Lord had heard her prayers. When she returned to her home and told her husband about it, he replied, "May God's Will be done."

The Lord gave them this saint and they called him Mina, according to the voice that his mother heard. When he grew, his parents taught him reading and writing and they reared him in a Christian manner. When he was eleven years old, his father departed at a good old age. Then his mother departed three years later. St. Mina devoted his life to fasting, praying and to living a

Christian life. Because of everyone's love towards him and his father, they placed him in his father's position. In spite of that, he did not forsake his worshipping.

When Diocletian had reneged Christianity and issued his orders to worship idols, many were martyred for the Name of the Lord Christ. St. Mina left his position and went to the desert, where he stayed many days worshipping God with all his heart.

One day he saw the heavens open and the martyrs crowned with beautiful crowns. He heard a voice saying, "He who toils for the Name of the Lord Christ shall receive these crowns." He returned to the city over which he was Governor and confessed the Name of the Lord Christ. Knowing that he belonged to a noble family, they tried to dissuade him from his faith and promised him honors and precious gifts. When he did not change his mind, they threatened him and the Governor ordered him to be tortured. When the Governor failed to turn him away from his faith in the Lord Christ, he sent him to his brother so that he might influence him but he failed also. Finally, he ordered his head to be cut off with the sword, his body to be cast in the fire and his ashes to be scattered in the wind. The body remained in the fire for three days and three nights, but it was not harmed.

His sister came and gave the soldiers a lot of money and they let her take the body. She put it in a sack made of fronds and decided to go to Alexandria, as her brother had previously advised her. She embarked with her brother's body on one of the ships to Alexandria.

During their trip, sea beasts came out of the water and attacked the passengers aboard the ship. They were frightened and screamed with fear. The Saint's sister prayed to the Lord and asked for the intercession of her brother. While the passengers were in fear, fire went forth from her brother's body and burned the faces of the beasts. They dived immediately into the water and as they reappeared, the fire burned them again. They finally dived and did not reappear.

When the ship arrived at the city of Alexandria, most of the people went out with the father, the Patriarch. They carried the holy body with reverence and honor and entered the city with a venerable celebration and placed it in the church, after they shrouded it in expensive shrouds.

When the time of persecution ended, the angel of the Lord appeared to the honorable Patriarch, Anba Athanasius, the Apostolic. The angel informed him of the Lord's command which was to place the body of St. Mina on a camel and to take it out of the city without letting anyone lead it, but to follow it from a distance until it stopped at a place that the Lord had designated. They walked behind the camel until they arrived at a place called Lake Bayad, in the district of Marriot. There they heard a voice saying, "This is the place where the Lord wishes the body of his beloved Mina to be placed." They lowered the body and placed it in a coffin, then they situated it in a beautiful garden and many miracles happened through the body.

Later on, the people of Pentapolis (the five cities) rose against the cities around Alexandria. The people were getting ready to face the Berbers, and the Governor decided to take the body of St. Mina with him to be his deliverer and his strong protector. He took the body secretly and through the blessings of this saint, he overcame the Berbers and returned victorious.

The Governor decided not to return the body of the Saint to its original place and wanted to take it to Alexandria. On the way back, they passed by Lake Bayad, St. Mina's original place. The camel carrying the body knelt down and would not move in spite of frequent beatings. They moved the body over another camel, but again this second camel did not move from its place. The Governor finally realized that this was the Lord's command. He made a coffin from decay-resistant wood and placed the silver coffin in it. He then returned it to its place and invoked St. Mina's blessings, then returned to his city.

When the Lord wanted to disclose the location of St. Mina's holy body, He did it in this manner. There was a shepherd in the desert. One day a sheep with mange slipped down into the water of a well near the place of the saint's body. The sheep then came out of the water and rolled over in the sand of that place, and instantly the sheep was healed. When the shepherd saw this miracle, he was amazed. He took some of the sand and mixed it with water and smeared it over every sheep with mange, as well as on those with other infirmities, and immediately they were healed.

The news of these miracles spread in all the countries until the Emperor of Constantinople heard of them. He had an only daughter and she was leprous. Her father sent her to the place where the saint's body was and she inquired from the shepherd how these miracles were happening. She took some of the sand, moistened it with water, smeared it on her body and slept the night in that place. In her sleep she saw St. Mina saying to her, "Arise early and dig in this place, and you will find my body." When she woke up, she found herself cured. She began digging as she was told and she found the holy body. She sent word to her father, informing him of the news. The Emperor rejoiced exceedingly, thanked the Lord and glorified His Name. He then sent men and money and built a church in that place and it was consecrated on the fifteenth day of the Month of Baounah.

When Arcadius and Honorius reigned, they ordered a city to be built there. Multitudes of people came to that church asking for the intercession of the blessed St. Mina. The Lord had honored him with many signs and wonders that appeared from his pure body. When the Arabs came to Egypt, some of them attacked the city and the church was destroyed, only ruins remained.

When His Grace, the late Pope Abba Kyrillos the Sixth was ordained Patriarch over the See of St. Mark, he took interest in building a large monastery in this area (Marriot) in the name of St. Mina. He spent a great deal of money in establishing it. There are now many churches in the monastery, visited by many Orthodox worshippers who go there to receive blessings and to pray. He also bought one hundred acres of land and built a fence around it. He ordained a number of monks who had a high degree of scientific and religious education.

The intercession of Mari-Mina be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Beginning of the Fast of the Nativity (Advent) in the Coptic Church.*
2. *The Consecration of the Church of St. Abu-Nofer (Onuphrius).*
3. *The Martyrdom of Saint Yostus, the Bishop.*

1. Today marks the beginning of the fast of the Nativity (the Advent) in our Coptic Church. We implore our Lord, who completed our salvation by coming down to redeem us from the bondage of sin, to help us to do what is pleasing in His sight during this holy fast and through all the days of our lives.

2. On this day also was the consecration of the Church of St. Abu-Nofer (St. Onuphrius), the hermit, which was in El-Zaher, Misr (Cairo).

3. Today also, is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Yostus, the bishop, by the hands of Maximus the prince. He tortured him severely and finally he received the crown of martyrdom. *His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.*

The Seventeenth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

The Departure of Saint John Chrysostom

On this day, the honorable Saint John of the Golden Mouth (Chrysostom), departed. He was born in the city of Antioch around the year 347 A.D., to a rich father, whose name was Sakondos and a pious mother, whose name was Anthosa. They brought him up well and reared him in the Christian tradition. He went to the city of Athens, where he learned the Greek wisdom in one of its schools. He surpassed many in knowledge and in virtue. He forsook the vanities of the world and became a monk at a young age in one of the monasteries. He had a friend whose name was Basilus, who was a monk before him in that monastery. They had the same interests and they practiced many virtues.

When his father departed, St. John did not keep any of his father's possessions, but gave all of his inheritance to the poor and the needy. He then lived an ascetic life full of strife.

In the monastery, there was a Syrian hermit whose name was Ansosynos. One night he saw the apostles, Peter and John, entering where the Golden Mouth was. St. John, the Apostle, gave him a Bible and told him, "Do not be afraid, whosoever you shall bind, shall be bound, and whosoever you shall loose, shall be loosed." The old hermit therefore realized that St. John Chrysostom would be a faithful shepherd.

The grace of the Lord filled St. John Chrysostom and he wrote homilies and sermons and he interpreted many books while he was still a deacon. It was St. Melatius, Patriarch of Antioch, who had raised him to this rank. Then he was ordained a priest by St. Phlapianus, St. Melatius' successor, by the guidance of the angel of the Lord.

When Nectarius, Patriarch of Constantinople departed, Emperor Arcadius summoned St. John and made him Patriarch. He conducted himself during his patriarchate in an apostolic manner. He continued teaching, preaching and interpreting the books of the church, both old and new. He boldly admonished the sinners and the wealthy, regardless of their authority or wealth.

Queen Eudoxia, the wife of Emperor Arcadius, had a lust for money. She took a garden which belonged to a poor widow by force. The latter complained to the Saint, who went to the Queen and admonished her and asked her to return the garden to its owner. When Eudoxia did not obey him, he prevented her from entering the church and partaking of the Holy Communion. She became exceedingly angry and gathered a council of bishops whom St. John had previously excommunicated for their evil deeds and their mismanagement. They sentenced the saint to be exiled. He was exiled to the Island of Thrace, but this exile did not last more than one night. The people were enraged and they gathered around the royal palace demanding the return of the Patriarch. While the people were sorrowful because of their righteous shepherd, a severe earthquake took place and almost destroyed the city, terrifying everyone. The people thought that this was a sign of the Lord's anger, caused by the exile of the Saint. As for Eudoxia, she was disturbed, her soul was troubled and she went in haste to her husband and asked him to bring back the saint from exile. Once the light of the shepherd shone on his flock, their sorrow changed to joy and their wailing was replaced by the songs of joy and happiness.

This state of affairs did not last long. There was a large square beside the church of Agia Sophia, where a large silver statue of Queen Eudoxia was erected. On the day of its dedication, some common people danced madly, played profligate games, until they were immersed in immorality and sin. Because of St. John's zeal to curb the spread of immorality, he repudiated the people in his sermons, courageously showing his disapproval of their behavior. His enemies took advantage of his zeal and accused him before the Queen, of having said that "Herodia had risen up and danced and asked for the head of John the Baptist on a plate." This cruel accusation gave the Queen a good reason to sentence him to exile. She instructed the soldiers who were in charge of guarding him not give him any means of comfort during his travel. Thus, they moved him from one place to another hastily, until they came to a city called Komana, where his health deteriorated and he departed in peace in the year 407 A.D.

During the reign of Theodosius II, the son of Emperor Arcadius (who exiled St. John), the body of St. John was taken to Constantinople, where it was placed in the church of the Apostles.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eighteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Martyrdom of the Two Saints: Atrasis and Yoana (Junia).*
2. *The Martyrdom of Saint Philip the Apostle.*

1. On this day the two saints Atrasis and Yoana (Junia), were martyred. Atrasis was the daughter of the pagan Emperor Hadrian. Because of his great love for her, he built a special small room where she could be away from people.

Atrasis thought always about the vanity of the world and the end of life. Day and night she asked for guidance towards the right way. In a vision at night, she saw a person who told her, "Bring Yoana (Junia), the virgin, the daughter of Philosperon, and she will teach you the way of the Lord." When Atrasis woke from her sleep, her soul rejoiced and she sent for Yoana, who came to her at once. Princess Atrasis met Yoana, bowed down before her and embraced her.

Yoana started to tell her the reason for the incarnation of the Son of God, starting with the creation of Adam and how he was expelled from paradise, the coming down of the flood and the renewal of the creation once more, the reason for worshipping idols, the appearance of God to Abraham, the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, how the prophets proclaimed the coming of the Son of God, His coming down from Heaven and His incarnation through the Virgin and the salvation of the world from the hand of Satan. She made clear to Atrasis what the godly people will receive; and that is, heavenly grace in eternal life. When the virgin princess heard that, her soul rejoiced exceedingly. The words of Yoana were sweeter than honey to her ears and she immediately believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be the Glory. The two virgins worshipped day and night with fasting and prayers. One night they saw the Lord Christ and the Virgin Lady, His Mother, in a dream. The Lord placed His hand over their heads and blessed them.

Meanwhile, her father, the Emperor had gone to war. When he came back his daughter was betrothed to be married. Before the wedding ceremony, her father asked her to offer incense to the god Apollo, before getting ready for her bridegroom. She told him, "Father, how could you forsake the God of heaven and earth and worship defiled idols? Turn, O my father, to the God Who created you and in Whose hand is your life and death."

When her father heard these words, which he had never heard from her before, he asked who taught her that. They told him it was Yoana, the daughter of Philosperon, who corrupted her mind. He ordered them both to be burned. They took them outside the city, arrayed in their beautiful garments and their jewelry. Their slaves and handmaidens were crying. All the people of the city were sorry for the youth of these two saints and they asked them to submit to the Emperor's wish by offering incense to the idols, but they would not turn from their decision.

When they dug the pit and lit the fire, the two saints held each other's hands and they cast themselves into the fire. They stood in the fire, turned their faces towards the east and prayed, and

many had seen them. After the fire was out, some of the believers who were present went forward to take their bodies. They found them stuck to each other; their garments and their jewelry were not burned. They placed their bodies in a safe place until the end of the persecution era, then they built a great church for them.

The prayers of these two saints be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 80 A.D., St. Philip the Apostle, one of the Twelve Disciples, was martyred. His lot fell to go to Africa and the surrounding regions. He went and preached there in the Name of the Lord Christ. There, he performed many miracles and wonders which astounded the people.

After he led the people to the knowledge of God, confirming them in the faith, he went to Herapolis, where he also led the people to the knowledge of God.

The non-believers took counsel together to kill him, accusing him of disobeying the king's order that no stranger was allowed to enter their city. They jumped him and seized him, but he smiled at them saying, "Why do you keep yourselves away from everlasting life and why don't you think about the salvation of your souls?" But they did not pay any attention to his words, instead they tortured him severely, then they crucified him head down. During the crucifixion an earthquake took place; the people were terrified and ran away. Some believers arrived and wanted to untie him from the cross, but he asked them to leave him, so he might finish his strife and receive his crown. He delivered his soul to the hands of Christ and received the crown of eternal glory in the year 80 A.D. and was buried there.

In the sixth century A.D., his body was transferred to Rome. The Lord manifested many signs and great wonders through the body of St. Philip.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Nineteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. The Consecration of the Church of St. Sergius and St. Bacchus.

2. The Commemoration of the Preaching of St. Bartholomew, the Apostle.

1. This day marks the consecration of the church of St. Sergius and St. Bacchus in the city of Rusafa. When St. Sergius was martyred in this city¹⁰, some believers carried his body, prepared it for burial, hid it in their home and lit lamps and candles before it. When the era of persecution ended, they brought the body out and a church was built in the Saint's name. Fifteen bishops and a large number of people gathered on this day and attended the consecration of the church. When

¹⁰The account of his martyrdom is mentioned in the Tenth day of Babah. (Vol. I, P.)

the body of the Saint was brought to the church, scented oil flowed forth from it and many sick people who were anointed with it in faith were healed.

His blessings be with us. Amen.

2. On this day, we also commemorate St. Bartholomew¹¹, one of the Twelve Apostles, who preached in the oasis of Al-Khargah, where he led the people to the knowledge of God.

His prayers be with us and glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. The Departure of St. Anianus, 2nd Pope of Alexandria.

2. The Consecration of the Churches of Prince Theodore, the Son of John El-Shotbe, and Prince Theodore El-Mishreke.

1. On this day of the year 86 A.D., the holy father Abba Anianus, the second Pope of Alexandria, departed. This saint was a native of Alexandria, the son of pagan parents, and he was a cobbler. When St. Mark, the Apostle, entered the city of Alexandria, it happened by God's Divine Will that he tripped and tore his sandal. He gave it to Anianus to repair. While Anianus was thrusting the awl into it, the awl went through to the other side of the sandal and injured his finger. He screamed in pain, saying in Greek, "Eis Theos" which means "O, the Only God." When St. Mark heard him mentioning the Name of the Lord, he glorified the Lord Christ. Then he took some dust from the ground, spat on it and applied it to the finger of St. Anianus and he was healed immediately.

Anianus was exceedingly amazed. He took St. Mark to his house, asked him about his name, his belief, and where he came from. The apostle began to tell him of the books of the prophets concerning the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the mystery of His incarnation, His Death and Resurrection and the performing of miracles in His Holy Name.

Anianus' mind was illuminated and he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and all the people of his house believed with him. They were all baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and God's Divine Grace was poured upon them. They continued to listen to the teachings of the Apostle Mark, who taught them the doctrine of the church, its ordinances and its laws.

When St. Mark decided to go to Pentapolis, he laid his hand on Anianus and ordained him Patriarch over the city of Alexandria, in the year 64 A.D. St. Anianus continued preaching and baptizing its people secretly, helping and strengthening them in their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He turned his house into a church; and it is said that it is the one known as the church of St. Mark

¹¹The account of his martyrdom is mentioned in the First day of Tute. (Vol. I, P. 1)

the Martyr, where the church of St. Mark in Alexandria stands now. This saint occupied the throne of St. Mark for 22 years, then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also commemorates the consecration of the churches of the two saints: Prince Theodore (El-Shotbe), the son of John and Prince Theodore (El-Mishreke¹²).

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-First Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Commemoration of the Virgin St. Mary, the Theotokos.*

2. *The Departure of Saint Gregory, the Wonder Worker.*

3. *The Departure of Saint Cosma, 54th Pope of Alexandria.*

4. *The Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs Alphaeus, Zacchaeus, Romanus and John, and the Commemoration of the Saints Thomas, Victor, and Isaac of the City of Ashmunen.*

1. On this day the church celebrates and commemorates the pure Virgin St. Mary, the Mother of God, the Word Who was incarnated from her, for the salvation of Adam and his offspring.

Her intercession be for us. Amen.

2. Also on this day, in the year 270 A.D., St. Gregory the wonder worker, departed. He was the bishop of Neocaesarea, in the province of Pontos, where he was born to rich pagan parents. He learned philosophy and wisdom at an early age and surpassed many of his colleagues. Then he went to Beirut, where he studied the Greek and Latin subjects. From there he went to Caesarea, Palestine, where the erudite Origen was, who taught him Christian philosophy. He also learned Theology and the interpretations of the holy books. In the year 235 A.D., he went to the city of Alexandria, the cultural center of the world at that time, to complete his studies.

He returned to his town in the year 237 A.D. In the year 239 A.D., he was baptized in the holy baptism and became a Christian, for he realized the vanity of this world and chose the way of the everlasting kingdom of heaven. He directed all his attention to the salvation of his soul.

When he knew that the Bishop of his town was seeking him to assist him in the bishopric duties, he escaped to the wilderness. He devoted himself to prayers and ardent worship, forsaking the world and the futility of its glories.

When the Bishop of his town departed, they sought him in order to make him the new bishop but they did not know where to find him. It happened while the people were gathered with St.

¹²The martyrdom of Prince Theodore El-Shotbe is on the Twentieth day of the month of Abib (Vol. IV, P. 562) and Prince Theodore El-Mishreke is on the Twelfth day of the month of Tubah (Vol. II, P. 208).

Gregory, the Theologian, that they heard a voice say, "Seek Gregory the hermit and set him a Bishop over you." They sent a party to search for him in the wilderness and in the mountains. When they did not find him, they decided to take a Bible and pray the prayer of ordination over it, as though he were present. They called him Gregory even though his given name was Theodore. St. Gregory, the Theologian, presided over this service.

The angel of the Lord appeared to St. Gregory in the wilderness and said to him, "Rise up and go to your town, for they have made you the bishop over it and refuse not, for it is the Will of God." He did not hesitate, rose up immediately and descended from the mountain and went to his town. The people went forth to meet him with great honor, and they completed his ordination in the year 244 A.D.

The Lord performed many signs and wonders at his hands, so that he was called the wonder worker. For example, two brothers who owned a lake from which they made a good living by catching large amounts of fish had a falling out because of it, for each one of them claimed his ownership of it. When they were unable to reach an agreement, they sought the wisdom of St. Gregory to help them settle their differences. He ordered that they should divide the yield of the lake equally between themselves. When they did not heed his judgement, he entreated God and the waters of the lake dried up and it became a farmland, which they divided between them.

Reports of the signs and wonders which he made were heard throughout the land. Finally, when he completed his strife, he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

3. Also on this day, in the year 809 A.D., St. Cosma II, 54th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was born in Samanoud and became a monk in the monastery of St. Macarius. When the papal chair became vacant, the bishops and the people, with one accord, agreed to choose this father.

He was ordained Patriarch and he experienced great tribulations. The believers also experienced tribulations and great afflictions; however, some wonders appeared during his patriarchate. Among them, blood flowed from the icon of St. Mary in the church of St. Severus, in the desert of Scete (the Holy desert). Also, many of the icons in the churches in Egypt became wet with tears. This unusual phenomenon was believed to be a result of the afflictions and sorrows that befell the Patriarch and the believers.

In spite of all the afflictions that he experienced, the Patriarch continued teaching the believers and strengthening them diligently and with great zeal. He stayed on the Chair of St. Mark for seven years and six months, then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

4. This day also marks the commemoration of the martyrs Saints Alphaeus, Zacchaeus, Romanus and John. Also the commemoration of Saints Thomas, Victor and Isaac of the city of Ashmunen. *Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.*

The Twenty-Second Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

The Martyrdom of Saints Cosmas, Damian, Their Brothers and Their Mother

On this day, saints Cosmas and Damian, their brothers, Anthimus, Leontius (Londius) and Euprepus (Abrabius), and their mother Theodata, were martyred. They were from one of the Arab countries. Their mother feared God and was compassionate and merciful towards strangers. She became a widow, while her children were still young. She raised them and instilled in them the fear of God and the love of righteousness. Cosmas and Damian studied medicine and they treated the sick, free of charge. As for their brothers, they went to the desert and became monks.

When Diocletian renounced the faith and ordered the worship of idols, he was told that Cosmas and Damian were preaching in the Name of Christ, and urging others not to worship idols. He ordered them to be brought to the Governor of the city, who tortured them severely by beating them and burning them. He then asked them the whereabouts of their brothers. Upon finding out, he brought them and their mother. He ordered them to raise incense before the idols, but they refused. He then ordered the five to be squeezed through the wheel. When they experienced no harm, he took them out and cast them into a red hot furnace for three days and three nights, then into hot boiling water. Finally he placed them on red-hot iron beds. Through all this, however, the Lord raised them up whole and unharmed to reveal His glory and the honor of His saints.

When the Governor became weary of torturing them he sent them to the Emperor who also tortured them. Their mother constantly encouraged and comforted them. The Emperor rebuked her, but she admonished him for his cruelty and for worshipping idols. He ordered her head to be cut off and she received the crown of everlasting life. Her body remained on the ground and no one dared to bury it for their fear of the Emperor. St. Cosmas screamed at those present saying, "Men of this city, is there not one merciful person among you who will cover the body of this poor old widow and bury her?" Straightaway, Victor, the son of Romanus, came forward, took the body, placed it in a shroud, and buried it.

When the Emperor heard what Victor had done, he ordered that he be exiled in the land of Egypt, where he received the crown of martyrdom. The next day, the Emperor ordered the heads of the saints Cosmas, Damian, and their brothers to be cut off. They then received the crown of life in the kingdom of heaven.

At the end of the era of persecution, many churches were built in the name of these saints and God made manifest many signs and wonders therein.
Their intercession be for us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Third Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Departure of St. Cornelius the Centurion.*
2. *The Consecration of the Church of St. Marina.*

1. On this day, St. Cornelius the centurion, departed. He was a captain over one hundred soldiers in Caesarea of Palestine and he worshipped the stars.

When he heard the Apostles preaching and saw the miracles performed at their hands, which were above and beyond any human power or pagan gods, he was astonished, confused, and he started to doubt his gods. He forsook the worship of the stars and opened his heart to the Lord through prayers, fasting and merciful deeds. In his prayers he repeated, "O Lord God, I am confused in my knowledge of You, direct me and guide me to You." The Lord had compassion on him, accepted his prayers and his compassionate deeds, and sent an angel to announce to him that his prayers and alms had ascended before God and had been accepted by Him. He ordered him to send men to the city of Joppa, to bring St. Peter the Apostle, who was lodging with Simon the tanner and who would tell him what he must do. Cornelius did as the Lord said and had St. Peter brought to his house.

As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter lifted him up saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." When Peter went in the house, he found many Gentiles who had come together. Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or to go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore, I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then for what reason have you sent for me?" So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour, I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. Send, therefore, to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.' So I sent to you immediately and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

Peter then opened his mouth and said, "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation, whoever fears Him and works righteousness, is accepted by Him." Then he preached to them of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all, and explained to them the mystery of His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and the workings of miracles in His Name. Cornelius, his household, all his men and most of those who were with him, believed and were baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Straightaway the Holy Spirit descended upon them. (Acts 10)

Afterwards, Cornelius left the military service and followed the Apostles. St. Peter then ordained him a Bishop over the city of Caesarea of Palestine. He went there and proclaimed the Name of Christ, showing them the error of worshipping idols. Their minds were illuminated with the

knowledge of God and they believed in Him. He strengthened them with the signs and miracles he performed before them and he baptized them all and among them was Demetrius the Governor. Then he departed in peace and received the crown of glory of the apostles.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the great martyr, the chosen bride of the Lord Christ, the fighter St. Marina and the consecration of her church in the city of Antioch.

Her intercession be for us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

The Commemoration of the Twenty-Four Priests

On this day, we commemorate the twenty-four incorporeal priests of the Most High, who are sitting around His throne. They are exalted above all the saints and the spiritual hosts. Because of their closeness to God, they intercede on behalf of the human race and offer the prayers of the saints as incense, in the golden censers in their hands, before the Glorious and Blessed Lord.

St. John the Evangelist said in Revelation, "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, 'Come up here and I will show you things which must take place after this.' Immediately I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes, and they had crowns of gold on their heads. (Revelation 4:1-4) ... each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Revelation 5:8) who are on earth raising it to the Almighty.

St. John continued saying, "I heard the Four living creatures praising God and saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come.' Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him Who sits on the throne, Who lives forever and ever. The twenty-four elders fall down before Him Who sits on the throne and worship Him Who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your Will they exist and were created.' (Revelation 4:8-11)

And when a command went forth from God they fell down, and worshipped saying, 'Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints, who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your Name? For You alone are Holy. For all

nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested." (Revelation 15:3-4)

The fathers of the church arranged this feast to commemorate them.
Their intercession be for us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

*The Martyrdom of St. Mercurius
Known as the Saint with the Two Swords*

On this day, St. Mercurius, known as the saint with the two swords (Abu-Saifain), was martyred. He was born in the city of Rome. His parents were Christians and they called him Philopateer (which means "Lover of the Father"). They reared him in a Christian manner. When he grew, he enlisted in the army during the days of Emperor Decius, the pagan. The Lord gave Philopateer the strength and the courage, for which he earned the satisfaction of his superiors. They called him Mercurius and he grew very close to the Emperor.

When the berbers rose up against Rome, Decius went out to fight them, but when he saw how many they were, he became terrified. St. Mercurius assured him saying, "Do not be afraid, because God will destroy our enemies and will bring us victory." When he left the Emperor, an angel appeared to him in the shape of a human being, dressed in white apparel. The angel gave him a sword saying, "When you overcome your enemies, remember the Lord your God." (That is why he is called, "of the two swords", "Abu-Saifain", one is the military sword and the other is the sword of the divine power).

When Emperor Decius conquered his enemies and Mercurius came back victorious, the angel appeared to him and reminded him of what he told him previously, that is, to remember the Lord his God.

Decius, and his soldiers with him, wanted to offer up incense to his idols and St. Mercurius tarried behind. When they informed the Emperor of what had happened, he called St. Mercurius and expressed his amazement at his abandoning of his loyalty to him. The Emperor reprimanded him for refusing to come and offer incense to the idols. The Saint cast his girdle and his military attire down before the Emperor and said to him, "I do not worship anyone except my Lord and my God Jesus Christ." The Emperor became angry and ordered him to be beaten with whips and stalks.

When the Emperor saw how the people of the city and the soldiers were attached to St. Mercurius, the Emperor feared that they might revolt. So instead, he bound him in iron fetters and sent him to Caesarea where they cut off his head. He thus completed his holy fight and received the crown of life in the kingdom of heaven.

His intercession be for us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Commemoration of the Martyrdom of the Sts. Valerian (Balaryanos) and Tiburcius (Thiborinos), His Brother.*

2. *The Commemoration of St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa.*

1. On this day, Sts. Valerian (Balaryanos) and Tiburcius (Thiborinos), his brother, who were natives of Rome, were martyred. They were the sons of pagan parents. Balaryanos was betrothed to the daughter of one of the nobles of Rome; her name was Kilkeya. She was extremely beautiful and a Christian, who worshipped Christ in secret. When he married her, she gradually started to tell him about Christ's life and how to believe in Him, until he believed at her hands and was baptized. When St. Valerian was filled with Grace, he taught his brother who also became a believer and was baptized. Because of his righteousness, St. Valerian became worthy to talk to the angels and they revealed to him future hidden things.

When Diocletian reigned and persecuted the Christians, these two saints went around the city and carried the bodies of the martyrs, prepared them for burial and buried them. Certain wicked men betrayed them to Tosius, the king's usher, who summoned them and asked them about their belief. They confessed that they were Christians. He offered them many things if they would deny Christ and offer sacrifices to idols, but they were not deceived by his promises. He threatened them with many kinds of torture, but that did not frighten them. When he saw their patience and endurance, he ordered their heads to be cut off.

The usher saw angels carrying their souls up to heaven and immediately he believed in the Lord Christ. Because of his conversion, he was cast into prison for three days and on the fourth day, he was taken out of prison and his head was cut off along with the head of Kilkeya, Valerian's wife. They all received the crown of martyrdom.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also we commemorate the departure of St. Gregory, bishop of Nyssa. He was born in Cappadocia, in the year 330 A.D. and was ordained bishop by his brother, St. Basilus, in the year 372 A.D.

He was exiled during the reign of Emperor Valens, then returned in the year 378 A.D., by the order of Emperor Theodosius the Great. He wrote many church books and departed in peace in the year 396 A.D.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

The Martyrdom of St. James the Mangled (Sawn)

On this day, St. James the mangled, was martyred. He was one of the soldiers of Sakrod, the son of Shapur, King of Persia. Because of his courage and his uprightness, he was promoted to the highest rank in the king's court. He found favor and access to the king, who even counselled with him in many affairs. In this way, he influenced St. James greatly to the extent that he turned his heart away from worshipping the Lord Christ.

When his mother, his wife, and his sister heard that he adopted the king's belief, they wrote to him saying, "Why have you forsaken the faith in the Lord Christ and worshipped the created objects, the fire and the sun? Know that if you persist in what you are doing, we will disown you and you will become a stranger to us." When he read their letter, he wept and said, "If by doing that, I have become a stranger to my own family and my people, how would the situation be with my Lord Jesus Christ?" Consequently, he resigned from the king's service and devoted his time to reading the holy books.

When the news reached the king, he summoned St. James. When the King saw the change that had befallen him, he ordered that James be beaten severely and if he did not change his belief, he was to be cut up with knives. They cut off his fingers, his hands, his legs and his arms. Each time they cut off a piece of his body, he praised the Lord and sang saying, "Have mercy upon me O Lord according to Your great compassion." (Psalm 50:1) Eventually, nothing was left of him except his head, his breast and his loins.

When he knew that his time was near, he entreated the Lord to have mercy and compassion upon the world and the people therein. He apologized for not standing in the presence of the mighty Lord and said, "I have neither legs to stand before Thee, nor hands to lift up to Thee, behold the parts of my body have been cast around me, O Lord receive my soul." Straightaway, the Lord Christ appeared to him, comforted, and strengthened him and his soul rejoiced. Before he delivered up his soul, one of the guards made haste and cut off his head. He thus received the crown of martyrdom. Some of the believers then came forward and took his body, wrapped it and buried it.

When his mother, his sister, and his wife heard that he was martyred, they rejoiced for his soul and came to where the body was and kissed it, weeping. They shrouded it in expensive cloth and poured sweet scents and perfumed oil over it. A church and a monastery were built in his name during the reign of the righteous Emperors Arcadius and Honourius.

When the king of Persia heard the news of the miracles and wonders which appeared through the body of St. James and of the other honored martyrs, he ordered all the bodies of the martyrs in all parts of his kingdom, to be burnt. Some of the believers came and took the body of St. James and brought it to Jerusalem and entrusted it to St. Peter El-Rahawy, Bishop of Gaza.

The body remained there until the reign of Marcianus, who persecuted the Orthodox Christians everywhere. St. Peter, the Bishop, took the body to Egypt. There he went to the city of Behnasa, where he stayed in a monastery occupied by devoted monks. It happened that at the sixth hour, while they were praying in the place where the holy body laid, St. James appeared to them with many other martyrs of Persia. They joined them in singing, blessed them and disappeared. Before leaving, however, St. James told them that his body should stay there as the Lord commanded.

Despite this, when Anba Peter the Bishop, decided to return to his country, he took the body with him. When he arrived at the seashore, the body was taken from their hands and returned to the place where it had originally been.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

The Martyrdom of St. Sarapamon, Bishop of Niku

This day marks the martyrdom of St. Sarapamon, Bishop of Niku (Nakiyos). He was born in Jerusalem. His father's name was Abraham, the son of Levi, the son of Joseph, Simon's brother and uncle of Stephen, the Archdeacon and the first martyr. He was from the tribe of Judah. At birth, he was called Simon after his grandfather.

When his father died, Simon longed to become a Christian. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and commanded him to go to Abba John, Bishop of Jerusalem, who taught him the mystery of the incarnation of the Lord Christ. However, he did not dare to baptize him in Jerusalem, for his fear of Jews, and he was pondering what he should do.

The Virgin St. Mary, appeared to Simon and told him to go to the city of Alexandria, to St. Theonas, 16th Pope of Alexandria. He departed and the angel of the Lord, in the form of a man, accompanied him on his journey to the city of Alexandria. He went to Pope Theonas, who rejoiced on seeing him, preached to him and baptized him.

He then became a monk in El-Zogag monastery, (the monastery of Abba Severus, outside Alexandria). When Pope Theonas departed and Abba Peter, the seal of the martyrs, succeeded him, Abba Peter summoned Simon so that he could assist him in the works of the patriarchate.

When the chair of the city of Niku (Nakiyos) became vacant, Abba Peter ordained Simon Bishop over it. His flock rejoiced greatly in him and the Lord performed many signs and wonders at his hands. There were pagan temples close to his city, and he pleaded to the Lord Christ until they were destroyed and were covered with water and Paganism was eradicated from his diocese. The heresy of Sabilius of Upper Egypt, who taught that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one person, was also eradicated.

When Diocletian denied Christ, they told him that Sarapamon the Bishop had hindered the worship of idols with his teachings. Diocletian ordered Anba Sarapamon to be brought to him. When Anba Sarapamon arrived in Alexandria with the messengers, he spent the night in prison. Pope Peter, accompanied by some clergy, came to see him. When they embraced him, they saw his face as though it was that of an angel.

When Anba Sarapamon came before the Emperor, he tortured him with all kinds of torture, but the Lord Christ raised him up every time without suffering. When the Emperor saw that many people believed because of him, he sent him to Arianus, Governor of Ansena, who tortured him and threatened to cut off his head if he did not change his mind.

It happened that Arianus was in Alexandria, so he took St. Sarapamon with him in the ship. When the ship reached Niku (Nakiyos), his home town, the ship stopped and no one was able to move it. They took the saint off the ship and led him to the northern part of the city, where they cut off his head and he received the crown of martyrdom. The people of his diocese carried his body to the church with great honor.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Peter, the Seal of the Martyrs, 17th Pope of Alexandria.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Clement, Pope of Rome.*

1. This day marks the martyrdom of St. Peter, 17th Pope of Alexandria and the seal of the martyrs. His father was the archpriest of Alexandria and his name was Theodosius and his mother's name was Sophia. They were God-fearing people and they had no children.

On the fifth day of the Coptic month of Abib, the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, his mother went to church where she saw other mothers carrying their children. She was exceedingly sorrowful and she wept. She besought our Lord Jesus Christ with many tears, to grant her a son. That night, Peter and Paul appeared to her and told her that the Lord had accepted her prayers and that He would give her a son, and to call him Peter. They commanded her to go to the Patriarch, to bless her. When she woke up, she told her husband about what she saw and he was exceedingly glad. Then she went to the father, the Patriarch and told him about what she saw and asked him to pray for her. He prayed and blessed her.

Shortly after, she gave birth to this saint and called him Peter. When he was 7 years old, they gave him to Pope Theonas, as was done with Samuel the prophet and he became as a son to him. He placed him in the theological school where he received his education and excelled in preaching and counseling. He then ordained him as a reader, then as a deacon, and shortly after as a priest. He relieved the Pope of many church administrative duties.

Before Pope Theonas' departure, he recommended that Abba Peter be his successor. When he was enthroned on the See of St. Mark, the church was enlightened by his teachings.

It came to pass in the city of Antioch, that a man of high authority had agreed with Diocletian the Emperor, to return to paganism. That man had two children and because of him, their mother could not baptize them there. Therefore, she took them to Alexandria. On her way there, the sea was troubled by a violent storm and she was afraid that her two sons would drown and die without being baptized. She therefore dipped them in the sea three times saying, "In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit," then she cut her breast and with her blood made the sign of the Holy Cross over their foreheads.

Eventually, the troubled sea calmed down and she arrived safely to Alexandria with her sons. On the same day, she brought them to be baptized. Whenever, the Patriarch, St. Peter tried to baptize them, the water would solidify as stone. This happened three times. When he questioned her, she informed him of what had happened to her at sea. He marvelled and praised God saying, "That is what the church proclaims, that it is one baptism." Therefore, the baptism she performed in the sea was accepted by the Lord.

Also in the days of this Pope, Arius the heretic appeared and St. Peter advised him several times to turn from his wicked thoughts, but he would not hearken to him. Consequently, he excommunicated him and prevented him from the fellowship of the church.

Arius contacted Emperor Maximianus, the infidel, and reported to him that Peter, the Patriarch of Alexandria, incited the people not to worship the gods. The Emperor was outraged and he sent messengers with orders to cut off his head. When they arrived in Alexandria, they attacked the people and destroyed most of the cities of Egypt. They robbed all their valuables, their women and children. In total, about 840 thousand of them were killed, some with the sword, some with starvation and some with imprisonment. Then they returned to Alexandria and captured the father, the Patriarch, and imprisoned him.

When the people heard about their shepherd's arrest, they gathered in front of the prison door and wanted to save him by force. The officer in charge of his slaying was worried that the general peace would be disrupted, so he postponed the execution till the next day. When the saint saw what had happened, he wanted to deliver himself to death for his people, for he feared what might happen to his flock. He wished to depart and be with Christ, without causing any disturbances or troubles. He sent for his people and he comforted them and advised them to adhere to the true faith.

When Arius, the infidel, learned that St. Peter was departing to be with the Lord, leaving him under the band of excommunication, he entreated him, through the high priests, to absolve him. St. Peter refused and told them that the Lord Christ had appeared to him this night in a vision, wearing a torn robe. St. Peter asked Him, "My Lord, who rent Your robe?" The Lord replied, "Arius has rent My robe, because he separated Me from My Father. Beware of accepting him."

After this, St. Peter summoned the Emperor's messenger in secret and advised him to dig a hole in the prison's wall on the side where there were no Christians. The officer was amazed at the bravery of the father and he did as he commanded him. He took him out of prison secretly and brought him outside the city, to where the tomb of St. Mark the evangelist, Egypt's evangelist. There, he knelt down and asked the Lord, "Let the shedding of my blood mark the end of the worship of idols and be the end of the shedding of the blood of Christians." A voice came from heaven and was heard by a saintly virgin who was near that place. It said, "Amen. May it be to you according to your wishes." When he finished his prayer, the swordsman advanced and cut off his holy head.

The body remained in its place until the people went out hurriedly from the city to the place where he was martyred, because they did not know what had happened. They took the pure body and dressed it in the pontifical clothes and seated him on the seat of St. Mark, which he refused to sit on during his life. He used to say that he saw the power of God sitting on the Chair and therefore, he did not dare to sit on it.

Then they placed his body with the bodies of the saints. He occupied the throne of St. Mark for 11 years.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks the martyrdom of St. Clement, Pope of Rome. This Saint was born in Rome to an honorable father whose name was Fostinus; who was a member of the Senate. His father educated him and taught him Greek literature.

When St. Peter, the Apostle, came to Rome and Clement heard about his teaching, he called him to appear before him and they discussed many things together. The Apostle explained to him the falsehood of idol worship and proved to him the Divinity of the Lord Christ, in Whose Name they preached and performed miracles. He believed at his hands, was baptized by him, and followed him since that day.

St. Clement wrote the biography of the Apostles and what happened to them at the hands of the kings and rulers. He preached in numerous cities and many believed at his hands. He was the one to whom the apostles gave their Canon Books. He became the Archbishop of Rome in the latter part of the first century A.D. He preached there and brought many of its people to the knowledge of the Lord Christ.

Emperor Trajan heard of him and ordered him to be seized and brought to him. The Emperor commanded him to worship the idols and deny the Lord Christ, but St. Clement refused. Because the Emperor feared torturing him before the people of the city and before his family, he exiled him to a city and wrote a message to its Governor, telling him to torture St. Clement, then to kill him. The Governor tied his neck to an anchor and cast him into the sea. In this way, the Saint delivered up his pure spirit and received the crown of martyrdom, in the year 100 A.D.

One year after his departure, the sea water receded off his body, which appeared in the bottom of the sea as though he was alive. Many went in and were blessed and they decided to take the body

away from its place. They brought a marble coffin and laid him in it and when they wanted to take his body out of the sea, they were unable to move it. They knew that he did not wish to be moved from his place, so they left him and departed.

On the day of his feast each year, the sea would flow back and the visitors would enter and be blessed by him. Many frequently travelled to see this wonder.

Among the many miracles written about him: One year the visitors went in to visit and to be blessed by him and when they left, they forgot a little child who was behind the coffin of the Saint. This was according to the Lord Christ's Will, in order to reveal the honor of His beloved ones and the grace they had received from Him. When the child's parents remembered their son, they went back to the sea, but they found the water was back and that it had covered the casket. They realized that their son must be dead and devoured by the beasts of the sea. They wept over him and commemorated him as was the custom. The next year, when the sea waters receded, the people entered, as was their custom, and were amazed to find the child alive. They asked him how he existed and what he had eaten. He replied, "The Saint fed me, gave me drink, and protected me from the beasts of the sea." They praised the Lord Christ Who is glorified in all His saints.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Hatour

1. *The Departure of St. Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Macarius.*
3. *The Consecration of the Church of Saints Cosmas, Damian, Their Brothers and Their Mother.*

1. On this day, St. Acacius, Patriarch of the city of Constantinople, departed. He was knowledgeable and well informed about the Holy Books and was an expert in explaining their mysteries. So, he was ordained a priest over the church of Constantinople.

When the council of Chalcedone convened, he refused to attend its meeting and when they called on him to hear his opinion, he refused, claiming he was sick. He was exceedingly sorrowful for the tribulations that befell St. Dioscurus and he made that known to his companions and those he trusted: the Governors, Christians and ministers whom he knew to be dedicated and faithful Orthodox. He thanked the Lord that he did not participate in the works of this council.

When Anatolius, the Patriarch of Constantinople departed, this father was chosen by the believing ministers and the enlightened government officials to be successor. St. Acacius strove diligently to eliminate the division and enmity that dwelled in the church. When he found that the spiritual ailment was deep-rooted and difficult to overcome, he believed that the proper thing to do was to devote his efforts to the salvation of his own soul.

He sent a letter to the holy father, Abba Peter, the Pope of Alexandria, confessing the true faith which he had learned and received from the holy fathers, Abba Cyril and Abba Dioscorus. He

followed that letter with many others, asking the Pope of Alexandria to accept him in the fellowship. The Pope of Alexandria answered all his letters, then he wrote him a Catholic letter and sent it with three bishops. They went disguised until they entered Constantinople and there they met Acacius, who treated them with great honor and received the letter from them. He read the letter to his friends, the Orthodox nobles of the city and they all agreed on it and with him, and confessed the True Faith. Then he wrote a letter before them, accepting the faith of Abba Dioscorus, Abba Timothy and Abba Peter and confessing the soundness of their faith.

Afterwards, he accompanied the three bishops to some monasteries and he took part with them in the celebration of the liturgy and the partaking of the Holy Communion. The bishops then exchanged the blessings with him, took the letter and returned it to Abba Peter. The Bishops informed Abba Peter about their fellowship with Abba Acacius and that they had taken part in the liturgy with him. Abba Peter accepted the letter and ordered that Abba Acacius be mentioned in the liturgies and the prayers of the Coptic church.

When the news reached the bishops of Rome, they exiled St. Acacius from Constantinople. He remained in exile until he departed in peace, all the while remaining firm in his Orthodox Faith.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of St. Macarius, the martyr.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day, we also commemorate the consecration of the church of the Saints Cosmas and Damian; their brothers, Anthimus, Leontius (Londius) and Euprepus (Abrabius); and their mother Theodata.¹³

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

¹³The account of their martyrdom is recorded in the twenty-second day of the Coptic month of Hatour (Vol. I, P.).

*In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
One God. Amen*

**The Blessed Month of Kiahk
The First Day**

- 1. The Departure of St. Peter Elrahawy, Bishop of Gaza.*
- 2. The Consecration of the Church of the Saint Abba Shenouda.*

1. This day marks the departure of St. Peter Elrahawy (the Iberian), Bishop of Gaza. He was born in the year 409 A.D. in the City of Raha (Edessa)¹ to a noble family. When he was twenty years old, his parents gave him to the Emperor Theodosius II, to be one of his attendants. But because he had forsaken the world and its glories, he practiced asceticism and worship while living in the king's palace. He had parts of the relics of the holy martyrs of Persia with him.

Abba Peter left the royal court and became a monk in a monastery. He fought a great spiritual fight. Shortly after, they ordained him Bishop of Gaza and its surroundings, against his will. It was said that when he celebrated his first Liturgy, blood flowed from the Holy Body and filled the Paten.

Abba Peter took the body of St. James, the mangled², and relocated it to a monastery in the city of Raha. When Marcian the Chalcedonian Emperor, started persecuting the Orthodox Bishops, Abba Peter took the body of St. James and came to Egypt where he dwelt in a monastery in El-Bahnasa. There he met the holy man Abba Isaiah the Egyptian.

After the end of Emperor Marcian's reign, Abba Peter went back to the land of Palestine and went on confirming the believers.

One day while he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy, a few of the people present in the church were conversing about earthly matters and were distracted from listening to the prayers. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and reproached him because he did not admonish those who were talking in the church.

Emperor Zeno heard of him and longed to see him, but was not able to do so because Abba Peter did not like the glory of this world. Abba Peter went to the area between Jerusalem and Damascus in Palestine, called Gaur³.

¹El-Raha or Urfa is an ancient city in modern Iraq. It is said that it was Ur of the Chaldees, home of Ibrahim.

²His martyrdom is on the 27th day of Hatour (P. 171).

³Designation of that part of the Syrian Groben which constitutes the Jordan valley.

On the feast day of St. Peter⁴, 17th Pope of Alexandria, Abba Peter celebrated the Divine Liturgy during which St. Peter appeared and told him, "Christ the Lord is calling you to be with us." Abba Peter called the people and commanded them to be firm in their Orthodox Faith, then he stretched out his hand and delivered up his soul in the hands of the Lord.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, is the commemoration of the consecration of the church of the great saint, Abba Shenouda (Shenoute) the Archimandrite⁵.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Second Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Departure of the Saint Abba Hor, the Monk

This day marks the departure of the saint Abba Hor, the monk. This father was a native of the city of Abraht, district of Ashmunein. He was a chosen monk that surpassed many saints in his worship. He loved the solitary life so he lived in seclusion in the desert. Satan envied him, so he appeared to Abba Hor and told him, "In the desert you can conquer me because you are alone here, but if you are brave, go to Alexandria and I will tempt you there." When Abba Hor heard that, he rose up immediately and went to Alexandria. He remained there for a while drawing water for the prisoners and the shut ins.

One day horses were galloping in the middle of the city, one of them hit a child and killed him immediately. Saint Abba Hor was standing where the child was killed. Satan entered the hearts of some of the people who were standing around and made them shout saying, "The killer of this child was that old monk." Several people were passing by and heard that. They gathered around and mocked Abba Hor. The saint, Abba Hor, was not disturbed. He took the child in his arms, while praying to the Lord Christ in his heart, then he made the sign of the honorable Cross over the child. The child's soul returned to him, and Abba Hor delivered the child to his parents.

The people standing around marvelled and glorified God, and their hearts and minds turned toward Abba Hor. Being afraid of vainglory, he escaped to the desert and stayed there in one of the monasteries for the rest of his days.

When his departure from this futile world drew near, he saw the company of saints calling him. He rejoiced exceedingly. He sent for his disciples, commanded them to remain in the path of the ascetic life, and told them that he was about to depart to the Lord Christ. They were sorrowful for

⁴His martyrdom is on the 29th day of Hatour (P. 176).

⁵His biography and departure is on the 7th day of Abib.

his departure, and felt that they would be orphans without him. After a short sickness, he delivered up his soul in the hands of the Lord.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Third Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Entrance of Saint Mary into the Temple at Jerusalem

On this day we commemorate the entrance of our holy Lady, the Virgin, Saint Mary, the Theotokos, into the Temple when she was three years old, for she was dedicated to God.

Her mother, Anna (Hannah), was childless. The women who were in the Temple stayed away from her. She was exceedingly sad and so was her husband Joachim who was a blessed old man. She prayed to God fervently and with a contrite heart saying, "If You give me a fruit, I will devote the child to Your Holy Temple." God answered her prayers and she brought forth this pure saint and called her Mary.

She reared her for three years, after which she took her to live with the virgins in the Temple. Saint Mary dwelt in the sanctuary for 12 years. She received her food from the hands of the angels, until the time when our Lord Christ came into the world, and was incarnated through her, the elect of all women.

When she had completed 12 years in the sanctuary, the priests took counsel together concerning her, so that they might entrust her to someone who would protect her, for she was consecrated to God and they were not allowed to keep her in the temple after this age. They decided that she be engaged to a man who could take care of her and who would look after her.

They gathered 12 righteous men from the house of David of the Tribe of Juda so they might place her with one of them. They took their staffs inside the Sanctuary, and a dove flew up and stood on the staff belonging to Joseph the carpenter who was a righteous man. They knew that this was God's will.

Joseph took the holy Virgin St. Mary, and she dwelt with him until Gabriel, the Angel of the Lord, came to her and announced to her that the Son of God was to be incarnated from her, for the salvation of Adam and his posterity.

Her intercession be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

*The Martyrdom of St. Andrew the Apostle,
the Brother of St. Peter*

On this day, St. Andrew the Apostle, the brother of St. Peter, was martyred. He was chosen to go to the city of Lydd and to Kurdistan. He entered the city of Lydd, where most of its people had believed at the hands of St. Peter. He was accompanied by his disciple, Philemon, who had a sweet voice and was a good reader. St. Andrew commanded Philemon to go up to the pulpit and read.

When the priests of the idols heard of the arrival of Andrew the Apostle, they took their spears and went to the church. They stood outside the church to hear if he was cursing their gods or not. They heard Philemon reading the words of David the Prophet, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak: eyes they have but they do not see: They have ears, but they do not hear: noses they have, but they do not smell: They have hands, but they do not handle: feet they have, but they do not walk: nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; so is everyone who trusts in them." (Psalm 115:4-8)

Their hearts rejoiced because of his sweet voice and their emotions mellowed. They entered the church, and bowed down at the feet of Andrew the Apostle. He preached to them and they believed in the Lord Christ. Then he baptized them with the rest of those who worshipped idols.

Andrew the Apostle, then left them and went to Kurdistan and to the cities of Aksis, Aregnas and Henefores, to preach there.

He also went with St. Bartholomew to the city of Azrinos. Its people were wicked and knew not God. They went on preaching and teaching them until they lead many of them to the knowledge of God, because of the signs and wonders they performed before them. Those who did not believe plotted against him. They sent for him so that when he arrived, they would attack him and kill him. When their messengers came to St. Andrew and heard his sincere teachings and saw his shining face, they believed in our Lord Christ and did not return to those who had sent them.

The unbelievers decided to go to him and burn him. When they gathered around him to do what they had intended, the Apostle prayed to the Lord, and immediately fire came down from heaven and surrounded them. They were terrified and believed.

The report of St. Andrew the Apostle, was heard throughout all these countries and many believed in the Lord. Nevertheless the priests of the idols did not cease looking for him in order to kill him. Afterwards, they gathered and went to him; they bound him and beat him severely. After they dragged him around the city naked, they cast him into prison, so that they might crucify him the following day. Their custom was to stone those who were to be killed by crucifixion.

The Apostle spent his night praying to God. The Lord Christ appeared to him and strengthened him saying, "Do not fear or worry for the time of your departure from this world is near." He gave him peace and disappeared. St. Andrew's soul rejoiced for what he saw.

On the next day, they hanged him upon a tree and stoned him until he departed. Certain believers came and took his holy body and laid it with great honor in a private grave. Many signs and wonders were made manifest from his body.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Departure of Nahum, the Prophet.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Victor (Boctor).*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Isidore (Isidorus).*

1. On this day is the commemoration of the righteous Prophet Nahum, one of the minor 12 prophets. He was born in the village of El-Kosh, one of the villages of Galilee. He was of the tribe of Simeon, among the prophets, he was the 16th from Moses down. He prophesied in the days of Amaziah the son of Joash, and in the days of Azariah, his son.

He rebuked the children of Israel because of their worship of idols and he revealed to them that although God, the most High, is compassionate and abundant in mercy, yet He is a jealous God Who will take vengeance on His adversaries. He prophesied concerning the preaching of the Gospel and the apostles who should preach it, saying, "Behold on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace..." (Nahum 1:15)

Nahum prophesied about the destruction that would come upon Ninevah. That was fulfilled since God had sent an earthquake and a fire which destroyed and burnt up the people that returned from the way of righteousness and committed the sin. As for those who were straight in their ways, no evil nor harm befell them.

When he completed his days in a life pleasing to God, he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also St. Victor (Boctor) was martyred. He was born in a town, in the province of Assiut, east of the Nile. He was appointed a soldier in the city of Shaou (Shaw).

During that time the Edict of Diocletian was issued to worship and raise incense to the idols. When St. Victor refused to worship the idols, the Governor of Shaou called him and tried to befriend him, but when he failed to persuade him, the Governor finally cast him into prison. His parents came and encouraged him to face martyrdom.

Once again the Governor brought him from prison and ordered him to worship the idols, but St. Victor refused. When the Governor of Shaou failed to make him renounce his faith in the Lord Christ, he was enraged. He sent him to the Governor of the province of Assiut, along with some soldiers, and a message informing him of what had happened.

When the Governor of Assiut read the message, he summoned Victor. When Victor came before him, the Governor asked him, "Why did you disobey the Governor of Shaw? Know, if you listen to me, I shall place you in a high honor, and I shall write to the Emperor to appoint you as governor over one of the cities." The saint shouted with a loud voice, saying, "The kingdoms of the world vanish, the gold perishes, the cloth wears out, the beauty of the body will corrupt and be eaten by worms and will disappear in graves, therefore I would not forsake my Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and the Provider for everyone, to worship idols made of stone which are inhabited by devils."

The Governor was enraged and ordered him to be tied to the tails of horses and be dragged to the village of Ebesidia. There, they asked him again to worship the idols, but he refused. The Governor ordered him to be killed by throwing him in boiling water in the village of Mosha (Monshah), east of the village of Ebesidia (Ibsidya).

When they took him there, Victor asked the soldiers to wait in order that he might pray first. He extended his arms and prayed to the Lord. The Angel of the Lord appeared to him and promised him with many promises, and the everlasting blessings in the kingdom of heaven. Then St. Victor looked to the soldiers and told them, "Finish what you have been ordered to do." They bound him and cast him into the boiling water. He endured to the end, completed his good strife, and received the crown of the Heavenly kingdom.

Some Christians secretly recovered his body and hid it till the end of the Diocletian reign. When they revealed it, the people who saw it testified that they found the body whole, with not even one hair burned, and lying peacefully like a sleeping person.

They built a great church in his name, which still exists in the village of Mosha (Monshah), province of Assiut. Many wonders and signs were manifested from his body and still appear to this day⁶.

His prayer be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Isidorus.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

⁶The commemoration of the consecration of his church is documented under the 5th of the month of Baounah.

The Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Departure of St. Abraam (Abraham), Ebn-Zaraa, 62nd Pope of Alexandria.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Anatolius (Anatole).*

1. On this day, of the year 970 A.D., the saint Anba Abraam, 62nd Pope of Alexandria, departed. This father was a descendant of the Christians of the East, whose name was Ebn-Zaraa the Syrian. He was a rich merchant who visited Egypt often, then finally settled there.

He was blessed with many virtues, including mercy to the needy. His reputation of righteousness and knowledge became well known. When the Patriarchal Chair became vacant, the bishops and the learned elders all agreed to choose him as Patriarch. When he sat on the chair of the See of St. Mark, he gave all his possessions to the poor and needy.

During his days, Cosman Ebn-Mina, the Coptic minister, was appointed a Governor over Palestine. Before his departure to his new position, he entrusted one hundred thousand dinars to the father, the Patriarch, asking him to hold them until his return. He asked the Pope to give the money to the poor, the needy, the churches and the monasteries, if he died there. When the news of the taking over of Syria and Palestine by Hafktin (Kormati), reached the Patriarch, he thought that Cosman had died. He distributed that money according to Cosman's instructions. But Cosman was saved from death and returned to Egypt. The father, the Patriarch, told him what he did with the money, and Cosman was glad and exceedingly happy.

Among his accomplishments was the abolition of some corrupt and erroneous customs. He prevented and excommunicated everyone who took bribes from anyone for the purpose of gaining a clerical position. He also strongly forbade the keeping of concubines. When the people who were practicing that knew his orders, the fear of God moved them, for they also feared that the Patriarch might excommunicate them.

They set all their concubines free and went to the Patriarch repenting, except for one of the rich men of the country. This man did not fear God nor did he heed the fact that this father, who chided him repeatedly and was very patient with him, would excommunicate him. He did not return from his evil way and was not afraid lest God should destroy him. In spite of that, this father did not slacken in teaching and rebuking him. Furthermore he humbled himself like Christ, his teacher, and he went to that man's house. When the man heard of the arrival of the Patriarch to his house, he shut the door and refused to let him in. The father remained standing at the door for two hours knocking but the man neither opened the door for him, nor did he speak to him. The father realized that this wretched man had intentionally separated himself from the flock of Christ and became a corrupt member.

The Pope saw it fit to cut him from the body of the church, so as not to corrupt the rest of the body. He excommunicated him saying, "Let his blood be on his own head," and then the Pope shook off the dust from his sandals at the door of the house of that man. At this moment God

manifested a sign before the eyes of those who were present, for the doorstep, which was made of granite, had split in two. Later on, the Lord showed his might, and the man lost all his wealth and he was fired from his position in disgrace. He became ill which led to his death in a horrible way. He became an example to the others; since many sinners learned a lesson and were afraid as a result of what happened to him.

During the days of this father, El-Mu'izz, the Khalifa, had a Jewish Vizier; his name was, Jacob-Ebn-Yousef, who adopted the Muslim faith (Islam). That minister had a Jewish friend (Ebn-Killis), who used to go with him frequently to the Khalifa and converse with him. That Jew took advantage of the favor that his friend had with the Khalifa, and found this to be an opportunity to ask for the presence of the father, the Patriarch, in order that he might have a debate with him.

Abba Abraam came along with Anba Severus Ebn-EI-Mukafaa, Bishop of Ashmunein. El-Mu'izz ordered them to sit, so they sat down silently. He asked, "Why are you not debating?" Anba Severus answered, "How can we argue in the presence of El-Khalifa, with a man who is less intelligent than an ox?" El-Mu'izz asked for an explanation. Anba Severus said, "God has declared by the mouth of the prophet, 'The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib: but Israel does not know.'" (Isaiah 1:3) They debated that Jew and shamed him with all the unrefutable arguments that prove the soundness of the Christian faith. Then they left El-Mu'izz with great honor.

The minister and his Jewish friend were not able to bear the insults. So they sought the chance to take revenge of on Christians.

A few days later, the Jewish Vizier; Jacob-Ebn-Yousef went to El-Mu'izz and maliciously told him, "Your royal highness knows that the faith of the Christians does not have a sound base. Their Bible states, 'If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move.' (Matthew 17:20) Prince of the faithful⁷ knows the falsehood of these sayings. And to verify this, we will summon the Patriarch to give us the proof that their Christ's sayings are true."

The Khalifa thought to himself, "If the saying of Christ is true, that would be of great benefit to us, for the Mukatam mount is too close to Cairo. If the mountain can be moved away, that would make the position of the city greater than what it is now. If the saying is not true, that will give us the justification to persecute the Christians."

El-Mu'izz called the father, the Patriarch, and placed this saying before him, and asked for the proof of its soundness. The Pope asked for a three-day respite, which was granted. When the Pope left El-Khalifa, he gathered the monks and the bishops nearby and they all stayed in El-Mualaquia (the Suspended) Church in Old Cairo, three days fasting and supplicating God.

⁷One of the titles used in addressing the Muslim Caliphs.

Before dawn of the third day as Abba Abraam dozed off out of sheer weariness, our Holy Lady, the Virgin, St. Mary, the Mother of God, appeared to him and told him to rise up and go to the street which leads to the market. There he would find a one-eyed man bearing a pot of water on his shoulder. She instructed Abba Abraam to tell him that he was the man designated by God to perform this sign.

This holy man's name was Simon and he was a Tanner. The father, the Patriarch, took him along with some of the priests, monks and people to see El-Mu'izz, who was out with the government leaders and the nobles of the city nearby the Mukatam Mountain. The father, the Patriarch, stood with those who were with him on one side and El-Mu'izz and his entourage stood on the other side.

The father, the Patriarch, and the believers prayed and knelt down three times, and every time they knelt, they said, "Kirya-layson" Lord have mercy. Whenever the Patriarch and the congregation lifted up their heads after each bow, the mountain would lift up and when they bowed down, the mountain was lowered down to the ground, and whenever they walked, the mountain moved before them.

A great fear came on the Khalifa and his companions and many fell on the ground. The Khalifa advanced on his horse toward the Patriarch and said, "O great teacher, I now know that you are a holy man, ask whatsoever you wish and I will give it to you." The Patriarch refused to ask for anything; but when the Khalifa insisted, he asked the Governor to allow him to build churches, especially the church of St. Mercurius (of the two swords) which was in Old Cairo. He wrote him a decree permitting the building and the renovation of churches and he gave him a large sum of money from the treasury. The Patriarch thanked him and prayed for him, but he refused to take the money. As a result, El-Mu'izz revered and respected him more for his piety and righteousness.

When they started building the church of St. Mercurius, some evil men prevented them from working, whereupon El-Mu'izz came to the sight and kept the troublemakers away. He remained there, standing until they completed laying the foundation.

This father renovated many churches all over the See of St. Mark. When he completed his course, he departed in peace after he sat on the chair for 3 years and 6 days.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also we commemorate St. Anatolius (Anatole - Patlas), the priest and martyr.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Departure of St. Matthew the Poor

On this day, St. Matthew the Poor departed. This father was the Abbot of a monastery in Aswan Mount. He had great virtues. The Lord granted him the gift of healing the sick and casting off of evil spirits.

Once they brought him a woman with an unknown sickness, which the doctors failed to cure, but he knew her problem through the Holy Spirit. He asked her to confess before those who were present. She confessed that she was married to two brothers at the same time, as a result, she was afflicted by that illness. The saint prayed for her and she was healed instantly.

He reached a degree of piety to the point that the beasts did not fear him and ate their food from his hand. When he finished his course, he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Departure of St. Heraclas (Theoclas), 13th Pope of Alexandria.*

2. *The Martyrdom of the Saints: Barbara and Juliana.*

3. *The Martyrdom of the Saints: Esi (Isi) and His Sister Thecla.*

4. *The Departure of St. Samuel the Abbot of El-Qualamon Monastery (Abba Samuel the Confessor).*

1. On this day of the year 240 A.D., the holy father, Pope Heraclas, 13th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was born to pagan parents who believed and were baptized after his birth. They taught him the Greek philosophy, then the Christian wisdom. He also studied the four gospels and the epistles. St. Demetrius, 12th Pope of Alexandria, ordained him deacon, then a priest over the church of Alexandria. He was successful in the ministry and was faithful in all that was entrusted to him.

When Abba Demetrius departed, St. Heraclas was chosen as Patriarch. He shepherded the flock of Christ well. He converted many pagans and baptized them. He devoted his efforts to teaching, preaching and instructing the transgressors. He assigned to St. Dionysius the work of judging between the believers, and taking care of their affairs. Pope Heraclas sat on the throne of St. Mark for 13 years and departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also Sts. Barbara and Juliana, were martyred. Barbara was the daughter of a noble man from one of the countries in the east, called Dioscorus, during the days of Maximianus the Emperor, in the beginning of the third Christian century.

Because of his strong love for her, he built her a tower to live in. The saint always raised up her eyes to the sky from the top of the tower and contemplated the beauty of the sky and what was in it: the sun, the moon and the stars. She came to the conclusion that they must have an able and wise maker and that would be none other than the Almighty God who created them.

Origen, the scholar, happened to be in this area and was informed of the saint. He went to her and taught her the principles of Christianity.

There were two windows in the bathroom and she ordered a third one to be opened and a cross to be placed over the water basin. When her father came to see her and saw the changes that were done, he asked her for the reason. She told him, "Don't you know, my father, that with the Holy Trinity everything is complete, and here are three windows in the name of the Holy Trinity. This sign is the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherein was the salvation of the whole world. I ask you, O my dear father, to turn away from the wrong way that you are in and worship the God Who created you."

When her father heard these words, he became angry, drew his sword and ran after her. She fled, and he ran after her. There was a rock in front of her that split into two halves and she went through. The rock then returned to its earlier state. Her father went around the rock and found her hidden in a cave. He jumped over her like a wolf, seized her and took her to Marcianus, the governor. The Governor talked to her kindly, promising her many things. Then he threatened her, but could not take away her love for the Lord Christ. Thereupon, he ordered her to be tortured with different kinds of torture.

There was a damsel called Juliana, who watched St. Barbara while she was being tortured and wept for her. Juliana saw the Lord Christ strengthening and comforting St. Barbara; she was enlightened and believed in the Lord Christ. They cut off her head and that of St. Barbara and they both received the crown of martyrdom.

St. Barbara's father perished shortly after and so did the Governor who tortured her. The water of the basin that had the cross over it in the tower had the power to heal everyone who washed with it.

They placed the bodies of these two saints in a church outside of the city of Galatia. Years later, they relocated the body of St. Barbara to the church in Cairo which is named after her to this day. *Their prayers be with us. Amen.*

3. On this day also was the martyrdom of St. Esi and his sister Thecla. They were from the city of Abu-Sair, west of El-Ashmunein. St. Esi was a very rich man. He gave the money which he earned from the shearing of his sheep to the needy.

When Esi knew that his friend Paul, whom he visited often for trading, was seriously ill in the city of Alexandria, he went to visit him and remained with him until he recovered from his illness. They both agreed to visit the saints who were in prison because of the persecution. Some of the saints in prison prophesied that they would receive the crown of martyrdom.

That was during the time when St. Victor, the son of Romanus (Ebn-Romanus) came to Alexandria. When Esi and Paul knew of his good strife and of his renouncing of the world, they wished to follow his example. Esi went to the Governor and confessed the Lord Christ. The Governor ordered him to be tortured with the most severe kinds of torture such as making him take off his clothes, binding and squeezing him, then placing burning torches on his sides. They also ordered him to be cast on the ground and beaten with whips, and to dismember parts of his body. Through it all he was patient, and the Angel of the Lord strengthened him and healed his wounds. Paul, his friend, was crying and praying along with his servants for Esi's sake.

The Angel of the Lord appeared to his sister Thecla and ordered her to go to her brother. She went to the seashore and embarked on one of the ships. Therein, the Virgin, the Mother of God, and Elizabeth, her kinswoman, appeared to her and comforted her because of her brother. Elizabeth told her, "I have a son; they beheaded him unjustly," and St. Mary told her, "I have a Son whom they crucified with envy." Thecla did not recognize them at that time.

When she met her brother, they agreed together and went to the Governor confessing the Lord Christ. He tortured them severely on the squeezing wheel (Hinbazeen), burned them with fire, nailed them, and flayed the skin of their heads. But the Lord healed, strengthened, and comforted them. When the Governor became weary of torturing them, he handed them to his son, the Governor of the city of Antione (Ansenia) in Upper Egypt. When they had sailed for a short while, the wind died down so the boat stopped. The Governor ordered the heads of Esi and Thecla, his sister, to be cut off and cast into the weeds and the wild plants on the banks. They did so and thus they received the crown of martyrdom.

The Lord commanded a priest called Abba Ori⁸ (Ari) from Shatanouf to go and take their holy bodies. As for Paul, Esi's friend, and Ablanius, the son of Thecla, they were martyred later on.
Their intercession be with us. Amen.

4. Also on this day the saint Abba Samuel, the head of El-Qualamon Monastery, departed. He was born in the city of Dakluba, diocese of Masil, from holy parents and he was their only child. Arselaos, his father, who was a priest, saw in a vision at night, a resplendent man telling him, "Your son must be entrusted with a large congregation, for he is chosen by the Lord to be His all the days of his life."

Samuel was pure from his youth, like Samuel the prophet, and he was always harboring thoughts in his heart about the monastic life. One day he found a means to go to the desert of Scete, but he

⁸His martyrdom is mentioned under the 9th day of the blessed month of Misra.

did not know the way. The Angel of the Lord, in the form of a monk, appeared to him and accompanied him as he was himself going to the monastery, until they came to the desert of Scete. There, the Angel delivered him to a holy man called Abba Agathon who accepted him as the Angel of the Lord instructed. Abba Samuel lived with Abba Agathon for three years in total obedience in every way. Later on, the holy old man Abba Agathon departed. Abba Samuel devoted himself to many prayers and fasting. He fasted a week at a time. He was ordained a priest over the church of St. Macarius in Scete.

An envoy came to the desert carrying Leo's Tome⁹ and when the envoy read it to the elders, Abba Samuel became zealous, with the zeal of the Lord. He jumped up in the middle of the gathered monks and seized the letter and rent it into pieces saying, "Excommunicated is this tome and everyone who believes in it and cursed is everyone who might change the Orthodox faith of our Holy Fathers." When the envoy saw this, he became furious and angry. He ordered him to be beaten with pins and to be hanged up by his arms, and that his face be smitten. One of these strikes enucleated one of St. Samuel's eyes. Then he was driven away from the monastery.

The Angel of the Lord appeared to St. Samuel and commanded him to depart and to dwell in El-Qualamon. He went there and built a monastery, lived in it for a while teaching those gathered around him and confirming them in the Orthodox faith.

When El-Moquakas heard about Abba Samuel, he came to him and asked him to recognize the Council of Chalcedon. When he did not listen to him, he smote him and expelled him out of the monastery. He went and lived in one of the churches and after a while he returned to the monastery.

When the Barbers raided the monastery, they took him with them on their way back to their country. He prayed to the Lord Christ to rescue him from them. Whenever they set him on a camel, the camel was unable to stand up with him on it, so they left him and he went back to his monastery.

When the Barbers raided the wilderness again, they took St. Samuel with them to their country. They had captured before Abba Yoannis the hegomen (Archpriest) of Scete. So they were joined together and comforted each other. The captive of Abba Samuel tried to persuade him to worship the sun. When he failed, he tied the leg of Abba Samuel to the leg of one of his maidens and sent them to attend to the camels. He intended for Abba Samuel to fall into sin with her and then he would submit to him, according to Satan's advice. Through it all, the saint was gaining more courage and became stout-hearted. He remained in these circumstances until the master's son fell ill and was close to death; Abba Samuel prayed for him and the boy was healed of his sickness. The news was spread all over this country and whosoever was sick came to him; he prayed over him and anointed him with oil and the sick were healed.

⁹The confession of Pope Leo of Rome of the two natures of Christ which was decided upon in the Council of Chalcedon. The Coptic Orthodox Church is a non-Chalcedonian Church, i.e., our Church does not recognize this Council or its doctrines.

His master loved him exceedingly, he apologized and asked for Abba Samuel's forgiveness. He told him to ask for anything he wished. Abba Samuel asked to go back to his monastery. His master allowed him to return.

When Abba Samuel returned, many of his sons gathered around him and they increased in number until they became thousands. The Virgin, St. Mary, appeared to him and told him, "This place shall be my abode forever," and from that day the Barbarians never attacked this monastery again.

Abba Samuel wrote many discourses and articles. He prophesied concerning the coming of Islam to Egypt. When the time of his departure drew near, he gathered together his sons and commanded them to be strong in the fear of God, to walk according to His commandments and to fight for the sake of the Orthodox faith till their last breath. Then he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

On this day also is the departure of St. Yustus, the monk of St. Anthony's monastery.

The Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Departure of St. Poemin, the Confessor

On this day St. Poemin, the confessor, departed. He was from the village of Bani-Khaseeb, district of El-Ashmunein. He was the steward of a rich man, whose wife trusted him greatly. Because of his chastity and his righteousness, everybody loved him.

Because of his disdain for the vanities of this world, he left his work and went to a monastery in this city wherein he became a monk. When the rich man, his employer, knew about it, he and his wife went to him and asked him to come back to his job, for they were sorrowful for his departure. When he did not go along with them, they returned sad. The saint went on with his worship and asceticism, but he was not satisfied with that, and longed to become a martyr by the shedding of his blood in the Name of the Lord Christ, to Whom is the glory.

He went to Ansena and found many Christians were being tortured for the Name of Christ. He therefore went forward and confessed his faith. They tortured him severely by beating him, burning him, by dismemberment of his body parts, and by squeezing him on the Hinbazeen. During all these tortures, the Lord Christ strengthened him and raised him up whole. While he was suffering in this manner, the era of worshipping idols came to an end; for Constantine the Just became emperor and ordered all those in prison, because of their faith in the Lord Christ, to be set free.

The Lord Christ appeared to this saint and commanded him to make known to all the saints in prison that the Lord, Whose Name be blessed, reckoned them among the martyrs and called them the confessors. Emperor Constantine sent for 72 of them in order to receive their blessings. They went to him along with St. Abanob, the confessor.

St. Poemin lived after that in a monastery outside the city of El-Ashmunein. God granted him the gift of healing the sick and these reports spread in all the surrounding districts. The Empress of Rome became sick with a grievous illness which was difficult to treat. She visited many monasteries and churches but she was not healed of her sickness. Finally she came to the city of Ansen, and the governor of the city and his men accompanied her to the place where St. Poemin was.

When they informed him of the Empress' presence and expressed to him her desire to see him, St. Poemin did not go out to meet her but said, "What have I to do with the kings of the earth." When the brethren, the monks, besought him to go out to meet her, he did so. When she saw him, she bowed down at his feet. The saint prayed over some oil and anointed her and she was instantly healed of her sickness. The Empress offered St. Poemin much money along with several expensive gifts but he did not accept them, except for a few sacred vessels for the altar, a paten, a chalice, and a cross of gold. The Empress returned to Rome glorifying God.

There was a holy bishop close to St. Poemin while he was celebrating the feast of some martyrs with several believers in one of the monasteries. He knew that the Arian heretics took a false bishop and lead many people astray. The bishop went to St. Poemin and told him. St. Poemin took some monks and went where those heretics were. He debated with them, explaining to them their evil counsel, and the Lord dispersed them.

The saint went back to his monastery, until he became an old man. When he became sick, he gathered the brethren and advised them, telling them that his time was drawing nigh to be with the Lord. The brethren were sorrowful because of his approaching separation from them. When he delivered up his soul, the brethren swathed him and prayed over him. Many healing signs were manifested through his body.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Tenth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

- 1. The Relocation of the Body of St. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch.*
- 2. The Departure of St. Nicholas, the Confessor, Bishop of Myra (Mora).*

1. On this day, the body of St. Severus, Archbishop of Antioch, was relocated to the Zogag Monastery. This holy man departed in the city of Sakha at the house of a righteous wealthy man called Dorotheus, where he was hiding. Dorotheus sent the body, in a ship, with trustworthy men to the Zogag Monastery, located to the west of the city of Alexandria.

He commanded them not to enter the bay but to use the lake until they came to the shore. When they came to Kartasa, facing north, they sailed towards the west, but they did not find water deep enough to sail their ship and the crew was saddened and worried.

God, the Lover of man, He Who saved the children of Israel from their enemies, and opened up a way for them in the Red Sea and made them pass over, this same God preserved the body of Saint Severus from those who hated him. God made manifest this miracle. He made the ship sail in shallow water for six miles until they arrived to the shore.

From there they took the body of the Saint, carried it to the Zogag Monastery and laid it in the place which Dorotheus had built for it. There was great joy in the city of Alexandria and God worked great signs and wonders through the body of His saint Abba Severus.

God honored St. Severus after his death even more than during his life.

His blessings be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also the righteous St. Nicholas¹⁰, Bishop of Mora (Myra), departed. He was from the city of Mora, his father's name was Epiphanius and the name of his mother was Tona. They were rich, as well as God-fearing, people. They had no children to bring joy to their hearts and to inherit their wealth after their deaths. They remained without a son until they grew old and they were enveloped with despair. God had pity on them and gave them this saint. He was filled with the Divine grace since his young age. When he reached school age, he demonstrated, through intelligence and knowledge, that he learned far more from the Holy Spirit than he did from his teachers. He learned all the doctrine and the teachings of the church since his young age and was ordained deacon.

Then he became a monk in a monastery wherein his cousin was the abbot. He lived an ascetic and a righteous life, and was ordained a priest when he was 19 years old. God gave him the gift to work signs and wonders and to heal the sick.

St. Nicholas is too illustrious to describe all the signs that were performed by his hands, but an example of his good deeds and benevolent works follows:

There was a very rich man in the city of Mora who lost all his wealth. He had three daughters who had passed the age of marriage, and he could not marry them because of his poverty. Satan tempted the man to think that he should make his daughters live in sin so that they might get their food by means of fornication. God revealed to St. Nicholas the thoughts which were in this man's head, and what he intended to do. St. Nicholas took 100 dinars of his father's money and tied it up in a sack. During the night, secretly and without anyone seeing him, he threw the money into the window of that poor man's house. When the man found the gold, he was astonished and rejoiced exceedingly and was able to give his eldest daughter away in marriage. During another night the saint threw another hundred dinars into the man's house and the man was able to give his second daughter away in marriage. The man wanted to know who this charitable person was. The third time when the saint threw the gold into the house, the man was watching and immediately when he felt the drop of the sack, he ran out of his house to see who was throwing the gold to him. He

¹⁰St. Nicholas is the true personality behind the story of St. Claus or Baba Noel, who leaves presents for children on Christmas Eve.

found the kind bishop St. Nicholas and the man bowed down at his feet and paid him great homage and thanked him because he saved his daughters from poverty and from a life of sin. The saint refused to accept any thanks and asked them to thank the Lord Who put this thought in his heart.

St. Nicholas drove out the devil and his angels from people, he healed many sick people, and he blessed little bread to satisfy many people, with much more left over.

Before being selected bishop, he saw in a vision, a great throne and magnificent vestments placed on it and a man said to him, "Put on these vestments and sit on this throne." Another night he saw our Lady, St. Mary, giving him the vestments of the priesthood and our Lord Jesus Christ gave him the Gospel.

When the Bishop of Mora departed, the Angel of the Lord appeared to the Archbishop and told him the one who was chosen for this rank was Nicholas and described his virtues to him. When he woke up he told the bishops what he had seen, and they all believed that vision. They knew that it was from the Lord Jesus Christ. They took St. Nicholas and made him Bishop over the city of Mora.

Shortly thereafter, Diocletian reigned, and incited the pagan worship. When Diocletian arrested many of the believers, he heard about this saint. He seized him and tortured him severely for many years. The Lord Christ strengthened him, protected him, and raised him whole from all these tortures so that he might become a mighty branch of the tree of faith. When Diocletian was tired of torturing him, he cast him into prison. Saint Nicholas wrote to his congregation from prison to teach, encourage and confirm them in the faith. He remained in prison until God perished Diocletian and established the reign of Constantine the Just. Constantine brought out all the confessors from prison, among them was St. Nicholas, who returned to his city.

When the Council of Nicea convened in the year 325 A.D. to judge Arius, he was one of the 318 fathers assembled there.

Having finished his course and guarded his flock, he departed to be with the Lord. He sat on the episcopal throne for more than 40 years, and all the days of his life were about 80 years.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eleventh Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Departure of the Saint Abba Pijimi

This day marks the departure of the saint Abba Pijimi. He was a native of Feesha, diocese of Masil. When he was 12 years old, and while he was shepherding his father's sheep, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the form of a young man and told him, "Let us go and become monks." Abba Pijimi agreed and went with him to the desert of Scete; to a place where three elder

monks dwelled, then the angel disappeared. The saint dwelt with them for 24 years until they departed.

Then he left that place and went into the desert, a distance of three days travel. The devils appeared to him in the form of wild beasts, pigs and serpents. They surrounded him to devour him. He was able to discern their intent by the spirit. He prayed and they were vanished. Then he lived in a valley there for three years, fasting a week at a time; and at the end of the week, he ate a handful of dates and drank a little water.

He prayed the Lord's prayer: "Our Father, who art in heaven.....", he recited it day and night. Once he fasted for 40 days and another time he fasted for 80 days, to the point that his skin cleaved to his bones. Then an angel brought him bread to eat and water to drink. That bread and water lasted for many years.

Afterwards, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision at night and commanded him to return to his city. Abba Pijimi built a small cell on the outskirts of his city. He dwelt there alone, devoting himself to worshiping and asceticism. He became a good model and a good example for everyone who saw him. The people of his town came to him to be nourished with his spiritual teachings.

One day the angel of the Lord lifted him up and brought him to the land of Euphrates¹¹, for its people had gone out of the Orthodox way. He converted them all to the Faith and returned to his place.

Once he was carrying some baskets to the village to sell and he became weary and sat down to rest. The power of the Lord lifted him up with his baskets and carried him to where he wished to go.

One day the great saint Abba Shenouda saw an exceedingly shining pillar and heard a voice telling him, "This is Abba Pijimi." Abba Shenouda went to him, walking until he came to Abba Pijimi's city. They recognized each other through the divine guidance. Abba Shenouda visited with him for a few days then returned to his monastery.

When the day of his departure from this world drew near, he called his disciple and informed him of his departure and commanded him to bury his body in the place where he was. He fell ill and was feverish and, while in this condition, he saw a company of saints approaching him. He delivered up his soul into the hands of God. The angels carried his soul and ascended with it, chanting hymns.

Abba Pijimi lived for 70 years, 12 years in the world and 58 in worship.
His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

¹¹In another manuscripts, Faran (in Saini).

The Twelfth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Commemoration of the Honorable Michael, the Archangel.*
2. *The Departure of St. Hedra, Bishop of Aswan.*
3. *The Commemoration of St. John the Confessor.*
4. *Assembly of a Council in Rome Against Benates (Novatus) the Priest.*

1. On this day is the commemoration of the honorable angel Michael, the Archangel, who is standing before God the Almighty interceding on behalf of the human race saying, "O Thou Who art not prone to anger, do not be angry. O Righteous One, have mercy on Your creation. O Thou Who is long suffering, do not destroy the work of Thy Hands."

His intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the great father Abba Hedra, Bishop of Aswan, departed. His parents, who were Christians, raised him and taught him the fear of God since an early age. When he was 18 years old, his parents wanted him to marry one of his relatives, but he refused with the excuse that he was ill. That morning he went to church early, prayed with the congregation asking the Lord Christ to reveal to him, through the readings of the scriptures, what was His will for him. He heard what comforted him.

When he left the church, he saw a deceased person was carried and on his way to the cemetery. He walked among the mourners, talking to himself saying, "Listen Hedra, it is not this one that died but you yourself who died from this futile world." When they arrived at the cemetery and buried the deceased, he did not go back to his home but joined the monastery and lived among the monks.

When his family and friends heard what he did, they went and told him, "In so doing you have brought grief to us and have saddened your fiancée's heart." They added, "You can worship God in any place you desire." When they failed to change his mind, they went back with grief-filled hearts for his separation.

Henceforth St. Hedra went on in intense worship, asceticism, continuous fasting, uninterrupted prayers, and numerous metanias. He was a contemporary of St. Poemin and became his disciple. St. Hedra was guided by Anba Poemin's teachings and his good example.

Eight years later, he asked to live a solitary life in the desert. Anba Poemin asked him to read the biography of the great saint Anba Antonius (Antony) the father of all monks, in order to learn how to fight the evil enemy, Satan. When the elders allowed him, he went in the desert until he found a cave wherein he lived. He lived there for many years fighting the devil and his soldiers.

The devil tempted him frequently. One time the devil appeared with a sword in his hand and wanted to cut off Anba Hedra's hands. The saint cried to the Lord and the devil disappeared at once. One day he left his cave and when he came back, he found a huge dragon in the cave. He

prayed to the Lord saying, "My Lord and Master, if it is Your will for me to live with this beast, so be it" He then looked at the dragon and found that it was cut into three pieces.

He was in a continuous war with the devils, awakened during the night and unsettled during the day, but the Lord saved him from them all. The defiled spirits cried saying, "Woe to you Hedra for your prayers burnt us and expelled us from the wilderness."

He shut himself up in his cell. Nevertheless, they brought the sick and those with evil spirits to him, he prayed over oil, anointed them with it, and they were healed immediately.

Syrian monks came to him, asking about unclear issues in the Scriptures (Holy Books). He explained all to them and they marvelled at his knowledge, saying, "We have been in many monasteries and mountains, visited teachers and philosophers, but we did not find anyone to explain these issues as St. Hedra did."

When the bishop of the city of Aswan departed, some of the people of the city went to the monastery. There they met the Syrian monks who praised St. Hedra highly. They went to St. Hedra and took him, against his will, and travelled to Alexandria. Anba Theophilus, Pope of Alexandria, ordained him bishop over them. When he sat on his chair, he went on preaching to his people and teaching them the way of life. He performed many miracles and lived the rest of his life in a good demeanor then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

3. Today we also commemorate the departure of St. John the Confessor.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

4. Also on this day, of the year 249 A.D., a holy Council was assembled in the city of Rome. This was in the first year of the reign of Decius, the infidel, and during the days of Cornelius, Pope of Rome, Dionysius, Pope of Alexandria, Flavianus, Patriarch of Antioch, and Germanus, Archbishop of Jerusalem.

They assembled to judge Novatus (Benates), a priest who said that whoever denied Christ and forsook the faith in the time of persecution, will not be accepted when he repents. Those who committed fornication shall not be accepted when they repent. Abba Cornelius rebuked him for what he was saying, but he did not hearken. Abba Cornelius gathered a Council of 60 bishops and 18 learned priests and deacons of Rome to debate with Novatus his teachings.

These, he said were based on the words of St. Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame." (Hebrews 6:4-6)

The fathers replied and explained to him that the Apostle did not say this concerning the man who repents but concerning the man who intends to be baptized every time he is fallen into sin, for baptism can be carried on only once. Therefore, the Apostle went on saying, "They crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put Him to an open shame." The Apostle here explains that since the crucifixion happened only once, so it is for baptism. As for the door to repentance, it is open to every repentant, otherwise everyone who falls in the sin of denying Christ or sins again will not be accepted even if he repents.

That would mean then that David's repentance was not accepted, and when Peter denied the Lord Jesus, his repentance also was not accepted. Therefore, the coming of the Holy Spirit upon St. Peter would be worthless also, setting him to shepherd His flock, invalid, and that would nullify every baptism he performed. On the whole, according to Novatus' opinion, everyone would have perished and that is extreme ignorance.

Christ the Lord came to the world to save sinners and to lead them to repentance for He said, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3)

All those who gathered against Novatus advised him to abandon his erroneous opinion and repent for it. They told him, "Do not be an enemy of God, yourself and of all mankind." Since Novatus did not relinquish his opinion, the Council exiled him, and excommunicated him and all those who believed in his word.

The prayers of those saints be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Thirteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Barsanuphius.*
2. *The Departure of St. Abracius (Apraxios).*
3. *The Consecration of the Church of St. Misaeal (Misayil), the Anchorite.*

1. This day marks the martyrdom of St. Barsanuphius the monk in the early days of the Islamic era in Egypt. He lived in the church of Mari Mina in the old district of Cairo (Fum-El-Khaleeg).

He worshipped God with dedication and piety. He fasted two days at a time, praying incessantly with numerous metanias.

Some wicked people accused him of cursing the judges and the Muslim sheikhs. They brought him and tortured him severely, then they finally cut off his head, thus St. Barsanuphius received the crown of martyrdom.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the father St. Abracius (Apraxios) departed. He was from upper Egypt and became a monk in one of the monasteries when he was 20 years old.

He fought a perfect fight until Satan grew tired of tempting him. Satan faced him saying, "You still have 50 more years to live in this world," wishing by these words to cast the saint into despair. The saint replied, "You have made me sorrowful for I have thought that I had another hundred years to live and I have slackened in my fight and in my worship. If this is the case, I have to fight harder before I die." In this way, he overcame the devil that tried to put slackness in his heart.

He fought strenuously and departed in peace in the same year after spending 70 years of worship and asceticism.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also we commemorate the consecration of the church of St. Misaeal, the Anchorite.

While Abba Isaac, the head of El-Qualamoon monastery, was sitting in the monastery a young man came to him. Abba Isaac made the sign of the cross over his face as is the custom of the monks¹² and allowed him to draw near. The young man came closer and prostrated himself before the saint and told him, "My father, Abba Isaac, accept my weakness for the sake of the Lord Christ. Help me to save my soul and count me among your children." The abbot marvelled, for he called him by his name and asked him, "Who told you about my name?" The young man replied, "The grace that dwells in you informed me."

The abbot asked Misaeal to sit down and he told him, "May God Almighty make you a holy temple. And now tell me about yourself." The young man replied, "My name is Misaeal. My father loved the world which kept him from worshipping God and he was sad because he did not have children. One day he hosted a holy old monk and expressed to him his sorrow for not having a child to inherit his wealth. The monk told him, 'Reform your way with the Lord, the Lover of mankind, Who will give you a blessed son.' He asked the monk, 'How can I go about that?' The holy old monk replied, 'Live a perfect life and live according to the commandments of the church that are required of the believers; do not stay away from the holy church and have a priest to consult with, in all your affairs. If you do that, you and your wife will have what you wish.'" St. Misaeal said, "My father did all that the holy old monk commanded, and his words were fulfilled and my mother gave birth to a son, me."

"When I was six years old, my parents departed. The father, the bishop, took care of raising me, he also took care of my education and of managing my money. When I studied the Scripture, I longed for the monastic life, so I came here." The abbot was pleased as a result of what the young man, Misaeal, told him. He entrusted him to one of the elders in the monastery who trained him in asceticism, in worship and in the fight in the spiritual life. Afterwards, they put on him the garb of

¹²The custom was if one monk meets another, they kiss each other's hands, then they sit together to talk about the glory of God and the spiritual fight. One time the devil, disguised as an old monk, met another monk and when they kissed each other's hands, the devil went away laughing at the monk. The Fathers then stipulated that when the monk sees someone coming toward him, he should make the sign of the cross over his face just in case the one who arrived is a devil. He will not be able to stand before the sign of the cross.

the monastic life and the holy Eskeem. From there on, he lived a solitary life in worship and asceticism.

One day, one of the brothers in the monastery came to Abba Misaeal. He found him standing up praying and when he knocked at the door of his cell, he opened it to him. They prayed together, blessed each other and sat discussing the ways to overcome the evil enemy. St. Misaeal told him, "The devil flees away when our spiritual prayers are sincere and warm." After they ended their spiritual talk, they praised God and the brother left him. After a while that brother came to Abba Misaeal and found him praying saying, "O Lord save me, look upon my meekness; wash me of my iniquities, for my mother and father have forsaken me but the Lord accepted me." When the brother saw how thin he was and how his skin cleaved to his bones, he cried and told Abba Misaeal, "Your body looks like it has been burnt." The saint told him, "I thank my God for he has given me my eyesight and my hearing to read the Scriptures (Holy Books) and hear the word of God and he also gave me the strength to stand as I pray."

When the abbot of the monastery heard about St. Misaeal's asceticism, he came to visit him. St. Misaeal told the abbot, "My holy father, after three days some people looking like soldiers will come and ask you about me. Do not keep me away from them. Do not be afraid or sorrowful for it is the Will of God. Also you should know that a famine will happen next year and I shall come back to see you at that time." After a while, the people resembling soldiers came, took the saint and left.

The abbot listened to what the saint said and he bought much of the grain. As St. Misaeal predicted, the famine took place and wheat was in shortage. The Governor came with his men to take whatever grains he might find in the monastery. Soldiers appeared and prevented him from doing so and he went back empty handed. The abbot welcomed those soldiers, thanked them and offered them food to eat. They told him, "We do not need any of that food." One of the them came forward, took the abbot's hand, and took him aside and told him, "I am your son Misaeal and those people who look like soldiers are hermits who came last year and took me with them. I ask you now to go to Abba Athanasius, the bishop of my town where I was raised; tell him about me, and ask him for my father's money with which you should build a church in my name. Then call our father, the bishop, to consecrate it."

The abbot did as St. Misaeal asked. He went to the bishop and took the gold, the silver, many books and 500 heads of sheep from him. Besides, he also received fabrics, jewels and utensils that belonged to the saint. The abbot tore down the saint's old house, bought the land next to the house and built the church there. While the father, the Bishop, was celebrating the consecration of the church, St. Misaeal and the fathers, the hermits, came and attended the consecration prayers. St. Misaeal told the abbot of the monastery, Abba Isaac, that he would depart from this world in the following year. Then they went back to wherever they came from.

The prayers of these saints be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Martyrdom of Saints Behnam and Sarah, His Sister.*
2. *The Departure of Saint Christodoulos.*
3. *The Martyrdom of Saints Simeon of Menouf, Abba Hor, and Abba Mina the Elder.*
4. *The Martyrdom of Saint Ammonius, Bishop of Esna (Latopolis).*

1. On this day, Saints Behnam and Sarah, his sister, the children of Sennacherib, King of Persia, were martyred. One day Behnam was out with 40 of his slaves hunting in the wilderness. He saw a huge wild beast, so he went after it for a long distance, and he was separated from his slaves. Night fell upon him and he had to sleep in that place. During his sleep he saw someone who told him to go to St. Matthew who dwelt in that mountain and he would pray for his sister so that the Lord would heal her. His sister was afflicted with an incurable disease, she was leprous.

When St. Behnam woke up and was joined by his slaves, they searched for St. Matthew until they found him in a cave. He knelt between his hands, told him about the vision and they asked him to accompany them to the city. Behnam went before him to the city and told his mother about the vision and the presence of St. Matthew out of the city. Because of her love and trust in Behnam she allowed his sister to go with him in secret. When they arrived to where the saint was, he prayed for her and the Lord healed her. St. Matthew preached and taught them the way of life. He prayed also and a spring of water rushed forth and he baptized them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God, then he returned to his cave.

When King Sennacherib knew that his daughter was cured, he called her and asked her how she was cured. She told him, "The Lord Jesus Christ granted me the healing at the hands of St. Matthew and not through the stars that you worship." The king became angry and threatened to punish them if they did not change their noble opinion.

During the night, St. Behnam and his sister decided to go together to St. Matthew before their deaths. While on their way secretly to the saint, surrounded by some of their friends, their father became aware of what they were about to do, and he sent his men after them. They found them on their way to the saint and they slew them. St. Behnam, his sister and their companions received the crown of life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

When the men that killed St. Behnam and his sister went back, they found the king possessed by an evil spirit, which tormented him painfully. The queen sent for St. Matthew, begging him to come. When he arrived, he prayed for the king and the Lord healed him immediately. The saint preached to them, and the king and his wife, along with all those in the city, believed. The king built a monastery for St. Matthew and placed the bodies of St. Behnam, and his sister, his children, in it. St. Matthew dwelt in it for a long while. The Lord worked many signs of healing and wonders through the bodies of Sts. Behnam and Sarah, his sister.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also was the departure of St. Christodoulos the jeweler. He was from the city of Ayn-Shems. One day a beautiful woman brought him a broken vessel of gold and tried to tempt him. She uncovered her hands and told him, "Make rings for these fingers, bracelets for these arms, a cross for this chest and earrings for these ears." He replied, "Today I am ill and as for tomorrow, may it be the will of God." He closed his shop, went home and started rebuking himself saying, "I am not any stronger than the saints Anthony the Great or Macarius or Pachomius and the others that escaped from this world and lived in the wilderness. O my soul escape from this world if you wish to be saved."

He recounted what happened to him to his mother and he asked her with flowing tears to allow him to go to the wilderness. She said, "If this was the case, as you indicated, take me first to a convent where I can be a nun, and as for you, may the Lord be with you." He took her to one of the convents and entrusted her to the head of the convent. He gave her whatever money she needed, then he gave the rest to the poor and went toward the mountain.

After walking three days, he saw three men, each one with a cross in his hand and a shining light brighter than the sun shining from the crosses. He went to them, was blessed by them and then he asked them to advise him as to what he should do to save himself. They guided him to a valley which had fruitful trees and a spring of fresh water. He remained there for many years in continuous prayers, and readings of the psalms with many long fasts. He ate the fruits of the trees of that valley.

When satan failed to overcome him, he appeared to evil men, in the form of a barbarian, and told them, "There is a great treasure in the valley. A man found it and is living beside it. Come with me, I will show it to you." They followed him to the mountain but they were not able to go down to the valley. The devil went in a monk's attire to St. Christodoulos and told him, "On the top of the mountain, there are some monks who lost their way; they are tired and will die of thirst. Go to them and give them something to eat and drink so that they may survive." The saint made the sign of the cross over his face as was the custom of the monks and immediately the devil turned into smoke and disappeared. In this way, St. Christodoulos was always able to overcome the devil with the sign of the cross.

He increased in his worship and he lived until a good old age. When the day of his departure drew near, the three hermits who guided him to the valley came and prayed together. After they blessed each other they told him, "The Lord sent us to write down your biography for the benefit of others." He told them all that had happened to him. After a short illness he departed in peace. They prayed over him and buried him.

His prayers be with us. Amen

3. Today also was the martyrdom of St. Simeon of Menouf in the days of the Arabs and the commemoration of the martyrdom of Saints Abba Hor and Abba Mina.

Their intercession be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also the great father Abba Ammonius, Bishop of the city of Esna (Latopolis), was martyred. He was extremely well mannered since a young age and his virtues were well known. Anba Peter, Pope of Alexandria, ordained him a bishop over the city of Esna.

Because of his strong desire for a solitary life, he built a monastery at the foot of the mountain beside a spring of water. He prepared a cave for his stay all week and went down to church on Saturday. He served the Holy liturgy on Sunday, met with his people, preached to them and settled their disputes. He spent Monday with them also, then returned to his cave to continue his worship and asceticism.

During his days, many of his people were martyred. When Arianus the Infidel went to upper Egypt, on his way he persecuted Christians. He ordered them to worship idols and those who refused were tortured and slain. He continued doing that until he reached Esna, where he met four young men driving asses loaded with melons. One of the governor's soldiers asked them about their belief. They answered, "We are Christians," so they seized them. When their mother knew what happened, she went in haste to encourage them saying to the soldiers, "We love Jesus Christ and do not worship your despicable idols." The governor ordered that she be cast into prison.

In the middle of the night the Virgin, St. Mary, appeared to this mother and told her, "Know that my Son the Savior and the Lord has called you and your blessed sons Sarous, Herman, Banouf and Bistay to the kingdom of heaven." St. Mary bid her peace then ascended to heaven. The next morning the governor summoned them and asked them to worship the idols but they refused courageously. As a result, he ordered that their heads be cut off. That took place on the 6th day of the Coptic month of Bashans. The believers took their bodies and hid them in their homes. Many wonders and signs were manifested through their bodies.

There were also four notable persons who worked as tax collectors in the city of Esna. While they were going over the account of their work with Arianus, one of them mentioned the Name of Christ. Arianus became enraged and ordered that they be tortured. When he saw their endurance, he ordered that their heads be cut off, so they received their martyrdom on the 6th day of the month of Baounah. Many were martyred along with them, women, men and monks.

When Arianus went to Armunt, two women called Thecla and Martha who were from Esna went there in hast and confessed Christ before him. Arianus addressed the people of Armunt around him and said, "Why did you say that there were no Christians in your city?" They investigated and found out that the two women were from Esna. They went to Arianus and told him that they were strangers and that they did not belong to their city which loved the emperors and the gods (idols). Arianus ordered their heads to be cut off, and that was on the 17th day of the month of Abib.

As for St. Ammonius, the angel of the Lord appeared to him when he was in the desert and told him, "Hail to you Ammonius, the Lord accepted your prayers on behalf of your people and prepared crowns for you. Arise, go down and preach to them and instruct them to be steadfast in confessing the Lord Christ." The angel bid him peace and departed.

The saint arose and went down immediately to the city. He gathered the people, preached to them and informed them of what the angel had told him. They all cried out saying, "Our father, we are ready to withstand any suffering in the Name of the Lord Christ, even unto death." That took place on the feast of St. Isaac, so he took his people up to the Mount of Katoun, which means the mount of good things, to celebrate the feast there.

Arianus departed from Armunt to a village called Helwan, west of Esna. All its citizens came out and confessed the Name of Christ before him. He ordered them beheaded and they received the crown of martyrdom. Then Arianus entered Esna and wandered in its streets which were empty until he came to the southern gate which is called the gate of thanksgiving, because Anba Armanius had prayed there with his people, the prayers of Thanksgiving. There he found an infirm old woman who was left behind because she could not go up the mountain with them. He asked her about the whereabouts of the people of the city. She replied, "The people heard that the infidel governor was coming to slay the Christians; so they went up to the mountain to celebrate the feast of St. Isaac before they faced martyrdom." He asked her which one of the gods she worshipped. She replied, "I am a Christian," and she was immediately beheaded.

Arianus then went out of the city going towards Mount Katoun, passing on the way through the village of El-Mabgalah where he found a group of people who declared themselves Christians and those he promptly beheaded. He continued through the villages of Harmajahat and Seroya where he executed the Christians.

He executed every Christian he met in his way till he finally reached Mount Katoun where all the people greeted him with one accord shouting, "We are Christians." Arianus threatened them and as this had no effect, he ordered his soldiers to draw their swords and to slay them all. Each one brought forth his daughter or his son to the swordsman saying, "Go forward to the true bridegroom that does not die." They all went to death saying, "We are going to the everlasting joy in the kingdom of heaven." They fulfilled their martyrdom on the 19th day of the Coptic month of Abib.

On their way back to Esna, the soldiers met three men who were crying, "We are Christians." The soldiers told them, "Our swords are dull from much use." So the men told the soldiers, "Here are our axes." The soldiers took their axes and the men put their heads on a stone beside the western gate of the city. The soldiers beheaded them and the men received the crown of martyrdom.

As for the bishop, Anba Ammonius, they seized him and brought him before Arianus, and in rage he ordered the saint to be tied behind the horses on their way to the boat which was sailing to Aswan. Then they threw him in the stern of the ship. Arianus brought him out every now and then and asked him to raise the incense before the idols but the saint refused. Finally he ordered his men to burn the saint who received the crown of martyrdom on the 14th day of the Coptic month of Kiahk.

The believers took his body which was untouched and unharmed by the fire. They shrouded it and hid it until the end of the era of persecution. When the people of his diocese came to transfer the

body to their city, they heard a voice from the body saying, "This is the place that God chose for me."

The prayers of all these saints be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Departure of St. Gregory, Patriarch of the Armenians

This day marks the departure of St. Gregory, the Patriarch of the Armenians who was a martyr, without bloodshed (A Confessor). This saint, as it was mentioned on the 19th day of the Coptic month of Tute, was tortured by Tiridates, the Armenian king, in the year 272 A.D. for disobeying the king and refusing to worship the idols. The king cast the saint into an empty pit where he lived for 15 years, during which God took care of him.

Near the pit lived an old widow, who saw, in a vision, someone telling her to make bread regularly and cast it into this pit. She continued to do so for 15 years. Because of the length of time, no one in his congregation knew if he was alive or dead.

When the king killed Arbsima, the virgin, and all the virgins who were with her, he also ordered that their bodies be cast away on the mountains. Later on he regretted what he did for he wanted to marry Arbsima.

When the king's family and close advisers saw how he grieved for killing St. Arbsima, they advised him to go out for hunting to recreate himself. While he was riding his horse the Devil jumped on him and cast him on the ground. King Tiridates became possessed with an evil spirit and assumed the appearance and manners of a wild boar, to an extent that no one was able to go near him safely. Many of the people of his kingdom had the same fate. Great fear and crying was heard all over the palace and the kingdom as a result of what had happened to the king and many others as a result of what the king did to the virgins.

The king's sister saw a vision on three consecutive nights. A man was telling her that unless she brought St. Gregory out of the pit, the King would not be saved nor would be cured. The people were surprised, since they believed that he was dead. They went to the pit and dropped a rope and called his name. When the saint moved the rope, they knew that he was still alive, they asked him to tie the rope around him and they pulled him out.

The people took the Saint with great honor to the palace. They asked him to heal the king of his sickness. The Saint asked him if he would go back to his evil deeds. When the king expressed no intention of going back to his evil works, the saint prayed for him, and the evil spirit departed from him. His personality and his mind were restored, but he was not completely cured. The nails of his hands and feet remained like those of a boar as a punishment and as a reminder to him of what he was and in order for him not to go back to his evil works.

The saint inquired about the whereabouts of the bodies of the virgins. He went and found them undecayed and he placed them in an honorable place.

St. Gregory cured all who were sick and cast out many devils. The king and his people believed. He taught and baptized them. He built many churches, ordained bishops and priests for them and he instituted laws for them to follow.

When he completed his strife, he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Departure of the Righteous Gideon, One of the Judges of Israel.*
2. *The Martyrdom of Saints Harouadi, Ananias and Khouzi.*
3. *The Consecration of the Church of St. James, the Persian.*

1. On this day, of the year 1349 B.C., the righteous Gideon, one of the Judges of Israel, departed. He was from the tribe of Manasseh and his father's name was "Joash". The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor." (Judges 6:13) Gideon said to him, "O my Lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of Midianites."

Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh and I am the least in my Father's house." The Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."

Then Gideon said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You Who talk with me. Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You."

He said, "I will wait until you come back." Then Gideon went in and prepared his offerings and brought them out to Him and presented them. And they were accepted. (Judges 6:11-21)

The Lord then commanded him to destroy the idols and their altars and to build an altar for the Lord and to offer the sacrifices and burn them with the wood, of which the idols were made. He did so as the Lord commanded him. (Judges 6:25-31)

When God commanded him to fight the Midianites, he asked Him to show him a sign to encourage him and said, "Look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand as You have said." And it was so.

Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more; Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece. Let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." And God did so that night. (Judges 6:33-40)

Then Gideon and all the people who were with him rose up early and encamped opposite the camp of the Midianites. The Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" Twenty-two thousand of the people returned and ten thousand remained.

But the Lord said to Gideon, "The people are still too many. Bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go."

So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." The number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men, but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water.

Then the Lord said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped, I will save you and deliver the Midianites into your hand." (Judges 7:1-7) With this number of people Gideon overcame the Midianites and the people with him captured the loots and gave them to Gideon and they put him in charge of them. The Lord God was with Gideon in all that he did.

He departed and was buried in the tomb of his father.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this days also, St. Harouadi, St. Ananias and St. Khouzi, who were from El-Fayyoum (in other texts, Akhmim), were martyred.

Their prayers be with us all. Amen.

3. Also, on this day is the commemoration of the consecration of the church of St. James the Persian, known as the mangled.

His prayers be with us all and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Seventeenth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Commemoration of the Departure of St. Luke the Stylite and the Relocation of His Holy Relics

On this day we commemorate the departure of St. Luke, the Stylite, and the relocation of his holy relics. He was born in Persia, to Christian parents. He became a soldier and was promoted until he became a centurion (an officer over a hundred soldiers).

Later in his life, he wanted to live a solitary life. He left the world and all its vainglory and became a monk in one of the monasteries of the east. When his virtues were known, he was ordained a priest for that monastery.

From this time on, he devoted himself to the ascetic life in continual prayers and fasting. He used to fast six days at a time and then break his fast on the seventh day after Mass, by eating a "Korbana" and some green pulses (beans). Then he lived on the top of a high rock for 3 years. One day, he heard the voice of an angel calling him by his name to go down. When he went down, the angel showed him a cross of light. He followed the voice and the cross went before him until he came to some mountains. There he stayed for some time, teaching his visitors the way of salvation.

He was inspired by God to go near Constantinople. He went and dwelt in a village nearby, on the top of a rock, in the shape of a pillar, for 45 years fighting the spiritual fight. God granted him the gift of prophecy and the gift of performing miracles. He healed everyone who went to him.

When he completed his holy course, he departed on the 15th day of Kiahk. His disciple went and told the Patriarch about his departure. The Patriarch went with the priests, crosses and censers and came to where the body of the saint was. They carried him to Constantinople on the third day of his departure, with hymns and prayers, and they placed him in the sanctuary and that was on the 17th day of Kiahk. After they prayed on him the third day prayer and the believers present received the blessing of his pure body, they put him in a marble sarcophagus next to the bodies of the saints. God revealed many signs and miracles from his body.

His prayers be with us all and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eighteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Commemoration of the Relocation of the Relics of St. Titus to Constantinople.*
2. *The Commemoration of St. Heracleas the Martyr and St. Philemon the Priest.*

1. On this day, the relics of the great St. Titus, the Apostle, and the disciple of St. Paul, were transferred from Crete to Constantinople at the order of Emperor Constantine the great¹³.

When Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, he paid his attention to the affairs of the churches in his empire, decorating them with the best paintings and precious stones, especially those churches in Constantinople, the capital of his empire. He also wanted to enrich the churches with the precious spiritual jewels, by collecting the relics of the saintly apostles and the honored martyrs.

When he heard that the relics of St. Titus were on the island of Crete, he sent some bishops there, and they carried the relics with great honor and brought them to Constantinople. He built for it a splendid sanctuary, placed the body in a coffin which was placed inside the sanctuary.

God honored this saint by manifesting many miracles and signs from his sacred relics. Among them, when they carried the relics to the Sanctuary (the Hekal) of the church, the stone coffer fell on and broke the foot of one of the carriers. The man took some of the oil of the lamp (Kandeel) that was hanging in front of the icon of the saint, and anointed his foot with it, then wrapped it. He remained in the church that night beside the coffer, for he could not go to his home. The following morning, his foot was cured. What remained on it were only traces of blood. He and all those who saw him marvelled. He washed the blood and walked on his feet as usual without pain, glorifying the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God, and witnessing to this miracle.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the church commemorates Saint Heracleas, the martyr, and the hermit, St. Philemon the priest.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

¹³The commemoration of his departure is on the second day of Nasi (Intercalary days).

The Nineteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

*The Departure of St. John, Bishop of El-Borollos
Who Gathered the Biographies of the Saints (The Synaxarion)*

On this day St. John, Bishop of El-Borollos, departed. He came from a wealthy family and from priestly ancestors. His parents were charitable and gave generously to the poor. When they died, St. John took the money they left and built a hostel for strangers. He gathered the sick, served them himself, and offered them what they needed.

Once a monk visited him and saw his good deeds, he praised him and praised monasticism in his presence, showing him its honor. The saint was attracted to the monastic life and he had a deep love in his heart for it. After the monk departed, the saint distributed his wealth among the poor and went into the wilderness of "Shiheet" (Scetis). He became a monk under the guidance of St. Daniel the archpriest of the wilderness. St. John was known for his zeal for worship and for his great asceticism. He lived alone in a secluded building. Satan and his soldiers envied his good deeds, and they gathered against him and painfully beat him. He was sick for so many days, after which the Lord Christ healed him. He regained his strength and overcame the devil.

God then called him to become a bishop of Borollos. At this time, there were some heresies and he made a great effort to eradicate them, and converted the heretics to the Orthodox Faith. Also in his time, a monk from upper Egypt claimed that he could reveal certain things which were imparted to him by the Archangel Michael, and he misled many by his deception. St. John saw that the monk's deeds were from the devil. He commanded that the monk be beaten until he confessed his sins and he drove him out of the country. Another claimed that Habakkuk, the prophet, appeared and revealed hidden things to him and, as a result, he was followed by many. St. John drove him out of the country, after he had exposed his deception. He also put an end to the use of several bad books.

Every time this saint went up to the sanctuary (Hekal) to serve the divine liturgy, his face and all his body were flushed red, as though he came out of a fiery furnace, and his tears poured heavily on his cheeks, for he was beholding the heavenly hosts on the altar. Three times when he placed his finger in the chalice to make the sign of the Cross during the fraction prayer, he found that the cup was as hot as fire.

Furthermore, in his days, some infidels were partaking of the Holy Mysteries without having fasted. The saint rebuked them, but since they did not hearken to him, he excommunicated them and forbade them from the fellowship of the church. When they disobeyed his order, he entreated God, so fire came down from heaven, and the fire burned their leader. Fear fell upon the rest and they repented.

When the Lord wanted to repose him from the toil of this world, He sent to him St. Antony and St. Macarius to tell him of the day of his departure. He called his people and commended them then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Departure of the Upright Haggai the Prophet

On this day, the upright Haggai, the Prophet, departed. This righteous man was a descendant of Aaron, the priest, and from the tribe of Levi. He was one of the twelve minor prophets.

When King Nebuchadnezzar captured the Jews of Jerusalem and took them to Babylon, the parents of this prophet were among them, and he was born in exile. This prophet returned to Jerusalem along with Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah and the rest of the people of Israel. He prophesied in the second year of the reign of Darius, King of Persia, who reigned in the year 3484 of the world and that was 15 years after the return of the people of Israel from the Babylonian exile.

This prophet directed his prophecies by the command of God to Zerubbabel, then to Joshua the son of Jehozidak, the high priest. He incited the Jews to complete the rebuilding of the temple of Solomon, the son of David. They had started rebuilding the temple after they returned from captivity, then they abandoned it to build their own homes. The prophet rebuked them saying, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses and this temple to be in ruins? Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Consider your ways! You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag of holes.'" (Haggai 1:4-6) Those who were upright amongst the people of Israel feared the threats of the Lord and built the house of the Lord as they were supposed to. Haggai the prophet had announced to the people after they finished building it, that the Lord was pleased by that.

This prophet lived more than 70 years, and he was 430 years before the advent of our Lord Christ. He departed in peace and was buried in the tomb of the priests in Jerusalem.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-First Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

- 1. The Commemoration of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos.*
- 2. The Martyrdom of St. Barnabas, One of the Seventy Apostles.*

1. On this day the church celebrates the commemoration of the pure lady, the Virgin, St. Mary, the mother of Light, the mother of the Savior of the world.

Her intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Barnabas, one of the seventy apostles, was martyred. He was from the tribe of Levi. His ancestors left Judea long before he was born and moved to the island of Cyprus.

His name was Joses. Our Lord, to Whom is the glory, gave him the name "Barnabas", which means son of "encouragement" or "consolation", when He called him to become an apostle.

He received the gift of the Holy Spirit in the upper room with the disciples. He preached the gospel with them and witnessed to the Name of Christ.

He had a field which he sold and brought the price and placed it at the feet of the apostles. (Acts 4:36-37) The apostles honored him for his many virtues and for his honesty.

When St. Paul believed in the Lord Christ, St. Barnabas presented him to the rest of the disciples in Jerusalem, three years after his conversion. St. Barnabas told the apostles how the Lord appeared to St. Paul near Damascus and attested to his zeal before them. The apostles accepted St. Paul in their fellowship. The Holy Spirit said to the disciples, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)

St. Paul and St. Barnabas travelled together to many countries preaching the Name of the Lord Christ. When they entered Lystra and St. Paul healed the man who was crippled from his mother's womb (Acts 14:8-18), the people of Lystra thought that they were gods, and they brought oxen and garlands to the gates intending to sacrifice them at the feet of the apostles. St. Paul and St. Barnabas forbade them and rejected the glory of men. They tore their clothes saying that they were men with the same nature as they.

After they travelled together to many cities, they were separated from each other. St. Barnabas took with him St. Mark and went to Cyprus. They preached there and converted many people to the faith of the Lord Christ and baptized them. The Jews resented them. So they falsely accused them before the governor. They seized St. Barnabas and brutally beat him, then they stoned him and finally burnt his body with fire. Thus, his strife was completed and he received the crown of martyrdom. After the people had left, St. Mark came and carried the body, wrapped it, and placed it in a cave in Cyprus.

St. Mark then went to Alexandria to preach there.

The prayers of these two apostles be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Second Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Commemoration of the Archangel Gabriel.*
2. *The Departure of St. Anastasius, 36th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. This day marks the commemoration of the honorable archangel Gabriel, the announcer, the consecration of his church in Caesaria and the appearance of many miracles in it.

He was the angel who was sent to the Virgin Mary to announce her with the glorious birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. He came to her and said, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you." (Luke 1:28) He also announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias. (Luke 1: 11-22)

As much as this announcement has of great joy and gladness, we should also rejoice in his feast and pray intently with supplications, asking for his intercession before God, to preserve us from being ensnared by the devil and to grant us salvation from our sins.

The intercession of this honored angel be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 611 A.D., St. Anastasius, 36th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was one of the great noblemen of Alexandria. Before he became a Pope, he was an overseer of the patriarchal court, then he became a priest for the church of Alexandria. Shortly afterwards, he was chosen to be Pope.

He devoted much of his attention to the churches and he ordained bishops and priests to fill the vacant posts. He built several churches and regained from the "Melkites" (those who were appointed by the Roman Emperor) those that they took over by force. Because he was loved by them for his knowledge, virtues and righteousness, he brought many of them back to the Orthodox faith.

When the Emperor of Constantinople died, some wicked people spoke evil of the Pope to his successor, that when the Pope was ordained he anathematized (excommunicated) the Emperor and his belief. The Emperor was enraged and sent to the Governor of Alexandria, commanding him to take the church of "St. Cosmas and St. Damian" and all its properties by force and to give it to the Roman Patriarch "Ologius". St. Anastasius was exceedingly sad, but the Lord comforted him in another matter.

Peter, the heretic, Bishop of Antioch, died. A well informed saintly monk called Athanasius of the Orthodox Faith was ordained in his place. As soon as Athanasius became Patriarch, he renewed the union between the Church of Antioch and the Church of Alexandria. He wrote an epistle, stating in it his Orthodox faith, and sent it to St. Anastasius, who rejoiced and gathered the bishops and the priests and read it to them. He wrote back to Abba Athanasius indicating his desire to see him.

Abba Athanasius went to Alexandria with his bishops and priests. When Abba Anastasius learned of his arrival, as he was in "Scetis", he departed to Alexandria. He went directly to the sea along with the bishops and priests to receive Abba Athanasius and welcome him to Alexandria with great respect and honor. They held a council in one of the monasteries that was at the sea coast, which lasted one month, to discuss the doctrines of the church. Then, the Antiochian Patriarch went back to his See in peace.

St. Anastasius continued to teach his flock in person and through his books. Because of his great knowledge, he was able to write a book every year. He remained on his throne for 12 years, 6 months and 10 days. During this period, he wrote twelve books and gave them the Coptic alphabet as titles. His first book was Alpha (&), his second was Beta (B) and so on, then he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Third Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Departure of David, the Prophet and King.*
2. *The Departure of St. Timothy, the Anchorite.*

1. On this day, of the year 2990 of the world, the great King and the saintly honored prophet David, the son of Jesse, departed.

He was the second king over the children of Israel and the first among their kings to walk in virtue and in justice. He was from the tribe of Judah from Bethlehem. God chose him to be a king over Israel, when Saul, the son of Kish, disobeyed the commandment of God.

God commanded the Prophet Samuel to anoint for Him one of the children of Jesse, a king over Israel. Samuel chose the eldest son who had a good appearance and was tall in stature, but God rejected him and said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (I Samuel 16:7)

Jesse called all his sons and showed them to Samuel and he chose David and anointed him king. God was with him in all his ways, for his purity of heart and his meekness. He overcame Saul who wanted to kill him on several occasions. Once Saul went out to kill David and he went into a cave to attend to his needs. David came to him secretly and cut off a corner of Saul's robe (I Samuel 24:4) to show him that he wouldn't stretch his hand to kill him. Another time David found him sleeping and he took his spear and a jug of water that was by his head and did not hurt him and spared his life for the second time. (I Samuel 26:1-25) When David's men told him to destroy Saul, David said, "The Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed." (I Samuel 26:11)

When a man announced to David the news about the death of his rival Saul saying, "I stood over him and killed him," David took hold of his own clothes and tore them and he mourned him. David called one of the young men and said, "Go near and execute him," (2 Samuel 1: 11-15) and he struck the man so that he died.

God honored this Prophet over all mankind, for he had many virtues. Besides the virtue of humility, he was a prophet, a righteous man, and a just king. In spite of that, he called himself a "dead dog" and a "flea". (I Samuel 24:14) God praised him by saying, "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will." (Acts 13:22; Psalms 89:20; 1 Samuel 13:14) God protected Jerusalem for his sake during his lifetime and after his death, and He made the kings of the people of Israel from his seed, and He called Himself "his Son." He prophesied in the Book of Psalms, which is a book full of useful teachings and good instructions.

David's might and power were supported by God. When he was young and guarding his father's sheep, once a bear and another time a lion attacked his sheep and David killed both the bear and the lion.

When the army of Israel faced the army of the Philistines and Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, whose height was six cubits and a span, and who was armored with a bronze helmet on his head and a coat weighing five thousand shekels of bronze, and he had bronze grieves on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders and the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; Goliath went out, stood up and cried out to the armies of Israel, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give us a man that we may fight together." The Philistine presented himself for forty days, morning and evening. All of Israel heard these words and were dismayed and greatly afraid.

When David came to visit his brothers and brought provisions to their camp, he saw and heard Goliath. David was moved with divine zeal and said to him, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the Name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied." David took out a stone and he slung it and he struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank in his forehead and he fell on his face to the ground. David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and cut off his head and removed the reproach of Israel. (I Samuel 17)

David lived 70 years, 30 years of which were before he became a king. He was born one thousand, one hundred and twenty years before Christ.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, the fighter, St. Timothy the Anchorite (Pilgrim), departed. He was born of God-loving parents, who educated and raised him according to the church disciplines. He desired the monastic life and became a monk in one of the monasteries. He loved the solitary life and lived in a cell alone near the monastery. He lived there for some time, making a living from his handiwork.

The enemy of everything that is good tried to deceive him by appearing to him in the form of a nun who approached him to buy his handiwork. Because of her frequent visits, a special relationship developed between them. They sat to eat together at one table. After a short time, the saint realized the trick of the devil to make him fall in sin. He remembered the hour of death and the awesome nature of Judgement; consequently, he arose and took flight from that place.

God guided him to another place with a spring of water and a palm tree. He stayed there practicing worship and asceticism. He reached a great level in his ascetic life, to the extent that the wild beasts befriended him. This continued for 30 years, during which his hair became very long and spared him of wearing clothes.

When he finished his course and fought the good fight, he departed in peace.
His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch.*
2. *The Departure of St. Philogonus, Patriarch of Antioch.*
3. *The Birth of St. Takla Haymanot, the Ethiopian.*

1. On this day, the honorable St. Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch, was martyred. He was a disciple of St. John the Evangelist and travelled with him to many cities. St. John ordained him Patriarch of Antioch where he preached the life giving Gospel, converted many to the knowledge of God, baptized them, illumined them, and showed them the error of worshipping idols.

The pagans were enraged, they seized him and tortured him with various tortures. They put burning coals in his hands and pressed his hands for about two hours. Then they burnt his side with red hot pitch and burning oil. They combed his body with iron combs. When they became tired of torturing him, they cast him in prison where he stayed for a long time. When they remembered him, they brought him out and promised him great rewards and then threatened him. As he was steadfast in his faith, they threw him to the wild beasts and they devoured him and rendered him into pieces. He delivered up his pure spirit in the hand of the Lord Whom he loved.
His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Philogonus, Patriarch of Antioch, departed. This saint was married and had a daughter. When his wife died, he became a monk. For his great virtue, his bountiful knowledge, his ascetic life, and his deep devotion, he was chosen Patriarch over the city of Antioch. He shepherded the flock of Christ well and protected it from the Arian wolves and the followers of Macdonius and Sabilius.

As a patriarch, he lived in piety and asceticism, renouncing the world, and never owning one dinari or a second tunic. He completed his strife and departed in peace. St. John Chrysostom had praised him in his sermons.
His prayers be with us all. Amen.

3. Today also, we commemorate the birthday of St. Takla Haymanot (Thecla Hemanot), the great Ethiopian saint.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Departure of St. John Kama (Khame)

On this day, the great Saint John Kama departed. He was from "Shubramento" of the region of "Sa". His parents were God-fearing Christians and he was their only child.

They forced him to marry against his will. When he entered his wife's room, he stood, prayed for a long time, then came near the young girl and said to her, "My sister, you know that the world and all of its lusts will go away. Do you agree with me to keep our bodies pure and clean?" She answered and said, "My brother, the Lord's Name lives. This also is my desire and now the Lord has given me what my heart desires."

They mutually agreed to live together as brother and sister and to keep their virginity. When they slept, the angel of the Lord came and covered them with his wings. For their many virtues, God planted a vine for them which grew up and covered their place of sleep. That was a sign of their purity and holiness; for what they did was above human nature, that two young people, a man and a woman, would sleep next to each other without being driven by the lust of the flesh; for who can come near a fire and not be burnt, unless it is God's divine power and care that keeps them and preserves them.

When their parents saw that they lived together for a long time without having any children, they thought that this was due to the fact that they were young. One day John said to his wife, "My sister, I desire to go into the wilderness to become a monk and I cannot do that without your permission." She gave him her permission and he placed her in one of the virgins' convents. There she became a virtuous nun and she performed many miracles, so they chose her to become the abbess of the convent.

As for St. John, when he left his town, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and guided him to the wilderness of Scetis "Shiheet". He went there and became a monk in the cell of Saint "Darudi" in the monastery of St. Macarius. He stayed with this saint learning piety from him until the saint departed.

Then the angel of the Lord told him to go west of the monastery of St. John the Short and to build a cell for himself there. He went and did as the angel commanded him. Three hundred brethren gathered around him and became his disciples. They built a church and a house with a garden for themselves and Saint John Kama taught them how to pray and the use of the "Epsalmodia".

One night, St. Athanasius the Apostolic appeared to them while they were singing the song of the three young men. St. Athanasius revealed many mysteries to him. Another time, St. Mary appeared to him and told him, "This is my dwelling forever, and I shall be with them as I have been with you and this monastery will be named after me." The church of the monastery was named after the Virgin St. Mary.

Some of the monks of upper Egypt desired to be under the guidance of St. John Kama and they asked him to come to see them. He called a brother named Shenouda, and gave him the responsibility of caring for the brethren until his return. When he returned, he found that he performed the task perfectly.

When St. John Kama completed his course, he departed in peace.
His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Anastasia.*
2. *The Commemoration of St. Juliana the Martyr.*

1. On this day, of the year 304 A.D., St. Anastasia, was martyred.

She was born in the city of Rome in the year 275 A.D., to a pagan father whose name was "Britastanos" and a Christian mother whose name was "Flavia". Her mother baptized her secretly without her father's knowledge and she brought her up in the teachings of the Christian faith. She was steadfast in her faith and no one was able to dissuade her.

When she was of marriage age, her father gave her in marriage to a pagan youth, against her wishes. St. Anastasia prayed to the Lord Christ with fervent supplications, asking Him to separate her from this pagan youth who was away from the faith.

When her husband left to go to his work, she also left to visit those who were imprisoned for their faith and she ministered to them, comforted them, and offered them whatever they needed. When her husband learned about this, he shut her up in the house and placed guards over her. She continued to pray and ask God with tears and supplications to save her from the hands of her husband. God answered her prayer and speeded up his death. She distributed her wealth among the poor and those who were in prison, the confessors and the strivers, for the sake of the faith.

When her fame reached "Florus", the Governor, he brought her before him to inquire about her religion. She confessed that she was a Christian. He tried to entice her to leave her faith by promising her many precious gifts. When she did not listen to his promises, he punished her by torturing her with various tortures and when he became weary of her he ordered her to be drowned. She came out from the sea unharmed with the grace of God. When the governor

learned that she was still alive, he ordered that she be tied up to four pegs on the ground and be beaten ferociously, then be thrown into a pit of fire. They did so until she gave up her pure soul and received the crown of martyrdom.

Her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of St. Juliana the martyr.

Her prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Martyrdom of St. Anba "Bisadi" (Psote), the Bishop

On this day, the great saint Bisadi, the Bishop of "Ebsay", was martyred. When Emperor Diocletian heard that Anba Bisadi and Anba "Ghellanicus" were confirming the Christians in the faith and hampering the worship of idols, he sent to bring them before him. Anba Bisadi asked the messenger to give him a chance for one night. He went to the church and called his people and celebrated the divine liturgy and administered to them the Holy Communion.

He commanded them to be firm in their Orthodox Faith, then he bade them farewell and submitted himself to the Lord. He went with the messenger to Arianus, the Governor of Ansena, and when the latter saw his illumined face and his reverence, he had compassion upon him and said, "You are a man of great dignity and you should have pity upon yourself and obey the command of the Emperor." Anba Bisadi answered and said, "It is impossible for me to replace the kingdom of heaven with this temporal life."

After a lengthy negotiation with him, the Governor ordered Anba Bisadi to be tortured and then thrown in a very hot water bath. God preserved him and raised him unharmed and without any pain. The Governor then ordered him beheaded. Thus, he received the crown of life in the kingdom of heaven.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

The Martyrdom of 150 Men and 24 Women from Ansena

On this day, 150 men and 24 women were martyred. They were from the city of Ansena (Antione) and they worshipped idols. They came once to the Governor's place and they watched the torture of St. Paul the Syrian. The Governor ordered the soldiers to gouge out the saint's eyes with red-hot nails then they cast him in prison.

The following morning when they brought him, these men and women were present and they saw that his eyes were whole as they were before. They marvelled saying, "No one can do this sign except God alone Who is the Creator of nature from nonexistent." They cried with one accord, "We believe in the God of St. Paul." They came and bowed down at the saint's feet asking him to pray for them. He lifted them up and blessed them. Then they went before the Governor and confessed the Name of the Lord Christ. He ordered them beheaded and they received the crown of martyrdom.

Their intercessions be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk

*The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
(Christmas)*

On this day, of the year 5501 of the world, as calculated by our glorious church, we celebrate the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate God in the Flesh from the virgin St. Mary.

Through the Divine plan of God and His foreknowledge, Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a general census in all the Roman Empire. For that reason, Joseph rose, and the virgin with him, and went from the city of Nazareth to "Bethlehem" to be counted in the census there because he was from the tribe of Judah, from the house of David. Bethlehem was the city of David. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the Virgin gave birth to her first born child and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes and put him in a manger, for they did not have a place for them in the inn.

Now there were, in the same country, shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all the people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: you will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger." Suddenly there was, with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." And they came with haste and found the Babe, Mary, Joseph, and Salomi. The place was shining with light. Now when they had seen him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this child. Then they worshipped the child and they returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen. (Luke 2:1-20)

On this day, the prophecies about the birth of the Lord from a chaste virgin had been fulfilled. Isaiah the prophet said, "Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His Name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

Ezekiel the prophet also said about this wonderful mystery, "And the Lord said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it, therefore it shall be shut.'" (Ezekiel 44:2)

About this child, Daniel the prophet said, "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and the Kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14)

Jeremiah the prophet said, "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a Branch of Righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgement and righteousness in the earth. In His days, Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His Name by which He will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness." (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

We must therefore now direct our minds toward the manger of Bethlehem, where the Son of God was lying in it in the flesh at the time of His birth, contemplating in silence and reverence worthy of the mystery of the incarnation of God, and His birth in a manger for our salvation. Knowing that He teaches us through this mystery to despise the world and all the vain things in it, and that He urges us to be humble and to love our neighbor seeking his own good, and that we should live in virtue and holiness according to the Christian ethics; not ignoring the great dignity that has been granted to us by this Divine Incarnation.

Since we have kept this fast before the Advent, and have arrived at this glorious feast, we should receive it with purity and every good thing. We should extend our hand to comfort the weak, to help the poor, and to be instruments of peace and reconciliation among the people, taking our Lord Who has made an eternal peace by His Incarnation as our example. We should ask God in supplications to have compassion upon us and to forgive our sins, and to bless our gatherings, and to keep the life of His Holiness Pope ... , Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, to keep his pontificate for many years with the joy, peace and the safety of the church, and the advancement of his people in virtue. May God grant us many returns of this feast, filled with the blessings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Who came for our salvation.

To Him be the Glory and Honor forever. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Kiahk
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The Departure of St. John, Archpriest of Scetis

On this day, St. John (Youannis), the archpriest (Heagomen) of Shiheet (Scetis) departed. When he was ordained archpriest for the monastery of St. Macarius, the whole wilderness was illumined by him and he became a father to many of the saints. Among those saints were Anba Gawarga and

Anba Abraam, the two great stars, and Anba Mina, bishop of Tamai "Tamuz", and Anba Zacharias and many others, through whom many souls were saved.

Because of his holiness and his great piety, when he was administering Holy Communion to the people, he was able to recognize those who were sinners and those who were righteous. Several times he saw Christ and the angels surrounding Him upon the altar.

He once saw one of the priests, who was of bad reputation, coming to the church and the evil spirits surrounding him. When the priest arrived at the door of the church, the angel of the Lord came out from the sanctuary (Hekal) with a fiery sword in his hand and dismissed the unclean spirits. The priest entered the church and put on the service clothes and administered the liturgy and gave the Holy Communion to the people. After he was finished, he took off the service clothes and went out of the church, the evil spirits returned to him. This was what St. John said to his brethren the monks, to make them aware that there was no difference between a sinful and an un sinful priest in ministering the church sacraments. For it is for the sake of the people that the bread and the wine are transubstantiated to the Body and the Blood of Christ.

He told them a parable, "As the picture of the emperor is imprinted on his seal that is made from iron or gold, and the seal is one, also the priesthood is one with the sinner and the righteous, and the Lord rewards everyone according to his deeds."

This saint suffered many tribulations. The "Berbers" took him captive to their country. He stayed there for many years, during which he was tortured. He met St. Samuel, the abbot of the monastery of Qualamon, during his captivity.

By the grace of God, he returned to his monastery. When he knew in a vision the day of his departure, he called the brethren and commanded them to keep the Commandments of the Lord, and to walk in the pathway of the saintly fathers, to share with them the good portion and the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. Shortly after, he became ill and he saw a crowd of saints were coming to take his spirit, and he gave up the spirit in the hand of the Lord. His brethren carried him to the church and because of their strong love for him and their firm belief in his holiness, they kept a portion of his burial clothes which was a source of healing for many sicknesses. This father lived for 90 years.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

*In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
One God. Amen*

**The Blessed Month of Tubah
The First Day**

- 1. The Martyrdom of St. Stephen the Archdeacon.*
- 2. The Martyrdom of St. Lawindianus (Leontius).*

1. This day marks the martyrdom of St. Stephen, the Archdeacon and the first martyr (protomartyr). St. Luke testified about him in the Acts of the Apostles saying, "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people." (Acts 6:8) The Jews envied him and seized him and brought him to the Council. They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." (Acts 6:12-13) And all who sat in the Council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel. (Acts 6:13)

Then the high priest said, "Are these things so?" St. Stephen answered with convincing words and told them the history from Abraham to Moses. The coming out of Abraham from Haran, the birth and the circumcision of Isaac, Jacob and his sons and their selling of Joseph, and how Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. St. Stephen continued to narrate to them all the events until the building of the temple. He concluded by saying, "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of Whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it." (Acts 7:51-53)

When they heard these things they were cut to their hearts, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran toward him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him.

They stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus receive my Spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:51-60) Devout men carried St. Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation over him.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Leontius (Lawindianus) was martyred. He was from Syria during the time of the infidel Emperor Maximianus. When the Emperor heard about this Saint and his worship of

Christ, he sent for him. He tried to entice him with much money to renounce the worship of Christ and to worship the idols.

The saint mocked the Emperor's words and despised his presents, belittling his threats of tortures. The Emperor, was enraged, ordered him to be hung on the squeezing machine (Hinbazeen) to be pressed and then be beaten with pins, and to be cast in boiling oil. The saint endured it all, and the Lord Christ strengthened and healed him.

When the Emperor was weary of torturing him, he ordered Leontius to be beheaded, and Leontius received the crown of martyrdom. Many miracles and wonders appeared through his body until he became well known in all Syria, and several churches and monasteries were built in his name.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

The Second Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. The Departure of St. Theonas, 16th Pope of Alexandria.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Callinicus (Gallinicus), Bishop of Oseem.

1. On this day in the year 300 A.D., St. Theonas, 16th Pope of Alexandria, departed. This saint was a righteous, meek scholar, gentle and loving to everyone. By the spirit of friendship and gentleness with everyone, he was able to build a church in Alexandria, dedicated to the name of the Virgin St. Mary, the Theotokos.

Until his time, the faithful were praying and performing their services in homes and in caves for fear of the unbelievers. Pope Theonas dealt with them wisely and gently to achieve what he wanted to do. He converted many of them to believe in the Lord Christ and baptized them.

He baptized, in the first year of his papacy, St. Peter, who succeeded him on the apostolic throne of St. Mark and was the 17th Pope. It was said that he ordained St. Peter as a reader at the age of five, then he promoted him to be a deacon at the age of twelve, then as a priest at sixteen.

At the time of this saint, a man by the name of Sabellius appeared in Alexandria who was teaching that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one person. St. Theonas excommunicated him and he invalidated his heresy by convincing proof.

When he completed his course, he departed in peace, after he had been on the throne of St. Mark for 19 years.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. Also on this day, St. Callinicus (Gallinicus), bishop of Oseem, was martyred.

When Emperor Diocletian heard the report that St. Callinicus was teaching the people to get away from the worship of idols, he sent envoys to seize him and torture him. When the saint heard

about the envoys of the Emperor, he called the people of his diocese to the City of Oseem. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy and after he administered the Body and the Blood of Christ to them, he told them, "You will not see my face again." The people wept bitterly, but they could not prevent him from delivering himself to the Emperor's envoys. They took him and delivered him to Arianus, Governor of Ansena (Antioe). He tortured him, with different kinds of tortures, but the Lord healed him and strengthened him. The Governor took him to the city of "Edku", and there he tortured him again. When the Governor became weary of torturing the Saint, ordered that the Saint's arm be split down to his hand.

Subsequently, he took him in a ship to the city of "Tukh". When the saint felt, while he was on the ship, that the time of his departure from the world had drawn near, he commanded one of the sailors who was a believer, "If I die, when we arrive ashore, cast out my body on a hill."

When St. Callinicus departed, the sailor did as he was commanded. Some believers, through a command of God, came and took the body of the saint and shrouded it for burial and hid it in their homes until the end of the era of persecution.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

The Third Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

*The Commemoration of the Slain Children of Bethlehem
by the Order of King Herod*

On this day, in the second year of the Advent of Christ, the children of Bethlehem were martyred.

King Herod secretly called the wise men and determined from them what time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

When they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary, His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him. When they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

When they were about to return to Herod, the Angel of the Lord warned them in a dream that they should not return to Herod, and that they should depart for their own country another way. When they had departed, the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him."

Joseph arose, took the young child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

"Out of Egypt I called My Son."¹⁴

¹⁴(Matthew 2:7-15, Hosea 11:1)

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Herod's intention was for Jesus to be slain among the children who were slain.

It was said that Herod schemed to achieve his evil objective, by sending envoys to Bethlehem and all its districts saying, "By the command of Caesar all the children two years old and under had to be counted." They gathered 144,000 children in the hands of their mothers. He thought that Jesus would be among them. Then King Herod sent a commander with one thousand soldiers, who slaughtered all these children on one of the mountains in one day.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet saying, "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and a great mourning. Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." (Jeremiah 31:15) For Bethlehem is related to Rachel, and the children were killed nearby her tomb, which is located close to Bethlehem. (Genesis 48:7)

St. John the Evangelist said in Revelation that he saw under the altar the souls of those children that had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

A white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed." (Revelation 6:9-11)

St. John said also that the new song that the four living creatures and the elders were singing, no one could learn except the 144,000 who were redeemed from the earth, who were not defiled with women for they are virgins. They follow the Lord (the Lamb) wherever He goes, and He wipes every tear from their eyes. (Revelation 14:3-4)

Blessed are they, and blessed are the wombs that carried them.
Their intercession be with us and Glory be to our Lord, now and forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

The Departure of St. John the Evangelist and Theologian

On this day, in the year 100 A.D., St. John, the virgin, the evangelist, and apostle who was the son of Zebedee, departed. St. John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth) said that St. John the Evangelist was originally a disciple of St. John the Baptist. He was the brother of St. James the Elder, who was killed by Herod by the sword. The Lord called him with his brother "Boanerges"

(Mark 3:17), that is "sons of thunder," for their strong zeal and great faith. He was also the disciple whom Jesus loved.

The lot fell on him to go to Asia. The people of this area were stiff-necked, so he prayed to Christ to be with him. He went to Ephesus, accompanied by his disciple Prochorus. They embarked on a ship, but the ship was wrecked on the way and every one of the passengers clung to a plank of the ship's wood. The waves washed out Prochorus to an island, but St. John remained among the waves of the sea for several days, until the waves carried him, by the will of God, to the same island where his disciple Prochorus was. When they met together, they offered thanks to God for taking care of them.

From there, St. John went to the city of Ephesus where he preached the word of salvation. Its people did not accept his message at first, until a day when an only child fell in the furnace of a public bath managed by the child's mother. They took him in haste out of the fire, but he was dead and his mother wept bitterly. At this time, St. John went to the child, prayed fervently to God, made the sign of the Cross over him, breathed in the child's face, and life came back to him right away. His mother rejoiced and she kissed the feet of the Apostle and tears of joy were in her eyes.

From this time on, the people of the city came to hear his teachings and many of them believed and were baptized by St. John. This made the priests of the idols resent him and they tried to kill him several times but they could not, for the Lord protects all His chosen ones. After a great effort and many hardships, St. John led them to the knowledge of God and ordained bishops and priests for them.

From there, he went to other places in Asia (Minor) and converted many of its people to the Faith of Christ.

This saint lived 90 years, and they used to carry him to the gatherings of the believers. Because of his old age, he only gave them very short sermons saying, "My children, love one another."

He wrote the gospel known after him, and the Book of Revelation which he had seen on the island of Patmos, which is full of divine mysteries. He also wrote the three epistles known by his name.

He was with the Lord Jesus Christ at the Transfiguration. He leaned (reclined) on the chest of our Lord at the Last Supper. He asked the Lord, "Who is he that shall betray you?" He was standing near the Cross with the Virgin St. Mary and the Lord said to his mother, "Behold your Son," and to John, "Behold your mother." He was the disciple about whom Peter asked the Lord, "And this one, what of him?" The Lord said to Peter, "If it be that I wish him to be here until I come, what is that to you?"

When St. John felt that he was about to depart from this world, he summoned the people and administered to them the Body and the Blood of the Lord. He preached and commanded them to be steadfast in their faith.

He then departed from the City of Ephesus for a short distance. He commanded his disciple and others with him to dig there a pit for him. He went down in it, raised his hands and prayed and then bade them farewell. He commanded them to return to the city and to confirm the brethren in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and said to them, "I am innocent of your blood, for I did not leave any command of God that I haven't taught you, and now, let it be known that you will never see my face again, and God will reward everyone according to his deeds."

When he said that, they kissed his hand and his feet, and they left him and returned to the city. When the people knew what had happened, they went out to where the saint was, and they found that he had departed. They wept and were deeply sad. They talked about his miracles and marvelled about his meekness.

In spite of the fact that he did not die by the sword, as the rest of the apostles did, he was equal to them in the heavenly glories, for his virginity and his holiness.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

The Martyrdom of St. Eusegnius (Eugenius) the Soldier

On this day, St. Eusegnius (Eugenius) was martyred. He was a soldier during the reign of Emperor Constantine the Great. He was merciful and had many charitable deeds.

When Emperor Constantine saw the sign of the Cross, he could not understand its significance, for he was not a believer yet. He asked the soldier Eugenius, who told him that it was the sign of the Lord Christ. The Emperor started to think deeply about it and particularly in the sentence that was written on the sign of the cross, "By this you conquer." At night the Emperor saw the Lord Christ in a dream and He showed him the sign of the Cross. He commanded him to make the flags of his army similar to it. The following morning, the Emperor did as he was commanded, and he won the war against his enemies. He entered Rome victoriously and became a Christian since then, and he lifted up the horn of the Christians and their faith all over the Roman Empire.

St. Eusegnius lived until he was 120 years old, until the days of Julian the infidel Emperor (the apostate).

One day, when he was walking in one of the streets of Antioch, he found two men fighting together. They stopped him and asked him to judge between them, for he was an honorable old man. He made peace between them. Some evil men plotted evil against him, by telling Emperor Julian that he made himself a judge and a ruler over the city. The Emperor brought him, rebuked him and said to him, "Who has appointed you a judge and a ruler?" St. Eusegnius replied with great courage, "I am not a judge nor am I a ruler, but you have forsaken the worship of the God of Heaven, in Whose hands is your soul, and you worshipped unclean idols and you did not follow

in the footsteps of those who came before you. I had been a soldier under the righteous Emperor Constantine for 60 years, and with his sons after him, and I did not see anyone as devilish as you.". The Emperor was exceedingly angry with him, and he commanded that he be crucified and to apply lighted torches to his sides. They did all these things to him, but the saint endured them all for his love of the Lord Christ. At last, the Emperor commanded that his head be cut off. When he was approached by the swordsman, he asked him to wait until he prayed. When he finished praying, they beheaded him and he received the crown of martyrdom.

His prayers be with us, and Glory be to our Lord forever. Amen.

The Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. *The Commemoration of the Circumcision of the Lord Christ.*
2. *The Ascension of Elijah the Prophet.*
3. *The Departure of St. Marcianus, 8th Pope of Alexandria.*
4. *The Departure of St. Basil the Great, Bishop Of Caesarea.*

1. On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the circumcision of the Lord Christ, to Whom is the glory. God had ordained the law of circumcision as a sign that His people would become a particular people over all others. This was that every male of the seed of Abraham be circumcised on the eighth day of his birth. God put every soul that did not obey this law under judgement.

As our Lord Jesus was born from the posterity of Abraham, according to the flesh, He willed to be circumcised on the eighth day, to fulfill the law of Moses and to relieve us from the heavy burden of this commandment, as St. Paul says, "Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers." (Romans 15:8)

He also gave us the sign of the new covenant through baptism, as St. Paul says, "In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in Baptism in which you also were raised with Him, through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." (Colossians 2:11-13)

Therefore, He demands from us to keep the spiritual circumcision, that is to say the circumcision of the heart, so that we may live for Him in righteousness and in holiness, for He says, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." (John 3:5)
Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

2. Also, on this day was the departure of the prophet Elijah (Elias), the Tishbite, to heaven, alive.

This prophet lived during the time of King Ahab. His heart was filled with sorrow, for he saw the king had turned from the worship of the God of Israel to the worship of idols. He followed Queen Jezebel, who helped the priests of Baalzebub. The worship of idols spread out in his days. Therefore, Elijah stood before the king and said, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." (I Kings 17: 1)

Immediately the brooks dried up, for there had been no rain in the land, and the grass dried up and the drought set in the whole land. God however did not forsake his zealous servant. He commanded him to go to the brook of Cherith, and the ravens came to him everyday and brought him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening.

The Lord ordered the water of the river to dry, but He did not forsake the prophet Elijah. God commanded him to go to Zarephath, which belonged to Sidon, where he found a widow gathering sticks and he asked her for bread to eat. She said to him, "As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks, that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die."

Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord God of Israel, "The bin of flour shall not be used up; nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.'" So she went away and did according to the words of Elijah, and she, the prophet, and her household ate for many days.

Elijah stayed with the widow until the drought had ended. She had a son who was sick, and his sickness progressed until he died. The prophet saw the grief of the woman. He took her son from her and carried him to the upper room where he was staying and laid him on his own bed. Then he cried out to the Lord and he stretched himself out on the child three times. The Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the soul of the child came back to him, and he was revived. Elijah took the child and brought him down and gave him to his mother alive. (I Kings 17:17-23)

When Jezebel knew that Elijah executed all the priests of Baal by the sword, she threatened to kill him. When he saw that, he arose and ran for his life. He went to Mount Horeb where he hid himself. The Lord talked to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" So he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life." The Lord said to him, "... Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal..." (I Kings 19:10-18)

When Ahab died and King Ahaziah reigned, he did evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father Ahab. Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and was injured. He sent messengers to inquire from Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, whether he would recover from his injury.

Elijah, the Prophet, met with his messengers and he told them to go and tell the King, "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore, thus says the Lord! You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die."

When they said this to the King, the King knew that it was Elijah the prophet. The King sent to him a captain of fifty, and the prophet was sitting on the top of the hill. He said to Elijah, "Man of God, the King has said, 'Come down.'" So, Elijah answered and said to the captain, "If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And the fire came down from heaven and consumed them. Then the King sent another captain of fifty and said to him what the first captain said. And the fire came down from heaven and consumed them. The third captain came to Elijah and fell on his knees before him and pleaded with him. Elijah arose and went down with him to the King whom he rebuked. The King died in his bed. (2 Kings 1:1-18)

After that, Elijah went to the Jordan River and he took with him Elisha, his disciple. He struck the water with his mantle, and the river was divided and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. While they were talking to each other, suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, separated the two of them, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. (2 Kings 2:1-12)

His prayers be with us. Amen

3. Also on this day in 154 A.D., St. Marcianus, 8th Pope of Alexandria, departed.

He was born in Alexandria. When Pope Omanius departed, the fathers of the church gathered with the people of Alexandria and discussed whom they should choose for the vacant throne. By consensus, they chose Marcianus for his intellect and righteousness.

He sat on the throne of St. Mark for 9 years, 2 months and 26 days. He was always teaching his flock and protecting the church from all the foreign teachings. When he completed his well pleasing course to God, he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

4. Today also of the year 379 A.D., the great St. Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, departed. His father's name was "Isosorus" (Isidore), who was a priest and a holy man. He begot five children: St. Basil of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Kisarion (Cherion), St. Peter of Sebastia, and St. Machrina. They all lived in holiness all their lives.

He was instructed in the art of rhetoric, at the hands of the philosopher Libianius of Antioch, and he worked as an advocate. In 358 A.D., he abandoned the world and all its vain glories. He travelled through the wilderness of Egypt, where he witnessed the ascetics and was influenced by them. Upon his return, he withdrew to a wild and beautiful spot in Pontus and devoted himself to prayer and study. When the news of his holiness spread around, many came to him and they took him as a guide to lead them in the way of perfection.

In 362 A.D., he was promoted to the priesthood. He continued to teach the believers, to defend the faith, and to save those who had been lost.

In 370 A.D., he was ordained Bishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia. For his boldness in truth and for his rebuke of the emperors who conducted themselves against the doctrine and those who behaved immorally. Emperor Valens wanted to exile St. Basil, but he declined because of the death of his son. Another time, when the Emperor wanted to sign an order for his exile, the pen broke in his hand, he took another pen and that also broke, and the same thing happened to a third pen. Valens tore the paper and left the saint to shepherd his flock and manage his church in peace.

St. Basil was filled with the Holy Spirit, and wrote the liturgy that is named after him. God wrought by his hands many signs and miracles. Among them, some heretics gained control over one of the churches and decided to close it unless someone opened it by his prayers. By the prayers of this saint, the church was opened and the believers gained access to it once again.

Another sign: Abba Ephraim saw a pillar of light between earth and heaven and heard a voice saying, "This is Basil." St. Ephraim came to the city of Caesarea and witnessed the virtues of St. Basil. St. Basil ordained him a deacon.

Among his miracles was that a woman wrote all her sins on paper and gave it to St. Basil. He prayed for her and her sins were forgiven, except one sin. He told her to go to Abba Ephraim to pray for her. When she went to Abba Ephraim, he sent her back to St. Basil saying, "Hurry, go back to meet him before his death." When she came back, she found that he had passed away. She wept and she put the paper that she had written on his body and the written sins were blotted out.

Also among his miracles was a Jewish physician, who was known for his professional accuracy and who told the saint that he would die after three days. The saint prayed to God, Who prolonged his life, and he did not die on the day that the physician expected him to die. The physician believed and was baptized with all his household.

Another example is that of a young man who wrote a covenant with the devil to deny his Christianity and his baptism. Through the prayer of the Saint, the young man was saved from the servitude of the devil¹⁵.

This saint had many virtues and performed many miracles besides the above mentioned ones. He wrote many articles, homilies, and discourses. He put down canons which the believers follow till now. He also wrote commentaries on some of the Books of the Old and New Testaments.

His prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁵The account of the miracle is mentioned under the 13th day of the blessed month of Tute.

The Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

The Departure of St. Silvester, Pope of Rome

On this day in the year 335 A.D., St. Silvester (Sylvester), Pope of Rome, departed. He was born in Rome. For his virtues, his ascetic life and his knowledge, he was chosen for the pontificate of Rome in 314 A.D., after the departure of his predecessor St. Miltiades. That was in the eleventh year of Emperor Constantine's reign and less than a year after the issuing of the edict of Milan, which granted freedom to Christianity.

He baptized Emperor Constantine, for he was not yet baptized. He was occupied with wars, demolishing pagan temples and building churches.

The life of this father was a bright and shining life. He continued to teach the people, and remove all doubts from them. He explained to them that which was difficult to understand. He frequently debated with the heretics and converted many of them to believe in the Lord Christ, and baptized them.

He composed several discourses and he wrote several books about the knowledge of God and the mystery of Incarnation.

During the seventh year of his papacy, the Ecumenical Council of Nicea convened, and he excommunicated Arius and all who supported him. When he completed his good course, he departed in peace. He occupied the Roman chair for 11 years.

His prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. *The Consecration of St. Macarius' Church.*
2. *The Departure of St. Andronicus, 37th Pope of Alexandria.*
3. *The Departure of St. Benjamin, 38th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, the church of St. Macarius¹⁶, in the monastery known after his name, was consecrated by the hand of Abba Benjamin, 38th Pope of Alexandria. This took place when El-Moquakas was appointed as a ruler and patriarch over Egypt by Emperor Heraclius. Both of them believed in the teachings of the Council of Chalcedon.

¹⁶St. Macarius' biography and his departure is on the 27th of Baramhat.

El-Moquakas started to persecute the Christians of Egypt (the Copts) because they refused to follow him. He pursued Pope Benjamin, the legitimate Pope of Alexandria, who took flight to upper Egypt. He moved from one church to another and from one monastery to another, confirming his flock in the faith. He did this for ten years, until the Arab conquest of Egypt and the death of El-Moquakas.

When Abba Benjamin returned to his throne, the elders of the wilderness of the holy desert of Scete (Scetis) asked him to consecrate for them the new church that they built there in the name of St. Macarius. He went with them joyfully. As he approached the monastery, the monks received him with palm fronds and olive branches, just as the city of Jerusalem received Christ when He entered it.

When he was consecrating the church and as he was starting to consecrate the altar, he saw the Hand of Christ anointing the altar with him. He fell upon his face in great fear, and one of the Cherubim raised him up and comforted him. Abba Benjamin said, "Truly this is the house of the Lord and this is the door of heaven." He looked to the west side of the church and he saw an elder standing there with reverence and awesome appearance, and his shining face looked like an angel. He said to himself, "Truly, if there a chair became vacant, I would make this man a bishop." The angel told him, "Would you make this man a bishop?, and he is St. Macarius, the father of Patriarchs, bishops, and all the monks. He has come today in the spirit to rejoice with his children, and this place will be forever filled with righteous monks, and it will never be short of leaders and spiritual fruits." St. Benjamin said, "Blessed is he and blessed are his children." The angel said, "If his children obey his commandments and follow his orders, they will be with him in glory, but if they disobey, they will have no share with him."

Then St. Macarius said, "Do not decide, my lord, what would happen to my children this way. For if one grape in a bunch remains, the blessing of the Lord will be on it. For if their love for one another remains among them, I believe that the Lord will never keep them away from His Kingdom."

St. Benjamin was amazed and marvelled at the abundant mercy of St. Macarius. He wrote what had taken place and placed it in the church as a perpetual memorial. He asked the Lord Jesus Christ that his departure might take place on a similar day. This was fulfilled, and he departed on the eighth day of Tubah, after he had been on the throne for 39 years. The altar in which he saw the Lord Christ was named after him.

His prayers be with. Amen.

2. Also on this day, of the year 617 A.D., the holy father Abba Andronicus, 37th Pope of Alexandria, departed. This father was from a rich family of great influence and his cousin was the chief of the imperial court at Alexandria. He was very well educated and he studied the holy scriptures and excelled in their interpretation. Because of his knowledge, his righteousness and his charity toward the poor, he was ordained a deacon. By consensus he was chosen to be patriarch, although he never lived in any monastery. He remained in Alexandria all the days of his papacy, not intimidated by the authority of the Melkites.

Shortly after the ordination of Abba Andronics, the Persians invaded the East and crossed the river Euphrates. They seized Halab, Antioch in Syria, Jerusalem, and many other cities. They killed and imprisoned many Christians. They captured Egypt and went to the City of Alexandria, around which there were six hundred inhabited monasteries. They killed all the inhabitants, plundered their possessions, and destroyed the monasteries. When the people of Alexandria heard what they had done, because of their fear, they opened the gates of the city for them.

The Persian King saw in a night dream someone saying to him, "I have delivered to you the city. Do not destroy it. But kill its heroes for they are hypocrites." He arrested the Governor of the city, and tied him up in chains. He ordered the elders of the city to bring forth the men, from 18 to 50 years old to come forward to give everyone twenty denari, and to enlist them as soldiers for the city. Eighty thousand men came forward and he killed them all by the sword.

Afterward, the Persian King went with his army to Upper Egypt. He passed by the city of Nikios. He heard that there were some seven hundred monks living in cells and caves around it. He sent men to kill them. He continued to kill and destroy until Emperor Heraclius conquered him and drove him out of Egypt.

As for Pope Andronicus, he lived a virtuous life. He remained on the throne of St. Mark for 6 years, then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, of the year 656 A.D., the blessed and holy father Abba Benjamin, 38th Pope of Alexandria, departed.

This father was from the city of Baret (Barshout), the province of El-Behiera. He was the son of wealthy parents.

He became a monk under the guidance of a holy elder by the name of Theonas in the monastery of St. Knobus nearby Alexandria. He grew in virtue and memorized the holy books of the church until he reached the level of Christian perfection.

One night he heard in a night vision someone saying, "Rejoice Benjamin, for you will shepherd the flock of Christ." When he told his spiritual father about what he had heard, he said to him, "The devil wants to hinder you. Beware of pride." He increased in virtue. His spiritual father took him to Pope Andronicus and told him about Abba Benjamin's vision. The Pope ordained him priest and put him in charge of the church affairs, and he excelled in his care.

When he was chosen to the patriarchate, he faced many tribulations. The angel of the Lord had revealed to him the hardships that the church was about to experience. The angel told him to flee with his bishops. St. Benjamin celebrated the Divine Liturgy and administered the Holy Mysteries to the people. He also commanded them to be steadfast in the faith of their fathers and informed them of what was about to happen. He wrote a circular to all the bishops and all the heads of the

monasteries, advising them to hide until the hardships were over. Then he went to the wilderness of St. Macarius, then to Upper Egypt.

After the Pope had left Alexandria, the Chalcedonian El-Moquakas arrived, and took charge over the country and seized the church with authority from Emperor Heraclius. He persecuted the believers and arrested "Mina", St. Benjamin's brother, and tortured him severely. Then he burnt his sides, and finally killed him by drowning him.

Shortly after, Amr Ebn-Elas invaded the land of Egypt and stayed there for three years. In 360 A.M. (Anno Martyri), Amr went to Alexandria and gained control of its fortress. Many evil men took the chance and burned many churches, among them was St. Mark's Church on the seashore, and many other monasteries that were surrounding Alexandria, and plundered their contents.

One of the sailors went to the church of St. Mark during this disturbance and he thrust his hand into the sarcophagus of St. Mark, thinking that he would find money. He did not find anything except a body. He stole the clothing that was on it and took the head with him, and hid it in his ship and did not tell anyone.

When Amr Ebn-Elas knew about the disappearance of Pope Benjamin, he sent a circular to all the cities of Egypt, giving orders that the Pope's hiding place be safe and secure. He asked the Pope to come back to his people and to take charge of the church. Pope Benjamin came back after he had been in hiding for 13 years. Amr Ebn-Elas was courteous toward him and honored him. He returned the churches and all their properties back to him.

When Amr was about to leave Alexandria, heading to Pentapolis (the five western cities), one of the ships could not move and was unable to leave. The captain of the ship was questioned and when they searched the ship they found the head of St. Mark. They called upon Pope Benjamin and he carried it and walked with the priests and the people while they were joyfully singing hymns, until they arrived to Alexandria. The captain of the ship paid a great amount of money to the Pope to build a church after the name of St. Mark.

This father was dedicated to converting the unbelievers to the Christian faith. He departed in peace after he had been on the apostolic throne for 37 years.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

The Departure of Abba Abraam, Companion of Abba Gawarga

On this day the blessed St. Abraam departed. His father was a pious man, merciful and kind to the poor. Because of his piety and good nature, he was entrusted to look after the treasury of his village, as well as that of the neighboring villages. When Egypt suffered a famine, he gave all he had to the needy.

As for St. Abraam's mother, she lived in the fear of God and Satan envied her, and provoked an evil man against her. As a result, he accused her to the Persians who captured and took her to Persia. During her captivity, one night she saw in a vision, one who told her; "you shall return to your country." Shortly thereafter, the vision was fulfilled and she returned to her country, Egypt, safely.

After her husband's death, she wanted her son, Abraam, to be married, but he refused and told her of his desire for monastic life, and she rejoiced. As she bid him farewell at the outskirts of the city, she lifted up her arms toward heaven and prayed saying, "Please Lord, accept him from me as an offering."

St. Abraam went to the wilderness of Sheheet (Scetis), where he became a monk and a disciple of St. Yoannis, the Archpriest of the wilderness.

Abba Abraam led an extremely harsh monastic life, exerting himself with long fasts and many worships. One day, St. Abraam saw the roof of his cell opened and the Lord Jesus came down, riding a heavenly chariot, and the Cherubim were praising Him. Abba Abraam knelt down in great fear and the Lord blessed him. Then the Lord Christ ascended to heaven. A sign remained in the roof of his cell as a commemoration of this visitation. His cell was near the cell of his spiritual father Abba Yoannis, which is known by "Babgeeh". An angel of the Lord used to visit Abba Abraam from time to time to comfort him.

One day he went to Mount Orion where he met with St. Gawarga. St. Gawarga came back with Anba Abraam to the wilderness of Sheheet and stayed with Abba Abraam until the day of their departure.

After the departure of Abba Yoannis to heaven, Abba Abraam became ill for 18 years. When the time of his departure drew near, Abba Abraam received the Holy Mysteries. Anba Yoannis appeared to him in the spirit and told him that the Lord Christ had prepared for him a heavenly banquet. Abba Abraam departed in peace at the age of 80.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our Lord forever. Amen.

The Tenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

Paramouni of Holy Theophany (Epiphany)

On this day it has been the tradition of the Orthodox Church, following the teachings of the holy fathers of the church, to fast until dusk, eating only what is permitted to be eaten during the holy forty days (Lent). If Christmas day or Epiphany falls on Wednesday or Friday, the saintly apostles ordained that the believers eat all the food that one is permitted to eat during the Pentecostal days (the post-resurrection fifty days). They are feasts to the Lord. The Paramouni days are fasted to compensate for the feast days, so that we may have the blessings of both the fast and the feast.

In the custom of our Coptic Orthodox church, if the Paramouni day falls on Saturday or Sunday, it is the tradition to fast on the Friday that precedes them also. Then they pray on water before midnight and they wash and bless everyone who wants to be blessed. The reason to complete this before midnight is because of the fear that the little children may break their fasting by drinking water.

We ask Christ to purify us, cleanse us from all our abominations, forgive our sins, and make us worthy to receive the revelation of the glory of His divine nature in our hearts and in our deeds, as He revealed His glory in the Jordan River.

To Him be the Glory with His Good Father and His Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the end of ages. Amen.

The Eleventh Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

*The Holy Theophany of Our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ
(Baptism of the Lord christ)*

On this day of the year 31 A.D., our Master, Lord and God, Jesus Christ, was baptized at the hands of St. John the Baptizer (the dyer). The feast is called in Greek the Feast of Theophany or the Feast of the Revelation of the Divine Nature of the Lord, for the Holy Trinity was revealed: our heavenly Father was heard from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son," and the Son standing in the Jordan river, and the Holy Spirit was descending in the form of a dove, and alighting upon Him.

St. John the Baptist bore witness that the Lord Christ, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying,

"This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."¹⁷

St. John the evangelist said about this day, "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. This is He of Whom I said, 'After me comes a Man Who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' I did not know him but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.'" (John 1:29-31)

¹⁷Matthew 3:16-17

The glory of our Lord Jesus Christ was revealed on this day, that He is the Son of God and that He is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. For this reason, this feast has become a great feast for all believers, in which they are purified with water after the example of the baptism of our Lord, to Whom is the glory, to obtain forgiveness of their sins.

Glory, honor and worship to our Lord God, now and forever more and to the end of ages. Amen.

The Twelfth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. *The Commemoration of the Archangel Michael.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Theodore El-Mishreke (the Oriental).*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Anatole (Anatolius).*

1. On this day, the church commemorates the honorable Angel Michael, the head of the heavenly host, the intercessor for the human race, and the faithful steward.

His intercession be for us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 306 A.D., the church celebrates the commemoration of the martyrdom of the courageous prince, St. Theodore El-Mishreke (The Oriental).

He was born in the City of Tyre in 270 A.D. In his youth, he enlisted in the Roman army and was promoted to the rank of commander. His father's name was Sadrikhos, "Adrakos" who was a high ranking official during the reign of Emperor Numerianus (283-284 A.D.), and his mother was the sister of Basilides, the minister.

When Emperor Numerianus died in the war against the Persians, his son, Justus, was fighting in the west. The two officials Sadrikhos and Basilides continued to run the affairs of the Empire, until the infidel Diocletian took charge of the Empire, and started to persecute the Christians.

At that time, St. Theodore was in charge of the army that was fighting against the Persians. He saw a vision at night: a ladder was extended between earth and heaven, and at the top of the ladder the Lord sat on a great throne, surrounded by hosts of angels chanting. He also saw under the ladder a great beast which was the devil. The Lord said to St. Theodore, "Your blood will be shed for My Name's sake." The saint asked the Lord, "How about my friend Lawondius?" The Lord replied, "Not only Lawondius, but Banikaros, the Persian, also."

During a truce, between the Roman and Persian armies, St. Theodore met with Banikaros, the commander of the Persian army. St. Theodore guided him to Christianity and he believed in Christ.

Emperor Diocletian ordered that Prince Theodore be brought to him. The prince came back with his army and with him were Lawondius and Banikaros. When St. Theodore knew that the Emperor was going to ask him to worship idols, he told his soldiers, "Whoever among you wants

to fight for the Name of the Lord Christ, let him come and join me." They all shouted in one accord, "We die with you and your God is our God also."

When he arrived in the city, he left his soldiers outside and went alone to the Emperor who received him well. The Emperor inquired about the war and the army and he asked St. Theodore to worship Apollo.

The saint answered in great courage and faith, "I do not know any god that I can worship except my Master, Jesus Christ."

Diocletian commanded his soldiers to nail the Saint to a tree and to brutally torture him. But the Lord was strengthening and comforting him. Finally, he delivered up his pure soul into the hand of the Lord Whom he loved. He received the crown of eternal glory in the kingdom of heaven.

The Emperor sent the priests of Apollo to the soldiers of the saint, to call upon them to worship the idols. They all shouted, "We have no king except our Master, Jesus Christ, Lord of Lords, and King of Kings." When the Emperor heard what they said, he had them all beheaded. They received the crowns of martyrdom and eternal bliss.

Their prayers be with us all. Amen.

3. On this day also, St. Anatole (Anatolius) was martyred. He was born in Persia. When he grew up, he became a soldier of the Roman Empire and was promoted to a commander in the army. He spent fifteen years in the army until the reign of Diocletian. He longed to chose the heavenly kingdom, preferring it over all the vain glory of this temporal world.

He came before the Emperor, took off his military attire and sword, threw them before him and confessed his faith in the Lord Christ. The Emperor was astonished at his boldness. When he knew that he was a Persian, the Emperor treated him with kindness, then sent him to Romanos that he might persuade him to change his counsel. Romanos failed to do that and he returned him to the Emperor. The Emperor tortured him with all kinds of tortures, sometimes by pressing his body, sometimes by beating him and casting him to wild beasts, and other times by cutting his tongue.

The Lord Jesus Christ sent to him His Angel to comfort him in all his afflictions. He remained under persecution for a long time and when the Emperor became weary of torturing him, he ordered his head cut off. He received the crown of martyrdom in the eternal kingdom.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Thirteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

- 1. The Commemoration of the Miracle at Cana of Galilee.*
- 2. The Departure of St. Theophilus, the Monk.*
- 3. The Martyrdom of St. Demiana.*

1. On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the miracle that our Lord Jesus Christ performed at Cana of Galilee. It was the first miracle that our Lord Jesus performed after His

baptism. He was invited to the wedding with His virgin mother, St. Mary, and also some of His disciples.

When they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

There were set there six water pots of stone. Jesus said to them, "Fill the water pots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Draw some out now and take it to the master of the feast."

When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, he said to the bridegroom, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine and when the guests have well drunk, then that which is inferior; but you have kept the good wine until now."

This was the beginning of the signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory and His disciples believed in Him. (John 2:1-11)

To Him is the Glory with His Good Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Theophilus the Monk, departed. He was the only son of a king of one of the Roman islands. He brought him up well in the Christian faith and knowledge. When he was 12 years old, he read in the epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, "And you, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands. They will perish but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." (Hebrews 1:10-12) Then he read in his first epistle to the Corinthians, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband... for I wish that all men were even as I myself... and I think I also have the spirit of God." (I Corinthians 7:1,2,7,40)

He also read in the holy gospel the words of the Lord, "If you want to be perfect, go sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (Matthew 19:21)

Theophilus left his father's house and all that was his, and went out in disguise. He went from one monastery to another until he arrived in Alexandria. From there, he went to the "Glass Monastery". When St. Boctor, the abbot of the monastery, saw him and knew by the spirit that he was a descendant of kings, he received him well and blessed him. He asked him about his story. St. Boctor was greatly surprised and glorified God and accepted him in the monastery. When he saw his successful, virtuous, and active spiritual life, he clothed him in the holy Eskeem.

Ten years later, some soldiers sent by Theophilus' father came and took him by force. When he came before his father, he could not recognize him, for asceticism had changed his appearance. The saint revealed his identity to his father, who rejoiced greatly. The saint started to preach to his

father telling him about life, death and judgement. His words left a mark in the heart of his father. His father took the crown off his head, relinquishing his throne to his brother. He went with his wife and St. Theophilus, their son to the "Glass" monastery, where the king became a monk and stayed with his son. St. Theophilus' mother became a nun in a convent. They all lived an ascetic life in worship and in virtue until the end of their days. When they completed their strife, they departed in peace.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, St. Demiana was martyred. This chaste and fighter virgin, was the daughter of Mark, Governor of El-Borollus, El-Zaafran, and Wadi Al-Saysaban¹⁸ in the Northern delta of the valley of the Nile. She was the only daughter to her parents. When she was one year old, her father took her to the church of the monastery of Al-Maymah. He offered alms, candles and oblations so that God might bless her and keep her in His care.

When she was fifteen years old, her father wanted her to be wed. She refused, and told him that she had vowed herself a bride to the Lord Christ. When she saw that her father was pleased with her intention, she asked him to build her a place where she could worship God in seclusion with her virgin friends. He fulfilled her wish and built her the house that she wanted. She lived in it with forty other virgins. They spent their time reading the holy scripture and in worship.

Shortly after, Emperor Diocletian sent for Mark, St. Demiana's father, and ordered him to worship the idols. He refused at first, but after the Emperor appeased him he obeyed his order and worshipped the idols and forsook the Creator of the Universe. When Mark returned to his official seat, and St. Demiana knew what had transpired, she rushed to meet him. She did not greet him, but said, "What is it that I heard about you? I would have preferred to hear about your death rather than to hear that you have renounced your faith and forsaken the God Who created you from non-existence into being, to worship gods made by hands. Take note that if you do not return to your first faith and renounce the worship of stones, you are not my father and I am not your daughter," and she left him.

Her father was greatly moved by the words of his daughter, and he wept bitterly. In haste, he went to Diocletian and confessed the Lord Christ. When the Emperor could not convince him with threats and promises, he ordered him beheaded.

When Diocletian knew that the one who turned Mark from worshipping the idols was St. Demiana, his daughter. He sent her a prince to try first gently to convince her to worship idols, and if she disobeyed him to behead her. The prince went to her with two hundred soldiers and the instruments of torture. When he arrived at her palace, he said to her, "I am a messenger sent from Emperor Diocletian. I came to call upon you according to the Emperor's orders, to worship his gods, so that he can grant you all that you want." The saint shouted in his face saying, "May God denounce the messenger and the one by whom he was sent. Don't you have any shame at all to

¹⁸Nearby Bilqas, north east of Gharbiah Province.

call stones and wood gods which are inhabited by devils? There is no god in heaven or on earth except one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Eternal Creator, the Everlasting, Who is everywhere, Who knows all the secrets, and Who can throw you in hell where is the everlasting torment. As for me, I am the maidservant of my Master and my Savior Jesus Christ, and His Good Father and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity, Him I confess and upon Him I depend, and in His Name I die, and by Him I live forever."

The prince became exceedingly angry and ordered her to be placed in the Hinbazeen (the squeezing press), until her blood poured out of her body on the ground. The virgins were standing weeping over her. When they put her in prison, the angel of the Lord appeared to her, touched her body with his illumined wings, and she was healed of all her wounds. The prince used all his evil imagination to torture St. Demiana, once by tearing her flesh and another time by placing her in boiling oil. Through it all the Lord raised her up safely. When the prince saw that all his attempts were in vain, before the steadfastness of this pure virgin he ordered her beheaded, and all the other virgins with her. Thus, they all received the crowns of martyrdom.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. The Departure of St. Archiledis (Arselidas).

2. The Departure of St. Maximus, Brother of St. Domadius (Domatius).

1. On this day St. Archiledis departed. This fighter was born in the city of Rome. His father's name was "John" and his mother's name was "Sinclatiki". They were righteous before the Lord and lived according to His commandments.

This saint's father died when he was 12 years old. When his mother wanted him to get married, he declined. She advised him to go to the Emperor to take over his father's position. She sent along with him two of their men and a precious gift to present to the Emperor. While they were sailing, they encountered a great tempest with high waves and strong winds, so that the ship was wrecked. The saint hung onto one of the ship's planks, and God saved him from drowning. When he made it to the seashore, he found a body of a dead man that was thrown to the shore by the waves.

He reflected on the transience of the world and its temporal nature, and said to himself, "What do I have to do with this temporal world, and what would I profit when I die and become dust?" He arose and prayed to the Lord Christ to guide him to the right way.

Then he walked diligently until he arrived at the monastery of St. Romanus. He gave to the abbot of the monastery what was left of his money. He stayed there living an ascetic life, denying himself food and clothing, until he reached a level of perfection. The Lord granted him the gift of healing the sick. He made an oath not to ever see the face of any woman.

When he did not return to his mother for a long time, and she did not know his whereabouts, she thought that he died, and she grieved much over him. She built a hostel for the poor and the strangers, and she lived in one of its rooms.

One day she heard two merchants talking about her son and his holy monastic life and the grace of God that was upon him. When she inquired about him, she became sure that it was him, her own son. She arose quickly and went to that monastery.

When she arrived, she sent to inform the saint of her arrival. St. Archiledis answered her saying that he had made an oath before God not to ever see a woman. She repeated her request, and threatened that if he did not allow her to see him, she would go to the wilderness to be eaten by the wild beasts.

When he learned of her persistence, and that he could not renege on his oath, he prayed to the Lord christ to take his soul. Then he told the gate keeper to allow her to come in while God had answered his request. When his mother entered his cell, she found that he had given up his spirit. She cried, wept and asked God to take her soul also, and God answered her prayer.

When they tried to separate their bodies, they heard a voice coming from St. Archiledis' body saying, "Let my body be with the body of my mother, for I did not grant her own heart's desire to see me." They buried both of them in one grave. God honored this saint in performing many miracles.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Maximus, brother of St. Domadius (Domatius), departed. They were the children of Emperor Walendianus.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

The Departure of Obadiah, the Prophet

On this day, Obadiah, one of the prophets of the children of Israel, departed. He was the son of Hananya, the prophet from the tribe of Judah. Obadiah prophesied in the days of King Jehoshaphat, King of Judah.

It was said that Obadiah was the head of the fifty men who were sent by King Ahaziah, for the third time, to Elijah the Prophet. He came to Elijah in humility and pleaded with him not to destroy him as those who proceeded him, for fire had come down from heaven and burned them. He asked Elijah to have compassion upon him and to come with him to go to see King Ahaziah. The Prophet went with him as was told by the angel of the Lord. (2 Kings 1:15)

Thus, Obadiah realized that to serve Elijah the Prophet was far more noble than to serve earthly kings, and that if he were to accompany him, it would lead him to the service of the Heavenly King. He left the service of the King and followed Elijah, and was filled with the grace of God.

He prophesied for more than twenty years. He prophesied about the destruction of the land of Edom, for they rejoiced for the distress of the people of God. (Obadiah 1-16) He also prophesied about the salvation of Jerusalem and her victory over the Family of Esau, and her victory over all her enemies. (Obadiah 17-21)

He lived more than seven hundred years before the advent of the Lord Christ.

He departed and was buried in the tomb of his fathers.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. The Martyrdom of St. Philotheus.

2. The Departure of St. John IV, 48th Pope of Alexandria.

1. On this day, the honorable St. Philotheus, whose name means "lover of God", was martyred. He was born in the City of Antioch, of pagan parents, who worshipped a bull, which they fed cakes made of fine flour and sesame seed oil mixed with honey. They also anointed the bull with spices and fine perfumed oils three times every day, and they gave it wine and oil to drink. They established two places for the bull, one for the summer, and another for the winter. They put around its neck a collar of gold, and golden rings in its legs.

When Philotheus was ten years old, his father asked him to worship the bull, but he refused, his father left him without punishment, for he loved him as he was his only son.

As for St. Philotheus, because of his young age, he did not know the Living God, and he thought that the sun was the god. He stood once looking at the sun and said, "I beseech you, O sun, if you are God, tell me." He heard a voice coming from heaven saying, "I am not God, but I am a servant and a slave to God, Whom you will know, and you will shed your blood for His Name's sake."

When God saw the integrity of the child's heart, He sent His angel to inform him about the creation of the world, and the incarnation of the Lord Christ, for the salvation of mankind. St. Philotheus was pleased, and rejoiced in his heart. From that time on, he fasted, prayed and gave alms to the poor and those who were in distress.

After one year had passed, his parents had a great banquet for their friends, and they asked their son to worship the bull before they ate and drank. The child stood in front of the bull and said, "Are you the God that should be worshipped?" A voice came out of the bull saying, "I am not the

God, but the devil has possessed me and I have become a deceiver of men." Then the bull jumped and attacked his parents and killed them instantly. The Saint ordered his servants to kill the bull, burn its body and scatter its ashes.

St. Philotheus prayed to God for the sake of his parents, and the Lord raised them up from the dead. Later on, he was baptized along with his parents in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God granted him the gift of healing the sick, and his repute reached Diocletian, the emperor. He brought him, and ordered him to offer incense to the idols, but he refused. The Emperor tortured him with all kinds of tortures, but the Saint never swayed from his determination. The Emperor tried again to persuade him by deception and flattery, and the Saint promised to worship Apollo as the Emperor commanded. The Emperor was pleased to hear this, and he brought Apollo along with 70 other idols, and 70 pagan priests and a herald went around to call upon the public in the city.

Great multitudes came to watch St. Philotheus worshipping Apollo. On their way, the saint prayed to the Lord Christ, and the earth was opened and swallowed the priests and the idol of Apollo. There was a great excitement and disturbance, and a great multitude believed and confessed the Lord Christ.

The Emperor was exasperated, and ordered them all beheaded, and they received the crown of martyrdom. St. Philotheus was also beheaded, and he received the crown of life.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, in the year 792 A.D., St. John IV, 48th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He became a monk in St. Macarius' monastery. He persevered in intense worship and was reputed for his ascetic life. He was chosen by Pope Michael, 46th Pope of Alexandria and ordained a priest for the Church of St. Mina. Pope Michael entrusted him to manage the affairs of the church and to lead the people and direct all its property and offerings. He excelled in his duties.

When Anba Mina, 47th Pope of Alexandria, departed, the bishops, the priests, and the scholars of the City of Alexandria gathered and nominated several monks. They wrote the name of each of them on a piece of paper, and the name of Father John was among them. The bishops prayed and celebrated the Divine Liturgy for three days. Then, on the third day, they brought a child to draw one of the names. They found it to be the name of this saint, Father John. They returned the paper, mixed it with the other papers, and brought another child, who drew the same paper. This was repeated a third time. They were sure that the Lord had chosen Fr. John to become the next pope. They took him and ordained him patriarch in 768 A.D. He shepherded his flock well. He always preached the people confirming them in the Orthodox faith. He was also merciful to the poor and the needy.

During his days, there was a famine, to the point that one measure of grain (a Bushel) was sold for two Dinari. Many poor from different beliefs gathered every day at his door. He delegated to his disciple Mark to use the money of the churches to feed the poor and satisfy their needs. He offered to everyone without distinction of faith until God removed this famine.

Anba John was dedicated to building many churches. When the time of his departure drew near, he called on the priests and said to them, "On the 16th of Tubah, I was born and was also ordained Pope, and on this day also I will depart from this world." When the bishops and the priests heard this, they wept and said, "Who would become our Father after you?" He said to them, "The Lord Jesus Christ has chosen my disciple Fr. Mark to this rank."

After he had completed 23 years and several months in the papacy, he departed in peace.
His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Seventeenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. *The Departure of St. Maximus and St. Domatius (Domadius).*
2. *The Departure of Anba Yusab, Bishop of Girga, known as El- Abbah.*

1. On this day is the commemoration of the two honored saints Maximus and his brother Domatius (Domadius). Their father's name was Walendianus, he was one of the Roman emperors who feared God and was Orthodox in faith. God gave him these two sons who were angelic in their purity and holiness since their young age, always praying and reading the holy books.

When they realized the vanity of this world and all its glory, they decided to leave it and live a monastic life. They asked their father to allow them to go to the City of Nicea, to pray in the place where the first Universal Council was held in 325 A.D. Their father rejoiced, and he sent an entourage of soldiers and servants with them, as was the custom for the children of kings.

When they arrived, they asked the soldiers to go back to their father and tell him that they wanted to stay there for some time. Then they revealed their thoughts to a saintly monk, that they desired to put on the holy garb of the monks. The monk did not agree with them because he feared their father, but he advised them to go to Syria where St. Agabius abided.

They went to St. Agabius and stayed with him until his departure. Before he departed, he put on them the monastic garb, and told them that he saw St. Macarius in a night vision saying, "Command your two sons to come to me after your departure, so that they may become my children." Then St. Agabius told them, "I desired to see St. Macarius in the flesh, but I have seen him in the spirit. After my departure, you should go to him in peace."

God granted them the gift of healing the sick. Their report was heard in all the countries, especially among the sea merchants and the travellers. They learned the trade of making ships' sails, and they were able to support themselves with money earned from selling them, and they gave the rest to the poor and the needy.

One day, one of their father's stewards saw a ship with the names "Maximus and Domatius" on its sail. He inquired of the owner of the ship about these names. The owner told the steward, "These

are the names of two monk brothers, which I have written on my ship as a blessing, so that God with their prayers may prosper my business." He described the brothers to him, as one with a full beard, and the other without a beard. The steward recognized them and he took the man and brought him before the Emperor. When the Emperor made certain about what he had heard, he sent their mother and the princess, their sister, to meet them. When the women met with the two saints and recognized them, they wept. Their mother wanted them to return with her, but the Saints refused, and they comforted the hearts of their mother and sister.

After a while, the Patriarch of Rome departed, and they remembered Maximus, whom they wanted to ordain in his place. His father rejoiced when he heard this. When the news arrived to St. Maximus and his brother, they remembered the command of their father Anba Agabius. They disguised themselves, and took the road along the Mediterranean sea shore, and when they were thirsty, God transformed for them the salty water into sweet water. They became very tired of walking, and their feet were bleeding. They slept on a hill because of their exhaustion and God sent them a certain power that carried them to the wilderness of Scetis where St. Macarius was residing. They told St. Macarius that they wanted to live under his guidance. When St. Macarius saw that they were of rich background, he thought that they would not be able to live in the desert because of its harsh living conditions. They answered him saying, "If we are not able to live here, our father, we will return to where we came from." Then he taught them how to plait palm leaves, and he helped in building a cave (cell) for them. He also told them about someone who would take the work of their hands to sell and bring them back bread.

They lived in this manner for three years, never communicating with anyone. They only went to church to partake of the Divine Sacraments silently. St. Macarius marvelled, for they did not go to him all these years. He prayed to God to reveal to him their secret. He went to visit them in their cell where he stayed the night with them. When he woke up at midnight, as was his custom, to pray, he saw the two saints praying and a ray of light going from their mouths to heaven, and the devils were all around them like flies, and the angel of the Lord standing with a sword of fire to protect them. The next day, St. Macarius put on them the holy Eskiem, and asked them to pray for him. They bowed to the ground before him (made metanias) in silence.

When they completed their course, and the Lord wanted to take them away from the sorrows of this temporal world, St. Maximus became sick. He sent word to St. Macarius, asking him to come. When St. Macarius arrived, he found St. Maximus ill with a fever, and he comforted him. St. Macarius saw a company of prophets and saints, including St. John the Baptist and Emperor Constantine, gathered around the Saint until he delivered his pure spirit in dignity and in honor. St. Macarius wept and said, "Blessed are you, O Maximus."

St. Domatius, his brother, wept bitterly, and asked St. Macarius to pray on his behalf to the Lord Christ to take him also to be with his brother. After three days, he also became sick, and when St. Macarius knew by the spirit he went to visit him. On his way, he saw the company of saints who carried St. Maximus before carrying the soul of St. Domatius ascending up to heaven. When he arrived at the cave, St. Macarius found that St. Domatius had passed away. St. Macarius put St. Domatius' body with his brother's, whose departure was on the 14th day of this month. St.

Macarius ordered that the monastery be called after their names, the monastery of "El-Baramus" as it is known until today.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 1826 A.D., Anba Yusab, the great scholar and honorable father, departed. He was the Bishop of Girga and Ekhmiem, and was known by the name "El-Abbah".

He was born in the town of Nekhila in Upper Egypt, to rich parents who were compassionate to the poor and the needy. When Anba Yusab was 25 years old, his parents wanted him to be wed, but he refused. Because of his inclination towards the monastic life, he went to the estate of St. Anthony's monastery in the city of Boash. He stayed there for some time, during which his humility and piety were evident. This convinced the abbot to send him to the monastery. When he arrived, the monks received him with joy, for they had heard of his virtues and his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Shortly after, they clothed him in the monk's tunic.

When the reports of this father reached Pope John, 107th Patriarch, he called Anba Yusab and kept him with him. After the Pope verified what he heard of Anba Yusab' righteousness and knowledge, he counseled with the bishops who agreed to ordain Anba Yusab a bishop over Ekhmiem and Girga. Anba Yusab refrained from accepting this rank because of its responsibilities; however, he was ordained against his will.

When he arrived at his diocese, Anba Yusab found many heretics mingled with his people. He built a church, and made a great effort to gather his flock, to teach them, to restore those who were lost, and to guide many of the heretics to the faith. He wrote several articles on the Incarnation of the Lord Christ and explained several difficult issues and ambiguous verses in the Bible. He urged his people to forsake all the bad customs that they were engaged in, both inside and outside the church. He succeeded in putting an end to the quarrels and divisions from those who were in opposition to the truth. He was merciful to the poor, and never judged anyone by his appearance. He was fair in judgement, never took sides, and did not accept bribes. He sent whatever money he had left to his brethren, the monks, in their monasteries. He did not own anything except the clothes that he wore and those things which fulfilled his basic needs. He never uttered anything but the truth, and was not afraid of the mighty rulers of the land. He shepherded his flock with the best of care.

When God wanted to take him away from this world, Anba Yusab became ill for a short period of time. While he was sick, he stayed some time in his diocese, and then in the cell of Pope Anba Peter, 109th Pope. Then he went to his monastery in the wilderness. The monks rejoiced to see him, and his blessed life ended there, and he gave his pure spirit into the hand of the Lord who loved him. He lived 91 years, 25 years before his monastic life, 31 years in the monastery, and 35 years as bishop.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eighteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

The Departure of St. James, Bishop of Nisibis

On this day of the year 338 A.D., St. James, Bishop of Nisibis, departed. He was born in the city of Nisibis, and was brought up there. He was Syrian by race.

Early in his youth, he chose the monastic life. He wore sackcloth made of hair to protect him from the heat of summer and the cold of winter. His food was composed of the vegetation of the earth, and his drink was only water. For this reason, he was very thin, but his soul was illumined and full of grace. He was worthy to receive the gift of prophecy and the performing of miracles. He also was able to foretell the future and he advised the people of what would happen to them in advance.

His miracles are numerous. One day he saw some promiscuous women jesting without shame by a spring of water, and they had let their hair down to take a bath. He prayed to God, and the water of the spring dried up, and the women's hair became white. When the women apologized to him and repented for what they had done, he prayed to God, and the water came back to the spring, but their hair remained white.

Another miracle occurred when he was passing by certain people who stretched a man on the ground and covered him as though he was dead. They asked the saint for some money for his burial. When they returned to the man, they found him dead. They came back to the saint and repented for what they had done. St. James prayed to God, and the man came back to life.

When his virtues became widely known, he was chosen to be a bishop over the city of Nisibis. He shepherded the flock of Christ very well, and protected his people from the Arian wolves. He was one of the bishops who attended the first Universal Council at Nicea in 325 A.D., and agreed on the excommunication and exile of Arius.

When Shapur, the Persian King, came and surrounded the city of Nisibis with his army, God, in answer to the prayer of St. James, brought swarms of mosquitoes and wasps over their horses and elephants which caused a great stampede and the animals fled away. The King of Persia then became fearful, and he fled with his army and the siege was ended.

When the saint completed his good course, he departed in peace.
His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Nineteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

*The Discovery of the Relics of St. Abahor (Pihour)
St. Bisoura (Pisoura) and their Mother Ampira (Asra)*

On this day, the church commemorates the discovery of the relics of St. Abahor, St. Bisoura, and their mother Ampira.

They were from the town of Shabas, near Desouk in Egypt. They were martyred during the era of idol worshipping, and their bodies were buried in the church of their town.

When the Europeans invaded Egypt, during the Crusades in 1248 A.D., they gained control of Damietta (Domiati) and all the surrounding towns. King El-Kamil, King of Egypt at that time, went out with his army to fight the invaders. On their way, they destroyed many churches, among which was the church of Shabas, where the relics of the saints were placed. One soldier opened the coffin of these saints, hoping to find something of value, rather he found these invaluable treasures that were of no value to him. He threw their relics beside the wall of the church and took the coffin and sold it. But the long suffering God was patient toward that soldier, until he went back to his camp. He was the first to be killed as witnessed by his companions on their return.

The precious relics were seen by the wife of one of the priests. She took them joyfully, and because of her fear, she entered the church and hid them in a side of the church and covered them with pieces of brick.

The relics remained hidden for twenty years, for the woman forgot everything about them. But God wanted to reveal the relics for the benefit of the faithful. The woman remembered them and she made it known to the rest of the faithful. The priests came and carried them while they were praying and praising God. They put them in a new coffin in the church. Anba Gabriel, the bishop of the diocese, ordered this day to be a feast and a memorial, and that their names be placed in the chronicle of the feasts of the Church.

Many miracles and signs were brought about by God through these relics. One of these miracles concerns a daughter of one of the believers who lost her sight and lost all hope for healing. She interceded through the saints' pure relics and was instantly healed and her sight returned. She glorified the Lord Christ Who honored His servants with this great honor.

The prayers of these saints be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. *The Departure of St. Prochorus, One of the Seventy Disciples.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of St. John, the Owner of the Golden Gospel, and the Transfer of His Relics to It. Also, the Commemoration of the Martyrdom of Anba Behna (Bahnou) and Anba Kloag (Bagoug), the Priest.*

1. On this day, St. Prochorus departed. He was one of the seventy disciples who were called by the Lord and sent to preach His Name, and granted the gift of healing and casting out of evil spirits. St. Prochorus was with the disciples in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost, and he was filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. He was chosen by the Apostles to be one of the seven deacons, who were filled with the Holy Spirit and with wisdom. (Acts 6:5)

He accompanied St. John the Theologian, and travelled with him to many cities. St. John laid his hand on him and ordained him bishop for Nicomidia in Bithinia. He preached the Name of the Lord Christ, and restored many Greeks to the faith, baptizing them and teaching them to keep the Commandments. After he built a church for them and ordained priests and deacons, he went to the surrounding cities. He preached to them and baptized many of their inhabitants, as he also preached to and baptized many of the Jews. He endured many afflictions and hardships because of his preaching of the Name of Christ.

When he completed his course, he departed at a well-advanced age, and received the eternal bliss.
His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also is the commemoration of the consecration of St. John "El-Koochy's" church, which was in the city of Rome, and the relocation of the saint's relics to it. He was known as the owner of the Golden Bible.

This day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Behna and St. Anba Kloag the priest.
Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-First Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. *The Dormition of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos.*
2. *The Departure of St. Hilaria, Daughter of Emperor Zeno.*
3. *The Departure of St. Gregorius (Gregory of Nyssa), Brother of St. Basil the Great.*

1. On this day, Our Lady, the all pure, Virgin St. Mary, the Mother of God, departed. As she was always praying in the holy sepulchre, the Holy Spirit informed her that she was about to depart from this temporal world. When the time of her departure arrived, the virgins of the Mount of Olives came to her, with the apostles, who were still alive, and they surrounded her bed. The Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is the glory, with a host of thousands and thousands of angels came to her

and comforted her and told her about the eternal joy that was prepared for her, and she rejoiced. The apostles and the virgins asked her to bless them. She stretched her hand and blessed them all, and she gave up her pure spirit in the hand of her Son and God, and He took her spirit to the heavenly mansions.

The apostles prepared the body in a fitting manner and carried it to Gethsemane. Some of the Jews blocked their way to prevent them from burying the body. One of the Jews seized the coffin with his hands, which were separated instantly from his body and they remained attached to the coffin. He regretted his evil deed and wept bitterly. Through the supplications of the saintly apostles, his hands were reattached to his body, and he believed in the Lord Christ. When they placed the body in the tomb, the Lord hid it from them.

St. Thomas the Apostle was not present at the time of St. Mary's departure. He wanted to go to Jerusalem and a cloud carried him there. On his way, he saw the pure body of St. Mary carried by the angels and ascended to heaven with it. One of the angels told him, "Make haste and kiss the pure body of St. Mary," and he did.

When St. Thomas arrived where the disciples were, they told him about St. Mary's departure and he said to them, "You know how I conducted myself at the resurrection of the Lord Christ, and I will not believe unless I see her body." They went with him to the tomb, and uncovered the place of the body but they did not find it, and everyone was perplexed and surprised. St. Thomas told them how he saw the holy body and the angels that were ascending with it. They heard the Holy Spirit saying to them, "The Lord did not will to leave her body on earth." The Lord had promised his pure apostles to let them see her in the flesh once again. They were waiting for this promise to be fulfilled, until the 16th day of the month of Misra, when the promise was fulfilled and they saw her.

The years of her life on earth were 60 years. She was 12 years old when she left the temple. She spent 34 years in Joseph's house, until the Ascension of the Lord, and 14 years with St. John the Evangelist, according to the commandment of the Lord which he told her at the cross, "Behold, this is your son," and to St. John, "Behold, this is your mother."

Her intercession and blessings be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Hilaria, daughter of Emperor Zeno, departed. Emperor Zeno was an Orthodox believer, who loved the church. He had only two daughters, Hilaria and her sister, Thaopesta.

Their father brought them up and taught them the fundamentals of the Orthodox faith. Hilaria, since her young age, loved to live a solitary life, and she thought about the monastic life. When she was 18 years old, she left the court of her father and travelled to Egypt, disguised in men's clothing.

She went to the wilderness of St. Macarius, where she met a holy man by the name of Anba Pemwah. She told him about her desire to become a monk and she was ordained a monk under

the name of Hilary. Three years later, Anba Pemwah found out that she was Hilaria, the daughter of Emperor Zeno. He kept her secret, and placed her in a cave, and visited her from time to time. She stayed there for fifteen years. When she did not grow a beard, the monks thought that she was an eunuch, and they called her "Hilary, the eunuch".

Meanwhile, her sister Thaopesta became possessed with an unclean spirit, and her father spent on her a great deal of money in vain. The men of his court advised the Emperor to send her to the elders of Sheheat (Scetis), for the fame of their holiness had spread to all the Roman districts. The Emperor sent her with one of the noble men in the empire, accompanied by many soldiers and several servants. He sent a letter with the nobleman to the elders of the wilderness telling them about his pain and grief. The Emperor told them that God had given him two daughters: one departed and did not return and he did not know where she was, and the other became possessed with an evil spirit who tormented her often. He asked them to pray for her, so that the Lord might heal her from what was ailing her, so that she would be a comfort to him in place of his disappeared daughter.

When the princess arrived at the wilderness of Sheheat (Scetis) with her entourage, and the elders read the emperor's letter, they prayed for her for many days, but she was not healed. At the end, the fathers decided that St. Hilary the eunuch (Hilaria, her sister) should take her and pray for her healing. St. Hilary refused, but the elders obliged her to take her. St. Hilary knew that she was her sister but her sister did not recognize her.

St. Hilaria embraced and kissed her sister often then left to weep outside. A few days later, Thaopesta, her sister, was healed from her illness, and St. Hilaria took her to the elders and said to them, "Through your prayers, God has granted her healing." The elders sent Thaopesta back to her father in peace.

When Thaopesta arrived to her father, he and all those who were in the palace rejoiced for her safe return, and offered many thanks to the Lord Christ. Her father asked her about her stay in Sheheat (Scetis), and she said that St. Hilary, the eunuch who healed her by his prayers, embraced her and kissed her often. When the Emperor heard this, he had some doubts about this monk. He sent to the elders asking them to send St. Hilary, who healed his daughter, in order to receive his blessings. When the elders ordered "him" to go to the Emperor, "he" wept bitterly before the elders, pleading with them to spare "him" from the trip. They told "him" that the emperor was a righteous man who loved the holy church and that it was only proper not to disobey him according to the Holy Scriptures.

After a great effort, St. Hilaria went to the Emperor, who saluted "him" and all those who were with "him". Then, he had a private meeting with Hilaria together with the Empress. They asked "him", "How did you "the holy man" embrace and kiss the princess?" Then Hilaria asked them to bring the Bible and to pledge to "him" not to prevent "him" from going back to the wilderness after answering their inquiry. They brought the Bible and pledged to "him" as he wished. Then "he" made "himself" known to them saying, "I am your daughter Hilaria," and she told them all

that had happened to her. Her parents wept with a loud voice and all the people in the palace were in confusion.

She remained three months, then she wanted to return, and when her parents refused, she reminded them of their oath. Then the Emperor wrote to the Governor of Egypt, demanding him to send a hundred bushels of wheat every year and six hundred measures of oil and all that the monks needed in the wilderness, on a yearly basis. The Emperor saw to it also that many cells were built for the monks. He also built a beautiful palace in the monastery of St. Macarius. From that time on, the number of monks increased in the wilderness.

St. Hilaria stayed five years after her return to the wilderness, then departed in peace. No one knew that she was a woman until after her death.

Her prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, of the year 396 A.D., St. Gregory of Nyssa, the brother of St. Basil the Great, departed. This great father of the church was virtuous and so were his brothers. He was very well versed in the art of discourse and in the Greek language. He was also strongly zealous in his Orthodox faith.

When these good characteristics were known about him, he was chosen bishop against his will, and was ordained over the city of Nyssa. He shepherded the flock of Christ, that was entrusted to him, very well. He illumined the souls with his sermons and discourses. He interpreted many books of the Holy Bible. He was exiled at the time of Emperor Valens, but returned to Nyssa by the order of Emperor Theodosius the Great, in 378 A.D.

When the one hundred and fifty fathers gathered together in the second Universal Council in Constantinople, in 381 A.D., because of the heresy of Macedonius, the archbishop of the city, at the order of Emperor Theodosius, St. Gregory, was one of the fathers present. He silenced Sabilius, Macedonius, and Apolinarius, arguing their heretic opinions and exposing the fallacies of their heresies.

It was said about him, that while he was celebrating the divine liturgy, he saw the cherubim on the altar.

After thirty-three years as the bishop of Nyssa, his brother St. Basil came to visit him, for St. Gregory was sick as a result of his austere ascetic life. St. Gregory received his brother with joy.

Once, when St. Gregory was about to start the holy mass, he fell into a trance, and the Virgin St. Mary appeared to him and said, "Today, you will come to us." He departed the same day, and St. Basil, his brother, prayed over him, and he was buried with great honors.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Second Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

The Departure of St. Anthony the Great (Antonius)

On this day, of the year 355 A.D., St. Anthony the Great, the star of the wilderness, and the father of all monks, departed.

This righteous man was born in the year 251 A.D. in the city of Qimn El-Arouse, to rich parents who loved the church and the poor. They raised him up in fear of the Lord. When he was twenty years old, his parents departed, and he had to take care of his sister.

Once, he entered the church and heard the words of the Lord Christ in the Gospel, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven; and come, follow Me." (Matthew 19:21)

He returned to his house, decided to fulfill this commandment and considered it directed to him personally. He gave his wealth to the poor and needy, and he took his sister and placed her with some virgins.

At that time, monasticism had not yet been established. All those who wanted to live a solitary life went and lived on the outskirts of the city. This was what St. Anthony did as he dwelt alone, worshipping and living an ascetic life.

The devil fought him there by afflicting him with boredom, laziness, and the phantoms of women. He overcame the devil's snares by the power of the Lord Christ. After that, he went to one of the tombs, and he resided therein and closed the door on himself. Some of his friends used to bring him food. When the devil perceived his ascetic life and his intense worship, he was envious of him, and he beat him mercilessly, then left him unconscious. When his friends came to visit him and found him in this condition, they carried him to the church. After he somewhat recovered, he went back to the same place. The devil again resumed his war against St. Antonius, only this time the phantoms were in the form of wild beasts, wolves, lions, snakes and scorpions. They appeared as if they were about to attack him or cut him into pieces. But the saint would laugh at them scornfully and say, "If any of you have any authority over me, only one would have been sufficient to fight me." At his saying this, they disappeared as though in smoke, for God gave him the victory over the devils. He was always singing this psalm, "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let those also who hate Him flee before Him." (Psalm 68:1)

St. Anthony used to prepare a quantity of bread that would sustain him for six months. He did not allow anyone to enter his cell, and whoever came to him, stood outside and listened to his advice. He continued in this condition of solitary worship for 20 years. Then by God's command, he went to El-Fayyoun and confirmed the brethren there in the faith, then returned to his monastery.

During the time of persecution, he longed to become a martyr. He left his monastery and went to Alexandria. He visited those who were imprisoned for the sake of Christ and comforted them. When the Governor saw that he was confessing the Lord Christ publicly, not caring what might happen to him, he ordered him not to show up in the city. However, the saint did not heed his threats. He faced him and argued with him in order that he might arouse his anger so that he might be tortured and martyred. But God preserved him all along, according to His will, for the benefit of many, and so the Governor left him alone. Then the saint went back to his monastery according to God's will, and many came to visit him and to hear his teachings.

He saw that these visits kept him away from his worship. As a result, he went far away to the eastern desert. He travelled with some bedouins to the inner wilderness for three days, until he found a spring of water and some palm trees, and then he chose to settle there. On this spot now stands the monastery of St. Anthony the Great. The bedouins came to him with bread, and the Lord drove away all the wild beasts from this place, for his sake.

On occasions, he would go to the monastery on the outskirts of the desert by the Nile to visit the brethren, then return to his inner monastery.

His fame spread abroad and it reached Emperor Constantine. The Emperor wrote to him, offering him praise and asked him to pray for him. The brethren were pleased with the Emperor's letter, but St. Anthony did not pay any attention to it, and he said to them, "The books of God, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, commands us everyday, but we do not heed what they tell us, and we turn our backs on them." Under the persistence of the brethren who told him, "Emperor Constantine loves the church," he accepted to write him a letter blessing him, and praying for the peace and safety of the empire and the church.

One day, he was bored, and he heard a voice telling him, "Go out and see." He went out and saw an angel who wore a girdle with a cross, one resembling the holy Eskiem, and on his head was a head cover (Kolansowa). He was sitting while braiding palm leaves, then he stood up to pray, and again he sat to weave. A voice came to him saying, "Anthony, do this and you will rest." Henceforth, he started to wear this tunic that he saw, and began to weave palm leaves, and never got bored again.

St. Anthony prophesied about the persecution that was about to happen to the church and the control of the heretics over it, the church victory and its return to its formal glory, and the end of the age.

When St. Macarius visited St. Anthony, St. Anthony clothed him with the monk's garb, and St. Anthony foretold him what would be of him.

When the day of the departure of St. Paul, the first hermit in the desert, drew near, St. Anthony went to him. St. Anthony buried St. Paul the hermit after he had clothed him in a tunic which was a present from St. Athanasius the Apostolic, 20th Pope of Alexandria.

When St. Anthony felt that the day of his departure had approached, he commanded his disciple to hide his body and to give his staff to St. Macarius, and to give one sheepskin cloak to St. Athanasius and the other sheepskin cloak to Anba Serapion, his disciple. He stretched himself on the ground and gave up his spirit. The angels and the saints took his spirit and carried it to the place of perpetual rest.

This saint lived for 105 years, struggling in the way of holiness and purity.
His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Third Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Timothy, the Apostle.*
2. *The Departure of Pope Cyril IV (Kyrillos), 110th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, of the year 97 A.D., St. Timothy, the Apostle, was martyred. He was born in the city of Lystra of the district of Lycaonia in Asia Minor, to a Greek father who worshipped the stars and a Jewish mother whose name was Eunice. (Acts 16:1-2, Timothy 1:5)

When St. Paul preached in Lystra, this saint heard his teachings and saw the signs that God wrought by his hands. He believed and was baptized. Timothy rejected the gods of his father and forsook the faith of his mother. He became a disciple of St. Paul the Apostle, followed him in his travels, and shared his labors.

In the year 53 A.D., St. Paul ordained St. Timothy bishop over the city of Ephesus and the neighboring cities. St. Timothy preached there and converted many to the Christian faith and baptized them.

St. Paul wrote two epistles to St. Timothy: the first of which was in 65 A.D., and the second was shortly before 67 A.D., urging him, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine, continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." (1Tim. 4:16) He also wrote to him about the qualifications of bishop, priest, deacon, and the widow. He cautioned him also about false prophets and commanded him not to lay his hand on one in haste but only after thorough examinations and testing.

St. Paul called Timothy his son and his beloved. St. Timothy delivered four epistles for St. Paul: the first was the Epistle to Corinth, the second to Philippi, the third to Thessalonica, and the fourth to the Hebrews.

St. Timothy shepherded the flock of Christ extremely well, and he illumined minds by his teachings, instructions, and admonitions. He continued to rebuke the Jews and the Greeks, therefore they envied him and congregated against him and started beating him until he was martyred in the city of Ephesus. The believers took his body and buried it.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the great father Pope Kyrillos IV (Cyril), 110th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was born in the town of Sawamaa of the district of the city of Girga, to righteous parents in the year 1816 A.D. They gave him the name David (Daoud) after his grandfather. His father brought him up and educated him well. He grew up despising the things of the world and its vanities. When he was 22 years old, he went to the monastery of St. Anthony, where he conducted himself virtuously and lived an ascetic life, which convinced the abbot of the monastery, Father Athanasius (El-Kalousni), to clothe him with the garb of the monks. He continued to read and to study the holy books.

Two years after David's ordination as a monk, the abbot of the monastery departed. David (Daoud) was chosen, by the consensus of the monks, to become their abbot. Pope Petros "El-Gawli" (Anba Petros VII), 109th Pope of Alexandria, ordained him a priest, and he appointed him as abbot of the monastery. He took care of the state of affairs of the monastery and those concerning the monks.

He was very sharp intellectually and was very well versed in religious matters. When a problem transpired among the Ethiopians concerning some doctrinal issues, the Pope, Anba Petros called upon him to go to Ethiopia to solve these problems. He performed his duty admirably.

Father Daoud returned on July 13, 1852, to find that Pope Petros had departed on April 15, 1852. When they tried to choose a successor to the Pope, there was a split in the people's opinions. Some wanted Father Daoud and others wanted to choose someone else.

Finally they decided to ordain Father Daoud an auxiliary bishop in the year 1853. He performed his duties as such, for a year and two months, during which, he showed discretion and good conduct, that made him worthy to be chosen patriarch on the 28th of Bashanse of 1571 A.M. (1854 A.D.).

He devoted all his efforts to disciplining the youth and educating them. He established the great Coptic school in the patriarchate. He also established another school in Haret-El-Sakkayeen. He paid great attention to the teaching of the Coptic language. He also established a great printing house and printed many church books.

Generally, the progress of the Copts at that time attributed to his efforts. He demolished the old church in the Patriarchate and built another, but he could not complete it because of his absence in Ethiopia for the second time.

This great pontiff upheld the canons of the church, and was charitable to the poor and the needy, and was deeply loved by his flock. He departed on the 23rd of Tubah in 1577 A.M. (1861 A.D.)
His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. *The Departure of St. Mary the Ascetic (The Shut-In).*
2. *The Martyrdom of Anba Bisada (St. Psati), the Priest.*

1. On this day, St. Mary the Ascetic, the shut-in, departed.

Her parents were among the wealthy and noble people of Alexandria. Several of the sons of the great men in the city asked to marry her, but she declined.

When her parents departed, she distributed all that they left among the poor, keeping just a modest part for herself. Then she joined a convent near the City of Alexandria, and wore the monastic garb. She exerted herself in worship for 15 years, then she put on the holy "Eskeem" and put on a garb made of hair. After she took the permission of the abbess, she shut herself in her cell, closed the door, and opened a small window in it to receive her provisions. She spent 22 years in this cell, fasting two days at a time. During the holy forty days fast (Lent), she fasted for three days, and then broke her fast on some pulses moistened with water.

On the 11th day of the month of Tubah, she asked for a little of the holy water. She washed her hands and feet, then she received the Holy Communion, and drank from the holy water. She became sick and stayed in her bed until the 21st of Tubah, when she received the Holy Mysteries once more. She called upon the abbess and all the sisters, bade them farewell, and asked them to visit her after three days. On the 24th day of Tubah, they visited her and found that she had departed in peace. They carried her to the church, and after praying over her, they placed her with the bodies of the virgin saints.

Her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Bisada (St. Psati) was martyred. His father was from El-Kase and his mother, who was the daughter of one of the pagan priests, was from Ehreet. She was a believer in the Lord Christ. When the son of a pagan priest asked her to marry him, she took flight to El-Kase where she married a farmer, and God gave her a son whom she called Bisadi.

They brought him up in the fear of the Lord and in the keeping of His Commandments. When St. Bisadi was twenty years old, his father departed and left him a great wealth. St. Bisadi increased in the deeds of charity and righteousness.

When Emperor Diocletian issued his decree of worshipping the idols, the saint hid himself in his home, and continued to worship God. A voice came to him from heaven saying, "Why are you delaying?" Immediately, he rushed to the governor and confessed his faith saying, "I am a Christian."

The Governor ordered him be tortured by beating with whips, hitting his head with pins, pulling out his nails, and dipping his fingers in vinegar and lime. He endured the torture for several days with great patience, and the Lord Christ healed all his wounds.

St. Bisadi performed several miracles, and the Governor became weary of torturing him; he chained him and sent him to the Governor of El-Fayyoun. There St. Bisadi raised a child from the dead. A large stone had fallen on the child while standing beside a wall. The bishop of the City of El-Fayyoun heard about St. Bisada, brought him and ordained him a priest. Then he went back to reappear before the Governor of El-Fayyoun who tortured him, then sent him to Alexandria where he received the crown of martyrdom.

St. Julius El-Akfahsi (who wrote the biographies of saints) took his body and gave it to his mother who was present. She returned with the body to her home town, Ehreet, and all the people of the town received the body of St. Bisadi with joy, and buried him with great honor. They built a church after his name, and the Lord performed many miracles through his body.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. The Departure of St. Peter, the Worshipper.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Askala (Asela), the Ascetic.

1. On this day, St. Peter the worshipper, departed. He was at first a tax collector, who was very cruel and had no mercy. Because of his selfishness and greed, he was nicknamed "the merciless". The Lord Jesus had compassion upon him and He wanted to turn him away from all his bad deeds.

One day, God sent him a poor man to ask him for a little food, and it thus happened that his servant arrived at the same time when the poor man was standing before him, with bread. The tax collector took a loaf of bread and hit the poor man with it on his head, not as an act of mercy, but to get rid of him so that he might not come back again.

That same night, Peter, the tax collector, saw a vision in his sleep, as though he was in the judgement day, where the scale of justice was erected, and he saw some people clothed in black in the ugliest forms. They came and put his sins and his injustices in the left pan of the scale. Then a group of the angels of light, with beautiful countenances and in white clothes, came and stood beside the right pan of the scale. They appeared perplexed, for they did not find anything to put in the pan. One of them came forward, and put in the loaf of bread with which he had hit the head of the poor man, and said, "There is nothing for this man except this loaf of bread."

At this moment, Peter woke up from his sleep trembling and afraid. He started to rebuke himself for all that he had done. He started to be exceedingly merciful and compassionate, and he even

gave his own tunic away. When nothing was left of his property, he left his town and sold himself as a slave, and paid the price to the poor.

When his good deeds became well known, he fled to the wilderness of St. Macarius, where he became a monk and lived an ascetic life with great devotion and good repute, that made him worthy to know the day of his departure. St. Peter called the elders of the monks and bade them farewell, and departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, we celebrate the commemoration of the martyrdom of the striving saint Anba Askala¹⁹ (Asela) the ascetic.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. *The Martyrdom of the Forty-Nine Saints, the Elders of Sheheat (Scetis).*

2. *The Departure of St. Anastasia.*

1. On this day, the forty-nine elder priests of Sheheat, Martinos, the envoy of the emperor, and his son, were martyred.

Emperor Theodosius the Less, the son of Emperor Arcadius, did not have a son. He wrote to the elders of Sheheat asking them to pray to God to grant him a son. St. Isidor wrote back to him saying that God did not will for him to have a son who would participate with the heretics after him.

When the Emperor read the message, he offered thanks to God. Some people gave him the advice to marry another wife to have offspring from her to inherit the empire after him. He said to them, "I cannot do anything except what the elders of Sheheat demanded." He sent an envoy whose name was Martinos to consult with them about that. Martinos had a son named Zius who accompanied him on his visit to the elders in order to receive their blessings.

When they arrived and the elders read the message, they took the messenger to the body of St. Isidor, for he had departed. They called on him saying, "Our father, we have received a letter from the Emperor. What shall we say to him?" A voice came from the pure body saying, "What I had said before, I also say now, that the Lord will never give him a son to participate with the heretics, even if he marries ten women." The elders wrote back to the Emperor recounting what they heard.

¹⁹ Mentioned in Butler, *The Lives of the Saints*, under January 23rd, under the name "Asclas".

When the messenger wanted to return, the pagan berbers attacked the monastery. One of their great elders, whose name was Anba Yuannis, called upon the brethren and said, "The berbers have come to kill us. Whoever amongst you would like to become a martyr, let him stand, and whoever is afraid, let him hide in the palace." Some of them hid in the palace, but he remained with the forty-eight elders, who were all slaughtered by the berbers.

Martinos and his son were hiding. The son looked up and saw the angels placing the crowns of glory on the elders who were killed. The son said to his father, "I see spiritual beings putting crowns on the heads of the elders. I shall go to receive a crown like them." His father replied, "And I also shall go with you, my son." Both revealed themselves to the berbers. They were killed and received the crown of martyrdom.

After the berbers had gone, the monks who were hiding in the palace came down, took the bodies, and placed them in a cave. They sang and said praises before the cave every night.

Some people from the city of Batanoon came and took the body of Anba Yuannis and returned to their city. The elders of the monastery returned the body after a while. Also, some people from El-Fayyoun came and stole the body of Zius, the son of Martinos. When they arrived at the lake of El-Fayyoun, the angel of the Lord returned him to where the body of his father was. The elders also tried to separate the body of Zius, the son, from the body of his father several times, but they could not. Every time they moved the body of Zius, the angel of the Lord would return it to its place. One of the fathers heard one night, in a vision, someone saying, "Praise God, we were not separated in the flesh, nor are we separated when we are with Christ. Why do you want to separate our bodies?"

When persecution became rampant and the attacks on the monastery continued, the fathers relocated the bodies, to a cave which they built beside the church of St. Macarius. At the time of Anba Theodosius, 33rd Pope of Alexandria, they built a church for them. When Anba Benjamin, 38th pope, came to the wilderness, he established a feast day for them on the 5th of Amshir, which was the day of the relocation of their bodies to this church.

In time, the church building deteriorated, and they moved the bodies to one of the cells until the time of Ibrahim El-Gohary, who built a church for them around the end of the 18th century, where they placed the bodies of the saints. The church is still in existence today in the monastery of St. Macarius.

The cell in which the bodies were kept is known today in Coptic as the cell of Ehme' Epseet, or the cell of the forty-nine.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Anastasia departed. She was from a noble family in the city of Constantinople. She was very beautiful and had a great moral character.

Emperor Justin, who was married, wanted to marry her. She refused and went and told his wife. The Empress sent her to Alexandria on a private ship. She built her a convent outside the city of Alexandria and named it after her.

When the Emperor knew where she was, he sent for her, but Anastasia escaped and hid herself in the wilderness of Sheheat (Scetis), disguised as a prince. She met with Anba Daniel, the archpriest of the wilderness, and revealed her story to him. He brought her to a cave, and asked one of the elders to fill a water pot for her once every week, and to place the pot at the door of the cave and leave. She remained in this place for 28 years, without anyone knowing that she was a woman.

She used to write her thoughts on pieces of pottery, and leave them at the door of her cave. The elder who brought her the water used to take the pieces of pottery without knowing what was written on them and give them to St. Daniel.

One day he brought a piece of pottery to St. Daniel who wept when he read it, and said to his disciple, "Come with me now to bury the body of the saint in that cave." When they entered her cave, they received blessings from each other. St. Anastasia said to Anba Daniel, "For the sake of God, bury me with what I have on my body." Then she prayed and bade them farewell and departed in peace. They wept and buried her. When the disciple was caring for her burial, he found out that she was a woman, and he marvelled in silence.

After they buried her, and they returned to their place, the disciple knelt before St. Daniel and said, "For the sake of God, tell me her story, for I have seen that she was a woman." The elder told him her story, that she was from one of the noble families of Constantinople, and how she surrendered herself to Christ, forsaking the vain glory of this world.

Her prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Sarapion.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Archangel Suriel.*
3. *The Relocation of the Relics of St. Timothy, the Apostle.*
4. *The Martyrdom of St. Abe-Fam, the Soldier (St. Phoebammon).*

1. On this day, St. Sarapion was martyred. He was a native of the City of Binosah (Babousah), a town of Lower Egypt. He was wealthy, had many possessions, and he was also a charitable man. At the time of the persecution, he heard that the governor of Alexandria, Armanius, had arrived in Lower Egypt, the northern part of the country, to torture the Christians. He went out with his friend, Theodore and another friend who was a shepherd called Thomas. They all confessed the Name of Christ before the Governor, who cast them into prison.

When the people of his town heard about his arrest, they came carrying arms to kill the Governor and to free the saint. The saint constrained them and told them that he wanted to be martyred in the name of Christ and they went away.

The Governor took the saint with him to Alexandria on a ship, and there he tortured St. Sarapion with the pressing wheel (Hinbazin), and threw him in a ditch filled with fire. Then he put him in a cauldron full of pitch and bitumen and lit fire under him. Through it all, the Lord was with him and delivered him safely. At last they crucified him and threw arrows at him.

The angel of the Lord came and brought St. Sarapion down, and crucified the Governor in his place. They continued to throw arrows at the Governor as if he was the saint, while he was crying and saying, "I am Armanius." The saint said to the Governor, "The Lord God lives, you will not be brought down from the tree, until you bring out those who are in prison and spread the accounts of their struggle." The Governor did as the saint told him. The number of martyrs that were beheaded on that day was 540 souls.

Then the Governor gave the responsibility of torturing the Saint to one of the princes, whose name was Orion. He traveled with the saint by sea to his own town. At night the ship was ashore at one of the villages, and they slept. In the morning, Orion found that the place where the ship was ashore was the town of the saint, and he marvelled, and he heard a voice saying, "This is his town, you should get him out of the ship."

After they had tortured the saint, they beheaded him, and he received the crown of martyrdom. Orion wrapped the body of the saint in his tunic and delivered him to his family.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the church commemorates the honorable Archangel Suriel. He was with Ezra, the righteous prophet, and instructed him about many hidden mysteries. He is also the intercessor on behalf of sinners.

His intercession be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, the church celebrates the commemoration of the transfer of the relics of St. Timothy, the Apostle, from the City of Ephesus to Constantinople.

When Emperor Constantine built the City of Constantinople, he relocated the relics of many of the saints to it. When he heard about the whereabouts of the relics of St. Timothy, he sent some priests who carried the holy body to Constantinople. They placed it in the church of the apostles and the saints.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also, St. Abe-Fam, the Soldier, was martyred (Bifam or Phoebammon). He was born in Oseem (Awsim) to a wealthy father whose name was Anastasius, and a righteous mother whose name was Susanna.

They brought him up in the Christian faith. He grew up in the fear of God, merciful to the poor, and steadfast in prayer and fasting. His parents wanted him to get married, but he declined.

When Emperor Diocletian reigned and knew that this saint did not raise incense to the gods, the Emperor sent to the governor Arianus to torture St. Abe-Fam if he did not offer incense to the idols.

Arianus went to Oseem and when he saw the saint he said, "Peace be with you," and the saint replied, "Why do you speak the word of peace? Did you not know that peace is only for the righteous?" and "there is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord." (Isaiah 48:22) The Governor became extremely angry and took the Saint to Qaw where he tortured him severely, then beheaded him. The Saint received the crown of martyrdom. God honored this saint by performing many miracles through his body.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. The Martyrdom of St. Clement.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Anba Kaou.

1. On this day St. Clement was martyred. He was the son of a faithful woman whose name was Euphrosyne (Euphrasia) from the City of Angora.

When he grew up, his mother taught him the church's subjects and reared him with the Christian ethics. When he was 12 years old, he walked in the way of righteousness, and he reached a high level in worship and asceticism. He did not eat except dry vegetables, as did the three young men at the time of Daniel. When he was ordained deacon, he increased in searching the books, and the spirit of God was upon him.

His fame spread out until it reached Emperor Diocletian. He brought the saint, befriended him and promised him that he would adopt him if he agreed to worship the idols. When he did not give in to his demands, Diocletian tortured him with various tortures. However, God strengthened him and exposed His enemies by His might. Many tortured him, to an extent that he stood before seven courts to be judged by them, and every time God strengthened and comforted him.

At last, they beheaded him and he received the crown of martyrdom. His body was taken by a faithful woman, whose name was Sophia, who buried him with great honor.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Kaou was martyred. He was from the City of Bamway (Bimay) in El-Fayyoum. At that time, Emperor Diocletian issued an edict commanding the worship of idols.

The saint resided in a home that he had built for himself outside of his city, where he worshipped God. The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision saying, "Why are you sitting here, while martyrdom is available? Arise now, and go to El-Lahoon where you will find the messenger of the Governor of Alexandria. Go and confess the Name of Christ before him and you will be granted the crown of martyrdom."

St. Kaou rose up from his sleep with great joy and he went to El-Lahoon and found the messenger at the seashore. When the messenger saw him, the messenger marvelled at St. Kaou's beautiful old age, and he honored him. The messenger took out from his pocket an idol made of gold and precious stones and said to the saint, "This is the gift of the Emperor to the Governor of Ansena."

St. Kaou took it in his hand and admired its wonderful workmanship. Then he cast it to the ground and smashed it. The messenger became very angry and ordered him to be bound. He took him to the Governor of Ansena and told the Governor what St. Kaou had done. The Governor tormented him, then he sent him to the Governor of Bahnasa, who also tortured him.

When he did not surrender and did not worship the idols, he was beheaded and received the crown of martyrdom. Some believers came and took his body to the place where he used to worship and buried him there. They built a church after his name in the same place later on and God manifested many miracles in it.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

1. The Departure of St. Eksani (St. Xene).

2. The Commemoration of St. Seriakos (Syriacus), the Fighter.

1. On this day, St. Eksani (St. Xene) departed. She was the daughter of one of the noble and rich families of Rome. She was the only daughter of her parents. She was brought up at an early age accustomed to fasting and prayers, visiting the prisoners and helping the needy.

She used to visit the convents in Rome to spend time in worship. She distributed what she brought with her among the poor and was satisfied with what the nuns ate. She read the biographies of the saints and prayed to God to grant her a share among them.

It happened that one of the ministers of Rome asked for her hand in marriage for his son. Her father was delighted about that and he brought her the best of clothing and the most precious gems and furnishings. Shortly before her wedding, she asked her mother to allow her to go to the monastery to visit her friends the nuns before getting married, in order to bid them farewell, and her mother gave her permission.

She took her precious ornaments and two of her maiden servants, and went quickly to the seashore. She found a ship going to Cyprus, which she embarked on. On her arrival, she went to St. Epiphanius and told him about her story. He advised her to go to the City of Alexandria.

She traveled to Alexandria, where she met Anba Theophilus, 23rd Pope of Alexandria. She informed him of her desire to live the monastic life. He agreed and he cut her hair and clothed her in the monastic garb.

She sold all of her jewels and clothes that she brought with her, and built a church in the name of St. Stephen, the Archdeacon. She resided with a group of virgins and nuns that Pope Theophilus settled with her.

She practiced asceticism and strived. She lived only on bread and some moistened vegetables. She did not eat any cooked food, and she slept on the ground. She struggled in that manner for more than 20 years.

When she departed, God manifested a sign in heaven to reveal the heavenly blessings that she received. At midday, a cross of light, whose light exceeded that of the sun, appeared in heaven, and around it a circle of stars that shone like crowns. The cross remained shining until her body was buried with the other saintly virgins, then it disappeared. The people knew that the appearance of the cross was to manifest her virtue.

Later on, the two maiden servants told the Pope her real story and how she had a covenant with them to conceal her story and to call her sister. The Pope marvelled, glorified God, and he wrote her biography.

Her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. Today also is the commemoration of St. Syriacus, the fighter.

His blessings be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Tubah

*The Martyrdom of Saints Pistis, Helpis, Agape,
and Their Mother, Sophia*

On this day, the holy and blessed virgins, Pistis, Helpis, Agape, and their mother, Sophia, were martyred. St. Sophia was from a rich and noble family in Antioch. When she had these three girls, she called them Pistis, which means faith, Helpis, which means hope, and Agape, which means love.

When they grew up, she went with them to Rome to teach them the worship of God and His fear. Emperor Hadrianus (Hadrian), the infidel, heard about them and he summoned them before him. Their mother preached to them, and encouraged them to be steadfast in the faith of the Lord Jesus

Christ, saying to them, "Let not your determination grow faint or weak, and let not the glory of the world entice you, lest you lose the eternal glory. Be patient and persevere until you meet your Bridegroom, the Christ, with Whom you will enter into the everlasting joy." The oldest sister was 12 years old, the second was 10 years old and the youngest was 9 years old.

When they came before the Emperor, he asked the oldest to worship the idols, promising her that he would marry her to one of the great men in his kingdom, and that he would bestow on her many delights and pleasures, but she refused. He ordered her to be beaten with hammers, mutilating her breasts, and to place her in a cauldron of boiling water over the fire. The Lord was with her, saved her, and He granted her strength and peace, and everyone was astonished and glorified God. Then the Emperor commanded that she be beheaded.

Then they brought the second daughter before the Emperor. He also beat her severely and also placed her in the boiling water, then they brought her out and beheaded her. With the youngest daughter, her mother feared that she would weaken, so she encouraged and strengthened her. When the Emperor ordered her placed in the pressing wheel (Hinbazin), she cried to Christ, and He sent His angel who broke it.

The Emperor then ordered her to be thrown into the fire. She prayed and made the sign of the cross on her face. Then she threw herself in it. All those who were present saw three men in white robes surrounding her, and the fiery furnace was as cold as the dew. They marvelled, and many believed in the Lord Christ, and they were all beheaded.

The Emperor ordered afterwards that her sides be pierced with hot rods, but the Lord strengthened her and she did not feel the pain. Finally, she was beheaded. Their mother carried their bodies outside the city, sat and wept, and asked them to ask the Lord Christ to take her soul also. The Lord granted her wish and her spirit went immediately to her Creator. Some believers came and carried the bodies and buried them with great honors.

Emperor Hadrian was struck with small pox in his eyes, and he became blind. The worms grew in his body and he died a dreadful death, and God avenged the death of these saintly virgins.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

*In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
One God. Amen*

**The Blessed Month of Amshir
The First Day**

1. The Commemoration of the Ecumenical Council in Constantinople.

2. The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of St. Peter, the Seal of Martyrs.

1. On this day of the year 381 A.D., one hundred and fifty fathers assembled upon the order of Emperor Theodosius the Great, in the city of Constantinople. They assembled to judge Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and Sabellius and Apollinaris, for their blasphemy against God the Word and the Holy Spirit.

When this blasphemy became widespread, the fathers of the church were concerned about the peace of the church, and made these heresies known to Emperor Theodosius. He ordered that a council be assembled, and invited Abba Timothy, 22nd Pope of Alexandria; Abba Damasus, Pope of Rome; Abba Petros (Peter), Patriarch of Antioch; and Abba Cyril (Kyrillos), Patriarch of Jerusalem. They came to the council with their bishops, except the Pope of Rome, who delegated others to attend on his behalf.

When the holy council convened in Constantinople, they called upon Macedonius. Abba Timothy, Pope of Alexandria, who was presiding over the council, asked him, "What is your belief?" Macedonius answered that the Holy Spirit was created like any other creature. Abba Timothy said, "The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. If we say as you claim that the Spirit of God is created, we are saying, in essence, that His Life is created, and therefore, He is 'lifeless' without it." He advised Macedonius to renounce his erroneous belief. When he refused, Macedonius was excommunicated, anathematized and striped of his rank.

Then Abba Timothy asked Sabellius, "And you, what is your belief?" He answered, "The Trinity is one being and one person." Abba Timothy said, "If the Trinity is as you claim, then the mentioning of the Trinity is groundless, and your baptism is futile, because it is in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the Trinity would have suffered pain and died, and the saying of the gospel would be invalid, when it is said that the Son was in the Jordan River, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the likeness of a dove, and the Father called upon Him from heaven." Then Abba Timothy advised him to renounce his belief. When Sabellius did not accept, Abba Timothy excommunicated, anathematized and striped him of his rank.

Then Abba Timothy asked Apollinaris, "And you, what is your belief?" Apollinaris said, "The Incarnation of the Son was by His union with the human flesh without the rational being, for His divinity replaced the soul and the mind of the human being." Abba Timothy replied, "God the Word united with our nature to save us, therefore if He only united with the animal body, then He did not save mankind but the animals. Humans will rise on the day of Resurrection with the rational and speaking soul with which there will be the communication and the judgement, and

with it they will be granted the blessing or the condemnation. Accordingly, the Incarnation would be in vain. If that was the case, why did He call Himself a man if He did not unite with the rational speaking soul?" Then Abba Timothy advised him to turn away from his erroneous belief, but he also refused. He excommunicated Apollinaris as he did the other two friends.

Ultimately, the council excommunicated these three and all those who agreed with them. Then they completed the creed that was established by the fathers at the Council of Nicea until its saying, "Of Whose Kingdom shall be no end." The fathers of the Council of Constantinople added, "Truly we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, Giver of Life... to the end." They put down many canons that are still in the hands of the believers today.

The prayers of these holy fathers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, we celebrate the commemoration of the consecration of the Church of St. Peter, 17th Pope of Alexandria and the Seal of Martyrs²⁰. He was martyred in Alexandria during the last days of the reign of Diocletian the Infidel.

When Emperor Constantine the Great reigned, and all the idol temples were destroyed, churches were built. So the believers built this church west of Alexandria in the name of St. Peter, the Seal of Martyrs. The church existed till shortly after the reign of the Arabs over Egypt, when it was destroyed.

His blessings be with us and glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Second Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. The Departure of the Great Saint Anba Paul, the First Hermit.

2. The Departure of St. Longinus, Abbot of El-Zugag Monastery.

1. On this day of the year 341 A.D., the great saint Anba Paul, the first hermit, departed. This Saint was from the city of Alexandria, and had a brother whose name was Peter.

After the departure of their father, they divided the inheritance between them. When his brother took the greater share, Paul's feelings were hurt, by his brother's action. He said to his brother, "Why don't you give me my rightful share of the inheritance of my father?" Peter responded, "You are a young man, and I am afraid that you might squander it. As for me, I will keep it for you."

When they did not agree with each other, they went to the governor to judge between them. On their way, they saw a funeral procession. Paul asked one of the mourners about the deceased man. Paul was told that he was one of the noble and rich people of the city, and that he left his riches and his wealth behind, and that they were taking him to bury him with only his garment.

²⁰The biography of the life of St. Peter and his martyrdom are mentioned on the 29th day of Hatour. (P. 000)

St. Paul sighed in his heart and said to himself, "What do I have to do then with all the money of this temporal world which I shall leave naked?" He looked to his brother and said to him, "My brother, let us return, for I shall not ask you for anything, not even for what is mine."

On their way back, Paul left his brother and went on his way until he came out of the city. Paul found a grave where he stayed for three days praying to the Lord Christ to guide him to what pleases Him. As for his brother, he searched for Paul diligently and when he did not find him, he was very sorry for what he had done.

God sent St. Paul an angel who took him out of this place, and walked with him until they reached the eastern inner wilderness. He stayed there for 70 years, during which he saw no one. He put on a tunic made of palm tree fiber. The Lord sent him a raven every day with a half loaf of bread.

When the Lord wanted to reveal the holiness of St. Paul and his righteousness, He sent His angel to St. Antony (Antonius) the Great, who thought that he was the first to dwell in the wilderness. The angel told St. Antony, "There is a man who lives in the inner wilderness; the world is not worthy of his footsteps. By his prayers, the Lord brings rain and dew to fall on the earth, and bring the flood of the Nile in its due season."

When St. Antony heard this, he rose right away and went to the inner wilderness, a distance of one day's walk. God guided him to the cave of St. Paul. He entered, and they bowed to each other, and sat down talking about the greatness of the Lord.

In the evening, the raven came bringing a whole loaf of bread. St. Paul said to St. Antony, "Now, I know that you are one of the children of God. For 70 years, the Lord has been sending to me everyday, half a loaf of bread, but today, the Lord is sending your food also. Now, go and bring me back in a hurry the tunic that Emperor Constantine had given to Pope Athanasius."

St. Antony went to St. Athanasius, and brought the tunic from him and returned to St. Paul. On his way back, he saw the soul of St. Paul carried by the angels up to heaven. When he arrived to the cave, he found that St. Paul had departed from this world. He kissed him, weeping, and clothed him in the tunic that he asked for, and he took his fiber tunic.

When St. Antony wanted to bury St. Paul, he wondered how could he dig the grave? Two lions entered the cave, bowed their heads before the body of St. Paul, and shook their heads as if they were asking St. Anthony what to do. St. Anthony knew that they were sent from God. He marked the length and width of the body on the ground, and they dug the grave with their claws, according to St. Anthony's directions. St. Anthony then buried the holy body, and went back to Pope Athanasius and told him what had happened. St. Athanasius sent men to bring St. Paul's body to him. They spent several days searching in the mountains, but they could not find the place of his grave. St. Paul appeared to the Pope in a vision and told him that the Lord would not allow

the revelation of the location of his body. He asked the Pope not to trouble the men, but to have them brought back.

Pope Athanasius used to put the palm fiber tunic on three times a year during the Divine Liturgy. One time, he wanted to let the people know about the holiness of the owner of that tunic. He put it over a dead man, and the dead man rose up instantly. The news of this miracle spread all around the land of Egypt.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, the pure saint Anba Longinus, the abbot of the El-Zugag monastery, departed. He was from Cilicia (in Asia Minor). He became a monk in one of the monasteries, where his father Lucianus became a monk after his wife had died.

When the abbot of this monastery departed, the monks wanted to appoint St. Lucianus an abbot over them, but he refused, for he shunned the vain glory of the world.

He took his son Longinus and went to Syria, where they lived in a church. God revealed their virtues by performing many miracles through them. For fear of the vain glory of this world, Longinus went to Egypt with his father's permission.

When he arrived, he went to the monastery of El-Zugag, west of Alexandria. The monks received him with joy. After the departure of the abbot, the monks appointed Anba Longinus abbot over them, for what they saw of his virtues and his good conduct. Shortly after, his father Lucianus came to him, and they worked together in making the canvas sails of boats, and sold them to support themselves. God performed many miracles and signs on their hands.

Father Lucianus departed from this world in peace, and shortly after, his son, Anba Longinus, departed also.

The prayers of these two saints be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Third Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Departure of St. James, the Ascetic

On this day, St. James, the ascetic monk, departed. This father denounced the world since his childhood. He dwelt in a cave for 15 years, during which he struggled with long fasting and numerous prayers. He did not leave his cave all this time.

Some followers of the evil one plotted against him, and they sent him a harlot. She decorated herself and went and entered his cave. She tried to get closer to him and flirted with him to entice him to commit sin with her. But he preached to her, and reminded her of the fire of hell, and the eternal punishments. She repented on his hand and went back to the city, thanking God, Who had compassion on her and brought her back from the way of eternal death to the way of eternal life.

God performed many miracles through him. When he finished his good struggle in this life, he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Martyrdom of St. Agabus, One of the Seventy Disciples

On this day, St. Agabus, one of the seventy disciples, was martyred. The seventy disciples were chosen by the Lord to go before Him to preach the gospel. St. Agabus was with the twelve disciples in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

He received the gift of prophecy, as the Acts of the Apostles tells us, "And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" (Acts 21:10-11) This prophecy was fulfilled. (Acts 21:17-36)

He also prophesied about a famine on all the earth, and this was fulfilled during the time of Claudius Caesar, the Roman Emperor. (Acts 11:27-28)

He preached the gospel together with the holy apostles. He went to many countries, teaching and converting many of the Jews and the Greeks to the knowledge of the Lord Christ. He sanctified them by the life-giving baptism.

This moved the Jews of Jerusalem to arrest him, and they tortured him by beating him severely, and putting a rope around his neck, and they dragged him outside the city. They stoned him there until he gave up his pure spirit. At this moment, a light came down from heaven. Everyone saw it as a continuous column between his body and heaven. A Jewish woman saw it and said, "Truly this man was righteous." She shouted in a loud voice, "I am a Christian and I believe in the God of this saint." They stoned her also and she died and was buried with him in one tomb.

Their prayers be with us and glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. *The Departure of St. Agrippinus, 10th Pope of Alexandria.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Saints Anba Bishay and Anba Abanoub.*
3. *The Departure of St. Apollo, friend of Anba Abib.*
4. *The Commemoration of the Relocation of the Relics of the Forty-Nine Elders of the Wilderness of Shiheet (Scetis).*

1. On this day of the year 181 A.D., the holy father Anba Agrippinus, 10th Pope of Alexandria, departed. This father was holy and pure and he feared God. He was ordained a priest on the church of Alexandria.

When Pope Cladianus, 9th Pope departed, Anba Agrippinus was chosen Patriarch by the people and clergy of Alexandria. By the grace of God, he took over the apostolic throne of Alexandria and walked in the footsteps of the apostles.

Anba Agrippinus preached the word of God and taught the principle of faith with its life-giving laws. He guarded his flock, with all his strength, by teaching them and praying on their behalf. He did not own any silver or gold, except for what met his basic personal needs. He completed his course after 12 years on the throne of St. Mark, and he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the church celebrates the commemoration of the saints Anba Bishay of Akhmim monastery, and Anba Abanub, known as the owner of the Golden Fan.

Their prayers be with us all. Amen.

3. On this day also, the church commemorates the departure of St. Apollo, friend of St. Abib²¹.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

4. Today also, we celebrate the commemoration of the relocation of the relics of the forty-nine saints of the wilderness of Shiheet to their church in the monastery of St. Macarius²².

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

²¹The biography of St. Apollo is on the 25th day of Babah. (P. 106)

²²The biography of the forty-nine martyrs is on the 26th day of Tubah.

The Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. *The Appearance of the Body of St. Apolidus (Hippolytus), Pope of Rome.*
2. *The Martyrdom of the Saints Abakir, John, the Three Virgins and Their Mother.*

1. On this day the church celebrates the appearance of the body of St. Apolidus (Hippolytus), Pope of Rome. He was a virtuous and a perfect man in his generation.

He was chosen to the Roman See after Father Augius. This was in the first year of the enthronement of Abba Cladianus, 9th Pope of Alexandria. Pope Apolidus was always teaching his people and guarding them from the pagan influences, confirming them in the faith of the Lord Christ.

When reports of St. Apolidus reached the infidel Emperor Claudius Caesar, he arrested him and tortured him severely. The Emperor then tied his feet with a heavy stone, and cast him in the sea on the 5th day of Amshir.

On the following day, one of the faithful found the body of the saint floating above the water, and the stone was bound to his feet. The man took it to his home and shrouded the body. The news spread in the City of Rome and in all the neighboring cities, and it reached Caesar, who asked for the body, but the man hid it.

This father left a great wealth of teachings about the Incarnation, and several sermons about Christian teaching. He also established 38 bylaws.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, the saints Abakir; John; the three virgins, Theodora (which means the gift of God), Theopisti "Theophana" (which means the faithfulness of God), and Theodosia (which means the glory of God); and their mother, Athanasia (which means the immortal), were martyred.

St. Abakir was a monk since his young age, and St. John was a soldier in the private guards of the Emperor. They left Alexandria, their own home town, and lived in Antioch. When Diocletian incited the persecution against the Christians, they confessed their faith in the Lord Christ along with the virgins and their mother.

When the Emperor knew that they were from Alexandria, he returned them to the governor of Alexandria. When they came to Alexandria, and were brought before the Governor, they confessed their faith in the Lord Christ. He ordered them beheaded. St. Athanasia was comforting and confirming her daughters and telling them that if they were martyred, they would become the brides of Christ. The virgins were beheaded first, then their mother, then St. Abakir and St. John.

Their bodies were cast to the wild beasts and to the birds of the sky. However, some believers came and took their bodies by night and they placed them in a coffin and hid them until the end of the time of persecution.

Their prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. The Departure of St. Alexandros II, 43rd Pope of Alexandria.

2. The Departure of St. Theodorus (Theodore), 45th Pope of Alexandria.

1. On this day of the year 715 A.D., the Holy Father Abba Alexandros II (Alexander), 43rd Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was from the City of Bana. He became a monk in the monastery of Pateron (Barbarun) or the monastery of the fathers, which was also known as El-Zugag monastery, which was west of Alexandria. Because of his righteousness and his knowledge, he was chosen to the throne of St. Mark.

During his papacy, he suffered many hardships. He was contemporary to the Caliph El-Walid Ibn Abd-Elmalek. When the latter took the caliphate, he appointed his brother Abdallah a governor of Egypt in the year 698 A.D. He mistreated the Christians of Egypt, and confiscated the monasteries of the wilderness of Shiheet (Scetis).

His evil nature went to the extreme. One day he entered a monastery in Upper Egypt, and saw an icon of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, and inquired about it. He was told that it was the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ, the Savior of the world, he spat on the icon and said, "If I live, I shall destroy all the Christians." He then blasphemed against the Lord Christ also.

At night, he saw a vision during his sleep which disturbed him, and filled his heart with fear. He wrote to his brother saying, "that he suffered the day before as he saw a Man sitting on a great throne, and His face shone more than the sun, and around Him were thousands carrying arms. We were bound behind Him. When I asked who He was, I was told that He was Christ Jesus, the King of the Christians, Whom I mocked and despised the day before. One of the armed men came and pierced my side with a spear."

His brother was extremely sad when he heard about the vision. The same night, that man, Abdallah, caught a severe fever and died. Forty days later, his brother El-Walid died also.

In 701 A.D. another Governor replaced Abdallah, and he followed his predecessor's policy. He mistreated the Christians, and arrested St. Alexandros and tortured him until the believers collected for him three thousand Dinari. God perished this Governor soon after that.

The following Governor, was even more wicked than the one before him. He ordered the arrest of the Pope, and asked him for three thousand Dinari. The Pope excused himself saying that part of the money that he paid to his predecessor was collected from some of the believers and the rest

was borrowed. The Governor did not accept his words, and finally the Pope asked him for a grace period.

The Pope went to Upper Egypt to collect the money from the believers. During his travel, an ascetic monk asked two of his disciples to dig out a cave. While they were digging, they found five copper jars filled with gold. They kept one of them and gave the rest to the hermit, which he sent to the Pope. The two disciples took the gold and left the desert. They went out into the world, married, and owned cattle, slaves and maidenservants.

The Governor was informed about these two men, and he called them to him. He threatened them if they did not tell him the truth about their sudden wealth. They told him about the five jars of gold, and that four jars were given to the Pope. He rushed to the patriarchate and plundered all the church vessels. He seized the Pope, insulted him and put him in prison. He demanded from the Pope the jars and the three thousand Dinari. He did not release him until the Pope gave it all to him.

Shortly after that, this Governor died, and another even more evil came after him. He ordered the Christians to tattoo on their wrists, instead of the sign of the honorable Cross, the name of the "beast" that St. John the Theologian had prophesied about in all the land. He also commanded the Pope to tattoo the sign of the beast on his wrist, but the Pope refused. As the Governor insisted, the Pope asked him for three days. The Pope went to his cell and prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ not to forsake him so that he would not fail in this test. The Lord answered his prayer, so he fell with a brief sickness.

He went to the Governor and asked his permission to go to Alexandria. The Governor refused, thinking that the Pope was pretending to be sick just to escape the tattooing. Afterwards, the Lord inspired him that he would depart from this world after four days. He told this to his disciples, and asked them to prepare a carriage to carry his body and to bury him beside the holy fathers. He departed in peace, and was carried for his burial as he requested.

During the papacy of Abba Alexandros, the Melkites had a Patriarch in Egypt by the name of Anastasius, who was hated by his own people because he loved the Orthodox Copts and was peaceful with them. He left his own congregation and went to Pope Alexandros, and confessed the Orthodox faith before him. The Pope treated the Patriarch well, honored him and wanted to hand him the affairs of the patriarchate so he could go and worship in seclusion in one of the monasteries. Father Anastasius refused and said to him, "If I had desired the patriarchal seat, I could have remained there, for I was a patriarch, but now I want to be your disciple." He finally accepted, however, to become a bishop in one of the bishoprics, and he shepherded the flock entrusted to him well.

Abba Alexandros remained on the seat of St. Mark for 24 years and 9 months.
His prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 728 A.D., St. Theodorus (Theodore), 45th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was a monk in a monastery near Mariut, which was known as the monastery of Tanboura, under the guidance of a virtuous elder called Yoannis (John). Abba Yoannis was inspired by the Holy Spirit that his disciple Tadros one day would become a Pope. He told those who were in authority.

Tadros struggled in his worship, and was perfect in his humility and meekness. He was chosen by the will of God to become the Pope of Alexandria. He shepherded the flock of the Lord Christ well. He continued to read and to preach to his people, especially on Sundays and on feast days. He completed 12 years on the seat of St. Mark and departed in peace.
His prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Feast of Presenting the Lord Christ in the Temple

On this day we celebrate the feast of presenting the Lord Christ to the temple after 40 days of His blessed birth. St. Joseph the righteous and His mother, the Virgin Mary, presented Him in the temple, to fulfill the Mosaic Law.

St. Luke the Evangelist says that when His parents brought Him according to the custom of the law, the just and devout Simeon the elder took Him in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the Glory of Your people Israel." (Luke 2:29-32)

Simeon was one of the 70 elders who translated the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek. This was in the time of Ptolemy Soter in the year 296 B.C., who was sent by the will of God to Jerusalem. He brought 70 men from among the learned Jewish teachers and scholars and commanded them to translate the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek²³.

He put every two of them in an isolated place so they would not agree on one translation, and to ensure a correct text after comparing all of the translations. Simeon the elder was one of them.

When Simeon was translating the verse from Isaiah 7:14, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel," he was afraid to translate that a virgin would conceive, because the King would mock him. He wanted to translate the virgin as a "young lady."

²³This translation is known as the Septuagint in regard of the 70 elders. This is considered to be the oldest translation present in the museums for the Old Testament.

He was disturbed because of this inaccurate translation, and God revealed to him in a vision that he would not die before he would see Christ the Lord born of a virgin.

This was fulfilled and he lived about three hundred years. When Christ was born; he was very well advanced in age and his sight dimmed.

When he carried the child Jesus in his hands, his sight came back to him, and the Holy Spirit told him, "This is the child that you have been waiting for." He blessed God and said, "You are letting Your servant depart in peace according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the Glory of Your people Israel." (Luke 2:28-32)

The prayers of this righteous man be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

- 1. The Departure of St. Barsauma, the Father of the Syrian Monks.*
- 2. The Martyrdom of St. Paul, the Syrian.*

1. On this day of the year 458 A.D., the blessed father Anba Barsauma, the father of the Syrian monks, departed. His father was from Samosata. One of the saints prophesied about him before his birth, saying to his parents, "There shall go forth from you a righteous fruit, whose fame shall spread out every where," and this prophecy was fulfilled.

When Barsauma grew up, he left his parents and went to the river Euphrates where he stayed with a holy man called Abraham. Afterwards, he lived a solitary life in the mountain and many disciples gathered around him. The water in this place was salty, and the saint prayed to God and the water became sweet. He used to fast for a week at a time. God wrought through him many miracles.

St. Barsauma was a contemporary of St. Simeon the Stylite. When St. Barsauma knew about him, he went to visit him and they blessed each other. He was well known for his resistance to the heresy of Nestorius and his followers.

He attended the Universal Council at Ephesus at the invitation of Emperor Theodosius the Less, who gave him a great honor. Some accused St. Barsauma of eating, drinking and living a luxurious life. The Emperor called him and saw for himself St. Barsauma's righteousness and his ascetic living. The Emperor vindicated him and allowed him to return to his monastery with great honor.

When Emperor Marcian called for the Council at Chalcedon, the fathers asked the Emperor not to call upon St. Barsauma, for they knew of the grace that was in him. When the council agreed on

the two natures of Christ, St. Barsauma resisted these heretic teachings and he was persecuted by the Chalcedonians.

When the Lord wanted to take St. Barsauma from the world, He sent him an angel to tell him that 4 days were left in his life on earth. He gathered his disciples and told them to go to the neighboring cities to confirm its people in the Orthodox faith. He blessed them and departed in peace.

At the time of his departure, a pillar of light appeared at the door of his cell which the faithful saw from afar. They came and found that St. Barsauma had departed. They took his blessings and buried him with great honors.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Paul, the Syrian, was martyred. He was born in the City of Alexandria to Syrian parents who lived afterwards in the City of Ashmunin. They were very rich merchants.

St. Paul heard about the persecution of the Roman governors to Christians. He gave up his money to the poor, after the death of his parents, and prayed to God to guide him in the way that pleased Him. God sent him His angel Soriel, who said to the saint, "The Lord has commanded that I be with you and strengthen you, so that you should not be afraid."

The saint arose and came before the governor of Antioe (Ansen) and confessed the Lord Christ. The Governor ordered him to be stripped naked, beaten with whips, and burned in the sides with torches. The governor tried again to entice him with money, but the saint said to him, "My parents left me a fortune of gold and silver, and I rejected them for the sake of the love of the Lord Christ. How can I look to your money now?"

The Governor became angry to hear that and he tortured him with different kinds of tortures. The angel Soriel came to him, healed and strengthened him. The Governor ordered to release venomous serpents on him, but they did not harm him.

The Governor then went to Alexandria and took the saint with him and put him in prison, where St. Paul met his two friends: Anba Esi and his sister Teckla. His soul rejoiced when he saw them. God inspired him that he would be martyred in Alexandria.

When the Governor wanted to go back to his city, he ordered that the head of St. Paul be cut off at the sea shore. The faithful came and they took the body and prepared it for burial, and they kept it in their possession.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Tenth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. *The Martyrdom of St. James the Apostle, Son of Alphaeus.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Justus, Son of Emperor Nuerian.*
3. *The Departure of St. Isidore of Pelusium.*
4. *The Martyrdom of St. Philo, Bishop of the Persian.*

1. On this day, St. James the Apostle, son of Alphaeus, was martyred. After he had preached the Gospel in many cities, he returned to Jerusalem and entered the temple of the Jews. He preached the gospel publicly and proclaimed the faith of the Lord Christ and His resurrection.

The Jews abducted him and brought him to Claudius, the deputy of the Roman emperor, and told him that he was preaching another king instead of Caesar. Claudius ordered him to be stoned to death, until he departed in peace. The faithful took his body and buried him beside the temple.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Justus, son of Emperor Nuerian, was martyred. When he returned from war, he found that Emperor Diocletian had married his sister and had become the new emperor. Emperor Diocletian had apostatized the faith in the Lord Christ, and St. Justus was greatly sorrowful for what happened.

When the nobles of the empire met together to enthrone him in place of his father, he did not accept, for he preferred the heavenly kingdom over the earthly. He came before Diocletian and declared his faith in the Lord Christ. The Emperor sent St. Justus with his son Abali and his wife Theoclea to the Governor of Alexandria, and commanded him to persuade them first and to behead them if they did not obey.

When they arrived in Alexandria, the Governor received them and treated them well to persuade them. As he could not change their deep conviction in their faith in the Lord Christ, to Whom is the Glory, he sent St. Justus to Antioe (Ansenia), Abali, his son, to Basta (near Zagazig, Sharkia), and Theoclea to Sa (Salhagar, Gharbia). Each of them took a servant with him so when they completed their strife, the servant would take care of the body. They tortured them, beheaded them, and they received the crown of martyrdom.

Their prayers be with us all. Amen.

3. On this day also, the ascetic, scholar and holy man, Anba Isidore of Pelusium (El-Pharma), departed. His parents were among the rich and noble people of Egypt. He was related to Pope Cyril and Pope Theophilus, patriarchs of Alexandria.

He was the only child of his parents, who cared about his education. They taught him the books of the church, and the Greek language in which he excelled and surpassed many. He was also ascetic and humble. When he knew that the people of Alexandria and the bishops wanted to make

him the Patriarch of Alexandria, he took flight by night to Pelusium and became a monk in a monastery there.

Then he went to a small cave where he lived alone for several years. During these years, he wrote many books about emperors and governors. He also commented on many books of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. His epistles that he sent to bishops and patriarchs were counted as eighteen thousand epistles. The gifts of the Holy Spirit poured upon him, and he reached a good old age, then departed to the Lord in peace.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

4. Today also, the honorable St. Philo, bishop of the Persians, was martyred by the hand of the Persian emperor. When he did not accept worshipping fire and the sun, they tortured him with different kinds of tortures, and then they beheaded him with the sword.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eleventh Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Martyrdom of St. Fabianus (Fabrianus), Pope of Rome

On this day, St. Fabianus, Pope of Rome, was martyred. This father was a righteous scholar. He was ordained Pope for the city of Rome, so he taught his people and guided them in the way of Christian perfection.

Decius, the head of the army, killed Emperor Philip, and replaced him as emperor. Decius incited a severe persecution against the Christians, and many were martyred. This infidel built a huge temple in the middle of the city of Ephesus, and erected in it idols, where he offered sacrifices to them. He then ordered to behead everyone who refused to sacrifice to these gods.

When Decius knew that St. Fabianus was against the worship of idols and that he was teaching the faithful to be steadfast in their faith, he brought him to Ephesus. Decius commanded St. Fabianus to sacrifice to the idols. St. Fabianus did not yield to him and ridiculed his idols. The Emperor punished him with many tortures for a long time and at the end, he beheaded him with the sword. St. Fabianus thus received the crown of martyrdom.

This pope stayed on the throne for 12 years, the major part of which was tranquil and peaceful.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twelfth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. *The Commemoration of the Archangel Michael.*
2. *The Departure of St. Gelasius.*

1. On this day we celebrate, commemorating the honorable Michael the Archangel, the intercessor of mankind.

His intercession be with us. Amen.

2. Also on this day, St. Gelasius, the struggling ascetic, departed. He was born of Christian parents, who brought him up in the Christian faith. They taught him the church subjects, and then he was ordained a deacon in the church. He labored in his obedience to Christ and in carrying His yoke.

He went to the wilderness of Shiheet and became a monk. Afterwards, he was ordained a priest, and the angel of the Lord guided him to a distant place where many monks gathered around him, and he was a great example for them. He considered himself as one of them. He was patient and long suffering to the point that he transcribed the Holy Bible and placed it in the church for the other monks to read.

One day a stranger visited him and stole the transcribed Bible and went to try to sell it to someone. That person wanted to know its value, so he went to St. Gelasius and showed him the Bible. St. Gelasius knew that it was his book and asked him, "For how much did he sell it to you?" He answered, "For sixteen Dinari." The saint said to him that it was cheap, and so the man took it and went to his home.

When the seller came back to him to pick up the price, he said to him, "I have shown the Bible to Father Gelasius and he said that the price was too high." The seller asked, "Did the father tell you anything else?" The buyer replied, "No." The man who stole the Bible said, "I do not want to sell it." He took the book and went to Father Gelasius and gave it to him weeping and regretting what he did. The saint did not accept it from him. However, after the man had insisted with many tears, the saint at last accepted it from him.

God granted this saint the gift of performing miracles. One day, the monastery was presented with an amount of fish. After they were cooked, the cook asked one of the servants to guard it, but the servant ate a great part of it. When the cook knew what had happened, he was angry at that servant, for he ate before the time of eating and before the elders had blessed it. The cook beat him with a deadly hit that killed him.

The cook was afraid of what he had done and went to St. Gelasius and told him what had happened. The saint told him to take the body and put it in the church in front of the altar and to leave it there. The saint and the monks came to the church, prayed the Vespers prayer, and then

the saint departed from the church, and the boy rose up and followed him. The monks did not know of this miracle until the saint had departed.

When this father finished the course of his life in a good old age, the Lord wanted him to rest from the labors of this world, and he departed leaving us with this good memory.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Thirteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. The Martyrdom of St. Sergius of Atripe, His Father, Mother, Sister, and Many Others with Them.

2. The Departure of St. Timothy III, 32nd Pope of Alexandria.

1. On this day, St. Sergius, his father, his mother, his sister and many others with them, were martyred. This saint was born in the city of Atripe to a righteous father whose name was Theodore, and a faithful mother whose name was Mary.

When he was 20 years old, St. Sergius desired to die for the Name of the Lord Christ. He presented himself to Cyprianus (Cyprian), the governor, and confessed his faith in the Lord Christ. The governor commanded him to be tortured with different kinds of tortures and to cast him in prison.

At night he saw in a vision as if he was in heaven, and he saw the mansions of the saints. His soul was greatly comforted, and the Lord Christ healed him from his afflictions.

A priest by the name of Mansoon heard about the labors of St. Sergius. Fr. Mansoon came with two deacons to Atripe and confessed the Name of the Lord Christ before the governor. The governor beat them with great cruelty. A multitude of people watched the tortures, and moved with compassion toward the priest, who could not do anything but to look at them, preach and command them to be steadfast in their faith in the Lord Christ. He prayed and blessed them and they all confessed the Orthodox faith. After they had been tortured, they were all beheaded, and received the crown of life. However, the Governor tortured the priest with fire, but the Lord saved him. The Governor sent him to Alexandria where he received his crown of martyrdom.

As for St. Sergius, Governor Cyprianus brought him and tortured him with excruciating tortures but the Lord healed, strengthened and comforted him. They brought an idol and ordered him to worship it. He kicked the idol with his foot and it fell and broke. Cyprianus believed instantly and said, "The god that cannot save itself, cannot save others." The captain of the soldiers "Ohios" continued to torture St. Sergius, and ordered to skin him and to rub his wounds with salt and vinegar, but the Lord gave him strength and grace.

His mother and his sister came to visit him and saw him in this condition, they wept bitterly, until his sister died from her extreme grief, but God raised her up by the prayers of the saint.

St. Julius of Agfahs came, wrote the biography of St. Sergius, and promised him that he would take care of his body and his burial. The captain "Ohios" ordered that St. Sergius be tortured by pressing his body through the pressing wheel (Hinbazeen), that his nails be pulled out, that he be placed over an iron bed, with a fire under it, and that torches of fire be placed in his ears. The Lord strengthened him through all of this and healed him. When "Ohios" the captain was tired of torturing him, he decided to behead him.

St. Sergius called his mother and sister to bid them farewell. They came with the rest of his family and when they saw him tied up with the bridle of a horse that was dragging him to the place of his martyrdom, they protested to the Governor for his extreme cruelty. He ordered to behead them all and they all received the crown of life and the eternal bliss.

There was a young boy among the crowd whose eyes were opened by the Lord and he saw the souls of the saints who were martyred carried by the angels, ascending to heaven. He cried with a loud voice saying, "O My Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me." His parents were afraid that the governor would hear him and destroy them because of him. When they could not calm him down, they put their hands upon his mouth to prevent him from screaming, asking the help of the Lord Christ, until he gave up his pure soul at the hand of the Lord.

Their prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 528 A.D., the holy father Abba Timothy III, 32nd Pope of Alexandria, departed. His enthronement on the apostolic throne was in 511 A.D. He suffered many hardships because he was steadfast in the Orthodox faith.

In his days, St. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, came to Egypt escaping persecution. The two saints traveled together to Egyptian cities and monasteries confirming the people in the Orthodox faith.

Because he did not agree with Emperor Marcion with regard to the canons of the Council of Chalcedon, he was exiled.

On the day of his exile, the faithful opposed the enforcement of the order of his exile, and many of them were killed, about two hundred thousand, by the order of the Emperor. The saint departed in exile together with St. Severus of Antioch, after he had been on the apostolic throne for 17 years.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. *The Departure of St. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch.*
2. *The Departure of St. James (Yacobus), 50th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day of the year 538 A.D., the holy father St. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, departed. He was from Asia Minor. His grandfather, whose name was also Severus, saw in a vision someone telling him, "The child who is for your son will strengthen Orthodoxy, and his name will be after your name." When his son had this saint, he called him Severus. He was taught the Greek wisdom and church subjects.

Once, the saint was strolling outside the city, a shut-in saint came out of his cave crying, "Welcome to you Severus, teacher of Orthodoxy, and Patriarch of Antioch." Severus marvelled at how he called him by his name, for he did not know him before, and how he foretold what would become of him.

Severus grew in virtue and became a monk in the monastery of St. Romanus. The fame of his righteousness and his ascetic life spread out. When the Patriarch of Antioch departed, the bishops had a consensus to ordain him the Patriarch of the city in the year 512 A.D. The church was illuminated by his teachings which spread to all the universe, and he was one of the fathers who attended the Universal Council at Ephesus.

Shortly after, Emperor Anastasius died and Justinian, who was Chalcedonian in faith, reigned after him. He called upon this holy father and gave him great honors to persuade him to change his stand and to follow the Emperor's belief, but the Saint refused. The Emperor became angry, but the Saint did not fear his anger, and so the Emperor ordered him to be killed. Theodora, the Emperor's wife who was Orthodox in faith, knew about what the Emperor intended to do, so she told the saint to flee from his face.

St. Severus escaped to the land of Egypt and traveled everywhere and visited monasteries disguised as a monk. He strengthened the faith of the believers in the Orthodox doctrine. He dwelt in the city of Sakha in the home of a holy lay leader called Doretheos. God performed through him many miracles. He departed in the city of Sakha, and his body was relocated to the monastery of El-Zugag.

His prayers be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 821 A.D., the great saint Abba James (St. Yacobus), 50th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was a monk in the monastery of St. Macarius. For his holiness and righteousness, he was chosen by a consensus to become patriarch after Pope Mark, 49th Pope, had departed. He was enthroned in the month of Bashans in the year 810 A.D.

St. James renovated the churches and populated the monasteries, and God granted him the gift of performing miracles. One of the deacons in Alexandria dared to say to him rudely, "Pay what you

owe to the churches, or else go to your monastery." The Pope replied to him, "You will never see me again from now on." The deacon went home, immediately became sick and died shortly after.

Another miracle: There was a lay leader (Archon) named Macarius from Nabarouh who was very well advanced in years and had no children. After a while, God gave him a son. He made a feast to celebrate this occasion, and invited Abba James. During the celebration, the child died but his father did not panic. He carried the child in his hands and placed him in faith before the Pope, trusting that God would hear His chosen one, and give life to his child. The Pope took the child and made the sign of the cross on his forehead, his heart and his chest, while he prayed, "My Master, Jesus Christ, the Giver of Life, raise this child alive again by Your mighty power." He breathed in his face, and the soul of the child returned to him, and he gave him to his father.

When he finished his good strife, Abba James departed in peace, after he had been on the throne of St. Mark for 10 years, 9 months and 28 days.

His prayers be with us, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. *The Departure of St. Zechariah, the Prophet.*
2. *The Consecration of the First Church Dedicated for the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.*
3. *The Departure of St. Paphnoute (Paphnotius).*

1. On this day St. Zechariah the Prophet, the son of Berechiah, one of the twelve minor prophets, departed. He was from the tribe of Levi, born in the land of Gilead, and was exiled to the land of the Chaldeans.

In exile, he started to prophesy, in the second year of King Darius, 520 B.C. He prophesied about "Jeshua, the son of Jozadak," and "Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel," that they would rebuild the temple. (Ezra 5:1; 6:14)

He prophesied also about the entrance of the Lord to Jerusalem riding a donkey, the foal of a donkey (Zechariah 9:9); the thirty pieces of silver that Judas Iscariot received to deliver his Master to the Jews (Matthew 26:14-15); the scattering of the disciples on the night of the crucifixion; the coming of Christ in glory; and the grief of the children of Israel who did not believe in Him (Zechariah 12:10). He also prophesied about many other things.

He was the prophet who was killed between the altar and the temple. He was buried in Jerusalem in the tomb of the prophets.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the consecration of the church of the forty martyrs from Sebaste by the hand of Emperor Licinius²⁴. It was the first church that was built after their names. St. Basil the Great consecrated it, wrote their biographies and established a great feast day for them.

Their intercession be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, the ascetic St. Paphnoute (Paphnotius) departed. He became a monk at a young age, and followed the hardest way in his monastic life.

God inspired him to travel to the inner wilderness, and there he saw many hermits and anchorites and St. Paphnoute wrote about them. Among those was St. Timothy and St. Abu Nofr. In his travels, he suffered much hunger and thirst, but the angel of the Lord appeared to him often to strengthen him. When he finished his strife, he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Departure of St. Elizabeth, Mother of St. John the Baptist

On this day the upright and righteous St. Elizabeth, mother of St. John the Baptist, departed. This holy woman was born in Jerusalem to a righteous father called Matthan from the tribe of Levi and from the house of Aaron the priest. Her mother's name was Sofia.

Matthan had three daughters. The first was called Mary, the mother of Salome, the midwife who cared for the Virgin St. Mary during her virginal birth. The name of the second daughter was Sofia, the mother of St. Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist. The youngest daughter was St. Hannah, the mother of the Virgin St. Mary, the mother of the Savior. Therefore, Salome, Elizabeth and the Virgin St. Mary were cousins.

When St. Zacharias the priest married St. Elizabeth, they lived in righteousness and holiness before God, as the evangelist said, "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke 1:6)

This upright woman was barren. She and her husband continually supplicated God who gave them St. John the Baptist. God was slow in answering their prayers until the time when the Virgin Mary conceived with the Word of God. When they were stricken in age, God sent His angel Gabriel to Zacharias to announce to him, "Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John," (Luke 1:13) and the angel told him what would become of St. John.

²⁴The history of their martyrdom is mentioned on the thirteenth day of Baramhat.

The Virgin St. Mary visited St. Elizabeth to congratulate her on her pregnancy. "And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." (Luke 1:41) When she gave birth to St. John, the shame of her barrenness was lifted up from her and her people. When she completed her days in purity, righteousness and chastity, she departed in peace.

Her intercession be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Seventeenth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Martyrdom of St. Mina (Menas), the Monk

On this day St. Mina the monk was martyred. This saint was born in Akhmim to Christian parents who were farmers. Since his youth, his heart was inclined to renounce the world, so he became a monk in one of the monasteries of Akhmim.

For a period of time, he fasted two days at a time and he was ascetic in his food and drink. Then he went to El-Ashmounein and dwelt in a monastery there for 16 years without leaving it.

When the Arabs ruled the country, St. Mina heard that they denied that God had a Son from His nature and essence, and equal with Him in Eternity. This denial of faith was painful to the saint, so he took permission from the abbot of the monastery and went to El-Ashmounein.

He came before the commander of the Arab camp and asked him, "Is it true that you say that God has no Son from His nature and essence?" The commander replied saying, "We deny that saying about God and totally reject it." The saint told the Arab commander that it should only be rejected if His Son was born through parental procreation, but our belief is that the Lord Christ is God of God, and Light of Light. The commander replied, "In our faith, this is blasphemy." The saint told him that the Bible says, "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides in him." (John 3:36)

The commander became enraged at this and ordered his soldiers to cut the saint into pieces and to throw him into the sea. The believers gathered the pieces of his body, shrouded and buried it. They arranged a commemoration of St. Mina the monk on this day.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Eighteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Departure of St. Malatius the Confessor, Patriarch of Antioch

On this day of the year 381 A.D., St. Malatius (Miltius) the Confessor, Patriarch of Antioch, departed. He was ordained a bishop for Sebaste in the year 357 A.D. He left it because of the

rudeness of its people and lived a solitary life nearby the city of Halab in Syria. In the year 360 A.D., he was chosen a patriarch for Antioch during the days of Constantius, the son of Constantine the Great.

He was an eminent, learned and meek man, who was loved by everyone. When he entered the city of Antioch, he resisted the Arians and kept them away from the churches. When the Emperor heard that, he exiled him in the same year that he was enthroned patriarch. The noble men of the city of Antioch, the bishops and the priests met and wrote to the Emperor asking for the return of the Patriarch. The Emperor returned St. Malatius in shame to them.

When St. Malatius came back in the year 362 A.D., he did not cease resisting the Arians, excommunicating them and all those who believed in their doctrines. He made clear to them their errors and explained to them their blasphemy. He declared, preached and confirmed that the Son was of the same essence as the Father, consubstantial with Him in essence and in Godship. The followers of Arius returned to slander St. Malatius before Emperor Valens, who exiled him again to a country further away than the one to which he was exiled first. When he arrived to his exile, the bishops and the fathers that were exiled from different countries came and gathered around and stayed with him.

St. Malatius did not slack in teaching and interpreting what was difficult to understand in the Holy Scriptures. His epistles reached his flock, in spite of the distance, confirming their faith in the Holy Trinity, preaching the faith of the Council of Nicea and refuting the teachings of Arius.

He was in exile for many years until his return to Antioch in the year 378 A.D. He was present in the Council of Constantinople in the year 381 A.D. Then he departed in peace.

St. John Chrysostom (Golden Mouthed) praised St. Malatius on his feast day declaring his greatness and that he was not in any less stature than the apostles in honor for what he suffered from exile and humiliation for the sake of the Orthodox faith.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Nineteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir
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*The Commemoration of the Relocation of the Relics of
St. Martianus, the Monk*

On this day we commemorate the relocation of the relics of St. Martianus (Martinianus) the fighter monk from Athens to Antioch. After he led an adulterous woman to repentance and then to monasticism, he placed her in one of the convents. Then he went to an island and visited many

countries. Finally, he came to the city of Athens where he stayed for a short while, until he fell sick and departed in peace²⁵.

St. Demetrius, Patriarch of Antioch, took on the endeavor to relocate the relics of the saint during the reign of Emperor Valens the Infidel. St. Demetrius sent priests to Athens. They carried the body of St. Martianus with great honor to Antioch. He placed the body in a sarcophagus and appointed a feast to celebrate him on this day.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. The Departure of St. Peter, 21st Pope of Alexandria.

2. The Commemoration of Sts. Basil, Theodore and Timothy, the Martyrs.

1. On this day of the year 370 A.D., the blessed father Abba Peter II, 21st Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was the successor of St. Athanasius the apostolic, who was his teacher. Anba Peter II suffered many tribulations from the followers of Arius who often tried to kill him, but he escaped them.

He was forced to hide for two years, during which the Arians put in his place one of them named Lucius. Nevertheless, the believers were able to remove Lucius, the false pope, and brought back Anba Peter who remained on his chair for 6 years of persecution, during which he resisted the Arians. When he completed 8 years, the Lord relieved him from the toil of this world and he departed to the eternal bliss.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of Saints Basil, Theodore and Timothy, the martyrs, in the city of Alexandria.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

²⁵The account of his departure is mentioned on the 21st day of the month of Bashans.

The Twenty-First Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. *The Commemoration of the Virgin St. Mary.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Onesimus, the Disciple of St. Paul.*
3. *The Departure of St. Gabriel, 57th Pope of Alexandria.*
4. *The Departure of St. Zacharias, Bishop of Sakha.*

1. We celebrate on this day the commemoration of the pure Lady St. Mary the Virgin, the Mother of God, the Word, through whom was the salvation of Adam and his offspring.

Her intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also St. Onesimus, the disciple of St. Paul, was martyred. This saint was a slave for a man from Rome called Philemon who believed at the hands of St. Paul, when he heard his preaching in Rome.

Philemon departed from Rome on a business trip and took with him Onesimus among others of his servants. There the devil enticed Onesimus, so he stole money from his master and fled to Rome. According to the Divine Will, Onesimus attended the preaching of St. Paul, which he kept in his heart. He believed at the hand of St. Paul and his heart was filled with the grace and the fear of God. He remembered what he stole from his master and from others and since he did not have anything left from the stolen money to return to its rightful owners, he was sorrowful and told St. Paul about that.

St. Paul comforted him and wrote an epistle to Onesimus' master, Philemon, informing him in it, that Onesimus became a follower of Christ saying, "I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains." St. Paul asked him to treat him gently and not to mind what he did but to consider what he lost as owed by the apostle.

When Onesimus took the epistle to his master Philemon, he was pleased by his faith and repentance and treated him as the apostle commanded. Furthermore, he offered him more money but St. Onesimus refused saying, "I am rich with Christ." Then he bid Philemon farewell and returned to Rome.

St. Onesimus continued to serve St. Paul until his martyrdom and deserved to be ordained a priest. After the martyrdom of St. Paul, the governor of Rome seized him and exiled him to one of the islands. He remained there preaching and baptizing the people of the island. When the governor came to the island, he found him guiding the people to the belief in the Lord Christ. He was beaten severely and his legs were broken. He departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also of the year 911 A.D., the great father St. Gabriel, 57th Pope of Alexandria, departed. This saint became a monk at a young age, practicing many worships. He loved solitary life and wept much while praying, asking the Lord to save him from the snares of the devil.

When Pope Mikhael, 56th Pope, departed, they chose this father to be the Pope in his place. He was ordained in the year 900 A.D. against his will. He cared for the church affairs well, and the duties of the patriarchate did not prevent him from his worship and asceticism.

He spent most of his days in the wilderness and whenever he had some affairs to take care of in Cairo or Alexandria, he would leave and then return back to the wilderness. He fought against the flesh and the devil by increasing fasting, watching, prayers and humility. He used to wake up in the night, put on a ragged garment, take a metal shovel and go around the bathrooms of the monks' cells, washing and cleaning them. He did the same for many years until the Lord looked upon his humility and humble heart, so He relieved his pains and gave him the grace of victory over sin and the body. This father was a worshipper, fighter and a preacher for 11 years, then he departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also St. Zacharias, Bishop of Sakha, departed. He was the son of a scribe called John who left his job and was chosen to be a priest. His son Zacharias was raised on studying literary and religious subjects.

When he grew up, El-Wazeer appointed him as a scribe in his court. Afterward he agreed with a friend called Ptolemy who was the prefect of the town of Sakha, to leave their work and go to the wilderness to become monks. That coincided with the coming of a monk from the monastery of St. John the Short, so they decided to go with him to the monastery. When the ruler (El-Wazeer) knew about that, he prevented them from going to the monastery.

A few days later, they saw a vision as if someone was asking them, "Why did you not fulfill your vow?" Immediately, they left in secret, walking to the wilderness, without knowing their way. They met on their way, by the will of God, a monk who took them to the monastery of St. John the Short (Colobos). When their friends knew about that, they took a letter from the Governor to bring them back, but the Lord defeated their counsel. As for Zacharias and his friend, they put on the garb of the monks and exerted themselves in many worships. That was during the time of the saints Abba Gawargah and Abba Abraham who were the best guides for them.

When the Bishop of Sakha departed, the people wrote to the father, the Patriarch, asking for Zacharias to be their bishop. The Patriarch brought him and ordained him against his will. At the time of the ordination, when the Pope was about to put his hands on Zacharias' head, a light shined in the church and his face appeared as a bright star.

When he arrived to his diocese, the people rejoiced and went out to meet him with great honor. The church was illumined with his teachings. St. Zacharias was eloquent and filled with grace and he wrote many articles, sermons and discourses. He stayed on his chair for 30 years, then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Second Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Departure of St. Maruta (Maruthas) the Bishop

On this day the church commemorates the departure of St. Maruta (Maruthas), bishop of Marjferqat (Mia Farcane²⁶), and the relocation of the relics of the saints who were martyred there in the days of Emperor Diocletian.

St. Maruthas was a knowledgeable and righteous man. For this reason, Emperor Theodosius, father of Arcadius and Honorius, selected him to serve as a good will ambassador to the king of Persia, Sapor II, to negotiate with him the conditions of the truce that both wanted to sign. King Shapur (Sapor) welcomed him and housed him in a royal palace.

When St. Maruthas knew that the king had a demented daughter, he asked to bring her to him. He prayed over her and she was healed. King Shapur was overjoyed and became more courteous to St. Maruthas.

The saint asked the King for the relics of the saints who were martyred in Persia, and the King gave him permission to take them. The saint took the relics for which he built a church and a great fortress around it. Later on, a city was built inside the walls of the fortress, which was named after Maruthas.

After the saint had finished his mission, he returned to Emperor Theodosius, and stayed in Rome until his departure.

His prayers be with us and to our God is the Glory forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Third Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Martyrdom of St. Eusebius, Son of Basilides, the Minister

On this day, St. Eusebius, the son of Basilides, the minister, was martyred. This Saint was one of the soldiers who fought in the war against Persia. When Diocletian abandoned the faith, Basilides, informed his son, Eusebius, of what Diocletian had done. Then St. Eusebius in turn told his companions, the holy men: Abadir, Yustos, Ecladius, and Theodore about this matter. They all agreed to shed their blood in the Name of the Lord Christ.

²⁶ This name is of Persian origin.

When the war was over, they returned to Antioch carrying the flag of victory. The Emperor went out to meet them, and asked them to worship his idols with him, but they all refused. Eusebius pulled his sword out, and tried to kill Diocletian and all who were with him, but Diocletian fled and disappeared. If not for the presence of Basilides, Eusebius and the saints with him could have killed all the leaders of the government.

Romanus, one of the ministers of the Emperor, advised him to exile Eusebius to Egypt to be killed there. He sent him to the governor of Qift (Coptos), Maurianus, who inflicted upon him many tortures from the Hinbazeen (the squeezing wheel), dismemberment, and by severe beatings.

The Lord sent to him His angel to strengthen him in his afflictions, to comfort him and to heal his wounds. The Lord showed him in a vision the paradise and the mansions of the saints, and the places that had been prepared for him, his father and his brother, and his soul exceedingly rejoiced.

The Governor ordered him to be burned in a fiery furnace outside the City of Ahnas. The angel of the Lord came and put out the fire and took St. Eusebius out safely. Finally the Governor ordered him beheaded and thus he received the crown of martyrdom.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. *The Departure of St. Agapetus (Agapius), the Bishop.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Timothy and St. Matthias.*

1. On this day St. Agapetus (Agapius), the bishop, departed. He was born of Christian parents during the time of the infidel emperors Diocletian and Maximianus. His parents brought him up in a Christian upbringing, and he was ordained a deacon. Then, he went to one of the monasteries and served the elders therein. He learned from them worship and asceticism and was accustomed to fasting and prayer. His food was legumes to break the fast. He grew in his ascetic life and in every virtue, and God wrought through him many miracles, among which were the following:

He healed a girl from a debilitating sickness which had stricken her for a long time, and doctors had failed to cure her. He also prayed once and God destroyed a beast which was devouring people. By his prayers, God granted healing to many sick people.

The news of his asceticism, righteousness and the power of his prayer spread everywhere. When Lucinus the governor heard about St. Agapius, he brought him by force and appointed him a soldier in his army. This did not prevent St. Agapius from continuing in his ascetic life and his worship and he rather increased in virtue.

Shortly after, God perished Diocletian and the God-loving emperor Constantine took over the empire after him. St. Agapius desired to gain his freedom and to return to his monastery, and God answered him.

Emperor Constantine had a servant who was very dear to him for the good qualities he had. The servant was stricken with an evil spirit which tormented him. Some friends of the Emperor advised him to ask Agapius, the soldier, to pray for his servant to be healed. The Emperor was surprised to know that one among his soldiers had the gift of healing. The Emperor sent for St. Agapius who prayed upon the servant, made the sign of the holy cross over him, and God healed him.

The Emperor rejoiced and wanted to reward him. St. Agapius refused to accept any reward except to be granted his release from military service to go back to the place of his worship. The Emperor granted him what he wanted. The saint returned to where he was before and he lived a solitary life. After a while, he was ordained a priest.

After the departure of the bishop of his town, the people asked for this saint from the abbot of the monastery, and he gave him his permission to leave. St. Agapius was ordained bishop and shepherded the flock of Christ with the best of care. He was granted the gift of prophecy and performing miracles. He rebuked the sinners for what they had done in secret. He rebuked the priests for forsaking teaching and instructing their flocks.

His biography included more than one hundred miracles that he had performed, and he departed at a good old age.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Timothy of Gaza, and St. Matthias of the City of Koos (Quoce).

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir
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1. The Martyrdom of Sts. Archippus, Philemon and Lycia the Virgin.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Quona (Kona) and St. Mina.

1. On this day, the Sts. Archippus, Philemon and Lycia the virgin, were martyred. They believed through St. Paul when he was preaching in Phrygia.

One day the pagans were celebrating the feast of Artamis. The saints entered their temple to see what they were doing and to see their rituals. They saw them offering sacrifices to the idol and glorifying it.

The divine zeal inflamed their hearts, and they went out of the temple and went to the church declaring the glory of the Lord Christ and magnifying His Holy Name. When the pagans heard about what the saints had done, they informed the Governor, who attacked the church and arrested them. He tortured the saints by driving hot nails in to their sides. He threw St. Archippus into a ditch and ordered him to be stoned until he gave up his pure spirit. St. Philemon and St. Lycia were also tortured with different kinds of tortures until they gave up their spirits.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the martyrdom of the deacon Quona of the City of Rome, and the martyrdom of St. Mina of Cyprus.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

1. *The Departure of St. Hosea, the Prophet.*

2. *The Martyrdom of St. Zadok and the 128 who were with Him.*

1. On this day, St. Hosea, the prophet, one of the twelve minor prophets of Israel, departed. This righteous man prophesied during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, King of Israel. (Hosea 1:1)

He mentioned in his prophecy some remarkable and marvelous things. He rebuked the children of Israel for their sins and their transgressions, and warned them in advance about the evil things that would befall them because of their offenses. He promised them the uplifting of these calamities if they returned to the Lord their God.

He also prophesied about the passions of our Savior, His resurrection and the salvation of the human race. He said, "He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in his sight. Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord..." (Hosea 6:1-3)

He prophesied also about the abolishment of the sting of death and the dominion of hell by saying, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death, O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction." (Hosea 13:14) "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (I Corinthians 15:55)

He departed at a blessed old age.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Zadok and the 128 saints with him were martyred in Persia. Behram, King of Persia, brought them before him and ordered them to worship the sun. St. Zadok said to him, "I do not worship except God, the Creator of the sun and all the universe." The King asked, "Does this Sun have a god?" The saint replied, "Yes, and He is the Lord Christ, our God."

The King ordered him beheaded. The saint prayed and the executioner cut his head. A great light appeared and all those who were present saw it and cried, saying, "We are all Christians." The King ordered that their heads be cut off and they received the crown of martyrdom.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Departure of St. Eustathius, Patriarch of Antioch

On this day of the year 330 A.D., St. Eustathius, Patriarch of Antioch, departed in exile. He was enthroned Patriarch of Antioch during the reign of the righteous Emperor Constantine the Great.

He was righteous and well learned. He attended the Nicene Council, and the fathers gathered there agreed on excommunicating Arius and exiling him and all those who believed in his teachings. Those were Eusabius the Nicomedian; Thaoghonius, Bishop of Nicea; and Eusabius, Bishop of Caesarea.

After the council was concluded and the fathers went back to their parishes, those who were excommunicated pretended that they wished to go to Jerusalem, but instead they went to Antioch. There, they enticed a harlot with money and other things in order to accuse St. Eustathius the Patriarch that he fathered a child from her. She took the money and went to the church and said as they had instructed her. They pretended to disbelieve her and said, "Bring forth your proof if you are truthful in what you are saying. We will not accept your statement unless you swear on the Bible that what you claim against this father is true." She swore to them and they replied, "We do not need any more proof."

They condemned St. Eustathius and judged to strip him from his episcopal rank. They informed Emperor Constantine saying: "A council of clerics judged to remove Fr. Eustathius, Patriarch of Antioch, from his office". The Emperor believed their unfounded judgement, and he deposed and banished St. Eustathius to Thrace where the saint remained until his departure.

The Lord God, Who loves His holy servants, did not neglect to reveal the truth. The woman became ill with a debilitating long illness and suffered great pain. She realized that her suffering was a punishment for her false accusation against the Saint. She came and confessed before the people of the city that the charge she had brought against St. Eustathius the patriarch was untrue. She pointed at those who bribed her with money to lie. She indicated that the Patriarch was innocent and that the child was born to another man whose name was the same as the Patriarch. They convinced her to swear against the Saint but at the same time to mean in heart her friend who was the father of the child, to be saved from falsely swearing.

The priests resumed mentioning the name of St. Eustathius in the divine liturgy after his innocence was evident. He was eulogized and praised by St. John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth) on the day of his commemoration.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Martyrdom of St. Theodore, the Roman

On this day St. Theodore (Theodoros), the Roman, was martyred. He was from the City of Astir (Peshotep) during the reign of the Emperors Maximianus and Diocletian. When they were informed that the saint did not adore their idols, they brought him and asked him to worship the idols but he refused.

They promised him precious gifts but he did not hearken to them. They tortured him by pressing his body in the Hinbazeen, and hacking parts of his body. He was burned with fire and beat him with whips. He endured all that because of his love for the Lord Christ Who sent His angels to comfort and strengthen him. Finally he was beheaded and received the crown of martyrdom.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

On this day of the year 167 A.D., St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna²⁷, was martyred. His life began at the end of the first Christian century, and he became the disciple of St. John the Evangelist. He was the one about whom the Lord said, "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead, and came to life: I know your works, tribulations and poverty, but you are rich; and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.'" (Revelation 2:8-10)

St. Polycarp went to Rome in the year 157 A.D. to settle a dispute with Arikestus, Bishop of Rome, in regard to the Easter feast. He shepherded his flock well and remained on his chair for a long time until a good old age. He wrote many articles and discourses about the Holy Advent,

²⁷ Known as Izmir, in Turkey.

death, hell, torments of hell, the virgin St. Mary and many others. He attracted many souls to the Lord with his life-giving teaching.

When Emperor Marcus Aurelius incited persecutions against Christians, they strongly pressured him saying, "Swear and we will set you free; curse Christ and we will spare your life." Polycarp replied, "I have served my Lord Christ for 86 years and He never harmed me so how can I blaspheme against my King Who saved me?"

The Governor said, "If you do not fear the wild beasts, I will make the fire consume you if you do not repent." St. Polycarp said, "You threatened me with fire that burns for a while, then burns out, for you do not know the everlasting fire of judgement and the eternal punishment that are awaiting the evil ones. Now why are you lingering? Do whatever you want."

After severe tortures and many threats, the saint wished to shed his blood for Christ's name. He commanded and taught his people to be steadfast in faith and told them that they would not see his face after that day. They wept and tried to hold him down to prevent him from leaving but they failed to stop him.

He went and confessed the Lord Christ before the Governor who ordered to cut off his head after much torture; thus he received the crown of life. Some of the believers took his body, shrouded and buried it with great honor.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Amshir

The Appearance of the Head of St. John the Baptist

On this day we celebrate the commemoration of the appearance of the head of St. John the Baptist. Herod commanded his head to be cut off and brought on a platter and given to Herodias, according to her request. (Mark 6:7-28) It was said that after the feast he regretted the slaying of St. John so he kept the head in his house.

Aritas, the Arabic King, Herod's father-in-law, was enraged because Herod banished his daughter and married the wife of his brother, while his brother was still alive. Aritas instigated a war against Herod in revenge for his daughter. He overcame Herod, dispersed his army and destroyed the cities of Galilee.

When Tiberius Caesar learned that the reason for these wars was the slaying of a prophet, who was great among his people, by Herod, who banished his wife, the daughter of Aritas, the Arabian king, and married his brother's wife, he summoned Herod and Herodias to Rome. Herod hid the head of St. John in his palace and went to Rome. When he arrived there, Tiberius removed him from his position and stripped him of all his possessions and exiled him to Spain where he died.

Herod's palace was ruined and became an example for those who might think of following in his footsteps.

A few years later, two believing men from Homs went to Jerusalem to spend the holy fast (Lent) there. Night fell on them while passing by the ruins of Herod's palace, so they spent the night there. St. John appeared to one of them and told him about his name and the whereabouts of his head and ordered him to take it to his house. When he woke up, the man told this to his friend and they went to the place where the head was buried. They dug and found a sealed pottery vessel. When they opened that vessel, a sweet aroma spread out of it. They found the holy head, took its blessing and placed it back in the vessel. The man that saw the vision took it to his house. He put it in a safe place and put a candle in front of it. Before his departure, he told his sister about it and she went on doing the same thing.

The head was handed from one person to another until it came to the hand of a follower of Arius who attributed the wonders and miracles that happened through the holy head to the heresy of Arius. The Lord commanded someone to force him out of his house. The place of the head remained unknown until the time of St. Cyril (Kyrillos), Bishop of Jerusalem. St. John appeared to Abba Martianus, Bishop of Homs, in his sleep and told him about the place of the head. He went there and found the head and that was on the thirtieth of the month of Amshir.

The prayers of this saint be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

On this day also of the year 1971 A.D., the holy and righteous father Abba Kyrillos the Sixth, the one hundred and sixteenth Pope of Alexandria, departed.

God has accorded this pure father the gift of working great miracles even after his departure. His prayers and blessings be with us. Amen.

*In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God.
Amen*

**The Blessed Month of Baramhat
The First Day**

- 1. The Departure of St. Narcissus.*
- 2. The Martyrdom of St. Alexandrus.*
- 3. Commemoration of Anba Marcura.*

1. On this day of the year, 222 A.D., departed the father St. Narcissus, Bishop of Jerusalem. This father came to Jerusalem during the reign of Alexander Caesar, who loved the Christians, in the year 190 A.D. This father was holy and unblemished in all his conduct. He shepherded his people with the best of care. Later, Alexander died and after him Maximianus Caesar reigned who incited persecution against the Christians. He slew many of the bishops and the remaining fled leaving their parishes. God granted this father the gift of performing wonders. On the eve of the feast of Easter, the oil in the lamps ran out, so he ordered the lamps to be filled with water and were lit. They all illuminated that night also by the light of his teachings.

The enemy of the good did not stop but, moved some people against him. They accused him of committing the sin of infidelity. God's punishment for those liars was bitter. One of them burned to death, and the bowels of another poured out and died, the body of the third wasted out from a long sickness, the fourth was killed and the fifth repented with tears confessing his sins. As for the saint, he went to the desert and disappeared there, lest his stay be a stumble to others.

Since nothing was known of St. Narcissus whereabouts, another man was chosen in his place whose name was Dius. Dius remained for a short period of time; he then departed. Upon Dius' departure they chose another called Ghordinus. When the time of persecution was over, Abba Narcissus returned to Jerusalem where he was greeted by his people with great joy. Ghordinus asked him to take over his Chair but, he refused preferring the solitary life. Ghordinus insisted that he stays with him in his cell. St. Narcissus stayed with him for one year at the end of which Ghordinus departed and St. Narcissus acquired his Chair. He had aged and was very weak so, he asked his people to choose another bishop, but they refused.

Alexander, Bishop of Cappadocia, came to Jerusalem to visit the Holy Land and pray. When he was about to return, after the feast, the people heard a great voice in the church of the Resurrection saying: "Go to the gate of the city, the first one to enter it, seize him, make him stay to assist Narcissus." When, they went to the gate, they met the Bishop Alexander, and pleaded with him to stay to assist Abba Narcissus. After much resistant, Bishop Alexander decided to accept and stay until the departure of St. Narcissus.

This father remained on the Episcopal Chair for thirty seven years, and all the years of his life were one hundred and sixteen years.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also St. Alexandrus, the soldier, was martyred during the reign of the infidel Emperor Maximianus. When this saint refused to raise incense for the idols, the Emperor punished him. The Emperor ordered him hung by his hands and a large heavy stone tied to his feet. He ordered him to be beaten, his sides burned, and placed lit torches against his face. When all these tortures did not dissuade him, the Emperor ordered him beheaded and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

3. Today also is the commemoration of Anba Marcura, the Bishop.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Second Day of the Blessed Month of Baramhat

The Martyrdom of St. Macrobius (Makrawy) the Bishop

On this day the blessed Saint Anba Makrawy (Macrobius) the bishop was martyred. This father was of the nobles of Ashmun Grais (Ashmun Kharirat) and he was ordained bishop for Nikiu (Nakiyos). When persecution against Christians started, Youfanyous, the Governor, sent for the Saint to appear before him. Before he went to the Governor, he went before the Holy Altar, lifted up his hands and prayed. He hid the Altar accessories (Utensils) and the service vestments in a place in the altar. He prayed again to the Lord Christ to guard His church. Then he went with the messengers to the Governor who asked him about his name and his hometown. When the Governor realized that he was the Bishop of the city, he ordered him to be beaten and humiliated. They mixed lime with vinegar and poured it down his throat. Nevertheless, God guarded him and he was unharmed.

Later, the Governor sent him to Armenius, the Governor of Alexandria, who casted him into prison. The Lord made, through his hands, many signs. Eucharistos, the son of Julius EL-Akfahsi, the writers of the biography of the martyrs, was paralytic. St. Macrobius prayed over him and God healed him through his prayers. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy in Julius home, administered the Holy Mysteries to them, and asked Julius to care for his body and to write his biography.

When Armenius heard what this Saint was performing signs and wonders, he ordered him to be tortured with different kinds of tortures: to be squeezed with the wheel, to cut off his members, to cast him to ferocious lions, to throw him into the sea, and to cast him into hot fire. The Lord strengthened him and all these tortures did not harm him.

This Saint had a virgin sister called Mariam who served the church and two brothers named Yoannis and Isaac. They came to him while he was in prison and wept before him saying: "You have been a father to us, after our father; so how can you depart and leave us orphans?" He comforted, encouraged, consoled, and asked them to leave in peace.

Finally, not wanting to see the Saint tortured any more, Julius EL-Akfahsi advised the governor saying: "Write the decree of this old man and get rid of him" The Governor listened to him and ordered his head to be cut off. Julius took his body and swathed it in wrappings embroidered in gold. He placed a golden cross on his chest and sent the body with his men in a ship to his Episcopal seat in Nikiu. The ship sailed until it arrived to the city of Ashmun Grais (Ashmun Kharirat). It stopped as if it had been tied with chains and all attempts to move it failed. While they were trying to do that, a voice came out of the body saying: "This is the place wherein God is pleased that my body shall rest." When they told the people of the city, they came out to the ship carrying palm branches. They carried the body with great honor to their city. He lived for one-hundred thirty one years; thirty of them as a priest, thirty nine as a bishop, and he completed his good strife and received the crown of life.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Third Day of the Blessed Month of Baramhat
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- 1. The Departure of St. Cosmas, the Fifty-Eighth Pope of Alexandria.*
- 2. The Martyrdom of St. Porphyry.*
- 3. The Departure of St. Hadid the priest.*

1. On this day of the year 648 A.M. (27th of February 932 A.D.) the blessed father Anba Cosmas, the Fifty-Eighth Pope of Alexandria, departed. This father was righteous, pure, merciful, chaste, and knowledgeable of the books of the church and in the interpretations thereof.

When he was chosen Patriarch, on the 4th of Baramhat 636 A.M. (28th of February 920 A.D.), he shepherded his flock in the fear of God and with wisdom. He distributed to the poor, the needy and to building churches, all of the church revenue after the little he used. The evil one, however, did not leave St. Cosmas without grief when he saw his pure life. He ordained a Metropolitan for Ethiopia from the monks, whose name was Peter, and sent him there. The king received him with great joy. A short while later, the king fell sick and felt that his end was near, so he brought his two sons and asked the Metropolitan to come to him. The king took off his crown and handed it to the Metropolitan saying: "I am going to my Lord Christ and whomever you see fit from my sons to rule the kingdom enthrone him."

When the King departed to the Lord, the Metropolitan and the Cabinet saw that the younger son was more suitable for ruling the kingdom, so they crowned him. Shortly afterwards, a monk from the monastery of Anba Antonius called Victor and along with him a companion named Mina came to Ethiopia. They asked the Metropolitan for money; but he refused to give it to them. The devil enticed them to scheme against him. One of them put on the garb of the bishops and the other one as his disciple. They falsified a letter from the father, the Patriarch, to the nobles of the government saying in it: "We have been informed that a deceptive man called Peter came to you claiming that we have sent him as a Metropolitan for you and he is lying in that. The one who is carrying this message to you is the legitimate Metropolitan Mina. We have been informed also

that Peter has enthroned the younger son of the king instead of his older brother, against the church and civic laws. On the arrival of this message, you should exile both the Metropolitan and the king, consider Abba Mina the carrier of our message to be your legitimate metropolitan and to allow him to enthrone the older son a king."

The two monks handed the forged letter to the older son of the king. When he read the letter he gathered the cabinet and the nobles of the government and read it to them. They ordered the exile of Metropolitan Peter and seated Mina in his place. They then took away the crown from the younger son and crowned his older brother. Nevertheless, a dispute occurred between the false Metropolitan and his assistant, who took the liberties of the absence of his Metropolitan and expelled the servants, plundered all what he found, returned to Egypt, and became a Moslem.

When the news reached Pope Cosmas, he grieved exceedingly. He sent a letter to Ethiopia excommunicating Mina the liar. The King of Ethiopia was outraged from Mina's actions and slew him. He asked for the return of Metropolitan Peter from his exile but found that he had departed to his Lord and Savior. The father, the Patriarch, refused to ordain for them another Metropolitan and so the four Patriarchs that followed him.

The days of this father were peaceful and tranquil, if not for this accident. He occupied the throne of St. Mark for twelve years and departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also St. Porphyry (Porphorius) was martyred. He was one of the most nobles of Baniyas, most charitable and caring for the poor. He visited those in prison because of their debts and paid off their obligations. When the era of persecution started, it was called in every place to worship the idols. The Saint heard that the prince was passing by, he stood in front of his house and shouted in his face, saying: "I am Christian." After many failed trials from the prince to dissuade him on changing his faith, the prince ordered his neck to be cut off. The Saint received the crown of life, and the people of his town took his body, and shrouded it with expensive shrouds.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, the blessed father and the lover of God Anba Hadid the priest departed. He was righteous and virtuous. The Lord granted him the gift of performing miracles and wonders and granted him the spirit of prophecy and knowing the hidden things. He revealed what was in the hearts of his visitors and healed those who were sick. It was said that he raised a dead man through his prayers. He departed, when he was one hundred years old, in a good old age.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramhat

1. *Assembly of the Holy Council on the island of Bani-Omar.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Haboulyous (Hanulius) the prince.*

1. On this day a Holy Council convened on the island of Bani-Omar against those people called the Fourteenthians. The Fourteenthians celebrated the feast of the Holy Easter with the Jews on the fourteenth of the crescent of Neesan (April) which was on any day of the week. The Bishop of the island excommunicated them, and sent to Serapion Patriarch of Antioch, Democratus Bishop of Rome, Demetrius Patriarch of Alexandria, and Symmachus Bishop of Jerusalem to inform them of the heresy of these people. Each one of them sent an epistle indicating in it that Easter was only to be celebrated on the Sunday that follows the feast of the Jews and ordered to excommunicate everyone that contradict and disobey that.

A council of eighteen bishops convened and these holy epistles were read to them. They brought those heretics and read before them these epistles, some of them returned from their wrong opinion and the others insisted on their error. They prevented and excommunicated them from the Holy Church. Also, they decided to celebrate Easter as the order of the Holy Apostles saying: "Any one that celebrate Easter on any other day than Sunday, had shared the Jews in their feasts and separated from the Christians."

The dispute on the feast of the Christian Passover (Easter) started between Asia Minor and Rome. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, publicly announced the need of keeping the 14th of Neesan to commemorate the Crucifixion and the 16th of Neesan to commemorate the Resurrection (These were the original dates that the Crucifixion and Resurrection fall on regardless what day of the week they fell on) and the Christians of Mesopotamia, Cilicia, and Syria followed his opinion. Victor, Bishop of Rome, publicly announced the importance of putting into consideration that the Crucifixion be on a Friday and the Resurrection be on a Sunday, (since Friday is the day of the Crucifixion and Sunday is the day of the Resurrection). The Christians of Egypt, Greece, Pontus and Arabia agreed with him in that. The dispute between the two bishops intensified, nevertheless their friendship remained unchanged.

Alexandria intervened in this subject, and its Patriarch Anba Demetrius the vine dresser (El-Karram), tried to mediate between these two opinions (By making the commemoration of the Crucifixion on Friday and the Resurrection on Sunday), and to be linked to the day 14th of Neesan (The Jewish Passover).

Pope Demetrius gathered the Alexandrian astronomers, among them was Ptolemy the astronomer which was from Farma, and with their help the Patriarch established the reckoning of the Epacts, which is known by the reckoning of El-Karmah. The reckoning of the Epacts was able to determine the day of the Jewish Passover (The slaughter of the Lamb) in any Egyptian Coptic year, and fix the Sunday after to be the Feast of Resurrection. This way he fulfilled what the Apostles commend that the Jewish Passover and the christian one not to be on the same day.

The first Universal council that convened in Nicea, 325 A.D. approved that view and asked the Alexandrian Pope to issue a message on the feast and its date every year.

May the Lord Guard us against the enticement of Satan, with the blessing of the prayers of the saints. Amen.

2. On this day also St. Haboulyous (Hanulius) the prince of the city of Perga in Pamphylia was martyred. The love of this prince for Christ made him publicly confess his faith. Barnabakhas the Governor arrested him at Diocletian's command. He confessed the Lord Christ before him giving the Lord the honor with glorious hymns then he cursed the idols. The Prince became raged and ordered him to be crucified. The Saint praised Christ that made him worthy to be martyred in His Name. Then he delivered his soul in the hand of the Lord and received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God for ever. Amen.

The Fifth day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

1. *The Departure of Anba Serapamon, Archpriest of Abba Yehnis (John) monastery.*

2. *Commemoration of the Martyrdom of St. Eudexia (Eutychia).*

3. *The Martyrdom of St. Peter the priest.*

1. On this day the ascetic holy father Anba Serapamon the Archpriest of Abu-Yehnis (John) monastery departed. This Saint became a monk in his youth at the monastery of the saint Abu-Yehnis. He stayed there for thirty two years in worshipping God and serving the elders. Then he was promoted to be the archpriest (Heagomain) of the monastery and was delegated to manage it. He added to his works of righteousness and ascetism, and he spent his day fasting from the day of his monkhood until the day of his departure. After spending twenty years in running the monastery, he shut himself up in a church and no one saw him for a period of ten years. During this period he only ate on Saturday and Sunday.

When the time of his departure drew near, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision and gave him a cross of fire saying: "Take this cross in your hand". The saint replied: " How can I hold fire in my hands." The angel said: "Do not be afraid for Christ have not given the fire dominion over you." The Saint extended his hand and took the cross from the angel. Then the angel told him: "Be strong, partake of the Holy Mysteries and after three days I shall come and take you".

When he woke up from his sleep, he told the elders about his vision. They wept, bid him farewell, and asked him to remember them. He asked them to remember him in their prayers. He departed on the third day and the elders were around him.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of St. Eudexia which is interpreted "happiness". This Saint was Samaritan by race and religion, from the city of Baalbek. The name of her father was

Younan and the name of her mother was Hakeemah. She lived her early life in immorality. With the beauty of her face and physical appearance, she stumbled many and made them to fall into sin acquiring thereby great wealth.

A saintly monk from Jerusalem called Germanus heard about her. He went to her, preached her with solemn and frightful words, mentioning to her hell, worms, darkness, and the fearful punishments which are therein. She asked him: "Does the body rise after death, and after it becomes dust to be judged?" He replied "Yes". She asked him: "What are the proofs on what you said, since the Torah that God gave to Moses the prophet and my fathers did not mention this?" He explained to her with biblical and logical proofs until she was convinced. She asked him: "If I go back on my evil works would God accept me?" He replied: "If you believed that the Lord Christ had come to the world, took away our sins by His Crucifixion, repented now a sincere repentance, and been baptized, He will accept you, and will not mention any of what you have done, but you will be as if you just have been borne."

Her heart opened to the faith and asked him to help her to fulfil that. He took her to the bishop of Baalbek and she confessed before him the Holy Trinity, the incarnation of the Word and His Crucifixion. While the Bishop was praying over the water to baptize her, the Lord opened her mind, she saw an angel attracting her to the water and the other angels were rejoicing for her. Then she saw an ugly terrifying looking person trying to drag her away from them and he was in wrath with her. What she saw increased her desire for repentance and baptism.

After her baptism, she gave all what she gained as fruit of her sin to the poor and needy. She entered a convent of nuns, she put on the garb of monasticism, and fought a good and perfect fight. Satan entered into some of her friends who informed the Governor about her. The Governor commanded his men to bring her. When she came into his house she found great lamentation and weeping for the governor's son had just died. She came to where the son was laid, prayed entreating the Lord Christ for his sake and He raised him up from death. The Prince believed in Christ through her. Another prince called Diogenes heard about her. He brought her before him, and she saw a soldier standing before him, who was blind in one eye, she prayed and made the sign of the cross over the eye, and it was opened. The prince released her instantly.

Shortly after this, another Prince called Bekeyfius was appointed, and he heard about her and had her brought to him. She asked the Lord Christ to give her a portion with the martyrs. The Prince commanded to cut off her head, and she received the crown of martyrdom.

May her intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also the honorable presbyter St. Peter departed. This father spent his life fasting, he shut himself in and was disciplined in praying days and nights. The Lord granted him the gift of knowing the future, healing the sick through the water and oil after praying over them. He was ordained a priest, after much reluctance, and he was forced to obey the order. He offered the incense and celebrated the Liturgy daily. The people of the city rejoiced saying: "May the Lord grant us the forgiveness of our sins with his prayers and supplications." He had a wonderful power of reconciling persons at variance.

During his prayer one night, St. Peter the apostle appeared to him and told him: "Hail to you for you have kept the priesthood without blemish. Hail to you for your prayers and masses had ascended as sweet aroma." When the Saint saw him, he was terrified. St Peter told him: "I am the apostle Peter, do not be afraid for the Lord has sent me to comfort you and to inform you that you are leaving this toilsome world to the Eternal kingdom, so rejoice and be comforted." The priest rejoiced for that and said "Remember me O My Father." When he said that he departed in happiness, glory and honor.

May the Lord have mercy on us with his prayers and blessings and Glory be to God for ever. Amen.

The Sixth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Dioscorus.*
2. *The Departure of St. Theodotus, the bishop.*

1. On this day, St. Dioscorus was martyred at the time of the Arabs. He was from Alexandria, and was brought up as Christian but for unexplained reason he left the faith of his fathers and adopted the faith of the Arabs. He had a married sister in the city of Fayyum. When she knew what her brother did, she sent a letter to him saying: "I would have preferred that the news had come to me telling me that you had died a Christian, and I would have rejoiced, than that the news that reached me, that you are not dead, and you have abandoned the Faith of Christ your God." At the end she said: "Know that this letter marks the end of the relation between you and me. From this time on do not show me your face and do not write me."

When he had read his sister's letter, he wept bitterly, and he smote his face and tore his beard. Then he rose in haste and girded up his loins, prayed entreating God fervently and made the sign of the cross over himself. He went out of his house and wandered about in the city.

When the Muslims saw him in this condition, they brought him to the Governor who asked him: "You have left Christianity and joined our religion, so what happened to you?" He replied saying "I have been born Christian, and I shall die Christian, and I do not know except this." The Governor threatened him, beat him and inflicted great pain upon him and when he did not change his opinion, he shut him up in prison. The Governor sent to the Khalifa of Egypt presenting his case to him. The Khalifa ordered the governor to offer him leaving the faith of the Christians and entering the faith of the Khalifa, if he obeyed to give him much money and to reward him, otherwise to burn him. The Governor brought him out of jail and asked him to deny his faith but he refused saying: "I told you before that I have been born Christian, and I shall die Christian." He ordered him to be burnt. They dug a large pit outside the city, and they filled it with wood and they set fire in it. When the flames of the fire mounted up to a great height, they casted him in the pit after they had beaten him sorely and gashed his body with knives. He received the crown of martyrdom in the kingdom of heaven.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the departure of St. Theodosius the confessor, Bishop of Corinth which on the island of Cyprus. Julius, the Governor of this island, who had been appointed by Diocletian, had him brought before him. He demanded from him to deny the Lord Christ and to raise incense to the idols. When he did not obey his orders, he removed off the Saint's garments and lashed him painfully with whips made of buffalo hide, hanged him from his arms, and combed his body with steel combs inflicting him with gashes all over his body. Then they tied to his legs long iron bands, and dragged him to prison. He remained in prison until God perished Diocletian and Constantine the righteous Emperor reigned, who released him among all those who had been jailed for the sake of faith. St. Theodosius returned to his Episcopal Seat, and tended his flock, that he was entrusted with, well until he departed in peace.
May his intercession be with us and Glory be to God for ever. Amen.

The Seventh day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat
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1. *The Martyrdom of Sts. Philemon and Apollonius.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Mary the Israelite.*

1. On this day Sts. Philemon and Apollonius were martyred. Philemon was the jester and singer, and Apollonius was the musician for Arianus the governor of Ansena (Antinoe). They were very close friends and they wished to receive the crown of martyrdom. One day, Philemon went to the Governor and confessed the Lord Christ before him, so he ordered to shoot him with arrows. After that, Apollonius came before the Governor and he also confessed the Lord Christ. When the Governor recognized him he became angry and ordered to shoot him also with arrows. While they were shooting Apollonius, one of the arrows glanced back and struck the Governor's eye and destroyed it. Sts. Philemon and Apollonius completed their strife and received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also St. Mary the Israelite was martyred. This Saint did not know the Lord Christ and she lived an evil life. When she wished to repent and to return to the righteous life, the Lord sent to her a holy man who preached her, and revealed to her the way of salvation by believing in the Lord Christ. He told her that the soul has to give an answer about all her deeds on the day of Resurrection. After death and departing of this world every one will be rewarded according to his deeds and explained to her the fearful punishments for the evil doers. She asked him: "What are the proofs on what you said, since the Torah that God gave to Moses the prophet and also my fathers did not mention this? so confirm to me the truth of what you said with biblical and logical proofs".

After he explained and confirmed to her all these facts she became convinced in her heart and mind. She asked him: "If I repent on my evil works would God accept me?" He replied: " If you believed that Christ had come to the world for the salvation of the human race, and walked in the way of repentance, God will accept you" and she believed and repented. When the Governor

knew about her, he brought her before him. When she insisted on her Christianity, he ordered her beheaded by the sword and she received the crown of martyrdom.

May her intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Matthias, the apostle.*
2. *The Departure of St. Julian, the Eleventh Pope of Alexandria.*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Arianus, the Governor of Ansenia.*

1. On this day St. Matthias, the apostle was martyred about 63 A.D. He was born in Bethlehem, followed the apostles and was chosen in place of Judas Iscariot in the upper room on the mount of Zion. Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, "Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; "for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry." (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) "For it is written in the book of Psalms: 'Let his habitation be desolate, and let no one live in it'; and, 'Let another take his office.' "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, "beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen "to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:15-26)

Afterwards he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and went to preach the Gospel until he came to the country of cannibals. The custom of those people was whenever they seized a stranger, they put him in prison for thirty days feeding him grass, then they bring him out and eat him. When St. Matthias came to them and preached among them the message of love they seized him, plucked out his eyes and put him in prison. Before the thirty days were over God sent to him Andrew the apostle and his disciple. They came to the prison and saw the prisoners and what abominable things the people of the city did to them. Satan inspired the people of the city to seize them also and kill them.

When they were about to seize them, the two Saints prayed to the Lord, and a stream of water flowed from under one of the pillar of the prison. The water flowed out into the city, and rose up until it reached the necks of the people. When the people of the city gave up all hope of saving their lives, they came to the apostles, and wept before them confessing their sins. The apostles

told them "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." They all believed and they released St. Matthias.

St. Matthias, along with St. Andrew and his disciple taught them the mystery of the Incarnation of the Lord Christ. The Apostles prayed and entreated God Who made the water to cease then they baptized them in the Name of the Holy Trinity. They also prayed to The Lord Christ Who removed from them their barbaric nature. The Apostles appointed over them bishops and priests. They tarried with them for a while during which they instructed them and confirmed them in the faith, then they left. The people of the city entreated them to come back to them speedily.

St. Matthias went to the city of Damascus and preached there in the Name of the Lord Christ. The people of the city became angry so they took him and laid him upon an iron bed, they lighted a fire under it which did not harm him but his face was shining with light like the sun. They marvelled exceedingly and they all believed on the Lord Christ through St. Matthias the apostle who baptized them, and appointed priests for them. He tarried many days with them confirming them in the faith. Afterward he departed in peace in one of the city of the jews called Falawon (Pilawon) where his body was laid.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 188 A.D. (3rd of march) the holy father Pope Julian the Eleventh Pope of Alexandria departed. This father was a student in the seminary established by St. Mark, and was ordained priest in the city of Alexandria. He surpassed many in knowledge, righteousness, and purity so he was ordained Patriarch on the 9th of Baramhat (Year 178 A.D.)

After his enthronement he saw that the pagans did not allow the bishops to leave the city of Alexandria, so he used to leave the city in secret to ordain priests everywhere.

Before his departure the angel of the lord announced to him that the one who will bring him a cluster of grapes, is the one to succeed him on the Patriarchal Chair. One day, while Demetrius the vine dresser was trimming his trees, he found a cluster of grapes and was not in season. He took the cluster and gave it to the Patriarch Abba Julian who was pleased with the present. He gathered the bishops and told them about the vision and commanded them to enthrone him Patriarch after him.

This father composed many homilies and discourses, he taught the people continually, preached and visited them. He stayed on the Apostolic Chair for ten years then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also St. Arianus, the governor of Ansena was martyred. When he ordered to shoot St. Apollonius with arrows, and one of the arrows glanced back and struck his eye and destroyed it, as it is mentioned in the Seventh day of Baramhat, one of the believers told him: "If you take some of his blood and smear your eye with it, you will receive your sight." The Governor took some of his blood, smeared his eye, and immediately he was able to see. Arianus believed on the Lord Christ, with great sorrow for all the evil things which he had done to the holy martyrs and

the severity with which he tortured them. Then he rose up, destroyed his idols, and he refrained from torturing any of the believers.

When Diocletian heard the report of Arianus, he brought him, and asked him why he had forsaken the worship of his idols. Arianus began to tell him about the signs and wonders which God was working by the hands of the holy martyrs, and how, in spite of the tortures which he had inflicted upon them, and the cutting of their bodies, they rose up again whole. The Emperor became furious with him because of what he said and ordered him to be tortured severely, and to cast him into a pit and to cover it until he dies.

The Lord Christ sent His angel, who brought him out from the pit, and took him by the bed of the Emperor. The Emperor woke up from his sleep, and when he saw and recognized that he was Arianus, he was amazed and terrified. Diocletian again ordered him to be placed into a hair sack, and to cast him into the sea, so they did. Arianus the martyr delivered up his soul while he was in the hair sack. The Saint had told his kinsfolk when he bid them farewell that the Lord had told him in a vision of the night that He would take care of his body, return it to his town, and they could find it on the shore of Alexandria.

The Lord ordered a sea creature who carried the Saint, and brought him to the city of Alexandria, where it casted him on the shore. His men took his body, brought it to Ansenia, and laid it with the bodies of the Saints *Philemon and Apollonius*. Thus, he finished his good fight and received the heavenly crown.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Ninth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat
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1. The Departure of St. Konan.
2. the Martyrdom of Sts. Abrianus, Amrata his wife, Eusebius, Armanius, and the Forty Martyrs.

1. On this day the fighter St. Konan departed. This Saint was from a city called Antanyos in the country of Syria during the days when the Apostles were preaching the Name of the Lord Christ to Whome is the glory. His father's name was Nestor, his mother's name was Theodora, and they worshipped the stars. When this Saint grew and became a man, the virtues of purity, chastity, piety, and mercy were manifested in his life.

His parents wished to wed him but he refused. They forced him to get married, but he refused to have any relation with his wife and both remained virgins. Often he prayed saying: " O God lead me to Your true Knowledge." Michael, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and ordered him to go to one of the apostles. Konan went to him, learned from him all the Laws of the Christian Faith, was baptized and received the Divine Mysteries. He went on listening to the teachings of the Apostles and he increased in purity, chastity, ascetism, and praying. God granted him the gift of performing miracles and the authority over the devil, and he attracted his parents to the faith in the Lord Christ.

Once, one of the unbelievers went to one of the temples to offer a sacrifice to satan. St. Konan knew this man, and he cried out against satan, rebuked him and commanded him to confess before the people telling them whom he was. The devil confessed that he was satan and was not a god. All the people were present cried out saying: "One is the God of St. Konan," and they believed and were baptized.

When the Governor, who had been appointed by Claudius Caesar, heard about this Saint, he had him brought before him, and the saint confessed his faith in the Lord Christ. The Governor commanded him to be bound and beaten very severely. When the people of the city heard that, and because of their love to the Saint, they wanted to kill the Governor but he fled from them. They released the Saint from his fetters, washed the blood off him, and carried him to their town. He lived for many years then departed to the Lord. The believers made his house a church and laid his body in it, from which many signs and wonders were manifested.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also was the martyrdom of Sts. Abrianus, Amrata his wife, Eusebius, Armanius, and the Forty Martyrs after they had been tortured severely in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Tenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

Commemoration Of the Appearance Of The Glorious Cross

The church celebrates the appearance of the glorious Cross of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ twice: **The First** on the sixteenth day of the month of Tute, 326 A.D. by the hands of the righteous Empress St. Helen, the mother of Constantine the great, the righteous Emperor. This Saint when her son Constantine accepted the Faith in the Lord Christ, she vowed to go to Jerusalem. Her righteous son prepared everything needed to fulfill this holy visit.

When she arrived to Jerusalem with multitude of soldiers, she asked about the place of the Cross but no one would tell her. She took one of the jewish elders and pressured him by hunger and thirst until he was forced to direct them to the place where they might find the Cross at the hill of Golgotha. She ordered them to clear out the site of Golgotha where they found three crosses and that was in the year 326 A.D. However, they did not know the cross upon which Our Lord Christ was crucified, they brought a dead man and they laid upon him one of the crosses and then the other but he did not rise up but when they laid the third cross upon him he rose up immediately, then they realized that this was the Cross of Our Lord Christ. The Empress and all the believers kneeled down before the Holy Cross, and she sent a piece of it with the nails to her son Constantine. Immediately after, she built the churches that were mentioned on the Sixteenth day of the blessed month of Tute.

The Second celebration that the church commemorates the Cross is on the Tenth day of the month of Baramhat by the hands of Emperor Heraclius, in 627 A.D. When the Persians were defeated by Heraclius they retreated from Egypt to their country. On their way back they passed through Jerusalem, a persian prince entered the church of the Cross which was built by Empress Helen. He saw a great light shinning from a piece of wood located on a place decorated with gold. He thrust his hand to it and there went forth from it fire which burned his fingers. The Christians told him that this is the base of the Holy Cross and they told him how it was discovered and no one was able to touch it except a Christian. He deceived the two deacons who were standing to guard it and gave them much money so they would carry this piece and go with it with him to his country. They took it and put it in a box and went with him to his country along with those who were captured from the city of Jerusalem.

When Emperor Heraclius heard that, he went with his army to Persia, fought with them and slew many of them. He traveled about this country searching for this piece of the Holy Cross but he could not find it, for the Persian prince had dug a hole in his garden and ordered the two deacons to put the box in it and buried it and then he killed them.

One of the captives of that Persian prince which was the daughter of one of the priests, was looking out of the window by chance and saw what happened. She went to Heraclius the Emperor and told him what she saw. He went with the bishops, priests and the soldiers to the place. They dug there and found the box, they took the piece of the Holy Cross out, in 628 A.D., wrapped it in magnificent apparel and Heraclius took it to the city of Constantinople and kept it there.

May the blessings of the Holy Cross be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eleventh Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

The Martyrdom Of St. Basil (Basilaos) The Bishop

On this day St. Basil (Basilaos) the bishop was martyred. In the year 298 A.D., Abba Armon, Patriarch of Jerusalem, ordained this holy man among others to be bishops without stated Sees. He sent them to preach the Kingdom of Heaven in pagan cities. This Saint preached in many cities where they beat him and drove him out.

When he entered the city of Sharsunah, in Syria, he preached the Gospel, some of its people believed but the others became angry and drove him out. He went outside the city and dwelt in a cave where he gave himself to perpetual prayers and supplications to God that the people of the city might believe in Christ.

The son of the Governor of that city died, he was his only child, and he grieved on him exceedingly. On the day that the Governor buried his son, he saw him in a vision at night, standing before him saying: "Call St. Basilaos and ask him to pray to the Lord Christ on my behalf because I am in great darkness." The Governor woke up from his dream and took the nobles of the city, went to the cave of St. Basilaos and asked him to enter the city to pray for his son. The Saint

agreed to their request and went with them to where the Governor's son was buried. He prayed to God with fervent supplication and the son rose up alive with the power of God.

The Governor, his household, and many of the people of the city believed, and were baptized by the hands of this Saint. There were in the city a congregation of Jews who were envious of the Saint. They joined with the men of the city who did not believe, and rose up against the Saint and beat him and dragged him until he yielded up his soul in peace.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twelfth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

1. *The Commemoration of the Honorable Angel Michael.*
2. *The Commemoration of the revealing of the virginity of St. Demetrius the Twelfth Pope of Alexandria.*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Malachias of Palestine.*
4. *The Martyrdom of St. Glathinos in Damascus.*

1. On this day the church celebrates the commemoration of the head of the heavenly hosts the honorable Angel Michael, the intercessor for the human race.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also the church celebrates the commemoration of the revealing of the virginity of St. Demetrius the Twelfth Pope of Alexandria. The angel of the Lord appeared to St. Julian, the Eleventh Pope, before his departure and said: "You are going to the Lord Christ, the one who will bring you tomorrow a cluster of grapes, is the one fit to be a Patriarch after you." On the morrow, this saint came with a cluster of grapes, Abba Julian held him and told the people: "This is your Patriarch after me," and told them what the angel told him. After the departure of Abba Julian they took him and ordained him Patriarch on the 9th. of Baramhat (March 4th., 188 A.D.) and he was married.

Since no married Patriarch ever before this father been enthroned over the See of Alexandria, satan entered the hearts of the laity and made them talk and grumble against the Patriarch and the one who recommended him. The angel of God appeared to St. Demetrius and told him about that and ordered him to remove the doubt from their hearts by revealing to them his relation with his wife. When St. Demetrius refused, the angel told him: "It is not meet that you save your self alone and let others be perished because of you. But because you are a shepherd you should fight to save your people also".

On the next day, after he had finished celebrating the Divine Liturgy, he asked the people not to leave the church. He brought flamed charcoal, and brought his wife from the place of the women and the congregation wondered at his action, not knowing what he was going to do. He prayed and walked on the blazing fire, he took a piece of the blazing fire and put it in his shawl, then he took another piece and put it in his wife's shawl. He prayed again for a long time and both shawls

did not burn. The congregation marvelled and asked him to tell them why he did that. He told them of his strife with his wife, and how his father and her father married them against their will, and they have lived together as a brother and sister since they were married forty-eight years ago, the angel of the Lord each night covered them with his wings, and no one knew that before that time until the angel of the Lord ordered him to reveal his secret.

The congregation marvelled for what they had seen and heard, they praised and glorified God asking the Saint to pardon them for what they had done or said and to forgive them. He accepted their apology, forgave them, blessed them, and sent them to their homes glorifying the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit talking about what they saw of wonders from this Saint.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also the righteous St. Malachias was martyred in the land of Palestine.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

4. On this day the church also celebrates the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Glathinos (Glazinos) who was in the early part of the reign of the Emperor Constantine the great. This Saint was from the city of Marmeen, near Damascus. He was acting with a group of people who were from the city of Heleopolis, Lebanon, and dedicated themselves to worship idols.

One day they gathered in the theater, and the actors poured cold water in a large brass basin, and started mocking those who go to the holy Christian baptism. They dipped one of those actors in the water, to act his baptism, when he came out of the water they put on him white cloth.

This actor after he had come out of the water, refused to go on acting, and made it known that he preferred to die Christian on the Name of the Lord Christ, and he added to that saying: "While you were mocking during my renewal with the Holy Baptism, I have witnessed a wondrous miracle." Those who were present became offended, and extremely furious for they were pagans. They seized the Saint, stoned him, and St. Glathinos delivered up his soul and received the crown of martyrdom, and was counted among the holy martyrs. His family and many of the Christians came, took his body, and buried him in the city where they built a church after his name.

May his blessings be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

<h3>The Thirteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat</h3>
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1. *The Departure of Abba Dionysius, the Fourteenth Pope of Alexandria.*

2. *The Return of the Great Sts. Anba Macarius the Great and Anba Macarius of Alexandria, from Exile.*

3. *The Martyrdom of the Forty Martyrs of Sebastia.*

1. On this day (March 8th, 264 A.D.) the great father Abba Dionysius, the fourteenth Pope of Alexandria, departed. His parents were stare worshippers of the Sun (Sabians) and they put emphasis on teaching him all the knowledge of that sect.

One day a Christian old woman passed by him, who had with her some pages of a book containing an Epistle of St. Paul the apostle and offered it to him to buy it. When he read it he found in it strange sayings and unusual knowledge. He asked her: "For how much will you sell it?" She said: "For one dinar of gold." He gave her three dinars and asked her to find the rest of the pages of the book and he was willing to pay her double. She went and brought him more pages. Having read them through he found the book to be still incomplete, he asked her to search for the rest of the book. She told him: "I found these quires among my father's books. If you want to acquire the complete book, go to the church and there you can find it."

He went and asked one of the priests to show him what is called the Epistles of Paul. He gave it to him, read it, and memorized it. Then he went to St. Demetrius the twelfth Pope, who taught and instructed him in the facts of the Christian faith then baptized him. He became well rehearsed in the doctrine and knowledge of the church, and Anba Demetrius appointed him a teacher for the people.

When Anba Demetrius departed and Anba Heraclas (Yaroklas) was enthroned, he appointed him as a deputy to judge among the believers and entrusted him to administer the affairs of the patriarchate.

When St. Heraclas departed, all the people agreed to appoint this father Patriarch. He was enthroned on the first of Tubah (December 28th, 246 A.D.) during the reign of Emperor Philip who was a lover of the Christians, and he shepherded his flock with the best of care, nevertheless, he suffered much tribulations. When Decius rose up against Philip and killed him, and reigned in his place, he incited persecution against the Christians. Decius slew many of the patriarchs, bishops, and believers. This father endured much suffering during that time. Decius died and Gallus reigned after him, and persecution quieted down during his reign.

When Gallus died and Valerian reigned in his place, he renewed the persecution severely against the Christians, and his men seized Abba Dionysius and imprisoned him. They asked him to worship the idols but he refused saying: "We worship God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit the One God." They threatened him, killed few men in front of him to terrify him but he was not afraid. They banished him and shortly after, they brought him back and told him: "We have been informed that you consecrate the offering secretly by yourself." He replied: "We do not forsake our prayers day or night" then he turned to the people present around him and told them: "Go and pray and if I am away from you in the body, I shall be with you in spirit." The governor became raged and returned him to exile.

When Sapor king of Persia overcame Emperor Valerian and seized him, his son Gallienus, who was wise and gentle, took over the empire. He released all the believers who were in prison and brought back those who were in exile. He wrote to the Patriarch and the bishops a letter to assure their safety in opening the churches.

In the days of this father, certain people arose in the Arabian countries saying: "That the soul dies with the body, and on the day of Resurrection, it shall be raised up with it." He gathered against

them a council and anathematized them. When Paul of Samosata denied the Son, a Council assembled against him in Antioch, this Saint was not able to attend for his age. He wrote a letter to the council, rich with wisdom, explained in it the corruptive opinion of this heretic, and stated the true Orthodox belief. He finished his good strife, and departed in a good old age on (March 8th, 264 A.D.), having sat on the Apostolic Throne seventeen years, two month and ten days.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the return of the Great Sts. Anba Macarius the Great and Anba Macarius of Alexandria, from exile on an island in Upper Egypt. Emperor Valens the arian had exiled them to this island.

The natives of this island worshipped idols, and according to the orders of Valens the two Saints were tortured severely for three years. It came to pass one day that satan entered the daughter of the pagan priest of this island and tortured her. St. Macarius the great came forward and prayed over her and the Lord healed her and subsequently the priest and the people of the island believed on the Lord Christ. The Saints taught them the facts of the Christian faith and baptized them on the eve of the feast of Epiphany, 11th. of Tubah, changed the temple into a church, and with a revelation from the Lord Christ they ordained priests and deacons for them.

When they wished to return they did not know the way, so the angel of the Lord appeared to them, guided them walking, until they reached Alexandria. From there they went to the wilderness of Sheahat (Scetis). The monks of the wilderness came out to meet them, and they were at that time about fifty thousand monks among them were Anba John the short and Anba Bishoy, and they all rejoiced to meet their fathers.

The prayers of these Saints be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also the holy forty martyrs of the city of Sebastia were martyred. Emperor Constantine the great had appointed his friend Lecius ruler for the east and commanded him to treat the Christians well. When he arrived to his headquarter, he ordered his subordinate to worship the idols but they refused and cursed his idols. That night some of the soldiers and their children, from the city of Sebastia, made an agreement among themselves to go to the governor confessing their faith. While they were sleeping the angel of the Lord appeared to them, strengthened them and comforted their hearts.

In the morning they stood before the Governor and confessed their faith in the Lord christ, he threatened them but they were not afraid. He commanded his men to stone them, but the stones came back upon those who stoned them. He ordered to throw them in a nearby lake, which was icy. Their organs were severed because of the excessive cold. One of them whose strength was weakened, went out of the icy water and entered the bath house nearby the lake. The heat in the bath house melted the ice that was on him but he died quickly, and lost his reward.

One of the guards saw angels descending from the heaven and in their hands crowns, they placed them over the heads of the thirty nine martyrs and remained one crown in the hand of the angel. The guard went down into the lake shouting "I am christian...I am christian." He took the crown that was in the hand of the angel and was counted among the martyrs.

Among the martyrs, were young men, whose mothers encouraged and strengthened them. Because they remained in the lake for a long time and they did not die, the Governor wished to break their legs, but the Lord took their souls and reposed them. He ordered to burn their bodies and to cast them after that into the sea. As they were carrying them out of the lake, they found a young man alive, so they left him. His mother took him and tried to throw him on the wagon with his mates but they put him off the wagon again for he was still alive. His mother took him and he died in her bosom so she put him back on the wagon. They took them outside the city and cast them into the fire which did not harm them, then they casted them into the river.

On the third day those holy martyrs appeared to the Bishop of Sebastia in a vision and told him: "Go to the river and take our bodies." He went with the priests, deacons and the people to the river and found the bodies. They carried the bodies with great honor and placed them in a beautiful shrine, and their strife was heard in all the countries.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

1. *The Departure of Anba Kyrellos (Cyril) the Seventy Fifth Pope of Alexandria.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Shenouda (Sinouti) El Bahnasawy.*
3. *The Martyrdom of the Sts. Eugenius, Agathodorus and Elpidius.*

1. On this day of the year 959 A.M. (Marsh 10, 1243 A.D.) departed the holy father Anba Kyrellos, the seventy fifth Pope of Alexandria, who was known as Ebn-Loqloq. This father was enthroned on the twenty third of the month of Baounah, 951 A.M. (June 17th., 1235 A.D.). There were objections at first in choosing him but finally they unanimously agreed on him.

During the days of this father a holy council convened, which was attended by all the bishops of the See of St. Mark, and they put down a comprehensive cannons for the church. The honorable scholar El-Safy Ebn El-Assal was the secretary of this council. This father sat on the Patriarchal Chair for seven years, eight month and twenty three days. He departed in El-Shamaa (Wax) monastery in the year 959 A.M. (March 10, 1243 A.D.)

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also St. Shenouda (Sinouti) El Bahnasawy was martyred. Certain men laid accusations against him before Maximianus, a governor appointed by Diocletian, that he was Christian. The Governor brought him, and asked him about his faith, and the Saint confessed his faith in the Lord Christ and that He was the True God. He ordered the soldiers to throw him on the ground, to beat him with hammers until his flesh was torn, and his blood flew on the ground, then they casted him into a prison with repulsive odor. The Lord sent Michael the Archangel to him, healed his wounds, encouraged and strengthened him. He told him that he will receive the crown of glory after he had endured what would befall him from severe tortures.

On the next morning the Governor ordered his soldiers to go and look at him, and they found him standing up praying. When they told the Governor about him and when he saw him whole and unharmed, he was amazed and said: "He is a sorcerer." Then he ordered to crucify him with his head downwards, and to light fire under him, but it did not harm him. They squeezed him with the wheel and finally they beheaded him and hacked his body into pieces with swords and casted him to the dogs which did not come near him. During the night the believers took him and poured over him expensive perfumes, shrouded him in costly wrappings, laid him in a coffin and buried him.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also the Sts. Eugenius, Agathodorus and Elpidius were martyred. These holy men were Christians, through their fathers and forefathers, walking in the way of God, and had a great deal of knowledge about the church subjects. St. Hermon (Armos) Patriarch of Jerusalem ordained them bishops without parishes to go around preaching and teaching the word of God. They went and preached in many cities, and the people of one of the cities went out, beat them very severely, then they stoned them until they departed in peace and received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat
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1. The Departure of St. Sarah the nun.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Helias of Hnes.

1. On this day departed the righteous and ascetic St. Sarah the nun who was a native of Upper Egypt. Her parents, who were exceedingly rich, were Christians and had no other children. They raised her in a christian manner and taught her reading and writing. She was always reading the books of the church and especially the biography and sayings of the fathers the monks. She was influenced by their lives and desired the ascetic life. She went to one of the convents of Upper Egypt and dwelt there for many years serving the virgins.

Then she put on the monastic garb, persisting on fighting the lust of Satan for thirteen years until Satan was weary of her. When Satan was exasperated from her steadfastness and purity, he wished to overthrow her by the sin of pride. He appeared to her while she was standing praying on the roof of her cell and said to her: "Rejoice for you have overcome Satan." She replied: "I am a feeble woman, and I can not conquer you except by the power of the Lord Christ" and then Satan vanished.

This Saint had many useful sayings that she used to say to the nuns. One of her sayings: "I never set my foot upon the step of the ladder, and I never go up to the next step without thinking I may die before I raise my leg so that the enemy might not entice me with the hope of a long life." And she also said: "IT is better for a man to show mercy even to satisfy men for the time will come that it will be to satisfy God." She also had many other sayings written in the Paradise of the

Fathers. She stayed on the banks of the river in a cave for sixty years fighting a great fight and no one saw her until she departed to the eternal bless and she was eighty years old.

May her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also St. Helias of Hnes was martyred.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat
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The Departure Of The Saint Anba Khail (Mikhail)

The Forty Six Pope Of The See Of St. Mark

On this day of the year 483 A.M. (March 12th, 767 A.D.) the holy father Anba Khail (Mikhail), the forty six Pope of the See Of St. Mark, departed. This father was a monk in the monastery of St. Macarius and he was knowledgeable and ascetic. When Pope Theodorus the forty fifth Patriarch, his predecessor, departed the bishops of Lower Egypt (Delta) and the priests of Alexandria gathered in the church of Anba Shenouda in Cairo.

A Dispute arose among them about who was fit, and finally they called Anba Mousa, Bishop of Ousem, and Anba Petros, Bishop of Mariout. When they arrived, Anba Mousa found the priests of Alexandria obstinate, he rebuked them for that, and dismissed them that night so their minds and souls might calm down. When they met the next day he mentioned to them the name of the priest Khail the monk in the monastery of St. Macarius. They unanimously agreed to his choice and obtained a decree from the Governor of Egypt to the elders of the wilderness of Sheahat (Wadi El-Natroun) to bring him from the monastery. On their way, when they arrived to Geza they found father Khail coming along with some elders to fulfill a certain task connected with the monastery. They seized him, bound him, and took him to Alexandria where they ordained him Patriarch on the 17th. of Tute, year 460 A.M. (September 14th., year 743 A.D.).

It Happened that there was a drought in the city of Alexandria for two years, and on that day the rain fell heavily for three days and the people of Alexandria considered that a good omen.

During the reign of Marawan the last of the Khalifas of the Umayyad rule and during the governorship of Hefs Ebn El-Walid and during the days of this father many great tribulations fell upon the believers.

A large number of the believers fled from Egypt and the number of those who denied Christ was twenty-four thousand, and because of that the Patriarch was in great sorrow until God perished those were responsible for that. This father endured many difficulties from Abdel Malek Ebn-Marawan the new governor. He imprisoned, beaten, chained, and tortured him with many other ways of painful tortures, then he released him. The Patriarch went to Upper Egypt to collect alms and when he came back, the Governor took the money from him and threw him back in prison.

When Keriakos king of Nuba knew that, he was extremely enraged, he prepared one hundred thousand soldiers and marched down to Egypt. Going through Upper Egypt he slew all the Muslims that he met, until he reached El Fostat (Cairo), he camped around the city threatening to destroy it. When Abdel Malek the Governor saw the army surrounding the city and that all this had taken place for the sake of the Patriarch, he became terrified, so he released him from prison with great honor. The Governor entreated the Patriarch to mediate peace between him and the king of Nuba. The Patriarch agreed to his request, so he went with some of the clergy to meet the king and asked him to accept the peace from Abdel Malek which the king accepted and returned back.

Abdel Malek respected the Christians and lifted up all his retribution. When the father the Patriarch prayed for the sake of the Governor's daughter, who was possessed with an unclean spirit, and with his prayers the unclean spirit left her, the Governor increased his respect for the Christians.

This father debated with Cosmas the Melchite Patriarch concerning the Hypostatic Union. Pope Khail wrote him a letter, signed it along with his bishops, which said in it: "It is not right to say that in Christ two distinct Natures or two distinct Persons after the Hypostatic Union." Cosmas was convinced with that and asked to become a bishop under the authority of Anba Khail. When Anba Khail completed his strife, he departed to the Lord whom he loved after he had spent on the Chair of St. Mark

twenty-three and half years.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Seventeenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat
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1. *The Departure of Lazarus, the beloved of the Lord.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Sts. George the ascetic, Belasius the martyr, and Anba Joseph the bishop.*
3. *The Departure of St. Basilius, Bishop of Jerusalem.*
4. *The Martyrdom of St. Sedhom Bishay in Domiat.*

1. On this day the righteous Lazarus, the beloved of the Lord Christ, departed. He was the brother of Martha and Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair. When Lazarus fell sick the sisters sent to the Lord Christ saying: "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was" to magnify the miracle.

Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples told Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. "But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not

in him." These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

When the Lord came to Bethany which is nearby Jerusalem He stood before the tomb and said: "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and prayed then he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go." (John 11:1-45)

That was to manifest the reality of his death, so no one would think that this was deception with previous arrangement, for that the miracle was magnified and many believed.

The prayers of this righteous be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also the church celebrates the commemoration of the Sts. George the ascetic, Belasius the martyr, and Anba Joseph the bishop.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also of the year 1615 A.M. (March 26th., 1899 A.D.) the great father Anba Basilius, Metropolitan of Jerusalem, departed. This father was born in the village of El-Dabah, Farshout county, the province of Quena, for righteous parents. They nursed him with the milk of righteousness since his young age, as they taught him reading and writing, so he grew on loving perfection and moral excellence.

When he was twenty-five years old he went to the monastery of St. Antonios and put on the monastic garb in the year 1559 A.M. He persevered in worshipping and ascetism and because he was adorned with righteousness and piety they ordained him priest in the year 1565 A.M. and archpriest (Hegumen) in the year 1568 A.M., then they appointed him an Abott for the monastery. He managed the monastery well with gentleness, wisdom and meekness that made the blessed Anba Kyrellos IV to ordain him Metropolitan for Jerusalem and the parishes that were attached to him: El-Kaliobia, El-Sharkia, El-Dakahlia, El-Gharbia, Suez, Domiat, and Port-Said.

He had shown prudence in managing the affairs of these parishes that made him the center of admiration and pride to the Copts. All his efforts were dedicated for the building of churches all over his parish, buying and renovating properties in Jaffa and Jerusalem. He was loved by all the people of Syria and Palestine, regardless of their religion or political persuasion, especially the rulers of Jerusalem, for his wise policy and straight morals.

During his days a dispute aroused from the Ethiopians where they claimed their ownership for the monastery of El-Sultan in Jerusalem. Because of this father and his vigilance they could not

establish an ownership for the monastery. He attended the enthronement of Pope Demetrius II, the hundred eleventh, and Pope Kyrellos V, the hundred twelfth. He spent his days in continuous effort for what was good for his people and departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also the church commemorates the martyrdom of Sedhom Bishay in Domiat on the 17th. of Baramhat year 1565 A.D. (March 25th., 1844 A.D.). He endured the torture for the Name of the Lord Christ and his martyrdom made the rising of the Cross during the Christian funeral processions openly, for it was forbidden before.

This martyr was a clerical employee in the government of the port of Domiat during the days of Mohammed Ali Basha the Governor of Egypt. A revolt of mobs in the port arose, they seized Sidhom Bishay and accused him falsely that he cursed Islam and witnessed against him before the religious judge a low uncivilized person and a donkey driver. The judge decided either he would forsake his faith or be killed, he whipped him and then sent him to the Governor of the city. After the Governor had examined his case he issued the same judgement against him as the judge did. Sidhom was steadfast in his Christian faith, not caring to be killed. They whipped, dragged him on his face down the stairs in the Governor palace, then they put him on a buffalo facing the tail and went around with him in the streets of the city insulting and degrading him. The Christians in the city became afraid and locked themselves in their houses.

The mob continued to insult him and tortured him in different ways until he was about to deliver his soul; so they brought him to the door of his house and left him there. His family went out and brought him inside and five days later he departed to heaven.

His departure was a great martyrdom, and the Christians counted him among the holy martyrs. They gathered regardless of their denomination and joined in his funeral in a celebration that there was nothing like it before. The Christians carried their arms and the priest put on their vestments headed by the Archpriest Yousef Michael who was the head of the Coptic congregation in Domiat and accompanied by the priests of the other denominations. They marched in his funeral in the streets of the city and in front of him the deacons carrying the banners of the Cross, and they arrived to the church where they prayed the funeral rites. The people went on objecting this reprehensible and painful incident and talking about the patience and endurance of the different kinds of torture in silence and the steadfastness of Sidhom the martyr.

The prominent people of the Christian community in Domiat deliberated as how to avoid these incidents in the future. They decided to ask the consuls of the foreign countries to mediate with the ruler of the country and the Pope the Patriarch of the Copts and sent to them detailed reports. Mr Michail Sorour the official representative of seven countries in Domiat was in charge of this mediation.

The ruler of Egypt was concerned about this incident and sent two official representatives to examine the case. So they reopened the inquiry and they realized the injustice and the ill-treatment that befell the great martyr and convicted the judge and the governor for their wrong doing, stripped them from their honor then exiled them. They asked, as a good will and to comfort the

people, to allow the raising of the Cross publicly before the Christian funerals, and the ruler allowed that in Domiat. This was allowed later on all over the country during the Papacy of Pope Kyrellos IV.

The blessings of this great martyr be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eighteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

The Martyrdom of St. Isidore, Friend of Sina the Soldier

On this day St. Isidore the companion of Sina the soldier was martyred. Sina, who was a native of the city of Deknash, was one of the soldiers who accompanied the Governor of Farma. St. Isidore was his friend and he was working as wool maker. Both of them gave alms to the poor and needy with what they earned. One night both saw a vision and it seemed to them that a virgin came to them with crowns which she placed on their heads. When they woke up from their sleep they told each other about what they had seen, and they rejoiced greatly as they believed that the Lord had called them to receive the crown of martyrdom. They went to the Governor and Sina unbound the soldier's girdle and cast it down before him and they both confessed the Lord Christ. He ordered their detention but God sent His angel and comforted them.

The Governor sent St. Sina to Alexandria and St. Isidore remained prisoner alone. After a short period St. Sina was returned back to the Farma and St. Isidore rejoiced at meeting his friend, and they told each other what had happened to them. The Governor tortured them severely and ordered St. Isidore to be cast into a pit with fire therein. St. Isidore asked the soldier to wait and he prayed asking our Lord Christ to accept his soul and to care for his body. He gave himself to the soldiers and they threw him into the pit but his body was not harmed in any way by the fire. The mother of St. Sina was weeping for her son because of his separation from his friend. After a short while St. Isidore delivered up his soul and at that time the mother of St. Sina saw a multitude of angels carrying away St. Isidore's soul.

May his intercession be with us and glory be to God fore ever. Amen.

The Nineteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

1. The Martyrdom of St. Aristobulus, the apostle.

2. The Martyrdom of the Sts. Alexander, Agabius, Alexander, Timol (Timolaos), Dionysius, Romulus, and Blesius (Valesius).

1. On this day St. Aristobulus, one of the seventy apostles that was chosen and sent to preach by the Lord before His passion, was martyred. He received along with the disciples the gifts of the Spirit the comforter, accompanied, ministered to them and preached with them the Life-giving Gospel. He turned many to the path of salvation, believed in the Lord Christ, baptized them and taught them the Divine commandments.

The disciples ordained him bishop for the city of Abratabias, and he went there, preached it's people, performed many miracles, taught and baptized them. Many tribulations and humiliation befell him from the Jews and the Greeks, who threw him out many times, and cast him with stones. Having finished his strife, he departed in peace. St. Paul had mentioned him in his Epistle to the Romans (Ch.16:10).

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the seven holy martyrs: Alexander the Egyptian, Agabius and Alexander from the city of Gaza, Timol (Timolaos) from Pontus, Dionysius from the city of Tripoli, and Romulus, and Blesius (Valesius) from the villages of Egypt. These men were joined together with the Christian love, and they came to the Governor of Caesarea, Palestine, and confessed before him the Lord Christ. They all were martyred and received the crown of martyrdom during the days of Diocletian.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat
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1. *The Departure Of the St. Anba Khail (Mikhail) the Fifty Six Pope of the See of St. Mark*
2. *Raising of Lazarus from the dead.*

1. On this day of the year 623 A.M. (March 16th., 907 A.D.) the holy father Anba Khail (Mikhail), the fifty six Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was enthroned Patriarch on the 30th. of Baramouda 5296 A.M. (April 25th., year 880 A.D.). This father had nobel qualities, nevertheless a great sorrow came upon him.

Pope Cosma II built a church on the name of St. Ebtelmaos in the city of Danousher which was under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Sakha. The people of Danousher desired to invite the father the Patriarch Anba Mikhail and some of the neighboring bishops to consecrate this church but the Bishop of Sakha was not pleased with this idea. When they did against his wish and the father the Patriarch along with the bishops came, this bishop refused to stay and he left the church pretending that he was going to check on their meal. When the Bishop did not come back, and the time to start the service had passed, the bishops and the elders asked the father the Patriarch to begin the service. Having urged the Patriarch and pointed out that he was the father of them all and having authority over them, with difficulty he rose up and prayed the prayer of thanks giving and the offering of the Lamb. When the Bishop heard of this, and for his wickedness and his love for the glory of the world, he became enraged with the excuse that the Patriarch had violated the cannons of the church and celebrated the divine Liturgy in a parish without the permission of its bishop. He returned to the church in hast and Satan entered his heart, he transgressed against the holy and pure altar and the offering that was on it, then left the church full of wrath. The father the Patriarch completed the Divine Liturgy with calmness and maturity.

On the following day the Patriarch held a council from the bishops who were with him, the priests, and the scholars and they excommunicated this bishop and appointed another in his stead. That Bishop became furious, Satan entered his heart and he went to the Governor of Egypt Ahmad Ebn-Tolon and told him: "The Patriarch is very wealthy, and his churches are filled with vessels, in gold and silver."

This Governor was preparing to go to war and needed funds to finance these preparations. He called the Patriarch and demanded the church funds and its vessels, but the Patriarch refused. He shut him up in prison with a deacon whose name was Ebn El-Monzer for a year during which the Pope ate only bread, salt, and boiled beans. John and Moses, two scribes of the Governor, agreed with the scribes of the Governor's minister John and his son Macarius to free the father the Patriarch and they asked for the minister's help who agreed to their request. He interceded on their behalf before the Governor Ebn-Tolon who agreed on a condition that the Patriarch pay him 20 thousand Dinar. The Patriarch wrote a promissory note to pay the amount on two installments: the first after one month and the second after four month and this way he was able to leave the prison. When the time came to pay the first instalment those scribes paid two thousand dinar, the minister contributed one thousand and Anba Michail paid seven thousands, he collected from the bishops and the believers.

The pope was compelled to travel to collect the sum required for the second instalment. When he was at the city of Belbays, a monk with ragged cloth passed by the Pope's disciples and told them: "Go and tell your teacher that the lord will relieve him from his fine after forty days." When the father heard that he sent for that monk but they could not find him. Before that period had passed Ebn-Tolon died and his son Khamarawaih, who forgave the Patriarch of his debt, took his place year 875 A.M. He called the Patriarch, comforted him and then tore up the promissory note as the monk had prophesied.

The wicked Bishop that caused all these troubles for the holy father Anba Mikhail, the wrath of God came upon him in his life and his death to be an example for others. This father spent twenty seven years on the chair of St. Mark, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also the Lord raised the righteous Lazarus from the dead and many people believed because of this great miracle. *Glory be to God forever. Amen.*

The Twenty First Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

1. *The Commemoration of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin St. Mary.*
2. *The Commemoration of the visit of Our Lord Christ to Bethany.*
3. *The Consultation of the chief Priests to put the righteous Lazarus to death, whome the Lord raised from the dead.*

1. On this day we celebrate the commemoration of the pure, and chaste, Virgin Mary the

Theotokos, mother of the merciful, and the compassionate One.
May her intercession be with us. Amen

2. On this day also we commemorate the visit of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ with his disciples to Bethany, which is near by Jerusalem. Lazarus, who had been dead, and Jesus raised him, sat at the table with Him, and Martha his sister served those who were present. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair, and the Lord praised her. He pointed out to His death by saying: "She has kept this for the day of My burial." (John 12:1-8)

3. On this day also was the consultation of the chief Priests to put the righteous Lazarus to death, whom the Lord raised from the dead. For many, because of the greatness of this sign, had believed in Our Lord Jesus Christ.
To Him is the Glory forever. Amen.

The Twenty Second Day Of The Blesses Month Of Baramhat
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1. *The Departure of St. Kyrellos (Cyril), Bishop of Jerusalem.*
2. *The Departure of St. Michael, Bishop of Naqadah.*

1. On this day of the year 386 A.D. the holy father Anba Kyrellos (Cyril), Bishop of Jerusalem, departed. This father was chosen in the year 348 A.D. as a successor for Anba Maximus, Bishop of Jerusalem, for his knowledge and righteousness. He did not stay long on his Chair, until a contention arose between him and Acacius Bishop of Caesarea about who had the right to be in primacy over the other. Kyrellos argued in that he was the successor of St. James, one of the Twelve Disciples.

Anba Kyrellos had sold some of the church vessels and distributed the money on the needy because of a famine that befell the land of Palestine. Acacius took this chance and made an effort to obtain an order to exile him from the country. Anba Kyrellos was exiled without any one listening to his case. In the year 359 A.D., he appealed his case before the council of Seleucia. The council called Acacius to hear from him his argument, but he did not attend, so they judged by removing him from his office, and the return of Kyrellos to his Chair (Parish). He did not stay long for Acacius went and enticed emperor Constans to assemble a council at Constantinople and the Arian bishops agreed with him. This council convened in the year 360 A.D. and ordered to exile this saint once more.

When Constans died, and was succeeded by Julian who ordered the return of all the exiled bishops to their chairs. This saint returned to his chair in the year 362 A.D. and shepherded his people faithfully and honestly, but he resisted the Arians. They went to emperor Valens the Arian who invalidated the order of his predecessor Julian stating the return of the exiled bishops to their chairs. This way St. Kyrellos was exiled for the third time, where he remained until the death of Valens in the year 379 A.D. When Theodosius the great reigned and assembled the one hundred

fifty in a council against Macedonius (The second universal council), this father attended, and opposed Macedonius, Sabilius and other heretics. This Saint composed many Homilies and Exhortations, exceedingly profitable, in the Doctrines of faith and old traditions then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also the honored father, and the unblemished bishop Anba Michael bishop of the Chair of Naqadah, departed.

With his prayers may the Lord have mercy on us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Third Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

The Departure of the Great Prophet Daniel

On this day of the last year of king Cyrus King of Babylon, the great righteous prophet Daniel Departed. This prophet was from the tribe of Judah, and from the posterity of king David. He was taken captive along with the Israelites by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon when he captured Jerusalem in the year 3398 of the world. He stayed in babylon for seventy years. This prophet was very young in age, however, he conducted himself in virtuous life, the Holy Spirit filled him and he prophesied in Babylon.

In the fourth year of the exile, Nebuchadnezzar the king saw a dreadful dream and was extremely frightened. When he woke up, he forgot the detail of his dream. He gathered all the wise men of Babylon to tell the king his dream and its meaning. If they failed to tell the king the dream and its interpretation they would all be killed, among those also were Daniel and the three young men. Daniel and the young men prayed to God with supplications to reveal to them the King's dream. God answered their prayers and revealed to Daniel the dream and its interpretation. Daniel went to the king and told him his dream and its interpretation. He also told him about the kings that they are about to rule after him, and what would happen to every one of them. Nebuchadnezzar was pleased with Daniel, and fell on his face before him. The king presented Daniel with great gifts and appointed him over the wise men of Babylon.

After some time had passed, Nebuchadnezzar saw another dream, and Daniel interpreted the dream for him. Daniel told the king that because of his arrogance, God would drive him from among men, to dwell among the beasts of the wild and would eat grass like oxen for seven years, and then God would bring him back to his kingdom, and all that happened to Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel also explained to Belshazzar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, what the angel of the Lord had written on the wall, when king Belshazzar drank wine in the gold and silver vessels of the temple of the Lord. Daniel told the king: " O king, the Most High gave Nebuchadnezzar your father, a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor... But when his heart was lifted up in pride, he was deposed from his kingdom and thrown from his throne into among the animals. And you, Belshazzar, although you knew all what happened to your father, yet you also lifted your heart

against the Lord of heaven. They brought the vessels of the house of the Lord before you, and you, your lords, wives and concubines (mistresses) drank wine from these vessels... Then the fingers of a Hand were sent from the Lord, and His writing was written: "Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Upharsin..which meant:

Mene means: God has numbered your days as a king and terminated you rule.

Tekel means: You have been weighed in the balances of the Lord and was found wanting.

Upharsin means: your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians after you.

All of them came to pass and the king was killed with all his lords and the kingdom of the Chaldeans ended. Darius, king of Persia, ruled after him.

There was an idol in Babylon named "Bael" which king Darius worshiped. When Daniel was asked why he did not worship it, Daniel answered: "I do not worship something that has no life in it." The king said to him: "He is alive for he eats and drinks every day." Daniel told him that could not be true. The king was angry and wanted to check the matter for himself. He put the food and the drinks in the temple of the idol and closed the door and sealed it. On the next day, he went to the temple, opened the door and did not find the food nor the drinks. But Daniel with the help of some of his companions, covered the floor of the temple with fine ashes, found the feet tracks of those who entered the temple by night and stole the food and drinks.

The king arrested the seventy priests of the idol Bael, together with their wives and children and tortured them until they told him about the secret entrance to the temple. The king then ordered them all to be killed and allowed Daniel to destroy the idol and its altar. The people rebelled against the king and asked him to deliver Daniel to their hands. The king surrendered to their demands and Daniel was cast into the den of lions. However God kept Daniel safe and destroyed his enemies.

Daniel saw in a vision the kingdoms and the kings to come after him to rule the world to the end of time. He also saw the glory of God and the Divinity of Christ the Savior. He prophesied about His coming and His death, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the abolition of the sacrifice and the offerings, and all has been fulfilled.

This great prophet remained in Babylon for seventy years, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God for ever. Amen.

<h3>The Twenty Forth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat</h3>
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1. *The Apparition of the Pure Lady the Virgin in the church of Zeiton.*

2. *The Departure of Anba Macarius, the Fifty-Ninth Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On the eve of this day of the year 1684 A.M. which coincide with tuesday the 2nd. of April 1968 A.D., during the papacy of Pope Kyrellos VI, the hundred sixteenth Pope of Alexandria, our Lady and the pride of our faith started to transfigure in luminous spiritual forms in and around the domes of the church dedicated to her immaculate name in Zeiton, a suburb of Cairo.

This transfiguration continued in following nights in a manner that was never known in the East or the West. This transfiguration in some nights was as long as many hours, without stop, in front of tens of thousands of people from every race and religion, with every one seeing her, pointing at her and interceding to her with songs, hymns, tears, prayers and hails and She was looking to them in a compassionate way raising her hand at times to bless them in all directions.

The first one to notice this transfiguration was the workmen at the garage of the Public Transit System which was across the street from the church. The watchman Abdel-Aziz Aly, who was in charge of guarding the garage at that night, saw a luminous body over the dome of the church. He started shouting: "light over the dome" and he called the other workers in the garage. They all came and saw the bright light over the large dome of the church. When they looked closely, they saw a young lady in white, kneeling by the cross at the top of the dome. Because the dome had a round, smooth, and very sloping surface, it held the men as though they were nailed in their places watching the fate of the lady. Few seconds passed then they saw the kneeling lady as she stood over the dome. They gave out a cry of fear that she might fall down. They thought she was a girl in despair trying to commit suicide and they cried warning that person not to jump down and some of them called the police. The pedestrians, men and women started to gather around. The view of the lady was getting more clear and she appeared as a beautiful girl in a bright gown of light and had branches of olive tree in her hand, and around her flew white doves. Then they realized that they were seeing a heavenly spiritual view. They directed flood light to the luminous picture to remove all doubt from their minds, but instead it became more clear and bright. They cut the electricity off all the area but the lady remained in her heavenly illumination and her bright gown of light became more clear. She started moving around in a circle of light radiating from her body to all the directions around her. All the people then realized that this lady in front of them, without no doubt is the Virgin Mary. They started to shout and cry saying: "She is the Virgin ... She is the Mother of Light ... " They prayed with songs, hymns and hails all the night until the next morning.

Since that night the pure Virgin had transfigured in different spiritual views in front of thousands and ten of thousands of masses, Egyptian and foreigners, Christians and non-Christians, men, women and children. Spiritual beings formed like doves would appear before, during and after the transfiguration zooming through the sky in a way raising the human from a materialistic to a heavenly atmosphere.

This transfiguration was in different forms. One of the most significant ways this apparition took place was that; the head of St. Mary under the veil looking down as in the picture of the sad Virgin and she was looking toward the Cross and that view would stay like this at times or slowly bow before the Cross at other times. The Cross itself will shine and illuminate although it was made of concrete. And some times an angel would appear standing behind her spreading his wings. That view might stay as long as many hours.

Another view was the view of the Mother of Light standing as a great Queen in a beautiful spiritual portrait radiating dignity, elegance and beauty. On her head was a crown of a queen as if it were made of diamonds and some times there appeared on the top of the crown a small

luminous cross. And some times she appeared in the same way but carrying Christ, to Him is the Glory, in the form of a child on her hand and on His head a crown. And on other times she raised her both hands as She was blessing the world moving to the right, to the front, and to the left in a dignified way.

Many spiritual signs appeared before, during, and after the apparition of the Virgin the mother of the Lord's transfiguration. The appearance of tongues of yellowish flame would flash over the church and then subside and that repeated several times. Another form of the signs were the spiritual beings formed like doves, larger than the doves that we know, appear about midnight or after, flying in the middle of darkness illuminating in a fast speed, appeared suddenly from no where, and also disappeared suddenly. These spiritual beings appeared in different formations and in varying numbers. A fact we should be aware of that pigeons do not fly during the night. Another sign was the shooting stars which were constantly falling and were seen very close to the apparition on many occasions as if coming down to glorify her from heaven. Another sign was the fragrance of incense. The smoke of the incense poured out of the domes in large quantities. Substance resembling clouds, thick fog or smoke would roll in toward the church and completely cover the church.

Also the illuminated cloud that appeared over the domes of the church in large volume and often proceeded the transfiguration of the Virgin or at times the cloud slowly formed in the shape of the virgin. Sometimes the apparition of the Virgin would appear from the clouds.

This transfiguration and all the spiritual signs were a forerunner and announcement for serious or important events to come in the near and far future. Or it might be a spiritual gesture from heaven to indicate the Lord's caring for His church and His people and our country.

May the mercy of God be upon us all. May the Lord keep His people and church in peace, with the intercession of Our Lady and the pride of our race the pure Virgin St. Mary. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 668 A.M. (May 20th. 952 A.D.) St. Macarius the fifty ninth Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was born in the city of Shoubra. He rejected the world since his youth and he desired the monastic life. He went to the monastery of St. Macarius at the wilderness of Sheahat (Scetis). He lived in virtues and good conduct made him worthy to be chosen a Patriarch, and a successor for Pope Cosma. He was enthroned on the first of Baramouda 648 A.M. (March 27th. 932 A.D.).

When he went forth from Alexandria going to visit the monasteries in the desert of Scetis according to the custom of his predecessors, he passed by his home town to visit his mother who was a righteous woman. When his mother heard that he had arrived she did not go out to meet him. When he had come to the house, he found her sitting down weaving and she did not greet him or paid attention to him. He thought that she did not know him. He told her: "Don't you know that I am your son Macarius who was elevated to a great position and became a head for a great nation?" She answered him with tears in her eyes: "I did not ignore you and I know what became of you, but I would have rather seen you dead than seen you as a Patriarch. Before, you were responsible only for your own soul but now your are responsible about the souls of all your

flock: Now remember you are in danger and it is difficult to escape it." She said that and went on weaving as she did before.

The father the Patriarch left her sad, and attended to his office with delegant and care. He instructed his people with preaching and sermons. He did not touch any of the church revenue, and did not lay his hand on any one without people consent. He commanded the bishops and the priests to watch their flock and to protect them with homilies and admonitions. He sat on the throne of St. Mark twenty years in peace and tranquility, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Fifth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

1. *The Departure of St. Onesiphorous (Friska), One of the Seventy Apostles.*
2. *The Departure of Pope Mattheos, the One Hundredth Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day the great St. Friska or Onesiphorus, one of the seventy apostles departed. This apostle was an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin. His parents kept the Law of Moses and were of those who followed the Savior, listened to His teachings, and witnessed His wonders and miracles.

When Our Lord raised the son of the widow of the city of Nain, this saint was present. He went without delay to the Lord Christ at once forsaking the light of the lamp of the Jewish Law, to be enlightened by the Sun of righteousness. He believed on Him heartily, was baptized, became one of the seventy apostles, and was present with the disciples in the upper room of Zion at the time of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

He preached the Gospel in many countries. He was ordained bishop for Khoranias, where he preached it's people and enlightened them with his teachings and sermons then baptized them. And having finished his holy strife he departed in peace. He received the crown of heavenly glory and he was seventy years old, twenty nine years of it as Jewish and forty one years as Christian. St. Paul mentioned him in his Second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:19).

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 1362 A.M. (March 31st. 1646 A.D.) on Lazarus' Saturday Pope Mattheos III, the one hundredth Patriarch departed. He was known by the name Matthew El-Toukhy, a son of Christian parents from the city of Toukh El-Nasarah, El-Monofiah province. They feared God, caring for the strangers and charitable to the poor and the needy. God granted them a son, they called him Tadros, and they raised him well. They disciplined him with every spiritual discipline, and taught him the holy church books. The grace of God filled this blessed son, so he devoted himself to study and teach Christian education. The grace of God moved him to the angelic and ascetic life, so he went forth from his town, left his family and kinfolks and followed the commandments of the Lord Christ and went to the wilderness of Sheahat. He became a monk in the monastery of the great St. Macarius, and he fought a great fight in

asceticism and worship. They ordained him a priest so he increased in asceticism and grew in virtues then they promoted him archpriest and head for the monastery.

Shortly after, Pope Yoannis XV, the ninety-ninth Patriarch departed, the fathers the bishops, the priests and the notables gathered to choose who would fit to be elevated to the Chair of St. Mark. They continued on praying asking the Lord Christ, to Him is the glory, to chose for them a good shepherd to guard His flock from the ravenous wolves. With the Will of the Lord Christ, the Shepherd of the shepherds, everyone agreed on choosing father Tadros the hegumen of St. Macarius monastery. They went to the monastery and forcibly seized him and enthroned him a Patriarch by the name Mattheos on the 4th. of El-Nasi (The intercalary days) year 1347 A.M. (September 7th. 1631 A.D.) and Anba Yoanis, the metropolitan of the Syrian monastery, headed the enthronement service.

When this Pope sat on the Apostolic Chair, he cared for Christ's flock with the best of care, and at the beginning of his days, there was peace and tranquility for the believers. The churches rested from the tribulations that they were under. Satan the enemy of the good envied him, he moved some evil doers against the Pope, so they went to the Governor in Cairo and told him that whomever sat on the Patriarchal Chair paid much money to the Governor. The Governor listened to their accusations and called the Patriarch to collect the dues. The notables went to meet the Governor who did not ask about the absence of the Patriarch but rather discussed the dues that the Patriarch pay. He forced them to bring four thousands Dinars. They left him with sadness and grief because of the heavy fine.

But God, to Him is the glory, who does not wish anyone to parish had put mercy in the heart of a Jewish man who paid the required fine to the Governor. The notables promised that man to pay him back, they divided the fine among them and allocated a small portion of this heavy fine for the Pope to pay. He went to Upper Egypt to collect the sum of money required from him, and because of his faith and his strong belief in God's help, the people with compassionate heart and willingly gave him what he asked them. Shortly after, he came to Lower Egypt to visit his flock, he went to the city of Berma, and the people of the city of Toukh his home town came to him and invited him to come to visit the city so they be blessed by him, and he fulfilled their request.

During the days of this Patriarch a great famine befell all the land of Egypt, nothing like it happened before, the people suffered much and many died.

King of Ethiopia sent to the Patriarch asking for a Metropolitan. Pope Mattheos ordained for them a Metropolitan from the people of the city of Assiut and sent him to them. Much tribulations and sorrows befell this Metropolitan while he was there, until they removed him and ordained another one instead of him.

After the Pope had finished his pastoral visit to the people of Lower Egypt and his acceptance to the invitation of the people of Toukh to visit their city, he left Berma with them on their way to Toukh El-Nasarah. When he drew near from the city, the priests and the Christian mass received him with reverence, veneration, and spiritual hymns to befit his honor. He entered the church with honor and glory and stayed with them one year preaching and teaching the people.

On the blessed Saturday, the commemoration of the day in which the Lord raised Lazarus from the dead, he met the priests and the people after the liturgy, ate with them, and he bade them farewell saying, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that his tomb will be in the church of this city and that he will not depart Toukh. He dismissed the people and went to rest in the house of one of the deacons. When the deacon returned home, he knocked on the door of the Pope's room, when he did not get any answer he entered the room and found the Patriarch laying on his bed, looking toward the east, his hand over his chest as the Holy Cross and his spirit had departed in the Hands of the Lord. The priests and the people came in haste and found him departed and his look did not change, but his face was shining as the sun. They took his blessed body to the church, and prayed over him as worthy of the fathers the Patriarchs, and buried him in the church in the city of Toukh his home town. He stayed on the Apostolic Chair for fourteen years, six month and 23 days did not eat meat or drink wine in it, and departed in a good old age.
May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Sixth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

- 1. The Departure of St. Euphrasia (Eupraxia), the virgin.*
- 2. The Departure of Pope Peter VI, the One Hundred and Fourth Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day the blessed St. Euphrasia (Eupraxia) the virgin departed. She was the daughter of a noble family in the city of Rome, who was related to Emperor Honorius. Before her father's departure, he asked the Emperor to care for her.

Her mother went to Egypt to collect the revenues and rent of her estates and orchards, which her husband had left her. She took her daughter, who was nine years of age, with her, and they lodged in one of the houses of virgins. The nuns of that convent were on high degree of asceticism, piety and devoutness, they never ate food with meat, oil, fruits, at no time drank wine and slept on the floor.

Eupraxia loved the life in that convent, and she was pleased with the nun that served her. That nun told her: "Promise me that you will not leave this convent"; and she promised her that. When her mother finished her work that she came to achieve, her daughter refused to return with her and she said to her mother: "I have vowed myself to Christ, and I have no need for this world, for my true Bridegroom is the Lord Christ." When her mother knew that, she gave all her money and goods to the poor and needy, and she lived with her daughter in the convent for many years, then departed in peace.

When Emperor Honorius heard that, he sent asking for her. She answered back saying that she had vowed her self to the Lord Christ, and she can not break her covenant. The Emperor marvelled at her wisdom and righteousness and allowed her to stay.

Eupraxia contended strenuously in the ascetic life, she fasted two days at a time, then three, then four, and afterwards she fasted for a week at a time, and during the Holy Lent she did not eat anything which was cooked. Satan was jealous of her, and he smote her with an illness in her feet, gave her pain for a long time, until God had compassion on her and healed her. God granted her the gift of healing the sick, and she was beloved by all the sisters and the abbess for her humility and obedience to them.

One night the abbess saw in a vision crowns which had been prepared, and she asked: "Who are these for?", and she was told: "These crowns for your daughter Eupraxia, she will be coming to us after a short while." The abbess told the nuns of the vision which she had seen, and commanded them not to tell Eupraxia about it. When her time came to depart of this world, she fell sick of a slight fever. The abbess and the nuns gathered around St. Eupraxia and asked her to remember them before the Divine Throne, then she departed in peace.

Then right after her departure the nun her friend departed, and shortly after, the abbess fell sick, so she gathered the nuns and told them: "Choose whom will be abbess over you, for I am going to the Lord." When they came on the following morning to visit her, they found that she had departed.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also the church commemorates the departure of Pope Peter VI (Petros), the one hundred and fourth Patriarch in the year 1442 A.M. (April 2nd., 1726 A.D.). This blessed father and spiritual angel was the son of pure and Christian parents from the city of Assiut. They raised him well, educated him with ecclesiastic subjects and manners and he excelled in them. His name was Mourgan, but later on he became known by the name Peter El-Assuity. The grace of God was on him since his young age, and when he came to the age of maturity, he forsook the world and what in it, and longed to the monastic life. He went to the monastery of the great St. Antonios in the mount of El-Arabah, he dwelt there, became a monk and put on the monastic garb. He exerted himself in worship, and when he achieved the ascetic life, purity, righteousness, and humility, the fathers the monks chose him to be a priest. They took him against his will to Cairo, and he was ordained a priest, for the monastery of the great Saint Anba Paula the first hermit, among others, by the hand of Pope Yoannis El-Toukhy (103), in the church of the Lady the Virgin in Haret El-Roum. He increased in virtues and he became well known among the people.

When Pope Yoannis, the above mentioned, departed, the Chair became vacant after him for two month and six days. They went on looking for whom was fit for this honorable rank so they chose some priests and monks. They wrote their names on pieces of papers, placed them over the alter and celebrated the Divine Liturgy. On the third day after asking and supplicating God to raise the one He chooses, the lot fell on this father, so they realized that he was the chosen one by God. He was ordained Patriarch for the See of St. Mark on sunday the 17th. of Mesra 1434 A.M. (August 21st., year 1718 A.D.) at the church of St. Marcurius in Old Cairo. It was a great joy for his enthronement, which was attended by the Christian mass, foreign dignitaries, Catholics, Greeks, Armenians, and the military.

Afterwards, Pope Peter went to visit the cities of Lower Egypt, visited the churches, and at the end he arrived to Alexandria to visit the church of St. Mark the evangelist in the 11th. of Baramouda year 1438 A.M. He kissed the pure holy head of St. Mark, and he did extensive renovation inside the church. When he was about to return he was informed that a group in Alexandria planning to steal the holy head so he hid it in the monastery since that time. Then he gave a lamb made of silver as a gift and lit it over the tomb of the Evangelist, and he encircled it by a partition with windows looking inside. He went to Lower and Upper Egypt and the people of Egypt rejoiced.

During the days of this father, a group of priests and deacons came, delegated by the Emperor of Ethiopia, with extravagant gifts and a letter from the Emperor, asking for a Metropolitan. He deliberated the subject with Mr. Lotf-Allah Abu-Yousif a prominent notable of Cairo and others, and they all agreed on the honorable father Khristozolo bishop of Jerusalem. He was a blessed father, and knowledgeable teacher, so Pope Peter ordained him Metropolitan, and called him Khristozolo III. They went with him to Ethiopia happy and joyful, and he cared for that parish from 1720 - 1742 A.D. Pope Peter ordained Anba Athanasius bishop for Jerusalem.

During the papacy of this Pope many churches were built and consecrated with his blessed hand. Among those churches, the church of St. Mary on the Nile in the district of El-Maady, the church of Michael the archangel in Babylon, and the church of St. Mina the wonder worker in Fum El-Khalig - Cairo. The last two churches were built by the noble and charitable Mr. Lotf-Allah Abu-Yousif by his private funds, also he built the church of the Apostles in the monastery of St. Antonios, and also assumed and paid the cost of the enthronement festivals of the Patriarch.

The days of this Pope were peaceful and tranquil, and he worked on implementing the church cannons especially he stopped the divorce, for whatever the reason. For that purpose he went to the Governor Ebn-Eiwaz and discussed the subject with the Muslim scholars, so they gave him a formal legal opinion and a decree that the No Divorce only apply to the Christians, and no one can object him for that in courts. He ordered the priests not to wed except in his presence. That was because a man, who was the son of a priest, protested against him. The man had divorced his wife and married another without the Patriarch's knowledge in the church. He ordered them to come before him so he might dissolve the illegal marriage, but the man refused and did not come. The Pope excommunicated the man, his wife and his father the priest for he had married them. This man died after sever illness in his mouth, and his father the priest went to the Pope, asked for his forgiveness, the Pope absolved him and shortly after he died.

This pope shepherded the flock of Christ with the best of care, and when he completed his strife, he fell sick for a short sickness and departed on the 26th. of Baramhat, year 1442 A.M. in the Holy Lent. His body was placed in the tomb of the Patriarchs in the church of St. Marcurius in Old Cairo. He remained on the Chair for 7 years, 7 month and 11 days. He was charitable, generous and merciful to his people as his predecessor. Pope Peter (Petros) El-Assuity was approximately forty six years old, and he was a contemporary of Sultan Ahmed III the Ottoman. The Chair remained vacant for 9 month and 11 days after him.

The year this pope departed, there was an outbreak of Plaque in the land along with severe drought, many bishops and priests departed and death befell the people from Alexandria to Aswan. *May the lord have mercy on his people and benefit us with the prayers and blessings of Pope Petros El-Asuity, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.*

The Twenty Seventh Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

1. *The Commemoration of the Crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*
2. *The Departure of St. Macarius the Great.*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Domicos.*

1. On this day is the commemoration of the Crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ Incarnate, to Him is the Glory, for the salvation of the world. The Holy Bible mentioned that: "From the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land." (Matthew 27:45) The sun had hidden its light when it saw its creator incarnated, hanging with His own free will on the wood of the Cross, inclined His head, and yielded up His spirit.

The Holy Church teaches us that: " His Divinity parted not from His Humanity for a single moment, nor a twinkle of an eye, and He descended to the hades from the cross to save those in bondage therein." St. Peter also said: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison." (1 Peter 3:18-19) In the heavens He was in His might, and on earth He was a savior. Praise the Lord, the omnipotent God, Who is in every place, He saved us by giving Himself up, and opened to us the door of His kingdom.

To Him is the Glory, Power and Dominion forever. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 392 A.D. the blessed father, the lamp of the wilderness and the father of all the monks the great saint Anba Macarius, departed. This Saint was born in the village of Shabsheer - Menuf, from good and righteous parents. His father's name was Abraham and his mother's name was Sarah and they had no son. In a vision at night he saw the angel of the Lord and told him that God was about to give him a son, and his name will be known all over the earth, and he will have a multitude of spiritual sons.

Shortly after, this holy man had a son and called him Macarius which means "Blessed." He was obedient to his parents, and the grace of God was upon him since his young age. When he grew up his father forced him to get married against his will, so he pretended that he was sick for several days. Then he asked his father if he might go to the wilderness to relax and that may make him recover from his illness speedily. He went to the wilderness and prayed to the Lord Christ to direct him to do what is pleasing to Him. While he was in the wilderness he saw a vision, and it seemed that one of the Cherubim, with wings, took his hands, and ascended up to the top of the mountain, and showed him all the desert, east and west, and north and south. The Cherub told him: "God has given this desert to you and your sons for an inheritance." When he returned from

the wilderness he found that his wife, who was still virgin, had died, and Macarius thanked the Lord Christ. Shortly after, his parents departed, and he gave all what they had left to the poor and the needy. When the people of Shabsheer saw his chastity and purity, they took him to the bishop of Ashmoun who ordained him a priest for them. They built a place for him outside the city, and they went to him to confess and to partake from the Holy Mysteries. They appointed a servant to take care of his needs and to sell for him the work of his hands.

When Satan saw St. Macarius growth in virtues, he brought on him a severe temptation. He inspired a girl that had defiled herself with a man to claim that St. Macarius is the one who had defiled her. When her family heard that, they went to him, insulted and beat him severely, inflicting much pain on him, which he endured silently. Macarius reproached himself saying "O Macarius now you have a wife and a child, and it is meet for you to work day and night for your own food and for that of your child and your wife." He worked continually at weaving mats and baskets, and he gave them to the man who ministered unto him; and he sold them and gave the money to the woman. When the day of her delivery drew near her labor was exceedingly difficult, she continued to suffer for four days and did not deliver until she confessed her false accusation against the Saint and named the man that defiled her.

When the family of the girl heard that, they decided to go to ask for his forgiveness for what happened from them. When St. Macarius heard that, he fled away from them running from the vain glory of this world.

At that time he was 30 years old, and the angel of the Lord appeared to him and walked with him for two days until they came to Wadi El-Natroun and the Saint asked the angel: "Appoint for me O master a place to live in." The angel replied: "I have not marked out a place for you to live, lest you leave it in the future and transgress the commandment of God. Behold all the wilderness is yours, so wheresoever you wish, live there." St. Macarius dwelt in the Inner Desert, in the place of the monastery of Sts. Maximus and Domadius which is known now by the monastery of El-Baramous.

He went to visit St. Antonios, who said about St. Macarius when he saw him: "This is an Israelite in whom there is no guile." St. Antonios put on him the Holy Eskeem, then St. Macarius returned to his place. When the number of monks increased around him he built a church for them. His fame was known all over the country and many kings and Emperors heard about the miracles that God performed on his hands. He healed the daughter of the king of Antioch that was possessed by an unclean spirit. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and took him to a place and told him to make this place his abode, for many people will come to him in that place. He built a cell for himself and a church.

He thought one day that the world had no more righteous people, so a voice came to him from heaven saying: "In the city of Alexandria there are two women who feared God." He took his staff, his provisions, and went to Alexandria and he asked around until he reached their house. When he entered, they welcomed him, washed his feet with warm water, and when he asked them about their life, one of them told him: "There is no kinship between us and when we married these two brothers we asked them to leave us to be nuns but they refused. So we committed ourself to

spent our life fasting till evening with often prayers. When each of us had a son, whenever one of them cry, any one of us would carry and nurse him even if he was not her own son. We are in one living arrangement, the unity in opinion is our model, and our husbands work is shepherding sheep, we are poor and only have our daily bread and what is left over we give it to the poor and the needy." When the Saint heard these words he cried saying: "Indeed God looks to the readiness of the heart and grant the grace of His Holy Spirit for all those who wish to worship him." He bade them farewell and left returning to the wilderness.

There was an erring monk who strayed many by his saying that there was no resurrection of the dead. The bishop of the city of Osseem went to St. Macarius and told him about that monk. Abba Macarius went to that monk and stayed with him until the monk believed and returned from his error.

On the day of his departure, he saw Sts. Antonios and Pachomius, and a company of the saints, and he delivered up his soul. He was ninety-seven years old.

St. Macarius had commanded his disciples to hid his body, but some of the natives of the city of Shabsheer came and stole his body, built a church for him and placed the body in it for around one hundred and sixty years until the Arab conquest and the rebuilding of his monastery, they returned the body to it.

In a manuscript in Shebeen El-Koum, was mentioned that St. Babnuda, his disciple, saw the soul of St. Macarius ascending to heaven, and he heard the devils crying out and calling after him, "You have conquered us O Macarius." The Saint replied "I have not conquered you yet." When they came to the gates of heaven they cried again saying "You have conquered us", and he replied as the first time. When he entered the gate of heaven they cried "You have overcome us O Macarius." He replied "Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ who has delivered me from your hands." *May his blessing be with us. Amen.*

3. On this day also St. Domicos was martyred during the reign of the infidel Emperor Julian. Sapor (Shapur) Arsakis II king of Persia was in peace with the Roman Empire, and he paid tribute to the lover of God Emperor Constantine. A dispute took place between Emperor Julian and Sapor king of Persia, and the later prepared an army to fight the Romans. Julian offered the sacrifices to his idols in the city of Casius which was about six miles from Antioch where was the idol Apollon. The enemy of God went along with the magicians, sorcerers, and the army to meet the Persians. On his way he passed by an isolated place, where he saw a multitude of men, women, and children.

When he asked about this multitudes they told him: "A monk who live in a cave in this place, perform miracles and heal the sick, and the multitudes that you see are the Christians that came to get his blessing and be cured from their illnesses." Julian became raged and sent a soldier to St. Domicos who talked to him in a threatening way saying: "If you are living in this cave to please God so why you are seeking the gratitude of men? and why don't you hide your self from them?" The Saint replied saying: "I have given my soul and body to the hands of God, the God of heaven and earth the Lord Jesus Christ, and spent many years in seclusion in this cave, as for those who

come to me with a strong faith, I can not dismiss them." When the Emperor heard his answer, he ordered his soldiers to seal the mouth of the cave with a wall and the Saint was inside where he delivered his soul therein.

Thus this Saint ended his pure life and received the crown of martyrdom on the 27th. of Baramhat, year 78 A.M. (March 23rd., year 362 A.D.).

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Eighth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat
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1. *The Departure of the righteous Emperor Constantine the Great.*
2. *The Departure of Pope Peter (Petros) VII, the One Hundred and Ninth Patriarch.*
3. *The commemoration of Anba Sarapamon, known as "The Veiled" Bishop of El-Monofia.*

1. On this day of the year 53 A.M. (337 A.D.) the righteous Emperor Constantine the great departed. His father's name was Constantius I Chlorus which means (Green), and his mother's name was Helena. Constantius reigned over Byzantium, Maximianus reigned over Rome, and Diocletian reigned over Antioch and Egypt. Constantius was pagan, but he was honorable, loved to do good, compassionate and merciful. He went to the city of El-Ruha (Urfa - Gr. Edessa) and there he saw Helena, liked her and he married her. She was a Christian, and she conceived Constantine. Constantius left her in El-Ruha and returned to Byzantium. She brought forth Constantine and raised him up very piously, taught him every kind of learning, sowed in his heart mercy and compassion for the Christians, but she did not dare to have him baptized.

Constantine grew up, and he was a bold and skilful horseman. He went to his father who rejoiced in him when he saw that he was full of wisdom, knowledge, and he was a skilful horseman. After his father's death he received the kingdom and he reigned with justice and integrity, and stopped all unfair practices. All the people were subject to him and they loved him and his righteous judgement spread throughout the Empire. The nobles of Rome sent asking him to come and save them from the injustice of Maximianus. Constantine marched with his army toward Rome to save them. During the war he saw in the heaven, in the middle of the day, a Cross made of stars, and on it was written in Greek words which being interpreted as "With this you shall conquer." The light of the Cross was more shining than the sun, and he shewed it to his ministers and the nobles of his kingdom. They read what was written, marvelled and they did not know for what reason that cross had appeared. That night the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision and told him: "Make a sign for yourself like that sign which you had seen, and with it you shall conquer your enemies." The next morning, he prepared a large flag with the sign of the cross on it, and made the sign of the cross on all the armaments. He engaged with Maximianus in a battle and fought. Constantine overcame Maximianus who withdrew with his army, and while crossing the bridge over the Tiber river, the bridge broke and he and most of his men perished. Constantine entered Rome and its people welcomed him with joy and gladness, and its learned men praised the Honorable Cross and called it the Savior of their city. Then they celebrated for the Cross seven days and Constantine became the Emperor of the East and the West.

When Constantine established himself in Rome, he and most of his soldiers were baptized by the Pope of Rome, in the eleventh year of his reign, which is the fourth year after the appearance of the Honorable Cross. He sent throughout the kingdom and commanded to set free all those who were imprisoned for the sake of faith, and that they should not work during the Passion week as the Apostles commanded.

Then he sent his mother Helena to Jerusalem where she discovered the Holy Cross of Our Lord Christ. In the seventeenth year of his reign the Holy Council of the Three Hundred and Eighteen bishops assembled at Nicea in the year 325 A.D. which arranged the affairs of the Christians and put down the canons of the church. He rebuilt the city of Byzantium and called it after his name "Constantinia" and he brought to it many of the bodies of the apostles and holy martyrs. He departed in the city of Nicomedia, they laid him in a gold sarcophagus, carried him and brought him to Constantinia. The Patriarch, bishops, priests, and all the people received him with prayers, psalms, and spiritual hymns, and laid him in the sanctuary of the holy apostles. All the days of his life were seventy five years.

To Our God is the glory, might, and dominion and may His mercy and grace be upon us forever. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 1568 A.M. (April 5th., year 1852 A.D. the holy father Pope Peter (Petros) VII, the 109th. Pope of Alexandria, departed. This father was born in the village of Gawli - Manfalout, and his name was Mankarius. He forsake the world since his young age, and the Divine grace led him to the monastery of the great St. Antonios where he became a monk. He immersed in worship, asceticism and purity as he occupied himself by reading the ecclesiastic books and learned the theological and liturgical subjects. He was ordained priest for the monastery, he surpassed his fellows in the practice of virtues and performing the religious duties, and was called Fr. Marcurius. Then he was promoted to archpriest (Hegumen) for his asceticism, zeal, and the purity of his heart.

When his news reached Pope Marcus (Mark) VIII, he called him. A group of the Ethiopians had come, delegated from the king of Ethiopia asking for a Metropolitan instead of Anba Yousab their predecessor one who had departed. The Pope searched for an honorable, learned and just man, and he found these virtues in the Archpriest Marcurius, so he chose him to be a Metropolitan for Ethiopia. During the ordination, instead he ordained him a bishop without a parish and called him Theophilus and ordained Anba Macarius II a Metropolitan for the kingdom of Ethiopia in the year 1808 A.D.

After ordaining Anba Theophilus a bishop at large the Pope kept him with him in the patriarchate to help him in managing the church business and the affairs of the Coptic people.

When Pope Marcus VIII departed on the 13th. day of Kiahk year 526 A.M. (December 21st., year 1809), the bishops were present in Cairo met with the notables of the people and unanimously agreed to chose Anba Theophilus to be his successor. They ordained him Patriarch in St. Mark church in El-Azbakiah three days after the departure of Pope Marcus, on sunday the 16th. of Kiahk, year 1526 A.M. (December 24th., year 1809), and they called him Peter VIII and

he was known by Petros El-Gawly. He was a gentle, meek, wise, greatly intelligent, outstandingly smart father with a noble policy in caring for the people. He devoted himself to studying, reading and learning the ecclesiastic subjects and the holy books. He wrote a valuable text to defend the church and its teachings, and he provided the patriarchal library with valuable and rare texts. His era was a peaceful time in the land, so the church had a complete serenity and total freedom in worship, and the churches were renovated in Upper and Lower Egypt.

During his Papacy the Chair of El-Nuba and Sudan returned to the Chair of Alexandria after separation for five hundred years. The governor of Egypt Muhammad Ali Basha conquered Sudan and took over its land and consolidated it to the land of Egypt. Many of the people of Sudan returned to the Christian faith and many of the Christian government employees and army men lived in Sudan. They built churches, then they asked Pope Petros to send them a bishop to shepherd the Christian people in these countries. He ordained for them a bishop who was nominated by the people of Sudan from among the monks called Damianus. This bishop departed during the days of Pope Petros so he ordained for them another.

This Pope, during his papacy, ordained twenty five bishops for the different parishes of Egypt and Nuba, and he ordained two Metropolitans For Ethiopia, the first was Anba Kyrellos IV in the year 1820, and the second in the year 1833 A.D.

God had performed many wonders through the hands of Pope Peter VII the most famous of them is the incident of the Nile Inundation. One year the flood of the Nile was not enough to water people, land and animals. The masses were worried about famine, inflation and high prices if the land could not be cultivated. They went to the Governor of Egypt asking to order the clergy to pray and supplicate God almighty that He might bless the water of the Nile and increase the flood water to be able to water the land to bring forth a plentiful crop and to avoid a famine that might befall the people. Pope Peter VII called the bishops and the clergy and went with them to the banks of the river where he celebrated the Divine Liturgy and after the service he washed the Holy Service utensils with water from the river, then he threw the water and the blessed Kourbana (Blessed Bread) in the river. The waves of the river roared, the water was disturbed and flooded, the deacons in haste removed all the elements used in the celebration, fearing of drowning. This incident glorified the Patriarch position before the Basha the Governor who made him close to him, and honor the men of his nation, and increased their authority and grace.

From these remarkable wonders also was the incident of the Holy Sepulcher light in Jerusalem. After prince Ibrahim Basha, Mohammed Ali Basha's son, had conquered Jerusalem and Syria year 1832 A.D., he invited Pope Peter VII to visit Jerusalem and attend to the service of the appearance of the light on Bright Saturday from the Sepulcher of the Lord Christ in Jerusalem as the Greek Orthodox Patriarchs did every year. The Pope accepted the invitation, and when he arrived, he was received with honor and reverence and he entered Jerusalem with a great procession and a splendid celebration, in which the governor, the rulers and the heads of the different Christian denominations participated. He realized with his wisdom that if he minister alone in the Holy sepulcher that would cause animosity between the Copts and the Greeks. The Pope asked the Basha to relieve him from this service, but he asked him to participate with the Greek Patriarch on the condition that he will be their third, for he doubted the authenticity of the

light. On Bright Saturday the church of the holy sepulcher was crowded with the worshipers, the Basha ordered the people to evacuate the church to the spacious outer courtyard. When the time to start the service came the two Patriarchs and the Basha entered the Holy Sepulcher to pray the customary prayers. In the specific time, the light burst out of the Sepulcher in a way that terrified the Basha, who became in a daze and confusion, and the Pope attended to him until he recovered. The people outside in the courtyard were not deprived from the blessing of the light since one of the pillars of the western gate of the church split and the light appeared to them from the pillar. This incident increased the reverence and respect of the Pope before the Basha. His holiness the Pope made many repairs and renovations in the church of Resurrection.

During the days of this Pope, Mohammed Ali Basha wanted to join the Coptic church with the church of Rome because of the efforts of one of his catholic army generals, in return of the services of the French scientists and army leaders who offered the Governor to organize the Egyptian government. The Governor (Basha) called the master Ghali and his son Basilius and presented the subject to them, and they replied saying that this merge would cause revolt and unrest among the Coptic people so to avoid shedding of blood and to encourage the topic of unity, his family and himself would join the Catholic church, on a condition that they would not be forced to change their rituals or Eastern custom. The Basha accepted that solution and accordingly they declared their joining the Catholic faith, and only few followed them, nevertheless they all continued to worship in Coptic churches.

During his time, the monk Daoud (David) excelled among the monks of St. Antonios monastery, and was promoted to be the head of the monastery. The fruits of his effort became obvious, in organizing the monastery and improving the condition of the monks. Pope Peter chose him for his intelligence and good management and sent him to Ethiopia in an official church duty which he took care of it well, and his return to Egypt was after the departure of Pope Peter.

History will exalt the memory of Pope Peter (Petros), because the Russian Caesar sent his delegates to offer putting the Coptic Church under the protection of Caesar. The Pope refused the proposal graciously by asking: "Does your Caesar live forever?" When the envoy answered that he would die like all human beings, the Pope told him that he preferred the protector of the church would be her true shepherd, the King that does not die. The prince admired the Pope's faith and patriotism, and he left after taking the blessings from the Pope stating that he is truly the good successor for the Eternal King, Christ the Savior.

When this Pope finished his course and completed his strife, he departed in peace. They prayed over him in a great celebration on Paschal Monday, participated in it all the heads of the Christian denominations in St. Mark church in El-Azbakiah. He was buried beside his predecessor Pope Marcus, and Anba Sarapamon bishop of El-Menofia in the eastern side of the great cathedral in El-Azbakiah. He stayed on the Patriarchal Chair for 42 years, 3 month, and 12 days and the Chair remained vacant after him one year and 12 days.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also is the commemoration of Anba Sarapamon, known as "The Veiled" Bishop of El-Monofia. This blessed and great Saint was contemporary of Pope Petros El-Gawly and one of

his famous bishops. God had granted him the gift to heal the sick, and to cast out evil spirits.

He was called Salib. When he was a young man, some evil women seized him and accused him of murdering a young man they had killed in the market. In the court, he lifted up his heart to God and with tears he asked the help of St. Mary and other saints. He looked to the slain person and asked him to confess before the judge who killed him. The slain person rose up and told the judge about the murderesses. The judge was astonished and set Salib free. Salib left the court and went immediately to St. Antonios monastery to become a monk, and later on, the Pope chose him a Bishop for El-Monofia.

When Mohammed Ali Basha asked the Pope's help concerning his daughter Zahra Hanem who was possessed by evil spirit, he sent Anba Sarapamon who healed her by praying over her. Mohammed Ali offered him money, but he refused saying that God's gifts are free. When the Governor insisted he asked for supplies and clothes for the monks in the monasteries, and to reinstate the Copts to their jobs in the government.

May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Ninth Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat

1. The Commemoration of the Life giving Annunciation.

2. The Commemoration of the Resurrection of the Lord Christ from the dead.

1. On this day the church commemorates the Annunciation of our Lady, the Theotokos, the Virgin St. Mary. When the appointed time by God since eternity for the salvation of the human race had come, God sent Gabriel the Archangel to the Virgin St. Mary, who is from the tribe of Judah the house of king David, to announce her with the Divine conception and the Glorious Birth as the Holy Scriptures testifies: " Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

Then the angel gave her the proof of the validity of his message: "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. "For with God nothing will be impossible." Then Mary said, "Behold the

maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26-36)

When she had accepted this Divine Annunciation, the Only Begotten Son, the Word of God, who is One of the Three eternal Persons, came and dwelt in her womb, a dwelling, the human race can not comprehend. And straightway He united with perfect humanity a complete unity inseparable and unchangeable after the unity.

This day then is the first-born of all feasts, for in it was the beginning of the salvation of the world which was fulfilled by the Holy Resurrection of our Lord, saving Adam and his offspring from the hands of Satan.

We ask Our God and Savior graciously to forgive our transgressions and excuse our sins. Amen.

2. On this day also the salvation was completed by the holy Resurrection, for Our Lord when he had finished His work upon earth, during a period of thirty three years, suffered of His own free will on the eve of the twenty-seventh day of this month, and He rose from the dead on this very day. As it was on this very day the incarnation of Christ was announced to the people of the world who were awaiting Him. On Friday, the living and the dead rejoiced in their Salvation, and on Sunday the living became certain of it, and they knew of their resurrection by the Resurrection of the body of Christ, Who was the first-fruits of the dead as the apostle Paul Said: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:20)

We ask Him according to His great mercy and His compassion that He may grant us the forgiveness of our sins. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramhat
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1. *The Commemoration of the Archangel Gabriel the Announcer.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Transfer of the Relics of St. James, known as the Mangled.*
3. *The Commemoration of Samson, One of the Judges of Israel.*

1. On this day, the church commemorates of the Archangel Gabriel the announcer, for his honor is great with God, he was worthy to announce the birth of His only begotten Son to the virgin St. Mary. He also foretold Daniel the prophet about the return of the people of Israel from exile, about the first coming of Christ, to Whome is the glory, for the salvation of the world, and also about the end of the animal sacrifices. For what God had done for us through him it is meet for us to honor and venerate him.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, is the commemoration of the relocation of the relics of St. James (James the mangled). His biography and martyrdom are mentioned under the twenty seventh day of the month of Hatour. (Vol. I, P. 125)

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, is the commemoration of Samson, one of the Judges of Israel. The name of the father of this righteous was Manoah from the tribe of Dan, and his mother was barren. The angel of the Lord appeared to her and announced her of his birth, and commanded her not to drink wine nor to eat unclean food all the days of her pregnancy. The angel also commanded her that no razor should come on his head, for the child was to be a Nazirite (dedicated) unto God from the womb, and that he would deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines.

When she told her husband about what the angel had said to her, her husband asked God to allow the angel to appear to him. The angel appeared, and said to him: "All that I commanded your wife let her observe." The woman conceived, and gave birth to Samson, and God blessed him and the Spirit of God filled him. At one time, he tore a lion apart as one would tear a young goat, and on another time, he killed thirty men and burned their fields. The Philistines rose against the tribe of Judah to fight and seize Samson, but Samson told the men of Judah: "Swear to me that you will not deliver me to them or kill me yourselves." They said to him: "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hands. We surely shall not kill you." They bound him with two new cords and brought him to the Philistines, who jumped upon him to kill him. The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the strong cords that were on his arms became as flax that were burnt with fire, and his bonds broke loose off his hands. He found a fresh jaw-bone of an ass, reached out and took it with his hand and killed a thousand men with it. Then he became very thirsty, he cried out to the Lord and said: "You have given this great deliverance by the hands of you servant, and now shall I die from thirst... ?" The all mighty God then split a hollow place and water came out. He drank and his spirit returned, and he survived. When he was in Gaza, the Philistines surrounded the place and laid wait for him all the night at the gate of the city to capture and kill him. Samson arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate, pulled them up, put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill. The Philistines came to his wife, Delilah, and asked her to entice Samson to find out the secret of his strength. When Samson told her that the secret was in his hair, for he was a Nazirite (Dedicated unto God). She told his enemies, lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man to shave off the seven locks of hair off his head. She began to afflict him, as his strength went from him. The Philistines took him to their city, insulted him, and plucked out his eyes.

His hair grew again, and his strength came back to him. He went to the temple of their idol, and took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple. Samson leaned with all his strength on the two pillars and said: "Let me die with the Philistines." The temple fell on three thousands of the Philistine people and their lords killing them all. So the dead that he killed on his death were more than he killed in his life. He judged for the people of Israel twenty years, then departed in peace.

To our God is the glory for ever, Amen.

The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah
The First Day

1. *The Departure of St. Silvanus the monk.*
2. *The Raid of the Arabs of Upper Egypt on the Wilderness of Scetis.*
3. *The Departure of Aaron the priest.*

1. On this day the holy father Abba Silvanus the monk departed. This blessed man became a monk in the monastery of St. Macarius, and he strove in every narrow path. He fasted for long periods with prayers and many vigils in humility and love and he became a great father. God had granted him to see Divine visions. He commanded his disciples never to cease working with their hands, and to give alms with what surpassed their needs.

One day a lazy monk saw him with his disciple absorbed in working with their hands, and he said to them: "Do not labor for the food which perishes" for it is written: "Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." When the old man Abba Silvanus heard that, he told his disciple: "Give the father a book, take him to the church to read, and shut the door on him without leaving with him any thing to eat;" and the disciple did as he was commanded. When the ninth hour came the old man and his disciples ate and did not invite the monk. During that time the monk was gazing with his eyes toward the door waiting for someone to invite him to eat. When he became very hungry, he left the church and asked the old man: "Have the brethren eaten to day?" and St. Silvanus replied "Yes". The monk asked: "Why you did not call me to eat with them?" He replied: "You are a spiritual man has no need for food for the body. You have chosen the good part, but we are humans in need of food for the body, for this reason we need the work of our hands." The monk knew that he had transgressed with his words and he bowed before the holy man asking for his forgiveness. The holy man told the monk: "O my son we need to work, for Mary needs Martha, and through Martha, Mary was praised." Thus the monk was rebuked by the teaching of this father, and he worked with his hands continually, and he gave alms with what remained over.

This father wrote many helpful discourses about the spiritual strife. When he finished his strife in a good old age, God made him know the time of his departure. He called the monks that were near by, he was blessed by them, and he asked them to remember him in their prayers, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also the Arabs of Upper Egypt rose up and attacked the desert of the great St. Macarius. They plundered what was in the churches and monasteries. The monks gathered together, prayed, and interceded with the holy fathers, and the Lord Christ drove them out. The monks were saved from their hands and they gave thanks unto God.

3. On this day also the righteous Aaron the priest, the brother of Moses the first prophet of the Law, departed. He was from the tribe of Levi, and God wrought by his hands many miracles in

the land of Egypt. God chose him and his sons to be His priests, and gave them the tithes and the offerings of the children of Israel. When the sons of Korah rose up against him, God destroyed them, by commanding the earth to open its mouth and swallowed them up alive. He pleased God by his good conduct, keeping the Law, and then departed in peace.

And glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Second Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah

1. The Martyrdom of St. Christopher.

2. The Departure of Pope Yoannis the Ninth, the Eighty First Patriarch.

1. On this day St. Christopher was martyred. He was from the country, whose people were cannibals, those who believed on the hands of St. Matthias the apostle (As mentioned in the eighth day of the month of Baramhat). He had unsightly look and the body of a giant but his soul was good and gentle.

When he was captured by the soldiers of Emperor Decius the infidel he admonished them for afflicting the Christians. The captain of these soldiers beat him severely, and St. Christopher told him: "If it was not the command of Christ which teaches me not to do unto others as they do unto us, other wise you and your soldiers could not be delivered from me." The captain sent to inform Decius concerning him, who sent two hundred soldiers to bring him. On their way, the bread they had was consumed except for a little of it. He prayed and blessed that little of bread and became in abundance. The soldiers marvelled exceedingly and believed on the Lord Christ the God of Christopher. When they arrived to Antioch they were baptized by the hands of Abba Paul the Patriarch.

When St. Christopher came before Decius, who became frightened from his appearance, tried to charm, persuade and deceive him to deny Christ. Then he sent two beautiful women to make him fall into sin with them. He rebuked and preached them and they believed on the Lord Christ. They confessed their faith in the Lord Before the Emperor, who ordered them to be beheaded and they received the crown of martyrdom. As of this Saint, he was cast into a huge cauldron over hot fire, but no harm whatsoever came to him. The people present were amazed and they believed on the Lord Christ. They came forward to remove him out of the cauldron but the Emperor ordered them to be cut off with the swords. The emperor finally ordered to cut off St. Christopher's neck and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 1043 A.M., on the 29th of March 1327 A.D. Pope Yoannis the ninth, the eighty first Pope departed. He was from Nephia - Menofia and was known as Yoannis El-Nakady. During his days many tribulations befell the Christians, who were killed or burned or crucified. The Moslems ridiculed them by putting them on camels, dressing them with turbans and blue clothes. But the lord had sympathy upon his people with His great mercy. The Pope departed

at Haret Zewaila and was buried at El Nastoor monastery after he had stayed on the Chair for 6 years and 6 month.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Third Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah
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1. The Departure of St. John, Bishop of Jerusalem.

2. The Departure of the holy father Anba Michael, the Seventy First Pope of the See of St. Mark.

1. On this day Anba John, Bishop of Jerusalem, departed. He was born to Jewish parents, who kept the Law of the Torah. They instructed and taught him well and he excelled in the Law of Moses. He argued and disputed with the Christians until he became convinced of the coming of the Lord Christ, and that He was the true God. He believed on the hand of St. Justus, Bishop of Jerusalem, who baptized and ordained him a deacon. Because of his knowledge, and virtues they chose him a bishop of Jerusalem after the departure of St. Justus.

When Andrianus reigned, he commanded to rebuild the ruined parts of the city, he built a tower on the western gate (The gate of the Jewish temple) and he hanged an engraved tablet with his name on the door of that gate. He prevented the Christians from praying at the Golgotha and even passing through it. The Jews and the Gentiles became powerful and troubled the Christians much. Because of that many tribulations and sorrows befell this father, so he asked God that He might receive him. His supplication was accepted and he departed in peace after he stayed on the Episcopal Chair for two years.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 862 A.M. (March 29th. 1146 A.D.) the holy father Pope Michael, the seventy first Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, departed. He longed to the pure life since his young age so he became a monk in the monastery of St. Macarius. He lived in the desert until he was an old man, in a good pleasing life to God.

When Pope Gabriel (70) departed, the bishops, the priests and the lay leaders spent three month searching for who was best suited to succeed him. A monk from the monastery of St. Macarius, called Yoannis Ebn Kedran, came forward nominating himself supported in that by Anba Yacoub, bishop of Lekanah, Anba Christodolus, bishop of Fowa, and Anba Michael, bishop of Tanta. Nevertheless, the bishops of Upper Egypt, the priests of Alexandria and the lay leaders of Cairo did not accept that choice. Finally they all agreed to choose three of the monks and those were: Yoannis Abu El-Fatah, Michael of St. Macarius monastery, and Soliman El-Dekhiary of El-Baramous monastery. They cast a lot among them, and the lot fell on the monk Michael, and they ordained him a Patriarch on the 5th of Mesra, 861 A.M. (July 29th, year 1145 A.D.). He was an honorable old man loving for the poor and the needy. He took for himself a scribe to write his sermons and teachings that he sent to the bishops and priests. When he fell sick, he went to the

monastery of St. Macarius, where he departed in peace, after he stayed on the Chair for eight month.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah

The Martyrdom Of The Saints Victor, Decius, Eirene the Virgin and those with them men, women and virgins

On this day the saints Victor, Decius, Eirene the virgin and those with them from men, women and virgins were martyred. These saints were during the reign of Emperor Constantine and his son who destroyed many idol temples and changed them to churches on the name of the Virgin Mary and the Saints. When Emperor Julian the infidel reigned, he supported idol worshipping, honored their priests, and slew many Christians. Some pagans informed the Emperor about these saints and how they destroyed the temples and the idols. He seized them, tortured them with different kinds of tortures and finally cut off their heads and they received the crowns of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah

- 1. The Commemoration of the Great Prophet Ezekiel, the son of Buzi.*
- 2. The Martyrdom of St. Hepatius, Bishop of Gangra.*

1. On this day the great prophet Ezekiel the son of Buzi departed. This righteous man was a priest, and Nebuchadnezzar exiled him with king Jehoiachin to Babylon. There in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar, the spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he prophesied about wondrous things for twenty two years. He spoke concerning the birth of the Lord Christ by the Lady the Virgin St. Mary and how after she had borne Him, she would remain a virgin: "Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut. And the LORD said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut" (Ezekiel 44:1-2). He prophesied concerning the baptism that sanctify the soul of the man and his body, soften his stony heart, and make him a son of God by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him. He admonished the priests for their forsaken the teaching of the people, warning them that God will ask for their souls from them if they neglect teaching them. He prophesied concerning the common resurrection and the rising of the bodies with their souls, and about their rewards for whatever they deserve. He said many useful sayings which are of benefit to those who read them, and God manifested through him many signs and great wonders. When the children of Israel worshipped idols in Babylon, he rebuked them and their leaders rose up and killed him. They buried him in the tomb of Shem and Arphaxad.

May his prayers be with us. Amen

2. On this day also St. Hepatius, Bishop of Gangra, in the province of Paphlognia (Pavlagonia), was martyred. He was in the early part of the fourth century, and he attended the first Universal Council at Nicea, year 325 A.D. He was one of the great fathers that defended the Divinity of the Word of God and His equality with His Father in essence, and refuted the error of the heresies of Arius, Appolonius, Novatius and others.

God had honored him with the gift of performing wonders, and was called the wonder worker. One of his wonders, during the days of Emperor Constans the son of Constantine the great: A beast entered the royal barns. The Emperor sent to the Saint asking him to go to the barns and kill that beast. The holy shepherd went there and after he prayed, he asked the servants to collect firewood in the yard of the city and put it on fire and they did. The Saint took his staff and put it in the beast's mouth and led it to the fire and it was burnt. As a commemoration of this miracle the Emperor ordered to hang the saint's picture over the doors of the barns.

On his way back, from Nicea after attending the first Universal Council, to Gangra, a group of heretics were waiting for him by the road, attacked him, stoned him and he was martyred (On the 31st. day of March) then threw his body in a hay barn. When the people of the city of Gangra knew of the departure of their good shepherd, they went in hast to the place where he was martyred and took the holy remains with great honor and buried him in the city.

May his blessings be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

<h3>The Sixth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah</h3>

1. The Commemoration of the Appearance of the Lord to Thomas the Apostle after His Resurrection.

2. The Departure of St. Mary of Egypt.

1. On this day is the commemoration of the appearance of the Lord Christ, to Whom is the glory, to Thomas the apostle on the eighth day from the glorious Resurrection as the Bible said: "And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:26-29) When St. Thomas put his hand in the side of the Lord, his hand was about to be burned by the fire of the Divinity, and when he confessed His Divinity his hand was healed from the pain of the burning.

May the prayers of this Apostle be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 137 A.M. (421 A.D.) the hermit St. Mary of Egypt departed. She was born in the city of Alexandria about the year 61 A.M. (345 A.D.) from Christian parents.

When she became twelve years old, Satan the enemy of the human race, seduced her, led her astray, and made her his net through which he caught innumerable souls.

She continued in this sinful conduct for seventeen years until the mercy of God touched her life, she met people going to Jerusalem and she went with them. Since she did not have what to pay for the trip, she gave her self to the owners of the ship in return, until she came to Jerusalem. She also went on doing the same there. She wished to enter through the door of the church of the Resurrection, but she felt a hidden power pulling her from the back preventing her from entering the church. Whenever she tried to enter she felt as someone preventing her from doing so, and right away she realized that was because of her uncleanness. She lifted up her eyes with a broken heart, and she wept interceding with St. Mary and asked her to intercede on her behalf before her Beloved Son. She felt encouraged and wished to enter with those entering, nothing prevented her from entering, and she prayed therein to God asking Him to guide her for what was pleasing to Him.

She stood before the icon of the blessed and pure Virgin, and asked her fervently to guide her that she might save her soul. A voice came out of the icon saying: "If you cross the Jordan river you will find rest and salvation." She rose in haste and when she left the court yard of the resurrection and on her way she met a man who gave her three small coins with which she bought bread. Then she crossed the Jordan river to the wilderness where she lived for forty seven years. She strove strenuously for seventeen years, Satan fought against her by the fornication that she repented from. She overcame with the grace of God and she ate all this period the herbs of the desert.

In the forty fifth year of her living in the desert, St. Zosima went to the wilderness, according to the custom of the monks there, during the holy Forty Days of fast for devotion and asceticism. While he was walking in the desert he saw this Saint from far and he thought that she was a shadow or mirage. He prayed to God to reveal to him the fact about this mirage, and he was inspired that it was a human being. He went toward the shadow, but it fled from him. When she saw that he is insisting on following her, she called him from behind a hill saying: "O Zosima if you wish to talk to me, throw me a rag that I may cover myself for I am naked." He marvelled for she called him by his name, he threw to her what she covered herself with, and she came to him. After the greetings and the metanias, she asked him to pray for her because he was a priest. He asked her to tell him the story of her life from the beginning to the present time. After she told him, she asked him to bring with him in the next year the Holy Eucharist to partake of it.

In the next year he came to her and she partook of the Holy Mysteries, then he gave her what he had from dates and lentils, she only took a handful of lentils, and she asked him to come to her in the next year. When he came to her in the next year he found that she had departed, a lion standing beside her and writing beside her saying " Bury Mary, the poor woman, in the dust of which she was created." He marvelled from the writing and from the lion that was protecting her body and while he was thinking how he was going to dig to bury her, the lion came and dug a grave for her. He prayed over her and buried her. When he returned to his monastery, he told the monks the story of the strife of this holy woman, and they all increased in steadfastness in the Divine Mercy and progressed in the spiritual life. All the years of her life were seventy six years.

May her prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah

1. *The Departure of the Righteous Joachim, The Lord Christ Grandfather.*
2. *The Departure of St. Macrobius.*
3. *The Departure of Sts. Agapius, Theodora, and Metruf.*

1. On this day the righteous Joachim (Yonakhir - Zadok) departed. He was the father of St. Mary, the Theotokos, the mother of God incarnate. He was of the seed of David, and of the tribe of Judah, for he was the son of Jotham, the son of Lazarus, the son of Eldad who ascended up in genealogy to Solomon the king, the son of David whom God promised that his seed should reign over the children of Israel for ever. The wife of this righteous man, Hannah was barren, and both of them prayed and entreated God continually to give them a child. Having accepted their petition He gave them a good and sweet fruit, which satisfied all the men of the world, and removed from them the bitterness of servitude, and He made Joachim worthy to be called the father of the Lord Christ in regard of His marvelous and wondrous Incarnation. After God had pleased him with the birth of our Lady, his heart was rejoiced and he offered his offerings, and the shame had been removed from him, he departed in peace when the Virgin was three years old.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also the saint Anba Macrobius, the son of the governor of the city of Kaw, departed in peace. When Anba Severus, Archbishop of Antioch, was wondering around the cities of Upper Egypt, he came to the city of Kaw and Macrobius ministered unto him. He accompanied Anba Severus in his visit to the monastery of Anba Moses, where he saw from the holiness of the monks, their asceticism and devoutness, made him ask Anba Moses to accept him as a monk. Anba Moses indicated to him the hardship of the monastic life and its difficulties especially he was raised in luxury and family wealth, and the one that slept on silk, could not take the rough life.

When Anba Moses saw the insistence of Macrobius on the monastic life he asked him first to resign his job that he took after his father, and to relinquish all his money and possessions. He went to his city Kaw, appointed his brother in his place, returned and put on the monastic garb. When his brothers Paul, Ilias, and Joseph saw what their brother had done, they came to him and became monks by the hands of Anba Moses.

Anba Macrobius built many monasteries and many monks, about a thousand gathered around him, and he also built convents for about a thousand nuns. He used his money to build many places for those that did not desire the monastic life, and he supported those who sought his help. Then he sent to Anba Moses asking to send him brethren to prepare those gathered around him for the monastic life, they came and put on them the monastic garb.

Christians from the cities of Assuit, Shatb, and neighboring cities came and gave him many gifts and much money to help him in building the churches and monasteries. He accepted it from them and blessed them. Anba Macrobius increased in virtues, asceticism and giving alms to the weak,

needy, widows, orphans and the lonely, beside caring for his monasteries. His alms were from his own money not from that was offered. God granted St. Macrobius the gift of healing, they brought him the sick and he healed them with the power of God and the strength of their faith.

The father the Patriarch Anba Theodosius, heard about him and he wrote to him praising and encouraging him to be steadfast in virtue, asceticism and loving the strangers and asked him to come for the people of Alexandria to be blessed by him. When he came to the Patriarch, he rejoiced with him and called the people of Alexandria to receive the blessing from him, and he ordained him a priest. Macrobius returned to his monastery, the people of Assuit and Shatb received him with songs and hymns until they came to the monastery. Many miracles were performed through his hands, and when he finished his good strife, he departed in peace. Multitudes gathered from Assuit, Shatb, Abu-Sergah, Kaw and the neighboring cities, and his brother Anba Yousab, who was appointed as his successor in running the monasteries in the fear of God, prayed and buried him.

The appearance of his body was on the seventh day of the blessed month of Tubah, seven hundred thirty three years after his departure by the hands of the deacon Los El-Talawy the servant of his monastery's church, during the days of Anba Yousab, bishop of Akhmeem and the notable Isaac the scribe of the prince Eiz-Eldeen El-Hamawy. Anba Yousab, bishop of Akhmeem, took the body out of its tomb in the mountain, down to the church of the monastery, where they buried him with hymns and praises.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also is the commemoration of the departure of Sts. Agapius and Theodora the martyrs, and the commemoration of St. Metruf the spiritual son of Anba Moses the Abbot of El-Baliana monastery.

May their intercession be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah

1. The Martyrdom of the Holy Virgins: Agape, Eirene, and Shiona.

2. The Martyrdom of the One Hundred and Fifty believers by the hand of king of Persia.

1. On this day the three holy virgins: Agape, Eirene, and Shiona (Susinia) were martyred. They were from Thessalonica, and worshipped Christ as their parents. They chose the life of chastity and they agreed to devote themselves to the ascetic life. They fasted and prayed unceasingly, visited the convents often and participated with the virgins in their prayers and asceticism. When Maximianus the infidel, reigned, he restored the worship of the idols and shed the blood of many Christians. These saints were afraid and they fled to the mountain and hid themselves in a cave devoting themselves to their worship and asceticism.

Every week, an aged Christian woman visited them bringing all things needed and took the work of their hands to sell it, and distributed the remainder as alms to the poor. One day a malicious

person observed the frequent visits of this old woman to the mountain, he followed her secretly until he knew the cave that she entered. He hid himself so she did not see him on her way back, and he thought that she was hiding precious things in it. After she left the cave by a distance he entered the cave and he found the precious pearls the prides of the Christ standing praying. He bound them, dragged them away, and brought them to the Governor of Thessalonica. He asked them about their faith, they confessed that they were Christians worshipping that Who was Crucified. The Governor became wrath with them, tortured them much, then cast them into the fire, and they delivered up their souls and received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the incident of the martyrdom of one hundred and fifty believers by the king of Persia. This king besieged Christian cities which were near the borders of his country, and captured many of them. When they refused to worship the sun and the stars, he commanded to cut off their heads, and they received the crowns of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

<h3>The Ninth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah</h3>

1. The Departure of St. Zosimus (Zocima).

2. The commemoration of the Wonder that took place on the hand of Pope Sinuthius (Shenouda I) the Fifty Fifth Patriarch.

1. On this day in the middle of the fifth century the ascetic father and the struggling monk Abba Zocima the priest, departed. This Saint was born about the middle of the fourth century from Christian and holy parents, who were from Palestine. When he was five years old they handed him to a righteous old monk, who raised him in a Christian manner and taught him the doctrine of the church, and shortly after they ordained him a deacon. He became a righteous monk and grew in virtues.

He was continually praising God and he read the Scriptures day and night and during work also. When he had completed thirty five years in the monastery they ordained him a priest. Then he increased his ascetic labors and struggle. After spending thirteen years in this struggle the enemy sowed in his mind the evil thought that he was superior to all his contemporaries in virtues and righteousness. But the Lord willed to turn him away from this thought. He sent an angel to him and commanded him to go to the monastery which was near the river Jordan. He rose up and went to the monastery and he found therein righteous old men who were more perfect in their contending than him. He realized that he was far from what he thought in himself and he stayed there with them.

The custom of those monks during the Holy Lent, was that after they had fasted the first week they partook the Holy Communion, then they left the monastery singing the twenty six psalm, and at the end of it, they prayed together. Then the abbot blessed them and they bid farewell to each other. Then they dispersed in the desert of Jordan and each of them carried out his spiritual fight

by himself. St. Zosimus used to go out with them each year wondering in the desert asking God to show him who was more perfect than him.

As he was wondering about he met Mary the Egyptian (Coptic). He learned from her about her life history and the reason for her wondering in the desert. She asked him to visit her after one year to give her the Holy Mysteries. He came to her in the next year and gave her the Holy Communion. In the year after he revisited her again but he found her had departed and he buried her and told the monks of the monastery concerning her strife. After he had lived ninety nine years he departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also a great sign was made manifest through our holy father Pope Sinuthius (Shenouda I) the fifty fifth Pope of Alexandria. This Pope went to the desert of Scetis in order to fast the Holy Lent with the fathers the monks. On Palm Sunday many Arabs came to the desert of Scetis to plunder the monasteries. They stood on the rock east of the church of St. Macarius. Their swords were drawn in their hands ready to kill and steal. The bishops and the monks gathered together and decided to leave the desert before the Holy Feast of Resurrection (Easter) and they took counsel with Pope Shenouda who told them; "As for me I will not leave the desert until I complete the Pascal week. On Maundy Thursday the situation became worse. The Pope took his staff that had the sign of the cross on it and he wanted to go out to meet the Arabs saying: "It is better for me to die with the people of God" but they prevented him from going out, but instead, he strengthened and comforted them. Then he went forth to meet the Arabs with his staff in his hand. When they saw him, they retreated and fled away as if they were pursued by an army of soldiers and from this day onwards they never came back to do any harm.

The prayers of this father be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Tenth Day of The Blessed Month Of Baramoudah

1. The Departure of Anba Isaac, the Disciple of Anba Apollo.

2. The Departure of Pope Gabriel II, the Seventy Pope of Alexandria, who was known as Ibn Turaik.

1. On this day the holy father Anba Isaac the Disciple of the great father Anba Apollo, departed. This holy man renounced the world since his young age. He became a monk in the wilderness of Sheahat (Scetis), and a disciple of Anba Apollo for twenty five years. He fought a strenuous fight that weakened his body to kill his body desires, and control his will. He mastered the virtue of silence and quietness especially during the prayers and the Liturgies. He used to stand during the liturgy with his hands clasped and his head bent until the end of the prayer then he returned to his cell, shutting his door, and did not associate with any one that day. When they asked him: "Why do you not talk to anyone who wish to talk to you during prayers or the Liturgy?" He answered saying: "There is time for talking and there is time for praying." When his departure drew near the fathers the monks gathered around him to receive his blessing and they asked him: "Why did you flee from men." He answered them: "I was not fleeing from men but from Satan. If a man hold a

lighted lamp in the wind, it will be extinguished. So, it is with us when our hearts and minds shine because of the prayers and the Liturgy then we talk with each other, our hearts and minds become dark." And this holy father having finished his good spiritual strife, departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 861 A.M. (April 5th., 1145 A.D.) the great and holy father Pope Gabriel II, the seventy Pope of the See of St. Mark, who was known as Ibn Turaik, departed. This Pope was from the nobles of Cairo, and he was a writer, scribe, distinguished scholar, with a commendable conduct. He transcribed with his hand many Arabic and Coptic books, he retained its contents and comprehended its interpretations. The elders of the people and the clergy chose him for the Patriarchal Chair, and his enthronement was on the 9th. of Amshir, 847 A.M. (February 3rd., 1131 A.D.).

When he prayed his first Divine Liturgy in St. Macarius monastery as the custom of the previous Patriarchs, at the end of the Liturgy, he added to the profession after the saying: "I believe and confess to the last breath, that this is the life-giving Flesh that Thine Only-Begotten Son, our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, took from our Lady, the Lady of us all, the holy Mother of God, Saint Mary," this sentence "He made it one with His Divinity." The monks objected, lest it would be understood from that there was mingling between His Divinity and His Humanity, and asked him to refrain from using it. He refused saying: "This statement was added by a decree from the council of bishops." After a great and lengthy discussion, they decided to add this sentence: "Without mingling, without confusion, and without alteration," because of the fear of falling in the heresy of Eutyches, and he agreed with them.

During his papacy, he ordained 53 bishops and many priests, he drew up Canons and laws concerning inheritance, and many other matters. He never took any money from anyone, nor he touched the revenue of the churches, or that of the religious endowments for the poor. When the governor of that time asked him for money, the nobles and people collected three hundred Dinars in gold and gave them to the governor on his behalf. He remained on the Episcopal Chair for fourteen years, two month and two days, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eleventh Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

1. The Departure of st. Theodora.

2. The Departure of St. John, Bishop of Gaza.

1. On this day, the pure and holy mother Theodora, departed. This holy woman was the only daughter of noble and Christian parents of Alexandria.

Her parents Provided for her costly apparels and many gold and silver accessories, for they wished to give her in marriage. This Saint refused that, for she desired in her heart the worship of God and the

strife for His Name's sake. She sold all what her father bought her, gave to the needy, and then built a church outside the city of Alexandria, towards the west.

Then she went to the holy father Abba Athanasius, the apostolic (Fourth century), who shaved her hair and made her a nun in one of the convents outside the city of Alexandria. She devoted herself to the ascetic life, fought the spiritual fight, and became worthy to see divine visions, distinguish angels from satan, and know the thoughts of the minds.

Pope Athanasius visited her often and instructed her with his teachings. When he was exiled, he sent her many letters full of valuable sermons, and she was steadfast in her strife until the end of her life. She was contemporary to five Patriarchs: Alexandros, Athanasius, Petros, Timotheos and Theophilos. She put down many useful sayings, some of them by the grace that was in her; the others were from what she learned from those fathers.

Once she was asked: "If a man talked to another evil words, would he silence him, or rebuke him, or close the ears and not listen to him?" She replied saying: "If a man put in front of you a table with good and bad foods, you can not say to him 'Take this or that for it is harmful for me,' but you overlook it and eat what you desired, so nothing should be said to who speak bad words to others but it is enough that the man does not let his ears enjoy what he is hearing."

She was also asked: "How can the human overcome his enemy Satan?" She answered saying: "With fasting, prayer, and humility."

When she finished her strife, she departed in peace and was one hundred years old.
Her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks the commemoration of the departure of Anba John, Bishop of Gaza.
His intercession be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twelfth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah
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1. *The Departure of St. Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem.*
2. *The Commemoration of St. Antonios, Bishop of Tamoui.*

1. On this day, the holy father Anba Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, departed. This holy father was Bishop of Cappadocia, and he came to the city of Jerusalem to receive the blessing of the holy places and then return to his country.

St. Narcissus, who was the Bishop of Jerusalem at that time (*Second century - his departure on the first day of Baramhat*), was advanced in age and had reached over 110 years. He often asked his people that he wished to retire from his See, but they refused. When St. Alexander finished his visit and decided to return to his Chair in Cappadocia, the people of Jerusalem heard a voice from heaven saying: "Go to the gate of the city, and the first one to enter it, seize him and make him stay with

Narcissus to assist him." When they went to the gate they met the Bishop Alexander, and they pleaded with him to stay with Abba Narcissus to assist him. He refused because he could not leave his flock that the Lord Christ had entrusted him with. They told him about the voice which they had heard from heaven and that it was God's Will. He accepted and wrote to the people of his parish what had happened, apologized, and allowed them to appoint another bishop in his place. He remained in Jerusalem, assisting its bishop Anba Narcissus, for about 5 years.

After the departure of St. Narcissus, he continued to shepherd the people of Jerusalem with the best of care, until Maximianus, the infidel, seized him, inflicted him with severe tortures of every kind, and then imprisoned him. When Gordianus reigned, he released him, and when he died and Philip reigned, he released the rest of the confessors. This father sat in quietness and peace until Decius rose, killed Philip, and reigned in his stead.

Decius afflicted the Christians exceedingly; he seized this holy father and many others, and tortured them, especially this father. He beat him cruelly with sharp pins until he broke his ribs, then commanded to drag him by his feet and throw him in prison. He remained there until he delivered his pure soul in the hand of the Lord, and received the kingdom which is prepared for the saints.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks the commemoration of St. Antonios, Bishop of Tamoui.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Thirteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

1. *The Martyrdom of the Sts. Joshua and Joseph.*

2. *The Commemoration of Dionisa (Denisa) the Deaconess and Medius the Martyr.*

3. *The Departure of Pope Yoannis the Seventeenth, the 105th. Patriarch of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, the holy monks Anba Joshua and Anba Joseph were martyred. They were the disciples of St. Melius in the mount of Khorasan, and their biography is mentioned in the 28th day of Baramoudah, which is the day of martyrdom of their spiritual teacher Anba Melius.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks the commemoration of St. Dionisa (Denisa), the deaconess who was appointed by the apostles and the commemoration of St. Medius the martyr.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, the distinguished Pope and prudent pontiff, Anba Yoannis the seventeenth, 105th Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. The parents of this father were pious Christians from the city of Mallawy, in Upper Egypt.

When he was 25 years old, he left this futile world and went to the monastery of St. Antonios. He became a monk there and his name was Abdel Sayed. Then he went to the monastery of Anba Paula,

after its renovation. He exerted himself in worship, and educated himself. He learned reading and writing, for he was illiterate, then he thoroughly studied the holy books.

After he exerted himself in asceticism and a virtuous life, studying the church subjects and its books, the fathers the monks chose him as a priest for them. Pope Yoannis, 103rd Patriarch ordained him along with his fellow Mourgan El-Assuity, who became, later on, Pope Petros VI, 104th Patriarch.

When Pope Petros VI, 104th Patriarch departed, the fathers the bishops, priests, and lay leaders discussed who would be fit for the Patriarchal Chair. They chose this father among others, and brought them from the monasteries to Cairo. After they prayed the Divine Liturgy for three days, they cast the lot, which fell on this father.

He was ordained a Patriarch in the church of the martyr Mercurius Abu Saifain, in Old Cairo, on Sunday, the sixth of Tubah, 1443 A.M. (January 12th., 1727 A.D.). After his ordination and before the reading of the Gospel, they opened the door to the tomb of the fathers the Patriarchs, as the custom, for the newly elected Pope to go down and take the cross and staff from the hand of his departed predecessor. After he went down and took the cross, the bones in the tomb crepitated, and he was terrified, so he ordered to stop this practice, saying that the crosses and staffs were in abundance. The purpose of this custom was that the successor will take a lesson from his departed predecessor, so he would not be deceived by the position and become arrogant, and seeing the fate of his predecessor would be a lesson and example before him always. The Pope stayed after his enthronement a week in Old Cairo, then went to the Patriarchal residence in Haret El-Rum.

This Pope dedicated himself to building churches and monasteries, their renovation and consecration. During his Papacy, a wonderful church was built in the monastery of Anba Paula, the first hermit in the Nembr Mount, and consecrated it himself. He was accompanied by Anba Ebraam, Bishop of El-Bahnasa, and an assembly of the notables. Among them was the archon Girgis El-Sourogy, who paid for the building of this church.

After that, Pope Youannis built a church, refectory, and other buildings in the monastery of the honorable saint Anba Antonios, the father of all monks. He consecrated it by his blessed hands and ordained there hegumens, priests, and deacons. The honorable archon Girgis El-Sourogy also paid for these buildings.

In the ninth year of his Papacy, in 1451 A.M., the Sultan ordered to raise the taxes for the Christians and Jews three folds. Later, these taxes were raised more and imposed over the monks, priests, children, poor, and beggars without exempting anyone, so the time of this father was difficult and sorrowful for the poor, professionals and trade workers.

During his time, there was also a great increase in prices and a severe earthquake shook Cairo in the middle of the night, which lasted for about an hour. The foundation of the earth violently shook, houses were destroyed, and people trembled then God Had mercy on his people and removed from them these bitter tribulations.

When Anba Khristozolo III, 102nd Metropolitan of the Chair of Ethiopia, departed, a group of Ethiopian lay leaders came to Pope Yoannis, in the 17th year of his Papacy, in 1460 A.M. (1744 AD.), and asked him to ordain for them a Metropolitan. He ordained for them the monk John (Youhanna), one of the priests of the monastery of our great father Anba Antonios, and called him Youannis XIV, and returned with joy with him.

This Pope lived long and lived until a good old age shepherding his flock with the best of care. When he finished his strife, he fell sick for a short illness and then departed in peace on the Monday of the Paschal week, the thirteenth of Baramoudah, year 1461 A.M. (April 20th., 1745 A.D.). He sat on the Chair 18 years, 3 months, and 8 days, and was buried in the tomb of the Patriarchs in the church of St. Mercurius Abu-Saifain in Old Cairo. He was contemporary to the Sultan Ahmed III and the Sultan Mahmoud I. The Chair remained vacant one month and ten days after his departure.

His blessings be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day of the Blessed Mouth of Baramouda
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*The Departure of the Holy Father Anba Maximus
The Fifteenth Pope of Alexandria*

On this day, that coincides with the ninth of April, 282 A.D., the holy father Anba Maximus, 15th Pope of Alexandria, departed. This father was born in Alexandria from Christian parents who raised and educated him well. He excelled in the Greek language. Then he learned the doctrine of the church and was a man that feared God.

Pope Heraclas, 13th Pope, ordained him deacon on the church of Alexandria. Then Pope Dionysius, 14th Pope, ordained him priest. Because of his advancement in virtues and knowledge, the fathers the bishops chose him for the Episcopal Chair after the departure of Pope Dionysius, and he was ordained on the twelfth of Hatour (November 9th., 264 A.D.).

Shortly after his enthronement, he received a letter from the council of Antioch, which included the grounds for excommunicating Paul of Samosata and his followers. He read it to the priests of Alexandria and issued a letter and sent it along with the letter of the council to all the cities of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Nuba. This was to warn them from the heresy of Paul of Samosata, which was abolished by the death of this heretic.

Pope Maximus fought and guarded his flock, confirmed them in the faith with sermons and admonitions for seventeen years and five days, then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

1. *The Commemoration of the Consecration of the first altar for St. Nicholas, Bishop of Mora for the Jacobite Christians.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Consecration of the church of St. Agabus, the Apostle.*
3. *The Departure of St. Alexandra, the Empress.*
4. *The Departure of Pope Mark (Marcus) VI, the 101st. Patriarch.*

1. On this day, the church commemorates the consecration of the first altar that was built by the Jacobite Christians, who were residing in the land of Egypt for St. Nicholas, bishop of Mora. St. Nicholas was one of the fathers of the council of Nicea, the Three Hundred and Eighteen. This altar was built in the church of the saint Anba Shenouda, to the east of the city.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also, marks the commemoration of the consecration of the church of St. Agabus, one of the Seventy Apostles. He prophesied about the events that afflicted St. Paul saying: "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" (Acts 21:10-11)

His prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, St. Alexandra, the Empress, Emperor Diocletian's wife, departed. When the great martyr, St. George deluded Emperor Diocletian that he would worship his idols, the Emperor embraced his head and brought him into his royal palace.

The Saint prayed and read some of the Psalms before Empress Alexandra and interpreted to her what he read. He explained to her the Divinity of the Lord Christ. His words entered her heart and she believed in the Lord Christ, to Whom is the glory.

When the Saint stood before the idols, he called the Name of the Lord Christ, and the idols were destroyed. The Emperor and those with him were humiliated. When the Emperor returned to the palace and told the Empress what had happened, she told him: "Did I not tell you not to set yourself against the Galilean, for their God is strong and powerful?" Diocletian became extremely raged, tortured her severely, then threw her in prison where she departed in peace.

Her prayers be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also, of the year 1372 A.M. (April 20th., 1656 A.D.), Pope Mark (Marcus) VI, 101st Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. He was known as Marcus El-Bahgoury. He was from Bahgourah, and became a monk in the monastery of St. Antonios.

When Pope Matteos III, 100th Pope, departed, the archon Beshara, the lay leader of that time, agreed with the people on ordaining this father. Anba Khristozolo, Bishop of Jerusalem, headed the celebration of the enthronement, on Sunday, the fifteenth of Barmoudah, 1362 A.M. (April 20th. 1646 A.D.), and was called Marcus VI. After his ordination, a vast dispute took place between him and the archon Beshara.

From his famous achievements, he issued an order preventing the monks from living in the world, ordering them to return to their monasteries. The monks were raged because of this order, did not consent to it, and refrained from obeying it. Satan, the enemy of the good, moved one of the monks called Kody, to write a petition to the Governor (Basha), accusing the Pope that he tortured the people and killed them. The Governor ordered an investigation to uncover the truth. During the inquiry, the monk denied writing the petition. The Pope was exonerated from the accusations that were in the complainant petition, but he was ordered to pay a heavy fine which was paid by the lay leaders of the country.

On the 21st of Tubah, 1365 A.M., an order was issued to prevent Christians from riding horses, wearing red caftans (A long sleeved outer garment), and red broadcloth skull caps. However they were to wear blue caftans thirty feet long.

The Patriarch went to Upper Egypt and stayed there for four years, during which he collected much money and was foolish in his conduct, to the point that all the people, bishops, priests, and lay leaders, were exasperated. The dispute, existed between him and the archon Beshara, went on until he returned to Cairo. He then reconciled with him, and his behavior was straighten after that. He built the prayer hall in the convent of the church of the virgin in Haret Zeewaila in Cairo.

Pope Marcus departed on the fifteenth of Barmoudah, 1372 A.M. (April 20th. 1656 AD.). He was buried in the church of Abu Saifain in Old Cairo, after he stayed on the Chair for ten full years. He was a contemporary to El Sultan Ibrahim I and El Sultan Mohammed IV, and the Chair was vacant for four years, seven months and sixteen days after him.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah
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The Martyrdom of St. Antipas, Bishop of Pergamos

On this day, St. Antipas, bishop of Pergamos, was martyred. He was a disciple of St. John the evangelist (Rev. 2).

Domitianus started persecuting and killing the Christians because he heard, that they were saying, that Christ was their God and King. This Saint was one of them. He was tortured severely, but adhered more to the faith. During his imprisonment, St. John the evangelist sent him a message to comfort and strengthen him. In his message, he called him faithful priest and good shepherd.

Finally, the Emperor placed him in a bull of brass and lighted fire under him until he delivered up his soul in the hand of the Lord. The believers took his body and placed it with great honor in the church.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Seventeenth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

The Martyrdom of St. James the Apostle Brother of St. John the Apostle

On this day, St. James the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, and the brother of St. John, the Apostle, was martyred. After he had preached the Gospel in Judea and Samaria, he went to Spain. He preached the Gospel there, and its people believed in the Lord Christ. He returned to Jerusalem and pursued his ministry.

He always advised his flock to give alms to the poor, the needy, and the weak. They accused him before Herod who called him and asked him: "Are you the one that instigating the people not to give the taxes to Caesar but to give it to the poor and the churches?" Then he smote him with the sword, cutting off his head, and St. James received the crown of martyrdom.

Clement of Alexandria, from the fathers of the second century, said: "The soldier that seized the Saint, when he saw his courage, he realized that there must be a better life and asked the Saint for his forgiveness. Then the soldier confessed Christianity and received the crown of martyrdom (Acts 12:1,2) along with the Apostle in the year 44 A.D."

Because Herod saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. So when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. (Acts 12:3-4)

So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died. (Acts 12:21-23)

As of the body of St. James, the believers took it, shrouded it, and buried it by the Temple. It was said that the body of St. James was translated to Spain, where James the elder considered to be its Apostle. *His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.*

The Eighteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

The Martyrdom of St. Arsenius, Slave of St. Sousnyous

On this day St. Arsenius, the slave of St. Sousnyous, was martyred. When Emperor Diocletian was torturing St. Sousnyous, St. Sousnyous father told the Emperor that Sousnyous had a slave, whose name is Arsenius and that he worshiped Christ and denounced the worship of the idols.

The Emperor brought the slave and asked him about his belief. Arsenius confessed the Divinity of the

Lord Christ, and also admonished the Emperor for deserting the worship of the true God and his insistence on worshipping the idols. The Emperor became furious and ordered him to beheaded him before his master, and thus he received the crown of martyrdom.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Nineteenth Day of the Blessed Mouth of Baramoudah

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Simeon the Armenian, Bishop of the country of Persia and 150 with him.*
2. *The Martyrdom of the blessed Youhanna (John) Abu Nagaah El-Kabeer.*
3. *The Martyrdom of the Vizier Abu Elaala Fahd ibn Ibrahim and his companions.*
4. *The Martyrdom of Daoud (David), the Monk.*

1. On this day, St. Simeon the Armenian, Bishop of the country of Persia, and 150 with him, were martyred. This Bishop lived during the reign of Sapor (Shapur), the son of Hormiz, king of Persia, who was unjust and oppressive to the Christians.

This Saint wrote a letter to king Sapor and told him: "Those whom the Lord Christ has bought with His honorable Blood had rid themselves from the servitude of men, and it is not conceivable for them to be in servitude for those who transgress the Law." When the king had read this letter, he became exceedingly wrath. He brought him, bound him with chains, and cast him into the prison. In prison, he found prisoners who worshipped the sun. The Saint rebuked them, taught them, and they believed in the Lord Christ.

They confessed their faith before the king, who brought the Saint from the prison, because he preached them the faith. The king ordered to cut off the heads of the Saint and the 150 persons with him, and they received the crown of martyrdom.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 719 A.M., the blessed Youhanna (John) Abu Nagaah El-Kabeer, was martyred. He was one of the noble Copts in the tenth and eleventh centuries. He was the head scribe in his time, as he was the lay leader during the reign of Al-Hakim Be-Amr Allah the Fatimid Caliph. This great elder was a contemporary to Pope Philotheos, 63rd Patriarch, who was enthroned on March 28th. 979 A.D. and departed on November 8th. 1003 A.D.

Youhanna was a devout Christian, righteous, virtuous, charitable, and loving to the church. He was zealous in the Orthodox faith. When Al-Hakim Be-Amr Allah completed the extermination of the people close to him and the leaders of the army, he turned to the notables and chiefs of the scribes. He called ten of them and offered them to adopt Islam. Youhanna, who was their head, was called first. Al-Hakim told him: "I want you to leave your faith and adopt my faith, the Islam. I will make you my minister to manage the affairs of my kingdom." Youhanna replied saying: "Give me a chance until tomorrow to deliberate the matter with myself"

Youhanna went to his house, called his friends, informed them with what had happened, and told them: "I am ready to die in the Name of the Lord Christ, and my reason for asking for the delay, not to deliberate the matter with myself but to see you and my family, to bid you and my family farewell, and to commend you and them. Now my brothers, do not ask for this vain glory, for you will lose the eternal glory of the Lord Christ Who satisfied us with the richness of the world, and now with His mercy, He had called us to the Kingdom of Heaven, so strengthen your hearts."

His golden words, which were full of wisdom, influenced those who heard them, strengthened their hearts, and they decided to die in the Name of the Lord Christ also. He made a great feast for them, and then they went to their homes. The next morning, Youhanna went to Al-Hakim Be-Amr Allah who asked him: "O Nagaah, have you decided?" Youhanna (John) replied saying "Yes". The Caliph asked: "Which way have you decided?" Youhanna answered steadfastly and with courage: "Remaining in my faith."

The Governor attempted with all ways of persuasion and threatening to make him forsake Christianity. John was steadfast as a rock; nothing shook him away from the Christian faith, and the Governor could not with all his powers make him renounce the faith of his fathers.

When the Governor failed with Youhanna, he ordered to remove his clothes, be tied to the squeezing wheels, and be beaten. They beat him five hundred lashes on his delicate body, and his flesh was torn and his blood flew as water. The whips that were used were made of cow hides; even the mighty ones could not bear one lash from it on their bodies, much less, this gentle branch.

Then the Governor ordered to beat him up to one thousand lashes. After he was beaten three hundred more lashes, he said as his Master: "I am thirsty." They stopped beating him and informed the Governor who told them: "Water him after you tell him forsake your faith." When they came to him with the water and told him as the Caliph ordered, Youhanna replied with pride and dignity: "Take the water back to him, for I do not need it, because My Master Jesus Christ had watered me and quenched my thirst." The people who were standing around testified that they saw at this moment water dripping from his beard. When he said that, he delivered up his soul.

When they told the tyrant Governor about his death, he ordered them to beat the dead body to complete the one thousand lashes, and thus he was martyred, and received the crown of martyrdom that was prepared for him by the Great King Jesus Christ.

The History of the Patriarch did not mention the day that he was martyred, but El-Makrizi in his manuscripts said: "The Vizier Fahd Ibn Ibrahim, one of the ten men and the companion of Youhanna Ibn Nagaah, was slain in the nineteenth of Barmoudah, 719 A.M. (April 14th., 1003 A.D.)" The martyrdom of the blessed Youhanna Ibn Nagaah was mentioned in the History of the Patriarchs, before the mentioning of the martyrdom of the Vizier Fahd Ibn Ibrahim. Youhanna, in the feast that he made for his friends and kinfolds among whom were the other nine chosen ones, did not mention the account of the martyrdom of the Vizier Fahd in what he said during the feast. Accordingly, the martyrdom of this Saint was on the same day of the martyrdom of the Vizier fahd.

His blessings be with us. Amen

3. This day also marks the commemoration of the martyrdom of the Elder the Vizier Abu Elaala Fahd Ibn Ibrahim, who was distinguished in the later half of the tenth century and early the eleventh century. He was also contemporary to Pope Philotheos, 63rd Patriarch, and from the Fatimid Caliphs, Al Emam Al-Azeez Be Allah, and his son Al-Hakim Be-Amr Allah.

He was an Orthodox Archon, adhered to his faith, faithful to his church, and charitable. During his life, he never turned down anyone who asked him. Whenever he went through the streets riding and one asked him, he would extend the sleeve of his cloak and the one asking would find much good in it, and that to hide his virtue of giving.

This vizier was one of the powerful and influential men of the government during the Fatimid Rule. Al-Hakim Be-Amr Allah appointed him head of all the scribes and department heads. He built the church of the martyr St. Mercurius in the present monastery of Anba Rowais, which was known then by Dair El-Khandaq.

It is documented in the History of the Patriarchs that when Al-Hakim Be-Amr Allah wanted to make the notable Coptic scribes apostatize their faith, the Vizier Fahd was one of the ten that was chosen for that purpose. He brought him and told him: "You know that I have chosen and appointed you ahead of all the men in my government, then listen to me and be with me in my religion, so I will promote you more than what you are in now and be like a brother to me." When he did not answer him, he ordered his neck to be cut off and to burn his body. The fire remained burning for three days and the body did not burn, and his right hand that he extended to give alms, was sound at all the time as the fire never touched it.

It was mentioned also in the book of El-Khetat El-Tawfikiah that the Vizier Abu Elaala Fahd Ibn Ibrahim was discussing the affairs of the government with the head of the army, El-Housain Ibn Gawhar, and El-Hakim was luring him to apostatize his faith with many promises. When Fahd refused, he ordered his head to be cut off and to burn his body but God protected his body from burning. He was buried in the southern corner of the church of St. Mercurius, which he built in Dair El-khandaq. El-Makrizi wrote in his manuscripts: "Fahd Ibn Ibrahim was killed after he had remained as a chief minister of the government for five years, nine months and twelve days."

God had took revenge severely from the wicked people that discredited Abu Elaala Fahd before the Caliph and changed his heart against him. Twenty-nine days after the departure of Fahd, the wicked man, Aly Ibn Omar Ibn El-addas, was killed, then his companion, Taher Mahmoud Ibn El-Nahawy, was killed.

The church also commemorates the rest of the ten chief ministers that the Governor asked them to apostatize their faith. When they refused and disobeyed him, he ordered to torture them. They were beaten with whips, and when the beating became cruel, four of them became Muslims, one of them died the same night, and the other three returned to their Christian Faith after the end of the time of persecution. The rest departed while they were being tortured and received the crown of martyrdom and acquired the eternal life.

4. On this day also, Daoud Ibn Ghobrial El-Bargy, the monk, was martyred. He was from the village of Berkit Karmout. He was tortured severely but did not forsake the faith, and he received the crown of martyrdom in the year 1099 A.M.

Their intercession be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah
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The Martyrdom of St. Babnuda (Paphnute)

On this day, St. Babnuda (Paphnute), who was from Dandara (Dendereh), was martyred. This Saint was a hermit monk. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him to put on the priesthood vestments and go appear before Arianus, the governor.

Arianus arrived with his ship and embarked by the city of Dandara, looking for that Saint. The Saint came to Arianus and cried out in his face with a loud voice, saying: "I am Christian, and I believe in the lord Christ." When the Governor knew that he was the anchorite for whom he sought, he ordered him to be tortured severely. He chained him with iron fetters and cast him in a dark prison. A heavenly light shone upon him and an angel of the Lord appeared to him, healed his wounds, and comforted him.

There was in the city a man, whose name was Kyrillos, with his wife, his daughter, and twelve young men. The Saint preached them and confirmed them in faith. They were all martyred by cutting of their heads, and they received the crown of martyrdom. The Governor was raged of him and ordered to hang a rock in his neck and cast him in the sea, and St. Babnuda received the crown of martyrdom.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty First Day of the Blessed Month of Barnmoudah

1. The Commemoration of the Lady the Theotokos.

2. The Departure of St. Hierotheos, of Athens.

1. On this day, we celebrate the commemoration of the Lady Virgin Mary, the Mother of God the Word.

Her intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Hierotheos (Berutawos) of Athens, departed. This father was one of the learned men in the city of Athens. He met the Apostle St. Paul, and many discussions took place between them which led to his belief on the Apostle's hand. He baptized him, taught him the Ordinances and Law of the church, and then ordained him a priest for this city. He frequently visited St. Dionysius the Areopagite, who was also one of the learned men in Athens.

This Saint was present at the time of the departure of the Lady Virgin Mary, and he stood in the midst of the apostles and comforted them with spiritual songs and hymns which he sang accompanied with musical instruments.

He converted many Jews and Gentiles to the knowledge of the Lord Christ. When the people wished to ordain him a bishop, he refused saying: "I just wish to be able to perform the duties of a priest."

Having finished his good strife, he went to the Lord Whom he loved.
His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Second Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah
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1. *The Departure of St. Isaac (Ishaq), of Hourin.*
2. *The Departure of St. Alexander I, 19th Pope of the See of St. Mark.*
3. *The Departure of St. Mark II, 49th Pope of the See of St. Mark.*
4. *The Departure of St. Michael II, 53rd Pope of the See of St. Mark.*

1. On this day the holy father Anba Isaac (Ishaq) departed. He was born in the city of Hourin - Shabas, from unblemished parents. His father's name was Abraham, and his mother's name was Susannah. His mother departed when he was a child, and his father, shortly after, married another wife.

In those days there was a famine, and his step-mother hated him. She only gave him a little bread, which he gave to the shepherds that he worked with. He fasted until sunset, although he was only five years old. When his father knew that, he went to see him to inquire into that. Knowing the matter, before his father came to him, he tied up three pieces of mud in his cloak, so that his father might think when he saw them from far that they were bread. When his father came and unrolled the cloak, he found three pieces of bread. The shepherds who were present testified that the boy had given them all what he had of bread, and others saw him tying the pieces of mud in his cloak. His father marvelled and glorified God.

When Isaac grew up, he went and became a monk with a righteous man whose name was Elias, and he lived with him for many years. After the departure of Anba Elias, he went to the mount of Barnug and lived with an old man whose name was Anba Zacharias. His father went about everywhere trying to find him. When he found his son living with St. Zacharias, he asked him to return with him. His teacher Anba Zacharias advised him to obey his father and return with him.

He returned and stayed until his father's departure. He distributed all what his father left him to the poor and needy. He then built for himself a place out side the city, where he dwelt there alone. He went on asceticism and worship until he departed in peace.

They buried him in his place of worship, and the place was forgotten. After many years, God willed to reveal his body, and a great light appeared above his grave, which was seen by reapers for three consecutive days. The believers came, took his body, laid it on a camel, and journeyed with it until they

came to a place between Horein and Nashrat. The camel stopped, knelt down, and would not get up again. They knew that this was the Lord's Will and they built a church for him in that place where they placed the body with great honor.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 44 A.M. (April 17th., 328 A.D.) the holy father Pope Alexander (Alexandros), 19th Pope of the See of St. Mark, departed.

This Pope was born in the city of Alexandria from Christian parents, and he grew up in serving the church. Pope Maximus ordained him a reader, Pope Theonas ordained him a deacon. Pope Peter (Petros the Seal of the Martyrs) ordained him a priest, and he was virgin and chaste.

When the time of Pope Petros (Peter) martyrdom drew near, Alexander and father Archelaus, who became Patriarch before him, went to him in prison, and asked him to lift the excommunication from Arius. Anba Petros excommunicated Arius again in their presence, and informed them that the Lord Christ had appeared to him and ordered him not to receive him again and that father Archelaus will be Patriarch after him and after Abba Archelaus, Pope Alexander will be ordained. He commanded that to the priests of Alexandria and ordered them not to accept Arius, and to have no fellowship with him.

When Pope Archelaus sat on the Chair and received Arius, he only lived for six months and died. When Pope Alexandros sat, the lay leaders came and asked him to receive Arius, but he refused and added curses to what were already upon him. He told them: "Pope Petros had commanded Pope Archelaus and myself to do that, and when Pope Archelaus had received Arius, God speedily removed him from his office."

Pope Alexander expelled Arius from the country. Arius went to Emperor Constantine and complained of the unjust treatment of this Pope. Emperor Constantine assembled the Ecumenical Council of the Three Hundred and Eighteen in the city of Nicea. The council was presided by Pope Alexander. He debated with Arius and revealed his denial of Christ, then excommunicated him and those who follow his belief.

Alexander, along with the rest of the fathers, uttered the Creed, and drew up the Canon, the Law, and the Statutes that are still in the hands of Christians until this day. After he put down regulations for Lent and the feast of Easter, he returned to his Chair, victorious and triumphant. He shepherded his flock with the best of care. He sat on the throne of the See of St. Mark for 15 years, 9 months and 20 days, then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, of the year 535 A.M. (April 17th., 819 A.D.), the blessed father Pope Mark (Marcus), 49th Pope of the See of St. Mark, departed.

This Pope was from Alexandria, and he a was chaste, learned, and honorable man. Pope John ordained him a deacon, and he was an eloquent speaker. His voice was sweet and all those who heard him rejoiced in him. The Pope handed him the administration of the papal place, and he did nothing without his advice. When Pope John put on him the garb of monks in the monastery, one of the elder monks

shouted saying: "This deacon whose name is Mark shall, rightly and fittingly sit upon the throne of his father Mark, the Evangelist."

When pope John departed, the bishops unanimously agreed to choose him Patriarch. He fled to the desert, but they caught up with him, brought him back, and enthroned him Patriarch on the second of Amshir, 515 A.M. (January 26th., 799 A.D.).

He tended to the churches needs, and restored those that were in a ruinous state. He returned many of the heretics to the Orthodox faith, healed many of the sick, and cast out, of many of them, devils. He told them: "What had happened to you was because you dared to partake of the Holy Mysteries with irreverence, so keep yourselves henceforward from the evil words that come out of your mouth."

In his days, the Muslim Arabs conquered the Greek Isles, captured many of their women and children, brought them to Alexandria, and started to sell them. The Pope gathered money from the believers, and beside the funds of the monasteries that he had, he was able to pay three thousand Dinars to save and free them. He wrote for them bills of manumission and set them free. He provided those who wished to return to their country with whatever they needed, and those who wished to stay, he gave them in marriage and protected them. He took thought for the church of the Redeemer in Alexandria and restored it, but some evil men burned it, so he restored it again.

When the Lord willed to give him rest, he became sick. He prayed the Divine Liturgy and partook of the Holy Mysteries. He bade the bishops that were present farewell and departed in peace after staying on the Chair 20 years, 2 months and 21 days.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also, of the year 567 A.M. (April 17th., 851 A.D.), the holy father Pope Michael (Khail), 53rd Pope of Alexandria, departed.

This father was a righteous monk, and he was ordained hegumen for the monastery of the saint Abba John. Because of his good conduct, they chose him Patriarch, and he was enthroned in the 24th. of Hatour 566 A.M. (November 20th., 849 A.D.).

When the Holy Fast came, he went to the desert of Scetis to keep the fast there. He remembered his earlier life in the wilderness, so he asked God with tears and supplication saying: "O God, you know how much I love solitary life and I have no aptitude for the position that I am in." The Lord accepted his petition and he departed in peace after the feast of Passover.

He stayed on the Chair one year, four months and twenty-eight days.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Third Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

The Martyrdom of St. George
Prince of the Martyrs

On this day, of the year 307 A.D., the great among the martyrs St. George, was martyred. He was born in Cappadocia; his father's name was Anastasius, and his mother's name was Theobaste.

When he was twenty years old, his father died, and he went to Emperor Diocletian to take over his father's position. He found that the Emperor had apostatized the faith and ordered the worship of idols. George was sorrowful, and he gave all his wealth to the poor and needy and set free his slaves.

When he saw the edict of the Emperor against the Christians, he became raged and tore it. They took him before the Emperor, and he cried in their midst saying: "For how long you shall pour your anger against the innocent Christians, and force those who know the true faith to adopt the faith that you are in doubt of because it is fraudulent? So, either you believe on this true faith, or at least do not disturb with foolishness those who are steadfast in it." The Emperor asked Mephnanius, one of his ministers, to pacify and persuade him. He asked him: "Who taught you to be daring like this." The Saint answered: "It is the truth," then started to explain it to him. The Emperor interrupted, reminding the Saint with the ranks that he bestowed on him, and promised him with more if he denied his Christ. The Saint refused with pride all these vain propositions. The Emperor tortured him severely, but the Lord strengthened him and healed all his wounds.

When the Emperor was weary of torturing him, he brought a magician, whose name was Athanasius, who gave the Saint a cup full of poison to drink. St. George made the sign of the cross over the cup then drank it. When no harm came upon him, the magician believed in the Lord Christ, and received the crown of martyrdom. The Emperor became raged and ordered to squeeze him until he delivered up his soul, and they cast his body out side the city.

The Lord Christ raised him up, and the Saint returned to the city. When the people saw him, three thousand and seven hundred souls believed. The Emperor ordered to cut off their heads and they received the crown of martyrdom.

When St. George stood before Emperor Diocletian, along with seventy kings that were sitting around him, they asked the Saint: "We wish you to make these chairs that we are sitting on to put forth leaves, and bear fruit." The Saint prayed to the Lord Christ, the Lord accepted his supplication and the chairs put forth leaves and bore fruit.

They took him once to a cemetery and asked him to raise the dead therein. He prayed to the Lord Christ. The Lord raised them and after they talked to them, they returned to their graves and died.

A poor woman, brought her son, who was blind, deaf and dumb, he prayed to the Lord Christ then made the sign of the cross over him, and he was healed right away.

Diocletian, during all that, went on torturing St. George, until he was weary and bored of that. He started to be pleasant to the Saint and promised to give him his daughter in marriage if he would offer the incense to his gods. The Saint pretended that he accepted his offer, and the Emperor rejoiced and brought him into the royal palace. While St. George was praying the Psalms, the Empress heard him and asked him to explain to her what he had said. He began to interpret to her all the events from the creation of the world to the Incarnation of the Lord Christ, and his words entered her heart and she believed in the Lord Christ, to Whom is the Glory.

The Emperor ordered to call upon all the men of the city to gather, in order to see Saint George offering the incense to the Emperor's gods. When multitude gathered by the idols, Gawargios (George) stood and cried at the idols in the Name of the Lord Christ the Savior of the world. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed all the idols. The Emperor and all those who were with him were ashamed and he returned to his palace full of fury and wrath. The Empress told him: "Didn't I tell you not to oppose the Galileans, for their God is strong and mighty?" The Emperor was exceedingly wrath with her, for he knew that St. George had brought her also to his faith. The Emperor with rage ordered to comb her body with a steel comb, then cut off her head, and she received the crown of martyrdom.

Finally, Diocletian decided to put an end to the humiliation that befell him, so he ordered to cut off the head of St. George, and he received the crown of martyrdom. A Christian took the body, wrapped it in expensive shrouds, and took it to the city of Lydda, his home town, and they built a great church on his name there.

His intercession be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah
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1. *The Departure of Pope Sinuthius (Shenouda I), 55th Pope of Alexandria.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Sina, the Soldier.*

1. On this day, of the year 596 A.M. (April 19th., 880 A.D.), the great father Pope Sinuthius (Shenouda I), 55th Pope of the See of St. Mark, departed. This holy father was a monk in the monastery of St. Macarius. He advanced in righteousness and worship, and was ordained archpriest for the monastery.

Shortly after, he was chosen for the Patriarchate with the recommendation of the people and bishops. He was enthroned on the 13th. of Tubah 575 A.D. (January 8th., 859 A.D.), and great tribulations and severe persecutions befell him. God performed through him many signs and healed many grievous sicknesses.

Once there was a drought in the city of Mariout for three years, the wells dried up and the farm land became barren. This father came to the church of St. Mina, celebrated the Divine Liturgy, and supplicated God to have mercy upon His creation. At the setting of the sun of that day, the rain began lightly then ceased. This father entered his room and stood up praying and he said: "O My Lord Christ,

have mercy on Thy people with the riches of Thy compassion, and let them be filled with Thy good pleasure." Before he finished his prayer, mighty thunders and lightnings started, and the rain descended like a flood, until the wells, the vineyards, and the farms were filled with water. The people rejoiced, glorifying God the wonder worker.

When this father was in the wilderness visiting the monasteries, the Arabs of Upper Egypt came to the desert of Scetis to plunder the monasteries and kill the monks. The Pope took his staff that had the sign of the cross on it and he went forth to meet them, when they saw the Cross they retreated and fled away. (The account of this wonder is mentioned in the ninth day of the month of Baramoudah).

Some men, in a village called Boukhnessa, one of the villages of Mariout, said that He Who suffered for us was only a man and that the Divinity had departed from Him. This Pope wrote a letter and sent it during the Holy Fast (Lent) to be read in all the churches. He said in it, "God the Word suffered for us in His Body, and His Divinity was not separated from His humanity, not for a twinkling of an eye. The pain and suffering did not touch and affect the Divinity, as when you hammer a red hot iron, the iron suffers from the hammering but not the flame. For the passion of the Humanity to be of value, the Hypostatic union with the Divinity was a must, and through this passion Christ redeemed all the humanity."

Also, some men from the city of El-Balyana, and their bishops, said that the Divine Nature died. When the father heard that, he wrote to them saying: "The Nature of God, the Word, is unknowable, intangible, and impassable for it was impossible for the pain to affect its essence. The participation of the Divinity with the humanity in passion is moral participation, to give a value to these sufferings, to pay the debt of the humanity to God the Omnipresent, and that would only be possible if the Divinity would participate morally without affecting His essence. So we say "Holy God, Who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us." When his letter reached them, they turned from their error, and the bishops came and confessed the true and right faith before the Pope and asked for forgiveness.

Pope Shenouda I, cared greatly for the churches, their buildings, and their needs. He also cared for the places wherein pilgrims sojourned, and what money was left to him, he gave to the poor and the needy. When he finished his good course, he departed in peace. He stayed on the Chair of St. Mark for 21 years, 3 months and 11 days.

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Sina, the companion of St. Isidore¹, was martyred. After the Governor of Farma had tortured the two friends and St. Isidore was martyred, he kept St. Sina in the prison until he was removed.

When the new Governor took charge with the command not to keep any one who confessed the Name of Christ, he heard about the presence of Sina in prison, and that he was a captain of soldiers.

St. Sina was tortured much but did not turn from his counsel. The Governor immediately ordered to

¹whose martyrdom is recorded in the eighteenth day of Baramhat.

cut off his head and he received the crown of martyrdom. His mother was beside him when he was martyred, and she saw a multitude of angels carrying away his soul as she saw St. Isidore's soul at the time of his martyrdom before.

They took his body, shrouded it, laid it with the body of his friend St. Isidore in the city of Samanoud, and many signs and wonders appeared from them.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

1. The Martyrdom of St. Sarah, and her two sons.

2. The Commemoration of Sts. Babnuda (Paphnute) the hermit, Theodore the worshipper, and the One hundred martyrs.

1. On this day, St. Sarah and her two sons, were martyred. She was from the city of Antioch, the wife of a man whose name was Socrates, one of the governors of Emperor Diocletian. This Governor had denied Christ to please Diocletian, pretending before his wife that he did that because of his fear from the Emperor.

Sarah had two sons, she could not baptize in Antioch, because of her fear from the Emperor and her husband. She took them and sailed to Alexandria to baptize them there. God willed to reveal the greatness of her faith as a lesson to the generations to come. God brought forth a great tempest and the ship was about to be wrecked and drown. Sarah was afraid that her sons would be drowned without being baptized. She prayed a long prayer, then she wounded her right breast, took some of her blood, anointed them making the sign of the cross upon the foreheads, and over the hearts. Then she dipped them in the sea three times saying: "In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

After that, the winds died down, a great calm came on the sea, and the ship sailed toward Alexandria. When she arrived, took her sons, went to the church, and handed them to Pope Peter, the seal of the martyrs. He baptized them, together with the children of the city. When the Pope carried one of her sons to baptize him, the water froze. The Pope went on baptizing other children and came back to her sons, but the water froze again. The same thing occurred on the third attempt. The Pope was amazed and asked their mother about her story. She told him about all what happened to her at sea and what she did for her sons. He glorified God and said: "It is indeed one baptism."

When the woman returned to Antioch, her husband denounced what she had done. He related what happened to the Emperor accusing his wife with adultery. The Emperor brought her and reproached her saying: "Why did you go to Alexandria to commit adultery with the Christians?" The Saint answered him: "Christians do not commit adultery, and do not worship idols, and after this do what you wish, for you will not hear another word from me."

The Emperor asked her: "Tell me what did you do in Alexandria?" When she did not answer him, he ordered to tie her hands behind her, and to place her two sons on her belly, and to bum all three of

them. She turned her face to the east and prayed. They burnt her, with her sons. She delivered up her pure soul along with her sons, and they all received the crown of martyrdom.

Their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks the commemoration of Sts. Babnuda (Paphnute) the hermit, Theodore the worshipper, and the One hundred martyrs, who were martyred in Persia.

Their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Sousenyos.*

2. *The Departure of Pope Youannis VII, 78th. Patriarch.*

1. On this day, St. Sousenyos was martyred. This Saint was the son of one of the friends of Emperor Diocletian. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and strengthened his heart on receiving the crown of martyrdom, and he kept this in his heart.

The Emperor sent him to the city of Nicomedia to restore the worship of idols. This Saint sorrowed exceedingly. He sent and brought a priest who taught him the doctrine of the church, the facts of the faith and baptized him.

When his father knew that, he accused him to the Emperor that he did not worship the idols. The Emperor ordered to torture him with severe tortures, but the Lord strengthened and comforted him. Finally, they cut off his head, and he received the crown of martyrdom.

The number of those who had seen him during his torture and believed because of him, were eleven hundred and seventy. They were martyred and received the crown of martyrdom,

His prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 1009 A.M. (April 21st, 1293 A.D.), Pope Youannis VII, 78th Patriarch, departed. After the lay leaders of Cairo had nominated Pope Gabriel III for the Papacy, some of the lay leaders of Egypt agreed to choose Youannis Ebn Abi-Saaïd El-Soukary. They threw an altar lot which fell on Gabriel, but Youannis, the above mentioned, along with his supporters, quarreled with Gabriel. Youannis nullified the result of the lot and was enthroned in the 6th. of Tubah 978 A.M. (January 15th., 1262 A.D.), after the departure of Pope Athanasius III, his predecessor.

He remained on the Patriarchal Chair six years, nine months, and nineteen days, then he was dismissed. Pope Gabriel took over his place from the 24th. of Babah 985 A.M. to the 6th. of Tubah 987 A.M., then he was dismissed. Youannis was reinstated by the order of El-Sultan on the 7th. of Tubah.

During Pope Youannis' days, in the year 980 A.M., El-Sultan ordered to dig a huge pit and throw the Christians in it, to be burned. He brought the Patriarch and mandated him to pay fifty thousand Dinars, which took two years to collect. Consequently, they released the Christians who suffered much tribulations in his time, and the bishops suffered much afflictions. Pope Gabriel, his predecessor,

departed during Pope Youannis second period of heading the church, so he was listed in the list of the Patriarchs before Youannis.

Pope Youannis remained on the Chair in his second time of heading the church 22 years, 3 months, and 19 days, and departed in peace in the 26th. of Baramoudah 1009 A.M. He was buried in the gardens of El-Nastour monastery.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

The Martyrdom of St. Boctor Ebn Romanus

On this day, the honorable Saint Boctor (Victor) Ebn Romanus, the minister of Emperor Diocletian, was martyred. His mother Martha had reared him in the Christian ethics. He was promoted in the ranks in the kingdom until he became the third in succession. He was then twenty years old.

He prayed and fasted much, visited the prisoners and assisted the poor and needy. When they cut off the head of St. Theodata, the mother of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, no one dared to bury her because they feared the Emperor. This Saint went forth and took the body, shrouded it, then buried her, not caring about the Emperor's order.

St. Boctor often admonished his father for worshipping the idols, so his father accused him before the Emperor. The Emperor had him brought and asked him to worship the idols to obey the imperial order. The saint took off his soldier girdle and threw it in his face saying: "Take your gift that you gave me." His father suggested to the Emperor to send him to Alexandria to be tortured there.

On their way, his mother bid him farewell, crying, and he asked her to care for the poor, the widows, and the lonely. When he arrived to Alexandria, the governor Armanius tortured him many tortures, then he sent him to the governor of Ansena, who tortured him also, then cut off his tongue and plucked out his eyes. The Lord strengthened and comforted him every time. There was a fifteen years old girl who was watching his torture from the window of her house. She saw a crown coming down over his head. She confessed that before the governor and all those who were present. The Governor ordered her head to be cut off and also the head of St. Boctor. They received the crown of life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

There is a district in Alexandria until now known as El Boctoriah (Victoria), named after this Saint, because probably there was a church on his name in this district.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

The Martyrdom of St. Milius, The Ascetic

On this day, St. Milius, the ascetic, was martyred. This father was an ascetic and fighter all the days of his life. He dwelt in a cave with his two disciples in mount Khurasan.

The two sons of the king of Khurasan went out to hunt wild animals and they set up their nets. This Saint fell in their net, and he was dressed in sackcloth made of hair, and his hair was exceedingly long. When they saw him they were afraid of him and asked him: "Are you a man or a demon?" He answered: "I am a sinful man and I dwell here in this mount to worship the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God." They told him: "There is no God except the sun and the fire, offer the sacrifices to them lest we kill you." He answered them: "These things have been created by God. You are not aware of the truth. It is preferable for you to worship the true God, the creator of all these things."

They asked him: "Do you claim that he Whom the Jews crucified is God?" He said to them: "Yes, He Who was crucified for our sins, and Who was killed and died, is God indeed." The two princes were raged of him. They seized his two disciples, tortured, and then slew them.

As for St. Milius, they continued to torture him for two weeks. Finally, they made him stand up between them and shot arrows at him until he departed in peace. On the following day they went on hunting, followed a wild beast, and shot arrows at him, and God turned their arrows into their own hearts killing them.

The prayers of this Saint be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah

1. *The Departure of St. Erastus, the Apostle.*
2. *The Departure of St. Acacius, Bishop of Jerusalem.*

1. On this day, St. Erastus, one of the Seventy Apostles, departed. He received the grace of the holy spirit in the upper room of Zion with the Disciples. He preached, ministered, and suffered along with them frequently.

They laid the hands on him, and ordained him bishop for Jerusalem. He taught there and in many other places, and God worked great signs and wonders on his hands. As example he changed bitter salty water to sweet water.

He labored with St. Paul the apostle in his many journeys, for he ministered unto him. He is mentioned in chapter nineteen of the Acts of the Apostles. After he reached a good old age, he departed in peace. *His prayers be with us. Amen.*

2. On this day also, St. Acacius, Bishop of Jerusalem, departed. He was a pure and righteous man. He was persecuted for a long time, and God wrought many signs and wonders by his hands, then departed in peace.

His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Baramoudah
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The Martyrdom of the Great Saint Mark, the Apostle The Evangelist of the Land of Egypt

On this day, which coincided with the 26th. of April 68 A.D., the great apostle St. Mark, the evangelist of the land of Egypt, was martyred. He was the first Pope of Alexandria and one of the Seventy Apostles.

His name was John, as the Holy Bible says: "He came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:12). He was the one that the Lord Christ, to Whom is the glory, meant when He said: "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, The Teacher says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples" (Matthew 26:18).

His house was the first Christian church, where they ate the Passover, hid after the death of the Lord Christ, and in its upper room the Holy Spirit came upon them.

This Saint was born in Cyrene (One of the Five Western cities, Pentapolis - in North Africa). His father's name was Aristopolus and his mother's name was Mary. They were Jewish in faith, rich and of great honor. They educated him with the Greek and Hebrew cultures. He was called Mark after they emigrated to Jerusalem, where St. Peter had become a disciple to the Lord Christ. St. Peter was married to the cousin of Aristopolus. Mark visited St. Peter's house often, and from him he learned the Christian teachings.

Once Aristopolus and his son Mark were walking near the Jordan river, close by the desert, they encountered a raving lion and a lioness. It was evident to Aristopolus that it would be his end and the end of his Son, Mark. His compassion for his son compelled him to order him to escape to save himself. Mark answered, "Christ, in whose hands our lives are committed, will not let them prey on us." Saying this, he prayed, "O, Christ, Son of God protect us from the evil of these two beasts and terminate their offspring from this wilderness." Immediately, God granted this prayer, and the two beasts fell dead. His father marvelled and asked his son to tell him about the Lord Christ. He believed in the Lord Christ at the hands of his son who baptized him.

After the ascension of the Lord Christ, he accompanied Paul and Barnabas to preach the Gospel in Antioch, Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, and Perga Pamphylia where he left them and returned to Jerusalem. After the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem, he went with Barnabas to Cyprus.

After the departure of Barnabas, with the order of the Lord Christ, St. Mark went to Afriquia, Berka, and the Five Western cities. He preached the Gospel in these parts, and believed on his hands most of its people. From there, he went to Alexandria in the 1st. of Bashans 61 A.D.

When he entered the city, his shoe was torn because of the much walking in preaching and evangelism. He went to a cobbler in the city, called Anianus, to repair it. While he was repairing it the awl pierced his finger. Anianus shouted in Greek saying "EIS THEOS" which means "O, ONE GOD". When St. Mark heard these words his heart rejoiced exceedingly. He found it suitable to talk to him about the One God. The Apostle took some clay, spat on it and applied it to Anianus' finger, saying in the Name of Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the wound healed immediately, as if nothing happened to it.

Anianus was exceedingly amazed from this miracle that happened in the Name of Jesus Christ, and his heart opened to the word of God. The Apostle asked him about who was the only God that he cried for when he was injured. Anianus replied "I heard about him, but I do not know him." St. Mark started explaining to him from the beginning, the creation of heaven and earth, the transgression and fall of Adam, the flood, how God sent Moses, who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, and gave them the Law, the captivity of the children of Israel to Babylon, and the prophecies that foretold the coming of Christ.

Anianus invited him to go to his house and brought to him his children. The Saint preached and baptized them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

When the believers in the Name of Christ increased and the pagan people of the city heard that, they were raged with anger and thought of slaying St. Mark. The faithful advised him to get away for a short while for the sake of the safety of the church and its care. St. Mark ordained St. Anianus a Bishop for Alexandria, three priests and seven deacons. He went to the Five Western Cities, remained there for two years preaching, and ordained bishops, priests, and deacons.

He returned to Alexandria where he found the believers had increased in number, and built a church for them in the place known as Bokalia (The place of cows), east of Alexandria on the sea shore.

It came to pass, when he was celebrating the feast of the Resurrection on the 29th day of Baramudah, year 68 A.D., the same day coincided with the great pagan Celebration for the feast of the god Syrabis, a multitude of them assembled and attacked the church at Bokalia and forced their way in. They seized St. Mark, bound him with a thick rope and dragged him in the roads and streets crying, "Drag the dragon to the place of Cows." They continued dragging him with severe cruelty. His flesh was torn and scattered everywhere, and the ground of the city was covered with his blood. They cast him that night into a dark prison.

The angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him: "O Mark, the good servant, rejoice for your name has been written in the book of life, and you have been counted among the congregation of the saints." The angel disappeared, then the Lord Christ appeared to him, and gave him peace. His soul rejoiced and was glad.

The next morning (30th of Baramudah), the pagans took St. Mark from the prison. They tied his neck with a thick rope and did the same as the day before, dragging him over the rocks and stones. Finally, St. Mark delivered up his pure soul in the hand of God, and received the crown of martyrdom, the apostolic crown, the crown of evangelism, and the crown of virginity.

Nevertheless, St. Mark's death did not satisfy the rage of the pagans and their hatred. They gathered much firewood and prepared an inferno to burn him. A severe storm blew and heavy rains fell. The pagans became frightened, and they fled away in fear.

The believers came and took the holy body, carried it to the church they built at Bokalia, wrapped it up, prayed over him and place it in a coffin. They laid it in a secret place in this church.

*The prayers of this great Saint and honorable Evangelist be with us and Glory be to our God forever.
Amen.*

The Blessed Month Of Bashans
The First Day

*The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
The Mother of God*

On this day the church celebrates the birth of the pure Virgin St. Mary, the Mother of God (Theotokos), through whom Salvation came to mankind. She was born in the city of Nazareth, where her parents lived. Her father was grieved in his heart for he could not offer an offering to God for he did not have any children. In the fullness of time according to the Divine Will, the angel of the Lord was sent to announce Joachim, her father, while he was on the mountain praying, and said to him: "The Lord will give you offspring through whom salvation comes to the world."

Immediately he went down the mountain believing what the angel told him, and he told his wife Anna of what he saw and heard. She rejoiced, gave thanks to the Lord, and vowed that the child who was to be born to her would become a servant in the house of the Lord all the days of her/his life. She conceived, and gave birth to this Saint and called her Mary who had become the Queen of all women of the world, and through her we have received the grace.

May her intercession be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Second Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

1. *The Departure of the righteous Job.*
2. *The Departure of St. Tadros (Theodore), the disciple of St. Pachomius.*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Philothaos.*

1. On this day the righteous Job departed. He was a righteous man in his generation and upright in his time, as the bible testified about him: "... there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" (Job 1:8) The devil envied him and asked God to allow him to harm Job and to destroy his wealth. God allowed that, because of His foreknowledge of the patience and perseverance of Job and that he would be an example and a model for those who come after him as the bible said: "You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord" (James 5:11). In one day, Job lost his sons and daughters, his cattle, and all his wealth. In addition, the evil one also stricken his body with a Leprosy from his head to his feet. In all this Job offered thanksgiving and praise to God, and never murmured or grumbled against his Creator. All what he said was: "May the day perish on which I was born" (Job 3:3). He said also about the loss of his children: "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21) "In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong" (Job 1:22).

The thing that hurt Job the most, was the harsh words of his wife and his friends. His wife advised him to blaspheme, but Job refused, and rebuked her saying: "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (Job 2:10).

Job remained sick for 30 years until he was purified as gold is purified with fire. At last the Lord spoke to him from the clouds and healed him from his sickness and doubled the wealth he had and gave him other sons and daughters. He lived to a good old age and departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also St. Tadros (Theodore) the disciple of St. Pachomius, the father of the spiritual monastic communal life (Coenobitic system), departed. He became monk at a young age under the guidance of Anba Pachomius and showed great asceticism, with extraordinary obedience, so that St. Pachomius loved him and he delegated him to preach to the brethren.

When St. Pachomius departed, St. Tadros replaced him. He was a good example in meekness and patience. When he completed his course, and finished his strife, he departed to the Lord whom he loved.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, St. Philothaos was martyred. He was from the people of "Doronka" in the province of Assuit. He was tortured without denying his faith and finally he received the crown of martyrdom in the year 1096 A.M.

May his intercession be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

<h3>The Third Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans</h3>
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1. The Departure of St. Jason, one of the Seventy disciples.

2. The Departure of St. Otimus, the Priest.

3. The Departure of Pope Gabriel IV, the 86th. Patriarch of Alexandria.

1. On this day St. Jason, one of the seventy disciples who were chosen by the Lord, departed. He ministered with the disciples before the passion of the Savior, and performed many signs and wonders. Then he was supported by the grace and power on the day of Pentecost.

He was born in Tarsus, and was the first to believe from this city. He accompanied St. Paul on his evangelical missions, and journeyed with him to many countries. He was arrested with St. Paul and Silas in Thesalonica, and when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. (Acts 17:9)

He was ordained bishop by St. Paul over Tarsus where he shepherded the church of Christ with the best of care. He preached the Gospel also in the city of Korkiras, many believed on his hands and he baptized them. He built for them a church in the name of St. Stephen the Archdeacon.

When the Governor of the city knew about this, he arrested him and imprisoned him. He met seven thieves in the prison, taught them the faith and baptized them. They confessed their faith in the Lord Christ openly before the Governor who put them in a caldron filled with tar and sulphur, they departed and were granted the crown of martyrdom.

Then, the Governor brought St. Jason from the prison, and tortured him with much torture but he was not harmed. The daughter of the Governor watched this torture from her window and she believed in the Lord Christ, the God of St. Jason. She took off her jewelry and ornaments and distributed them among the poor, and confessed that she was Christian and believed in the God of Jason. Her father became angry, he threw her in prison, and ordered to throw arrows at her. She gave up her pure spirit in the hand of Christ whom she loved.

The Governor sent St. Jason to one of the islands to be tortured there. He took a boat with some soldiers to this island, and God drowned them all and saved St. Jason, who continued to teach and preach for many years until another Governor was installed. The new Governor brought him and the Christians who were with him, and tortured them much. When the Governor saw that his torture did not harm their bodies, he and all those in his city also believed in the Lord Christ Who only Has the power to protect His chosen one. The Saint baptized them all, taught them the commandments of the Gospel, and built for them churches. God performed through him many miracles and signs. He departed in a good old age.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Otimus the priest was martyred. He was born in Fowwa, and because of his righteousness, he was ordained a priest for his city. He taught and confirmed the faithful in the faith. Afterwards, he moved to mount Ansena. When Emperor Diocletian incited the persecution against the Christians, the account of this Saint reached Arianus the governor of Ansena. He brought him and offered him to worship the idols, and the Saint did not hearken to his orders. He tortured him much, but the Lord strengthened him. When the Governor became weary of his torturing, he ordered him to be burned. He was burned and received the crown of martyrdom.

His body was taken by a God fearing priest, who shrouded the body and hid it in a place until the end of the time of persecution. They built him a church where God revealed many miracles. It is believed that his body still exists in the city of Kalabsha near El-Santa.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also of the year 1094 A.M. (April 1378 A.D.), Pope Gabriel the fourth, the 86th Patriarch, departed. He was the abbot of the monastery of El-Moharrak. He sat on the apostolic throne on the 11th of Tubah, 1086 A.M. (January 6th, 1370 A.D.).

He was a great scholar and righteous ascetic. During his time, in the year 1370 A.D., a great light appeared during the night which looked like a day light and lingered until dawn. In 1371 A.D., there was a great flood in the river Nile valley which threatened to drown all the land.

He was contemporary of El-Sultan Shabaan and El-Sultan Ali Ebn-Shabaan El Mansour. He sat

on the throne for 8 years, three months, and twenty two days. He was buried beside Simeon the shoe maker.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

1. *The Departure of Pope John (Youhanna) the First, the Twenty Ninth Patriarch of the See of St. Mark.*

2. *The Departure of pope Yoannis the Fifth the Seventy Second Patriarch.*

1. On this day of the year 221 A.M. (April 29th., 505 A.D.), Pope John the first, the twenty ninth Pope of Alexandria, departed. This father was born in Alexandria to Christian parents, and was attracted since his youth to the monastic life. He became a monk in the wilderness of St. Macarius, and he was chosen Patriarch after the departure of his predecessor Pope Athanasius the second. He did not accept but was taken by force by the bishops, priests, and lay leaders and ordained him on the first of Babah of the year 213 A.M. (September 29th., 496 A.D.). After his enthronement, he gave special attention to education and preaching for the edification and the steadfastness of the faithful in the Orthodox faith. He was the first Patriarch to be chosen from among the monks.

The Roman Emperor in Constantinople, at that time, was the righteous Emperor Zenon. For this reason the hand of the Patriarch was strengthened in spreading the Orthodox faith in all of Egypt. The Emperor sent all the needs of the monasteries from wheat, oil, wine and money to renew the buildings of their cells and to restore their churches. All the days of this pope were days of peace and tranquility. When he finished his good course, he became sick for a short time, and then departed in peace, after he had been on the throne of St. Mark for eight years and seven month.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 882 A.M. (April 29th., 1166 A.D.), Pope Yoannis the fifth, the 72nd. Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. He was John the monk from the monastery of Abu-Yehnis (John). He was enthroned on the 2nd. of El-Nasi (Intercalary days), year 863 A.M. (August 25th., 1147 A.D.) He was a holy, righteous, and pure man. In his days, the Copts (El-Nasarah - Christians) were persecuted by the Moslem governors (Emams) and Khalifas, and many were killed or sold as slaves. A monk named "Bashnouna" from the monastery of St. Macarius was martyred on the 24th. of Bashons year 880 A.M. (1164 A.D.) and his body was burned for he refused to change his faith. The bones of this Saint were preserved in the church of Abu-Serga. They also destroyed the church of St. Mina in Haret El-Rome, and the church of El-Zohari and many other churches in different parts of Cairo after they plundered what was in them. But God permitted these churches to be rebuilt by the Coptic layman Abu El-Fakher Salib Ebn-Mikhail.

The Patriarch was arrested during the days of El-Aadel Ebn El-Selar and was imprisoned because he refused to ordain a Metropolitan for Ethiopia instead of its Metropolitan who was still alive.

The metropolitan name was Anba Michael El-Atfihi who was ordained by Pope Macarius. The Pope was released two weeks later because of the death of El-Aadel.

During the days of this Patriarch, the words "Life-giving" was added to the confession which became: "This is the life-giving Flesh that Thine Only-Begotten Son, Our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, took from our Lady ..."

He departed after he had been on the throne of St. Mark for 18 years, 8 month, and 4 days.
May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

The Martyrdom of St. Jeremiah the Prophet

On this day, the prophet Jeremiah, one of the major prophets, the son of Hilkiyah the priest, was martyred. He prophesied in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah and Jehoiakim son of Josiah. God had chosen him for He said: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations" (Jr 1:5). He rebuked the children of Israel for they left the worship of God and rejected His Commandments. He warned them of the anger of God if they did not return on their transgressions. When he saw their hard hearts and the fast approaching judgement of the Lord, he prayed fervently weeping so that God might forgive the sins of his people. God rejected his prayers with regard to those who did not obey him, and He moved Nebuchadnezzar to besiege Jerusalem. His soldiers conquered it under the leadership of Nebuzardan who killed many of them inside the city. After they had taken all the precious possessions of the temple, the king's palace, and the nobles of the people, they took with them all those who were left alive to Babylon. Among those who were driven to exile was the prophet Jeremiah. Nevertheless, when Nebuzardan saw him bound with the rest, he set him free. He then wrote his "Lamentations" for the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, the temple and the exile of his people for 70 years in Babylon.

This Prophet prophesied about the coming of Our Lord and Savior, and His sufferings and passion. His life ended when the Jews themselves stoned him in Egypt, and he died a martyr in prison.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Sixth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Isaac El-Defrawi.*
2. *The Departure of St. Macarius of Alexandria.*
3. *The Departure of Father Paphnute of El-Bandarrah.*

1. On this day, St. Isaac El-Defrawi was martyred. He was born in the city of Defra, district of Tanta. When he grew up, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision, and told him to go to the town of Towwa, district of Beba, to receive the crown of martyrdom. He instantly went to his parents to bid them farewell, they wept and forbade him from doing that. The angel of the Lord appeared to him again and took him out of the town. When he arrived to Towwa, he professed his faith before the Governor saying: "I believe in the Lord Christ". The Governor placed him under guard until he had returned from the city of Nakyos.

It happened when St. Isaac was passing by, with the soldier, a blind man, was sitting on the wayside, asked him to give him sight. He said to him: "Do not say give me, but let it be according to your faith", and then he prayed to the Lord Christ for his sake, and the man was given sight straightaway. When the soldier saw that, he believed. When the Governor returned, the soldier confessed the Lord Christ before him, he ordered to cut off his head, and received the crown of martyrdom.

The Governor became angry at St. Isaac, and tormented him severely, then sent him to the city of El-Bahnasa to be tortured there. It happened when he was in the boat, he asked for a drink, and a sailor gave him little of water, and the man was with one eye. The Saint took some of the water and poured it over him, and the man received the sight in his blind eye immediately. When the Saint arrived to El-Bahnasa, the Governor tortured him severely, but the Lord comforted and healed him and finally the Governor ordered him to be beheaded, and he received the crown of life. Some of the faithful took his body and carried it to his town Defra and buried him there. Then they built a church after his name.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 395 A.D., the blessed father St. Macarius of Alexandria departed. He was a contemporary of St. Macarius the great (Senior), the father of the monks, and for this reason, he was called St. Macarius, the Junior. He became a monk at one of the monasteries near by Alexandria. For his asceticism, he became the father and the spiritual guide for all the monk's cells in the area that near by Alexandria, so he was also called the father of the cells.

He practiced many worships and possessed many virtues in his ascetic life. Among these practices, he once stayed for five days with his thoughts in heaven, occupied with early Saints, prophets, angels, apostles and the Lord Christ, while he was standing on his sleeping mat. After two nights, the devils started to scratch his feet, twisting themselves as snakes around his feet. They also showed him fire in his cell, however with patience, the fire and the phantoms disappeared. On the fifth day, he could not control his thoughts with regards to the needs of life. This happened so that

he would not become proud of what he had spiritually achieved. He said to himself: "I have remained in the ascetic life for 50 years, and they had not been like these five days."

After he had managed the schools of those were seeking to be baptized, he lived alone (Recluse) in the year 335 A.D. in el-Natroun desert, where he became the abbot of all the monasteries in this desert.

It happened that he walked in the desert for several days in unpaved road, and was placing sticks of reed during the way to help him recognize the way to come back. When he wanted to return, he found the devil had removed all the sticks to mislead him. When he became thirsty, God sent him a wild cow, and he drank from its milk, until he returned to his cell.

One day a hyena came to him and pulled his garment. He followed her to her den, and it brought out her three young ones. He found that they were all malformed, and was amazed from the intelligence of the animal. He prayed and put his hands on them, and they were healed. The hyena disappeared for a while, and she came back with a sheep skin which he used to sleep on until his departure.

At one time, the thoughts of pride disturbed him until he was weary of it. These thoughts invited him to come to Rome to heal the sick there, instead of them suffering the travel to him. He slept in his cell, and extended his feet outside the cell, and said to his thoughts: "You can travel now if you can." When his thoughts went on disturbing him, he carried on his shoulder a basket full of sand, and walked in the desert until he became physically tired, the thoughts of pride left him, and he rested.

Once, he went to the monastery of St. Pachomius in a layman's garment, and stayed there during the forty days of Lent. No one saw him eating or sitting down. He was making baskets of palm leaves while he was standing. The monks said to St. Pachomius: "Cast out this man from here, for he is not human." He asked them to be patient until God reveals his story to them. St. Pachomius inquired of God about him, and God told him that he was St. Macarius of Alexandria. They were all happy to hear that, they welcomed him and received his blessings. When he found that his virtues have been revealed, he returned to his monastery.

It happened that it did not rain for some time in Alexandria, and the Patriarch called him. When he arrived to Alexandria, the rain started to fall, and it continued to rain until they asked him to stop it. He prayed and God stopped it.

Emperor Valens exiled him with St. Macarius the great to one of the islands. They guided its people to the Christian faith, and then they returned to their monasteries.

He considered that the virtue that was revealed and became known to everyone, was rendered useless. When he heard that someone had a virtue that he did not have, he practiced this virtue until he mastered it more than him.

He completed his life in a good spiritual conduct until he reached a good old age, and departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, father Papnoda (Paphnute) who was from El-Bandarrah, departed.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

The Departure of St. Athanasius the Apostolic the 20th. Pope of Alexandria

On this day of the year 89 A.M. (373 A.D.) the great Pope Anba Athanasius the apostolic, the 20th. Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was born to pagan parents about the year 295 - 298 A.D. It happened that when he was in school, he saw some Christian children acting the Christian rituals some as priests, some as deacons and one of them as a bishop. He asked their permission to participate with them, but they refused saying: "You are pagan, and you are not allowed to mix with us." He answered them: "I am from now on a Christian." They rejoiced with him, they made him a patriarch over them in the play, they enthroned him on a high place, and they offered him honor and respect. At that time pope Alexandros passed by, when he saw them, he said to those who were with him about Athanasius: "This child would be in a great position one day."

When Athanasius' father died, his mother brought him to Pope Alexandros, who taught them the principles of the Christian faith and baptized them. They gave their money to the poor, and stayed with the Pope, who taught Athanasius the church subjects, and ordained him deacon and made him a personal secretary. The gifts of the Holy spirit increased in him. He was chosen Patriarch on the 8th. of Bashans of the year 44 A.M. (May 5th., 328 A.D.) after the departure of Pope Alexanderos.

Pope Alexanderos had recommended Athanasius, his deacon, for the Papacy, who lived with St. Antonios the father of the monks and followed his example in asceticism. He manifested his brilliancy in exposing "Arius" in the universal council, when Arius said about Christ that he was "similar" in essence with the Father, St. Athanasius said: "One in essence with the Father." In this fashion he manifested his excellence.

St. Athanasius hid himself in the mountains, after the departure of Pope Alexanderos for he believed of his unworthiness to this serious and important position. The people sought him until they found him, and brought him to the bishops, and was ordained Pope in 328 A.D.

The historian Socrates testified about him saying: "Athanasius fluency in speech and his outspokenness in the council of Nicea brought over him all the hardships that he encountered in his life."

After he became a Pope, he ordained for Ethiopia its first Metropolitan whose name was Anba "Salama". The church of Ethiopia have followed the church of Alexandria since that time. The spiritual and religious state in Ethiopia had established and settled since that time.

St. Athanasius was exiled away from his Chair five times:

1. The First Exile:

Arius, after he had been excommunicated, tried to return to Alexandria, by sending a misleading and flattering letter to Emperor Constantine, which touched him. The Emperor asked Pope Athanasius to take him back. Athanasius refused to accept him because that would be a contradiction to the decision of the Universal Council.

The Arians accused Pope Athanasius with these charges:

1. That he supported pope Philominus who rebelled against the government.
2. That he broke the communion cup of the priest Eskira, and destroyed his altar.
3. That he killed bishop Arsanius, and used his arms in sorcery.
4. That he also raped a nun.

The Pope cleared himself from the first charge. A council was assembled in Tyre, most of the attendants were Arians, were against Athanasius to look into these charges. In the second charge, the Lord moved the priest Eskira's heart, who had conspired with them to testify falsely against him, and he cleared the Pope from that charge.

With regard of the third charge, Arsanius the bishop, who had agreed with them to accuse the Pope falsely for his murder, came to the council. Pope Athanasius kept him in an adjacent room. The Arians brought two arms of a dead person and claimed that they were the arms of Arsanius. Then Arsanius was brought in, and showed his arms to the council and declared his regrets. The Arians said that Athanasius was a sorcerer and he was able to make arms for him. They became violent against Arsanius who left the council and went to the Emperor.

Then they looked in the matter of the rape, they brought a harlot who claimed that Athanasius raped her. One of the entourage of Pope Athanasius, a priest called Timothy said to her: "How dare you to say that I came to your house, and overpowered your will?" She thought that the priest was Athanasius for she did not know him, and she said: "You are". At once the false claim was exposed.

Athanasius could not meet the Emperor because of the interferences of the Arians, who accused him before the Emperor that he prevented the export of the wheat from Alexandria to the Emperor. The Emperor gave his order to exile Athanasius to Trefe (Treves) in France in February 5th., 335 A.D. where its bishop had met him with great honor.

Arius died a horrible death as Socrates said: "God made Arius to die in a public washroom, where his bowels poured out of his body, and the people regarded his death as a punishment from the Divine Justice."

When the Emperor heard about the death of Arius, he recognized the innocence of Athanasius, and recommended while he was on his death bed, in the year 337 A.D. that Athanasius be returned to Alexandria. After the departure of Constantine, the Empire was divided, Constantine II over France, Egypt became under the rule of Constantius, and Constance over Italy. With the mediation of Constantine, the Pope returned in the year 338 A.D. The people of Alexandria received him with great joy.

2. The Second Exile:

The Arians did not stop at that, but assembled a council, where they excommunicated Athanasius. They appointed instead someone called Gregory, and they sent their decision to Julius, Bishop of Rome. Pope Athanasius assembled a council in Alexandria in 340 A.D. where he protested against the Arians, then he wrote a letter to all the churches to declare his innocence.

However, the Arians influenced Philogorius to help to install their appointed Patriarch Gregory to take over the churches of Alexandria, and they also influenced Emperor Constantius.

The people of Alexandria were horrified, and decided to resist, but the Arians attacked the churches in Alexandria on Good Friday, raped and slain many worshipers.

Pope Athanasius sought the help of all the churches in the world, left his Chair, and traveled to Rome. A council was assembled in Sardica, where they declared:

- a. The innocence of Pope Athanasius
- b. Confirmed the canons and the Creed of faith of the Council of Nicea.
- c. They excommunicated the Arian bishops.
- d. Deposed Gregory from his office.

They delegated two bishops to meet Emperor Constans, the ruler of Italy, who agreed on what the council had decided, and threatened his brother Emperor Constantius with war if he did not return Athanasius to Alexandria. At the same time, some Egyptian radicals rose up and killed Gregory in 349 A.D. Athanasius returned for the second time to his Chair, and the people received him with joy. Gregory the Theologian, the writer of the liturgy, described this reception saying: "The people came as the flood of the Nile," and he also pointed out to the palm branches, the carpets, and the many clapping hands.

3. The Third Exile:

The Arians did not like the return of Athanasius to Alexandria, and waited unwillingly until the death of Emperor Constans. The Arians accused Athanasius before Constantius that he collaborated with Magneutius who was the enemy of the Emperor. Constantius obtained a condemnation of Athanasius and his exile from a council assembled at Arles and another one at Milan. The soldiers went to the church of St. Mary which was built by Pope Theonas (The 16th. Patriarch). Athanasius was praying the Vespers service. The soldiers rushed inside the church to arrest him, but God blinded them from recognizing him from the rest of the people and the lamps

were extinguished. Athanasius escaped and went to the desert, and remained for sometime with the monks. The Arians appointed George of Cappadocia, bishop on Alexandria, but the Orthodox refused to accept him and anathematized him. He took over all the churches and its properties. Nevertheless, the pagans whom he persecuted, killed him and burnt his body.

4. The Fourth Exile:

After the death of Constantius, Julian his cousin became Emperor. He wanted to rally the people of Alexandria so he returned Athanasius. Athanasius assembled a council in 362 A.D., and provided conditions for the acceptance of the Arians that wish to return to the church. He also gave a special attention to the preaching among the pagans. This was not appreciated by Emperor Julian, who loved and supported the pagans.

He ordered the arrest of Athanasius. Athanasius went out of Alexandria, and took a boat to Upper Egypt. The Governor followed him in another boat, and when he approached the boat of Athanasius, he asked about the boat of the Pope. They said to him that he was not too far away. The Governor went on his way in hurry but he did not find Athanasius, for he hid himself in another place.

Those around the Pope were greatly saddened because of the much tribulations that befell him. Athanasius told them, that in times of persecution, he felt great inner peace and that God took care of him and embraced him with His grace more than any other time in his life. He also said: "The persecution of Emperor Julian is like a summer cloud that will go away." While they were in these conversation, the news came to them that Julian was killed in his war with the Persians, and that he was killed by St. Mercurius (Abu Sefain), and that he said just before his death: "You have overcome me, O You son of Mary."

5. The Fifth Exile:

Jovian became Emperor after Julian had been killed, then Valens became Emperor and he was Arian. In 367 A.D. valens ordered the exile of Athanasius again. Athanasius was forced to leave Alexandria and hid in the tomb of his father. Meanwhile, the Emperor killed 30 bishops who were pro-Athanasius. The Emperor saw the determination of the Copts, and decided to lift the persecution, and to return Athanasius to his Chair in 368 A.D.

Although Athanasius reached the age of 72, he did not compromise in performing his duties. For his steadfastness and his firm stand for justice, the world described him by the saying: "Athanasius against the world."

He wrote several books about the Arians, on the Incarnation, and other subjects. Abba Cosma (The 44th. Patriarch) praised these publications by saying: "I ask anyone who would find the books of Athanasius to write them on paper, and for those who could not find paper, to write them on their clothes."

Athanasius was the first Pope to wear the monastic tunic from the hand of St. Antonios. He made it the uniform for bishops and patriarchs. He was the one who ordained St. Antonios a priest, and then Archpriest.

He departed in peace after he had been on the Apostolic Throne for forty five years.

May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans ⁽²⁾

1. *The Martyrdom of St. John of Senhout.*

2. *The Departure of St. Daniel the Archpriest of Sheahat (Scetis).*

1. On this day St. John of Senhout, departed. He was born in Senhout, his father's name was Macarius and his mother's name was Anna.

It came to pass that when he was tending the sheep flock of his father, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, showed him a crown of light and said to him: "Why are you sitting here while many others are persecuted, now rise up and go to the city of Atrib (Banha), struggle for the Name of the Lord Christ"; then the angel gave him the salutation of peace and departed from him.

He bade farewell to his parents, went to the Governor, and confessed the Lord Christ before him. The Governor delivered him to one of the soldiers to entreat him kindly that perhaps he would change his mind and be obedient to him. However the Saint performed several miracles before the soldier that made him also believe in the Lord Christ and received the crown of martyrdom by the hands of the Governor. The Governor became angry and tortured the Saint with every kind of torture, but the Lord strengthened him and made him to endure it. Then the Saint was sent to Ansena (Antinoe), where he was again tortured. At the end they cut off his head by the sword. Julius El Akfahasy took his body, shrouded, and sent it to his town Senhout. The people received him with hymns and praise, and placed him in the church. The body of the Saint now is located in Shoubra El-Khema in Egypt.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also the holy father Anba Daniel the Archpriest of Sheahat (Scetis), departed. He was perfect and pure father. When his fame was noised abroad, many came to him among whom was St. Anastasia disguised in a man's apparel. She became a nun, and lived in a cell near him for 28 years and no one knew who he (She) was.

². On this day is the commemoration of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ to heaven, putting in our account that the Resurrection was on the 29th. of Baramhat. You can find this account in the end of the fourth volume, among the changeable feasts (i.e. doesn't have a fixed date).

One day, the Saint saw a person whose name was Olagi (Eulogius), who worked as a stone cutter for a Karat of gold each day. With a very small portion of this he lived and with the remainder he fed the poor without saving any thing. When Abba Daniel saw his good fight and the excellence of his deeds, he asked God to give Olagi more money to increase his deeds of mercy. God answered his prayer, and Olagi found a treasure when he was cutting the stones, which he took and went to Constantinople. With the newly found money he became a minister to the Emperor, and forsake the deeds of mercy.

When St. Daniel heard about this, he went to Constantinople, and found what had become of Olagi, and that he had abandoned his deeds of mercy. Then the Saint saw in a vision as if the Lord Christ is sitting judging among the people and that he commanded to crucify St. Daniel and demanded from him the lost soul of Olagi. When the Saint rose up from his sleep, he went back to his monastery, and entreated God to bring Olagi back to his former state. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and rebuked him for rejecting God's judgement of His creation. Afterwards, the Emperor of Constantinople died and another reigned who dismissed Olagi and took his money and wanted to kill him. He escaped in order to save his life and returned to his town to cut the stones as before. Anba Daniel met Olagi and told him all what had happened to him because of him.

Many hardships befell St. Daniel because of the faith, and God manifested many miracles through him. He knew in advance the time of his departure from this world, he gathered all the monks around him, commanded, strengthened, and comforted them and then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Ninth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

1. *The Departure of St. Helena, The Empress.*
2. *The Departure of Pope Yoannis the Eleventh, the 89th. Patriarch of Alexandria.*
3. *The Departure of St. Gabriel the Eighth, the 97th. Patriarch of Alexandria.*

1. On this day of 327 A.D., St. Helena the Empress, departed. She was born in the city of Raha (Edessa) for Christian parents about the year 247 A.D. They brought her up in a Christian manner, taught her the doctrine of the church and the religious ethics. She was very beautiful. When Emperor Constantius the First, Emperor of Byzantium, came to the city of Raha, and heard about this Saint, he sought her out and married her. She gave birth to Constantine who became the first Christian Emperor. She raised him up well, and taught him philosophy, wisdom and knighthood. During the reign of her son, she saw a vision at night as if one said to her: "Go to Jerusalem and search carefully for the Honorable Cross and the Holy places." When she informed her son about this, he sent her with many soldiers to Jerusalem.

She searched for the wood of the Honorable Cross until she found it along with the other two crosses whereon the two thieves were crucified. She wanted to know which was the cross of the Lord Christ. St. Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, told her that it was the cross that was written on

the top of it: "This is Jesus, king of the Jews." She asked him that she wished to see a miracle to make sure that it was the cross of the Lord. By the Will of God, a procession of a dead man was passing by at that time. She placed the other two crosses on the body of the dead man, but he did not rise. When she placed the third cross, straightway the dead rose up. Her faith increased and her joy multiplied. She built many churches as it is written under the 17th. day of the month of Tute (Vol. I, P.25). She gave the needed money to build the churches to St. Macarius, she took the honorable Cross and the nails and returned to her righteous son Emperor Constantine. He kissed the Cross and placed it in a case made of gold and decorated with precious stones, and placed some of the nails in his helmet.

St. Helena led a righteous life, and she endowed many endowments for the churches, monasteries and the poor. She departed at age of eighty.

May her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 1168 A.M. (May 4th., 1452 A.D.) Pope Yoannis the eleventh, the 89th. Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. He was known as Yoannis El-Maksi for he was from El-Maksa in Cairo. His name was Farag before his ordination. He was enthroned Patriarch on the 16th. of Bashans, 1143 A.M. (May 11th., 1427 A.D.). He sat on the throne of St. Mark for 24 years, 11 month, and 23 days. His residence was in the patriarchal cell in Haret Zewala. When he departed, he was buried in the tomb of the monastery of El-Khandak. The Chair remained unoccupied after his departure, for four month and six days. He was contemporary to the rulers El-Ashraf, El-Aziz, El-Zaher, and El-Mansour. He encountered many hardships that required the intervention of the kings of Ethiopia who threatened the Egyptian government to cut the flow of the Nile because of the persecution of El-Nasara (The Copts, the Nazarenes). The Patriarch was forbidden to communicate with the kings of Ethiopia and Nubia without the permission and knowledge of the rulers of the government.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also of the year 1319 A.M. (May 14th., 1603 A.D.), Pope Gabriel the eighth, the 97th. Patriarch of Alexandria, departed during the reign of Sultan Ahmad the first, the Ottoman. He was from Meer, and became a monk in Anba Bishoy monastery in the wilderness of Sheahat (Scetis). His name was Shenouda, and was ordained Patriarch on sunday the 16th. of Baounah 1303 A.M. (June 20th., 1587 A.D.). The enthronement celebration was headed by Anba Zacharias, Bishop of Jerusalem, and Anba Kyrellos El-Khiami, in the church of St. Mercurius in Old Cairo. At the time of his ordination, the Copts were divided, and they chose for themselves four patriarchs, and they deposed him. He returned later on to his Chair at the time of Sultan Mourad the third, the Ottoman and his papacy was confirmed.

It came to pass (As was written in a document in St. Antonios monastery) that he decreed that the fast of the Apostles must start on the 21st. of Baounah until the 5th. of Abib, and that there should be no fasting during the three days of Nineva, the Advent fast should start on the first of Kiahk, and that the fast of the Virgin be left optional. All the Copts at that time approved what he had decreed. However, after his departure, they returned back to the old tradition of fasting.

He departed in the monastery of the Virgin Mary known as El-Sourian, after he had been on the throne of St. Mark for fifteen years, ten month, and twenty four days.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Tenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

The Departure of the Three Hebrew Young Men Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael

On this day is the commemoration of the departure of the three young men the Saints: Hananiah (Ananias), Azariah (Azarias) and Mishael (Misael). These Saints were the sons of Jehoiakim king of Judah. They were exiled by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. When Nebuchadnezzar chose some of the exiled young men to be in his service. These young men and Daniel, their cousin, among those who were chosen. Ashpenaz the master of the eunuchs gave them other names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah : Shadrach; to Mishael : Meshach; and to Azariah : Abed-Nego.

These young men purposed in their heart that they would not defile themselves with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore they requested of the chief of the eunuchs that they might not defile themselves. The chief of the eunuchs said to them, "I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king." They said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over them: "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our countenances be examined before you, and the countenances of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants." So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenance appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. When the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm, and he appointed them governors on all the provinces of Babylon. (Daniel 1:8-20)

When the king made an image of gold, and the three Hebrew young men did not worship it, those envious of them, accused them before the king that they did not worship the image. The king brought them and asked them about that and they confessed that they only worship the true God. He commanded them to be casted in a burning fiery furnace. The Lord sent His angel, who protected them and made the fire as a cool dew although it burnt the men that threw them in the

fiery furnace. When the king saw that, he believed in their God and promoted them in the province of Babylon.

On the tenth day of Bashans, while they were praying, and kneeling down, they gave up the spirit at the hand of the Lord. A great earthquake occurred. The king was terrified, and inquired from Daniel about what had happened, who told him that the three Hebrew young men had died. The king came to the place and mourned them. He ordered that three beds made of ebony be made, and their bodies be wrapped in silk, and then placed on the beds. He also ordered a bed made of gold for himself, so that when he died, they would place him on it among them.

Pope Theophilus, the 23rd. Patriarch, built a church after their names and wanted to relocate their bodies to it. He delegated St. John the short and sent him to Babylon. When he arrived to the place where they were buried, he heard a voice saying: "The Lord has ordained that our bodies remain in this place, but because of your labor of love, when you return, say to the Patriarch to fill the oil lamps with oil on the night of the consecration of the church, and the power of God will be revealed." When he returned, and told the Pope, he did as he was commanded, and the oil lamps (Kandeels) lighted up. They glorified God, and completed the consecration after the names of these Saints. (See Vol. I, P.69)

May their prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eleventh Day Of the Blessed Month Of Bashans
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1. *The Martyrdom of St. Theoclia, the wife of St. Justus.*
2. *The Departure of St. Paphnutius (St. Paphnuti), the Bishop.*

1. On this day, St. Theoclia, the wife of St. Justus (Whose commemoration is on the 10th. day of Amshir - Vol.II, P.261) was martyred. After the Roman Emperor Diocletian had sent them to the Governor of Alexandria, he separated them. He sent St. Justus to Ansena (Antinoe), where he was martyred, and he sent St. Theoclia to Sa El-Hagar. When the Governor saw, her he was astonished, for those who leave the kingdom preferring to die instead. He first tried to persuade her, but she refused to accept his words saying: "I have left my kingdom, accepted the separation of my husband since my youth, and I have been comforted for my son for the sake of the Lord Christ, so what could you give me?" He ordered her to be beaten until her flesh was torn and then placed her in prison. The angel of the Lord appeared to her, comforted and strengthened her. When the prisoners witnessed that her wounds had been healed, they believed in the Lord Christ, and they received the crown of martyrdom. Then the Governor ordered her beheaded and she received the crown of martyrdom. Some believers came, paid the soldier silver, took her body, shrouded and placed it in a coffin until the end of the days of persecution.

May her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also St. Paphnuti, the Bishop, departed. He became a monk in the wilderness of St. Macarius. He exerted himself in asceticism and worship and lived his monastic life eating dry beans and fasted for days. He learned how to read and write, and learned the doctrines of the

church. He was ordained a priest, and stayed in the wilderness for thirty-five years. His virtues became known to everyone, and Pope Philotheos I, the sixty-third Patriarch of Alexandria, called him, and ordained him bishop.

He did not change his clothing except on the day of celebrating the Eucharist, then he put on his sackcloth that made of hair again. His spiritual fighting and asceticism were so intense that his body languished and he became ill. He asked God in his prayer: "O My Lord Jesus Christ, do not take away from me Your blessings for the sake of my office of bishop." The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "You know that when you were in the wilderness, there was no one to take care of you in your sickness, there was no one to minister to you, you could not find medications to relieve you, but God supported, sustained you, and kept sickness away from you. However, you are now in the world, and there are many who can take care of you, and offer you medications in your sickness."

He was a bishop for thirty two years. When the day of his departure drew near, he called the priests and the deacons, handed over to them the sacred property of the church and all its possessions, and told them: "Behold know that I am departing to the Lord Christ. I have walked among you, and the Lord Jesus to Whom I am about to stand before, testifies that I have never taken even one dinar from all the money which came to me from the bishop's office." He blessed them, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twelfth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

1. *The Commemoration of the Consecration of the church of St. Demiana.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Relocation of the relics of St. John Chrysostom.*
3. *The Commemoration of the Appearance of a Cross of light above Golgotha.*
4. *The Departure of Pope Mark the Seventh, the 106th. Patriarch of Alexandria.*
5. *The Commemoration of the Martyrdom of Master (Moallem) Malati.*

1. On this day, the church commemorates the consecration of the church of the virgin St. Demiana. This pure and fighting virgin was the daughter of Mark, who was the governor of El-Borollus, El-Zaafan and the valley of Saisaban. She was the only child of her parents. When she was one year old, her father took her to the church that was in the monastery of El-Maima. He offered gifts there so that God might bless this daughter and keep her safe Him.

When she was fifteen years old, her father wanted to get her married. She refused and told him that she had vowed herself a bride for the Lord Christ. When she found that her father was pleased of her decision, she asked him to build her an isolated palace, so that she could worship God with her virgin friends, and right away he did what she asked. He built the palace where she and the forty virgins lived in. They spent their time by reading the Holy Bible and praying fervently to God.

Shortly after, Emperor Diocletian sent for Mark her father and ordered him to worship the idols, but he refused at first. However, after some persuasion, Mark obeyed him and worshipped the idols, forsaking the creator of the universe.

When Mark returned, and St. Demiana knew of what her father had done, she rushed to meet him without a greeting saying: "What have I heard about you? I wished I have Heard the news of your death, and not knowing that you have forsaken God who have created you and worshipped what is made by hands. If you insist on what you have done and you do not relent by denouncing the idols, you are not my father, and I am not your daughter." She also said to him: "It is better for you, O my father, that you die a martyr and live with Christ in heaven forever, than you live as a pagan here and die with the devil in hades forever." Then she left him. Her father was moved by what she said and wept bitterly. He went in hurry to Diocletian and confessed the Lord Christ before him. When Diocletian could not change his mind, he ordered him to be beheaded.

When Diocletian knew that the one who turned Mark away from worshipping the idols was his daughter Demiana, he sent to her a prince to persuade her at first, and if she did not obey, he would cut off her head. The Prince came to her with an entourage of one hundred soldiers armed with all instruments of torture. When he arrived to her palace, he went to her and said: "I am an envoy sent by Emperor Diocletian. I came to ask you, according to his orders, to worship his gods, so he might grant you whatsoever you wish." St. Demiana shouted at the prince saying: "Curse the messenger and he who sent him. Are you not ashamed to call stones and wood gods that only dwelt by devils? There is no other God in heaven or on earth except the one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator, Who has no beginning and no end, the Omnipresent, and the Omniscient God, who will throw you in hell for eternal condemnation. As for me, I worship my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His Good Father and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity. I profess Him, depend on Him, and in His name I die and by Him I will live forever."

The Prince became angry of what she said, and ordered her to be placed in the body press. Her blood poured out on the ground, and the virgins were standing, weeping for her. Then they put her in prison, where the angel of the Lord appeared to her and touched her body with his celestial wings and healed her from all her wounds.

The Prince was creative in the ways he tortured St. Demiana, sometimes by rending her flesh, or placing her in boiling grease and oil. In all that, the Lord strengthened her and raised her up whole. When the Prince saw that his efforts were of no avail and the steadfastness of this pure virgin, he ordered her to be beheaded with all the virgins with her. They all received the crowns of martyrdom. *(The account of her martyrdom is mentioned in the thirteenth day of the month of Tubah - Vol.II, P.212)*

The Prince returned to Antioch, the city of the Emperor. The faithful came and gathered the bodies of the martyrs and kept them until the end of the days of persecution and the reign of the righteous Emperor the Christ-loving Constantine the great. He ordered to destroy the idol temples and built many churches after the names of the martyrs. He gathered the bodies of the martyrs in

every place and placed them in the churches. He endowed the churches with the necessary income to maintain them.

When Constantine knew of all what had happened to St. Demiana, and how she endured for a long time in the valley of El-Saisaban, he delegated his blessed mother St. Helena to take burial clothing, go to El-Zaafran, and build a church in the name of St. Demiana and the forty virgins, there.

St. Helena came to the valley, went up to the palace, and found that the bodies were unharmed. She found St. Demiana in the place where she used to sit and around her the forty virgins. She kissed the body, taking the blessing of the Saint and wrapped the bodies with expensive shrouds. She gathered the craftsmen and architects, tore down the palace, and built instead a well built tomb (Cellar) underground. She laid the body of St. Demiana on an ivory bed, and covered her with a precious bedspread and laid the forty virgins around her in it. Then she built a small and beautiful church which had one dome on the top of it. The church was consecrated by Pope Alexandros, the nineteenth Patriarch of Alexandria, on the 12th. of Bashans. He also ordained a saintly bishop, priests, and deacons to serve in the church day and night in prayers.

The bishop of this area, El-Zaafran and El-Borollus, was martyred and his body was placed in this church among the bodies of other martyrs. Abba Yoannis, Bishop of El Borullus, said in his book, *The History of the Church*: "The church was destroyed in the 8th. century by one of the Arab rulers, who built in its place a palace for his residence."

At this time, the water of the Mediterranean sea flooded the Delta of the Nile river until it reached the city of Samannoud to the western side of the church that called "Zion" by the old citadel. This flooding was caused by the deterioration of the barrier, which held back the sea water. When the news reached the king Hassan Ibn Atahia, he was saddened because this district brought the government much money because it was rich in its highly priced aromatic plants. One of his close aids, who was a Jew, told the king to bring the Patriarch of the Copts and order him to pray in faith to return everything to where they were before the flood.

God assisted this Patriarch through the help of one of the holy men who was known as El-Toffahi in this trying time. The Patriarch prayed in the church at Samannoud in the presence of the king. Then the Patriarch went out of the church raising the Cross. The people were saying Lord have mercy and the holy man, El-Toffahi, behind him. Instantly, the water receded to the north before them. The Patriarch, behind him El-Toffahi, the priests, the people, and the king continued to walk until they arrived to El-Zaafran where they erected tents for the king beside the destroyed palace, under which the body of St. Demiana along with the bodies of the forty martyrs were kept. The Patriarch prayed and knelt to the ground with all the people with him. At this moment, a great miracle and sign occurred that amazed everyone. A great wind blew in the sea and the waves became very high, which caused great quantities of sand to form a great barrier with the power of God almighty which was stronger than the original one. Then the winds calmed down.

The Patriarch returned to the king, who received him with honor and told him: "O Patriarch, ask from me, something to do for you." The Patriarch replied: "I need your assistance in building a

church in this place because it contains the bodies of Saints who were martyred, for they refused to worship idols. The king ordered that the place be cleaned. The Patriarch opened the door of the cellar, went down, and found the forty bodies of the martyrs around the bed of St. Demiana. The king ordered at once to build a church with one dome, which was consecrated by the Patriarch on the 12th. day of Bashans.

The news of this church spread in all the country and the people came with their offerings to it. The church was consecrated for the first time during the reign of Constantine and the second time was on this day.

The king ordered that no one disturb the Copts, so it was a peaceful and tranquil time in all Egypt. The king returned to his palace in Misr (Cairo) and always asked the Patriarch to visit him periodically. He came to visit the king with great honor till his departure.

The king of Egypt at that time was Hassan Ibn Atahia, who was just, loved the churches, and treated the bishops and the monks with great respect. He loved Pope Khail the first, the forty-sixth Patriarch of Alexandria (743 - 767 A.D.), and came often to visit him. He discussed the affairs of the country with him.

May the prayers of St. Demiana be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks the commemoration of the relocation of the relics of St. John Chrysostom (Of the Golden Mouth), from the city of Cuma, where he departed to the city of Constantinople, in the year 437 A.D., with honor and respect befitting him. They laid him in the church of the holy Apostles, and this was during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II.

Empress Eudoxia, the wife of Emperor Arcadius, had exiled St. John, for he prevented her from attending the church and partaking from the Holy Mysteries, because she took by force a garden owned by a widow, and for other reasons. God avenged because of the Empress' evil deeds; she became sick and spent large sums of money. The Saint had departed in his exile and the Empress went to his tomb, wept, and asked his forgiveness. She was healed.

The biography of the Saint is under the 17th. day of the month of Hatour (Vol. I, P.110).

May his prayer be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, of the year 351 A.D., during the time of St. Kyrillos (Cyril), Patriarch of Jerusalem, and during the reign of Emperor Constantius, the sign of the honorable Cross appeared in the sky at the third hour of the day. The sign of the cross was surrounded with a light which exceeded the light of the sun, covering the area above Jerusalem, from Golgotha to the mount of Olive. All those who were in Jerusalem saw it, and they all rushed to the church of the resurrection, and were astonished and overwhelmed from the greatness of the sign. Many believed at that time.

The Patriarch wrote to Emperor Constantius saying: "In the days of your blessed father, the sign of the Cross made of stars, appeared in the middle of the sky, and in your days, the sign of the Cross appeared also surrounded with great light. He forbade him from following the heresy of

Arius. He also made this day a memorial in Jerusalem and one of the feasts celebrated there, and all other churches followed this tradition until today. For through the Cross we received the Salvation, and it is our armor against all our enemies if we armored ourselves with it in a strong faith.

May the blessing of the Cross be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also, of the year 1485 A.M. (May 18th., 1769 A.D.), Pope Mark the Seventh, the one-hundred and sixth Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. He was from the city of Klosna, in the district of El-Bahnasa. His name was Simeon, and he went to the monastery of St. Antonios at a young age. He stayed there for a time and visited often the monastery of St. Paul in mount Nimra, where he became a monk and was ordained a priest. When Pope Yoannis the Seventeenth (The 105th. Patriarch) departed, he was chosen to succeed him on the Patriarchal Chair. They brought him from the monastery and ordained him Patriarch on Sunday, the 24th. of Bashans, 1461 A.M. (May 30th., 1745 A.D.) on the day of the feast of the entry of the Lord Jesus to Egypt.

This Pope was kind, with a very beautiful voice, and was very fluent in speech. After two years of his enthronement, there was a mutiny among the soldiers. Many of the princes were killed, some escaped to upper Egypt, and some escaped to the Arabian Peninsula. The Pope suffered a great deal in these days, from inside the church and from outside. God removed these tribulations after it had lingered for a time.

This pope ordained Abba Peter, a Metropolitan over Upper Egypt, to shepherd his flock from the snatching wolves. At the end of his days, Abba Yoannis the 14h., Metropolitan of Ethiopia the 103rd., departed. A delegation was sent by the king of Ethiopia, came to the Pope asking to ordain a Metropolitan for them. The Pope ordained Abba Yousab the 4th., six months before his departure, and Abba Yousab left Egypt to his Chair in Ethiopia, after the departure of Pope Mark.

He departed when he was residing in the church of the virgin, in the monastery known as Adawiyya, in El-Maadi near Cairo. Before he delivered up his soul, he saw St. Antonios and St. Paula at the second hour of Thursday. The church was celebrating the feast of St. Demiana, the commemoration of Archangel Michael, and the departure of St. John Chrysostom.

Right after his departure, they took his body by a boat to the monastery of St. George, and placed it in the convent under the shrine. On Friday, the 13th. of Bashans, Metropolitan Yousab of Ethiopia, Abba Peter bishop of Upper Egypt, and all the archpriests, priests, deacons, and lay leaders washed the face of the departed Pope: his hands and his feet with rose water. They prepared him with precious spices, put on him his priestly clothing, and placed him in a coffin. They carried him in a procession to the church of St. Marcurius (Abu Saifain), where they prayed over him as befitting his honor and buried him in the tomb of the Patriarchs. He stayed on the Patriarchal Chair for twenty-three years, eleven months and eighteen days, and the Chair was vacant five months and five days after his departure. He was a contemporary to El-Sultans Mahmoud I, Osman III, and Moustafa III.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

5. On this day also, of the year 1519 A.M. (May 19th., 1803 A.D.), the church commemorates the martyrdom of Master (Moallem) Malati. He was a scribe to Ayyoub Beck El-Defterdar, of the Mamaliks of Mohammed Beck Abu El-Dahab.

When the French occupied Egypt, they formed a department to look after national problems, and made Moallem Malati a general manager to it with the consent of the Christian and Moslem members, for his great managerial ability and wisdom. After the French had been driven out of Egypt, Moallem Gergis El-Gawhary, Moallem Wasef, and Moallem Malati were protected by the rulers of Egypt. However, in a disturbance at the time of Taher Pasha, the governor of Egypt, they arrested Moallem Malati, and cut off his head at Bab Zoweila in Cairo, and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Thirteenth Day Of The Blessed Month OF Bashans

The Departure Of St. Arsanius

The Tutor Of the Emperor's Children

On this day, of the year 445 A.D., the ascetic, fighter, and wise father St. Arsanius departed. He was born in Rome from a very rich Christian parents. They taught him church subjects and ordained him a deacon. He was highly knowledgeable in the Greek culture and endowed with great Christian values. When Emperor Theodosius the Great sought for a good and wise man to teach his sons Honorius and Arcadius, he could not find a better person than Arsanius. He brought him to his palace and entrusted the teaching of his sons to him. St. Arsanius taught them and admonished them, as was fitting. Since he devoted much exertion and toil in teaching them, he inflicted them once with painful beatings.

When Emperor Theodosius their father died, Honorius reigned over Rome and Arcadius reigned over Constantinople. The Saint remembered that he once beat them, and that Honorius desired to do him harm. While he was thinking of this, a voice came from the Lord saying: "O Arsani, get out from this world and you shall be saved." Once he heard this voice, he did not tarry, changed his clothing, and came to the city Alexandria. Then he went to the wilderness of St. Macarius (Sheahat - Scete), where he fought a great fight with fasting, prayer and long vigils.

At the beginning of his monastic life, he reviewed his thoughts to a simple monk for advice. The monks were surprised and said to him: "Does someone like Arsanius who is very well versed in Greek and Roman culture, need the advice of this simple monk?" He told them that the Coptic Alpha Beta of this monk had not been mastered by Arsanius. He meant by this the virtues of that monk.

A messenger came from Rome carrying a will of one of St. Arsanius' relatives who had departed, granting all his possessions to the Saint. The Saint asked: "When did this man die?" The

messenger answered: "One year ago." The Saint said: "I have died eleven years ago, and those who died to the world can not inherit others who died."

One of the noble women of Rome came to visit him because she heard of his righteousness. After she visited with him for a short while, she asked him to remember her in his prayer. He said to her: "May God erase all your memory from my mind." She returned sorrowful and complained to the Pope in objection to this statement. Pope Theophylus clarified to her what he meant, that he was afraid, that the devil might use her memory to tempt him.

When Arsanius started his monastic life, he used to select for himself the white beans for his food. When the Abbot of the monastery noticed, he gently struck the monk, who was sitting beside Arsanius saying: "It is not right that you distinguish yourself from your brethren by selecting the white beans." Arsanius said: "This stroke is directed to you, O Arsanius!"

Arsanius mastered the virtue of silence. When he was asked about that, he said: "Many times I regretted that I have spoken, but I have never regretted on being silent." He was a very humble and modest man, who lived from selling the works of his hands by pleating palm leaves, and giving the rest to the poor. He put down many useful sayings and teachings. Whenever he entered the church, he hid behind a pillar of the church so no one would see him.

His appearance was good, his face was bright and very cheerful. He was tall in stature, but he became bowed because of his age. He visited Jerusalem when he was seventy years old, to be blessed by the holy places, and then he returned to Sheahat. When he departed, he was ninety-five years old: He spent forty years in Rome, forty years in the wilderness of St. Macarius, ten years in Mount Torah, three years in the monasteries of Alexandria, then he returned to Mount Torah and lived there for two years.

He had commanded his disciples to throw his body on a certain mountain, so that wild beasts and vultures would eat him. However, fear gripped him, just before his soul departed from his body and his disciples said to him: "Is someone like Arsanius fearing death?" He replied: "Since I had become a monk, I dreaded this hour." He became calm, his soul was comforted, and a peaceful look covered his face as if he was saying: " Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me" (Psalms 23:4). He departed in peace in the year 445 A.D.

When Theodosius II, the son of Arcadius, knew of his death, he brought his body to Constantinople. He built a monastery on the same place where he departed, which was known in history as the monastery of El-Kosair.

From his sayings: An old monk was sitting in his cell, heard a voice saying to him: "Go out so I might show you the deeds of people." When he went out, he saw a man cutting wood. When he tried to carry it, he could not, and instead of reducing his load, he increased it, and tried to carry it again, but failed, and did this again and again. Then he walked away and saw another man getting water from a well and pouring it in a pot with a hole in it, and the man could not fill it. Then he saw two men riding on two horses, carrying a pole from each side. When they came to the door,

their pride prevented that one would stay behind in order to get the pole in, and therefore they remained outside.

St. Arsanius explained this vision to them, saying: "The wood cutter was a man with a multitude of sins. Instead of repenting, he added more and more to his sins. The man who wanted to fill the pot with water was a charitable man who gave alms from what he earned unjustly, and his reward was lost. The two men carrying the pole were carrying the burden of our Lord Christ, but with great pride, and therefore they both stayed outside the kingdom.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

1. The Departure of St. Pachomius (Pakhom), the Father of the Spiritual Communal Monastic life (Cenobitic life).

2. The Martyrdom of St. Epimachus (Ephimachus) of Pelusium.

1. On this day, of the year 64 A.M. (348 A.D.), Abba Pachomius, the father of the spiritual communal life (Cenobitic life), departed. He was born in Thebes (Luxor) from pagan parents, who forced him to worship idols. He rejected and mocked this worship, then became a monk with St. Balamon (Palaemon). He lived in submission to him for many years, and he mastered well the ways of the monastic life. Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him and commanded him to establish a communal and holy monastic life. Many monks gathered together to him, and he built for them many monasteries and established for them a system of manual labor, the times of prayers, and eating. He was the father of them all, with an Abbot in every monastery. He visited all the monasteries, from Aswan to Edfu to Donasa to the end of Upper Egypt to the north. He did not permit any one of his sons to become a priest for the sake of the vainglory of this world, and not to overlook the purpose of their monastic life of worship by being away from the world. He invited a priest from outside for each monastery to officiate the Divine Liturgy. When Pope Athanasius wanted to ordain him a priest, he fled from him. St. Athanasius asked his disciples to tell him that he who built his house on the rock that can not be shaken, and fled from the vainglory of the world, is blessed, and his disciples are also blessed.

He desired once to see Hades, and he saw in a night vision the habitation of the sinners and places of torment.

He remained the father of the Cenobites for forty years. When the time of his departure drew near, he called the monks, strengthened their faith, and appointed someone to take over his place after him, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Epimachus was martyred. He was born in Pelusium (Farma). He was a weaver along with his two companions: Theodore and Callinicos. When he heard that "Youlamis" the governor of Egypt, had come to torture the Christians, he preached his friends explaining the

vainglory of this world, then he bade them farewell and went to El-Bakroug, which was near Demera. He came to the Governor who was torturing a woman, and then threw her in a furnace. The fiery furnace became like cool dew to her. The Governor then took her out of the furnace and cut off her head.

When Epimachus saw that, he came before the Governor, and confessed the Lord Christ, to Him is the glory. The Governor tortured him severely. He was twenty-seven years old. Then he ordered him to be squeezed on the wheel, and a drop of his blood splashed on the eyes of a blind maiden, and right away she was able to see. Her family believed in the Lord Christ. They were all martyred and received the crown of martyrdom. The Governor became angry and ordered him to be crucified, and then his head to be cut off. The executioner drew his sword but his strength failed and was unable to raise his sword. The same thing happened when another executioner tried and so with fourteen other executioners. When they failed to cut off his head, they tied a rope around his neck and dragged him until he delivered his soul into the hand of the Lord and received the crown of martyrdom.

One of the soldiers, who was deaf and dumb, carried the body to cast it away. When he touched the body, instantly he heard and spoke. Some of the believers from the city of Edku came and took the body and many signs and wonders took place from it.

When the people from Demera came to console his family and saw the signs and wonders which were revealed through him, they believed and were baptized. They numbered one thousand, seven-hundred and fifty, men, women, and children. His kinsfolk carried him to El-Barmoun with great honor. The Governor of El-Barmoun shrouded him with expensive shrouds from his own money and they built a church after his name.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Simon the Zealot, the Apostle who is known by (Simon the Canaanite).*
2. *The Martyrdom of 400 martyrs in Dandara (Denderah).*
3. *The Commemoration of St. Mina the Deacon.*

1. On this day, St. Simon the Zealot, the apostle of our Lord (Whose name also is Nathanael, Jn 1:45-55), was martyred. He was born in Cana of Galilee, and was expert in the Law and books of the prophets. He had a fervor zeal, so he was called the Zealot, and he was righteous, pious, and did not show favor to anyone. So when Philip the Apostle said to him: "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote; Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael, who

realized that He knew the hidden secrets, answered and said to Him: "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

It was said that when he was a young man, he quarrelled with a man, killed him, and buried him under the fig tree, and no one knew about it. It was also said that at the time of the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem by Herod, his mother hid him under a fig tree that was in her house. She nursed him during the night and hid him during the day, and continued to do so until the persecution of Herod died down. His mother did not tell him about this until he was fully grown and he never told anyone about this. When Jesus revealed that to him, he realized that He was the omniscient God, bowed before him, and was obedient to Him. He believed, followed Him, and became one of His twelve disciples.

After he had received the grace of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, he spoke with tongues, enlightened the world with his evangelism, and returned many to the faith in the Lord Christ. He preached in Africa, and in the country of El-Bejah which extended from Aswan to the Red sea. He also preached in the island of Bertanah, which was probably one of the islands by the shore of the Red sea. He preached there with the Name of Christ, and many tribulations befell him, but God added to his courage and strength. God manifested on his hands many signs, and finally he was martyred, crucified on a tree, and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, four hundred Saints were martyred in Dendera, after they had suffered many tortures. This was at the end of the reign of Emperor Diocletian.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, is the commemoration of Deacon Mina the anchorite.

May his prayers guard us, and glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

The Commemoration of St. John The Evangelist

On this day the church commemorates St. John the Evangelist and his preaching in Asia Minor, the city of Ephesus, and the cities that are around it. Commemorates, the afflictions that he suffered and what befell him from the evil men who worshipped idols until he brought them to the knowledge of God and delivered them from the error of Satan by his teachings. The miracles that God performed through him. The writing of his Gospel, uttering in it with the eternity of the Son and His incarnation. His ascension to heaven in the Spirit, he saw the heavenly ranks and heard their praising and wrote about it in the book of Revelation.

This was during the reign of Emperor Domitianus (Domitian), when he exiled St. John, after he placed him in a cauldron filled with boiling oil, and was not harmed, to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelation.

After Domitian had been killed in the year 96 A.D., St. John returned to Ephesus. He found some heretics of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6) who taught that Christ's birth was a natural birth from both Joseph and Mary. For this reason, he wrote his Gospel to refute their heresy.

St. John had ardent zeal for the salvation of sinners. Once he saved a youth, delivered him to the bishop, and told him: "I entrust you with the safe keeping of this soul," but the youth, because of his bad conduct and the evil company that he kept, spoiled his morals and he became the head of a band of robbers. When St. John returned, he asked the bishop about the young man, who expressed his sorrow to St. John for the condition that became of this young man and told him what had happened. St. John rode a horse, took with him a guide, and travelled to his place. When he arrived to that place, he was caught by the thieves and they took him to their leader. When the leader saw St. John, he knew him, and was ashamed and tried to flee. St. John told him: "My son, be merciful to yourself, because the door of hope is still open for your salvation, and I will be your intercessor before the Lord Christ." Then, the young man wept, returned repenting, and St. John administered to him the Holy Communion to strengthen him.

The biography of St. John is written under the fourth day of Tubah (Vol. II, P.193). This feast is a commemoration for his evangelism, and also because on this day a church was consecrated after his name in the city of Alexandria.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Seventeenth Day of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

The Departure of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus

On this day, of the year 402 A.D., the great father St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, departed. He was born to Jewish parents, his father died, and left him with a sister and their mother brought them up well.

His father left him an untrained donkey and his mother asked him to sell it. He met a Christian man called Philotheus who wanted to buy the donkey, but the donkey kicked Epiphanius in his thigh, and he fell down on the ground unconscious. Philotheus made the sign of the cross over the place of injury and Epiphanius was cured of his pain instantly. Then Philotheus cried out over that donkey asking God that the donkey would die God answered his prayer, and the donkey fell down and died. Epiphanius inquired about the secret of the donkey's death and Philotheus told him that it was the cross. He guided him to the crucified Christ, the Son of God, Whom the Jews crucified in Jerusalem by His own will for the Salvation of the world. This remained in the mind of Epiphanius.

When one of the rich Jewish men died and had no one to inherit him, he left all his inheritance to Epiphanius. He used this inheritance to spend on the teachers of religion and Law. Once, when he was walking in the road, he saw a poor man asking for charity from one of the monks, and as the

monk did not have any money to give, he took off his garment and gave it to him. As the poor man took this garment, St. Epiphanius saw a white dress coming down from heaven upon the monk instead of the garment that he gave away. He was astonished and went to the monk and asked him: "Who are you and what is your faith?" The monk told him that he was Christian. He asked the monk to guide him to the facts of the Christian faith. The monk brought him to the bishop who taught him the law of the Christian faith and baptized him.

Epiphanius desired to become a monk, and the bishop sent him to the monastery of St. Lucianus. He became a disciple to St. Hilarion, and the grace of God was with him. He excelled in the church subjects, monastic virtues, and its canons.

St. Hilarion prophesied that he would become a bishop and commanded him to go to Cyprus, and not to refuse the office of bishop if it was offered to him. When the bishop of Cyprus departed, it happened that Epiphanius entered the city to buy certain necessities, and he had two monks with him. A saintly bishop was inspired to go to the market place to choose the monk that had two clusters of grapes, whose name was Epiphanius, to ordain him a bishop for Cyprus. When the bishop went to the market, he found him with the other two monks, with two clusters of grapes in his hand. He asked him about his name and he knew that he was the chosen one by God. He took him to the church and ordained him deacon, priest, then bishop. He revealed to the people his vision about him and the prophecy of St. Helarion was fulfilled.

St. Epiphanius followed a right course of conduct in his diocese, which was well pleasing to God. He wrote many books and discourses and he always preached about mercy. It happened that John, bishop of Jerusalem, was not merciful, so St. Epiphanius borrowed from him some of his gold and silver table vessels, and sold them and gave its price to the poor and the needy. When Abba John asked him to return them, he struck him in his eyes and he became blind. John asked the Saint to pray to heal him, and he prayed, and God opened one of John's eyes.

In the year 402 A.D., Empress Eudoxia called Epiphanius to help her to drive out St. John Chrysostom (Of the Golden Mouth) from Constantinople. However, he tried to reconcile them together, but he failed. She threatened him that she would open the temples of idols and close the churches if he did not work on his removal. But since he could not reconcile the differences between her and St. John, he returned to Cyprus and departed in the same year. (His body was relocated on the 28th. of Bashans).

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eighteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans
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1. *The Departure of St. George (Ga'orgi), the Friend of St. Abraam.*
2. *The Commemoration of the feast of Pentecost.*

1. On this day, St. George (Ga'orgi), the companion of St. Abraam, departed. He was born to saintly Christian parents, and he shepherded the sheep of his father. He desired to become a monk,

so he left the tending of the sheep, and he was fourteen years old. He went to the wilderness of St. Macarius. While he was walking on the road, the devil appeared to him in the form of an old man, and said to him: "Your father thought that a wild beast has killed you, and he rent his garment, grieving over you. It is meet that you should return to your father to comfort his heart first then return to the wilderness". The Saint was astonished for that, and thought in himself saying: "The Holy Bible says: 'He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.'" (Matthew 10:37) When he said that, the devil became like smoke and fled from him. Immediately, the angel of the Lord in the form of a monk appeared to him, and guided him to the monastery of Abba Orion (Arion). He remained there under the guidance of a holy monk for ten years, during which he never ate any cooked food or fruit and never drank wine.

He then desired to live alone in the inner wilderness and went to the monastery of the Roman Saints Maximus and Domadius in Scetis. At the same time, St. Abraam arrived to the monastery. They went together to the monastery of St. Macarius and met St. Yoannis, the archpriest of Sheahat. He gave them a cell close by him to live in, which was known as the cell of Bageeg, where St. Abraam departed, and after him St. George departed also, and he was seventy-two years old.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks the commemoration of the coming down of the Holy Spirit upon the holy disciples in the upper room of Zion. They spoke with different tongues and it is called the feast of Pentecost. The details of this feast are mentioned at the end of Vol. IV of the Synexarium.

May the blessings of the Pentecost be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

<h3>The Nineteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans</h3>

1. The Commemoration of the Departure of Abba Isaac, the Priest of El-Qalali (Cells).

2. The Commemoration of the Martyrdom of St. Isidorus (Isidore) of Antioch.

1. On this day, the church commemorates the holy father Abba Isaac, the priest of El-Qalali (Cells). He was born in an Egyptian village from poor parents, but he was rich in his righteous works. He took the opportunity of the presence of the elders of the monks in the village to sell the works of their hands, and followed them to the wilderness. He served them under the yoke of obedience. When he became a monk, he excelled in asceticism and worship to the point that he never possessed two garments at the same time. They asked him once: "Why don't you possess two garments?" He answered: "Because when I was in the world before being a monk, I did not have two garments at the same time."

He wept very often during his prayers, and he mixed his bread with the ashes of the censer and ate it. Once he became sick of a grievous sickness, and some of the brethren brought him food, but he did not eat it. One of the brethren described to him the benefits of food and urged him again to eat some of it. He insisted on not eating anything of it, and said to him: "Believe me my brother that I desire to remain sick for thirty years."

When he became seasoned and everyone heard about his virtues, the fathers by consensus decided to ordain him a priest. He fled and disappeared among the fields. When they were looking for him, they passed by the field, where he was hiding in and sat to rest. They had with them a donkey, which went into the field and stood where the father was. When they went after the donkey to catch it, they found him, and they wanted to bind him so that he could not escape again. He said to them: "I will not escape now, for I know that this is the will of God." He went with them, and they ordained him a priest, and he increased in obedience to the elders and in teaching the beginners the virtues. When the time of his departure drew near, they asked him: "What can we do after you leave us?" He told them: "Do exactly as you have seen me do, if you wish to steadfast in the wilderness", then he departed in peace.

May his prayer be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Isidore. He was born in Antioch and his father's name was Bandalaon, who was one of the noble men in the empire of Diocletian, and his mother's name was Sofia. He had a sister whose name was Ophimia, and their parents taught them the Christian faith.

When Diocletian apostatized, St. Bandalaon and his son Isidore left all their possessions and went secretly to a mountain where they lived with a holy man whose name was Abba Samuel.

When the Emperor knew of what had happened, he brought them before him, and he tried to persuade Bandalaon with promises, then threatened him. When he refused, not paying attention to what he was saying, he cut off his head. St. Isidore, who was only twelve years old, was tortured with different kinds of tortures. His mother and sister were beside him, comforting him and strengthening him to endure. Then the Emperor ordered them to be beheaded. They received the crowns of life.

God performed many miracles on the hands of this Saint, and many believed through him and were martyred.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

The Departure Of St. Ammonius The Hermit

On this day, of the year 73 A.M. (357 A.D.), the holy father Abba Ammonius departed. He was born in 294 A.D., in a village near Mariot. He was, as St. Antony was, born to a righteous and rich Christian family. He lost his parents while he was young and became under the guardianship of his uncle. He longed for the life of purity, chastity, and holiness. Nevertheless, his uncle forced him to be engaged to a rich girl against his will. Since he could not disobey his uncle, he talked to his bride to be, with a spiritual dialogue and through his holy life, he was able to have a good influence on her. He made her long to the life of purity and planted in her heart the desire to

consecrate her self a bride for the True Bridegroom Jesus Christ. Thus they decided to accept the marriage but decided to live as a brother and sister.

They remained like this for seventeen years, keeping themselves pure and chaste, after which his wife departed to the eternal bliss. The Saint saw in a vision St. Antonios calling him to put on the monastic garb. When he woke from his sleep, he rose up and went to St. Isidore, who put on him the holy Eskeem. He dwelt with him for some time, after which he went to mount Tounah, where was St. Antonios.

St. Ammonius remained with St. Antonios for a while and became his disciple, and studied on his hands the canons of the holy monasticism. He built for himself a cell in mount Tounah. He fervently worshipped God there, and the devil envied him. He came to him in the form of a nun and knocked his door. When he opened and asked the devil to pray with him, the devil became like a flame of fire. Then the devil went and dwelt in a woman and moved her to entice the Saint to fall in sin with her. She wore the best of her clothing and came to him at dusk, and knocked the door of his cell, saying: "I am a traveling woman, and I had lost my way, and it is dark now. Please do not let me stay outside lest the wild beasts kill me, and you become responsible for my blood." When he opened the door and knew the snare of the devil who sent her, he started to preach her and put the fear in her heart of the tortures of hell which is awaiting the sinners, and indicated to her the delight and the bliss which is awaiting the righteous. God opened her heart, and she understood what he said to her. She knelt to his feet weeping and asked him to accept her and assist her in saving her soul. She took off her apparel and he put on her a sackcloth of hair. He cut off her hair and called her "The simple minded or the naive". He taught her the way to righteousness and she excelled through many prayers and fasting, and surpassed many saints by her fasting and perpetual prayers.

The devil tried to snare him again. This time in the form of a monk who went around in the monasteries weeping and saying: "Abba Ammonius the hermit had married and he kept the woman with him in his cell. He had put the monks to shame and disgraced the monastic garb." When Abba Apollo (Ebelo), who was like the angels, heard of that, he took with him Abba Yousab and Abba Nohi (Bohi), and came to mount Tounah to the cell of Abba Ammonius. They knocked on the door of the cell, and when she opened to them they realized the matter. They entered and prayed together as the custom and sat to talk about the greatness of God. At the end of the day, Abba Ammonius told them, let us go to see the "Naive" for she was baking some bread. When they went out to where she was, they saw her standing in the midst of a great fire, and her hands were stretched out towards heaven praying. They marvelled exceedingly and glorified God. After they had eaten the bread, everyone went separately to sleep and the angel of the Lord revealed the story of the "Naive" with St. Ammonius to Abba Apollo, and that God brought them there to be present at the time of her departure.

About the third hour of the night, she became sick with fever. She knelt down and delivered up her soul at the hand of the Lord. They swathed her, and after praying over her, they buried her. Then Abba Ammonius told them about her virtues, and that for the eighteen years that she stayed with him, she never raised her face to look at him, and that her food was bread and salt.

After this, St. Antonios sent him to El-Natroun valley to establish there new monasteries, and many believers followed him. He organized for them their livelihood and directed them with excellence. Soon after, this holy father departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty First Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans
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1. The Commemoration of the Holy and Pure Virgin Mary.

2. The Departure of St. Marcian (Martinianus).

1. On this day, the church commemorates the pure and Virgin St. Mary, the mother of the Savior of the world, the intercessor of all the Christians, from whom came the salvation of Adam and his posterity.

May her intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Marcian departed. He was born in the city of Caesarea of Palestine. He became a monk since his young age at an elderly holy man living on a mountain near by his town called mount El-Safina (The ship). He fought a great and strenuous fight with many worships and he lived there for sixty six years, and his virtues became known.

An evil woman heard of him, and she said to some of those who talked about his virtues: "For how long you will continue to praise him, while he is in a wilderness where he does not see the face of a women? If he saw me, I would stain his virginity and defile his holiness". They rebuked her for what she said, because of what they knew of the purity and holiness of this Saint, but she made a wager with them that she would go to him and make him fall in sin. She straightway, rose up, took her ornaments, her expensive apparels and her perfumes in a piece of cloth, and put on an ugly dress and covered her face. She went to a place close by where the Saint was and waited until the evening, then knocked on the door of his cell, weeping, pretending that she had lost her way, and asked him to let her stay with him until the morning. The Saint pondered about her, if he left her outside, the wild beasts might eat her, and if he brought her in, the warfare would increase against him because of her. Finally, he opened the door to her, and went to another place in the cell. She arrayed herself in her beautiful apparel, adorned and perfumed herself, then attacked him tempting him to commit sin with her. He knew that she was a snare of Satan plotted up for him. He told her: "Wait a little for me until I look at the road, for some people are used to come to me here every now and then." He went out and lighted a great fire, and he started throwing himself in the fire time after time saying to himself: "If you can't bear the pain of a little fire, how can you bear the torment of the fire of hell?" Then he fell on the ground weeping from the severity of the pain from the burns that he suffered on his feet and his fingers. As he tarried, she came out and saw him in that condition. She was terrified and she returned to her senses. She stripped off her expensive raiment, knelt at his feet, and begged him to help her to save her soul. He started to preach her telling her about the vanity of this world and its lusts, and she repented with all her heart. He took her to one of the convents, and asked the abbess to take charge of her and she lived there a life of purity and ascetism that was pleasing to God to the end of her life. She

reached a high degree of holiness, received the gift of healing and she healed many from their infirmities.

But as for St. Martinianus, fearing lest the enemy might bring to him another woman, departed to an island in the middle of the sea. He made an agreement with a sailor to sell the works of his hand, and to bring him food. However, a ship was wrecked near by the island, and a woman managed to hang on to one of the planks, and the waves washed her to this island. When the Saint saw her, he was preplexed and wanted to leave the island. The woman asked him to make her a nun and he did as she wished then gave her all what he had of bread. He crossed himself with the sign of the cross, and threw himself in the sea, hanging on the plank that she hung on and he put himself in the hand of the Almighty. The waves threw him on the land, and he wandered about in the mountains and deserts for two years until he arrived to the city of Athens, where he became ill. He called the bishop, and told him all what had happened to him, and then he gave up his soul in the hand of the Lord, and they buried him with great honor.

The woman that remained on the island, the sailor continued to bring her food until she departed, then he took her body to his country.

May the prayers of this saint be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Second Day Of the Blessed Month Of Bashans

*The Departure of St. Andronicus
One of the Seventy Disciples*

On this day, St. Andronicus departed. This disciple was chosen by the Lord to be among the seventy disciples whom He sent before Him to preach the kingdom of God. He received the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room on the day of the Pentecost. St. Paul mentioned his name in (Romans 16:7) saying: "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me."

He preached the Gospel in many cities in the company of Junia, and they guided many to the Christian faith, and performed many miracles, healed the sick, and transformed the temples of idols to churches. When they completed their course, and the Lord willed to take them from this world, Andronicus became ill for a short time and departed in peace. Junia buried him in a cave, and he

prayed to the Lord to take him also. He departed on the next day.

May their prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Third Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

1. *The Departure of St. Junia, One of the Seventy Disciples.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Julian (Yulianus) and his mother in Alexandria.*

1. On this day, St. Junia, one of the seventy disciples, departed. He was born in Beth Gubrin (Jibrin) from the tribe of Judah. He was chosen by the Lord to be one of the seventy disciples, and received the Holy Spirit. He preached the Gospel with the disciples and suffered many hardships. He accompanied

St. Andronicus in his preaching of the Gospel as it is mentioned on the 22nd. day of Bashans. St. Junia buried St. Andronicus, and he prayed that the Lord would take him also, and he departed in the following day. St. Paul mentioned him in Romans Chapter 16.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Julian and his mother were martyred in the city of Alexandria.
May their prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Fourth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

1. *The Commemoration of the Entry of the Lord Christ to Egypt.*
2. *The Departure of the Prophet Habakkuk.*
3. *The Martyrdom of the Monk St. Bashnouna El-Maqari*

1. On this day, our Lord Jesus Christ came to the land of Egypt when He was a two years old child, as the Bible says in (Mt. 2:13) that the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying: "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." This was for two reasons:

A. If He fell in the hand of Herod, and Herod could not kill Him, he would have thought that His flesh was a phantom.

B. The second reason was to bless the people of Egypt by being among them, so that the prophecy of Hosea (11:1) could be fulfilled which says: "... out of Egypt I called My Son." And also the prophecy of Isaiah (19:1) be fulfilled: "Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt, the idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst."

The Lord Jesus came to Egypt with Joseph, and His Virgin mother, and Salome. They passed in an estate called "Basta" where the Holy Family drank from a well, and the water of the well became a curing water for all sicknesses. Then they went to "Meniet Samannoud" and crossed the Nile to the western side. In this place, the Lord Jesus put His foot on a stone, and the trace of His

foot appeared, and the stone was called "Picha Isos" in Coptic (or The heal of Jesus). From there, they went westward to Wadi El-Natroun, and St. Mary blessed the place, for her knowledge that many monasteries would be built there. Then they went to "Al-Ashmoneen" where they settled for several days, after which they went to Mount "Qosqam", where the monastery of St. Mary was later built, which has been known with the name "El-Moharrak monastery".

When Herod died, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying: "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." (Mt. 2:20-21). They came back to Cairo, and on their return they stayed in a cave which is today located in the church of Abu-Serga in Old Cairo. Then they passed by El-Mataryia, and they washed there from a well, and the well has been blessed since, and a tree of Balsam grew beside it, from its oil the Chrism (El-Myroun) is made which is used to consecrate new churches. From there, the Holy Family walked to El-Mahama (Mustorod), and from there to Israel.

We ought to celebrate this feast spiritually with joy, for Our Lord Jesus honored our land.
Glory to His Holy Name for ever. Amen.

2. On this day also, the prophet Habakkuk departed. He was one of the twelve minor prophets, and he was from the tribe of Levi. He was a singer using stringed musical instruments as it is indicated in this verse: "The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills. To the chief musician. With my stringed instruments." (Habakkuk 3:19).

He prophesied at the time of king Jehoiakim. He lived long enough to see the return of the children of Israel from exile, and he prayed saying: (Habakkuk 3:2)

He prophesied about the Incarnation of Christ and His birth, saying: (Habakkuk 3:3).

He finished his course, and departed in peace. A church after his name was built in Bartsa - El-Behera in Egypt at the time of the Christian Emperor Anastasius, and consecrated on the twenty fourth of Bashans.

May the prayers of this prophet be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, of the year 880 A.M. (May 19th., 1164 A.D.), St. Bashnouna was martyred. He was a monk in St. Macarius (Abu Maquar) monastery. During the fighting between the men of prince Dergham and the men of El-Wazir Shower in the Fatimid rule, the monk was arrested. He was threatened with death if he did not convert to Islam, but he refused. They burned him alive, and he received the crown of martyrdom. The faithful took his bones and carried them to the church of Abu Serga in Old Cairo, in the place of wax, and they buried him there.

May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Fifth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Colluthus of Antinoe (Known as Abu Colta).*
2. *The Departure of the most honored Layman Ibrahim El-Gohari.*

1. On this day, St. Colluthus of Antinoe was martyred. He was the son of God fearing parents. His father was a governor over Antinoe. He was praying to the Lord Jesus to give him a son, and God gave him this saint. He taught him the Christian principles and the church doctrine. He was pure from his youth. His father wanted him to get married, but he did not accept. However, his sister was married to Arianus who became the governor after her father. When the Saint's parents departed, he built a hostel for the strangers. He also studied medicine and practiced it to cure the sick without charging them money.

When Diocletian apostatized, Arianus the governor followed him to keep his position, and started to persecute Christians. Then St. Colluthus rebuked him for forsaking the worship of the True God, and the Saint cursed the idols of the Emperor. Arianus did not hurt him for the sake of his sister, but he sent him to the governor of El-Bahnasa, where he was in prison for three years. His sister meditated for his release until another governor took over who threatened the saint and tortured him. The angel of the lord came to him to comfort and strengthen him. At last, the governor cut off his head, and he was granted the crown of Martyrdom. His family prepared his body for burial and kept him in a place until the end of the persecution, when they built a church for him. Many miracles appeared from his body.

The saint has a church from antiquity in "Refa" near Assuit. A memorial is celebrated every year on the day of his martyrdom. The visitors who come are blessed by the saint and his intercessions, For they are healed from their sicknesses. It is worth it to mention that this church contains a stone which has a great influence to keep scorpions away until this day.

May his prayers be with us, Amen.

2. On this day also of the year 1511 A.M. (1795 A.D.), the great layman Ibrahim El-Gohari, departed. He was born in the eighteenth century, and his parents were poor. His fathers name was Yousef El-Gohari whose trade was making clothing in Kalube. They taught him writing and arithmetic, and he excelled in them. He used to trans-cribe the religion books, and distribute them to the church at his own expense. He brought the books to Pope John (Youhanna) the Eighteenth, and 107th patriarch of Alexandria Who was enthroned from 1486-1512 A.M. (1769-1796 A.D.)

The many books presented to the church by Ibrahim El-Gohari got the attention of the pope, together with the high cost of transcribing the books and binding them. The pope asked Ibrahim about his resource, and Ibrahim revealed to them his zealously and his godly life. The pope blessed him saying:"may the lord uplift your name and bless your work, and keep your memory forever." The relation between Ibrahim El-Gohari and the pope became stronger from that time.

When he started to work, Ibrahim was a scribe to one of the mamalik- The pope mediated with Moalem Rizk the chief scribe, and he took him as his private scribe. He continued in his position until the end of Ali Bek El-Kebir when Mohammed Abu- El-Daheb became the governor, and Ibrahim El-Gohari became the chief scribe of all of egypt, a position which is equal to prime minister today.

Ibrahim El-Gohari became more humble, generous, and charitable. He attracted to him the hearts of all the people. Ibrahim then married a righteous woman who shared with him his good nature and character. She helped him in his charitable deeds, and encouraged him to build and maintain churches. A son was born to them whom they called josph, and a daughter whom they called Demiana. They lived in a place called "Kantaret-ElDekka".

When his son grew up, his father prepared for him a private home furnished with the est of furniture, and prepared for his wedding day. But God chose that his son be with him before his marriage, and Ibrahim was greatly grieved. He then closed the home, and it remained closed.

The death of his son was the most shocking event in his life, but his desire to help the widows, the orphans and the poor intensely increased. Everyone was so astonished for his endurance, patience, and his great control over his disappoint When his wife resented the will of god, St. Anthony the great appeared to her in a dream, and comforted her saying, "you must know that god loved your son, and he took him in his youth, and he loves his father for a reason, to keep his name pure, for the popularity of his father might have caused his son to shame him and ruin his reputation. this is a reward from God to your husband for his godliness and his righteousness. Be comforted, and continue in your good deeds." St. Anthony also appeared to Ibrahim El-Gohari, and he comforted him and strengthened his faith. When his wife rose up, and told her husband about her dream, he told her that he also saw the same dream that same night. They surrendered their will to god, and they changed their mourning clothes , and put on regular clothes. Their hearts were filled with comfort, and continued in their good and charitable deeds. Their Daughter Demiana also died shortly afterwards and she was a young virgin.

Ibrahim El-Gohari remained in his office until a coup occurred which forced Ibrahim Bek and Murad Bek together with Ibrahim El-Gohari to flee to upper egypt. The new Governor Hasan Qubtan persecuted the copts and forbade them to ride horses with saddles, and forbade them to use moslems as servants in their homes, and did not allow them to buy slaves. The copts responded by hiding in their homes and not leaving for many days. He also ordered to have an account of the endowments that Ibrahim El- Gohary's wife hid herself in a moslem home to which her had made great favors. But some of those who did not honor his favors, betrayed him by telling his wile was hiding. the governor forced her to tell him about the places they hied their possessions, and they confiscated all the silver and gold utensils and their horses saddles, and sold them for low prices. Some also Guided the governor to the house of his son which was looked after his death, and they also confiscated all its contents of furniture, and took them many days to sell them for they were plenty. The governor was called back to istanbul, and Ibrahim Bek and Mourad Bek returned to cairo on August 7, 1791 A.D. and Ibrahim El-Gohari returned to his former position, but he did not continue for more than four years, and he was loved by everyone.

The people called Ibrahim El-Gohari the "The Sultan of the Copts" as it is indicated on the iconstasis of one of the churches in the monastery of St. Paula in the eastern desert, and also in the "Katamares" kept in the same monastery.

The famous historian El-Gabarty said about him: "He had made Egypt great by his capability which endured for long time. He was one of the great world statesmen with a great decisive mind. He treated everyone according to their abilities, and did things that attracted the hearts and the love of the people to him. In Ramadan, he used to send gifts to prominent and non-prominent moslems. In his days, many churches and monasteries were built and maintained, and many endowment of the best of land were given, with the necessary provisions and salaries.

Anba Yousab the bishop of Girga and Ekhmim said about him: "He was one of the great people of his day, who was God-loving, giving all his possessions to the poor, and caring about the construction of churches. He loved all people of different religions, making peace with all, filling all the needs of everyone without prejudice."

His religious work is as follows: Ibrahim El-Gohari was famous for his love of the construction of churches and monasteries, and repairing what was destroyed by the evil hands. Because of his influential position in the government, and his great favor to the moslem rulers, he was able to issue regulations (Fatawi) to permit Copts to rebuild the destroyed churches and monasteries. He also donated many endowment of good land and money for the reconstruction, that amounted to 238 endowments as documented in the patriarchate.

He was also popular for the trans-scrubbing of rare books, and giving them as gifts to the churches and monasteries.

He was the first to build St. Mark cathedral in El-Azbakiya. The Copts were not allowed to build new churches or to repair the old ones, unless they get permission from the government, which were rarely granted.

One of the princesses came from Istanboul (Estana) on a pilgrimage to Mecca passing by Egypt, Ibrahim El-Gohari made everything possible to her comfort during her stay, and offered her many gifts. She wanted to reward him, and he asked her to get an order from the Sultan (Faraman) to permit the construction of a church in El-Azbakiya where he lived, and asked her about some other things needed by the Copts. The Sultan issued the permit, but he died before the construction of the church, and his brother Girgis El-Gohari completed it.

In order that the time of prayers be maintained in the church of the Virgin in Haret-Zoweila, he built a small church after the name of St. Mercurius (Abu-Saifain) beside it. This allowed him and the government Christian employees to attend the services and return to their work as the government allowed.

He also prepared the materials for the oil of Chrism (Myroun) from his own money, and his brother Girgis carried them to the Pope.

In 1499 A.M. (1783 A.D.), Ibrahim El-Gohari built all the northern wall of St. Antonios monastery, and built a water wheel. He built before that the southern and the western walls in 1498 A.M. The wall is known until today as El-Gohari's wall. He also renovated the building of the church of the Virgin in Haret

El-Roum in 1508 A.M. (1792 A.D.). He also built the church of Abu Saifain in the monastery of St. Paula in the Eastern desert, and in the monastery of El-Baramouse, he built the church of Sts. Apollo and Abib (The church was demolished in 1881 A.D. to enlarge the church of St. John). He also built palaces to the Lady Virgin in El-Baramouse and the Syrian monastery. He also built an extension to the southern end of the monastery of El-Baramouse, with a wall around it, and the extension was about 2400 square meter.

In summary, he built and maintained many churches and monasteries. He took care of the monks, and offered many offerings, candles, oil, veils, and church books to all the churches of Egypt. He also distributed charities among the poor and the needy everywhere, and gave them food and clothing. He gave special attention to widows and the orphans who had no one to help them, and provided monthly provisions for all their needs. His deeds were made known in his funeral eulogy by Pope Youannis, the 107th. Patriarch. He departed to his eternal home on Monday the 25th. of Bashans, 1511 A.M. (May 31st., 1795 A.D.) everyone grieved his departure including the governor Ibrahim Bek who walked in his funeral procession to honor him as he had honored him before his death. Pope Youannis eulogized him for his great love to him. He was buried in the private tomb that he built for himself beside the church of St. George in Old Cairo which had an oil lamp that was lit day and night. He died without leaving a posterity, but his memory lives forever.

The society for the revival of the Coptic churches in Cairo took action to renovate his tomb in Old Cairo, and it has become a tourist attraction to all those who have heard about Ibrahim and his brother Girgis El-Gohari.

The biography of his brother Girgis is under the 17th. day of the month of Tute. He departed on the 17th. of Tute, 1557 A.M. (September 27th., 1810 A.D.)

May their prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Six Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans
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The Martyrdom Of St. Thomas, the Apostle

On this day St. Thomas the apostle was martyred. He was born in Galilee, and the Lord chose him among the twelve disciples (Mathew 10:3). When the Lord wanted to go to raise Lazarus from the dead, Thomas said to the other disciples: " (John 11:16). He also asked the Lord at the supper: " (John 14:5-6). When the Lord Christ appeared to the disciples after the resurrection,

and said to them "Receive the Holy Spirit", Thomas was absent. On his return, the disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." He said to them: " (John 20:19-29).

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in the Upper room in Zion, the apostles dispersed everywhere to preach the Gospel, Thomas went to India. He worked there as a slave at one of the friends of the king, whose name was Lukios, who brought him to the king who inquired about his profession. Thomas said: "I am builder, carpenter and a physician. He preached in his master's palace, and Lukios' wife believed and all his household.

The king asked him about his achievements, and he said: "The palaces that I built were the souls that have become the temples of the King of Glory; the carpentry that I did was the Gospel that removes the thorns of sin; and the medicines I practiced are the Holy Mysteries which heal the poison of the evil one. The king became angry and tortured him, and bound him among four poles, cut off his skin and rubbed his wounds with salt and lime. The apostle Thomas endured the pains. Lukios' wife saw him suffering, and she fell from the window and died. Lukios came to him and said: "If you raise my wife from the dead, I believe in your God." Thomas went to the room where the dead body was, and said: "Arsabona (Arsonia), rise up in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ." She rose instantly and bowed to the Saint. When her husband saw that, he believed and many more with him from the people of the city, and Thomas baptized them.

Once the sea drove a huge tree to the shore that no one could lift it up. St. Thomas asked the king for permission to lift it up and to use its wood in building a church. He got the permission, he made the sign of the cross, and he raised it and later he built the church, to which he ordained a bishop and priests.

St. Thomas left and went to a city called "Kantoura" (Kontaria), where he found an old man weeping bitterly because the king killed his six children. The Saint prayed over them, and the Lord raised them up. The idol priests were angry, and wanted to stone him. The first raised a stone to throw it at him, and his hand was paralyzed. The Saint prayed over his hand, he was healed instantly, and all the idol priests believed in the Lord Christ. Then St. Thomas went to the city of "Parkenas" and other cities, where he preached in the Name of Jesus Christ. The king heard about him, and he put him in prison. When he found out that he was teaching the prisoners the way of God, he tortured him, and at last he cut his head off, and he received the crown of martyrdom. He was buried in "Melibar", then his body was relocated to El-Raha. *May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.*

The Twenty Seventh Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans
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1. *The Departure of Pope Youannis the Second, the 30th. Patriarch of the See of St. Mark.*
2. *The Departure of Lazarus the beloved of the Lord.*

1. On this day of the year 232 A.M. (may 22nd., 516 A.D.), the saint Pope Youannis the second, the 30th. Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. He was a monk since his youth, and lived a solitary

life. His reputation, because of his godly life spread everywhere, and was chosen a patriarch of the great city of Alexandria on the third of Baouna, 221 A.M. (May 29th., 505 A.D.). He wrote the biographies of the saints and sermons. The church lived in peace and tranquility at the time of the Orthodox Emperor Anastasius. St. Sawirus was the patriarch of Antioch, and he wrote a message to Pope Youannis on the one nature of Christ saying: "Jesus Christ after the union with flesh has become of one nature with one Will without separation, and I believe in the same faith of Pope Cyril and Pope Dioscorus."

When Pope Youannis received this message, he was pleased, and he replied with a message filled with faith that testified to the union of the essence of God, and the trinity of His characters, and by the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, the Divine and the human nature have become one and no longer two natures, without separation, mingling, or confusion. He anathematized those who separate the two natures, those who confuse them and those who said that the suffering crucified Christ was only a man, and those who say that His Divine nature also suffered and died. He said that the Orthodox faith was to profess that God the word suffered by the flesh that united with. When Abba Sawiris read his message, he received it with joy, and made it public in all Antioch.

This Pope continued to take care about his people for 10 years, 10 months, and 23 days, and he departed.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, and the beloved of the Lord, departed after he had become the bishop of Cyprus.

After he had been raised from the dead by Our Lord, he followed the disciples. After the pentecost, they ordained him a bishop over Cyprus. He lived for forty years, and departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Eighth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

*The commemoration of the Relocation
of the Body of St. Epiphanius*

On this day of the year 403 A.D., the body of St. Epiphanius (His biography is under the 17th. of Bashans), arrived to the island of Cyprus. The boat that carried his body arrived to Cyprus from Constantinople on the 28th. day of Bashans. The priests and the people came with crosses, gospels, candles and incense and carried his body to the church. When they started to dig his tomb, two deacons did not allow them. They were excommunicated by the saints for their bad reputation. The body remained in the church for four days without a change or a stench. His body looked as if he was asleep. A saintly deacon came near the body and said: "I know of your relationship with God, and that you can restrain these evil opponents." He then took an ax and hit

the ground with it. The two opposing deacons fell on their faces immediately, and they were carried to their homes and died on the third day.

The body of the Saint was anointed and wrapped, they buried him in a marble sarcophagus in the church. Many miracles appeared from his body.

May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Ninth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

The Departure Of St. Simon the Stylite

On this day of the year 461 A.D., St. Simon departed. He was born in Antioch in 392 A.D. His father's name was John, and his mother's name was Martha. Many miraculous things happened because of him. Before his mother had conceived of him, St. John the Baptist appeared to her in a dream and told her of her conception and what he would become. At age sixteen, he became a monk in the mountain of Antioch, and he led a great ascetic life in worship and prayer. An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and guided him in his monastic life to the life of St. Pachomius. He excelled in his worship to a level beyond the normal human level, so that he lived alone on a high place like a pillar, for 45 years, during which he ate grass.

This father wrote many useful ascetic teachings, and explained many church books. He departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Bashans

- 1. The Departure of Pope Mikhail the First, the 68th. Patriarch of Alexandria.*
- 2. The Departure of St. Fournous, one of the seventy disciples.*

1. On this day of the year 818 A.M. (May 25th., 1102 A.D.), the holy father Pope Mikhail, the sixty eighth Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was knowledgeable in the church books from his youth, and recited them from memory. He desired to worship God, and went to the wilderness and became a monk in St. Macarius monastery. He was ordained a priest, then he went to a place near Singar, and lived there in a cave for more than 20 years, fighting the good spiritual war. His virtues were known to everyone. He was chosen to the Throne of St Mark and was enthroned on the 12th of Babah, 809 A.M. (October 9th., 1092 A.D.), after he had proclaimed the Orthodox faith. He took care of the priests of the churches of Alexandria. He did not allow "Simony", and returned all the properties of the church that the Pope before him took to himself. He never took even one Dinar. He lived on very little money, and spent most of it to feed the poor and the needy. He paid the taxes for those who could not pay, and spent money to buy new vessels and books for the churches. He taught his people through preaching and sermons. When he

completed his course, he gave his soul by the hand of the Lord Whom he loved. He was Pope for 9 years, 7 months, and 17 days.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the disciple Phorus (Fournous), one of the seventy disciples, departed. He served Christ for 3 years. After the ascension of the Lord, he served the apostles, and was filled with the Holy Spirit, the comforter on the day of Pentecost. Then he served St. Paul, and carried his epistles to many countries, and taught the Jews and pagans and baptized them. He suffered many afflictions, and departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

*In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
One God. Amen*

**The Blessed Month of Baounah
The First Day**

- 1 . The Consecration of the church of St. Leontius of Tripoli.*
- 2. The Martyrdom of St. Qozman El-Tahawy and his companions.*
- 3. The Consecration of the church of St. Abe-Fam (Epiphany) the soldier.*

1. This day marks the commemoration of the consecration of the church of St. Leontius (Laventius) the Syrian. This Saint was martyred in the city of Tripoli on the twenty-second of Abib (P. ,Vol.IV) A Christian woman, the wife of a great nobleman and prominent army commander, gave much money to the soldiers, and took his holy body. She wrapped it in expensive cloth and laid it in a coffer inside her house. She made a picture of him and she hung a lighted lamp before it.

It happened that Diocletian became angry with her husband and shut him up in prison in the city of Antioch. She became sad, and prayed to God, interceding with His saint Leontius, to save her husband from prison. God accepted her prayers. St. Leontius appeared to her husband in prison and told him, "Do not grieve or be sorrowful, for you shall be delivered tomorrow, and you shall eat with the Emperor at his table, and you shall return safely to your house." The Saint, then, went to the Emperor, and woke him up. When the Emperor saw the Saint, he became terrified. The Saint told the Emperor, "I have come to you, O Emperor, to order the release of the army commander. Honor him, and let him go to his house, lest you be destroyed." The Emperor, who was trembling, replied saying, "Whatever you command me, O my lord, I will do." The next morning, the Emperor brought the commander out of prison, honored him, and dined with him at his own table. The Emperor told him about the horseman that appeared to him, then dismissed him to return to his home town.

When he arrived in Tripoli, his home town, he told his wife and his family what had happened to him. His wife told him, "The good that happened to you was through the blessings of St. Leontius." Then she uncovered the body of the Saint, and he took the blessing of the Saint. When he saw his face, he realized that he was the one that had appeared to him in prison.

After the perishing of Diocletian, they built a church in his name, relocated the body to it with great veneration, and the church was consecrated on this day.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Qozman (Cosmas) El-Tahawy and his companions were martyred.
May their prayers be with us. Amen.

3. Today also, the church commemorates the great saint Abe-Fam (Bifam or Phoebammon) the soldier. This Saint was born in the city of Oseem (Giza). His father's name was Anastasius, who had a high ranking position, and his mother was a holy woman whose name was Susanna.

He distributed his money on the works of righteousness and went before Armanius, governor of Alexandria, during the reign of Diocletian, to be martyred. Armanius tortured him much, then sent him to Arianus, governor of Ansena (Mallawy), who tortured him, excessively. However, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, and strengthened him. Saint Abe-Fam always lifted his eyes up toward heaven and finally they beheaded him. The believers then took the body and buried him with veneration in a hill of sand west of Tema (Souhag). This Saint completed his strife on the twenty-seventh of the month of Tubah (Vol. II, P. 240) during the reign of Diocletian, in the Fourth century. A church was built after his name in Tema and another in Oseem.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen

The Second Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. The Commemoration of the Appearance of the Bodies of St. John the Baptist and Elisha the Prophet.

2. The Departure of Pope Yoannis the Eighteenth, the 107th. Pope of Alexandria.

1. On this day, the church celebrates the appearance of the bodies of St. John the Baptist and Elisha the Prophet, the disciple of Elijah the Prophet, in the city of Alexandria.

Julian the Infidel wished to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem, having been destroyed by Emperor Vespasian and his son Titus. He intended with malice to prove the invalidity of the saying of the Lord in the Holy Gospel: "Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matthew 24:2). He supplied the Jewish people with money to rebuild it. He put Elebius, who asked the Jews to assist him secretly, in charge.

Many of the Jews, men, women, old and young, gathered. They started digging the foundation with eagerness, transferring the dirt and rocks away, some with baskets and the others in the tails of their dresses. St. Kyrillos (Cyril), bishop of Jerusalem, ridiculed what they were doing.

When they finished raising the rocks of the old foundation, they started to put down the new one. A severe earthquake took place, filled the excavation with dirt, dispersed the building material and killed many of the workers. The Jews were not terrified of that, and returned to the work again. Out of the depths of the earth, fiery balls came, showering the workers with rocks and hitting them so they stopped building. Many of them believed because of that and especially because they had fulfilled the prophesy of the Lord Christ, with their hands, about the destruction of the building of the temple from its foundation.

St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom had mentioned this incident. The Jewish historian Emian, in the fifth century, had mentioned this account also incidentally in his writings.

Nevertheless, the Jews told the Emperor, "The reason for what happened is the presence of the bodies of Christian leaders in that place. They must be removed from it, otherwise the temple will not be

built." Julian ordered that the bodies of the saints be removed from the place and burned. When they took the bodies of St. John the Baptist and Elisha the Prophet to burn them, some believers came forward to the soldiers, gave them a sum of silver and took the two bodies. They brought them to St. Athanasius, Pope of Alexandria. He was pleased and placed them in a special place until he could build a church for them.

One day St. Athanasius was sitting in the garden with his scribe, the one to be Pope Theophilus (23rd Pope) who succeeded him on the Chair, and told him, "If God gives me long days, I will build in this place a church in the names of St. John the Baptist and Elisha the Prophet, and I will lay their bodies in it."

When Pope Theophilus was enthroned on the Chair of the See of St. Mark, he remembered what Pope Athanasius had told him. He built the church and relocated the pure bodies to it. On their way to the church carrying the holy bodies, they passed by a house of a pagan woman. This woman was in labor for the last four days. She had a difficult labor and she was in severe pain. When she heard the singing and the chanting of the people as they passed by, and when she knew what was happening, she vowed, saying, "O John, the saint of God, if you deliver me from this tribulation, I will become a Christian." Before she had finished what she was saying, she gave birth to a boy, and she called him John. Then, her family and she were baptized. They laid the bodies with great honor in the church. Many miracles and wonders were manifested through them.

As of the end of Julian the infidel was as follows:

He decided to declare a war against Sapor, King of Persia.

St. Basilus the Great, the author of the liturgy, and some bishops went to meet him. Emperor Julian asked them, "Why have you come." St. Basilus replied, "We came asking for a shepherd" He mocked them saying, "Where did you leave the son of the carpenter?" The Saint answered with courage and pride, "We left him making a coffin for you, for you have lost all wisdom and knowledge." Julian told him, "I have read and memorized it." St. Basilus replied, "But you did not comprehend it." Julian became angry and ordered them seized, to be slain after his return from the war with Sapor. St. Basilus told him, "You will not come back, for God has spoken by my mouth." The Emperor ordered them imprisoned.

The Emperor went to the war. St. Basilus prayed before the icon of St. Marcurius Abu-saifain, asking for the chastisement of the Emperor because he insulted his Lord Christ. St. Marcurius disappeared from the icon, and when he returned, his sword was dripping blood.

During the war, Julian was shot by an arrow in his liver. Thlodoritius said in his history of the church: "When this infidel Emperor was stabbed, he took a handful of the blood that was pouring out of his side and scattered it toward the heaven, saying, 'You have defeated me O Son of Mary.'" The prophesy of St. Basilus was fulfilled in him and the church was saved from his evil.

When St. Macarius, Bishop of Edko, was martyred, they placed his body with the bodies of St. John the Baptist and Elisha the Prophet.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the church celebrates the departure of Pope Yoannis (John) the Eighteenth, the 107th Pope of Alexandria. He was of the people of El-Fayyoun and his name was Joseph. He became a monk in the monastery of the great St. Antonios on the mount of El-Araba. When Pope Marcus the seventh, his predecessor, departed, the bishops, priests, and the notables of the people unanimously agreed on choosing him a Patriarch. They brought him and ordained him a Patriarch in the church of the martyr St. Marcurius in Old Cairo. That was on Sunday, 15th of Babah, 1486 A.M. (October 23, 1769 A.D.). He was called Yoannis the Eighteenth, the 107th Pope of Alexandria.

During his days, the Pope of Rome attempted to attract the Eastern Churches and especially the Orthodox Church of Egypt (The Coptic Church) to the Catholic rite. He published the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedone in a book and distributed it in all the countries of the East. This council had caused the schism of the church, and the Saint Pope Dioscorus (25th Patriarch) had refused to recognize the legitimacy of this council.

The Pope of Rome then sent an envoy to Pope Yoannis carrying a message inviting him to be united with him. Pope Yoannis gave this message to Anba Yusab El-Abbah, bishop of Girga. He asked him to study it and to respond to it. This great scholar and distinguished theologian replied, refuting all the claims of Rome. He defended his church, its faith, and its doctrines, a splendid defense that immortalized his memory. However, the book of the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedone brought the opposite results of what Rome expected from publishing it. The book was a proof of the sound teachings and doctrines of the Coptic Orthodox church. The Bishop of Rome was sorry for publishing the book in the East, and he gathered its copies and burned them.

During the papacy of Pope Yoannis (John) many tribulations and hardships befell him from the rulers of the country and the Ottoman governors. The Turkish commander of the army seized the patriarchate treasury and took all its funds. That forced the Pope to disappear from the oppression and the injustice of those rulers who over tasked the Christians with their unjust rules and the enormous increase of taxes stipulated from them.

Pope Yoannis participated with Ibrahim El-Gohary, the head scribe at that time, in restoring the monasteries and the churches. He also made the Holy Myron. He departed on the second day of the blessed month of Baounah, 1512 A.M. (June 7, 1797 A.D.). He remained on the patriarchal chair for twenty-six years, seven months, and sixteen days. He was buried in the tomb of the patriarchs in the church of St. Marcurius Abu-Saifain. The chair remained vacant three months and twenty-six days after his departure.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen

The Third Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. *The Construction of the first church of St. George in the cities of Birma and Beer Maa (Water Well) in the Oases.*
2. *The Departure of St. Martha of Egypt.*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Alladius the Bishop.*
4. *The Departure of Pope Cosmas, the 44th Patriarch.*
5. *The Departure of St. Abraam, bishop of El-Fayyoum.*

1. On this day, the first church in the name of St. George was built in Egypt in the city of Beer Maa in the Oasis. As was consecrated also on this day a church in his name in the city of Birma, district of Tanta. For after the perishing of Diocletian, and the reign of the righteous Emperor Constantine, all the temples of the idols were destroyed. Churches were built after the name of the heroic martyrs, who strived with their blood to defend the faith.

Some Christian soldiers in the land of Egypt, had donated a piece of the land where the city of Birma is now located. One of them was a righteous and meek young man, who lived on a piece of this land with some of the farmers. In this area there was a well of water. This young man heard of the wonders of the great among the martyrs, St. George. He searched until he found his biography. He wrote it, and it comforted him to read it, which he did without boredom.

While he stood praying, on the evening of the twenty-fourth of the month of Bashans, he saw that an assembly of the saints had come down beside the well. They were praising God and chanting with angelic voices. They were surrounded by heavenly light, and he was astounded. One of them, who was in the uniform of a soldier, came forward and informed him that he was Gawargios (George) who was martyred at the hands of Diocletian. He ordered him to build a church for him on that site, for that was the Will of God. The assembly left him, and raised up to heaven while they were glorifying the Most High.

The young man spent that night awake till morning. Few days passed during which he was thinking about how he could build this church, knowing that he did not have the money for a small piece of it. One night, while he stood praying, the great martyr St. George appeared to him. The Saint pointed out to him the place to build the church. Then he directed the young man to another place and told him, "Dig here and you shall find what you need to build the church." When he woke up in the morning, he went where the honorable martyr had directed him. He dug there and found a vessel filled with gold and silver. He praised God, and glorified his patron saint. He built the church and called the father the Patriarch who consecrated it on this day.

The relics of St. George, that were kept in his church in the city of Beer Maa in the Oasis, were relocated to the monastery of Anba Samuel by its monks. That was during the days of the Saint Abba Matheos (87th Patriarch), and the monastery was under the direction of Fr. Zachary Ebn-Elkomos and Fr. Soliman El-Qualamony.

During the Papacy of Pope Gabriel (88th Patriarch) the relics of the saint were relocated to his well-known church in Old Cairo. That was on the 16th of Abib, 1240 A.M. (July 10, 1024 A.D.).

A great celebration takes place annually, where the church was built beside the water well, to commemorate this venerable event. There, many signs of casting out of evil spirits and healing of the sick take place with the intercession of this great martyr.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the ascetic and fighter St. Martha, departed. She was born in the city of Mesr (Cairo) to wealthy Christian parents. She loved fornication and unchastity in her youth and her works became known. However, the mercy of God from above encompassed her, and moved her to go to the church. That was on the Nativity of Our Lord. When she came to its door and wished to go inside, the servant delegated to watch the door told her, "It is not meet for you to go into the holy church, for you know what you are?" A confrontation took place between them, and when the Bishop heard the clamor, he came to the door of the church to see what had happened. When he saw the girl, he said to her, "Do you not know that the house of God is holy, and only the pure enter it." She wept and said, "Accept me O father, for I am repentant from this instant, and have decided not to go back to my sin." The bishop replied, "If it is true what you have said, go and bring back here all your silk clothes and gold ornaments."

She went quickly and brought back all of her clothes and ornaments and gave them to the Bishop. He ordered that they be burned immediately, then he shaved off the hair of her head. He put on her the monastic garb and sent her to one of the convents. She fought a great spiritual fight, and she frequently said in her prayers: "O Lord, if I could not bear the disgrace from the servant of Your house, so please do not put me to shame before Your angels and saints." She continued the spiritual fight for twenty-five years, during which she did not go out of the door of the convent, then departed in peace.

May her prayers be with us. Amen

3. Today also marks the martyrdom of St. Alladius (Hilarius or Hilarion), bishop of one of the countries of the East. One day, he rebuked Emperor Julian for worshipping the idols. The Emperor replied, "If I am, in your opinion infidel, because I do not worship that whom was crucified, I shall make you also forsake worshipping him." Then the Emperor handed him to one of his officers and commanded him to torture Alladius without mercy for one year. When he did not turn away from his firm intention, he lit a fire in a pit and threw him in it, but no harm came upon him. Many believed, and the Emperor ordered their heads to be cut off. Finally, they brought the saint out of the pit, and ordered to cut off his head. He delivered up his soul in the hand of the Lord Christ and received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

4. This day also marks the departure of Pope Cosmas the First (44th Patriarch), in the year 446 A.M. (June 24, 730 A.D.). He was from the village of Abi-Sair. He became a monk in the monastery of St. Macarius. He was ordained against his will a patriarch on Sunday the 30th of Baramhat, 445 A.M. (Marsh 729 A.D.). He did not cease, since his enthronement, from asking God to repose his soul

speedily. God responded to his request after one year and three months of his enthronement.
May his prayers be with us. Amen.

5. Today also, the saint Anba Abraam, Bishop of El-fayyoum and El-Giza, departed. This was in the year 1630 A.M. (June 10, 1914 A.D.). This saint, whose name was Paul (Boulos), was born in 1545 A.M. (1829 A.D.) in the Estate of "Gilda", district of Mallawi, governate of Miniah, to righteous parents. They brought him up in a Christian manner. They sent him to the church school, where he learned religious subjects and the church hymns. As he was a very bright student, Anba Yousab, the Bishop of Sunabbo ordained him a deacon for the church of Gilda. His heart longed for the monastic life, so he went to El-Muharrak monastery where he was ordained a monk by the name of Paul Gabriel El-Muharraki. He was nineteen years old.

He was meek, humble, had a pure life, and he prayed much in seclusion. Accordingly, the monks loved him exceedingly. When Anba Yakoubos, bishop of El-Meniah, heard of him, he summoned him. He retained him in the episcopate for a period of time during which he promoted him to a priest. When he returned to his monastery, the monks with a consensus decided to make him the abbot over the monastery after the death of their Abbot. He was then promoted to archpriest (hegumen) in the days of Abba Demitrius the second (111th Patriarch). He remained Abbot of the monastery for five years, during which the monastery was the refuge for thousands of the poor. So he was called the father of the poor and the destitute. During his time as abbot, he did not spare an effort to improve the condition of the monastery spiritually and physically. He improved its finances by developing its agricultural land. As he increased his charity toward the poor, the orphans and the widows, some of the monks became more resentful of him, for they considered these charitable works as squandering and extravagant acts. They complained against him to Anba Morcos, Metropolitan of El-Behira, who was the acting Patriarch after the death of Pope Demitrius. Anba Morcos accepted their complaints and deposed him as the abbot of their monastery. Shortly after his dismissal, he left El-Muharrak monastery and went to the monastery of El-Baramous. Several monks from the El-Muharrak monastery went to the monastery of El-Baramous, with archpriest Bolous (Abba Abraam), because they did not like the attitudes of the complaining monks. He stayed there for some time studying the Bible and teaching the monks.

The abbot of the monastery of El-Baramous at that time was archpriest Youhanna the Scribe, who became later on Pope Kyrillos the fifth (112th Patriarch). In the year 1597 A.M. (1881 A.D.), Pope Kyrillos the Fifth chose and ordained him a bishop for the parish of El-Fayyoum and El-Giza. He replaced its reposed bishop, Anba Eisak, and was ordained with the name of Abba Abraam.

During his episcopate, he became famous for two attributes:

The First: His charity to the multitude of poor that came to the bishopric residence. He gave them all what he had of money. He made the bishopric residence a shelter for many of them. He offered clothing for those who had no clothes and food for those who were hungry. He never allowed anyone to offer him food that was better than that offered to the poor. Once he went down to visit the poor while they were eating, and found that the food he was offered that day was better than that offered to them. He became very sad, and immediately relieved the nun supervising the feeding service of the poor from her duties.

The Second: He was famous for his prayer of faith. Many miracles were performed, through his prayers, on his hands. His fame was spread to all parts of Egypt and also to some parts of Europe. Many patients, of different religions, came to him, seeking the blessing of his prayers and were healed.

Anba Abraam was well read of the holy books. He always gave to his visitors advice, instructions and sermons which showed the great depth of his knowledge. More important was that he possessed a pure nature and many virtues. Particularly, his severe denial of himself, and his true renouncement of the pleasures of life and its vain glory. His food and clothing were just bare necessities. His ambition never looked up to the glory of higher ranks or positions. When the Patriarch wanted to promote him to the rank of metropolitan he apologized saying that the Holy Bible did not mention any ranks in the priesthood except the ranks of the priest and the bishop.

He was also straightforward in revealing his own opinion, looking only for the truth. He never gave any attention to the rank and greatness of people in higher places, for their greatness was far less than the greatness of the truth. For this reason, all the metropolitans and bishops of the church avoided his anger and sought to please him.

Abba Abraam departed to the heavenly bless on the third of Baouna, 1630 A.M. (June 10, 1914 A.D.). More than ten thousand Christian and Moslems walked in his funeral precession. His pure body was laid in the tomb, which was prepared for him in the monastery of the Virgin Mary in El-Ezab. Many miracles were manifested through him after his departure, and his tomb became and still is a pilgrimage for many who have special needs or infirmities.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Shenousi (Sanusi).*
2. *The Martyrdom of Saint Anba Amoun and the Righteous Sophia.*
3. *The Martyrdom of John of Herakleia.*
4. *The Departure of St. Aba-Hour.*
5. *The Departure of Pope Yoannis the Eighth (80th Patriarch).*

1. On this day, St. Sanusi (Shenousi), who was from Balkim, was martyred. When he was a young man, he tended the sheep. He used to give his food to the young shepherds, and spend his day fasting. He visited the sick and those who were in prison.

One night, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision and told him, "Rise up, and go before the governor and confess your God to receive the crown of martyrdom." When he woke up from his sleep, he told that to his mother. She was sorry and wept for she was unable to prevent him. He had heard about a righteous holy woman, in the city of Shoubra, whose name was Mariam. She received the poor and the sojourners and did many good deeds. He went to her, and both agreed on receiving the crown of martyrdom. They went to Arsanos, the governor, who was residing in a ship anchored on the bank of the river Nile. They cried out before him saying, "We are Christians." He ordered that they be

tortured. While they were torturing them, St. Mariam delivered up her soul in the hand of the Lord. The Lord Christ comforted and strengthened St. Sanusi. When the Governor failed to change his conviction, he sent him with many others to the Governor of Ansena (Antinoe), who tortured him severely. Then, he brought a sorcerer from Akhmeem, who gave the Saint a drink mixed with poison. The Saint having made over it the sign of the Cross, drank it, and no harm came to him. When the governor was tired of torturing him, he ordered him put to death. They cut off his head with the sword. The sorcerer believed when he saw that, so they cut off his head also. Both received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, Saint Anba Amoun and St. Sophia were martyred.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

3. This day also, marks the martyrdom of St. John of Herakleia.

May his prayer be with us. Amen.

4. Today also, marks the departure of the Saint Aba-Hour in the mount of El-Amoud in the East.

May his prayer be with us. Amen.

5. On this day also, of the year 1036 A.M. (May 29th, 1320 A.D.) Pope Yoannis the Eighth (80th Patriarch), departed. He was from Meniat Bani-Khosaim, and was known as El Mo'ataman Ebn El-Kedees, and his name was Yohanna Ben-Ebsal. He became a monk in the monastery of El-Shahran, and was ordained Patriarch on the nineteenth of Amshir, 1016 A.M. (February 14th, 1300 A.D.).

During his days severe tribulations befell the Christians. They forced them to tinge their turbans with the color blue. Churches were closed in old Cairo, Cairo, and then in different parts of the country except the monasteries in Alexandria, and some churches in other cities. An envoy from the king of Spain came to intercede on behalf of the Christians. Two churches were opened, one of them was the Coptic church of the Virgin Lady in Haret Zeewailah and the other was the Malachite church of St. Nicholas in Elhamzawe. He was a contemporary of the Saint Anba Barsouma known as El-Erian Ebn-Eltaban, who departed during his days. The Patriarch prayed over him on the 5th of El-Nasi 1021 A.M.

This Patriarch was the last to reside in the church of Abu-Saifain in Cairo. He was the first to relocate the patriarchal chair to the church of the Virgin Lady in Haret Zeewailah. He was residing there in the year 1303 A.D. when a severe earthquake took place that destroyed a large part of Syria and Egypt. Ebn-kabre indicated that this Patriarch had made some changes in the Liturgy. He departed after remaining on the chair for twenty years, three months, and fifteen days and was buried in the monastery of El-Shahran.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. *The Departure of St. James of the East.*
2. *The Martyrdom of Sts. Anba Bshay (Ebsoy) and Anba Botros (Peter).*
3. *The Commemoration of the Consecration of the church of St. Boctor (Victor) in the region of Sho.*

1. On this day, St. James of the East (Oriental), the confessor, departed. He lived and worshipped in one of the monasteries of the East. He was a contemporary of Emperor Constantine the Great, Julian the Infidel, and Jovianus the Believer. When the latter was killed, Valens, his brother, reigned in his stead. He was an arian and he closed the Orthodox churches and allowed the Arians to open their churches. The grace of God moved this Saint and he went to the city of Constantinia. He met the Emperor on his way to war. He stood before the Emperor and said, "I ask you to open the churches of the believers, that they may pray for you, so may God make you victorious against your enemies, otherwise God will forsake you and you will be defeated before your enemies." The Emperor became angry at what St. James said and commanded to beat and imprison him. The Saint told him; "Know that you shall be defeated before your enemies, and you shall die by burning." The Emperor became enraged and ordered to keep him under guard until he should return from war. The Saint told him, "If you return safely, then God has not spoken by my mouth."

The Emperor went on to fight his enemies. When the two armies faced each other, the Lord forsake him, so he was defeated before his enemies. They pursued him until he came to a certain village to which they set fire. Its people escaped, but he and some of his men remained and they were burned. Those of his soldiers who returned to the city of Constantinia told the believers what had happened. Thus the prophecy of the holy man was fulfilled. The believers assembled, and brought him out of prison with great honor. The Arians knew that the divine grace and the spirit of prophecy dwelt in him, as they believed in the accuracy of his faith. Many turned from their error, confessing that the Son of God is equal with the Father in essence.

This saint spent the rest of the days of his life in devotion to the ascetic life, and in fighting the spiritual fight until he departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the two great Sts. Anba Bshay (Ebsoy) and Anba Botros (Peter) were martyred. Their relics are located in Sedfah, the governorate of Asyut.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

3. This day also, marks the commemoration of the consecration of the church of the great saint Anba Boctor (Victor) in the region of Sho, east of El-Khesous.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Sixth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

The Martyrdom of St. Theodore the Monk

On this day, St. Theodore the Monk, was martyred. He was born in the city of Alexandria. He became a monk in one of the monasteries near the city, and became known for his pure life and strenuous asceticism.

When Constantius, the son of the righteous emperor Constantine, followed the Arians, he sent an arian patriarch to Alexandria called Gawargios. He was accompanied by a number of soldiers. He exiled St. Athanasius, the Pope of Alexandria, and sat in his place after he had killed many of the believers.

St. Theodore, with Christian zeal, disputed with the Arians, and exposed their infidelity. The alien Patriarch seized him, tortured him much, then ordered that he be tied to the legs of unbridled horses. The horses were then released. St. Theodore's body was torn to pieces and his head was smashed. He delivered up his soul into the hand of the Lord and received the crown of martyrdom. The believers collected his holy members, and laid them in a coffin. They established a feast for him on this day.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

The Martyrdom of St. Abaskhiroun the Soldier

On this day, the honorable St. Abaskhiroun, who was from the city of Qalin, was martyred. He was one of the soldiers of Arianus, governor of Ansena (Antinoe). When the Edict of Diocletian to worship the idols was issued, this Saint arose in the middle of the people present, exposed the infidelity of the Emperor, and cursed his idols. They seized him and shut him up in the prison, which was in the palace of the Governor, in Asyut. Five other soldiers agreed with him to shed their blood in the Name of Christ. Their names were: Alfius, Armanius, Arkias, Peter, and Cranius. When they came before the Governor, he cut off their girdles, tortured them, crucified some and cut off the heads of the others.

As for St. Abaskhiroun, the Governor tortured him with different kinds of tortures, but the Lord comforted him, strengthened him, and healed his wounds. The Governor brought a sorcerer, whose name was Alexander. He gave the Saint some deadly poison, saying; "O master of the powers of darkness, manifest in this Christian your powers." The Saint took the poison, made the sign of the cross over it, and drank it, but no harm came upon him. The sorcerer marvelled, and he believed in the God of St. Abaskhiroun. The Governor cut off the head of the sorcerer, and he received the crown of martyrdom. The Governor became more enraged with the Saint. He tortured him extensively, then he ordered to cut off his head, and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. *The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of the Virgin Lady known as El-Mahammah.*
2. *The Commemoration of St. Tamada and her children, and Armenius and his mother.*
3. *The Martyrdom of George (Girgis) the new martyr.*

1. On this day, of the year 901 A.M., is the commemoration of the consecration of the church of the Virgin Lady, the Mother of God. This church is in the city known as El-Mahammah (Mostorod) which means "bath" because of the fountain of water flowing from the spring. This spring the Mother of God had sprung out upon her return from her visit to the land of Egypt. When Joseph went to Egypt as the Angel had said, he went to Upper Egypt. On his way back, he came to El-Mataryah, and then to El-Mahammah. A church was built in that place in the name of the Virgin Lady.

May her intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, is the commemoration of St. Tamada and her children, and Armenius and his mother.

May their intercession be with us. Amen.

3. This day also marks the martyrdom of George (Girgis), the new martyr. He was an Ishmealite as was his father. He believed in the Lord Christ and became a monk. They seized, and punished him severely. They took him before the Governor El-Zaher, where he confessed his faith in the Lord Christ. The Governor attempted to make him forsake his faith by offering him expensive gifts, but he refused. The Governor ordered to cut his neck off, and he received the crown of martyrdom in the year 1103 A.M. (1387 A.D.).

May his intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

1. *The Departure of Samuel the Prophet.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Lucilianus and four others with him.*
3. *The Relocation of the Relics of St. Mercurius to Cairo.*

1. On this day, of the year 2947 of the world, the upright and great, Samuel the Prophet, departed. This righteous man was born in Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim. His father's name was Elkanah and his mother was Hannah. She was barren, and by continual supplication, the Lord gave her Samuel. She raised him in her house for three years, and then she offered him to the temple of God as she vowed before she conceived him. He served Eli the priest until he grew up. Eli's two sons had behaved badly and defiled the temple.

While Samuel was lying down to sleep, the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." And Eli said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down. And the LORD called yet again, "Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." And Eli answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him. And the LORD called Samuel again a third time. Then Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. "In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." (1 Samuel 3:1-14)

Afterward, the Lord commanded Samuel to anoint Saul the son of Kish, a king for Israel. When Saul disobeyed the Lord Samuel anointed David, the son of Jesse, a king by the command of the Lord. He prophesied and judged for the people of Israel for twenty years.

May his prayer be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Lucilianus and four others with him, were martyred. He was a priest for the idols during the reign of Emperor Aurelianus Caesar. He witnessed the torturing of the martyrs, their beating, burning, and being hacked to pieces. He also witnessed many being thrown into the fire without being harmed. He marvelled and realized that his idols did not possess the power to do likewise and the God that does these signs is the true God. Straightway, he cried saying, "I am Christian, I am Christian." They seized him, and brought him before the Emperor who rebuked him for that. He promised him many gifts, then threatened him. Since he did not return from his firm intention, he tortured him severely then cast him into prison.

Then the Emperor brought him again with the other four Christians and threw them into the fire. God sent heavy rain and it quenched the fire. Finally, they hung him upon a wooden cross and nailed his body with long nails. Thus he delivered up his soul in the hand of the Lord. As for the other four, they cut off their heads and they all received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. Today also, we celebrate the commemoration of the relocation of the relics of St. Marcurius Abu-Saifain¹ to his church in Cairo. That was during the papacy of Pope Yoannis (94th Pope of Alexandria).

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

¹ His Biography is mentioned under the 25th of Hatour. Vol.I, P.122.

The Tenth Day of The Blessed Month of Baounah

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Dabamon.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Closing of the Pagan Temples and Opening of the Churches.*
3. *The Departure of St. Yoannis the 16th, the 103rd Pope of Alexandria.*
4. *The Enthronement of Pope Demetrius the Second, the 111th Patriarch of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, St. Dabamon, was martyred. A man named "Warshenoufa"² (Ouarshenoufa) was called upon to be a bishop, but he fled to "kahmoun" (Tahmoun), diocese of Bana. There, he found a lodging with two brothers called Dabamon (Eudaeman) and Bastamon (Episteman). That night, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "Why are you asleep while the fight is on, and the crowns are prepared? Arise and go to the governor and confess Christ to receive the crown of martyrdom."

When he rose up, he told the two brothers about his vision. They all agreed to receiving the crowns. They went to the governor and professed the Name of the Lord Christ before him. The Governor tortured them, and put them in prison. Then, he took them with him from Benchileel to Sanhour. He asked them to raise incense for the idols, but they refused. The Governor tortured them again and the Lord sent his angel to comfort them.

Then he took them to Sa, where the priest of the idols told the governor that a woman named Dabamon from Degwah had cursed the gods. She was a righteous and charitable woman who had a daughter named Youna. They weaved fabrics and painted beautiful drawings on them. They sold it and gave whatever was left as alms. The governor sent an executioner named Eulogi. When he saw her righteousness and her good nature, he refrained from killing her, and took her with him to the governor. There she met St. Warshenoufa and his two companions. The governor tortured her excessively and ordered to squeeze her with the press. The Lord strengthened her and raised her whole again. Meanwhile, Eulogi, the executioner that brought her, professed the Lord Christ. He was beheaded, and received the crown of martyrdom. The governor also ordered Dabamon to be beheaded outside the city. They took her out, and the women were around her weeping, but she was rejoicing. They cut her head off and she received the crown of martyrdom.

May her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 312 A.D., the righteous Emperor Constantine the great, issued his Edict to close all the pagan temples, and open all the churches throughout the whole Roman Empire. The news of the Edict arrived to Alexandria on this day, and all the people rejoiced exceedingly along with the heavenly hosts. All the Christians made this day a great feast day. This was at the beginning of the enthronement of Pope Alexandros the first, the 19th Patriarch of Alexandria.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

² His martyrdom is on the 29th of Abib. Vol. IV, P. .

3. Today also, of the year 1434 A.M. (June 15, 1718 A.D.), Pope Yoannis the Sixteenth, the 103rd Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. This Pope was known by the name "Yoannis El-Tokhi". His parents were Christians from Tokh El-Nasara, the diocese of El-Menoufia. They brought their son, whose name was Ibrahim, with the best of care. They provided him with the best of education. God blessed him from his youth, thus he grew up in virtue and in a chaste life.

When his father departed, he forsake the world and desired the monastic life. He went to the monastery of St. Antony in the wilderness of Araba, and became a monk there. He put on the garb of the monk and attired with the holy Eskeem. When he showed his dedication in worship and asceticism, the fathers the monks chose him to be a priest. Pope Mattheos, the Fourth, ordained him a priest for the monastery, in the church of the Virgin Lady in Haret Zeewailah. He became more righteous in his new priestly rank, and increased his worship, until his godliness, humility and meekness became well known.

When Pope Mattheos departed, the bishops, priests and lay leaders, met to choose a good shepherd. They elected a number of priests and monks, among whom was this father. They casted an altar lot after they had celebrated the holy liturgy for three consecutive days, asking God to guide them to the one who is fit to shepherd His people. When the lot was made, it fell on this father. They knew and realized that God had chosen him for this office. He was ordained on Sunday, the ninth of Baramhat, 1392 A.M. (May 5th, 1676 A.D.). He was called Yoannis the 16th. The celebration of his enthronement was splendid and the joy prevailed everywhere in Egypt.

He gave his attention to the restoration of the monasteries and the churches. He restored the holy places in Jerusalem and paid off its debts. He renovated many churches and monasteries which he consecrated by his blessed hands. He gave special attention to the monastery of St. Paul, the first hermit, in mount Nemra. The monastery was desolate for a period of more than one hundred years. He opened it, restored it, reestablished the monastic life in it, and made it better than before. He prepared books, veils, altar accessories, and relics of saints for it, and consecrated it himself. He ordained many priests, deacons and monks for it on Sunday the 19th of Bashans, 1421 A.M. (May 25, 1705 A.D.).

He visited the monastery of the great St. Antony, the father of the monks, in mount El-Kalzam, four times: the first was in the month of Kiahk, 1395 A.M. (1678 A.D.), accompanied by the head of the monastery, and some monks. The second was in the 20th of Baramouda, 1411 A.M. (1695 A.D.) at the end of the holy fast. He was accompanied by Fr. John the Virgin, the priest of the church of the Virgin in Haret El-Room and the honorable deacon El-Moallem Girgis El-Toukhy Abu Mansour, and El-Moallem Soliman El-Sarraf El-Shenrawi. The third time was in Misra 1417 A.M. (1701 A.D.), and the fourth time was in 1421 A.M. (1705 A.D.) to consecrate the monastery of St. Paul.

In the blessed month of Abib, 1417 A.M., a great tribulation befell the Orthodox Christians of Egypt, during the reign of the governor Mohammed Pasha. An accusation had reached him that the Coptic Christians had built new buildings in their churches. The Governor appointed an Agha, architects, and judges to go and investigate the accusation. They came back with the evidence that there were many new constructions in the churches. However, God did not forsake His people by the prayers of this godly Pope. Many honorable people in Egypt went to the Governor to intercede on behalf of the

Christians. The Governor ordered that a fine be paid as a penalty. The Pope met with the lay leaders El-Moallem Youhanna Abu Masri, El-Moallem Girgis Abu Mansour, and El-Moallem Ibrahim Abu Awad. They agreed unanimously that the Pope would visit the Christians in their homes, and collect what needed to be collected. The penalty was collected and paid to the Governor. The lay leaders were able to pay it back to the people and every one rejoiced. The churches were opened, and there was peace. The Pope took it hard going to the homes of the believers asking for money, so he went to the monastery of St. Antony on the 7th of the month of Misra, 1417 A.M. for a retreat.

In 1419 A.M., the Pope desired to make the Holy Oil (Myron). The Lord answered his request, and moved the heart of a Christian, the great lay leader, El-Moallem Girgis Abu Mansour, the administrator of the churches of El-Muallakah and Haret El-Roum. He was charitable to the poor and the needy, cared for the places of the saints and martyrs. He participated in every good deed with the Pope. He prepared what was needed (oil, spices, perfumes), and the Holy Myron was cooked and consecrated by the Pope in the Church of the Virgin in Haret El-Roum. The Myron had not been made for a period of two hundred and forty seven years, during which, 18 Popes sat on the throne of St. Mark. He was also the first to build the Patriarchate residence in Haret El-Roum, and dedicated properties and revenue for it.

In 1425 A.M. (1709 A.D.), this Pope visited Jerusalem, with some of the bishops, many archpriests, priests, and laymen. The honored deacon El-Moallem Girgis Abu Mansour El-Toukhy, paid all the expenses of this trip. He also paid all the expenses for the renovation of the church of the Virgin known as El-Muallakah in Old Cairo.

The Pope visited the churches, and monasteries. He also visited St. Mark church in Alexandria. He traveled everywhere in both Lower and Upper Egypt. In his time, he allowed the Holy Elements (the Body and the Blood of Christ) to be taken to the sick and those who could not come to the church.

This Pope was loved by everyone, and he was honored and respected for his humility, meekness, and his love for the poor. His door was always open to everyone who would call upon him. The days of his papacy were quiet. The Lord was with him, and delivered him from all his sorrows. He accepted his prayers and supplications and he lived to a good old age.

When he completed his course, he became sick for a short time. Then he departed in peace, with his friend the honorable lay leader Girgis Abu Mansour within one week. Many mourned him, and the bishops, the priests, and the lay leaders attended the prayers on his body. They carried him with great honor, and placed the body in the tomb of the Patriarchs in the church of St. Mercurius Abu Saifain in Old Cairo, in the 10th of Baounah, 1434 A.M., after he had been on the throne of St. Mark for forty two years and three months.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also, of the year 1578 A.M. (15th of June, 1862 A.D.), is the commemoration of the enthronement of Pope Demitrius the second, the 111th Patriarch.

This father was born in the village of Galda, the governorate of El-Menia. He became a monk in the monastery of St. Macarius. When the abbot of the monastery departed, he was chosen to become the new abbot. He did well in managing the monastery. For his good virtues, he was ordained a Pope to succeed the great Pope Abba Kyrillos the fourth, the 110th Patriarch.

He completed the construction of St. Mark Cathedral, built many buildings in the patriarchate, and in his monastery in the area of Atrees. In 1869 A.D., he attended the celebration for the opening of the Suez Canal, and met many kings. He was well respected by Sultan Abdel-Aziz. When this Pope came before him to greet him, the Pope kissed the sultan on his chest. The Sultan was troubled, and the guards asked the Pope why he did that. The Pope said, "The book of God says: 'The king's heart in the hand of the Lord' (Proverbs 21:1), when I kissed his heart, I have kissed the hand of God." The Sultan was pleased with his answer, and gave him many farm lands to help the poor and the schools.

The Pope traveled on a governmental boat to visit the churches in Upper Egypt. He regained those who were lost and strengthened the faithful.

After he had completed in the papacy seven years, seven months, and seven days, he departed in peace on the eve of Epiphany, the 11th of Tubah, 1586 A.M. (Jan. 18th, 1870 A.D.).

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen

The Eleventh Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. The Martyrdom of St. Claudius.

2. The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Altar of the Forty Martyrs in Alexandria.

1. On this day, the honorable St. Claudius, was martyred. He was the son of Ptolemy (Abtelmawos), who was Emperor Numerianus³ brother. He was loved by the people of Antioch for his courage and good appearance. Because they loved him so greatly, they painted a picture of him on the doors of the city of Antioch.

When Diocletian reneged the faith and incited the persecution against the Christians, this Saint agreed with St. Boctor (Victor) Ebn Romanus⁴ to be martyred for the sake of the Name of Christ. Satan appeared to them in the form of an old man and told them, "O my sons, you are young men, the sons of nobility, and I am afraid for you from this infidel Emperor; so if he asked you to worship the idols, accept his command, and in your houses you can worship Christ in secret." They realized that he was satan disguised as an old man and told him, "O you who are filled with all evil, go away from us." Straightway the old man changed his appearance and became like a

³The son of Numerianus is St. Justus, who was martyred. His biography mentioned under the tenth day of Amshir (Vol. II, P260).

⁴His martyrdom is mentioned under the twenty-seventh of Baramoudah (Vol. III, P.392).

black slave and told them, "Behold, I will go before you to the Emperor and instigate him to shed your blood."

The Emperor brought St. Claudius and proposed to him the worship of the idols, and promised to give him his father's position. Claudius neither accepted his promise, nor submitted to his order. He spoke to him boldly and fearlessly reviling him for worshipping the idols. The Emperor did not dare to harm him for the people of Antioch loved him. Romanus, St. Victor's father, advised the Emperor to send him to Egypt to be killed there. He sent him with a letter to the Governor of Ansena (Antinoe) stating in it: "Claudius neither obeyed our orders, nor hearkened our words. Persuade him with all your power first, and if he does not return on his counsel, cut off his head."

When the Saint heard that, he called Sidrakhos, his sister's husband, asked him to care for his sister, his possessions and bid him farewell. The Saint went with the soldiers to Egypt. When he arrived to Arianus, the governor of Ansena, he received him standing, kissed his hand, and said, "O my master Claudius, do not transgress the command of the Emperor." The Saint replied, "I was not sent to you for you to lead me astray by your words, but that you might fulfil what the emperor commanded." They argued with each other till Arianus became enraged with the answers of the Saint, and he drove the spear into the Saint. He delivered up his pure spirit and received the crown of martyrdom. Some of the believers, took his body and shrouded it. They placed it with the body of St. Victor who was martyred shortly before that. After the end of the time of persecution, Victor's mother came, and took their bodies to Antioch.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the church celebrates the commemoration of the consecration of the altar of the Forty martyrs⁵ of Sebastia, in the church of the Savior, in Alexandria.

May their intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twelfth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. *The Commemoration of Archangel Michael.*
2. *The Departure of St. Justus, the Sixth Pope of the See of St. Mark.*
3. *The Departure of St. Kyrillos the Second, the 67th Pope of Alexandria.*
4. *The Departure of St. Euphemia.*

1. On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the angel Michael, the Archangel, the intercessor of the human race. The one who appeared to Joshua the son of Nun, encouraged him, and told him, "Nay, but as captain of the hosts of the Lord am I now come." He made the city of Jericho to fall into his hands, and he stopped the sun for him.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

⁵The account of their martyrdom is mentioned under the thirteenth day of Baramhat (Vol. III, P.307).

2. On this day also, of the year 135 A.D., St. Justus, the Sixth Pope of the See of St. Mark, departed. This saint was an honorable and learned man before his ordination. He was baptized by St. Mark the Apostle, along with his father, his mother and others. St. Anianus, the second pope, ordained him a deacon, then a priest, and appointed him to preach, and teach the people. He was chosen for the papacy to succeed Pope Primus. He shepherded his people with the best of care for ten years. He departed at a pleasing good old age.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, the twelfth of Baounah, 808 A.M. (June 6th, 1092 A.D.), the great Pope, St. Kyrillos the Second, the 67th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He became a monk in Sawma'et (Cell) of Singar. Because of his knowledge and righteousness, they chose him a Patriarch, a successor to St. Christodolus, the 66th Pope. His enthronement was on 22nd of Baramhat, 794 A.M. (March 18th, 1078 A.D.).

Some of the bishops disobeyed the Pope and decided to depose him. They assembled a council from forty-seven bishops for this purpose. When the Fatimid governor knew of this dissension, he called the bishops to his orchard. He harshly talked to them with words God had put in his mouth.

The overseer of the orchard (Yaseeb) sided with those who opposed the Pope. Peter, the pope's disciple, reproved him and an exchange of words took place between them while the Pope was coming out of the meeting. The Pope told the overseer, "If the Governor has authority, Christ has authority over the heaven and earth." The Pope dismounted his horse, and made a matonia before him, which was on Saturday the 23rd of Misra, 802 A.M. On the next Saturday, the governor became enraged with the overseer of his orchard. He went there and ordered the beheading of the overseer. That was in the same place where the Pope had made the matonia to him and in the same hour.

The Governor told the dissenting bishops, "You all should be in accordance, and obey your Archbishop." Thus, they all were reconciled, and went to the church of St. Marcurius. They celebrated the Divine liturgy on Saturday and Sunday and then went to their parishes rejoicing.

This Pope remained on the Chair for fourteen years, two month, and thirteen days, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

4. This day also, marks the martyrdom of St. Euphemia. She was the wife of a man who feared God, and gave much alms. He kept three festivals each month: the commemoration of the angel Michael, on the twelfth day⁶; the commemoration of the Mother of God (Theotokos), on the

⁶ The pagans in Alexandria worshipped the idol Zuhal, who had a statue and a temple, that was built by Cleopatra on the twelfth day of the month of Baounah.

During the reign of Emperor Constantine, Pope Alexandros preached to the people, explaining to them the error of worshipping the idols that do not move or reason, which are made by human hands, and the error of offering sacrifices to them. He changed the temple of this idol to a church in the name of Michael the Archangel, and destroyed that statue. He asked them to distribute these sacrifices to the poor that Christ had called His brothers, to

twenty-first day; and the commemoration of the Nativity of our Lord, on the twenty-ninth day of each month. When the day of his departure drew near, he commanded his wife, to keep this custom, to not stop the giving of alms, and to do the acts of charity especially on these three festivals. He painted a picture of the honorable angel Michael and gave it to her.

After the departure of her husband, she continued to fulfill his will. Satan was jealous of her, and he came to her disguised as a monk, who talked to her expressing his pity for her. He advised her to get married, to bring forth children, and to refrain from doing charitable deeds lest she finish her money. He told her also that her husband had received the Kingdom and he had no need of the alms giving. She answered saying, "I have vowed not to consort with another man after my husband." She went on saying, "If birds as the doves and the ravens do not take second mates, how then can men who are created in the form and likeness of God do this?" The devil left her angry.

When the feast of the Angel had come, and she had prepared all what she needed as her custom, Satan appeared to her in the form of an angel and said to her, "Peace be to you, the angel Michael has sent me to you, commanding you to cease from these alms, and to marry a believing man." Then he told her, "A woman without a man is like a ship without a captain," and he began to bring her proofs out of the Holy Bible in regard of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and others like them who married wives and pleased God. She replied saying, "If you are an angel of God, where is the Cross, the symbol of your military service? For the soldier of the King never goes to any place without this symbol with him." When Satan heard these words from her, he returned to his original form, and jumped on her to choke her. She cried for the angel Michael, whose feast she was celebrating, and he delivered her immediately from him. The angel Michael told her, "Go and arrange your affairs, for you shall depart from this world today. And behold the Lord has prepared for you what eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, nor has it occurred to the heart of man," then he gave her the greeting of peace, and went up into heaven.

After, St. Euphemia had celebrated the feast of the angel Michael, she sent for the father the bishop and the priests. She

gave them all her money to give to the poor and the needy. Then, she took the Picture of the honorable angel Michael and prayed before it. She laid it upon her face and breast, then departed in peace.

May her prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

receive the intercession of the angel Michael. This church was called, at that time, the church of El-Kaisariah.

It was said also that this feast was taken after the Ancient Egyptians. They believed that the flood of the Nile started on the eve of the twelfth of the month of Baounah by "the coming down of the drop." That is to say, the tear of "Isis," the goddess of fertility and motherhood. The tear that she shed grieving for her husband "Osiris," the god of agriculture and abundance, who was killed by "Typhon" the god of evil.

This feast was replaced in Christianity by the feast of Michael the Archangel (Tareekh El-Omah El-koptiah). May his intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Thirteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. *The Departure of St. John, Bishop of Jerusalem.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Archangel Gabriel, the Announcer of Daniel the Prophet.*

1. On this day, of the year 419 A.D., the holy father St. John the second, bishop of Jerusalem, departed. He became a monk in the monastery of St. Hilarion, with the great father St. Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus⁷. His virtues and knowledge became well known, so they chose him a bishop for Jerusalem in the year 388 A.D., after the ordination of St. Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus.

After the ordination of St. John a bishop, the enemy of good led him astray through the love of money. He gathered much money, made silver vessels for his table, and neglected the poor and the needy. When St. Epiphanius heard that, he was troubled for what he knew about his friend St. John, from asceticism, righteousness, worshipping and being merciful. St. Epiphanius, because of his old friendship with St. John, came from Cyprus to Jerusalem. He made it appear that he had come to visit and worship the holy places, and visit the saints, but in fact he came to meet Abba John. When he arrived in Jerusalem, Abba John invited him for a visit. He prepared a table for St. Epiphanius and put these silver vessels on the table before him. When St. Epiphanius saw that, his heart was in pain, for he saw that his friend Abba John had in him no mercy for the poor and the needy. St. Epiphanius devised a plan to put his hands on these silver vessels. He went to one of the monasteries of Jerusalem, and sent to Abba John asking to borrow these vessels from him. He pretended that some of the elders of Cyprus came to visit him and he wished to offer them food using them. When Abba John sent the vessels to St. Epiphanius, he took them, sold them and gave the money as alms to the poor and needy.

A few days later, Abba John asked for the vessels, but St. Epiphanius asked him to wait a while on him. Abba John repeated his demand a second and a third time. When St. Epiphanius did not return them, Abba John seized him by the hem of his garment in the church of Resurrection and said to him, "I will not let you go until you give me back my silver vessels." St. Epiphanius prayed to the Lord Christ, and entreated Him for the sake of his old friend. Abba John became blind. He wept, and entreated St. Epiphanius to help him. St. Epiphanius prayed for his sake and one of his eyes was healed. He looked at him and said, "Behold, the Lord Christ has left blind one of your eyes as a reminder for you." He reminded him of his earlier benevolent life, and told him that he had sold his vessels and gave their price as alms. He also told Abba John that he only came to Jerusalem to substantiate what he had heard about his greed and love of the world. Abba John awoke from his foolishness and inadvertence. He walked diligently in the path of charity beyond what can be described. He gave as alms all that he owned of money, clothes, and the vessels. He

⁷His biography is mentioned under the seventeenth of Bashans (Vol. III, P.434), and the relocation of his body is under the twenty eighth of Bashans (Vol. III, P.455).

forsake all things worldly to the point that they did not find even a "Dirham" with him when he departed. God granted him the gift of healing the sick and performing signs. After he finished in his episcopate thirty one years, he departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the church in Egypt celebrates a feast for the honorable angel Gabriel. The angel Gabriel announced Daniel with the return of the children of Israel from captivity, the coming of the Lord Christ, the time of His coming, that He would be killed, the destruction of Jerusalem, and that no other Messiah would come after Him except the anti-Christ. This angel is the one who announced to Zachariah the birth of John, and six months later, he came with the glad tidings of the salvation of the world when he announced to the Virgin Mary saying, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; ... And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:31-33) Therefore, our church has arranged this feast to venerate this honorable angel.

May his intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. The Departure of Pope Yoannis the Nineteenth, 113th Patriarch of Alexandria.

2. The Martyrdom of Sts. Apakir, John, Ptolemy and Philip.

1. On this day, of the year 1658 A.M. (1942 A.D.) Pope Yoannis the Nineteenth, 113th Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. He was born in the village of Dair Tasa, Asyiut governorate in the year 1571 A.M. (1855 A.D.). His parents were righteous, therefore he was raised on piety and godliness. He drank the love of virtuous life and loved, since his young age, to read the biographies of saints. He longed to follow their example, accordingly he went to the monastery of the Virgin Lady known as El-Baramous in Wadi El-Natroun, in the month of Baramoudah, 1591 A.M. He became a monk on the third of Kiahk, 1592 A.M. (1876 A.D.). Because of his fervent worship, intelligence, and intellect, the fathers unanimously agreed to nominate him to be a priest. Pope Kyrillos the fifth, 112th Patriarch, ordained him a priest in the year 1593 A.M., then hegumen in Baramhat, 1594 A.M., and appointed him on the same day to be the head of the monastery. He remained the head of the monastery for ten years, during which he was an example of, ambition, honesty, purity of conduct, firmness, godliness, and good management.

When the Chair of the diocese of El-Biharah became vacant, the people chose Yoannis a metropolitan for that Chair. He was ordained on the twelfth of Baramhat, 1603 A.M. (1887 A.D.) and also was appointed as a deputy of the See of St. Mark. After the departure of Anba Yoannis, metropolitan of El-Menofaya at that time, the people of the diocese nominated him to care for them. The diocese of El-Menofaya was added to his duties in the year 1610 A.M. (1894 A.D.), and he became the metropolitan of El-Biharah, El-Menofaya, and the deputy of the See of St. Mark.

Since his official seat was in Alexandria, he established there a theological school to educate the monks. He sent from its students a mission to Athens for higher theological studies.

The revenue of the church properties was inconsiderable. By his good judgement, the revenue increased year after year. Because of the highrise buildings that he built and the renovation of the old ones. He also gave great care for the Coptic schools, elementary and high, until their standard became equivalent to the best schools. He built and renovated most of the churches in his parish. He also gave special attention to the monasteries in his jurisdiction, which were improved greatly because of his good care and close supervision.

Because of his foresight, and prudence, the government chose him as a representative for the Copts in many councils and committees at the general assembly, the committee for formulating the constitution and many others.

He spent forty-two years as a metropolitan, which were full of splendid works. When the blessed Pope Kyrillos the fifth, departed, on the first of Misra, 1643 A.M. (August 7th, 1927 A.D.) the Holy Synod convened on the fourth of Misra. They unanimously agreed to chose him Acting Pope to run the affairs of the church until ordaining a patriarch. As a result of that, the Holy Synod had received many nominations from the parishes approving that choice.

He performed his duties as Acting Patriarch for one year, four months, and ten days. During this period he administered the affairs of the See of St. Mark very well, during which also the Holy Synod, with Anba Yoannis presiding, issued a canon to regulate the affairs of the monasteries and the monks. He organized a committee to oversee the church properties and those of the monasteries and to review their accounts.

From what everyone knew of his purity, virtuous life, good character, asceticism, and piety, they all unanimously agreed to chose him a patriarch with nominations from the bishops, priests and lay leaders. He was enthroned a patriarch on Sunday the seventh of Kiahk 1645 A.M. (December 16th, 1928 A.D.) in the great St. Mark cathedral in Cairo (Azbakiah). That took place with a great celebration attended by the representatives of the King, princes, ministers, important Egyptian personalities, the metropolitans of different denominations eastern and western, and ambassadors of foreign countries.

After his ordination, Pope Yoannis directed his attention to caring for the affairs of the Coptic People and the church. He established a higher theological institution for the education of the monks in the city of Helwan. He ordained for the kingdom of Ethiopia, a Coptic Metropolitan and four well-learned Ethiopian bishops. He travelled to Ethiopia to reaffirm the unity between the Coptic and Ethiopian churches. He stayed there for thirteen days where they received him with great honor and respect. In Addis Ababa, he ordained the head of the Ethiopian monks (the successor of St. Takla Haymanot) a bishop.

With the will of God, he made the Holy Oil (Myron) in the year 1648 A.M. (1930 A.D.). The last time the oil was made was one hundred and ten years earlier during the papacy of Pope Peter,

109th Pope of Alexandria. Pope Yoannis made the Holy Oil a second time, specially for the kingdom of Ethiopia, attended by Anba Kyrillos, metropolitan of Ethiopia, and Anba Peter, an Ethiopian bishop.

His contributions, too numerous to be mentioned completely, include watching over the welfare of the church, kindness to the needy, support for charitable organizations, moral and financial support for the Coptic teaching institutions, and assistance on valuable projects that financially and spiritually benefitted the Copts.

During Pope Yoannis' papacy, a war broke out between Ethiopia and Italy, during which most of the Ethiopian bishops died except Anba Abraam and another bishop. When Italy occupied Ethiopia, the Emperor departed from his country. Anba Kyrillos, the metropolitan of Ethiopia, was exiled to Egypt, for he refused to agree with Italy on separating the Ethiopian church from the Coptic Orthodox church. In November, 1937 A.D., the Italian governor of Ethiopia decided the independence of the Ethiopian church and its separation from the Alexandrian See. He appointed Anba Abraam, the Ethiopian bishop, a patriarch for Ethiopia. Nevertheless, God punished him for his betrayal. He became blind and died shortly after. The Alexandrian Holy Synod decided to excommunicate him, not recognizing him nor the bishops that he ordained. This situation in Ethiopia did not last long; during the Second World War the Emperor of Ethiopia regained his kingdom from Italy. Anba Kyrillos returned to his church with great honor, in May 1942 A.D.

When Pope Yoannis had realized the return of the Ethiopian church to its mother church, the Coptic Church, he was stricken with the ailments of old age. He departed in peace on Sunday 14th of Baounah, 1658 A.M. (June 21st, 1942 A.D.).

May his prayers be with us. Amen

2. On this day also, Sts. Apakir, John, Ptolemy and Philip, were martyred. St. Apakir was born in the city of Damanhur, and had a rich brother called Philip. They had agreed with two priests, one called John and the other called Ptolemy, to receive the crown of martyrdom. They went to the city of Kartsa (Kartes), and confessed the name of the Lord Christ before the Governor. The governor ordered to shoot them to death with arrows, but the arrows did not touch them. They were then cast into red hot fire, but the angel of the lord delivered them from it. Then the governor commanded to tie them to the tails of horses, and to drag them from Kartes to the city of Damanhur, but the Lord guarded them from any harm. The governor commanded that their heads be cut off outside the city of Damanhur. They received the crown of martyrdom. People from the city of Sa came and took the body of St. Apakir, built for him a church, and laid his body inside it. Many signs and wonders took place through him. The people of Damanhur came and took the bodies of John, Ptolemy, and Philip, wrapped them in expensive shrouds and buried them there.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

- 1. The Turning Over of the Relics of the Great St. Mark the Apostle by the hand of Pope Paul the Sixth, Pope of Rome.*
- 2. The Consecration of the Church of Mari Mina at Maryut.*

1. On this day, of the year 1684 A.M., that coincided with Saturday the 22nd of June, 1968 A.D., and in the tenth year of the papacy of Pope Kyrillos the sixth, 116th Pope of Alexandria, the official delegation of the Pope of Alexandria received the relics of the great St. Mark the Apostle, the evangelist of the Egyptian land and the first Patriarch of the See of St. Mark from the hand of Pope Paul the Sixth, Pope of Rome, in the Papal palace, Vatican City.

The delegation consisted of ten metropolitans and bishops, seven of them were Coptic and three Ethiopians, and three lay leaders. The Alexandrian papal delegation left Cairo on Thursday the 23rd of Baounah, 1684 A.M. (June 20th, 1968 A.D.) on a special plane accompanied by 90 of the Coptic personalities, among them, seven priests. They were received by a delegation of cardinals and priests delegated by Pope Paul the Sixth, and the ambassador of Egypt to the Vatican, at the airport in Rome.

Twelve o'clock, the morning of Saturday the 15th of Baounah (June 22nd), was the appointed time for the Alexandrian Papal delegation to meet the Pope of Rome and receive the relics of St. Mark the Apostle. At the appointed time, the delegation went in headed by Anba Marcus, metropolitan of Abu-Teeg and Tahta, and were received by Pope Paul VI in his private office. Pope Paul greeted the delegation, commending Pope Kyrillos the sixth, and the church of Alexandria. He congratulated the delegation on the opening of the new St. Mark Cathedral and the receiving of the relics of St. Mark. Anba Marcus, the head of the delegation, replied with a short speech, in which he carried the greetings of his brother, the Pope of Alexandria. Then he handed him a letter from Pope Kyrillos the sixth, thanking him and introducing the members of the delegation.

Pope of Rome, along with the head of the Alexandrian delegation, then carried the box that contained the relics of St. Mark. They all walked in a procession to a grand room, which was prepared to receive the Copts, accompanied by the official delegates to witness this historical and joyful moment. The box containing the relics was placed on a special table. The Roman Pontiff came forward and knelt before the box and kissed it. He was followed by Anba Marcus, the head of the Alexandrian Papal delegation, who was followed by the members of the delegation. During the veneration of the relics of St. Mark the Apostle, the Coptic priests and deacons present chanted appropriate ecclesiastical hymns. Joy filled the hearts of everyone, Egyptian and foreign. An atmosphere of spirituality and holiness filled the room.

The Roman Pope then sat on his throne, and Anba Gregorius, bishop of higher studies and scientific research, gave a speech in English, representing the delegation. He expressed in it the greetings of Pope Kyrillos the Sixth, and the joy of the Christians of Egypt and Ethiopia for the

return of the relics of St. Mark the Apostle after eleven centuries. During which the body of St. Mark was absent from the country in which he was martyred.

Pope of Rome, replied in an official speech in French, that he read while sitting on the throne. In it he exalted the history of the Alexandrian church, and its long struggle in the field of dogma. He also praised its heros, and its learned people such as Athanasius the apostolic, Kyrillos (Cyril) the Pillar of Faith, Pantaenus and Clement. He hoped that the celebration of the day would be a sign of love and a bond between the church of Alexandria and the church of Rome. The Roman Pope asked in his speech also from the head, Cardinal Doval, and members of the Roman Papal delegation to carry his greetings, admiration, and appreciation to Pope Kyrillos the Sixth, the clergy of the church of Alexandria, Egypt and its people.

Afterwards, the Pope and Anba Marcus, the head of the delegation, rose up to exchange the commemorative gifts. Anba Marcus gave the Pope the presents which were sent by H.H. Pope Kyrillos. Pope of Rome admired the precious gifts and asked Anba Marcus to convey his thanks to H.H. Pope Kyrillos. The Pope in return gave the members of the delegation commemorative presents.

The Roman Pope, then gave Anba Marcus, the head of the Alexandrian Papal delegation, an official document dated May 28th, 1968 A.D. testifying that the relics were authentic and belonged to St. Mark the Apostle, and were taken from their original place with veneration. The document was signed by Cardinal Porfeer, the deputy of Vatican City. Thus, the official celebration of handing over the relics of St. Mark the Apostle ended, and the delegation went back to their hotel.

May the blessings of St. Mark be with us all. Amen

2. On this day also, is the commemoration of the appearance of the body of the honorable saint, and great martyr Mari Mina, and the consecration of his church at Maryut (Mareotis).

Now, the body of this saint was hidden, and the Lord wished to reveal it. It came to pass that there was a shepherd, who pastured his sheep near the place where the body of the saint was buried. One day, one of his sheep, which was sick of a skin disease (mangy), dipped itself in the water of a pond which was near that place. It then went out of the water, and rolled itself in the sand of that place, and it was healed straightway. When the shepherd saw this wonder, he marvelled, and took the sand of that place and mixed it with the water of the pond. He smeared every mangy sheep, or any that had a deformity, and they were healed immediately.

The report of this shepherd became widespread in all the regions of the empire, until the emperor of Constantinople heard of it. He had an only daughter who was leprous. Her father sent her there. She questioned the shepherd about how she could get rid of her illness, and he told her. She took some of that sand and mixed it with the water. She retired to her quarters and smeared her body with the mixture and slept that night in that place. She saw in a dream St. Mina and he told her, "Rise up early and dig in this place and you shall find my body." When she woke up from her sleep, she found herself healed. She dug in that place, and she found the holy body. She sent to

her father to inform him about what had happened. He rejoiced exceedingly, thanked God and praised His Holy Name. He sent men and money and built a church in that place which was consecrated on this day.

When Arcadius and Honorius reigned they ordered a city to be built there which was called Maryut. The masses came to this church interceding with the blessed Mari Mina. God had honored him by the miracles and wonders⁸ that were manifested from his pure body, until the Moslems occupied the city and destroyed it.

The biography of this saint is mentioned under the fifteenth day of Hatour (Vol. I, P. 106).
May his intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

The Departure of St. Abba Nofer the Anchorite

On this day, the ascetic father, Abba Nofer the Anchorite, departed at a good old age, and of a glorious memory, in the desert of Upper Egypt. The grace of God had moved St. Paphnoute (Paphnutius)⁹, and he longed to see the servants of God, the Anchorites. He saw many of them, among them St. Abba Nofer, and wrote their biographies.

He said that once he went into the desert and found a well of water and a palm tree. Then he saw the saint coming to him, naked, and the hair of his head and beard covered his body. When St. Paphnutius saw him, he was afraid and thought that he was a spirit. Saint Abba Nofer encouraged him, made the sign of the cross, and prayed the Lord's prayer, then said to him, "Welcome O Paphnoute." When he called him by his name, St. Paphnutius calmed down. They prayed together, then sat, and talked about the greatness and goodness of God.

St. Paphnutius asked Abba Nofer to tell him about his life and how he came to that place. Abba Nofer replied, "I was in a monastery wherein lived holy and righteous monks. I heard them talking about the greatness of those anchorites who dwelled in the desert and their good virtues. I said to them, 'Are there any who are better than you?' They said to me, 'Yes, those anchorites who dwell in the wilderness. We live near the world, if we are sorrowful or sad, we find someone to console us; if we are sick, we find someone to visit and treat us; if we are naked, we find someone to clothe us. Those who live in the wilderness lack all these things.' When I heard that from them, my heart became anxious.

"When the night came, I took a little bread and I went out from the monastery. Then I prayed to

⁸That is why the church calls him the wonder worker.

⁹His biography is mentioned under the fifteenth day of Amshir, (Vol. II, P. 268).

the Lord Christ and asked Him to guide me to the place where I was to live. The Lord facilitated my way and I found a holy and righteous man. I dwelt with him, and he taught me all about the life and the ways of the hermits and the anchorites. After I came to this place, I found a palm tree, and a well. The tree bore twelve clusters of dates each year. One cluster of dates is enough food for me for a month, and I drink water from this well. I have lived here for sixty years during which I have never seen the face of a man except yours."

While they were talking together the angel of the Lord came down, and told St. Abba Nofer that his departure was near. Straightway, his color changed and became like fire, then he bowed his knees and worshipped God. After he embraced St. Paphnutius, he delivered up his pure soul. St. Paphnutius wrapped him, and buried him in his cave. St. Paphnutius wished to live in the place of Abba Nofer. But after he had buried him, the palm tree dried and fell down and the water of the well dried up. That happened by the Will of God, so St. Paphnoute would return to the world and tell us about the holy hermits that he had seen.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to god forever. Amen.

The Seventeenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. *The Return of the Relics of the Great St. Mark to the New St. Mark Cathedral.*
2. *The Departure of St. Latsoun El-Bahnasawy.*

1. On this day, of the year 1684 A.M., that coincided with Monday the 24th of June, 1968 A.D., and in the tenth year of the papacy of Pope Kyrillos the Sixth, 116th Pope of Alexandria, the relics of the great saint, the beholder of God, St. Mark the Apostle, the Evangelist of the Egyptian land and the first Patriarch of Alexandria, were returned to Egypt. Pope Kyrillos had delegated an official delegation to travel to Rome to receive the relics of St. Mark the Apostle from Pope Paul VI. The papal delegation consisted of ten metropolitans and bishops, seven of them were Coptic and three Ethiopians, and three of the prominent Coptic lay leaders. The Alexandrian delegation received the relics of St. Mark the Apostle on Saturday the 22nd of June, 1968 A.D. from Pope Paul VI. The moment of handing over the holy relics, after eleven centuries, during which the body of St. Mark was kept in the city of Venice, in Italy, was a solemn and joyful moment.

The next day, Sunday 16th of Baounah (June 23rd), the Alexandrian Papal delegation celebrated a festive pontifical liturgy in the church of St. Athanasius the Apostolic in Rome. The ten metropolitans, bishops, and the priests accompanying the delegation, all served in the liturgy. Members of the Roman Papal delegation, the Copts who accompanied the Delegation, and those who lived in Rome, newspaper and news agency reporters, and many foreign dignitaries attended the liturgy.

The Alexandrian Papal delegation carrying the holy relics, on Monday the 24th of June, 1968 A.D., went to the airport in an official procession, preceded by the motorcycles and police escort. They boarded a plane which came especially from Cairo. The plane arrived at Cairo airport at ten thirty P.M. of the same day. Awaiting the arrival of the relics were, Pope Kyrillos the Sixth, Mari

Ignatius Yacoub, the Antiochian Patriarch for the Syrian Orthodox, a great number of coptic and foreign bishops, the head of various denominations and religions, Egyptian and foreign, and thousands of the Egyptian masses, Christian and Moslems. They sang and chanted enjoyable religious songs, waiting for the arrival of the plane.

When the plane landed, H.H. Pope Kyrillos went up the stairs of the aircraft, and received the precious box that contained the relics of St. Mark the Apostle, from the head of the delegation. Many, and especially those who were in the balcony of the airport, at this particular moment, saw three white doves flying over the aircraft. Since pigeons do not fly during the night, these were not ordinary pigeons. Perhaps, it was the spirits of the saints welcoming the relics of the great St. Mark. It is worthy to note also that the plane was suppose to arrive at five o'clock but it was delayed for no apparent reason till it was dark. Perhaps also, it was just for the spectators to witness and see these flying doves.

The Pope disembarked the aircraft carrying the box on his shoulder in the middle of the chanting and singing of the deacons, followed by a tremendous procession of thousands chanting with the deacons in joy and jubilation. The head of the Roman Papal delegation, Cardinal Doval, Cardinal of Algeria, was amazed by this tremendous religious rally. He also expressed that he was deeply touched by the devoutness of the Copts and their great honor and veneration for St. Mark. He said that what he saw far exceeded his expectations, especially that the masses had to wait from five o'clock P.M., the expected time of arrival of the aircraft, till ten thirty or even later.

Pope Kyrillos returned to the old St. Mark Cathedral in El-Azbakiah with the box of the relics. He placed the box on top of the main altar which was consecrated in the name of St. Mark the Apostle. The box remained there till the third day of its arrival, when the Pope carried it to the new St. Mark Cathedral in its inauguration.

May the blessings of St. Mark be with us all. Amen

2. On this day also, the great saint Anba Latsoun of El-Bahnesa, departed. One day, he went to the church and heard the words of the Lord Christ in the Holy Gospel saying: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what advantage is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?" (Luke 9:24-25) These words kindled his heart, so he left the world and went to the wilderness of Scetis (Sheahat). There he fought a great fight with ceaseless fasting and prayers.

The angel of the Lord appeared to him and commanded him to go to St. Isidore, to clothe him with the holy Eskeem. He went to him, and after forty days St. Isidore clothed him with it. He increased in his asceticism, then he lived a solitary life in the wilderness.

There, he was visited by St. Balamon (Palaemon). Satan had appeared to him disguised as a woman. Satan tried to persuade him to marry her by mentioning some of the Old Testament men that were married but yet were righteous. St. Balamon realized that he was the devil. He crossed himself with the sign of the cross, and prayed to the Lord to save him. The devil became like smoke and disappeared. St. Balamon went to St. Latsoun to take his advice on devil warfare. He

instructed him on how to overcome the devil and his deception. St. Balamon then went back to his abode. As of St. Latsoun, he increased in his asceticism until he departed in peace.
May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eighteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

1. *The Inauguration of the New St. Mark Cathedral in the Monastery of Anba Rowais.*
2. *The Departure of St. Damianos, 35th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, of the year 1684 A.M., that coincided with Tuesday the 25th of June, 1968 A.D., and in the tenth year of the papacy of Pope Kyrillos the Sixth, 116th Pope of Alexandria, the holy church celebrates the inauguration of the new St. Mark Cathedral in Dair El-Anba Rowais, which was known also as Dair El-Khandaq.

For this occasion and for the return of the relics of St. Mark the Apostle from Rome, after being in the city of Venice in Italy for eleven centuries, i.e. since the ninth century, a great religious celebration was organized. The celebration was headed by H.H. Pope Kyrillos the Sixth and was attended by President Gamal Abdel Naser, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Emperor Haile Selassie the First, Emperor of Ethiopia, and many of the heads of different religions and representatives of churches from all around the world. Among those religious leaders was Mari Ignatius Yacoub the Third, the Antiochian Patriarch for the Syrian Orthodox.

Many momentous speeches, were delivered in different languages for this occasion. The speakers were, Pope Kyrillos the Sixth, the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox, Cardinal Doval, the head of the Roman Papal delegation, the Catholicos Patriarch of Ethiopia, the secretary general of the World Council of Churches, and the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia. They all expressed their joy on this happy and blessed day, saluting the church of Alexandria, which had a glorious history, with salutation of appreciation and respect.

At the end of the speeches the Pope along with the President of Egypt and the Emperor of Ethiopia went to the entrance of the new Cathedral. They unveiled the curtains from the commemorative plaque that was prepared to perpetuate this historical day.

This celebration was attended by the journalists, the international news agencies' reporters, radio, television and more than six thousand Egyptians and foreigners.
May the blessings of St. Mark be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 321 A.M. (June 25th, 605 A.D.) St. Damianos, 35th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He became a monk in his early years in the desert of Scete. He continued to fight and to devote himself to God for sixteen years. He was ordained a deacon in the monastery of St. John the Short. Then he went to the monastery of the fathers which is to the west of Alexandria, and there he increased his asceticism.

When Pope Peter (34) was enthroned on the See of St. Mark, he brought and appointed Damianos a private secretary. Damianos pursued a good course of life and everyone loved him. When Pope Peter departed, the bishop unanimously agreed to ordain him a patriarch. He was enthroned a patriarch on the second of Abib 285 A.M. (June 26th, 569 A.D.). He cared for his flock well and he wrote many epistles and discourses.

In the wilderness of Scete, there were some followers of Melitius El-Assyuty, who drank wine a few times during the night before they intended to partake of the Holy Communion. They claimed that the Lord Christ gave to His disciples two cups: the first He did not say, "This is My Blood" but when he gave them the second cup he said, "This is My Blood." St. Damianos showed them their error. He clarified to them that the first cup was the cup of the Jewish passover, and He nullified it with the second cup. He also told them that the canons of the church ban those that eat before communion from partaking of the Holy Eucharist. Some of them turned from their evil, but those that did not turn from their evil council were driven out of the wilderness.

When Anba Theophanius, the Antiochian Patriarch departed, they ordained a successor to him called Peter, who sent a letter to Pope Damianos which said, "There is no need for us to say that God is the three Persons." When Pope Damianos read this letter he became enkindled with zeal. He wrote him a letter which explained that God is, in no doubt, one in His Godhead, one in essence, but He is Three persons, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, One God. He wrote to him many testimonies from the Holy Scriptures and from the sayings of the holy fathers. Nevertheless, Peter refused to return to the truth, and insisted on his error. Pope Damianos ordered that his name not be mentioned in the Divine Liturgy for twenty years until the heretic died.

Pope Damianos remained for thirty five years, eleven month, and sixteen days, teaching and preaching to his flock. He departed at a good old age.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Nineteenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

- 1. The First Pontifical Liturgy in the New St. Mark Cathedral in the Monastery of Anba Rowais.*
- 2. The Departure of Pope Archelaus, the Eighteenth Pope of Alexandria.*
- 3. The Martyrdom of St. George (Girgis) known as El-Mezahem.*
- 4. The Martyrdom of St. Bishai Anoub.*

1. On this day, of the year 1684 (Wednesday, June 26th, 1968), the church celebrated the first Pontifical Liturgy in the new St. Mark Cathedral in the monastery of Anba Rowais, which was known as Dair El-Khandaq, where the relics of St. Mark were placed after his return from Venice and Rome.

On the morning of Wednesday the 19th of Baounah (June 26th) at about six o'clock, Pope Kyrillos took the box of the relics of St. Mark, that he had placed on the altar of the old St. Mark

Cathedral in El-Azbakiah upon its arrival. He brought it in his private car to the new St. Mark Cathedral.

The Pontifical Divine Liturgy that was celebrated on this occasion was headed by H.H. Pope Kyrillos the Sixth, and participating with him were the patriarch Mari Ignatius Yacoub the Third, the Antiochian Patriarch for the Syrian Orthodox, and a number of Syrian, Indian and Armenian Orthodox bishops. This celebration was attended by Emperor Haile Selassie the First, Emperor of Ethiopia, Cardinal Doval, the head of the Roman Papal delegation and Cardinal of Algeria, many of the heads of different religions and representatives of churches from all around the world, and more than six thousand Egyptians and foreigners.

During the Liturgy, the box that contained the relics of St. Mark the Apostle was placed on a table in the middle of the eastern part of the altar of the Cathedral, and remained there till the end of the liturgy. Right after the liturgy, Pope Kyrillos went down carrying the box along with the Emperor, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch and the heads of the churches in a magnificent procession. They went to the sanctuary that was prepared for St. Mark under the main altar of the Cathedral. Pope Kyrillos placed the box inside the marbled altar, which was covered by a large marble slab and on it was the altar table.

The different choral groups then sang, successively in different languages, songs and hymns that befit the occasion in salutation for St. Mark. They sang in Coptic, Ethiopian, Syrian, Armenian, Greek, Latin, and in Arabic. The day was a joyous day and one of the most blessed days in the history of the church of Alexandria.

May the blessings of St. Mark be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 28 A.M. (June, 312 A.D.) Pope Archelaus, the Eighteenth Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was a priest in the church of Alexandria. When Pope Peter the first, the seal of martyrs, received the crown of martyrdom, the believers in Alexandria agreed and gathered the bishops. They ordained Archelaus the priest a Patriarch instead of Pope Peter, as he commended before his departure from this world. When he was enthroned on the patriarchal chair in the 19th of Kiahk, 28 A.M. (December 24th, 311 A.D.), a group of people came to him and asked him to accept Arius in the church. He accepted their petition against the command of his father Pope Peter, but he did not remain on the Chair longer than six months, then departed.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. This day also, in the year 675 A.M. (June, 959 A.D.), marks the martyrdom of St. George, the new martyr, known as El-Mezahem. His father was a Moslem bedouin. He married a Christian woman from the city of Demerah El-kibliah. He had from her three sons, one of them was this Saint, and they called him El-Mezahem.

He used to go with his mother to the church at a young age. He also used to see the children of the Christians dress in white on the days that they partook of the Holy Mysteries. He longed that his mother would dress him like them, and allow him to eat from whatever they ate at the altar. His mother told him that could not be, unless he was baptized. She gave him a portion of the

blessed *Eulogia* bread, that they distributed to the people, and it tasted in his mouth like that of honey. He meditated in his heart and said, "If the taste of this bread that was not consecrated by prayers tastes like this, what will be the taste of the Offering?" His longing for the faith in Christ increased from that time.

When he grew up, he married a Christian woman, and he told her that he wished to become a Christian. She told him that he had to be baptized. He went to Birma, was baptized there and was called George (Girgis). When this matter became known, he went to Domiat. The Moslems there recognized him, seized him and tortured him. Then he escaped and fled to the city of Saft Abu-Trab, where he stayed for three years. When his matter became known again he went to the city of Katurah, and remained there serving the church of St. George, then went back to Demerah.

When the Moslems of the city of Demerah knew his history, they seized him, and delivered him to the governor who put him in prison. The Moslems assembled and broke the door of the prison. They beat the Saint severely, split open his head, and left him between life and death. When some of the believers came on the morrow to bury him, for they thought that he was dead, they found him alive. The Moslems convened a council, and threatened him, but he did not change his conviction. They hung him up on the mast of a ship, but the governor ordered that he be taken down and cast him up in prison.

His wife strengthened him, and comforted him. She taught him to believe that the punishment which had come upon him was because of his sins; lest Satan lead him astray and he might boast that he became like the martyrs. The angel of the Lord appeared to him, comforted him, strengthened him, and informed him that he would receive the crown of martyrdom on the next day. On the next morning, the Moslems gathered with the governor and demanded from him that the head of El-Mozahem be cut off. He handed him over to them. They took him, and cut off his head near the church of the angel Michael in the city of Demerah. They cast his body in hot fire for a day and a night. But his body did not burn, so they put him in a barrel and threw him into the river. By the Will of God the barrel landed on the shore of an island, which was inhabited by a believing woman. She took his body, shrouded him, hid him in her house until they built a church for him, in which they laid his body.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

4. On this day also, St. Bishai Anoub, which means "fine gold", was martyred. He was from the city of Banios, in the diocese of Domiat. He was one of the soldiers of Cyprianus, governor of Athribis. When persecution was incited against the Christians, he went to the governor and confessed his faith in the Lord Christ before him. The governor tortured him, then sent him to the governor of Ansena (Antinoe). St. Bishai openly declared his faith in Christ before Arianus, the governor of Ansena, who tortured him severely. Finally, he ordered his head cut off outside the city. A great multitude followed him outside of the city. One of them, was the keeper of the lions of Arianus, the governor, and he had with him two lions bound with chains. One of them rushed forward, broke the chain, and attacked the Saint to devour him. Immediately, the angel of the

Lord appeared, took the Saint and brought him to the city of Ain-Shams where his martyrdom was consummated.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Baounah

The Departure of Elisha, the Prophet

On this day, of the year 3195 of the world, the holy prophet Elisha, departed. This prophet was born in one of the villages of Israel called Alamut. His father's name was Shaphat. Elisha was a servant to the holy prophet Elijah. When the Lord would take up Elijah the prophet into heaven, he went with him to the river Jordan. Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I be taken away from you." Elisha asked, "I pray you, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me," and it was as he asked. (2 Kings 2:1-18)

Elisha divided the river and passed through it. Then he went to Jericho and went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!" So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the LORD. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. (2 Kings 2:23-24)

A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves." So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil." Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors; empty vessels; do not gather just a few." With his prayers the Lord blessed the oil and all the vessels became full. The woman sold the oil and paid off her debt. (2 Kings 4:1-7) He also raised the son of the Shunammite woman from the dead.

When Naaman the Syrian came to him, he healed him from his leprosy. Naaman offered him much money and costly clothes, but he refused them. Nevertheless, when his servant Gehazi took them for himself, the prophet knew that by the spirit. Elisha became angry and told him, "Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever."

Elisha had performed many signs and miracles. He prophesied for about fifty years. When Elisha died, they buried him. And the raiding bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year. So it was, as they were burying a man, a plundering band was seen, and they cast the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, stood on his feet, and went back to his people. (2 Kings 13:20-21)

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty First Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

1. *The Commemoration of the First Church for The Virgin Mary in the city of Philippi.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Timothy of Memphis (El-Masry).*
3. *The Departure of St. Cedron (Kardonos), the Fourth Patriarch of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the first church to be built in the name of the Virgin Lady, the All pure St. Mary, the Theotokos (Mother of God), through whom the salvation of Adam and his posterity was fulfilled. When the two apostles Paul and Silas preached among the gentiles, many believed of them in the city of Philippi. They built a church there in the name of the Virgin, the Mother of God, and its consecration was on that day. It is meet for us to celebrate for her a spiritual festival, for she has borne the Savior of the world.
May her intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Timothy of Memphis (El-Masry) was martyred. He was one of the soldiers of Arianus, governor of the city of Ansena. When he read the Edict of the Emperor Diocletian, which commanded the worship of idols, this soldier rose up in the middle of the people, seized the Edict, and tore it up saying, "There is no God except Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God." The Governor became enraged. He seized Timothy by the hair of his head, and cast him down on the ground. He commanded him to be beaten until his flesh was mangled. The Saint cried out, saying, "O my Lord Jesus Christ, help me for there is no God but You." God considered his endurance, and sent His angel, who healed his wounds. The Saint returned to the Governor crying, "There is no God except Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God." The Governor tortured him severely again, and finally he cut off his head and thus St. Timothy received the crown of martyrdom.
May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. This day also (June 15th, 106 A.D.) marks the departure of St. Cedron (Kardonos), the Fourth Patriarch of Alexandria. This father was baptized by the hand of St. Mark the apostle, and the evangelist of the land of Egypt. He learned the doctrines and the books of the Church. After the departure of Pope Melius, he was ordained a Pope for the See of St. Mark in the 7th of Tute (September 5th, 95 A.D.). He shepherded his people with the best of care, by preaching, teaching, and instructing them for eleven years, one month, and twelve days, then departed in peace.
May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Second Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

The Consecration of the Church of Sts. Cosmas, Damian, Their Mother, and Brothers

On this day, the church celebrates the consecration of the church of St. Cosmas (Kozman),

Damian, their brothers, Anthimus, Londius, and Abrabius and their mother Theodata¹⁰. They were from one of the Arab countries. Their mother feared God and was compassionate and merciful towards strangers and the needy. She became a widow, while her children were young. She raised them and taught them the fear of God. Cosmas and Damian studied medicine, and they treated the sick freely. As for their brothers, they went to the desert and became monks.

When Diocletian renegaded the faith and ordered the worship of idols, he was told that Cosmas and Damian were preaching in the Name of the Lord Christ in every city and urging others not to worship the idols. He commanded them brought and delivered to the governor of the city, who tortured them with different kinds of tortures. Then he asked them the whereabouts of their brothers. Upon finding out, he brought the brothers and their mother. He ordered them to raise incense for the idols, but they refused. Then he ordered the five to be squeezed through the wheel. When they experienced no harm, he took them out and cast them in red-hot fire for three days and three nights then cast them in a hot steaming room. Finally, he placed them on red-hot iron beds. Through all this, the Lord strengthened and healed them.

When the governor became weary of torturing them, he sent them to the Emperor who also tortured them. Their mother constantly encouraged them and comforted them. The Emperor rebuked her, and she cursed him in his presence and also cursed his idols. He ordered her head cut off, and she received the crown of martyrdom. Her body remained on the ground, no one dared to bury it, because of their fear of the Emperor. St. Cosmas screamed at those present saying, "Men of the city, is there not one merciful person among you who will cover the body of this poor old widow and bury her?" Straightway, Victor, Ebn-Romanus, came forward and took the body, shrouded it, then buried it.

When the Emperor heard what Victor had done, he ordered him to be exiled to Egypt where he received the crown of martyrdom. The next day, the Emperor ordered the beheading of Sts. Cosmas, Damian, and their brothers. They received the crown of life in the Kingdom of Heaven. After the time of persecution was over, many churches were built for them, where God manifested many signs and wonders.

May their intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Third Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

The Departure of St. Abba Noub the Confessor

On this day, the holy and pure father Abba Noub the confessor, departed. This Saint was a devoted monk in one of the monasteries of Upper Egypt. That was during the time of Diocletian, who tortured the martyrs severely and shed their blood.

¹⁰The account of their martyrdom is recorded on the twenty- second of the month of Hatour (Vol. I, P. 118).

One day, someone mentioned the name of the saint Abba Noub before Arianus, governor of Ansen. Arianus brought him and asked him to worship the idols. The Saint replied, "How can I abandon my Lord Jesus Christ and worship the idols that are made of stones?" Arianus tortured Abba Noub much then exiled him to the five western cities (Pentapolis). Abba Noub stayed in prison there for seven years, until God had perished Diocletian. When the righteous emperor Constantine reigned, he ordered the release of all those who were in prison for the Name of Christ. Constantine also asked that they be brought to him, so that he might be blessed by them, especially the honored ones as Zacharia El-Ahnasy, Maximus El-Fayyomy, Agabius from the city of Dakhnin, and Abba Noub from the city of Balaos. The envoy of the Emperor went to all the countries releasing the prisoners, who left singing and praising God.

The holy father Abba Noub returned from the five cities (Pentapolis) and lived in mount Beshla (Sebla) near his hometown. The envoy of the Emperor met Abba Noub, and took him with him to Ansen. There he met the Christians and the bishops who ordained him a priest. While he was consecrating the Offering and as he said, "Hollies for the Holy," he saw the Lord Christ, to Him is the Glory, in His heavenly splendor, in the altar forgiving the sins of the people who were repentant.

The envoy traveled back to the Emperor along with the holy fathers who were seventy two in number. Every two of them rode a chariot. They passed by a city, where there were convents for the virgins. Seven hundred virgins went out to meet them with songs and hymns and they sang to them until they were out of their sight. When the holy fathers arrived and came before the Emperor, he asked them to change their clothes with new ones, but they refused. He was blessed by them, kissed their wounds and honored them. He offered them money, but they refused to take any except what the churches needed for vestments and vessels. The Emperor then embraced them and bid them farewell, and they returned to their countries. St. Abba Noub went back to his monastery and when he finished his strife he departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

The Martyrdom of the Great Saint Anba Moses the Black

On this day, St. Moses the Black, whose life story is remarkable, was martyred. This saint took the Kingdom of Heaven by force, exactly as our Lord Jesus Christ said: "The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matthew 11:12).

In his early life, St. Moses was a slave to people who worshiped the sun. He was a mighty man who loved to eat and drink excessively. He killed, robbed and committed all evil. No one could stand up before him, or challenge him.

On many occasions, he lifted up his eyes to look to the sun and to talk to it saying, "O Sun!! if you are God, let me know it." Then he said, "And you O God whom I do not know, let me know you."

One day, he heard someone saying to him, "The monks of Wadi El-Natroun know the real God. Go to them and they will tell you." Instantly, he rose up, girded his sword and went to the wilderness of Shiheat. He met St. Esidorous (Isidore) the priest, who was frightened when he saw him, because of his appearance. St. Moses comforted him by saying that he came to the monks so that they might let him know the real God. St. Esidorous took him to St. Macarius the Great, who preached to him, taught him the faith and baptized him. He accepted St. Moses as a monk and taught him to live in the wilderness. St. Moses dashed in many worships, and fought a spiritual fight which was greater than that fought by many saints.

However, the devil fought him intensively with his old habits of excessive eating, drinking, and fornication. He informed St. Esidorous about everything which came upon him in his fight with the Enemy. He comforted him and taught him how to overcome the snares of the devil.

It was told about him, that when the elders of the Monastery slept, he used to go round to their cells and take their water pots and fill them with water which he brought from a well at a far distance from the monastery. After many years in spiritual struggle, the devil envied him, and struck him with a sore on his foot which made him sick and bed-ridden. When he knew that this was from the devil, he increased in his asceticism and worship, until his body became as a burnt wood. God looked to his patience, healed his illness, and removed all his pains. The blessing of the Lord came upon him.

After a while, he became the Father and the spiritual guide of 500 brothers, who elected him to be ordained a priest. When he came before the Patriarch to be ordained, the patriarch wanted to test him by asking the elders, "Who brought this black here? Cast him out." He obeyed, and left saying to himself, "It is good what they have done to you, O black colored one." The Patriarch, however, called him back and ordained him a priest, and said to him, "Moses, all of you now has become white."

One day, he went with some elders to St. Macarius the Great, who said to them, "I see among you one to whom belong the crown of martyrdom." St. Moses answered him, "Probably it is me, for it is written: 'For all they that take with the sword, shall perish with the sword.'" (Matt. 26:25)

After they returned to the monastery, it did not take long until the Barbarians attacked the monastery. He told the brethren, "Whoever wants to escape, let him escape." They asked him, "And you O father, why do you not also escape?" He replied that he had waited for this day for long time. The Barbarians entered the monastery and killed him with seven other brothers. One of the brethren was hiding, and saw the angel of the Lord, with a crown in his hand standing by and waiting for him. He went out from his hiding place to the Barbarians and he was also martyred.

Beloved Ones, contemplate in the power of repentance, and what it did. It transformed an infidel slave who was a murderer, adulterer and robber into a great Father, teacher, comforter, and priest who wrote rules for the monks, and saint whose name is mentioned on the altar in our prayers. His Body is located now in the Monastery of El-Baramouse.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God for ever. Amen.

The Twenty Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

1. The Martyrdom of St. Jude, one of the Seventy Disciples.

2. The Departure of St. Peter the Fourth, 34th Pope of Alexandria.

1. On this day, St. Jude, one of the Seventy disciples, was martyred. This Apostle preached in many cities, and in the islands, where he built a church. He went to Edessa, healed its king Abgar from his sickness and baptized him. After this he went to the city of Araz, preached there, and baptized many of its people. The governor of the city seized him, and tortured him with many tortures. Then, they shot at him with arrows, so he delivered up his pure soul. He is the writer of the Epistle attributed to his name in the New Testament which is filled with wisdom and grace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the holy father and fighter St. Peter the Fourth, 34th Pope of Alexandria, departed. His predecessor Pope Theodosius was exiled by the orders of Emperor Vespasian because he did not agree with him on the resolutions of the Council of Chalcedon. When the Pope departed in exile, the Emperor did not permit the ordination of a new Patriarch. The lay leaders of the city of Alexandria went to its governor, who was an honorable and forthright man, and expressed to him their grief because of the vacancy of the Patriarchal chair. He advised them to go to the monastery of El-Zogag as if they were going to pray, there they could then ordain the patriarch of their choice. They rejoiced at this counsel. The bishops took Abba Peter to the monastery of El-Zogag and ordained him Patriarch on the first of Mesra, 283 A.M. (July 25th, 567 A.D.).

Before this, Anba Severus had departed and the Antiochian chair remained vacant. When the people of Antioch heard that the Egyptians had ordained for themselves a patriarch, they also ordained for themselves a patriarch called Theophanius. He and Pope Peter exchanged letters concerning the Orthodox faith. Each one mentioned his brother in the Divine Liturgy, nevertheless they did not dare to go to their official seats. Pope Peter resided in the monastery of Epiphaniah south of El-Zogag monastery, as Theophanius was residing in the monastery of Aptonius in the outskirts of Antioch.

In those days, there were six hundred monasteries and thirty-two villages on the outskirts of Alexandria; all their inhabitants were Orthodox. The city of Alexandria, the cities of Upper and Lower Egypt, the monks of the monasteries of the desert of Scete, Ethiopia and Nuba were under the authority of Pope Peter. He did not cease sending Epistles to the believers to confirm them in the Orthodox faith. He went around visiting the monasteries of Alexandria and its villages,

teaching, admonishing, and strengthening them. He chose a holy and learned man called Damianos and appointed him as his scribe. Pope Peter delegated to him the care of the churches, and he became a patriarch after him. Pope Peter went on caring for his flock, confirming them in the Orthodox faith until he departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God for ever. Amen.

The Twenty Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

- 1. The Departure of the Great Prophet Joshua Son of Nun.*
- 2. The Consecration of the Church of Archangel Gabriel.*

1. On this day, of the year 2570 of the world, the great prophet Joshua Son of Nun, departed. He was born, in the year 2460 of the world, in Egypt (Fifty three years before the deliverance of the people of Israel from the bondage of Pharaoh). He was a disciple and servant to Moses. Moses, after leading the people of Israel out of Egypt with the might of the Divine arm and the extraordinary wonders, brought them to the nearby mount of Sinai. He went up the mount taking with him Joshua, his minister, to receive the commandments. During the war of Israel against Amalek, Joshua was the leader of the soldiers.

When Moses chose twelve men to spy out the promised land, one from each tribe, Joshua was one of them. He completed this mission with honesty. He and Caleb alone brought forth the true and accurate information about the promised land. Therefore they alone entered this land without the people of Israel that came out of the land of Egypt. Because they had murmured and doubted in the sincerity of the promises of God, God swore in His anger that they would not enter to His rest. Their children that they begot after their deliverance from Egypt, entered this land along with Joshua and Caleb.

After the death of the great prophet Moses in the year 2553 of the world, the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun saying: "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them; the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." (Joshua 1:1-8)

Joshua's heart was strengthened and he sent out two men to spy out the land secretly. So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. The woman hid them; and they swore to spare her and all her household. Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall. (Joshua 2:1-15) Then Joshua opened (i.e. conquered) Jericho after he had gone around its walls several times and when they shouted with a great shout the great walls of the city fell down. The people went up into the city and killed both man and beast. The two men that had spied out the country, went into Rahab's house and brought her, her father, her mother, her brethren, and all that she had, out of the camp. Joshua spared their lives as the two spies promised her for she had spared their lives, and hid them. Then they burnt the city, and all that was therein. The gold, and the silver and vessels of brass and iron, were taken to the treasury of the house of the Lord.

The Lord was with this righteous man, so he opened many cities, killed many kings, and the nations feared him. Because of the great fear, the inhabitants of Gibeon worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. And they went to Joshua, and said to him, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us." But the men of Israel said to them, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?" They said to them, "From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame ... this bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy ... and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey." Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them. Three days later, after they had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them. Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell near us? Now therefore, you are cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves." Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the house of the LORD. (Joshua 9:3-27)

Joshua fought with the five Amorite kings, hence the hand of the Lord had helped him by casting down great stones from heaven upon them. The children of Israel fought them before the city of Gibeon, and he made the sun stand still until the five kings and their soldiers were destroyed. Joshua divided the land according to the command of God among the children of Israel. He gave the priests cities to dwell in, and land for their cattle. He set apart five cities of refuge wherein all those who had committed a murder unintentionally might dwell.

When he completed about one hundred ten years and reached a good old age, he gathered together the elders of Israel, their heads, their judges and their officers, and commanded them to keep the commandment of the Law and not to deviate from worshipping God, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, is the commemoration of the consecration of a church in the name of the honorable angel Gabriel the announcer, on the Naklon mount, in El-Fayyoum.
May his intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Ananias, the Apostle.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Thomas of Shentalet.*

1. On this day, St. Ananias, the apostle, departed. The apostles ordained this saint bishop for the city of Damascus. He preached therein with the life-giving gospel, as he preached also in the city of Beth-Gabriel and converted many of its people to the faith, and baptized them and their children.

St. Ananias was the one to baptize the apostle Paul when the Lord sent him to him. When he baptized St. Paul, something like scales fell from his eyes, and he received his sight at once.

God wrought many great miracles by his hands; and many of the Jews and Gentiles believed through his preaching. Afterwards, Lucianus the governor seized St. Ananias, and tortured him with sever tortures, such as burning his sides with fiery torches. Finally, Lucianus took him outside the city, and commanded him stoned until St. Ananias delivered up his pure soul in the hand of the Lord.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Thomas of Shentalet¹¹ (Sandalat) was martyred. Michael, the angel of the Lord, appeared to this Saint when he was twenty-one years old, while he was sleeping in the field tending the pigs. The angel Michael commanded him to go and confess the Lord Christ. St. Thomas went to Alexandria and confessed his faith before the governor who tortured him with different kinds of tortures. There were with him under the torture St. Babnuda, of the city of El-Bandara, and Anba Shenousy¹², from the city of Balkim, and they encouraged each other to endure. After many tortures, the governor sent St. Thomas to Arianus, the governor of Ansena, where he was beheaded and received the crown of martyrdom. There were seven hundred men and nine women martyred during his days.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

¹¹District of El-Santa, El-Gharbiah governorate.

¹²The name (Moses) mentioned in a manuscript in Shebeen El-Koum.

The Twenty Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

1. *The Departure of St. Theodosius, 33rd Pope of Alexandria.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of Anba Sarabamoun, Bishop of Nikios.*

1. On this day, of the year 283 A.M. (June 22nd, 567 A.D.) St. Theodosius, the thirty-third Pope of Alexandria, departed. After the departure of Pope Timothy, the bishops and the Orthodox Christians gathered and ordained this father a patriarch. He was a learned man, and well rehearsed in the church books. Soon after, the enemy of the good enticed some evil men from the city of Alexandria, to take Acacius, Archdeacon of the churches of the city of Alexandria, and appoint him a patriarch. That happened with the help of Julian, who was excommunicated by Pope Timothy for his approval of the council of Chalcedon.

When they appointed Acacius, they exiled Pope Theodosius to the city of Germanos. St. Severus, the Antiochian Patriarch, who was residing in Sakha, in the Egyptian land, comforted and strengthened him. He reminded him of the tribulation that came upon the apostles, and John Chrysostom (of the golden mouth). Six month after the exile of Pope Theodosius, he went to the city of Malig, and dwelt there for two years. Afterwards, the people of the city of Alexandria went to the governor and demanded from him the return of their legitimate shepherd, and the expulsion of Acacius the Fraudulent. When the news reached Emperor Justinian and the God-loving Empress Theodora, she sent a letter to the church in Alexandria to ask about the legitimacy of the ordination of Pope Theodosius, for if it was according to the canon of the church he should be reinstated on his chair. A council of lay people and one hundred twenty priests convened and unanimously agreed that Theodosius was ordained with the consent of the bishops and the people and according to the canons of the church. Acacius was present in this council; he rose up confessing that he had transgressed. He asked for forgiveness and to remain as archdeacon as he was before. They sent these facts to the Empress. Since the Emperor was in agreement with the faith of the council of Chalcedon, he wanted to attract the Pope to this erroneous faith. He wrote to his representative in Alexandria saying, "If the Patriarch Theodosius agreed with us in faith, along with his papacy, add the governorship of the city of Alexandria, but if he did not agree, he should be expelled from the city." When the Patriarch heard that, he said, "That what the devil had told the Lord Christ after he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, 'All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me'". The Patriarch then left the city and went to Upper Egypt and stayed there confirming the believers.

Later on, the Emperor called St. Theodosius to Constantinople, so he went with some of the learned priests. The Emperor received him with great honor, and seated him in a distinguished place. He tried to flatter him, and talk gently to him, to persuade him to agree on the faith of the council of Chalcedon. When he did not yield, he exiled him to Upper Egypt, and appointed in his place a person called Paul. When this Paul arrived to Alexandria, its people did not receive him. He remained there for a year and only few followed him. When the Emperor heard of this, he commanded to shut the churches until the people submitted to the patriarch he appointed. The

believers built a church in the name of St. Mark and another on the name of Sts. Cosmas and Damian outside the city where they were able to receive the Holy Mysteries and baptize their children.

When the Emperor heard that, he had the churches opened. Pope Theodosius, when he heard this, feared that the Emperor might have intended to lure the people by that act. He wrote a letter to the believers to confirm them in the Orthodox faith and to warn them from the deception of this infidel. He lived four years in Alexandria, and remained in exile in Upper Egypt for twenty-eight years. He spent thirty-one years, four months, and fifteen days in the patriarchate. This Pope wrote many discourses and useful teachings.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the church celebrates the Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of Anba Sarabamoun, the martyr, Bishop of Nikios.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

1. The Martyrdom of the Seven Ascetic Saints in Tounar Mount.

2. The Martyrdom of Sts. Abba Hour and his Mother Theodora.

1. On this day, the seven ascetic saints in Tounar Mount (Tona), were martyred. These were: Basadi, Cotolus, Ardama, Moses, Esey, Parkalas (Mikalas), and a monk called Cotolus. The angel of the Lord had appeared to Sts. Basadi and Cotolus and commanded them to confess the name of the Lord Christ. They rose up straightway to go to the governor. They met the five saints embarking a ship going to the governor to also confess the Lord Christ. They all agreed together on receiving the crown of martyrdom. They went to the governor and confessed the Lord Christ. He tortured them excessively, then hung stones from their necks, and shut them up in prison. The Lord appeared to them, comforted, strengthened, and promised them the kingdom. The governor then sent them to Alexandria, where they were tortured severely. He threw them into cauldrons full of sulphur and pitch, and lighted a great fire under them, then he took them out and threw them away. The Lord sent His angel who healed them. They came back to the governor and confessed the Lord Christ before him. One hundred thirty persons witnessed that. They confessed the Lord Christ, were martyred, and they received the crown of martyrdom. The Governor intensified the torture on the seven saints, and finally cut off their heads with the sword, and they received the crown of martyrdom.

May their intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, Sts. Abba Hour and his mother Theodora, were martyred. Abba Hour was a soldier in the army of Antioch. He came to Alexandria, and confessed the Lord Christ before its governor. He commanded that Abba Hour's hands be cut off, that he be tied to the tail of an ox and dragged through the city. Then he was thrown into a pit filled with snakes which did not harm

him. During all that torture, he cried out to the Lord Christ, who healed and strengthened him. His mother came to see him and she rejoiced in his strife.

They told the governor about her, and he had her brought to him. He asked her to sacrifice to the idols but when she refused he became enraged at her, and frightened her but she was not afraid of his raging. He commanded to put red-hot iron rods in her sides. When they did so she rejoiced and sang hymns to venerate the Lord for He made her worthy to suffer for His Holy Name. Later on she delivered up her soul and received the crown of martyrdom.

As for St. Abba Hour (Hor), they placed him in a cauldron of boiling oil and tar, and he praised God until he delivered up his soul and received the crown of martyrdom. His brother Abba Bishai (Pishai) was martyred on the first day of El-Nasi (Intercalary days). (Vol. IV, P.)

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Baounah

The Nativity of St. John, the Baptist

On this day, the church celebrates the nativity of St. John the Baptist. He whom none born of women was greater. He who kneeled to the Lord Christ while he was still in his mother's womb, and was worthy to lay his hand upon the head of the Son of God during Baptism. The Holy Bible said about him: "Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her. Now so it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. And his mother answered and said, 'No; he shall be called John.' But they said to her, 'There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.' So they made signs to his father; what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, 'His name is John.' And they all marveled. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. He prophesied about his son, saying. 'you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.'" (Luke 1:57-76)

When he was two years old, the wise men (Magi) came, Herod killed the children, some divulged about this child and the soldiers searched for him to kill him. Zechariah took the child and brought him to the sanctuary, laid him on the altar and told the soldiers, "I have received him from this place". The angel of the Lord caught up the child and brought him to the desert of Ziphana, so the soldiers became enraged and they killed his father Zechariah. For this reason the Lord had said to the Jews: "That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar." (Matthew 23:35) So the child John grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts more than twenty years living an angelic life, till the day of his manifestation to Israel. (Luke 1:80)

And John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. (Matthew 3:4) He lived in the wilderness persevering in prayers and asceticism, until the Lord ordered him, to fulfill the prophecies, to preach to the people about the coming of the Savior of the World. For he was sent from God, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. (John 1:6-8)

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being high priests, the Word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; and the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" (Luke 3:1-6)

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:1-2)

Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. (Matthew 3:5-6)

While the people were waiting, and thinking in their hearts about John if he was the Christ, John answered, saying to them all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." (Luke 3:16-17)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17) (Luke 3:20-22)

Then John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified; behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!" John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and

speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:26-36)

But when John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Matthew 3:7-10) (Luke 3:7-9)

When Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, married Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, against all the Laws, St. John the Baptist came to him. He admonished him for his transgression and all the evil things that he was doing. So Herod ordered, according to the instigation of Herodias the adulterer, to seize John, chain him and imprison him in the fortress called Macronda.

John remained in this jail for a year, without Herod being able to slay him. His disciples visited their teacher, frequently and courageously, in prison. As he did not neglect his duties toward them, proving to them that Jesus was the expected Christ. When the news of the wonders that our Savior did noised everywhere, John wanted his disciples to be eye witnesses to the wonders of Christ, to be confirmed in their faith in him.

While he was in prison, John sent two of his disciples to Christ, who said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind receive their sight and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me." (Matthew 11:2-6)

As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.' Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, and saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; we mourned to you, And you did not

lament.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children." (Matthew 11:7-19)

The Lord Christ, to Whom is the Glory, also said about John the Baptist: "He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light." (John 5:35)

Herodias desired to get rid of John the Baptist, so she executed her scheme during the celebration of Herod's birthday.

When Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter." And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him at the table, he commanded it to be given to her. So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart. (Matthew 14:2-13) The joy of the people celebrating Herod's birthday turned into sorrow. As of the head, it flew up from their hands and was crying out saying: "It is not right for you to take your brother's wife."

The martyrdom of St. John took place at the end of the thirty-first or at the beginning of the thirty-second year of the Christ. The life of this Saint was like that of the angels in purity. He was filled with the Holy Spirit while he was in his mother's womb, and was martyred for his witnessing to the truth¹³.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

¹³The commemoration of his martyrdom is reported in the second day of the month of Tute (Vol. I, P. 3).

The Blessed Month Of Abib The First Day

1. *The Martyrdom of Saint Febronia the Ascetic.*
2. *The Departure of Saints Bioukha and Tayaban (Banayen) the priests.*

1. On this day, St. Febronia, the ascetic virgin, was martyred. This saint was the niece of the superior of a convent that had fifty virgins, in a place called "Ouryana" in Mesopotamia. Her aunt brought her up in the fear of God and taught her the reading of the Holy Books. St. Febronia vowed herself to the Lord Christ, and she fought the good fight by asceticism, fasting for two days at a time, and unceasing in her prayers.

When Emperor Diocletian issued his edict to worship idols, many Christians were martyred by his hands. When the virgins heard that, they were afraid and left the convent and went into hiding. None was left in the convent except St. Febronia, another sister and the abbess.

On the following day, the envoys of the Emperor came, seized the abbess, and humiliated her. St. Febronia said to them, "Take me and set free this old woman." But they took her as well, bound in ropes, and brought them to the Governor. At that time she was twenty years old, and was attractive. The Governor asked her to worship the idols and promised her many things but she refused. He ordered that she be beaten with rods, and her dress to be torn off. The abbess cried out to him saying, "May God rip you up, O wild beast, for you want to put to shame this young orphan girl." The Governor was wrathful, and ordered St. Febronia to be squeezed by the wheel, and to comb her body with an iron comb until her flesh was completely torn. During all that, she prayed to the Lord asking for help. He then cut out her tongue and smashed her teeth so that she could not pray. But the Lord strengthened her and comforted her.

Finally, the Governor ordered her head cut off, and she received the crown of martyrdom. A righteous man took her body and shrouded it with costly shrouds, and placed it in a golden box.
May her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the fighters Sts. Bioukha and Banayen, departed. They were priests in the church of "Tunah" of the diocese of "Tanda". Their father was the steward of this church. It happened when the priest Banayen was celebrating the Divine Liturgy, someone came calling him to see his father who was dying in that instant. He answered him saying, "I cannot take off my priestly vestment before the end of the service. If God is willing, I shall see him before he dies, otherwise it will be the will of God."

His father asked for him three times, and he responded with the same answer. When he finished the mass, he found his father had departed. The church vessels were stored in a place known only by his father. Banayen the priest went to St. Daniel, the priest of the wilderness of Shiheet, who

guided him by Divine inspiration, to the place where the vessels were stored. These two saints lived a virtuous life until they departed in peace.

May their prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Second Day Of The Blessed Month Of Abib

The Departure of St. Thaddaeus, the Apostle

On this day, St. Thaddaeus¹⁴, the Apostle, departed. The Lord had chosen him among the twelve disciples. When he received the grace of the Comforter along with the disciples, he travelled around the world preaching the Gospel. He returned many of the Jews and Gentiles to the knowledge of God and Baptized them. Then he went to the land of Syria and preached to its people and many believed through his hands. He suffered from the Jews and Gentiles, much humiliation and many tortures, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Third Day Of The Blessed Month Of Abib

- 1. The Departure of St. Kyrillos (Cyril) the First, the Twenty- Fourth Pope of Alexandria.*
- 2. The Departure of St. Celestine, Pope of Rome.*

1. On this day, of the year 160 A.D. (June 27th, 444 A.M.), the great father, the pillar of faith and the lamp of the Orthodox church, St. Kyrillos (Cyril) the First, the Alexandrian Pope, and the twenty-fourth Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, departed.

This saint was the son of the sister of Pope Theophilus (23rd patriarch). He was raised by his uncle at the school of Alexandria where he was educated in its Theological and Philosophical subjects needed to defend Christianity and the Orthodox faith. After he learned a great deal of these subjects, his uncle sent him to the monastery of St. Macarius in the wilderness. There, he became a disciple to a righteous old monk called Sarabamon. He taught him the church books, and the sayings of the pure fathers. He trained his mind and body by practicing the works of righteousness and virtues for a period of time.

After he spent in the wilderness five years, Pope Theophilus sent him to Abba Sarapion, the honorable bishop, so he increased in wisdom and knowledge. Shortly after, the bishop returned him to Alexandria. His uncle was rejoiced, ordained him a deacon, appointed him a preacher in the cathedral and made him his scribe. Whenever Kyrillos gave a sermon, he captured the hearts

¹⁴The Holy Bible mentioned: "Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus" (Mat. 10:3).

of his listeners with his eloquence, fluency, and his strong influence. Since that time, he became well known for his vast knowledge, his great righteousness, and his deep influence in his teaching.

When his uncle Pope Theophilus departed in the 18th of Babah 128 A.M. (October 15th, 412 A.M.), they enthroned this father in his place on the 20th of Babah, 128 A.M. (Oct. 17th, 412 A.D.). The church was illumined with his knowledge, and he gave special attention to resisting paganism and defending the Christian faith. He started to refute the falsity of Emperor Julian the Infidel in his ten essays that had been written after his apostasy. These were the favorite readings of the pagan young people of Alexandria and their pride, for they believed that it destroyed the principles of the Christian faith. Pope Kyrillos refuted them in terms that were clear, strong and convincing.

He set out to rebut the heretics until he was able to close their churches and seize their contents. He ordered the expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria which led to a disturbance and confrontation between the Jews and the Christians. This led to the widening of the contention between the governor and this great saint. Because of his strong devotion to the Christian ethics and teachings, he found himself compelled to ask for reconciliation with the governor. However, the governor refused to accept the reconciliation, and the conflict between them continued for a period of time.

When the heresy of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, emerged, a Universal Council convened for him. He denied that the Virgin was the mother of God (Theotokos). Two hundred bishops assembled in the city of Ephesus during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II, known by Theodosius the Less. St. Cyril (Kyrillos), Pope of Alexandria, presided over this council. He debated Nestorius, explained to him his heretic opinion, and threatened him with excommunication and exile from his Chair, if he did not change his erroneous opinion. St. Kyrillos composed twelve discourses wherein he explained the true faith, refuting the error of Nestorius. Anba John, Patriarch of Antioch, and some of the bishops of the East disagreed with him, taking Nestorius' side. Nevertheless, shortly after, they came back and agreed with Kyrillos who was victorious over the enemies of the church. He wrote many discourses and valuable epistles, confirming in them, that God the Word is One Nature, One Will, and One Person incarnated. He anathematized anyone who separated Christ or differed from this true faith. The Emperor exiled Nestorius in the year 435 A.D. to the land of Egypt, and remained in the city of Akhmim until his death in the year 440 A.D.

From the monumental works of Pope Kyrillos was the commentary of the Holy Books. When he finished his strife, he fell sick for a short time and departed in peace. He remained on the Alexandrian Chair for thirty-one years, eight months, and ten days.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the great Pope Celestine, bishop of the city of Rome, departed (July 27th, 432 A.D.). This saint was the disciple of St. Boniface, bishop of Rome. At the time of his death, he commended that father Celestine would succeed him, and then he cautioned him saying, "Take heed O my son for there would be ravaging wolves in the city of Rome." This father was a

righteous and well learned monk. When Pope Boniface departed on September 4th, 422 A.D., they ordained Celestine in his place on September 10th, 422 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Honorius. This Emperor died in the city of Raffein in France in the year 423 A.D. One of the Emperors (Julian the Infidel) wanted to appoint Nestorius a patriarch for Rome and expel Celestine the saintly Pope. The people rose up and expelled Nestorius which made Emperor Julian enraged against him. This Saint fled to one of the monasteries nearby Pentapolis (Five cities) and dwelt there. God wrought many signs and miracles by his hands.

Then, the angel Raphael appeared to him in a dream saying: "Rise up and go to the city of Antioch to its patriarch St. Dimitrius, and abide with him for the Emperor had decided in his heart to kill you upon his return from the war." When he woke up, he went forth from that monastery along with two brothers and came to the city of Antioch. He found its Patriarch ill, told him what had happened to him, and stayed in one of the monasteries of Antioch. Sts. Ignatius and Boniface along with a third venerable person appeared to the Emperor in a dream and said to him, "Why have you left the city of the saints without a bishop. Behold, God will remove your soul from you, and you shall die by the hands of your enemies." The Emperor asked, "What shall I do?" They replied, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He answered saying, "I do believe." They said to him, "Send and bring our son bishop Celestine with honor, and restore him to his throne." When the Emperor awoke from his dream, he wrote to the patriarch of Antioch, Demetrius, asking him to inform his envoys of the whereabouts of Celestine, and return him to his See. They found him and returned him to his Chair with great honor, and the people received him with joy and happiness. The peace and the affairs of the church were established by his presence.

When Nestorius blasphemed and the Council assembled for him, Celestine was unable to attend the Council, because of his illness, so he sent two priests with a letter excommunicating Nestorius in it. The Emperor believed in what Nestorius said, nevertheless he yielded to the decisions of the Council and exiled Nestorius to Egypt.

When the Lord willed for Celestine to depart from this world, St. Boniface, his predecessor, and St. Athanasius, the Apostolic, appeared to him and told him, "Affirm your people in the faith, for Christ is calling you." When he woke up he commanded his people saying, "Take heed to yourselves, for behold ravening wolves shall come into this city." Having said this he added, "I am leaving, for the saints are calling for me." When he said that, he departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Abib

The Commemoration of the Relocation of the Relics of Sts. Apakir and John.

On this day, the church commemorates the relocation of the relics of the honorable Sts. Apakir and John. After they received the crown of martyrdom as it is mentioned in the account of the sixth day of the month of Amshir (Vol. II, P. 254), some of the believers took their bodies. They laid them in the church of St. Mark the Evangelist, which is to the south of Alexandria. They

remained there until the days of St. Cyril (Kyrillos), the Pillar of Faith, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and commanded him to relocate the relics of these two saints to the other church of St. Mark by the seaside. He relocated them with great honor, then built a church for them in this district.

They arranged for them a feast on this day. Beside the church there was a pagan temple wherein many heathens gathered. When they saw the wonders that were manifested in the church of these two saints many of them believed in the Lord Christ.

May their prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Abib

The Martyrdom of Sts. Peter and Paul, the Apostles

On this day, the two great saints Peter and Paul, were martyred. Peter was from Bethsaida, and he was a fisherman. The Lord chose him on the second day of His baptism after He chose Andrew his brother. He had fervent faith and strong zeal. When the Lord asked His disciples: "Who do men say that I am?" So

they answered, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ... Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Mat. 16:13-20) After he received the grace of the Holy Spirit, he went around in the world preaching of the crucified Christ, and he converted many to the faith. God wrought great and innumerable signs and wonders by his hands. He wrote two catholic Epistles to the believers. When he came to the city of Rome, he found there St. Paul the Apostle. Through their preaching, most of the people of Rome believed, so Nero seized Peter and commanded to crucify him. Peter asked them to crucify him head downwards, and he delivered up his soul into the hand of the Lord.

As of St. Paul the Apostle, he was born in Tarsus two years before the advent of the Savior. He was a Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. He was well learned in the Law of the Torah, and he was jealous for it. He persecuted the Christians.

When they stoned St. Stephen, Paul was guarding the clothes of those who were stoning him. He took from Caiaphas, the high priest, letters to the synagogues of Damascus, to bind the Christians and bring them to Jerusalem. As he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." Then He ordered him to go to Ananias in Damascus, who baptized him, and he received his sight at once. He was filled by the grace of the Comforter, and he proclaimed boldly the Faith. He went around in the world preaching of the crucified Christ. He suffered much beatings, imprisonment, and was bound with fetters, some of which are mentioned in the book of the Acts of the Apostles and in his Epistles.

He went to Rome and proclaimed the Faith there and many believed by his hands. He wrote for them the Epistle to the Romans which was the first of his fourteen Epistles.

Finally, Nero seized him, tortured him severely and ordered his head cut off. While St. Paul was passing along with the executioner, he met a damsel who was a kinswoman of the Emperor Nero, and who had believed through him. She walked along with St. Paul, weeping, to where they carried out the sentence. He comforted her and asked her for her veil. He wrapped his head with the veil, and asked her to return back. The executioner cut off his head and left it wrapped in the veil of the young girl, and that was in the year 67 A.D. The young girl met the executioner on his way back to the Emperor, and asked him about Paul and he replied, "He is lying where I left him and his head is wrapped in your veil." She told him, "You are lying, for he and Peter had just passed by me, they were arrayed in the apparel of kings, and had crowns decorated with jewels on their heads, and they gave me my veil, and here it is." She showed it to the executioner, and to those who were with him. They marvelled, and believed on the Lord Christ.

God wrought by the hands of Peter and Paul many great signs and wonders, that they even carried the sick out into the streets ... that as Peter came by ... his shadow might fall on them ... and they were all healed. (Acts 5:15) The handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from Paul's body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. (Acts 19:12)

May their prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Sixth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Abib

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Aoulimpas, the Apostle.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Theodosia and her companions.*

1. On this day, St. Aoulimpas, who was called Paul, one of the seventy apostles, was martyred. This Apostle ministered to the disciples and carried the epistles of St. Peter to the Gentiles. He went with him to the city of Rome, preached there, taught and converted many to the Faith. When St. Peter was martyred, this Apostle was the one to take his body off the cross, shroud him, and take him to the house of one of the believers. Someone accused him, before the Emperor Nero, of being one of the disciples of Peter. Nero brought him and questioned him. The Saint confessed that the Lord Christ is the true God. Nero tortured him severely. Then he asked him, "How do you wish to die?" The Saint replied saying, "I only wish to die for the Name of Christ. Kill me any way you wish, and bring me speedily to my desire." Nero ordered to beat him and to crucify him, head downwards, like his teacher St. Peter. They did so and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Theodosia, mother of St. Proconius, along with two prefects and twelve other women, were martyred. When Theodosia heard that her son became Christian, and the Emperor had tortured him severely until he was close to death, she went to see him. She found them bringing him out of prison and all his wounds were healed. She and all those who were with

her marvelled. They all cried saying, "We believe in the God of Proconius." The Emperor ordered their heads cut off and they received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day Of The Blessed Month Of Abib

1. The Departure of St. Shenouda (Shenoute), the Archimandrite.

2. The Martyrdom of St Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, in Rome.

1. On this day, the ascetic father, St. Shenouda (Shenoute), the Archimandrite, departed. This father was born in the city of Shandaweil (Shenalolet) in the district of Akhmim. His father was a farmer, who owned flocks of sheep.

When Shenouda grew up, his father entrusted him with the care of the sheep. He tended to the sheep, gave his food to the shepherd, and he spent his day fasting. His father took him to his uncle Anba Bgoul (Bigal) to bless him. Anba Bgoul laid the boy's hands on his own head and said, "You bless me, my child, for you will be a father for many peoples." His father left him with his uncle and returned home. One day he heard a voice from heaven saying, "Shenouda has become the Archimandrite." Since that time, he exerted himself with many worships and intense asceticism. When Anba Bgoul (Bigal) departed, Shenouda replaced him. He followed the monastic communal rules that were formulated by St. Pakhom, and he added to them a pledge the monk had to sign before joining the monastery.

The number of monks during his days reached 1800 monks. That monastery, still standing west of the city of Souhag, has a church and is known as the monastery of Anba Bishoy.

Anba Shenouda had built another monastery, the number of its monks reached 2200 monks, which is still standing and is known as the monastery of Anba Shenouda.

Once, an army commander asked Anba Shenouda to lend him his girdle to wear during the war so that God might make him victorious. The Saint gave it to him and the commander overcame his enemies.

Anba Shenouda became a shining light to all the world with his sermons, discourses, and canons that he put for the good of the monks, hierarchies, and laity, men and women. He attended the Council of the two hundred that gathered at Ephesus with the holy father Anba Kyrillos (24th), and he admonished Nestorius the heretic. Before his departure, he asked his disciples to support him so that he might worship his creator. He worshiped God and then commanded them to follow his footsteps and told them, "I commit you to God" then he departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Ignatius¹⁵ was martyred in Rome in the year 107 A.D. He was chosen Bishop for Antioch, succeeding St. Peter the Apostle, in the year 69 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Trajan. When the Emperor heard that this Saint had attracted many by his teachings to believe in the Lord Christ, he brought him and asked him, "Are you Ignatius the Theophoros?" He replied, "Yes, I am." The Emperor inquired about the meaning of his name. The saint replied saying, "It means 'Godbearer.'" The Emperor said, "Do you think that we do not carry our gods to support us in wars?" The Saint answered, "How can these statues be gods? Listen, there is no God except the only God that created the Heaven and Earth, and His Son Jesus Christ who was incarnated to save mankind. So if you had believed in Him, you would be content now in your kingship."

The emperor attempted to persuade him to forsake Christianity, but he refused. The Emperor was enraged, ordered him bound with fetters, and taken to Rome to be thrown to the beasts. Ignatius responded by kissing the fetters that would be his means of receiving the crown of martyrdom. The believers tried to save him by paying bribes to the soldiers, but he refused, for he was yearning for martyrdom.

He went on his way to Izmir (Smyrna), where he wrote a letter to the Christians of Rome that said in it: "I am afraid that your love may be harmful. If you wish to prevent my death, that will not be difficult for you. But allow me to be slaughtered wherever the altar has been prepared .. I am wheat which must be ground, to make bread, to be offered to Jesus Christ. Whenever the people will not behold me anymore, I will behold our Lord Jesus Christ."

When he arrived in Rome, they threw him to the beasts. A lion attacked him and grabbed him by his neck. The Saint delivered up his soul in the hand of the Lord. Then the lion released him and went back to his place, and the believers came and carried his body with great honor to a place they prepared for him in Antioch.

May his prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Abib

1. *The Departure of St. Anba Bishoy.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Piroou and St. Athom.*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Balanah, the Priest.*
4. *The Martyrdom of St. Epime (Pimanon).*
5. *The Departure of Cyrus (Karas), brother of Emperor Theodosius.*

1. On this day, St. Bishoy, whose memorial is honorable, the star of the desert, departed. He was born in a town called Shansa in Egypt, and he had six brothers. His mother saw an angel in a vision saying to her, "The Lord says to you, give Me one of your children to serve Me." She

¹⁵His biography is mentioned on the twenty-fourth day of the month of Kiahk (Vol. II, P. 180).

answered, "Lord, take whoever you want." The angel took the hand of Anba Bishoy, who was thin and his body was frail. His mother told the angel, "My Lord, take one who is strong to serve the Lord." "This is whom the Lord has chosen," answered the Angel.

Later on, St. Bishoy went to the wilderness of Shiheet and became a monk by the hand of Anba Bemwah (Bamouyah), who also ordained St. John "Yehness" the Short a monk. St. Bishoy struggled in much asceticism and many worships that made him worthy to see the Lord Christ.

Emperor Constantine appeared to him in a vision, saying, "Had I known how great is the honor of monks, I would have abandoned my kingdom and became a monk." St. Bishoy told him, "You have banished the heathen worship and exalted Christianity, and has not Christ given you anything?" Emperor Constantine answered him, "The Lord has given me many gifts, but none of them is like the honor of the monks."

During his days, an ascetic old man appeared in the mountain of Ansena, who was reputed for his righteousness and to whom many people gathered. But he deviated from the true faith and the devil lead him astray. He taught that there is no Holy Spirit, and many were deceived by his sayings. Anba Bishoy heard about him, and he went to him and he had with him a weaved basket with three ears. When he visited the old man and his followers, they asked him about the reason for making three ears for the basket. He answered, "I have a Trinity, and everything I do, is like the Trinity." They said to him, "Then, Is there a thing called the Holy Spirit?" Then he started to explain to them from the Holy Scriptures, from the Old and New Testaments. He indicated to them that the Holy Spirit is One of the three Persons of the Trinity. He convinced them, and they returned to the true faith. Then he returned to his monastery in the wilderness of Scete (Shiheet). When the barbarians invaded the wilderness, he left it and dwelt on Mount Ansena, where he departed. After the time of persecution had ended, they brought his body with the body of St. Paul of Tamouh to his monastery in the wilderness of Shiheet. *May his prayers be with us. Amen.*

2. On this day also, St. Piroou and St. Athom were martyred. These two Saints were born in the city of "Sonbat", of Christian parents who were righteous, loving works of righteousness and charitable deeds. Their father's name was John and their mother's was Mary. St. Piroou was blond with curled hair, tall in stature, with blue eyes. St. Athom was tall in stature with white complexion, dark eyes and black beard. When Piroou was thirty years old, and Athom was twenty-seven, they attended church consistently during masses, and continued to give alms and provide shelter for strangers.

When persecution was incited against the Christians, they took some goods and went to the town of El-Farma to trade there. They found the body of a Saint called "Noua" with some of the soldiers. They bought the body from them with silver, placed the body in a marbled sarcophagus in their own home. They hung an oil lamp before it, and many miracles appeared from the body. The two saints reflected upon the vanity of the world, and the blessings of paradise. They distributed their money among the poor, went to Alexandria and confessed Christ before the Governor. He tortured them by beating and whipping them until their blood poured out on the ground. They hanged them and put fire under them. The Angel of the Lord came and brought

them down and healed their wounds. Then, the Governor sent them to El-Farma. When the Governor of El-Farma saw their courage and the beauty of their appearance, he offered them the worship of the idols. When they refused, he pulled out the nails of their hands and feet. Then he put them on iron rods and lit fire under them.

During this, the wife of the Governor died, and he asked the two Saints to forgive him for what he had done to them. They prayed to God for her and God raised her from the dead. The Governor and every one with him believed. He released the two Saints and they returned to their town "Sonbat". They gave the poor whatever was left of their money. They gave the body of St. Noua to a righteous man called Sarabamon. They asked him to hang an oil lamp before it at all times.

Then, they went to the Governor and confessed Christ. He ordered them beaten and dragged in the city until their blood poured out on the ground. A deaf and dumb woman took some of the blood and anointed her ears and tongue with it. Instantly she was healed. She glorified the Lord Christ and confessed Him. The Governor ordered them all to be beheaded. They all received the crown of martyrdom. The righteous Sarabamon, and some people from Sonbat were present. They took the bodies of the two Saints, shrouded them, and took them to their town. A church was built for them, where their bodies and the body of St. Noua were placed. It was said that their bodies are now located in the church of St. Barbara in Old Cairo.

May their prayers be with us, Amen.

3. On this day also, St. Balanah the priest, was martyred. He was from the city of Bara, of the diocese of Sakha. When he heard of the persecution of the faithful and the slaying of the saints, he distributed all his money to the poor and the needy. He then went to "Antinoe" (Ansena), and confessed the Lord Christ before the governor. He tortured St. Balanah much with different kinds of tortures until he delivered up his soul in the hands of the Lord.

May his prayers be with us, Amen.

4. This day also, marks the martyrdom of St. Epime (Pimanon) (Bima). He was the chief of the village of "Panokleus" of the district of El-Bahnasa. He was rich and merciful to the poor. The Lord Christ appeared to him in a vision and told him, "Arise, go to the Governor and confess My Name, for there you have a crown prepared for you." When he awoke from his sleep, he distributed all his money to the poor and the needy. Then he prayed, and went to El-Bahnasa, and confessed the Lord Christ. When he confessed that he was the chief of the village, the Governor asked him about the vessels of the church in his town, and offered him the worship of the idols. St. Bima answered him saying, "I will not give you the vessels, and as for worshipping the idols, I only worship my Lord Jesus Christ." The Governor ordered his tongue cut off, and torture by the press and by burning. But the Lord saved and healed him.

The Governor then, sent him to Alexandria, where he was imprisoned. Julius El-Akfahsi (the writer of the biographies of the saints) had a sister possessed with an evil spirit. This Saint prayed for her and she was healed. The report of this miracle spread out and many believed. The Governor became furious and he tortured the Saint with the press and by pulling out his nails. The Lord strengthened him and healed him. When the Governor became weary of torturing him, he

sent him to Upper Egypt. There he was beheaded, and he received the crown of martyrdom. The servants of Julius El-Akfahsi carried his body to his town.

May his prayers be with us, Amen.

5. Today also, St. Cyrus (Karas) departed. He was the brother of Emperor Theodosius the Great. This saint knew well the vanity of the world and its temporal nature. He left all his possessions and went out wandering without a destination. God guided him to the inner Western Wilderness, where he lived for many years alone, without seeing man or beast.

There was in the wilderness of Shiheet (Scete) a holy priest called Bamwa (Pimwah) who shrouded the body of St. Hilaria. This father longed to see one of the servants of Christ, the hermits. The Lord helped him until he came to the inner wilderness, and he saw many of the saints. Everyone of them told him about his name, and the reason he came to the wilderness. But St. Pimwah asked each of them, "Is there is anyone who lives further in the inner desert?" They answered him, "Yes." He continued to walk until he finally arrived at St. Karas, the last one of them. St. Karas called him from inside his cell, "Welcome, Anba Pimwah, the priest of Shiheet." Anba Pimwah entered his cell, and after the greetings, St. Karas asked him about the news of the world, the governors and the faithful. At night, St. Karas prayed for a long time, then he knelt to the ground and delivered up his soul in the hands of the Lord. Anba Pimwah buried him in his cloak, then he returned glorifying God, telling everyone about the Saint and his strife.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever, Amen.

The Ninth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Abib

1. The Martyrdom of St. Simon Cleophas, the Apostle.

2. The Departure of St. Cladianus (Celadion), the Ninth Pope of the See of St. Mark.

1. On this day, St. Simon, the Apostle, was martyred. He was the son of Cleophas, brother of Joseph the Just, to whom the Virgin Mary was betrothed. He received the grace of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room of Zion, and was ordained bishop for Jerusalem succeeding St. James the Apostle. He converted many of the Jews to the faith in the Lord Christ. The Lord wrought many wonders in his hands, and he urged the people for chastity and purity. When Emperor Trajan heard about him, he brought him, tortured him much, and then cut off his head. He was one hundred twenty years old.

May his prayers be with us, Amen.

2. On this day also, in the year 166 A.D. St. Cladianus (Celadion), the ninth Pope of the See of St. Mark, departed. He was a knowledgeable man, and righteous in his life. He was chosen Patriarch in the 8th of Tubah (January 16th, 152 A.D.), after the departure of his predecessor Pope Marcianus. He continued to teach, preach, and better his people, until he departed in peace after he had stayed on the Chair for fourteen years and six months.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever, Amen.

The Tenth Day Of The Blessed Month Of Abib

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Theodore, Bishop of Pentapolis.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Theodore, Bishop of Corinth, and his companions.*
3. *The Departure of Anba Gabriel VII, 95th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, St. Theodore, Bishop of Pentapolis (Five Cities) was martyred. He was ordained by Pope Theonas (16th) a bishop for the Five Cities (Pentapolis). One year after his ordination, Diocletian incited the persecution against the Christians everywhere. He appointed a prince called Pilate, governor of Africa and its provinces. He heard that this bishop was confirming the Christians in their Christian Faith, so he brought him and ordered him to offer a sacrifice to the idols. He replied, "I offer daily the sacrifice for the Creator of the idols." The Governor asked him, "Is there any other god beside Artemis and Apollo? " The Saint replied, "Yes, Jesus Christ the creator of all things." The Governor became angry from his answer and ordered his torture. They spent forty days torturing him by beating and crucifying him. When he did not return from his true faith they cut off his head and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us, Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 299 A.D., St. Theodore, Bishop of Corinth, three women, and two governors, one called Lucianus and the other Dagnanius, were martyred. When some evil men accused the Saint before these two afore-mentioned governors, that he was a Christian, and bishop of Corinth, the governors brought him and asked him about his belief. He confessed that he was Christian. They tortured him by beating and dragging him in the streets. He admonished them for their forsaking the true God, and worshipping the hand made stones. They ordered to cut out his tongue. They cut off his tongue and threw it away. A believing woman took it and handed it to the Saint who placed it back in its place, and by the power of God it healed as it was. He started again to explain the invalidity of the worshipping of idols. Those gathered marvelled and many of them believed as the governor Lucianus also believed. Dagnanius the governor became enraged and he killed St. Theodore as he killed three women who were following him as he was going to the place of execution. Shortly after, Lucianus convinced Dagnanius and he also believed in the Lord Christ. Both went to Cyprus, confessed the Lord Christ before its governor. He cut off their heads and they also received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us, Amen.

3. This day also, of the year 1561 A.D., marks the departure of the great Saint Anba Gabriel VII, 95th Pope of Alexandria.

He was born in the area around the monastery of El-Mouharraq, and at a young age he became a monk in the wilderness of St. Macarius. Because of his good conduct and his great righteousness, they ordained him Patriarch after the departure of Pope John XIII (94th Pope). That was in the year 1518 A.D. after the Ottoman conquest.

He remained in the papacy about forty-three years, preaching and teaching the flock. Some of his important accomplishments, were the renovation of the monasteries of Anba Antonius, and Anba Paul, the first hermit, in the Eastern desert, and the monastery of El-Mouharraq in Upper Egypt.

Some people in authority asked him to approve things against the welfare of his flock. The Pope chose to leave his Chair and he went to the monastery of St. Antonius, for he desired to keep what the Lord said: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) The Lord examined him but he endured thankfully, and received the blessing that the Lord gave for those persecuted for the sake of righteousness. Then, he fell sick for a short illness, and departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever, Amen.

The Eleventh Day Of The Blessed Month of Abib.

1. The Martyrdom of Sts. John and Simon, his cousin.

2. The Departure of St. Isaiah, the hermit.

1. On this day, Sts. John and Simon, his cousin, who were from the city of Shoubramalas (Ziftah-Gharbiah), were martyred. The mother of St. John was barren, and his father prayed ceaselessly to the Lord to give him a son, whom he would vow to the Lord. He saw in a vision St. John the Baptist, who told him that the Lord would give him a son. When this Saint was born, his father called him John, and he built a church in the name of St. John the Baptist. When the boy grew and was twelve years old, his father put him in charge of tending the sheep. John gave his food to the shepherds, and he fasted until the evening daily. When his father heard this, he went to him to verify that. When the boy saw him, he was afraid that his father might beat him, and he wanted to flee. His father calmed him and asked him about his food. John replied, "It is inside the hut." When the father went inside, he found the basket full of hot bread. He returned and told his mother what had happened and both rejoiced for the grace that was bestowed upon their son. They prevented their son from tending the sheep, and handed him to one who taught him the church books.

When John became eighteen years old, they ordained him a priest. Simon, his cousin, who was also tending to the sheep of his father, left that and became a disciple of this Saint. God wrought many signs by the hands of St. John.

When Diocletian denied Christ and worshipped idols, Sts. John and Simon went to Alexandria. They confessed the Lord Christ before its Governor, who tortured them much. Finally, he cut off their heads, and they received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the great saint, Anba Isaiah, who was a hermit in the wilderness of Shiheet (Scetis), departed.

May his prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twelfth Day Of The Blessed Month of Abib.

1. *The Commemoration of Archangel Michael.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Abba Hour El-Siriakousy.*

1. On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the honorable Archangel Michael, the perpetual intercessor of the human race before God the Pantocrator. "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; ... that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world;" (Revelation 12:7-9) and crushed his power over the Christians.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Abba Hour, was martyred. He was born in Siriakous to a father, who was an iron worker. He wished to become a martyr, so he went to El-Farma where he confessed the Lord Christ before its Governor. He tortured him much but the Lord comforted him and healed his wounds. The Governor was amazed when he saw that. That governor, his wife and his children believed in the Lord Christ. They became martyrs by the hands of another governor, who also kept on torturing the Saint Abba Hour. When he became weary of torturing him, he sent him to Ansena, where he was squeezed by the wheel, crucified head down, and burned by fire. Finally they cut off his head, and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Thirteenth Day Of The Blessed Month of Abib.

1. *The Departure of St. Pisentius, Bishop of Qift.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Apamon of Toukh.*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Abba Shenoute, during the Early Arab Rule.*

1. On this day, the holy father, Anba Pisentius, Bishop of Qift, departed. This Saint became a monk in his early years, devoted himself to the ascetic life, and learned the church books. He never looked upon the face of a woman. Once a woman, who had a serious sickness, waited until he came out of the church, and drew near him to kiss his hand, for her belief was that she would be healed. But when he saw that she was getting close to him, he walked faster. Since she was unable to catch him, she took a handful of the dust upon which his feet had trodden, and placed it on the site of the pain and she was healed.

When he was ordained a bishop, he used to see the angels fluttering their wings around the altar while he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy. He was eloquent in his sermons; no one became weary of listening to his teachings.

When the Lord informed him that his departure drew near, he gathered his people, taught them, and strengthened them in the Faith. Then, he departed in peace. God manifested many miracles from his

body. His disciple took a piece of his shroud which healed many of the sick.
May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Apamon, was martyred. He was from the city of Toukh, the diocese of Banha. The Angel Michael appeared to him and commanded him to go to Ansena and confess Christ. He went and confessed the Lord Christ before Eukhius, the governor. He tortured him much with the press (the wheel), red-hot iron bed, and by whipping him with whips. Then he cast him in a hot water cauldron. In all that, the Lord strengthened and raised him up sound. He was worthy for the Lord Christ to appear to him, and promised him the Kingdom of Heaven. This Saint performed many signs and miracles. When they cut off his head he received the crown of martyrdom. St. Julius El-Akfahasi was present, took his body, shrouded it with costly shrouds and sent his body with two of his men to his hometown.
May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. This day also, marks the martyrdom of St. Shenouda. He was a righteous man, keeping the Christian commandments. That was in the early days of the Arab conquest of Egypt. Some of his enemies laid an accusation against him before the Moslem ruler. He brought him and asked him to leave his faith but he refused, and proudly declared his faith in the Lord Christ. The ruler became enraged, tortured him, and finally cut off his head, and he received the crown of martyrdom.
May his prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day Of The Blessed Month of Abib.

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Procopius (Proconius) of Jerusalem.*
2. *The Departure of St. Peter the Fifth, 83rd Patriarch of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, of the year 303 A.D. (July 8th), St. Procopius (Proconius), was martyred. He was born in the city of Jerusalem, his father was a Christian whose name was Christophorus, which means "Bearer of Christ." His mother's name was Theodosia, and she was a worshipper of idols. When his father died, Theodosia took her son, and went to Antioch. She presented much money and expensive gifts to the Emperor Diocletian, and asked him to make her son a governor for one of the cities. He accepted her gift, answered her request, and appointed her son the governor of the city of Alexandria. He commanded that Procopius torture the Christians.

When the Saint had gone a little way from the City of Antioch, he heard a voice from heaven calling him by his name, and censured his deed. The voice also threatened him by death because he dared and accepted to do what was against the command of God. Procopius asked, "Who are you, O my Lord? I beseech you to show me yourself." A cross of light appeared to him, and he heard a voice which said to him, "I am Jesus, the Son of the Living God, Who was crucified in Jerusalem." He was afraid and trembled, and he turned to the city of Bit-Shaan (Bisan). He made for himself a cross of gold like the cross that appeared to him.

On his way to Alexandria, some of the bedouins attacked him to plunder whatever he had. But he overcame them by the cross that he had. His mother told him, "You must offer sacrifices to the gods

who delivered you from your enemies." The Saint replied, "Rather, I will offer the sacrifice to Jesus Christ, Who helped me by the power of His cross." When his mother heard his words, she became angry, and sent to Diocletian to inform him about that. The Emperor sent to the Governor of Caesarea, Palestine, to investigate the matter, and to handle his torture. When the Governor brought him, Procopius confessed his faith in the Lord Christ. The governor beat him so severely that he was close to death, then he cast him in prison. The Lord Christ appeared to him, surrounded by His angels, released him from his bonds, and healed his wounds. The next morning, the Governor asked about the Saint, and they told him that they found him free and sound. He had him brought to the temple of the idols, where the Governor was going to pray. When the Saint came, and the people saw him whole, they all marvelled, and they all cried out in the name of Christ saying, "We are Christians, and we believe in the God of Procopius." Among them were two prefects, twelve women, and St. Theodosia, mother of St. Proconius. They cut off their heads, and they received the crown of martyrdom. That was on the sixth day of the month of Abib.

The Governor ordered the return of the Saint to prison, until he could determine what to do with him. He brought him back three days later and told him, "Behold, I have waited three days for you to return to your mind, to have mercy on yourself, and to offer sacrifice for the gods." The Saint replied, "The Lord Christ is the only true God. As for these statues, which are made of stone and wood, they are not gods and can neither harm nor help." The Governor became angry and ordered the soldiers to cut his sides with swords. A swordsman, whose name was Archelaus, stretched out his hand to cut the sides of the Saint, whereupon his hand dried up, and fell down dead. The Governor ordered to stab him with knives and pour vinegar in his wounds. Then they dragged him by his feet to the prison, where he stayed for three days. The Governor was wondering what he should do with him. Then he threw him into a pit filled with fire, but the Lord delivered him and no harm came upon him. Finally, the Governor ordered to cut off his head and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 1064 A.M. (July 8th, 1348 A.D.), Pope Peter the Fifth, 83rd Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. He was known as Peter (Boutros) Ebn-dawoud. He was from St. Macarius monastery, and was a priest in El-Shahraan monastery. He was enthroned on the 6th of Tubah, 1056 A.M. (January 2nd, 1340 A.D.). All the days of his papacy were peaceful and tranquil. He departed after staying in his Chair for eight years, six months, and six days, and was buried in Old Cairo.

May his prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day Of The Blessed Month of Abib.

1. *The Departure of St. Ephraem El-Soriani (The Syrian).*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Cyriacus and St. Julietta His Mother.*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Horesius (Harsios) of Soul.*

1. On this day, of the year 379 A.D., the holy father, St. Ephraem (Ephraim) the Syrian, departed. He was born in the city of Nissibis, in the beginning of the fourth century to pagan parents, during the days

of the righteous Emperor Constantine. It happened that he met with St. James bishop of Nissibis, who preached to him and taught him the particulars of the Christian Faith. Ephraem believed on his hands. St. James baptized him and Ephraim stayed with him. He excelled in his worship that surpassed his contemporaries. He debated the pagans and overcame them by the grace that was within him. When the council of Nicea convened, he went with his teacher St. James to attend the council.

One day, it happened that while St. Ephraem was praying, he saw a pillar of light which extended from earth to heaven. When he marvelled at what he saw, he heard a voice saying to him, "That what you saw is St. Basil, Bishop of Caesaria." St. Ephraem longed to see St. Basil and he went to Caesaria. He entered the church and stood in a corner of it. He saw St. Basil in his priestly vestments embroidered with gold. St. Ephraim doubted the holiness of St. Basil. The Lord showed him a white dove that alighted over St. Basil's head. God then inspired St. Basil of the presence of St. Ephraem. St. Basil called him by his name, and St. Ephraem marvelled at how he knew him. They greeted each other, and St. Basil ordained him a deacon.

St. Ephraem increased his asceticism, and many great virtues were manifested through him that surpass description. Among which was that of an honorable woman, who was ashamed to confess her sins orally to St. Basil. She wrote on a paper her sins which she had committed since her youth, and gave it to St. Basil. When he received it and knew what was written in it, he prayed for her. The piece of paper became blank except for only one great sin. The woman wept, and entreated him to pray for her that God might forgive this sin for her. St. Basil told her, "Go to the wilderness where St. Ephraem is and he will pray for you." The woman went to him and told him what had happened. He said to her, "I am not worthy of this honor, go back to St. Basil for he is a high priest. Go now quickly before he departs from this world." When the woman returned, she found that St. Basil had departed, and was carried on the heads of the priests. She wept, and threw the piece of paper on his coffin. She prayed to God interceding through the saint. Then, she took the piece of paper, and she found it completely blank.

St. Ephraem had performed many miracles. In his days, Ebn-Disan the Infidel appeared. This father debated with him until he overcame his erroneous opinions. He wrote many articles and discourses. When he completed his strife, he departed to the Lord.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Cyriacus (Qyriacus) and St. Julietta, his mother, were martyred. When Cyriacus was three years old, his mother left Iconium, her native land, taking her son with her. She went to Tarsus, fleeing from the Governor that was persecuting the Christians. However, she found the Governor there in Tarsus. Some had laid accusation against her before the Governor. He brought her and ordered her to worship the idols. She answered him, "What you say to me cannot be accepted by a three year-old child." The governor said to her, "We can ask your child." God then made the child talk, who cried out saying, "Your gods are made of stone and wood by the hands of men, there is no other True God except my Lord Jesus Christ." Those who heard the child were amazed, and the Governor was exposed. For that reason, he inflicted pain over the child that surpassed his age. He also tortured his mother with many kinds of tortures. But the Lord God delivered them safely each time. Many saw this and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and received the crown of martyrdom. Finally, the Governor

ordered to cut the heads off of St. Cyriacus (Qyriacus) and St. Julietta, his mother, and they received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, the honorable saint Anba Horesius of Soul, was martyred.

May his intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day Of The Blessed Month of Abib.

1. The Departure of St. John, of the Golden Gospel.

2. The Recovery of the Holy Relics of St. George, the Great Martyr.

1. On this day, St. John, the owner of the Golden Gospel, departed. This saint was born in the city of Rome. His father was a rich man whose name was Atrofius (Trabius). His father gave him a copy of the Gospel of St. John written in letters of gold and bound with a golden cover and from this he was generally known as "John of the Golden Gospel." John rejoiced exceedingly with this gift.

A monk, who was on his way to Jerusalem, came to visit his father's house. John asked the monk to take him with him. The monk told him that he was going to Jerusalem and not to the monastery. He also told him that he was young and could not endure the rough life that the monks practiced. Nevertheless, John was sincere in his intention, so he embarked on a ship, without telling anyone, to the monastery of that monk. When the Abbot saw him, he refused to accept him because of his young age, and explained to him that the monastic life was difficult for one like him. John pleaded with him, and when the Abbot saw his firm intention and strong conviction, he accepted him. He shaved his head, and arrayed him in the holy garb of the monastic life. John devoted himself to the ascetic life with many worships. The Abbot often advised him saying, "Have pity on yourself, and do as the rest of the brethren." But John used to answer, saying, "The power of God and your prayers support me."

Seven years later, he saw in a vision, who told him, "Rise, and go to your parents, that you might receive their blessings before your departure from this world." This vision was repeated on three consecutive nights, and he told the Abbot about it. The Abbot told him that this was from God, and advised him to go to see his parents.

When he left the monastery, he found a poor man wearing ragged garments, he took them from him, and gave him his own monk's garb. When he arrived at his father's house, he lived for three years, near the door of the house, in a small hut made of straw. He ate, during this time, the fragments from his father's table which the servants threw to him. Whenever his mother passed by him, she was disgusted by his smell and the appearance of his clothes.

When his departure drew near, the Lord made it known to him that after three days he would depart from this world. St. John sent and called his mother. Without telling her that he was her son, he made her swear to bury him in that hut with whatever clothes he had on. Then, he gave her the golden Gospel and said to her, "Whenever you read in it, remember me." When his father returned to the

house, she showed him the Gospel, and immediately he recognized that it was the Gospel of his son John. They came in haste to St. John and asked him about the Gospel and about their son. He asked them to assure him that they would not bury him except in the clothes that he had on, and then he told them that he was their son. They wept with a great weeping. When the nobles of the city of Rome heard that, they gathered to see this righteous monk. After three days, he departed and his mother clothed him with the clothes that she had prepared for his wedding day before he went to the monastery. Thereupon she fell sick, and her husband remembered the oath that they had given. Immediately he removed the clothes of his son and clothed him with the old ragged cloth that he had on and buried him in the hut in which he had lived. Many miracles were manifested from his body. Then they built a church in his name and placed his body in it.

May his prayers with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, was the arrival of the holy relics of St. George, the great martyr, to his church in Old Cairo. A monk called Fr. Marcus, who was the hegumen and Abbot of El-Qualamoun monastery, used to visit the villages and the cities every year to visit the Christians. One night, while he was visiting someone in one of the villages he used to visit, he saw St. George (Gawargios) in a vision, who told him, "Take my body from the woman that will be coming to you tomorrow, and place it in my church that is in Old Cairo."

On the next day, a woman came to him and told him that she had a box that her father had brought before his death from the church of St. George in Palestine. This fulfilled the vision, and he went with her and examined the box. Then, he went to Pope Gabrial, 88th Pope, and told him about the vision and the box. Immediately the Pope rose up and took with him the priests and the deacons, and went to where the box was. After they took the blessings of the holy relics and gave some money to the woman, they carried the box in a venerable celebration. They brought it to the church of St. George in Old Cairo where many signs were manifested from it.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Seventeenth Day Of The Blessed Month of Abib.
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The Martyrdom of St. Euphemia

On this day, St. Euphemia, was martyred. When Barsiros (Briskos), one of the deputies of Diocletian, was passing down the road, there were with him some of the saints with iron chains round their necks like dogs. This saint saw them and her heart waxed hot. She was sorry for them and she wept. Then, she cursed the Emperor, his idols, and admonished the Governor saying, "O you whose heart is like a stone, do you not have compassion on these holy men! or are you not afraid that their God might destroy you?" The Governor became enraged and informed the Emperor about what she had done and said. The Emperor brought her and asked her about her belief. She confessed that she was Christian. He tortured her severely by beating and burning until she delivered up her pure soul in the hand of the Lord.

May her prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eighteenth Day Of The Blessed Month of Abib.

The Martyrdom of St. James the Apostle, Bishop of Jerusalem

On this day, St. James the Apostle, Bishop of Jerusalem, who was the son of Alphaeus, was martyred. (Mat. 10:3) The Holy Bible mentioned his brothers, Joses, Simon, and Judas, the sons of Cleophas. (Mat. 13:55) The Greek word "Cleophas" means in the Syriac language "Alphaeus". His mother, the sister of the Virgin, was also called Mary and was the wife of Cleophas. (John 19:25)

When he grew up he was known as James the Just. For there was a drought in Palestine and he prayed to God, Who sent the rain and watered the land, as Josephus, the Jewish historian, testified. He was called James the Less, to identify him from St. James the son of Zebedee, and the brother of St. John the beloved.

It was said that the Lord had appointed him bishop of Jerusalem when he appeared to him. "After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles." (I Cor. 15:7) He was called the head of the church in Jerusalem for it was the mother church and from it the Good News had spread to the other churches. He wrote a liturgy, with which the Armenians still pray.

During his time and in the year 53 A.D. a Council of the Apostles and priests convened in Jerusalem and St. James presided over it. During this Council St. James said, "Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, "but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood ... " (Acts 15:19-21) St. James preached and taught the Name of the Lord Christ, brought many back to the faith, and baptized them. God wrought by his hands many signs and wonders.

One day, many of the Jews came to him and asked him to tell them about the Lord Christ. They thought that he would tell them that Jesus was his brother. St. James went up to the pulpit, and began to explain to them the Godhead of the Lord Christ, His eternal existence, and His equality with God the Father. When they heard this they were wrath with him, they dragged him down, and beat him severely. One of them beat the apostle on the head with an iron rod, and he delivered up his soul instantly.

It was said about this Saint, that he never drank wine, and never wore clothes, but always wore a linen loin-cloth, and that he kneeled so often during his worship and praying that his feet and knees became swollen, and the skin of his knees became like that of the camels.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Nineteenth Day Of The Blessed Month of Abib.

1. *The Martyrdom of Sts. Bidaba, Bishop of Qift, Anba Andrew, and Anba Christodoulas.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Pantaleemon, the Physician.*
3. *The Departure of Pope Youanis X, 85th Patriarch of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, of the year 284 A.M., which is the first year of the martyrs, the great saint Anba Bidaba, and his companion, the priest Andrew, his nephew, and St. Christodoulas, were martyred. Anba Bidaba, who was known by El-Gawhary, was bishop of the city of Qift, in Upper Egypt, during the days of the governor Arianus, and the reign of Emperor Diocletian.

This great saint was born in the city of Armant to Christian parents who raised him since his young age in a Christian manner. His mother's sister had a son, called him Andrew and raised him in a Christian way. Andrew and his cousin Bidaba liked each other and decided to forsake the world. They eagerly read the Bible and religious books, they widened their comprehension and they became the authority of their times in piety and godliness. When Bidaba was ten years old he had memorized most of the religious books and spiritual teachings. They fasted two days at a time without food or water and when they ate, they only ate bread and salt, accompanied by fervent prayers day and night.

One day while they were thinking about the vanity of this world, they decided to leave their families and live lives of seclusion in a deserted place. They went to the Eastern mount where they found Anba Eisak. This saint comforted and strengthened them to endure the hardships to receive the Eternal Life. Anba Eisak blessed them and commanded them to go to another place where they could live a life of solitude and spend all their time in worship. Then he told Anba Bidaba, "O, my son you shall shepherd the flock of Christ, many toils, tribulations and great persecutions will befall you." He told Andrew, "You also shall receive a crown, after your strife, that has been prepared for you."

They left Anba Eisak and went to the western side and built for themselves a cell. They had full knowledge and excellent skills in transcribing the holy books. They did that for little money to support their life and donated whatever was left to the poor and the needy. The bishop of this district came, once he heard about them, and ordained Anba Bidaba a priest and Andrew a deacon. They went to a church in one of the nearby cities once every forty days to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. One day they went to the church, and found the bishop there so Anba Bidaba stood in reverence and respect for the bishop. The bishop was sitting on his chair looking at St. Bidaba, and he was amazed to see the face of the Saint shining as the moon, and light emanating from him and on his head was a crown of gold decorated with precious stones. The bishop asked them to bring this saint and his companion Andrew. When they came to see him, he asked them to stay with him, but Anba Bidaba refused, preferring to live in the barren desert than live under the care of the bishop. Nevertheless, St. Andrew accepted to stay under the care of the bishop. Anba Bidaba returned to his cell weeping and saying, "I ask you O my Lord Christ to consecrate that place for Thy self that Your Name might be mentioned in it for ever." Then he left that place and went to another area further away. A few days later the bishop sent a messenger to the cell seeking the Saint but he did not find him. The bishop built a church in the name of this saint in that place and consecrated it on the thirteenth day of the month of Kiahk. As for St.

Bidaba, he went to the church taking a different way to pray. Many signs and miracles were wrought by his hands, and he increased in grace and blessing.

When his fame spread, and his name was acclaimed, many came to him and he healed their spiritual and physical sicknesses. The people asked the bishop Anba Tadros saying, "We ask you O our father to bring for us Anba Bidaba to be blessed by him and to stay among us for a period of time." The bishop did as they asked.

When Anba Bidaba came to the city of Bahgourah, district of Nagaa-Hammady, there was a man, whose name was John, who had only one daughter, who was attractive. His neighbors were furious against him, and used sorcery against her, for they asked her father to give her in marriage to one of their sons, but he refused. But, the Saint Anba Bidaba prayed for her, and she became as normal as she had been, and God nullified the witchcraft away from her. When her family saw their daughter healed by the hand of that saint, they came and kneeled before him, and kissed his hands thanking him for his act. The Saint told them, "Thank God and praise Him, for the grace that healed your daughter was not from me." They left him rejoicing.

When it was Sunday and the people were gathered in the church, they brought the Saint to the bishop who promoted him to Hegumen (Archpriest). He stayed with the bishop for nine days then went back to the mountain. Later on, the bishop of Qift departed, so the people of the area gathered and unanimously decided to nominate Abba Bidaba to be ordained in his place. They decided to go to Pope Peter the First (The seal of martyrs and the 17th Patriarch) to ordain him a bishop for them. The angel of the Lord appeared to the Pope in a vision and told him, "Go to Upper Egypt and bring the Archpriest Bidaba and ordain him a bishop for the city of Qift, for the Lord has chosen him." Early next morning the delegations of the believers came asking to ordain the honorable father Bidaba a bishop. The Pope sent four priests with a letter to the Saint. When they arrived, he received the letter from them and read in it, "It is written in the Holy Bible whoever hears from you, heard from Me, and whoever refuses you, refused Me." St. Bidaba cried bitterly and said, "Woe to me the poor sinner for the Devil wishes my perishing." Then he prayed saying, "Let it be according to Your Will, O Lord, and not according to mine, for You know that I am weak, powerless, and incapable of handling this position."

The messengers of the Pope embarked with him to the Pope. The Pope asked the people of the parish, "Who do you chose to be a bishop over you." They unanimously answered saying, "Abba Bidaba, for he is worthy for this honorable ministry." The Pope ordained him a bishop for the diocese of Qift. While he was laying his hand over his head, a voice from heaven said, "Worthy, worthy, worthy O Bidaba to receive this position." He remained with the Pope for a few days, during which he celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Whenever he placed his hand over the chalice to make the sign of the cross, the wine changed to blood. The Pope was amazed and looked at the saint and said, "Truly you are chosen from God." He asked the Pope to allow him to go to his parish. He embarked in a sailing boat, which had a handicapped man, that did not walk for twenty-two years. While he was getting aboard the boat the saint's leg slipped and stepped over the leg of that handicapped man. The man's legs were healed and he jumped up immediately praising God. All those in the ship praised God and asked the saint to remember them in his prayers and to bless them.

Many miracles were wrought by his hands during his journey. When they arrived safely at their hometown, the people of the parish went out with candles, crosses, censers, olive branches and palm branches, in their hands to receive him. They took him in a procession until they entered the church and he sat on his Episcopal Chair. He lived in asceticism, as he had lived before, praying continually day and night. His food was bread and salt and his dress was a cloth of hair. He performed many signs and wonders.

When Emperor Diocletian incited persecution against the Christians, governor Arianus came to upper Egypt, and seized the Christians. He threw them in prisons, and tortured them severely, along his way until he arrived at Esna. When the saint Anba Bidaba knew of that, he was kindled with a spiritual zeal and said, "Is it right for me to remain here, and my brothers, the Christians facing unbearable tortures? No, I must go there and die with them as a sacrifice of faith." He called the people and celebrated a pontifical Liturgy and after he administered to them the Holy Mysteries, he preached to them saying, "We must not be afraid to be martyred in the Name of the Lord Christ, not be afraid of hot fire, arrows or spears, and swords drawn against our necks. As also you need to be merciful to the poor, comfort the grieved, be vigilant in your prayers and fasting for they are your aid by which you can overcome obstacles and cast out the devil that weaken your faith in the Lord Christ." The bishop preached and strengthened his people, and after he made the sign of the holy cross over them, blessed them and bid them farewell saying, "I shall go to be martyred by the hand of Arianus the governor." The people cried and wept for his departure, but he comforted and strengthened them.

Afterwards, he left them and went to the city of Esna, accompanied by the blessed Fr. Andrew and Anba Christodoulas. The bishop Anba Bidaba looked at them and said, "Where are you going?" They replied, "We are going with you to die for our love of Christ." The bishop looked at them and saw the grace of God had come down upon them and their faces shining like the moon. He strengthened and commanded them to be steadfast in their faith in Christ. He told them, "On this night I saw in a vision an angel who had with him three crowns and I asked him to whom did these belong? He said one for you, one for your cousin, and one for Christodoulas, so let us go to Esna."

When they arrived at Esna, they saw a multitude of Christians, bishops, priests, deacons, and believers, being tortured. The governor brought them and ordered them to raise incense for the gods, but they cried saying, "We are Christians and we do not fear you, O infidel governor. We do not worship these defiled gods that were made by human hands. Our God that we worship, is in heaven, the creator of everything with the Word of His might, visible and invisible, to Whom is the Glory, Honor, and Worship with His good Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the age of ages, Amen." When the Governor heard their words and saw their steadfastness, he ordered to cut their heads off with the sword.

During that time, Anba Bidaba was standing, watching the Christians being tortured, and he saw angels coming down from heaven, and in their hands, crowns of light for the heads of those who were martyred, and raising them to the heaven with great honor and glory. The Bishop and his companions went forward and cried out saying, "We are Christians, and we believe in Jesus Christ the Lord of all creatures and the God of every power." The Governor asked them, "From where are you?" Then he

asked the bishop about his name. The Bishop replied, "I am the lowly Bidaba." The Governor said, "I think you are the bishop of this land, but I am amazed at how you could dare to say these words. Did you not dread my retaliation and fear my authority and majesty? Have you not seen the torture that has been prepared for those who confess that Name?" The Saint answered courageously and said, "Have you not heard the saying of the Book by the mouth of Lord Jesus Christ, 'Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.' (Mat. 10:32-33) Because of this promise, we confess Our Lord Jesus Christ to the uttermost breath." The Governor tried, by promising him money and position once and then threatening him in other time, to change his council and his faith in the Lord Christ, and when he failed, he ordered that the Saint be imprisoned in one of the prisons.

When the saints in prison saw him, they saluted him and said, "Would you vanquish for us this governor, for you have been given the victory from the Lord of hosts." While they were talking about the greatness and goodness of God, the Archangel Michael appeared to the Bishop and said, "Hail to you O honored one, let your soul rejoice today for God has accepted all your toil, asceticism, and struggle for the sake of faith. You shall receive three crowns: the first, for your worship and asceticism since your young age, the second, for shepherding the flock on the straight path, and the third, for your martyrdom. You shall be crowned with these crowns with glory and honor to receive the heavenly glories." The angel ascended, and the Saint stood and prayed saying, "Hear me O Father the Pantocrator, may my petition rise before You, and You smell it as a sweet incense that pleases You, I ask You O father for Thy people and saints who do mercy for the poor, and accept my soul in Your hands that I may receive the heavenly glories, for to You is the Glory, Honor, and Worship with Your Good Father and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen."

When he finished his petition he saw the Lord our Savior and around Him the angels coming to comfort him, saying, "My consolation O beloved Bidaba, I am with you." Then the magnificent procession ascended to heaven. On the next morning, the governor ordered all the prisoners brought to the place where the people of the city gathered. When they saw the saints they cried saying, "We are Christians and we believe in one God, the God of Anba Bidaba." The governor became enraged and brought the Saint and those who were with him and ordered their heads cut off. The blood flowed like streams. The skies were filled by the pure angels welcoming the spirits of those righteous saints. St. Bidaba, St. Andrew, and St. Christodoulas received the crown of eternal life.

May their blessings be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks the martyrdom of the honorable St. Pantaleemon, the Physician. This saint was born in the city of Ta'madan. His father, whose name was Astochius (Asturius), was pagan, and his mother, whose name was Unala (Ulana), was Christian. They taught him the medical profession.

A priest lived near their house, and every time Pantaleemon passed by him, and the priest saw his stature, his comeliness, his knowledge, and his wisdom, he was sorrowful for him for he was away from God. The priest entreated God in his prayers, to guide Pantaleemon to the way of salvation. Having repeated his petition to God for Pantaleemon's sake, the Lord told him in a vision that he would believe through him. The priest rejoiced, and started to speak to him whenever he passed before him, until a friendship grew between them. The priest started to explain to him the corruptness of idol

worshipping and the nobility of the Faith of the Lord Christ and the noble life of its followers. He also told him about those who believe in Christ, and the signs and wonders wrought by their hands.

When Pantaleemon, the Physician, heard that, he rejoiced and desired to perform these signs to perfect his medical profession. One day, he was passing through the market-place of the city, and he saw a man, whom a serpent had bitten, lying on the ground and the serpent was standing up before him. He said to himself, "I will put to test the words of my teacher, the priest, who told me, 'If you believe in the Lord Christ, you shall work miracles in His Name.'" He drew near that man, and prayed a long prayer, asking the Lord Christ to manifest His Power in healing that man, and in killing that serpent, so that it might not harm anyone else. When he finished his prayer, the man rose up alive, and the serpent fell down dead. Pantaleemon's faith increased; he went to the priest, who baptized him, and he went on practicing medicine.

One day a blind man came to Pantaleemon that he might heal him, but his father sent him away. The Saint asked him, "Who was asking for me?" His father replied, "It was a blind man, and you can not heal him." The Saint told him, "You shall see the glory of God." He called the blind man back, and asked him, "If you can see will you believe in the God Who shall heal your eyes?" The man said, "Yes, I will believe." The Saint prayed over him a long and a profound prayer, and then he laid his hand upon the eyes of the blind man, and said, "In the Name of the Lord Christ receive your sight." Straightway, he received his sight and believed in the Lord Christ. When his father saw that, he also believed. The saint brought them to the priest who baptized them.

When his father departed, the Saint set his slaves free and gave all his money to the poor. He treated the sick freely, and asked them to believe in Christ. The other physicians were jealous of him, and they laid accusation against him, the priest and many others who had believed, before the Emperor. He brought them and threatened to torture them if they did not deny the Lord Christ. When they did not yield to his threats, he tortured them severely then cut off their heads. The Emperor exaggerated in torturing St. Pantaleemon, he cast him to the lions which did not harm him, and the Lord strengthened and healed him. Finally, the Emperor ordered to cut off his head and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, of the year 1085 A.M. (July 13th, 1369 A.D.) Pope Youanis X, 85th Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. He was known by El-Mo'ataman the Syrian, and he was from Damascus, Syria. He was a righteous and knowledgeable man. He was enthroned on the twelfth of Bashans, 1079 A.M. (May 7th, 1363 A.D.). He remained on the throne for six years, two months, and seven days. He departed in peace and was buried in Old Cairo beside Simon the shoe maker.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twentieth Day Of The Blessed Month of Abib.

The Martyrdom of St. Theodore of Shotep

On this day, of the year 220 A.D., St. Theodore of Shotep was martyred. His father's name was John and he was from the city of Shotep in Upper Egypt. He went with his regiment to the city of Antioch, where he married the daughter of a pagan noble man, and begot by her this St. Theodore. When his mother wanted to present him to the house of idols to be educated there, his father refused. She became angry, drove him away, and the child remained with his mother. His father John prayed ceaselessly, and entreated God to guide his son Theodore to the path of salvation. The child grew up, and learned philosophy, wisdom, and literature. The Lord Christ illuminated his heart, and Theodore went to a righteous bishop who baptized him. When his mother heard of this she was sorrowed greatly, but the Saint did not mind her.

He joined the army and advanced in the ranks until he became one of the great generals during the reign of Emperor Lucianus. The people of the city of Eukhitos worshipped a great serpent, and offered to him a human sacrifice every year. While St. Theodore was passing through this district, he saw a woman crying bitterly. He asked her about the reason for her crying. She answered him saying, "I am a widow and they have taken my two sons to offer them as a sacrifice to the serpent, although I am Christian." He said to himself, "They have wronged this woman, but God shall avenge her." He came down from his horse, and turned his face towards the East and prayed, then drew near the serpent. The people of the city were watching him from the tops of the walls of the city. The serpent was fourteen cubits long, but God gave him power over it, and he speared it with his spear and killed it, and delivered the sons of the widow.

After this, Theodore came to Egypt to search for his father, and he stayed with him until he died, and then returned to Antioch. He found that the Emperor had apostatized the faith and started to persecute the Christians. He came before him and confessed the Lord Christ. The Emperor ordered him beaten with rods, burned, and cast into the fire. He delivered up his soul and received the crown of martyrdom. A Christian woman took his body - it was said that she was his mother - after she gave much money to the soldiers and hid his body until the end of the time of persecution. Churches were built in his name in many cities.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-First Day of the Blessed Month of Abib

1. *The Commemoration of the Lady, the Virgin Mary.*
2. *The Departure of St. Sisinnios (Sosenius), the Eunich.*

1. On this day, is the commemoration of the Virgin Lady, St. Mary, the mother of the Savior of the world, the great shelter, and the inexhaustible treasure.

May her intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Sisinnios (Sosenius), the Eunich, departed. He was one of the men in the palace of Emperor Theodosius. He was full of grace and wisdom, and his compassion was great. When the third Ecumenical Council convened in Ephesus to judge Nestorius, this saint ministered to St. Cyril (Kyrillos) the Great, and the rest of the holy members of the council. He fell ill and St. Cyril prayed to God for his sake, and St. Sisinnios was healed from his sickness. He gave all his money to the poor and the needy, then departed in peace. St. Cyril prayed over him, and arranged an annual commemoration for him on this day.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Second Day of the Blessed Month of Abib

1. *The Commemoration of the Martyrdom of St. Macarius, the Son of Basilides (Wasilides) the Minister.*
2. *The Commemoration of the Martyrdom of St. Leontius of Tripoli (Lawendius).*

1. On this day, the great St. Macarius, the son of Basilidis the Chancellor, was martyred. When the messengers reviewed the order of Emperor Diocletian, which dictates the worship of idols, with Macarius, he did not heed them. When the Emperor knew that, he sent Macarius to the governor of Alexandria. He bid farewell to his mother, and asked her to care for the poor and the needy, then he went with the envoy. The Lord Christ appeared to him in a vision, encouraged him, and told him what would happen to him. When he arrived to the city of Alexandria, he stood before Armanius the governor, who deceitfully treated him well because he knew that he was the son of Basilidis the Chancellor. When Macarius did not change his counsel, the governor tortured him with all kinds of torture. While he was being tortured, his soul was taken up to heaven and he saw the habitations of the saints. Afterwards, the governor sent him to Nikios where he was tortured again. They cut off his tongue and arms and placed hot nails in his sides. God wrought many miracles on his hands. Among these was a procession, in which a dead man passed by him. The saint asked the Lord Christ to reveal His glory, and the man rose from the dead instantly. The man told the people around him of what he saw in Hades, and that Christ is the Lord of all. Many believed, and they were beheaded and received the crown of martyrdom.

It happened that Arianus the governor of Antinoe (Ansena) was present in Alexandria, who took the saint with him on his way back to Ansena. When he arrived in Shatanouf (Setnuf, Pshati), the ship stopped and they could not move it again. The governor ordered the soldiers to disembark the saint, where they cut-off his head. Thus, he finished his strife and received the crown of martyrdom.

When the righteous emperor Constantine reigned, he sent the commander Eulogius with an order to open the churches, renovate the fallen ones, and to destroy the pagan temples. The Saint appeared to him in a vision and told him about the place of his body. He went to the place and brought out the body, built a church after his name, and placed the body in it. God performed many miracles through the body of St. Macarius.

May his prayers be with us, Amen.

2. Also on this day, St. Leontius of Tripoli (Lawendius), was martyred. He was born in Tripoli to Christian parents. He was handsome, perfect in his conduct, and gentle in his relationships. He read continuously the Holy Scriptures, especially the book of Psalms until he memorized it. When he enlisted in the army, he preached to his fellow soldiers, and demonstrated to them the corruption of idol worshipping. He advised them to refrain from its worship, some of them followed his advice while others were enticed by the devil and informed the commander that Leontius despised the idols, and was preaching that Christ was the true God.

The commander brought him to investigate the matter. The Saint answered the commander with the saying of St. Paul: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword?" (Romans 8:35)

The commander became enraged, and he threw the saint in prison. The next day, he brought him back, and asked him, "With what power do you dare to disobey the Emperor, and to drive the people away from worshipping the gods?" The Saint answered, "Truly I desire that all people come to the obedience of Christ. You too will inherit the Eternal Kingdom, if you abandon your error, and worship Christ." The commander ordered him to be beaten until his blood poured out on the ground, while the saint was praising God and glorifying His name. One of the soldiers sympathized with him, and came close to him, saying, "I greatly sympathize with you, therefore I want you to sacrifice to the gods, so you will be pardoned." The Saint cried out at him saying, "Go away from me Satan." The commander increased his torture until he delivered up his pure spirit while he was in prison.

A rich believing woman came, gave money to the soldiers and to the prison guard, and took the body. She wrapped it in a golden shroud, and put him in a coffin inside her home, until the end of the time of persecution¹⁶.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever, Amen.

¹⁶The consecration of his church is written under the first day of the month of Baounah (Vol. IV, P. 459).

The Twenty-Third Day of the Blessed Month of Abib

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Longinus the Soldier.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Marina, of Antioch.*

1. On this day, St. Longinus the Soldier, was martyred. He was Greek by nationality, from one of the countries of Cappadocia. When Tiberius Caesar reigned, and appointed Pilate governor of the land of Judah, Longinus was one of the soldiers that accompanied him.

When the time arrived that Our Lord wished to save the creation, Longinus was one of the soldiers that were in charge of crucifying the Lord of Glory. It happened that after the Lord had delivered up His soul, Longinus pierced His side with a spear, and blood and water flowed from His Side. Longinus marvelled exceedingly when he saw this, and his amazement increased when he saw that the sun became dark, the curtain of the Temple was rent, the rocks were split, and that the dead rose up from the tombs. He believed and realized all the miracles which Our Lord performed from His Birth to His Crucifixion. When the righteous Joseph took the body of the Savior, shrouded Him, and laid it in the sepulcher, this Saint was standing there with the guards when they sealed the tomb.

When Our Lord rose from the sealed tomb, Longinus was perplexed, and he asked God to explain to him this mystery. Our Lord sent to him the Apostle Peter, who told him everything which had been prophesied concerning the Redeemer. He believed, abandoned the military service, went back to his country, and preached the Name of Christ.

When Pilate heard about this, he wrote to Tiberius about him, who ordered his head cut off, and thus he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us, Amen.

2. On this day also, is the commemoration of the martyrdom of the blessed St. Marina, who overcame the Devil. She was one of the daughters of the nobles of Antioch. Her parents were pagan. When her mother died, her father sent her to a nanny to raise her, who was a Christian. She taught Marina the Faith of Christ. When Marina reached the age of fifteen years, her father died. One day she heard her nurse talking about the biography of the martyrs and what glory they receive in the Kingdom of Heaven. She longed to become a martyr in the Name of the Lord Christ. One day St. Marina went out of her house with her maiden servants, and on her way she passed by Lopharius Ebrotus, the governor, who admired her much when he saw her. He ordered her brought to him. When the soldiers came to her, she told them that she was Christian. In turn, when they told the governor this, he was distressed for he liked her, and he had her brought to him by force. He offered her the worship of the idols and asked her to forsake God, but she refused. Then he asked her, "What is your name? and from where are you?" She told him, "I am Christian. I believe in the Lord Christ, and my name is Marina." He tried to persuade her by many promises and promised to marry her, but she did not heed him. When she cursed and insulted him, he ordered her body scraped with iron combs, then rubbed with vinegar, salt and lime, which they did. Nevertheless, she endured with patience. They cast her in prison, thinking

that she was about to die. Immediately the angel of the Lord came, and healed all her wounds. While she was standing up praying, and her hands were extended in the form of a cross, a huge and terrifying serpent came forth. When she saw it she was frightened and her whole body trembled. The serpent swallowed her up, and her soul almost departed from her. She made the sign of the cross and prayed while she was in the belly of the serpent. It split open and fell on the ground dead. St. Marina went out unharmed.

The next morning, the governor ordered her brought to him. When he saw that she was well, he marvelled much, and told her, "Marina, your sorcery has become evident today, so listen to me. Worship the gods and much good would be for you, and I will give you all that I have promised you." She looked to him and to the dumb idols with contempt and said, "I worship the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, the God of heavens and earth, and whatever you wish to do with me, do, for I will not heed you." The governor ordered her hanged on the wheel, the squeezing wheel, and squeezed very tightly. They did so, then cast her in prison. The angel of the Lord came to her, and healed her. Then the Devil appeared to her and said, "O Marina, if you obey the governor that would be for your good for he is merciless, and he wishes to erase your name from the face of the earth." She realized that he was the Devil. Straightway she caught the hair of his head, and she took an iron rod and started to beat him, saying, "Stop it O Satan." Then she bound him with the sign of the cross, not to depart from before her until he told her all about what he does to the human race. When she pressed him, he told her, "I am the one who makes adultery, stealing, blasphemy, and earthly desires, good and desirable to the human. And if I do not overcome him, I steer sleep and laziness against him, so he will not pray and ask for the forgiveness of his sins." The Saint straightway expelled him.

When the governor saw her he marvelled much, then he ordered to uncover her body, and to fill a large cauldron with melted lead, and to immerse her in it. When they did so, she asked the Lord to make this a baptism for her. The Lord sent his angel in the form of a dove. She immersed while saying, "In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God Amen." A voice from heaven called her and said, "O Marina you have been baptized in the baptismal water." She rejoiced exceedingly, and those who were present heard what had happened to the saint. Many of them believed, and the governor ordered to cut off their necks, and afterwards ordered to cut off St. Marina's holy head. The executioner took her and went outside the city, then told her, "My lady Marina, I see the angel of the Lord and with him a crown of bright light." She said, "I ask you to tarry on me until I have prayed." She extended her arms and prayed fervently, then told the executioner, "Do what you have been ordered to do." She bowed her neck to the executioner who told her, "I could not do so." The saint told him, "If you do not do so, you would not have a share in the Kingdom of God." When he heard what she said, he took the sword and cut her neck off then he cut his neck also while he was saying, "I believe in the God of St. Marina." He fell down beside her and he received the crown of martyrdom in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Lord had manifested from her body many signs and healing miracles. Her body is presently located in the church of the Lady the Virgin Mary in Haret El-Roum.

May her prayers and intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Abib

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Apanoub.*

2. *The Departure of St. Simeon the First, 42nd Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, St. Apanoub (Abba Nob) was martyred. He was born in the city of Nehisa (District of Talkha). His parents were pure and merciful and they reared him in the fear of God. When Diocletian incited the persecution against the Christian, St. Apanoub was twelve years old, and he desired to shed his blood for the Name of Christ.

One day he went to the church, and he heard the priest teaching the believers, strengthening them in the Faith, warning them from worshipping the idols, and encouraging them to deliver themselves over to death for the sake of the Lord Christ. He returned to his house, and set before him all what his father had left him of gold, silver, and apparels and told himself it is written, "The world is passing away, and the lust of it." (I John 2:17) Straightway he rose up, and gave all his money to the poor and needy, then went to Samanoud, walking along the river bank. He confessed the Name of the Lord Christ before Lucianus the governor, who tortured him severely. Then he hung him up upon the mast of his ship head downwards. The governor sat down to eat and to drink, and the vessel which was in his hand became a stone. The angel of the Lord came down from heaven, released the saint, and wiped up the blood that was running down from his nose and mouth. The governor and his soldiers were greatly disturbed. Strong winds blew, that made the ship to sail fast to Athribis. When they arrived, the soldiers unfastened their belts, and cast them before the governor, then confessed the Lord Christ and they received the crown of martyrdom.

The governor of Athribis tortured St. Apanoub (Abba Nob) severely, then sent him to the city of Alexandria. There, he was tortured until he delivered up his pure soul and received the crown of martyrdom. St. Julius El-Akfahsi was present, he wrote the biography of St. Apanoub, took his body and sent it with some of his men to his hometown Nehisa.

Many churches were built in his name. Many signs and miracles were manifested from his body which is now located in his church in the city of Samnanoud.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 416 A.M. St. Simeon the First, 42nd Pope of Alexandria, departed. This Pope was Syrian in nationality, and his parents brought him to El-Zugag monastery, west of the city of Alexandria, wherein is the body of St. Severus, the Antiochian. He became a monk there, and he learned to read and to write, and he learned by heart the books of the Church. Pope Agathon ordained him a priest. When his virtues and knowledge became well known, they elected him for the patriarchate. He was ordained a patriarch in 23rd of Kiahk, of the year 409 A.M. (December 19, year 692 A.D.).

He called his spiritual guide and delegated to him the management of the affairs of the patriarchate. He devoted himself to fasting, praying, and reading the Scriptures. He ate only bread, salt and cumin, and uncooked legumes, until he made the spirit of lust subjected to his rational and understanding soul.

God wrought great signs and miracles by his hands, among which were the following: Some of the priests of the city of Alexandria, were resentful of him, and they plotted to kill him. They went to a magician who prepared a deadly poison for them and he gave it to them in a bottle. In turn they gave it to the Pope as if it was a medicine to use and bless them. Pope Simeon drank that drink after he had received the Holy Mysteries and no harm came to him. As they failed in their scheme, they worked up another deadly poison in some of the figs. Then they deceived the appointed one to prepare the Korban from making it that night, so the Pope would not be able to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and receive the Holy Mysteries. They went to the Pope in the morning and gave him the figs as a present. They pressed him until he ate some of the figs, which made him ill, and he was bed-ridden for forty days.

When the Khalifah Abdel-Aziz came to Alexandria, the Pope could not go out to welcome him. The Khalifa asked about the Patriarch, the Christian scribes told him what had happened. He ordered to burn the priests and the magician. The Pope besought the Khalifa with tears to have mercy on them. The Khalifa marvelled at his gentleness and compassion, then he pardoned the priests and burned the magician.

Since that time he increased in reverence and respect in the sight of the Khalifa, who allowed him to build churches and monasteries. He built two monasteries at Helwan, south of Cairo.

This Pope appointed a priest whose name was Mina, to administer all the properties of the church, to take care of its funds, endowments, sacred vessels and books. Nevertheless, Mina mishandled his duties, to the point that he had denied what he had from the church's funds. Fr. Mina fell ill and was not able to talk. When Pope Simeon heard that, he was sorry and asked the Lord to heal him, lest the properties of the church's be lost. The Pope sent one of his disciples to the wife of that priest to ask her about the properties of the church. When he drew near to the house, he heard the crying and weeping, and he was informed that the priest had died. He went in and bowed his head to kiss him in salutation to his priesthood. Straightway, the dead man rose, sat up and talked, thanking the Lord Christ, and confessing that the prayers of St. Simeon on his behalf had raised him up from the dead. The priest came hastily to the Pope repenting and weeping, and returned all that he had from the church's funds.

During the papacy of St. Simeon there were some who took concubines besides their wives, and he excommunicated them until they returned from their transgression. He remained on the Patriarchal Chair for seven years and seven months, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Abib

1. *The Departure of St. Thecla.*
2. *The Martyrdom of the Saint Abba Isaac.*
3. *The Martyrdom of St. Hilaria.*
4. *The Martyrdom of Sts. Thecla and Mouji.*
5. *The Martyrdom of St. Antonius (Anthony) of Beba.*
6. *The Martyrdom of St. Abakragoun.*
7. *The Martyrdom of St. Domadius El-Souriani (The Syrian).*
8. *The Consecration of the Church of St. Mercurius.*
9. *The Departure of St. Palamon, the Father of the Monks.*

1. On this day, St. Thecla, who was contemporary to St. Paul the Apostle, departed. When St. Paul went forth from Antioch and came to the city of Nicomedia, there was a certain believer, whose name was Sefaros, took him to his house. Many gathered together to hear St. Paul's teaching. When this virgin Thecla heard St. Paul's teaching, she looked out from the window of her house so that she might hear more of his teachings. Her heart was pleased with his teachings, and she followed the apostle. Her father and her family were grieved and wanted to prevent her from following St. Paul to his meetings. When she did not heed their counsel, her father presented her situation to the governor, to prevent her from listening to St. Paul's teachings. The governor brought the apostle Paul, examined his teachings, and when he could find no cause for complaint against him, he shut him up in prison.

St. Thecla took off her expensive attire and ornaments, and came to St. Paul in prison, and bowed down at his feet. When her parents sought her, they could not find her. When they found out that she was with St. Paul in prison, the Governor ordered to burn her. Her mother cried out saying, "Burn her to be an example for the other women of noble families who believe in the teaching of the Apostle."

They threw her in the fire, which did not harm her. She escaped and came to St. Paul, then went to Antioch. There, a nobleman saw her, and was captivated with her beauty. He asked to marry her, but she refused saying, "I am the bride of Christ." He informed the governor of the city about her, who seized her and cast her to the lions, which did not harm her for two days. Then she came to where St. Paul was, he comforted her, strengthened her and commanded her to preach Christ in Iconium. She went there and preached the Faith of Christ, and then went to her own city and converted her father to the Faith of Christ. Having finished her fight, she departed in peace.

May her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks, the martyrdom of the Saint Abba Isaac, who was from Shama, district of Ashmoun. He worked as a gardener and overseer of an orchard. He was pious, gentle, and devoted to God. He did not eat meat or drink wine. He fasted two days at a time, then broke the fast with legumes. He visited the poor and the needy, and gave them what was left of his wages.

The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision and commanded him to go to the governor and confess the Name of Christ to receive the crown of martyrdom. Abba Isaac rejoiced, distributed all that he had, went to the governor, and confessed the Lord Christ. The governor tortured him much, but the

Lord strengthened and healed him. Afterwards, the governor cut off his holy head and he received the crown of martyrdom. The people of his hometown came and took his pure body with great honor. The Lord wrought many great signs and wonders of his holy body.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, was the martyrdom of St. Hilaria (Liyarya). She was born in the city of Demliana which is near by the city of Demera, to pious Christian parents. She was chaste, and she fasted and prayed continually. When she was twelve years old, the angel of the Lord appeared to her while she was working and told her, "Why are you sitting here, and the strife is going on and the crown of martyrdom is prepared for you."

She gave all that she had to the poor and departed to Toah, and then to the city of Sarsana, district of El-Shouhada, Menoufiah. She located the governor and confessed the Lord Christ before him. He tortured her much. St. Shenousy was there. He comforted and strengthened her. The governor intensified his torture by making gashes in her body with an iron comb, and he drove red-hot iron pegs into her ears. Afterwards, he bound her along with seven thousand, six hundred martyrs, took them with him and departed. While they were on the ship, a crocodile jumped from the water and snatched away an only child from his mother, who wept and lamented for her son. This saint had compassion on her, and prayed to the Lord Christ. The crocodile returned the child alive and sound. When they came to Toah, the governor cast St. Hilaria (Liyarya) in the fire which did not harm her. Then they hacked off her members, cut off her head and cast them in the fire, thus she received the crown of martyrdom.

May her prayers be with us. Amen.

4. This day also marks, the martyrdom of Sts. Thecla and Mouji (Mugi). They were born in the city of Kerakus, and they were brought up by a God-fearing woman, who was a teacher. Once when they were crossing the river they saw the governor torturing the Christians. They were amazed from his hard-heartedness. The angel of the Lord appeared to them, and showed them the glory of the saints. They went to Alexandria, where they confessed the Lord Christ before the governor, who tortured them severely. Then, he cut off the head of St. Mouji. As for St. Thecla, he sent her to the city of Demtaw, where she was martyred, after much torture. Thus they received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

5. Today also, St. Antonius (Andona), was martyred. He was born in the city of Beba, to pious and merciful parents. When he heard about the torture of the martyrs, he went to Ansenia, and confessed the Lord Christ before the governor. The governor ordered him shut to death with arrows. When no harm came upon him, he sent him bound with St. Abimachus and two other martyrs to Alexandria. The Governor shut up the three in prison and crucified St. Antonius head downwards but he was not harmed. When the governor became weary of torturing him, he sent him to the governor of Farma. There he found St. Mina in prison, and they rejoiced for their meeting. The governor of Farma tortured Antonius, at times by combing his body with iron combs, and at other times by casting him in a cauldron filled with boiling oil, but the Lord strengthened and healed him. Afterwards, they cut off his head and thus he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

6. On this day also, St. Abakragoun, who was from El-Batanoon, was martyred. He was formerly a thief. Two young men plotted with him to steal. They went to the cell of a monk, and they found him keeping a vigil, praying. They waited until he had finished his prayer and had lain down. Nevertheless, he remained standing praying until they became weary and troubled. At dawn, the old monk went out to the thieves, and when they saw him they bowed down before him, and cast down their swords. He preached to them, taught them, and they became monks under his direction.

St. Abakragoun fought a very great fight, and devoted himself to the ascetic life. The old monk prophesied to him that he would receive the crown of martyrdom for the Name of Christ, and his saying was fulfilled later on.

Six years latter the devil incited persecution against the church, St. Abakragoun bid his spiritual father farewell and took his blessings. He went to Nakios, and confessed the Name of the Lord Christ before the governor, who was appointed by Maximianus Caesar. The governor tortured him much and then took him to Alexandria. Then he was tortured by hanging him on the mast of the ship five times, and each time the ropes broke. Then they placed him in a sack made of hide, and threw him into the sea. The angel of the Lord brought him out of the water, and commanded him to go to Samanoud. On his way he passed by the city of El-Benwan, and its people recognized him. They brought to him everyone who had an infirmity and they were healed by his prayers.

When he arrived at Samanoud, God wrought on his hands many signs. He raised, by his prayers, the daughter of Justus the Vizier from the dead. Justus, his wife, and all his soldiers, believed, and they all received the crown of martyrdom, and they were numbered, nine hundred thirty-five men. As for St. Abakragoun, they sent him back to Alexandria. After they tortured him with different kinds of tortures, they cut off his head, and he received the crown of martyrdom.

The angel of the Lord appeared to a priest from the city of Menuf, told him about the place of the body of the saint, and the priest went and took it. After the end of the time of persecution, they built a church in his name in the city of El-Batanoon, and placed his body in it.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

7. This day also, marks the martyrdom of St. Domadius El-Souriani (The Syrian). He was brought up in Persia, and learned Astrology, and wished to become Christian. One day he found a Persian monk in the market, whose name was Aughalis, who taught him the way of God and he rejoiced exceedingly. He began to preach to the people of his house, and to teach them what might facilitate them to the path of Faith. Then he was baptized, and became a monk. He performed many great deeds that the brethren were jealous of him. When he felt that, he left them and went to the monastery of St. Sergius. There he lived with a hermit for ten years during which he did not eat any cooked food. Then they ordained him a deacon.

While he was ministering with the hermit priest in the sanctuary, he saw a white dove of most beautiful appearance, which came down and descended upon the altar. Domadius thought that it was a real dove, so he made a motion with his hand to drive the dove off, for he was worried about the content of the chalice. After the service was ended, the priest asked him, "What did disturb you during the

liturgy?" Domadius told him what he had seen. The priest told him, "If you see the dove again tell me." In the next day, the priest went up to the altar to celebrate the liturgy as usual, and when Domadius saw the dove, he told the priest, "My father the dove has come." The priest looked around but he could not see anything. He bowed his head before God with weeping and prayer by day and night for a period of time, until he was worthy to see this dove. He realized that this was the sign of the Holy Spirit. He did not say anything to St. Domadius lest pride fill his heart, but he told the bishop who had ordained him a priest.

When the news of his holiness reached the patriarch of this area, he wished to visit him. When St. Domadius knew of this, he fled from there and came to the church of St. Cosmas, where he lived for a while nearby, feeding on the vegetation of the earth. God wrought on his hand many signs and miracles.

When Emperor Julian went out to fight against the Persians, he passed by the cave of this saint. They told him about the saint, so he ordered him stoned. The soldiers stoned him and his disciple, until a great heap of stones stood over the cave. Many years later, God revealed his body, a church was built for him and God manifested many wonders in it.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

8. Today also the church celebrates the commemoration of the consecration of the church of the great St. Mercurius Abu-Saifain. The biography of his life is written under the twenty- fifth day of the month of Hatour (Vol. I, P. 122).

May his blessing be with us. Amen.

9. On this day also, of the year 316 A.M., the saint Anba Palamon the anchorite, departed. He was an anchorite in the Eastern Mount in a town called El-Kasre and El-Sayad, district of Nagaa-Hammady, governorate of Quena. The Devil was weary of tempting this father, and failed to overcome him. The Devil took every chance to direct his snares against him.

One day, the man of God Anba Palamon rose up, took the work of his hand, and walked toward the countryside of Egypt. While he was walking in his way, he was weeping for his sins. The enemy of the good led him astray in the mountain, for seven days, until he was close to death from hunger and thirst, for it was summer. Finally, he collapsed, fell on the ground, wishing to die. God, the lover of mankind, wished not to leave His servant Anba Palamon fall prey to the devil, so He ordered the devil to leave him. When the old man realized that, he cried saying, "O Lord Jesus Christ help me." Instantly he heard a voice saying to him, "Do not be afraid, for the enemy can not overcome you. Rise and walk a short distance to the south. You shall find a righteous old monk whose name is Talasoun. Tell him about all that the devil has brought on you, and the grievous sin that he tempted you with in your young age. He will pray on your behalf so that your sins will be forgiven." The blessed Anba Palamon rose up, carried the works of his hands, and walked in the mount reciting Psalm fifty four, "Save me, O God, by Your name, And vindicate me by Your strength. Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers have risen up against me, And oppressors have sought after my life; They have not set God before them. Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is with those who uphold my life. He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth. I will freely sacrifice to You; I will

praise Your name, O LORD, for it is good. For He has delivered me out of all trouble; And my eye has seen its desire upon my enemies." He also recited Psalms 68, "Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered; Let those also who hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, So drive them away; As wax melts before the fire, So let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad; Let them rejoice before God; Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly." He did not cease praying until God guided him to the place of Anba Talasoun.

When Anba Talasoun saw him, he rejoiced exceedingly, greeted him, held his hand and pulled him up the rock where he lived. They prayed, then sat down talking about the greatness of God. Anba Talasoun asked Anba Palamon about how he found his way to come to visit him in this wilderness. Then Anba Palamon started crying and kneeled, saying, "Please forgive me O my beloved holy father." Anba Talasoun said, "The Lord Jesus Christ forgives to all of us all our transgressions." Anba Palamon replied saying, "I am ashamed to tell you, O my holy father, about the enormous sin that befell me by the Devil without knowing." Anba Talasoun told him, "It is written 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed.'"

When Anba Palamon saw that the blessed Anba Talasoun was comforting and encouraging him, he started to tell him, "While I was living in the monastery, I asked God to forgive me my sins. I also read in the holy books of the fathers which are inspired by the Spirit of God, that solitary life brings forth the fear of God, and God despises mockery and laughing for no reason. So I decided to live a solitary life in my small home, to not talk to anyone, and never to laugh, but to cry on my sins by day and night. The Devil often fought against me. He tried to please my heart with laughter but I did not heed him, and I never cursed. I fought for a long time through these tribulations, steadfast in the salvation of our Lord Christ until the enemy was wrath with me. One day I took the work of my hands, walked in the mount to go to sell it and buy a little of bread. After I was at a considerable distance from my abode, the Devil captivated me, and right away I lost my mind. He removed the Name of God from my mouth and I was no longer reciting the Divine sayings. The mount changed entirely before me, the sandy earth became black. When I looked before me I saw a new city, had splendid buildings, magnificent houses, rich palaces, and the city had shining armored gat which was fortified as a city of a king, surrounded by trees and gardens. When I saw it, I wondered about this city and its great distinction.

"When I inclined to enter the city thinking that its people might buy from me the work of my hands. As I came close to the walls of the city, I found a turning water wheel (sakieh), and I saw a sorrowful woman. Her face was very gloomy. Her clothes were torn and her veil covered her eyes for the sake of decency. She was standing beside the well, running the water wheel and watering the vines. When she saw me, she sat down, covered her head and said, 'Bless me O my holy father.' In hast she put down the baskets before me then said, 'Sit down and rest O my beloved father for you had become tired from what you have carried.' She sat me down beside running water, she took water in her hands, poured it on my feet, and washed them as someone taking blessings. She acted as a woman of a rich man. I asked her, 'O faithful woman, tell me, if I enter this city with the work of my hands would I find one who would buy it from me?' She said, 'Yes, they would buy it from you. Nevertheless, leave it and I will buy it from you, and I will give you all that you need. For I was married to a rich man who died recently and left me much money and herds of cattle. I pick the fruits of these enormous vines, and I do not have anyone to oversee it. I wish to have a man like you, to whom I can hand all my possessions,

to handle the way he sees fit. So if you accept, O my holy father, to come and oversee my house and to take charge of all my possessions, I will take you as a husband.' I replied, 'If the monk gets married, shame and disgrace follow him.' Then the woman told me, 'If you do not take me as a wife, be an overseer for my possessions. You supervise it during the day, for I own fields, cattle, barns, vineyards, slaves and maiden servants, and when the night falls you shall fulfill your prayers.' Then she rose up, and took me to her house. She prepared a table of different kinds of foods and placed it before me. Afterwards, she went to her room, and put on expensive and extravagant clothes, then came and embraced me. I was surprised and I held fast to the power of God almighty, and crossed myself with the sign of the cross. All that I saw immediately vanished as the smoke before the winds, and nothing of what this woman did remained.

"Instantly, I realized that all of this was the doing of the Devil who wished to make me fall in sin. I cried bitterly, and regretted much what I had done. The Lord had compassion on me with His tender mercy, and sent me His angel who comforted me, and promised the forgiveness of my sins and told me, 'Go to the saint Anba Talasoun who is nearby you, and confess to him your sins. Tell him that you have come to him so that the Lord may forgive your sins through his prayers.'" The saint Anba Talasoun prayed saying, "O my son may the Lord forgive you and myself." Subsequently, a table came down from heaven, they ate, then Anba Palamon returned to his place of worship in peace.

This Saint received the gift of healing from God. The beasts were friendly to him, he fed them by his hands, and they licked his feet. He lived naked, so God lengthened his hair until it covered his whole body. He fasted the whole week, only ate on Saturday and Sunday. He ate a half loaf of bread that God sent him with the raven. Often he ate from the vegetation of the mount. He was merciful, compassionate, and tender like His creator. When the night fell, he went down from his place of worship, to visit the prisoners, orphans, widowers, those in trouble, and the sojourners, as his strength allowed him, to help them from the price of the works of his hands.

St. Palamon was fervent in his asceticism and worship. He persevered, all the days of his life, in the daily and nightly prayers, and watching all night in ascetic worships. St. Pachomius¹⁷, the father of the monastic cenobite, was the disciple of this saint.

When St. Pachomius¹⁸ rejected paganism and adopted Christianity, he wished to live a life of asceticism and worship, so the priest of his hometown directed him to go to the great hermit Anba

¹⁷The biography of St. Pachomius is under the fourteenth day of Bashans (Vol. III, P. 430).

¹⁸When Constantine the Great was victorious, Pachomius' military detachment returned to its post in Upper Egypt, and the soldiers were released to return to their hometown. St. Pachomius arrived to his town Chinu, and met its priest and asked him to join him to the congregation of his church. Since Pachomius was pagan as his parents, the priest wrote his name among the catechumens, but God inspired the priest to accept him among the believers. He baptized him in Maundy thursday, year 301 A.D., and he was twenty years old. He grew in virtues, ministering to the believers, and loving the people, until his merits became well known. Many people gathered around him. When an epidemic spread in this village, he served them, and brought them wood from far distances. The Lord had mercy on him and saved him from the epidemic, and remained three years visiting the orphans, and the widows, ministering to their needs, keeping himself from the defilement of the world.

Palamon. Pachomius handed the care for the poor and the needy in his town to another elder monk, and went to Anba Palamon. When he arrived, he knocked the door of his cell. The old man looked from an aperture and asked him, "Who are you O brother? and what do you want?" Pachomius answered hastily, "I, O blessed father, looking for the Christ the God Whom you do worship, and I beg your fatherhood to accept me and to make me a monk." Abba Palamon told him, "O my son, monasticism is not an unrestricted labor, and the man does not come into it as he pleases, for many had adopted it not knowing its hardships, and when they adopted it they could not endure it, and you have heard about it without knowing its contention."

Pachomius replied, "Do not turn my request, and my desire, and do not put off the flame of my zeal. Accept me, be patient with me, and examine me, and afterward do whatever you see fit with me." The old man told him, "Go, O my son test your self alone for a period of time, then come back to me for I am willing to labor with you as much as my weakness allows so you might know your own self. The monastic piety needs toughness and asceticism, and I will teach you first its extent. Then you go and examine your self if you could endure the matter or not. My intent in that, God knows, is for the sake of your teaching and discipline and not for any other reason. When we, O my beloved son, knew the vanity and trickery of this world, we came to this distant place, and carried on our shoulders the cross of our Christ, not the wooden rod, but the overcoming of the flesh, subduing its lusts, and wasting its power. We spent the night praying and glorifying God. Often we vigil from sun set till the morning praying and working much with our hands, making either ropes, braid palm fibers, weave palm leaves or hair to resist sleep and to have what our bodies need and to feed the poor as the apostle said, 'remember the needy.' We entirely do not know the eating of oil, cooked food or drinking liquors. We fast till the evening of the summer days, and two days at a time during the winter then we break the fast by eating only bread and salt. We keep away the boredom by remembering death, and how close it is. We refute every pride and exaltation and guard ourselves from evil thoughts by humility and piety. By this ascetic strive that is accomplished by the grace of God, we offer our souls a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, not only once but many times. For according to the strive and how much we exert ourselves in it, we realize spiritual gifts, remembering the saying of the Lord, "Those overcame themselves, seize the Kingdom of Heaven."

When Pachomius heard from Abba Palamon these sayings that he never heard before, he was more assured by the spirit, and was encouraged on facing the hardships and endure the pains. He replied saying, "I am confident in the Lord Christ first, and by the support of your prayers second, I would be able to fulfill all the precepts, and persevere with you till death."

Pachomius then kneeled before him and kissed his hand. The old man preached him and instructed him about the importance of mortifying the flesh, the humility and contrition of the heart. He told him, "If you kept what I told you, did not go back, or vacillate between two opinions, we will rejoice with you." Then he told him, "Do you think my son that by all what I mentioned to you from asceticism, praying, watching and fasting we ask for the glory of men, no my son, it is not like that. We lead you to the works of salvation so we would be blameless, for it is written every apparent thing is light, and we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of heaven. Now go back to your abode so you might examine your self and test her for few days for what you are asking is not an easy task." Pachomius answered him saying, "I have examined myself in every thing, and I hope with the Grace of

God and your holy prayers, that your heart would be pleased toward me." The old man answered, "Well."

Anba Palamon accepted him with joy, then left him for ten days testing him in prayer, watching and fasting. Three month later and after he tested his patience, endurance, strife and will, he prayed over him, clipped off his hair, and put on him the garb of the monks (El-Eskeem) in year 304 A.D.

They persevered together on asceticism and prayer as they worked in their spare times in weaving hair and knitting clothes to gain their bare necessities, and what they spared they gave to the needy. Whenever they were vigilance and the sleep overcame them, they went out their cells and moved sand from one place to another to exhaust their bodies and remove the sleep away from them. The old man went on preaching the young man and encouraging him saying, "Be courageous O Pachomius, let your devotion to God always be flamed with the fire of love, and be before Him, in fear, humility, and persevering in praying and kneeling without boredom. Be watchful lest the tempter examine you and grief you."

It came in the biography of St. Pachomius in a manuscript in the monastery of El-Baramous the following:

One day someone knocked on the door of Sts. Palamon and Pachomius to visit them, and he spent the night with them. The pride and self-reliance had overcome that person. While they were talking about the words of God and before them was fire, for it was winter, the guest told them, "Whoever of you has strong faith in God, let him rise up, stand on this blazing embers, and recite the prayer which the Lord had taught to His disciples." When the old man St. Palamon heard that, he admonished him saying, "Cursed is the defiled devil who planted this thought in your heart. so stop talking." The guest did not heed to the words of the old man and said, "I, I would." He rose up and stood on the blazing coal while saying the Lord's prayer slowly. Then he stepped out the fire which did not touch his body with any harm, and went to his abode with arrogance. Pachomius told Anba Palamon, "God knows that I marveled about this brother who stood on the amber and his feet did not burn." The old man replied saying, "Do not be amazed for there is no doubt that this from the work of the Devil. The Lord had allowed his feet not to be burned as it is written to the crooked, God sends crooked ways. Believe me O my son, if you know the torment that is prepared for him, you will be weeping for his wretchedness."

The Devil came to this man in the form of a woman and enticed him to allow her to enter his cell. Because of the pride and the blindness of his perception, he did not realize the danger that surrounded him. The lust filled his heart toward her, and immediately the devil struck and threw him on the ground and he remained as a dead man for a day. When he regained his conscious and his faculties, he went to Abba Palamon weeping and remorseful for what he had done. He asked for their help and prayers for the devil had captivated him by his own free will. While he was talking to them, the old man and his disciple were weeping, the evil spirit suddenly came over him. He went to the mountain, and he lost his mind. He was astray for a period of time, then he threw himself in a fire which burned him. When the old man knew that, he was grieved. His disciple asked him, "How God allowed this to happen to him after he confessed and asked for repentance with tears and remorse." The Abba answered, "God with

His foreknowledge knew that the repentance of this brother was not sincere, so He allowed him to reap what he did."

While St. Pachomius was still staying with his teacher Anba Palamon, one day he was wondering in the wilderness, and he came to the village of Tabanseen. When he was praying, the angel of the Lord appeared and told him, "O Pachomius, with the order of the Lord, build a monastery in the spot that you are standing on, hence many will come to you seeking monasticism." He returned to the old man Anba Palamon and told him what the angel had told him, and his intention of fulfilling the Will of God. Anba Palamon was sad for the departure of his disciple and said, "How could you leave me after seven years you spent with me in obedience and submission and I am an old man. I see that it is easier on me to accompany you than you leaving me."

They moved south until they came to Tabanseen, and started to build a monastery. That was in the year 311 A.D., and Pachomius was thirty years old. When they finished building the monastery, Anba Palamon told his disciple Pachomius, "My beloved son I long to return to my cell and the place of my solitude. I had known that God had appointed you to establish this monastery, which will grow and be filled with God pleasing monks. You shall receive power and long suffering to manage them. As of my self, I have become old, weak, and the time of my departure had drew near. So I see that my solitary life is best for me. Nevertheless, I ask from your kindness that you do not deprive me from seeing you from now and then. I shall come to visit you as the few days left for me allow." They were separated after they prayed with each other, and they visited each other. In one of the visits of Anba Palamon, he became ill and departed to the Lord that he served and loved since his young age. Anba Pachomius took the blessings of his teacher, shrouded and buried him.

Many wonders and miracles have been attributed to this saint. An ancient church in his name is located in the town of El-Kasre and El-Sayad in a monastery named after him which had other churches in the name of the Virgin St. Mary, the archangel Michael, St. Mercurius Abu-Saifain, and St. Demianah. A great festival celebration is celebrated annually in his feast day.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Abib

- 1. The Departure of the Upright St. Joseph, the Carpenter.*
- 2. The Departure of St. Timothy, 22nd Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, the righteous man St. Joseph, the carpenter, who was worthy to be called the father of Christ in the flesh, departed at a good old age. The Holy Gospel bore witness that he was a righteous man, and God chose him to be betrothed to the all-pure, our lady, the Virgin St. Mary. When he finished his course, his strife, his toil in the journey together with the Lord and the Virgin Lady from Bethlehem to the land of Egypt, and the tribulations that befell him from the Jews, he departed in peace. When the time came for him to depart from this world, to the world of the living, the Lord Christ was present at his departure, and laid His hand upon his eyes. He extended his arms, and delivered up his soul, and was buried in the tomb of his father Jacob. All the days of his life were one

hundred and eleven years; forty years before his marriage, fifty-two years married, and nineteen years a widow. His departure was in the sixteenth year of the advent of the Lord Christ.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 101 A.M. (July 20th, 385 A.D.), St. Timothy, 22nd Pope of Alexandria, departed. This saint was enthroned in the seventeenth of Baramhat, 95 A.M. (March 14th, 379 A.D.). He shepherded the flock of Christ with the best of care, and guarded them from the Arian wolves. In the sixth year of his papacy, Emperor Theodosius the Great reigned, who ordered the assembly of the Ecumenical Council at Constantinople to judge Macedonius the enemy of the Holy Spirit. This Pope presided over this council, and he disputed with Macedonius, Sabilius, and Apolinarius and refuted their erroneous council as it is mentioned in the first day of Amshir (Vol II, P. 247).

This saint took great care concerning the buildings of the churches in Alexandria and elsewhere. He was knowledgeable and eloquent, and he left many sayings refuting the heresy of the Arians. He remained on the Chair for six years, four months and six days, then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Abib

1. *The Consecration of the Church of St. Abba Fam.*

2. *The Martyrdom of St. Apamon (Abba Amoun).*

1. On this day, was the consecration of the church of St. Abba Fam¹⁹.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Apamon (Abba Amoun), who was from the city of Tarnut, was martyred. This saint came to Upper Egypt, and he saw the tortures which were being inflicted by the infidels upon the holy martyrs. He went to Arianus, the governor of Ansena (Antioe), and confessed the Lord Christ before him. Arianus tortured him severely, by beating him, combing him by iron combs, and drove sharp long nails through his body. The Lord Christ strengthened and healed him.

Then, arianus sent him to Alexandria. The angel of the Lord appeared to him, encouraged, and strengthened him. There he was tortured much and many were martyred because of him. Among them was a virgin, whose name was Theophila, she came and stood up before the governor, confessed the Lord Christ, and admonished him for his worship of the idols. He cast her in the fire but the Lord saved her, and finally they cut off her head as they cut also the head of St. Apamon.

May there prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

¹⁹His biography is mentioned under the 27th of Tubah (Vol.II, P. 240), and his commemoration is on the first of Baounah (Vol.IV, P. 459).

The Twenty-Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Abib

The Departure of St. Mary Magdalene

On this day, St. Mary Magdalene, departed. The Lord Christ cast seven demons out of her, she followed Him, and she served Him during His passion, crucifixion, death, and burial. She came early with the other Mary to the sepulcher, and saw the stone had been rolled back and the angel was sitting on it. When they became frightened the angel told them, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen." (Matthew 28:1-7) The savior appeared to her and told her, "Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John 20-17)

She came and told the disciples about the resurrection of the Lord, and after the ascension of the Lord, she remained ministering to the disciples. She received the gifts of the Spirit of Comfort, fulfilling the prophesy of Joel the prophet which said, "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." (Joel 2:28)

This saint preached with the disciples, and brought back many women to the Faith of Christ. The apostles ordained her a deaconess, to teach the women, and to assist in their baptism. She received many insults and humiliation from the Jews, and she departed in peace while she was still ministering unto the disciples.

May her prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Abib

- 1. The Commemoration of the Translocation of the Relics of St. Andrew, the Apostle.*
- 2. The Martyrdom of St. Ouarshenoufa (Warshenofius).*

1. On this day, the church commemorates the relocation of the relics of St. Andrew the apostle from Syria to Constantinople, at the order of the righteous emperor Constantine. He built for his name a beautiful altar and consecrated it on this day.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Ouarshenoufa (Warshenofius) was martyred. He was well learned, righteous, and pious. When they asked him to become a bishop, he fled to the city of Tahmoun (Galgamoun, or Dalgamoun), and spent the night there with two God loving, Christian brothers. The Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and told him to go to the governor, and confess Christ before him. When he woke up, he told the two brothers about the vision. They all agreed to go together to go to the governor. They came to the governor, confessed the Name of Christ before him, and he tortured them severely. Then he took them with him to Sanhour where he continued to torture them. Then he took them to the city

of Sa, gathered all the confessors and read to them the edict of the emperor to worship the idols. St. Ouarshenoufa jumped and took the emperor's edict and tore it to pieces. The governor was enraged and ordered him to be thrown in a fiery furnace and thus he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever, Amen.

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Abib

The Martyrdom of Sts. Mercurius and Ephraem

On this day, the two honorable Sts. Mercurius and Ephraem (Ephraim) were martyred. These saints were loving brethren in the spirit, and kinsmen in the flesh, and they were born in the city of Akhmim. They became monks in one of the monasteries of Upper Egypt, and they remained their for twenty year.

Satan, the enemy of good, brought tribulation upon the Orthodox Church, and the followers of Arius entered the churches to offer the sacrifices upon the altars of the Orthodox. These two saints rose up and came to the church and cast aside the bread and wine which the Arians had laid on the alter and said, "He who has not been baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity is only fit to offer up an offering on the altar of idols." The Arians seized the saints and beat them very severely, until they delivered their souls into the hand of the Lord and they received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Blessed Month of Misra The First Day

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Apoli, Son of Justus.*
2. *The Departure of St. Kyrillos V (Cyril), 112th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, St. Apoli (Aboli), son of Justus, son of Emperor Nomarius, was martyred. This Saint was the crown prince of the Roman empire. He was away in war, and when he returned to Antioch, he found Diocletian had already established the pagan worship of idols. Although Apoli was capable of killing him and taking the empire over from him, he preferred the heavenly everlasting kingdom. St. Apoli came forward, and confessed Christ before Diocletian. In the beginning, Diocletian handled him gently, but when he failed to attract him to the worship of the idols, he banished him along with his father, Justus²⁰, and his mother, Theoclia²¹ to the city of Alexandria. He wrote to Armanius, its governor, to persuade them to offer sacrifice to the gods, and if they refuse, to separate them from each other.

Armanius, knowing their royal positions, sent Justus (the father) to Ansena (Antioe), his wife to the city of Sa, and Apoli, their son, to Basta. He also left to each of them one of their servants to minister unto them. When Apoli arrived in the city of Basta, he confessed Christ before its governor who tortured him severely. He beat him, burned him, and dismembered him. When the governor saw that many became Christians because of what they saw from the steadfastness of the Saint to the tortures, and that the Lord was healing him from his wounds, he ordered to cut off his holy head, and thus received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 1643 A.M. (August 7, 1927 A.D.) the righteous and honorable father Pope Kyrillos V, 112th Pope of Alexandria, departed. This father was born in the city of Tezment, governorate of Beni-Swaif in 1831 A.D. His pious parents named him John, brought him up well, and raised him up in the Christian morals. He had a strong desire to study the Holy Bible and the biography of the saints.

When he was 12 years old, in 1843 A.D., he was ordained a deacon and carried the deaconate duties ardently. Because he was inclined at a young age to the life of asceticism, and solitary life, he left the world, and went to St. Mary's monastery (Known by El-Sourian) in Wadi El-Natrun. There he became a disciple to the spiritual elder, the hegumen, Fr. Girgis El-Far, the father of confession of the monks. When John's father discovered where he was, he came to the monastery and brought him back, but because of his love for the ascetic life, he did not stay long. He returned to the wilderness, and became a monk at El-Baramous monastery in the year 1850 A.D. He excelled in his monastic duties and

²⁰His commemoration is on the 10th day of Amshir (Vol. II, P. 261).

²¹Her commemoration is on the 11th day of Bashans (Vol. III, P. 419).

became known for his asceticism, purity, and gentleness, and became a good paragon to the other monks. He was ordained a priest in 1851 A.D., then promoted to Hegumen (Archpriest) in 1852 A.D. The number of monks in the monastery then was small and its income was very little. This Father worked hard in transcribing and selling books to churches. The income was used to buy the necessities of the monks, such as food and clothing.

His virtues of knowledge, righteousness, and gentleness became well known. He was ordained a Patriarch, in the 23rd of Babah, 1591 A.M. (November 1st, 1874 A.D.) in a venerable celebration. He directed his attention to building churches, renovating monasteries, being merciful to the poor, and caring for the affairs of the monks. In 1892 A.D., he chose to be exiled, rather than to squander the properties of the monasteries. Anba Youanis, Metropolitan of El-Behara, Menoufia, and then the deputy of the See of St. Mark, was also exiled with him. Afterwards, both returned from their exile with much respect and honor.

During his papacy the church was adorned by knowledgeable and holy men: among them was the great father, the man of purity, meekness, and charity, *Anba Abraam, Bishop of El-Fayoum*²². This bishop's virtues had spread vastly, and his almsgiving to the poor had reached a point where he did not save any money. All the donations he received from the benevolent, he gave to the poor and needy. He also performed many wonders such as healing the sick and casting out evil spirits.

Another was the well learned, great theologian and skillful orator, the *Hegumen (Archpriest) Philotheos Ibrahim El-Tantawy*, rector of the great St. Mark Church. Also, the well learned father the honorable and the ascetic monk the Hegumen *Fr. Abdel Messih Saleeb El-Baramousy*, who was well educated in Coptic, Ethiopian, Greek, and Syrian languages. He also knew some French and English. He was characterized with immeasurable patience in research and examining religious books. In return, he left valuable publications which speak of his prominence.

Pope Kyrillos appointed *the late Habib Girgis*, who was the dean of the theological seminary, to be his deacon. He dedicated his life to the seminary and its improvement. Mr. Girgis assisted the Pope in expanding its buildings in Mahmasha. Pope Kyrillos often visited the seminary and blessed its students. This deacon was a skillful speaker. He accompanied the Pope in his pastoral visits to Upper Egypt and Sudan. He translated many religious books from foreign languages to Arabic and published *El-Karma periodical*, to spread the facts of the faith in a positive way. He published many books, among them were: *The Seven Sacraments of the Church, The Consoler of the Faithful, The Mystery of Piety*, and many others. He taught and nurtured many generations of clerical men who flourished in the church and filled it with their sermons and religious publications.

The Pope gave the utmost of his efforts to lift his flock to the highest spiritual level, as he was prudent in printing the church books. He departed in peace, after spending fifty-two years, nine months and six days on the Patriarchal chair.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

²²His biography is mentioned under the third day of Baounah (Vol. IV, P. 464).

The Second Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Departure of St. Pa'esa (Athanasia)

On this day, St. Pa'esa, departed. She was born in Menouf, to pious and rich parents. When her parents died, she turned her house into a shelter for the poor and the sojourner. She accepted everyone that came to her fulfilling their every need until she ran out of money. Evil people gathered around her, and turned her mind to the ungodly way. She turned her home into a house of prostitution. When this news reached the elders of Shiheet, they sorrowed for her with great sorrow. The elders called upon St. John, the Short, and asked him to go to her, as an act of mercy, and to aid her in saving her soul, in turn for the good that she had done for them.

The saint obeyed the elders and asked them to support him with their prayers. When St. John came to where she lived, he asked her maid to announce his presence. When the maid informed her, Pa'esa adorned herself, and called him in. As he was walking, he was saying, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil. For thou art with me." (Ps. 23:4) When he sat down, he looked to her and said, "Why did you belittle the Lord Christ, and do this evil deed?" She trembled, and her heart was melting from the words of the Saint who bent his head and started weeping. She asked him, "Why do you weep?" He answered, "Because I see the devils playing on your face, and therefore I weep for you." She asked him, "Is there any repentance for me?" He replied, "Yes, but not in this place." She said to him, "Take me wherever you wish."

Then he took her to one of the convents close by the wilderness of Shiheet. On their way it became dark. St. John told her to sleep in one place, while he slept far away from her. When he stood up to pray the midnight prayer, he saw a pillar of light coming down from heaven to earth, and the angels of God were carrying the Soul of Pa'esa. When he approached her, he found that she had departed. Then he knelt down and prayed fervently, with tears, asking God to reveal to him concerning her fate. He heard a voice saying, "Her repentance was accepted in the moment that she repented." After the saint had buried her, he returned to the Elders and told them what had happened. They all glorified the Lord who accepts the repentants and forgive their sins.

May her prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Third Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Relocation of the Body of St. Simon (Simeon) the Stylite to the city of Antioch.*
2. *The Departure of Pope Abriamus (Primus), Fifth Patriarch of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, St. Simeon (Simon) the Stylite, departed. He was from Syria and he had shepherded his father's flocks since he was young. He regularly attended the church. The Grace of God moved him and he came to one of the monasteries, where he stayed and worshiped God in great asceticism. He exerted himself with much fasting and excessive thirst. Then he tied a rope around his loins until it

pierced his flesh, and a repulsive smell came out of him. When the other monks were offended by his smell, he left the monastery and came to a pit where he dwelt for a short time. The abbot of the monastery saw in a vision, as someone was telling him, "Why did you send away My servant Simon? Seek him, and bring him back," as if the voice was rebuking them for his dismissal from the monastery. The abbot informed the brethren of this vision and they became troubled and they began to look for St. Simeon until they found him in the pit, without food or water. They confessed to him their transgression, asked for his forgiveness, and brought him back to the monastery. When they started to exalt him, he felt that he was unworthy, so he left the monastery secretly, and came to a certain rock, where he lived for sixty days without sleeping. Afterwards, the Angel of the Lord came to him, comforted him, and told him that God had called him for the salvation of many souls. Then he dwelt over a pillar, thirty cubits in height, for fifteen years. He performed many signs and great wonders, and preached to all those who came to him.

His father sought him, but did not find him and he died without seeing him. His mother, after a long time, found out about him, so she came to him where he was staying on that pillar. There she wept greatly, then she slept under that pillar. The Saint asked the Lord Christ to have mercy on her. His mother died while she was sleeping, and they buried her under the pillar.

Satan became envious of the saint for all his good deeds, and moved against him. He smote him in one of his legs with ulcerations which forced him to use the other leg for many years, until the diseased leg rotted, and worms dropped from it under the pillar. A chief of a band of thieves came to him and slept under his pillar. The Saint prayed to Christ on his behalf, and he stayed for a few days, and died. The Saint asked Christ to supply him with water, and a spring of water sprang up at the foot of the pillar. Then he moved to a taller pillar, where he stayed on top for thirty years. After he completed forty-eight years in worshipping, he departed to the Lord. He preached many people, taught them, and brought many back to the knowledge of Christ.

When the patriarch of Antioch heard about his departure from this world, he came to him and took his body to Antioch in great veneration.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, in the year 116 A.D., Pope Aprimos (Primus), Fifth Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. He was baptized by St. Mark the Apostle. He was one of the three who were ordained priests by St. Mark the Apostle, along with Bishop Anianus, the Second Patriarch. Pope Aprimos was ascetic, pious, and filled with good deeds. He was ordained to the apostolic chair on the 22nd of Baounah (June 16th, 106 A.D.). During his papacy, the church was in peace and tranquility.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Departure of Hezekiah the King.*
2. *The Consecration of the Church of the Great St. Anthony (Antonios).*

1. On this day, the righteous King Hezekiah son of Ahaz the King, departed. He was of the seed of David, of the tribe of Judah. There was no king appointed over the children of Israel, like this righteous man, after David. The other kings worshipped the idols and built altars for them. After becoming King, Hezekiah destroyed the idols, and demolished their altars, therefore God rewarded him for more than what he had done. In the fourteenth year of his kingdom, Sennacherib, King of Persia, came and besieged Jerusalem. He was a great and very powerful king, and all the other kings in his time were afraid of him. Hezekiah also feared him, and sent him large sums of money, but Sennacherib was not satisfied with them. Instead, he threatened and intimidated Hezekiah, and he reviled, with his unclean tongue, God, the Glorious and Most High, saying, "Do not be deceived by your God that you are depending on him saying, 'Do not deliver Jerusalem to the hands of King of Persia.'" Then Hezekiah wept, rent his garments, and he put on hair sackcloth, and went into the House of the Lord and prayed saying, "O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands; wood and stone. Therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone." (2 Kings 19:15-19) Then King Hezekiah sent a letter to Isaiah the Prophet to inform him about what Sennacherib had said and asked him to pray for him. Isaiah answered and told him that God would strengthen his heart and God will do to Sennacherib an action, the like of which has never been heard of in all the earth. That night, the angel of the Lord went forth, and slew one hundred eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. The rest were conquered and returned to their countries. When Sennacherib went to worship in the house of his gods, his sons slew him with the sword and killed him. (2 Kings 19:35-37) Thus Hezekiah escaped his hands and glorified God.

In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the Prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.'" Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD. Then it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Return and tell Hezekiah ... I will add to your days fifteen years ... " Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What is the sign that the LORD will heal me ... " Then Isaiah said, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, ... the shadow of the sun will be brought ten degrees backward ... " (2 Kings 20:1-11)

All the kings feared him and they brought tribute to him, because they knew that God was with him. King Hezekiah reigned for twenty-nine years and all the days of his life were fifty-four years when he

departed in peace. His prayer which he uttered through the Holy Spirit when he was healed of his sickness is written in the book of Isaiah (38:10-20).

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, was the consecration of the Church of the great St. Anthony (Antonios).

May his blessing be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Departure of St. John the Soldier

On this day, the devout St. John the Soldier, departed. He was born to pious Christian parents. When he grew up, he joined the army of the Infidel Emperor Julian. Julian had sent him with other soldiers to afflict the Christians where ever they went. He pretended that he was in agreement with his fellow soldiers in their persecution of the Christians but in fact he was defending them. He treated the Christians well, fulfilling their needs. He also used to fast, and pray continually and give alms. He lived a life like unto the lives of the righteous, until he departed in peace. God manifested many miracles from his grave.

May his blessing be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Martyrdom of St. Julietta

On this day, St. Julietta was martyred. She was born in the city of Caesaria, in Cappadocia, to rich Christian parents. She inherited great wealth from them. An oppressor defrauded her from her wealth by bribing false witnesses against her. When that evil man knew that she wished to inform against him, and expose his lies and extortion, he informed the governor of Cappadocia that she was Christian. She said within herself that the temporal wealth of this world is nothing to make her lose herself for, but if she gain the eternal life to come, no one would be able to take it from her. When she came before the governor, she confessed the name of Christ. The governor cast her in fire, and she delivered up her pure spirit in the hands of the Lord. She received instead of her temporal possessions, the eternal life and St. Basil the Great praised her immensely.

May her prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

- 1. The Annunciation of St. Joachim with the Birth of the Virgin Mary.*
- 2. The Departure of St. Timothy II (Timotheos), 26th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, God sent His honorable angel Gabriel to announce to St. Joachim²³ of the birth of the Virgin, the mother of the incarnated God. This righteous man and his wife St. Anna (Hannah) were stricken in years and had no children for Anna was barren. The children of Israel used to insult him because he had not begotten a son. Because of this, these two saints were sad, and prayed continually, and entreated God by day and by night. They vowed that the child they would beget would be made a steward for the temple.

While St. Joachim was praying over the mountain, he fell into a deep sleep and Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, appeared to him and announced to him that his wife Anna would conceive and bear a child, that would delight his eyes and please his heart; and likewise all the world would rejoice and be glad. When he woke from his sleep, he came to his house, and told his wife about the vision, which she believed. Anna conceived forthwith, and brought forth our Lady, the Virgin Mary, and St. Anna became more honorable than all the women of the world.

May her intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 193 A.M. (July 31, 477 A.D.) St. Timothy II, the twenty-sixth Pope of the See of St. Mark, departed. This father was chosen for the Patriarchate after the departure of the striving father Pope Dioscorus on the third of Babah, 172 A.M. (October 1, 455 A.D.). He suffered many hardships for the sake of preserving the Orthodox faith. Emperor Leo, the Great, banished him to the island of Gagra (Gangra), in Paphlognia (Pavlogonia), where he was detained for seven years until he was returned by Emperor Leo, the Less, with great honor. He spent the rest of his days in establishing the faithful in the Orthodox faith. He departed in peace after he spent twenty-one years and ten months on the throne of St. Mark.

May his blessings be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

- 1. The Martyrdom of the Sts. Lazarus, Salomi, His Wife, and Their Children.*
- 2. The Confession of St. Peter, the Apostle, that Christ is the Son of the Living God.*

1. On this day, the nine saints: Lazarus the Elder, his wife Salomi, and their children; Abeem (Animo), Antonius, Hosea, Lazarus, Aniana, Semuna, and Marcolus, were martyred. Lazarus was one of the

²³The departure of this saint is under the seventh day of Baramoudah (Vol. III, P. 359).

teachers of the Jewish Law. His father was one of the Seventy Elders who translated the Torah by the order of Ptolemy, King of Egypt. This just man taught his children the Law of Moses.

When Antiochus, King of Rome, reigned over the Syrian land, he besieged Jerusalem and afflicted the Jewish nation with cruelty. He compelled them to break the Law of their fathers and to eat what was forbidden them such as pork meat and the like. Many of them feared his might and obeyed him. Nevertheless, these righteous persisted on keeping the Law, which had been given to them by God. Antiochus tortured them severely, by flogging them, crucifying, burning, and plowing their bodies with metal combs. The righteous woman Salomi, encouraged them until they had fulfilled their martyrdom. Then, she also cast herself in the fire without waiting for them to throw her into it. Thus, they received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the church celebrates the confession of St. Peter, the Apostle, that "Christ is the Son of the living God." When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven, and I also say to you that you are Peter and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven." Then He commanded his disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ. (Matthew 16:13-20)

May the Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Martyrdom of St. Ari, the Priest of Shatanouf

On this day, St. Ari (Ori), the priest of Shatanouf, was martyred. He was exceedingly merciful, pure in soul and body, to the extent that he was worthy to foretell future things by the Divine Inspiration. When the governor of Nakios, heard about him, he had the Saint brought before him and ordered the Saint to offer incense to the idols. When St. Ari refused, the governor tortured him much, then sent him to Alexandria, where he was also severely tormented with excruciating tortures. Then they cast him in prison, where God wrought many miracles on his hands. His news spread and many came to him from everywhere. When the governor heard this, he ordered him beheaded. Thus he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Tenth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Matra.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Pigebs (Bekhebs).*

1. On this day, St. Matra was martyred during the papacy of Pope Demetrius, the twelfth patriarch of Alexandria, and in the days of Emperor Decius. When this Saint heard the imperial Edict read ordering the worship of idols, he went and took the arm of the statue of the idol Apollo, which was made of pure gold. He cut it in pieces, and gave them to the poor. When they searched for the idol's arm, and could not find it, they seized many because of it. St. Matra came forward and told them, "I am he who took it." They tortured him much, and then cast him into the fire, but the angel of the Lord saved him from it. Then they cut off his hands and his feet and crucified him on a tree, head downwards. A blind man came and took some of the blood that was dripping from the Saint's mouth and smeared his eyes with it, and he regained his sight. Afterwards, the Saint was beheaded, and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Pigebs (Bekhebs)²⁴ was martyred. He was from the city of Ashmoun-Tanah. He was a soldier under the command of prince Antiochus. When the prince knew that he was Christian, he had him brought along with Anba Klog, the bishop, Anba Nehro, who was from Tersa and Anba Phillip, and asked them about their faith. They confessed that they were Christian. He tortured them severely.

Later on he bound St. Pigebs and sent him with others to the Baramon. They spent many days in the ship without eating or drinking. When they arrived to the Baramon, they tortured St. Pigebs severely, and finally they hacked his body in pieces with a cleaver, thus he received the crown of martyrdom. A believing man from the Baramon came and took St. Pigebs body and sent it to his hometown Ashmoun-Tanah. Ninety-five others received the crown of martyrdom along with the Saint.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Eleventh Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Departure of St. Moisis, Bishop of Ouseem

On this day, the holy father Anba Moisis (Moses), Bishop of Ouseem, departed. He was pure and chaste from a young age. He learned the church subjects, and was ordained a deacon. Then he went to the desert of Scetis and became a monk, under the direction of a righteous man. Anba Moisis served him for eighteen years, devoting himself to praying and fasting, and was adorned with humility and love. As the report of his virtues noised throughout, he was ordained a bishop for Ouseem after Anba

²⁴It means the Lamp.

Gamoul. He pursued a good, virtuous life, increased in righteousness, and he shepherded the flock of Christ with the best of care. He was ascetic and did not own anything all his life. He suffered, along with Pope Michael, 46th Patriarch of Alexandria, many tribulations. God wrought many signs and miracles on his hands. Often, Anba Moisis foretold incidents before their occurrences. For example, once he told Anba Tadros, Bishop of Misr, that the King would not return to his kingdom, and it was so.

When he completed his strife and was in a good old age, he had a short illness. When he knew the time of his departure, he called his congregation, blessed them, commended them, and asked them to pray for him. They all wept and asked him to remember them before Christ. He stretched out his hand, prayed, bid them farewell and departed in peace. He remained in his chair for more than twenty years. *May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.*

The Twelfth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Commemoration of the Honorable Archangel Michael.*
2. *The Reign of the Righteous Emperor Constantine, the Great.*

1. On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the honorable Archangel Michael. With his supplications God brings the water of the Nile up to its measure and blesses the fruits of the earth. *May his intercession be with us. Amen.*

2. On this day also, is the commemoration of the enthronement of the Righteous Emperor Constantine the Great, over the city of Rome. When he reigned over Byzantium, succeeding his father Constantius Chlorus in the year 306 A.D., he abolished the injustice throughout the kingdom. His fairness and fame spread throughout the Empire. The nobles of Rome asked him to come and save them from the injustice of Maximianus. He sorrowed for their misfortune, and he pondered in what way he could deliver them. The sign of the cross appeared to him, to which he adhered. Constantine went and fought against Maximianus and defeated him. While Maximianus was retreating, crossing the bridge over the Tiber River, the bridge broke and he perished, drowning along with his soldiers. That was in the seventh year of the reign of Emperor Constantine. When Emperor Constantine entered Rome, all its nobles and people welcomed him in a grand festival, and with great joy. They celebrated his victory for seven successive days. The poets of Rome and its orators praised the Honorable Cross, describing it as the savior of their city and the supporter of their Emperor.

The account of the appearance of the Cross to Emperor Constantine and his victory over Maximianus is written under the commemoration of the departure of this righteous Emperor, which is on the twenty-eighth day of the month of Baramhat (Vol. III, P. 340). *Glory be to our God forever. Amen.*

The Thirteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Feast of Transfiguration of Our Lord on Mount Tabor

On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor. The disciples, Peter, James and John, were with Him, and about whom the Lord said, " there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." (Mt. 16:28) He fulfilled His promise, for six days later, He took His three disciples, up on a high mountain, where He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them talking to the Lord.

The Lord wants to teach us that He is the Lord of Moses whom He can raise from the dead, and that He is the God of Elijah whom He can bring back from heaven.

St. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here, if you wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." This indicated the weakness of Peter for he thought that the Lord needed something to cover Him from the sun. It also indicated his good character, for he did not think of himself or the other disciples. We should not marvel at the lack of knowledge of the disciples, for they were not yet perfected. While Peter was still speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, so that Peter would know that Jesus was not in need of tabernacles made by hands. Suddenly a voice came out of the cloud saying, "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him." (Mt. 17:1-8) When the disciples heard the voice, they fell on their faces and were exceedingly afraid. Jesus came and touched them with His blessed hand, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but the Lord Jesus alone.

To Him is the Glory forever. Amen.

The Fourteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Commemoration of the Great Sign, the Lord had Manifested During the Papacy of St. Theophilus

On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the great miracle which God performed during the papacy of St. Theophilus²⁵, the twenty-third pope of Alexandria. There was in the city of Alexandria, a Jewish man whose name was Philexinos. He was very rich, feared God and practiced the Law of Moses. There was also in the city two poor Christian men, one of them blasphemed saying, "Why do we worship Christ and remain poor, while this Jewish man Philexinos is very rich?" The other

²⁵His commemoration is on the eighteenth day of the month of Babah (Vol. I, P. 64).

man answered him saying, "The possessions of this world are nothing before God, for if it was, He would not give it to the worshippers of idols, adulterers, thieves, and murderers. The prophets were poor and persecuted, as also the apostles were, and the Lord said, 'the least of these my brethren'" (Matthew 25:40). Satan, the enemy of good, would not permit that man to accept any of the words of his friend. The rebellious friend went to Philexinos the Jew and asked him to accept him as his servant. Philexinos replied, "It is not lawful for me to employ anyone unless he believes in my faith, but if you want alms, I can give some to you." This miserable man replied, "Take me to your house, and I will adopt your faith and I will do whatsoever you command me."

Philexinos took him to the synagogue and the chief of the Jews asked him before all the Jewish congregation saying, "Is it true that you have denied your Christ and become a Jew like us?" He replied, "Yes," and that debased man rejected Christ the Lord before the Jewish congregation. Thus to poverty in money he added poverty in Faith. Then the chief of the Jews commanded them to make for him a cross of wood. They gave him a reed, on the top of which was a sponge full of vinegar, and a spear. Then they said to him, "Spit upon this cross, offer to him this vinegar, and pierce the cross with this spear and say, 'I pierce you O Christ.'" That debased man did everything as they commanded him. When he pierced the honorable cross with his sinful hand, blood and water flowed forth, and ran down on the ground. Then this apostate dropped dead instantly, and dried up like a rock.

Great fear fell upon all those who were present, many of them believed and cried, saying, "One is the Lord God of the Christians, and we believe in Him." Then they took the blood, and anointed their faces and eyes with it. Philexinos took also some of the blood and sprinkled it on his daughter who was born blind, and she saw straightway. He believed as well as his household, and many others of the Jews.

Afterwards, they informed Pope Theophilus about this incident. He took Abba Kyrellos (Pope Kyrellos I²⁶), many of the priests and people, and went to the synagogue of the Jews, where he saw the cross, the blood and water. The Pope took the blood and water, blessed himself and also blessed the people. He wiped the blood from the floor, and laid it in a vessel for blessing. He ordered the wooden cross carried to the church. Afterwards those present confessed their faith before the Pope who baptized them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and blessed them. Then they went to their homes giving thanks to the Lord Christ and glorifying his Holy Name.

Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Commemoration of the Departure of St. Mary Known as Marina, the Ascetic

On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the departure of the nun St. Marina, who was the daughter of a very rich Christian man. Her name was Mariam, and her mother died when she was a little girl. Her father raised her, and brought her up well. When he wanted to give her in marriage, and

²⁶His biography is mentioned under the third day of the month of Abib (Vol. IV, P.).

to go himself and become a monk in one of the monasteries, she told him, "O my Father, why would you save your own soul, and destroy mine?" He answered saying, "What shall I do with you? You are a woman." She told him, "I will take off my woman's dress and will put on the garb of a man." She rose up straightway, shaved off the hair on her head and put on the garb of a man. When her father saw her strong determination and persistent desire, he gave all his possessions to the poor, keeping only a very little for himself, and he called her Marina instead of Mariam (Mary).

Then he went to one of the monasteries, and lived in one of the cells with his daughter, for ten years, fighting the spiritual fight. Then her father, who was an old man, died. St. Marina was left by herself, and she doubled her fasting, prayers and increased her asceticism. No one knew that she was a woman, and they attributed her soft voice to her intense asceticism and vigilant prayers.

Once the abbot of the monastery sent her, together with three monks, to the city on certain business of the monastery, and they lodged in an inn. That same night, one of the king's soldiers lodged in that inn, and he saw the daughter of the owner of the inn, and he defiled her virginity. He instructed her to tell her father, "that the young monk, Father Marina, did that to me." When she had conceived, and her father knew that, he asked her and she answered saying, "that it was the young monk, abba Marina, who did that to me." Her father then became angry, went to the monastery and began to curse and insult the monks. The Abbot met with him, comforted and calmed him down and then sent him away. The Abbot then called this saint and rebuked her much. When she knew what had happened, she wept and bowed down and said, "I am young, I have sinned, forgive me O my Father." The Abbot was furious with her, and cast her out of the monastery. She dwelt outside of the monastery for a long time. When the daughter of the inn keeper had the baby, her father took him to St. Marina, set him down before her and left. She took the child, moved among the surrounding shepherds and nursed him with milk. She increased her fasting and prayers for the three years, that she was expelled from the monastery. The monks felt pity upon her and asked the Abbot to readmit her. The Abbot consented to their request and readmitted her to the monastery after he had laid heavy penalties and severe rules upon the Saint. She performed very hard labors, such as cooking, cleaning, and watering, as well as her regular monastic duties.

When the child grew, he became a monk. After St. Marina had completed forty years, she fell ill for three days then departed in peace. The Abbot ordered to take off her old ragged clothes and dress her with new ones prior to carrying her to the place of praying. When they removed her clothing, and found that she was a woman, they all shouted out saying, "God have mercy." They informed the Abbot who came, marvelled, and wept because of what he had done to her. The Abbot then called the inn keeper and told him that the monk Marina was a woman not a man. The inn keeper went to where her body was and wept much. After they prayed over her body, they came forward to be blessed from her body. One of the monks had sight only in one eye, he put his face close to her body and immediately he gained sight in his blind eye. After she was buried, God allowed a devil to torment the inn keeper's daughter and the soldier, her friend, and brought them to where the Saint was buried and both confessed their iniquity in front of everyone. God manifested innumerable miracles through her blessed body.

May her prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Sixteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Assumption of the Body of the Pure Virgin St. Mary.*
2. *The Departure of St. Mattias IV (Mattheos), 102nd Patriarch of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, was the assumption of the body of our pure Lady St. Mary, the Mother of God. While she was keeping vigil, praying in the Holy Sepulchre, and waiting for the happy minute of her liberation from the bonds of the flesh, the Holy Spirit informed her of her forthcoming departure from this vain world. When the time drew near, the disciples and the virgins of the Mt. of Olives (Zeitun) came and the Lady was lying on her bed. Our Lord, surrounded by thousands and thousands of angels, came to Her. He consoled her, and announced her with the everlasting joy which was prepared for Her. She was happy, and she stretched out her hands, blessed the Disciples, and the Virgins. Then, she delivered up her pure soul in the hand of her Son and God, Jesus Christ, Who ascended her to the higher habitations. As of the pure body, they shrouded it and carried it to Gethsemane.

On their way, some of the Jews blocked the way in the face of the disciples to prevent the burial. One of them seized the coffin. His hands were separated from his body, and remained hanging until he believed and repented for his mischievous deed. With the prayers of the holy disciples, his hands were reattached to his body as they had been before.

St. Thomas was absent at the time of St. Mary's departure, but he came after the burial. On his way back to Jerusalem, St. Thomas saw angels carrying St. Mary's pure body and ascending with it to heaven, and one of the angels said to him, "Hurry and kiss the pure body of St. Mary." When he arrived to the disciples, they informed him about St. Mary's departure. He told them, "I will not believe, unless I see her body, as you all know how I did doubt the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ before." They took him to the tomb, to uncover the body but they did not find it, and they were perplexed and amazed. St. Thomas told them how he saw the pure body ascending to heaven, carried by angels.

The Holy Spirit then told them, "The Lord did not Will to leave Her Holy body on earth." The Lord had promised his pure apostles that they would see her in flesh another time. They were waiting for the fulfillment of this truthful promise, until the sixteenth day of the month of Misra, when the promise of seeing her was fulfilled. They saw her sitting on the right hand of her Son and her Lord, surrounded by the angelic Host, as David prophesied and said, "At your right hand stands the queen." (Psalm 45:9)

St. Mary's life on earth was sixty years. She spent twelve years of them in the temple, thirty years in the house of the righteous St. Joseph, and fourteen years in the care of St. John the Evangelist, as the Lord commanded her saying, "Woman behold your Son," and to St. John, "Behold your Mother."
May Her intercession be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 1391 A.M. (August 15, 1675 A.D.) Pope Mattias IV (Mattheos), 102nd Patriarch, departed. He was known as Matta El-Meeri. This father was born to pious Christian parents, who were righteous, merciful and benevolent. They were of the rich people of the city of

Meer, Ashmonain district, the diocese of Qousqam, which is known as El-Mouharaq. They had vast farm land and live-stock. They had three boys, one of them was this righteous Father. He was the closest to his parents, and his name was Guirguis. They raised him with prudence, and brought him up with good manners and decency. They never asked him, as they did his brothers, to work on the farm, or attend to the live-stock. Instead he dedicated himself to reading and learning until he became more informed about the Holy books than his contemporaries. He was able to explain and interpret their meanings to those who had difficulties with them.

When he grew up, he renounced this vain world and went to the monastery of St. Mary known as "El-Baramos" in the wilderness of Sheahat (Scetis), where he stayed for six years. He saw in a dream that his parents were grieved over him for they thought that he was dead, since they had not found him. Immediately he informed his brothers in the monastery who advised him to go to his home-town to see his parents. He went to Meer and greeted his parents who became exceedingly happy when they saw him alive. Afterwards, they wished to wed him, but when the Saint learned from a friend what his parents intended to do, he escaped and returned again to the monastery.

The monks welcomed him back with great joy. He lived with these holy men in love and faithful service, so they nominated him to the monastic rank. Then he was ordained a priest for the monastery, and after a short time, he wore the Eskeem. He exhausted himself with vigilance, prayers, worships, and kneeling more than was required from the other monks. He fasted from sunset to the sunset of the next day and in the winter he fasted two days at a time. He kept this manner all the days of his life until he realized the favor of God, because of his good deeds, acceptable worship, and asceticism.

When Pope Marcos VI, 101st Patriarch, departed, the bishops, priests, and the lay leaders sought a new righteous shepherd to ordain in his place. They asked the monks of the wilderness and the monasteries to guide them to one fit for this position. The monks guided them to this father. When they asked him to come to Misr (Cairo), he refused to comply with their request. So they were forced to send a soldier from the government, who seized him, and brought him to Misr.

Meanwhile the people of Misr (Cairo) seized another righteous priest called John, and wanted to ordain him Patriarch, and as a result of that a conflict developed. The governor apprehended the two candidates and imprisoned them for forty days. When the matter prolonged, the bishops met and decided to cast an altar lot which was done before all the congregation. The soldiers also cast among them another lot in the government building. Each time they drew the lot it fell on Guirguis. One night the soldiers of the governor saw a burning candle hovering over Father Guirguis' head while he was in prison. Finally they nominated this father after the considerable contention, and all the congregation was pleased. He was ordained on Sunday, 30th of Hatour, 1377 A.M. (Dec. 6th, 1660 A.D.) during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan, Mohammed IV.

The celebration of his ordination was a splendid and grand celebration which was attended by many of the other Christian denominations. When he was enthroned as the Patriarch in the Patriarchal cell at Haret-Zewailah, he considered marital and family matters, and church affairs in stern, just and fair judgements. He was meek and humble, disliked attention and exaltedness, so he never sat on a chair in the church, but stood beside it until the end of the service. He visited widows, orphans, and prisoners,

and cared for the monks in the monastery, fulfilling their needs. He cherished the monasteries and the churches, as he lived a simple life as those monks lived in the wilderness. During his papacy the church was in peace and tranquility and the church was enlightened with his grace. In the year 1387 A.M. (1671 A.D.), a grievous plague befell Egypt, which perished many.

He ordained two successive metropolitans for Ethiopia after the departure of its Metropolitan Youanis the Thirteenth. The first was Anba Khristozollo II, who remained on the chair from 1665 to 1672 A.D., during the reign of King Wasilidis. The second was Anba Shenouda I, who remained on the chair from 1672 to 1694 A.D. during the time of John I.

Pope Mattias IV, was the last to dwell in the patriarchal cell at Haret-Zewailah for he moved his residency to Haret-El-Roum in 1660 A.D. just after his ordination.

During his papacy Pope Mattias endured some hardships.

+ The devil entered the heart of a Christian man and motivated him to go to the tax collector to over tax the Christians, which put a great burden on them. They complained to the Pope, who sent for the tax collector. The Pope forbade him, but he did not cease his wicked act. The Pope ex-communicated him, and the man died a horrible death.

+ Another time, a woman came to the pope complaining that her husband had divorced her and married another woman. The Pope sent for him and asked him to come with his second wife. When this man came, the Pope ordered them to be separated, but the second wife refused saying, "How can that be while I am pregnant with his child?" Then the Pope said, "The Lord Christ will judge between the two marriages." Just as the second woman left the Pope's cell, she aborted and the fetus came out of her womb. A great fear transpired because of this incident. The man separated from her and returned to his first wife. Pope Mattias became respected, honored, and revered by his people.

+ Another time, some infidels wanted to demolish St. Marcurius' "of the two swords," Church at old Cairo. They went to the governmental office and appointed someone in charge of this matter. When the Pope heard about their intentions, he grieved much and spent that night's vigil beseeching God, and interceding with St. Marcurius to annul their conspiracy and save the church from destruction. While the soldiers were asleep around the church, a wall fell on them. They all died, and the news spread around the city. The wicked conspiracy was annulled and everyone glorified God.

During Pope Mattias' days, the enemy of good, stirred up the unbelievers against the Christians. But Christ, to Whom is the Glory, always vanquished their council and perished them through the prayers of Pope Mattias, for he shepherded the flock of Christ faithfully.

When the time of his departure drew near, he went to the tomb of the Patriarchs in Misr and said to it, "Open and receive me so I can dwell with my righteous brothers." After he returned to his residence, he fell sick with the illness of death. He called the bishops and priests and commended them on the flock of Christ. He also called the Abbess of the convent and gave her all he had, and asked her to hand them to his successor, as they were the property of the church. Then he departed in peace at a good old age, after he had remained on the chair of St. Mark for fourteen years, eight months, and nine days. He

was seventy-five years old and was buried in the tomb of the Patriarchs in the church of St. Marcurius in Old Cairo. The chair remained vacant after him for seven months.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever.

Amen.

The Seventeenth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Martyrdom of St. James the Soldier

On this day, St. James, the soldier, departed. He was born in Mengoug (Manug), district of Ebso (Psoi), to God fearing Christian parents. God gave them three daughters before they had this saint. They committed the daughters to a nunnery to be taught, and brought up, in the fear of God. They learned and read the Holy Bible and the church teachings. When their father asked them to return, they refused for they preferred to stay in the nunnery and they dedicated themselves as brides of Christ. Their parents sorrowed, but God consoled them by giving them this saint. They rejoiced in him, and when he was six years old, his father sent him to Ebso to learn reading and writing. After he finished his education his father put him in charge of his money and possessions.

The father had an old man, who shepherded his sheep. This old man was adorned with several virtues and James took him as a role model. When the devil provoked persecution against the Christians, the old man handed over the sheep to the father of James and left to become a martyr. James asked his father if he could go to bid the shepherd farewell and then come back, and his father allowed him to do so. When James went with the shepherd, he found the governor in upper Egypt torturing St. Justus²⁷, son of Emperor Nomarius. The old man told James, "Look O my son, the person that you see being tortured is the son of an emperor, who has forsaken the world and its vain glory, and followed Christ, so what the poor like us, would do? Then be patient, and do not be sorrowful because of your separation from your parents." They came before the governor and confessed the Lord Christ. The governor tortured them severely, then beheaded the old man.

The governor tortured St. James severely by beating him with whips. Then he placed a piece of red-hot iron on his chest. The saint lifted up his eyes and appealed for help to the Lord Christ, Who saved him and healed him from his afflictions. Then, they put him in a sack, and cast him in the sea, but the angel of the Lord raised him up from the sea. Then the saint returned, and stood before the governor who sent him to the city of El-Farma. There the governor tortured him, by cutting his tongue, tearing out his eyes, torturing him on the wheel, and combing his flesh. Sourial, the angel of God, came down and saved him. When the governor was tired of torturing him, he commanded James' head cut off, along with two other martyrs, whose names were Abraham and John, who were from Samannoud. They all received the crown of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

²⁷His commemoration is on the 10th day of Amshir (Vol. II, P. 261).

The Eighteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Departure of St. Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Eudaemon, of Armant (El-Armanti).*

1. On this day, of the year 340 A.D. the saint Abba Alexander, Patriarch of the city of Constantinople, departed. He was an honorable saint who suffered many hardships from the followers of Arius.

When St. Athanasius the Apostolic, the twentieth Pope of Alexandria, renewed the excommunication of Arius, he went to Constantinople. Arius complained to Emperor Constantius, Son of the righteous Emperor Constantine, about St. Athanasius' conduct against him. When the emperor refused his petition, Arius asked the emperor to instruct Abba Alexander to accept him in the communion of the church. The emperor sent to this father saying, "Athanasius had defied us because he did not accept Arius, and you know that we appointed you to this position, so you must not transgress our command. Make my heart glad, and reinstate Arius." St. Alexander replied saying, "The church does not accept him for he does not worship the Holy Trinity." The Emperor said, "Arius had confessed his faith in the Holy Trinity before me and that the Son is of one essence with the Father." Then the saint answered, "If Arius had confessed that, let him write his confession by his own hand." The emperor brought Arius and he wrote down the faith with his own hand, contrary to what he had in his heart. Then the emperor made him swear on the Holy Bible that was his faith, but he swore falsely. The emperor said to Abba Alexander, "What do you have against him now, since he has written his faith with his own hand, and taken an oath on the Holy Bible." Abba Alexander replied, "Pope Athanasius renewed the excommunication of Arius, which was signed by your father, Emperor Constantine along with the three hundred and eighteen fathers, and expelled him and all his followers from Alexandria. Wait for one week, and if nothing happens to him during this week, then his profession of faith is sincere, and his oath is righteous. Then I will receive him in the communion of the church." The emperor agreed to his request.

When the patriarch went back to his church, he commanded his congregation to fast, along with him, for seven days and pray to God that He might save His church from the sin of Arius. After the week ended, and on the eve of Sunday, the heretics took Arius and started strolling with him in the streets of the city rejoicing that their leader would be accepted in the church. In the morning, Arius went to the church and sat down with the priests in front of the altar. Then Abba Alexander entered the church, being sad, and not knowing what to do. When he started the liturgy, Arius felt a colic and had to run to the washroom, where his bowels poured out of his body. When Arius delayed in returning, his followers went to the washroom, found him dead, and they were ashamed. The faithful glorified the Lord Christ, Who does not forsake His church. The emperor was amazed at that, and realized that Arius was lying in his writing and in his oath. He also perceived the holiness of Abba Alexander, the truthfulness of his faith, and the erroneous belief of Arius. He glorified the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and confessed publicly that the Trinity is one in essence. This Father having completed his life in a good course, and arrived at a good old age, departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Eudaemon (Wadamon), of the city of Armant (El-Armanti), was martyred. One day, he had visitors in his house, who were heathen, and they were saying to each other, "We have heard that a lady arrived to the city of Ashmonain carrying a young Child who resembled the children of Kings." Others asked, "Did this Child²⁸ come to the land of Egypt?" and everyone was talking about this Child.

After the guests had left, Eudaemon rose up, rode his donkey and went to the city of Ashmonain. When he arrived, he saw the Child Jesus with his mother Mariam (Mary), and he kneeled before Him. As the Child saw what Eudaemon had done, the Child smiled and said, "Peace be with you Eudaemon, you have labored and come here in person to assert what you have heard from your guests about Me. Thence I will stay in your home, which will be a house for Me forever." St. Eudaemon marvelled and said, "O My Lord I wish that You will come and live in my house and I will be Your servant forever." The Child replied saying, "Your home will be a house for Me and My mother forever. When you return home and the heathen hear that you came to Me, they will be sorry and hurt, and they will shed your blood in your house. Don't be afraid because I will receive you in My heavenly kingdom forever, the place of perpetual joy, which has no end. You will be the first martyr in Upper Egypt." Then Eudaemon kneeled down before the Lord Christ, the Child, Who blessed him, then he returned to his home.

Upon Eudaemon's return to Armant, the heathen heard about his arrival. The news that Eudaemon had visited the Child Jesus, spread in the city. They came to him in haste asking, "Is all that they say about you true?" Eudaemon replied saying, "Yes, I went to the Lord Christ, Who blessed me and said, 'I am coming to dwell in your house with My mother, forever.'" The heathens shouted out as one person, drew their swords, and killed him. Thus, Eudaemon received the crown of martyrdom on this day.

When paganism was abolished, and Christianity spread in the land, the Christians converted the house of St. Eudaemon into a church, and named it after St. Mary and her Son, to Whom is the everlasting Glory. This church is the one called El-Gishouna, which means "the church of the living," in the outskirts of Armant, which still exists now.

May God have mercy on us through the intercession of our Lady the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, and the intercession of the martyr Eudaemon, the pure faithful, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

²⁸An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word." (Matthew 2:13)

The Nineteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Translocation of the Body of St. Macarius to His Monastery in Scetis

On this day, the church celebrates the return of the body of St. Macarius²⁹ to his monastery in the desert of Sheahat (Scetis). After the departure of St. Macarius, some of the natives of the city of Shanshour (Shabsheer) came and stole his body. They built a large church for him, and placed the body in it. Later on, his body was moved to another town where he stayed for four hundred forty years, till the time of Pope Michael V (Anba Mikhail V), the 71st Pope. When Pope Michael went to the wilderness to observe the holy fast in the monastery, he sighed and said, "How much I yearn that God would help us so that the body of our father Anba Macarius be in our midst."

Later on, the abbot of the monastery, the Archpriest (Hegumen) Michael, went with some of the elders on certain business of the monastery, and they thought of bringing back the body of the saint to their monastery. They came to where the body was, but the people of the town and the governor assembled against them with swords and sticks and prevented them from taking the body. The elders spent the night in great sorrow. The governor saw that night a vision of St. Macarius telling him, "Let my children take my body and do not prevent them." The governor was frightened and he called the elders and gave them the body. The elders took the body with great joy, and many faithful people followed them to bid the body farewell.

When the ship arrived in Mariot, they spent the night. The next morning they celebrated the Divine Liturgy and received the Holy Mysteries. Then they loaded the body on a camel to the wilderness. Midway through the journey, they needed to rest, but the Abbot said, "As the Lord lives, we do not rest until the Lord shows us the place where the angel of the Lord held our father's hand." So they kept moving until the camel knelt down and did not get up. The camel started to turn his head around, licking the body and bowing his head down to the ground. Then the elders knew that was the right place, and they glorified God.

As they reached the monastery, all the monks came out holding candles and singing. Then they carried the body on their shoulders and went into the church in a great celebration, and God performed many wonders on that day.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

²⁹The departure of this saint is mentioned under the 27th of Baramhat (Vol. III, P. 336).

The Twentieth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Martyrdom of the Seven Young Men of Ephesus

On this day, of the year 252 A.D., the seven holy young men of the city of Ephesus: Maximus, Malchus, Martinianus, Dionysius, John, Serpion and Constantine, were martyred.

They were soldiers of Emperor Decius, who appointed them to guard the royal treasury. When the emperor established the worship of idols, certain men made accusation against them. They hid themselves in a cave, lest they become weakened and deny the Lord Christ. When the emperor knew that, he ordered the blocking of the cave's entrance, shutting them in. One of the soldiers was a believer in the Lord Christ. He engraved their life story on a tablet of brass and left it inside the cave. Thus the seven holy young men delivered up their pure souls.

God wanted to honor them as His faithful servants, so He inspired the bishop of Ephesus about the place of the cave. The Bishop went and opened the entrance to the cave, and found their bodies uncorrupted. He knew from the brass tablet that they had been there for about two hundred years. That was during the reign of the Emperor Theodosius the Less. As they knew also from the coins, which they found with them that they were during the time of emperor Decius, because it had his picture on them.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-First Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Commemoration of the Virgin, the Mother of God.*
2. *The Departure of St. Irene (Eirene).*

1. On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the All pure St. Mary, the Mother of God the Word, who intercede for us before her beloved Son.

May her prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Irene (i.e. peace), departed. She was the daughter of a pagan king, whose name was Lucianus. She was exceedingly beautiful. Her father loved her very much, therefore he built a fortified mansion for her. He assigned thirteen maids to serve, guard and protect her from what might defile the name and honor of her family. St. Irene was then six years old, and her father left some statues for her to worship. Her father also assigned a wise old teacher to instruct her.

Once St. Irene saw in a vision, a dove with an olive leaf in her mouth, and the dove came and laid it on a table before her. Then there came an eagle with a crown, which he laid also on the table. Afterwards, a raven came with a serpent, which he laid on the table. St. Irene was frightened by this vision, and she revealed this vision to her teacher. Her father was unaware that the teacher was Christian. The teacher

explained the vision to her saying, "The dove is the teaching of the Law, the olive leaf is baptism, the eagle is the victory and the crown is the glory of the saints. The raven is the king and the serpent is the persecution." He concluded his talk by saying that she had to struggle for the sake of the Faith in the Lord Christ.

One day, her father came to visit her, and proposed that she marry one of the princes. She asked him for three days in which she might think it over. After her father had left, she went to the statues, and asked them to advise her on what was right for her, but they did not answer her. The saint lifted up her eyes to heaven, and said, "O God of the Christians, guide me to whatever pleases you." The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "Tomorrow one of the disciples of St. Paul will come to you, will teach you what you need to know, and then will baptize you." The next day, St. Timothy, the Apostle, came to her, taught her the essentials of Christianity and baptized her.

When her father knew that, he summoned her. When he verified this news from her, her profession in the Lord Christ, he tied her to the tail of an untamed horse, and then released it. Nevertheless, God preserved her and she was not harmed. Instead, the horse itself turned and grasped with his mouth the arm of her father, hurled him on the ground, and her father fell dead. With the prayers of his daughter, St. Irene, he was risen alive. The father, his wife and three thousand persons became Christians, and they all were baptized. God honored this saint with several inspired miracles which she wrought before governors and kings and many had believed because of her. When she fulfilled her strife, she departed in peace.

May her prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Second Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. The Departure of Micah, the Prophet.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Hadid.

1. On this day, the great righteous prophet Micah, departed. He prophesied about Samaria and Jerusalem during the time of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judeah. He prophesied about the incarnation of the Lord, to Whom is the Glory, saying, "For behold, the Lord is coming out of His high place. He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth." (Micah 1:3) He prophesied about His birth in Bethlehem, saying, "But you Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me. The one to be ruler in Israel. Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2) He prophesied about the futility of the Jewish temple and the going forth of the Law of the Gospel from Zion, saying, " ... For out of Zion the Law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Micah 4:2) He also prophesied about the perdition of Ahab, king of Israel. (Micah 5:15,16) When this prophet finished his strife in peace, he departed at a good old age. He preceded the Lord Christ by about eight hundred years.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, in the year 1103 A.M. (1387 A.D.), St. Hadid, was martyred. He was from the Giza Governorate.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Third Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Martyrdom of Thirty Thousand Christians in Alexandria.*

2. *The Martyrdom of St. Damian in Antioch.*

1. On this day, is the commemoration of the martyrdom of the thirty thousand Christians in the city of Alexandria. When Emperor Marcianus banished Pope Dioscorus to the island of Gagra, he appointed Brotarius, a Patriarch, in his place. The bishops of Egypt refused to have a fellowship with him. They assembled a council against him, the Council of Chalcedon, and the tome of Leo³⁰. Brotarius became raged and with the aid of the government forces he attacked and plundered the monasteries and churches. Then he confiscated all their endowments for himself and he became wealthy. Thieves attacked him during the night, killed him, and plundered what he had. His friends sent to the Emperor saying, "The followers of Dioscorus were the ones that killed the Patriarch that was appointed by the Emperor."

The Emperor became furious and sent a number of his soldiers, who killed about thirty thousand Christians in the city of Alexandria.

Shortly after, Marcianus died and was succeeded by Leo the Great. The bishops of Egypt seized this opportunity and ordained Fr. Timothy a Patriarch for Alexandria. Immediately the new Pope assembled a council and excommunicated the Council of Chalcedon. The heretics informed the Emperor saying, "Those who killed Brotarius ordained for themselves a Patriarch without permission from the Emperor." The Emperor was enraged and he exiled Abba Timothy and his brother Anatolius to the island of Gagra. They remained there for seven years until Emperor Leo the Less released them.

After the return of Pope Timothy, he cooperated with Abba Peter of Antioch, and assembled a council of five hundred bishops in the capital. This council judged to refuse the Council of Chalcedon, and also

³⁰This Tome was sent by Leo, bishop of Rome, to the Council of Chalcedon. It briefly stated that, "Christ the two, the God and the Man, came. The first overwhelmed us with miracles, and the second received the humiliations." Therefore the Orthodox anathematized the Council of Chalcedon, as Pope Dioscorus had anathematized the heresy of Eutyches. Eutyches stated that the Human nature of Christ mingled with His Divine nature, and that the essence of the Divinity had suffered the passion of the Cross.

Pope Cyril of Alexandria (Kyrillos I) said, "The union of the Divinity and the Humanity, like the union of fire and iron, the hammering of the iron affects only the iron, but doesn't affect the fire, although it shares a unity with the iron. The union of the Divinity with the Humanity gave an infinitive value for the one Who suffered for the sake of the salvation of all the humanity.

affirmed the teaching of the unity of the natures of the Lord Christ. They also presented their report to the Emperor who approved it. The Emperor issued an edict that dictated to abide by this council report only. As a result, the Sees of Alexandria, Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem were united for a long time.

May the prayers of these fathers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Demian was martyred in the city of Antioch. He suffered many tortures and endured severe afflictions until he delivered up his soul in the hand of the Lord.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. The Departure of St. Takla Haymanot, the Ethiopian.

2. The Departure of St. Thomas, Bishop of Mar'ash (Syria).

1. On this day, the great hermit and the blessed St. Takla Haymanot, the Ethiopian, departed. He was born in a village nearby Jerusalem which was the share of Zadok and Abia-thar the priests during the reign of King Soliman, son of King David.

Zadok begot Azariah, Azariah begot Zadok, who was named after his grandfather, and Zadok begot Levi, and so forth till the father of this saint was born. His name was Tsega Ze-Ab (which means the Grace of the Father) and he married a woman whose name was Sarah. They were righteous, God fearing and very rich. They always celebrated the commemoration of the honorable Archangel Michael on the twelfth day of each Coptic month, and gave alms to the poor and the needy.

Sarah, the mother of this saint, was very beautiful, meek and adorned with many virtues, hence they called her "Egezi-Hareya" (i.e. God has chosen her). However, She and her husband were bitter and sad because they did not have any children. She went daily to the church imploring God to give her a child that would delight her heart. Her husband also went to the church at the time of the offering of the incense and taught the congregation the fundamentals of faith. Every time he went to the church he took from his own money an offering to the house of God. They both agreed to disperse their money to the poor, the needy, the monasteries and the churches.

Meanwhile the king died, and another king reigned who worshipped the idols. The new king demolished the churches and built pagan temples. He was unjust and he plundered and captured women, among them "Egezi-Hareya", the mother of St. Takla. Later she returned safely to her husband and both glorified God and praised His Holy Name.

Afterwards, the angel of the Lord appeared to them in a vision at night, and announced to them the birth of this saint. When the saint was about one and half years old, a famine befell Ethiopia. When the twelfth day of the blessed month of Baramhat, the commemoration of the honorable head of the Heavenly hosts, drew near, Sarah, the mother of the child, was crying because she was not able to celebrate this occasion. The child wiped away her tears with his little hands and yet he was still unable

to talk. He pointed to her to carry him to where there was a plate with a little flour in it. She took him to the plate where he dipped his hand in the flour. The flour increased until it was pouring onto the floor. She brought baskets and every time she emptied the plate, it became full again, until she had filled twelve baskets. His mother then knew that God was with the child. Then she brought to him the empty container of oil. He placed his hand over it and it was filled with the power of God. In the same fashion, other containers in the house were filled. When Tsega Ze-Ab, the father of the child, returned from the church and knew what happened, he glorified God. They celebrated the commemoration of the archangel Michael, fed the poor and all the neighbors.

God honored this saint with many miracles that he performed during his life and also after his departure. When St. Takla Haymanot completed his good strife, he departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the fighter father, St. Thomas, Bishop of Mar'ash, departed. He was an ascetic worshipper, who fasted and prayed continually, with many merciful deeds. Therefore, they ordained him a bishop for the city of Mar'ash. He shepherded the flock of Christ with the best of care.

When the infidel Emperor Diocletian reigned, he sent one of his representatives to the city of Mar'ash to torture the Christians. He started with this saint. He ordered the saint to worship the idols. The saint not only disobeyed him but also rebuked him on his idolatry. He tortured the saint severely by flogging, and dismemberment, then he cast him in an abandoned prison. From time to time, he ordered to dismember one of his organs. First they cut his ears, then nose, lips, his legs, then they smashed his teeth. He was left in this prison for twenty-two years. His congregation thought that he had died, and they celebrated an annual commemoration for him. A faithful woman came to him by night, and threw to him provisions through a small opening.

The saint remained in this condition until the righteous Emperor Constantine reigned and declared the glory of the Christian faith, and ordered the release of the faithful from prisons. The woman informed some priests of the whereabouts of this saint. The priests came to the saint, carried him to the church with songs and hymns. The people came forward for his blessing and kissed the places where he was dismembered.

When the Emperor assembled the council of Nicea, this saint was one of those attended. As the Emperor came to the council, he knelt before the fathers and kissed their hands. When he knew what had happened to this father, he asked for his blessings. As the council adjourned, he and the other bishops returned to their dioceses. He gathered his priests and congregation, read to them the creed that was instituted by the council, and also explained to them what was difficult to understand. Afterwards the saint lived for a short period then departed in peace, when his episcopate was about forty years.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Departure of St. Bessarion, the Great.*

2. *The Departure of St. Macarius III, 114th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, the great ascetic father, St. Bessarion, departed. He was born in Misr (Egypt) to Christian parents. When he grew up, he longed for the monastic life, so he went to Anba Anthony (Antonius), under whose direction he remained for a while. Then he went to Anba Macarius, and stayed under his guidance for a while. Later on, he wandered about in the desert, never lodging in a place with a roof. He possessed absolutely nothing of this world, and he had only one coarse hairy sack-cloth. He used to carry the Gospel, and went round the cells of the monks crying. If they asked him the reason for his weeping, he would reply, "My riches have all been stolen, and I have escaped from death. My family have fallen from honor into disgrace." His words referred to the great loss that befell the human race by the fall of the first father Adam by breaking the first commandment. Those who did not understand what his words meant would console him saying, "God shall restore what has been stolen from you."

The fathers had recorded for him many signs:

+ Once he was walking with his two disciples, John and Dulas, by the shore of the Red Sea (salty water). When they became thirsty, St. Bessarion took some of its water and prayed over it. The water became sweet and they all drank of it.

+ Another time, they brought to the wilderness of Scetis a mad man, who was possessed by demons, for the elders to pray over. Because the elders knew that St. Bessarion despised the glory of men, they did not want to ask him to pray over the sick man, but rather they put the man in the church where the saint usually stood. When St. Bessarion came into the church and found the man there asleep, he woke him up, and the man rose up healed and with a sound mind.

God wrought many signs on his hands. He pleased God and then departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 1661 A.M. (August 31st, 1945 A.D.), Pope Macarius III, 114th Patriarch of Alexandria, departed.

He was born in the city of El-Mahalla El-Koubra, on February 18th, 1872 A.D., to an old, respectable family. His family was known by El-Kasees family (The family of the priest), which was virtuous and godly. He grew up from a young age in a religious and pious atmosphere. He received his primary and secondary education in El-Mahalla El-Koubra and Tanta. Even as a young man, he was ascetic, longed for solitary life, and enthusiastic about memorizing the church hymns. When he was sixteen years old, he deserted the world and went to the monastery of Anba Bishoy in Wadi El-Natroun, in the year 1888 A.D., to fulfill his desire for asceticism and worship. His name was Monk Abdel-Mesieh. He devoted himself to worship and to the study of the Holy Bible, ecclesiastical books, and Coptic rituals. In a short time his virtues and righteousness were evident, and his pure life became known to the monks. He was distinguished for transcribing books, and his Coptic and Arabic penmanship was exquisite. He

perfected the religious Coptic artistic decorations. After he was ordained a priest he spent about six years in the pure ascetic life.

In the year 1895 A.D., Macarius went to the Baramous monastery, where he was ordained Archpriest (hegumen) by Pope Kyrillos V, and became his private secretary. The Pope delegated him to teach the Coptic and French languages in the theological school for monks. He intended to ordain him a bishop for Misr (Cairo), but two years after the arrival of Fr. Abdel-Meseih to Cairo, Anba Michael, bishop of Assiut, departed. A delegation from Assiut came to Cairo, they chose this honorable hegumen and nominated him to be a metropolitan for Assiut.

In the beginning, the Pope did not accept their petition, for he kept Macarius in order to ordain him a bishop for Cairo and as an assistant to His Holiness, in managing the affairs of the See of St. Mark. But when the delegation persisted in their demand, the Pope accepted their petition, and ordained Macarius a metropolitan for Assiut on July 11th, 1897 A.D. (Abib 5th, 1613 A.M.). He called him Macarius, and he was twenty-four years old. He went to his parish as a young man, with no armors but his piety, asceticism, and knowledge. He embarked, with the wisdom of the elders inspite of his young age, with his strong will, and with the help of the Lord, on bringing together the factions of his congregation, and establishing the Faith. So, he maintained the unity of his people, and the position and reverence of the church, and he was quite successful in it. He was not content with the program that he placed for the church reform, but he also held an immense Coptic conference in the city of Assiut in year 1910 A.D., inspite of all the objections that rose against it. He also submitted along with Anba Theophilus, then bishop of Manfalot and Abnoup, in early 1920 A.D., a petition to Pope Kyrillos V. This petition contained the required administrative and financial reforms, which indicated his great competence.

When Pope Kyrillos V, departed in 1928 A.D., the people nominated Abba Macarius for the Patriarchal chair to achieve the required reforms, but the circumstances then prevented that. When Pope Yoannis IXX, departed, the Divine grace permitted that Anba Macarius be enthroned on the throne of St. Mark. He was ordained Patriarch for the See of St. Mark on Sunday, February 19th, 1944 A.D.

After his enthronement to the Patriarchal chair, Anba Macarius issued on February 22nd, 1944 A.D., a historical document. Its main objective was to reform the monasteries, and promote their monks spiritually, and scientifically. He also ordered that the heads and the administrators of the monasteries be accountable. This lead to a major contention between the Holy Synod and the General Coptic Community Council (Maglis El-Milli).

On June 7th, 1944 A.D., the Holy Synod submitted a memorandum to the Pope and to the minister of Justice. They objected to the draft of the Marital and Personal Law for the non-Muslim denominations, for it subverted a canon of the Coptic Orthodox Church, as it affected two of the Holy Sacraments of the church which are the sacrament of Priesthood and Matrimony. These sacraments are cornerstone of the Christian religion and worship.

The dispute between the Synod and the Council continued, and all the attempts of reconciliation failed. The efforts of the Pope to eliminate the misunderstanding failed also. The council insisted on interfering

in what was not its jurisdiction, and in what was the core jurisdiction of the Holy Synod. As a result, the Pope was compelled to leave the Capital, and the Papal residence, for seclusion in Helwan, then went to the Eastern monasteries accompanied by the metropolitans. He remained for a while in St. Antony's monastery then went to the monastery of Anba Paul. All these painful events had strong impact in all the circles and distressed every devout in the church.

When the Prime Minister knew about the departure of the Pope to the monastery, he worked on the return of the Pope in honor to his Chair, and his efforts were successful. Meanwhile, the Coptic Community Council (Maglis El-Milli) sent a letter to the Pope asking for his return, to be able to manage the affairs of the church, and promised the cooperation in the needed reforms. Later, the Pope returned from the monastery, and the people received him with joy and reverence.

The Holy Synod convened, with Anba Macarius presiding, on January 1st, 1945, and issued many resolutions, which follow:

- + The representation of The Ethiopian church in the Alexandrian Synod.
- + The exchange of delegations between Egypt and Ethiopia, and the establishment of a seminary in Ethiopia.
- + Restriction of divorce on the grounds of adultery only.
- + Legislation of the Family and Marital Law.
- + Rules for nominating and electing the Patriarch that coincide with the canons of the church and its tradition.
- + Establishment of a Theological seminary for the monks.
- + Formation of a permanent committee to revue all the ecclesiastical books.
- + The safeguarding of the endowment funds, and improvement of the office procedures at the administrative offices of the patriarchate.
- + Strict enforcement of the Monastic Law that was issued on June 3rd, 1937 A.D., and the return of all the monks that were living outside their monasteries.
- + Establishment of a record in each church to register the members of each Coptic family, and another to register the baptized, the departed, and the deacons.

On June 6th, 1945 A.D., the Russian Patriarch visited Cairo. Pope Macarius sent a delegation of metropolitans and bishops to be in his reception. Then they exchanged the cordial visits.

Once again a dispute between H.H. the Pope and the General Coptic Community Council (Maglis El-Milli) took place. This time the dispute was not resolved before the Pope took the initiative to defend the position and dignity of his nation, the canons of the churches, and the Family Marital Law for non-Muslims in particular. On May 30th, 1945 A.D. all the leaders of the non-Muslim denominations in Egypt, headed by the Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church, presented a memorandum to the minister of Justice objecting to the special law that regulated the denominational family affairs courts. Also copies were sent to the senate and the house of representatives. The memorandum focused on the objections, to better suit the Christian rites and traditions.

The Pope suffered from a severe weakness two weeks before his departure that forced him to rest in his residence. On Thursday evening, the 24th of Misra, 1661 A.M. (August 30th, 1945 A.D.), he felt

fatigued and he suffered from heart failure. The doctors rushed to his bedside trying to save him till dawn. At 9:15 Friday morning, 31st of August, 1945 A.D., his pure soul departed to its creator. On Sunday, the second of September, his pure body was taken to its final resting place in the church with the signs of grief and sorrow. His coffin was placed beside the bodies of the patriarchs, his predecessors. He remained on the Patriarchal throne for one year, six months, and nineteen days. May God accept him in the habitations of the righteous.

Coincidentally, an earthquake was felt in Cairo at 2:45pm at the time of his burial. Everyone felt it, and the believers were touched, for nature shared their sorrow for the departure of this pure saint.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Sixth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Martyrdom of St. Moses (Moisees) and his Sister Sarah.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Agabius, the Soldier, and his Sister Thecla.*

1. On this day, St. Moses (Moisees) and his righteous sister Sarah, were martyred. They were born to rich, Christian parents. When their parents departed, St. Moisees wanted to give his sister in marriage, and to hand over to her all their possessions, and to go and become a monk. She answered him and said, "If you would get married first, then I also can get married." He said, "I have committed many sins, and I want to become a monk to blot out my sins. I can not attend to the marriage and the salvation of my soul at the same time." She answered him saying, "O my brother, how can you cast me to the snares of this transitory world, while you seek to save your own soul?" He said, "Whatever you wish, I will do." She said, "What you do for your self, I likewise will do for myself."

When he saw her strong determination, he dispersed all their money to the poor and the needy. He took his sister to a convent for virgins, which was outside Alexandria. He also entered one of the monasteries for men. They did not see each other for ten years.

When Emperor Decius incited persecution against the Christians, during the papacy of Pope Demetrius, the twelfth Patriarch of Alexandria, many were martyred. St. Moses (Moisees) sent to his sister Sarah to bid her farewell and to inform her that he wished to shed his blood in the Name of the Lord Christ. She rose up immediately and asked the abbess to release her. After she took the blessings of her sisters the nuns, she joined her brother on his way to Alexandria. They confessed the Lord Christ before the governor. After they had been tortured severely, their heads were cut off, and they received the crowns of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Agabius, the Soldier, and his pious sister Thecla, were martyred. They lived during the time of Julian the Infidel, and they confessed the Lord Christ before him. He cast them to the lions, and they received the crowns of martyrdom.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Seventh Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

1. *The Martyrdom of Sts. Benjamin and his Sister Eudexia.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Mary, the Armenian.*

1. On this day, St. Benjamin and his sister St. Eudexia, were martyred. Their parents were pious Christians who loved sojourners. They brought them up in a Christian manner.

When Benjamin grew up, he longed to be martyred for the sake of the Name of Christ. He went to "Shatanouf" and confessed the Lord Christ before the governor. The governor tortured him much then cast him in prison. When his parents and sister knew about this, they came to him weeping, but he comforted them, and told them about the vanity of the world and the life of the coming age which has no end. When his sister heard that, she told him, "God lives, I shall not separate from you until we die together."

The governor cast them in a dark place for twenty days. Then he took them out and hung heavy stones on their necks and threw them in the river. The Angel of the Lord came and loosened the stones. They swam until they arrived at the town of Petra. A virgin found them and rescued them. They then returned to the governor and again they confessed The Lord Christ before him. The governor ordered to cut off their heads and they received the crown of martyrdom. The faithful built a church in their names in their town "Shanshour."

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Mary the Armenian, was martyred. She was captured by the Moslems, who asked her to deny her faith in the Lord Christ. She refused, so they tortured her severely, but she remained steadfast in her faith. They threatened to burn her alive in a blazing pit, by the gate of Zoweila in Cairo. Many gathered there, and the crowd tried to frighten her from the suffering and to persuade her to change her counsel, but she answered saying, "It is good that I deliver up my soul in the hands of my Master, Lord, and Savior Jesus Christ." Then she quickly threw herself in the fiery pit. Thus she received the crown of martyrdom.

May her prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever, Amen.

The Twenty-Eighth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Commemoration of the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

On this day, the church celebrates the holy Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

1. Our father Abraham:

Who can describe the virtues of he who became father to many nations? He believed in God, obeyed Him, and did not doubt His promises. The Lord appeared to him in a vision at night and told him, "Get out of your country, away from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing." (Genesis 12:1-2) Then the Lord appeared to Abraham in the form of three men. He welcomed them, for they were strangers, and God promised him the birth of Isaac. Abraham was then one hundred years old; Sarah, his wife, was advanced in age, and they believed the promise of God.

When Isaac was born, Abraham, his father, circumcised him on the eighth day of his birth. Although he was sure that through his procreation all the nations of the earth would be blessed, God told him, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and offer him there as a burnt offering." He did not doubt the promise of God. He began to offer his son as a sacrifice, confident that God would raise him, and raise offspring through him. When he fulfilled the sacrifice of Isaac by intention, God revealed his virtues to the generations to come by saying, "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven." (Genesis 22:1-18) That was fulfilled and he was called the father of Christ in flesh. (Luke 3:34) He departed in peace when he was one hundred seventy-five years old.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. Our father Isaac:

He was born by a divine promise, and he was perfect in piety and obedience to God and to his father. He was willing to be sacrificed by his father as an offering to God, although he was the son of the promise, and his father begot him when he was one hundred years old. Isaac was not a child then, for the Bible said, "So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and went to the place which was afar off." Some historians say that Isaac's age then was about thirty-seven years old. He obeyed his father, and laid down his neck for slaying, but the angel of the Lord ordered his father not to lay his hand on the lad. As it was considered that Abraham had fulfilled the sacrifice of his son by intention, it was also considered that Isaac was sacrificed by intention.

He suffered many tribulations and sorrows. God gave him two sons, Esau and Jacob. Isaac loved Esau for his bravery. When Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, he called Esau, his older son, and said to him, "My son ... behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. Now

therefore, please ... go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food ... that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die." Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. She spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "... Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves ... that he may bless you before his death." Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." But his mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son." (Genesis 27:1-29) She did that by a divine inspiration. Jacob did as his mother ordered him, and his father ate and blessed him. Isaac departed in peace when he was one hundred eighty years old.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. The father of the Tribes Jacob:

Esau, his brother, hated him for he took the blessing of their father from him. Jacob feared Esau, and fled to Laban, his uncle. He shepherded Laban's sheep for seven years and Laban gave Jacob his daughter, Leah, in marriage. Then Jacob served another seven years, and Laban gave him his second daughter, Rachel, in marriage. (Genesis 29:15-30) Then Laban, his uncle, told him, "The sheep that are streaked shall be your wages, then all the flocks bore streaked." (Genesis 31:4-8)

God made him exceedingly wealthy. He returned with his two wives, Leah and Rachel, and God blessed him with twelve sons. He saw God face to face and wrestled with him until the breaking of day, and God called him Israel.

He suffered many sorrows and tribulations, such as the selling of Joseph his son as a servant to the Egyptians, the loss of his sight, the severe famine, and others as mentioned in the Holy Bible. His son Joseph then rose to power and became the second man in Egypt after the Pharaoh, and he tried until he was able to bring his father Jacob to Egypt, where he stayed for seventeen years. When his departure drew near he called his twelve sons and blessed them. When he blessed Judah, he said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people." That was a prophesy about the coming of the Lord Christ from his seed. When he was one hundred forty-seven years, he departed in peace, after commanding that he be buried in the tomb of his fathers. Joseph carried him in the chariot of Pharaoh, brought him to the land of Canaan, where he was buried with his fathers.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Twenty-Ninth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

- 1. The Martyrdom of Sts. Athanasius, the Bishop, Gerasimus (Jarasimus), and Theodotus.*
- 2. The Arrival of the Holy Relic of St. John, the Short, to the Wilderness of Scetis.*

1. On this day, Sts. Athanasius, the Bishop, Gerasimus (Jarasimus), and Theodotus, his two servants, were martyred. Certain men laid an accusation against the bishop before Arianus, the governor, that he

had baptized the daughter of Antonios, the chancellor. Arianus brought St. Athanasius and asked him to worship the idols. The bishop refused and declared his faith in the Lord Christ. The governor tortured him with severely painful tortures, and when he saw him getting firmer in his faith, he ordered to cut off his neck and the necks of the two servants with him. Some believers took their bodies, shrouded them, and laid them in coffins. God honored them by manifesting many signs and wonders from their bodies.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, in the year 515 A.D., the body of the great saint Anba John³¹, the Short, was relocated from Al-Qulzum (Red Sea) to the wilderness of Scetis. When Pope John (Youhanna), 48th Pope of Alexandria, was in the wilderness of Scetis, some of the monks expressed their wish to relocate the relics of St. John, the Short, to his monastery. The Grace of God moved the Pope, and he wrote a letter by the hand of the Hegumen Kosman and Hegumen Boctor, from the elders, and sent them to Al-Qulzum. They were not able to take the body because it was in the hands of the followers of the Council of Chalcedon. So they returned empty handed.

Shortly after, a prince from the Arabs took charge of Al-Qulzum, and he was a friend of Anba Michael, bishop of Epla'os. Once again the Patriarch wrote another letter to the bishop expressing his wish to take the body of St. John and to send it with the monks carrying his letter. The bishop rejoiced with the letter, and informed the prince about the wish of the Patriarch. The prince asked, "How could they reach the place?" His scribe answered him, "Let the monks put Arab garments over their own apparel, and let them come with us to the place." The monks came in, along with the Arabs, to the place where the body was. The monks carried the body and walked all night until they came to Misr, and then went to the wilderness. The monks of the monastery of St. Macarius went out carrying crosses and censers and met them with songs and hymns. They brought the body of St. John to where the body of St. Macarius was. They poured many perfumes and fragrant oil over him, then carried him to his monastery while they were chanting. The monks of his monastery received him with joy and happiness.

When Pope Mark (Marcus), 49th Patriarch, was ordained, and went to the wilderness with the bishops of Lower Egypt and some priests, he visited the monastery of this saint. He uncovered the holy relic of the saint, and he was blessed by it. He covered him with the sackcloth that was covering him, then wrapped him in fine linens. The monks praised and thanked God, and sang many hymns and songs for this holy father.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

³¹His departure is mentioned under the twentieth day of Babah (Vol. I, P. 67).

The Thirtieth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra

The Departure of St. Malachi, the Prophet

On this day, the great prophet, Malachi, one of the twelve minor prophets, departed. He prophesied about the return of the people from captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem. He rebuked the children of Israel because of their transgression against God and His Law. He also admonished them because of their vile offerings, and prophesied about the acceptance of the Gentiles when he said, "For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations." (Malachi 1:11) He pointed out to them that they did not give the tithes nor their first fruits, by saying, "'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this,' says the LORD of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,' says the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 3:10-11)

He prophesied about the coming of St. John the baptizer before the Lord, the Savior of the World, by saying, "'Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,' says the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 3:1) He also prophesied about the coming of Elijah before the Lord at His second coming, saying, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." (Malachi 4:5-6)

Having pleased God by his strife, and having completed his days in peace, he departed to God Whom he loved.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Blessed Month of El-Nasi (The Little Month) The First Day

1. The Departure of St. Eutychus.

2. The Martyrdom of St. Pishay (Abshai), the Antiochian.

1. On this day, St. Eutychus, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist, departed. After he spent some time with the apostle, Eutychus asked for his permission to go to St. Paul, the Apostle, and St. John allowed him. He went to St. Paul and preached the Name of Christ with him, and returned many of the Jews and the pagans to the Lord Christ and baptized them. He converted temples of idols to churches, and he endured tribulations, imprisonment, and beatings for many days. He was

cast in the fire, but he was not harmed, and was cast to the lions, which did not harm him but rather became friendly towards him. He went to Sebastia and preached there, and the angel of the Lord was with him and strengthened him.

It was said, that this saint was the young man who sat in a window and "was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead," and St. Paul raised him with his prayers. (Acts 20:9)

May his blessings be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Pishay (Abshai), the brother of St. Bahor (Abba Hor - St. Hour), was martyred. He was from the city of Antioch, and because of his piety and knowledge, he was ordained a priest. When his brother, Abba Hour, and his mother went to Alexandria, they were martyred on the twenty-ninth of the month of Baounah. (Vol. IV, P. 517) This saint gave all his possessions to the poor and the needy, and came to Alexandria to be blessed by their bodies. When he saw the two bodies, he wept much, then went to the governor and confessed the Lord Christ before him. The governor tortured him much until he delivered up his pure soul. The governor ordered his body burned along with the bodies of his brother and his mother, and the bodies of other martyrs, eighty-eight in number.

Certain believers came and took the bodies of Sts. Pishay, Abba Hour, their mother, and the bodies of Sts. Tabamoun (Damon), of the city of Danbak (Debkeya), Abimachus (Bimakos), from the city of El-Baramon, and Barashenoufah (Wursunufa), of the city of Teliah (Tuluya), and carried them to the city of Ansbashy (Ablasi), where the believers received them with great reverence.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Second Day of the Blessed Month of El-Nasi

The Departure of St. Titus, the Apostle

On this day, St. Titus, the Apostle, was martyred. He was born in Crete, and he was the nephew of the governor of the island. He learned the Greek language, its literature and wisdom, and he excelled in it. He was meek and merciful. When the news of our Lord Jesus Christ spread in all the land of Palestine and Syria, the governor of Crete, the uncle of this saint, wanted to confirm what he had heard about the magnificent signs, and eminent teachings of Christ. He sent Titus to verify that and to bring him accurate information.

When Titus arrived in the land of Judah, he saw the signs and heard the Divine words of the Lord Christ. He compared the words and miracles of our Lord to the words and deeds of the Greeks, and he found a great and clear difference between them. So he believed in the Lord Christ, and sent to his uncle telling him all that he had seen and heard. When the Lord chose the seventy apostles, Titus was one of them. After the ascension of our Lord Christ, Titus received the grace of the Holy Spirit along with the disciples. He accompanied the apostle Paul to many countries.

When St. Paul went to Rome, St. Titus returned to Crete. He built a church there, and ordained for it priests and deacons. Having finished his apostolic strife, St. Titus departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Third Day of the Blessed Month of El-Nasi

1. *The Commemoration of the Angel Raphael, the Archangel.*
2. *The Martyrdom of St. Andrianus.*
3. *The Departure of St. Yoannis XIV, 96th Pope of Alexandria.*

1. On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the honorable Angel Raphael, the third of the Archangels, and the dedication of his church outside the city of Alexandria. During the time of Pope Theophilus³², the twenty-third Patriarch, a faithful woman came from Rome, with her children and had with her a picture of the honorable Archangel Raphael. She had inherited much money from her husband. She revealed to the Pope her desire to build many churches. He showed her a large heap, which was in front of the patriarchate, which she removed and built a church in its place. Then she built another church in the name of the Angel Raphael, which was consecrated on this day.

The intercession of this honorable angel be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, St. Andrianus, one of the commanders of the army of the emperor, was martyred. This saint, whenever he saw a martyr he would ask him, "Why do you do that to yourself?" They answered him, "In the hope of the eternal life, and the everlasting kingdom." He went to the emperor and confessed the Lord Christ. The Emperor tortured him much then imprisoned him with many martyrs. Anatolia, the wife of this saint, cut off her hair, and dressed in a man's apparel. She came to the prison and ministered to the martyrs. She strengthened her husband, comforted and consoled him. When other women heard about what she did, they did the same.

Later on the emperor ordered the legs of the prisoners broken until they die. This saint came and encouraged her husband until he delivered his soul to the hand of the Lord. After all the martyrs had delivered up their souls, the emperor ordered their bodies burned, but God brought down dew which put out the fire. Some believers carried the bodies to Pisidia. A prince asked to marry St. Anatolia, but she refused. When she finished her strife, she departed in peace.

May their prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, of the year 1302 A.M. (September 6, 1586 A.D.), and during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Mourad III, Pope Yoannis XIV, 96th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was from Manfalout, and he was known by Yoannis El-Manfalouty. He became a monk at El-Baramous

³²See the eighteenth day of the month of Babah (Vol. I, P. 64).

monastery, in Wadi El-Natroun. He was ordained Patriarch during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Selim II, on the 22nd day of Baramoudah, 1287 A.M. (April 17th, 1571 A.D.). During his Papacy the Christians were forced to wear black turbans (head cover). He received a letter from the Pope of Rome and he answered him back. Sultan Selim asked him to collect head taxes from the Christians, and every one complied. He went to Alexandria, and on his way back, he felt weak and ill at the city of El-Nahrawiah. He departed there and was buried at the Church of St. George in Birma. His body was relocated later on to El-Sourian monastery. He was on the Chair for fifteen years, four months, and nineteen days.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of El-Nasi

1. The Departure of St. Leparius, Bishop of Rome.

2. The Departure of St. Poimen, the Hermit.

1. On this day, St. Leparius (Liberius), Bishop of Rome, departed. He was ordained during the reign of Emperor Constance, the son of Constantine. When Athanasius, Pope of Alexandria, and Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople, were exiled, they came to him. St. Liberius took them to Emperor Constance, who wrote to his brother, and they were allowed to return.

After Constance was killed in Rome, Constantius sent to St. Liberius asking him to accept the followers of Arius, and to accept the exile of Athanasius, but he refused this petition. Constantius exiled St. Liberius, then came to Rome where he killed the killers of his brother. The heads of the monasteries and the priests met him and asked him to release their father Liberius. The emperor returned him from his exile, and he continued to teach and preach to his flock. He resisted the followers of Arius, until he departed in peace. He sat on the episcopal throne for fifteen years.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the ascetic saint, Anba Poimen (Baymon), departed. He was born about the year 350 A.D., in one of the cities of Egypt. He had six brothers, John, Jacob, Job, Joseph, Sonosyos, and Abraham. They all agreed to become monks, and they dwelt in a remote place. They forsook the love of the world, they bore the yoke of the Lord Christ, and they lived an ascetic life. Once their mother desired to see them, so she came to them, stood outside, and she sent a message for them to come to see her. They replied saying, "You shall not see us except in the age to come." She understood their answer and returned to her town.

Anba Poimen was a teacher, counselor, and comforter to the old and young men of the wilderness. Whenever tribulation or temptation befell anyone, he would come to him, and St. Poimen would cure him.

This father left to us many profitable teachings such as:

+ If you see a brother who has transgressed, despair not of him, but wake up his soul, comfort him, and lighten his burden, so that he may rise up from his fall.

+ Teach your heart what your tongue says.

+ One of the brethren said to him, "If I see a brother whose conduct is wicked, I do not feel comfortable to bring him to my cell. On the other hand, if his conduct is good, I rejoice and bring him to my cell cheerfully." The saint replied, "If you treat well the brother who is good, then you must treat that brother whose works are inferior with a double portion of goodness, for he is sick and needs healing."

+ Then he told this brother, "There was a monk in a monastery, who had fallen into a transgression, and he was always weeping, and supplicating God saying, 'O Lord, I have sinned against You, please forgive me.' A voice came to him, 'I have not forsaken you, except when you have forsaken your brother in the time of his trial.'"

+ Anba Poimen also added, "If we cover over the sins of our brethren, God will cover over our sins. And if we make it known, God will do the same of our inequities."

Having finished his days and having arrived at a good old age that was pleasing to God, he departed in peace.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Fifth Day of the Blessed Month of El-Nasi

1. The Departure of St. James, Bishop of Misre.

2. The Departure of the Righteous Amos, the Prophet.

3. The Departure of St. Barsoma, the "Naked".

4. The Departure of St. Yoannis XV, 99th Pope of Alexandria.

1. On this day, in the year 804 A.M. (August 28th, 1088 A.D.), and during the Papacy of Pope Kyrillos II, 67th Patriarch, the church celebrates the commemoration of the pure father, St. James, Bishop of Misre (Cairo). This saint longed for the monastic life from a young age, so he went to the wilderness of St. Macarius, and lived in a cell there for many years. Then he was ordained Archdeacon for the church of the monastery of St. John. Because of his virtuous life, great knowledge and piety, he was ordained bishop for Misre (Cairo). Having been seated upon the episcopal seat, he added to his prayer, asceticism, and worship. He was a teacher, spiritual advisor, and a deterrent to the sinners, during his episcopate. When he finished his good strife, he fell sick. He called his people, commanded them not to be negligent in the Divine commandments, and explained to them what the punishment of sinners would be. Then, he made the sign of the glorious Cross on his face, and delivered his pure soul in the hands of the Lord.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks, the departure of the righteous prophet Amos, one of the twelve minor prophets. He prophesied in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam the son of Joash, King of Israel. God had sent him to the children of Israel to caution them and advise them to bear fruit that befits repentance before the coming of the day of vengeance. He prophesied concerning the passion of the Lord and the darkness of the sun on that day. He also prophesied concerning the lamentation and sorrow which should come upon the children of Israel after this, how their

festivals should be turned into days of sorrow, and their joy into weeping; how they should lack the help of God, and how they should hunger and thirst through the lack of teaching and knowledge, how they should be scattered in all countries among the nations. And all these things were fulfilled upon them. It was said that this prophet was killed because of his harsh rebuke for their sins. This prophet lived about eight hundred years before the advent of the Lord Christ.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, in the year 1033 A.M., the great saint who was perfect in the love of God, Anba Barsoma the "Naked" (El-Erian), departed. He was born in Misre (Cairo). His father called El-Wageeh Moufdel, was the scribe of the Queen "Shagaret El-dor", and his mother was from the family of El-Taban. When his parents departed, his uncle took possession of all that they had left. Barsoma did not quarrel with him but forsook the world and lived the life of the righteous hermits. He lived outside the city for five years suffering the harshness of the summer heat and the winter cold. He wore no clothing except a hairy sackcloth, following the example of the Saint Anba Paul (Anba Paula), the first hermit. Then he shut himself in a cave inside the church of St. Marcurius Abu-Saifain for twenty years in ceaseless prayer and fasting, by day and night.

There was a huge serpent in that cave. When he entered the cave and saw this serpent, he cried saying, "O my Lord Christ, the Son of the Living God, who gave us the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and every power of the enemy. You granted healing to the children of Israel, who were bitten by the serpents, when they looked to the brass serpent. Now I look to you, O You Who was hanged on the Cross, so that you might grant me power to be able to overcome this beast." Then he made the sign of the cross over himself, and moved toward the serpent saying, "You trampled the serpent and the snakes, and You tread upon the lion and the dragon. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Then he said to the serpent, "O blessed one stand still in your place," and then he made the sign of the cross over it. He prayed to God and asked Him to remove the beastly nature from it. As he finished his prayer, the serpent changed its nature and became tame. The saint said to the serpent, "Henceforth, O blessed one, you shall not have power or might to harm any man, but you shall be subject and obedient to what I say to you." The serpent manifested signs of submission and obedience, and became with the saint as the lion was with Daniel, the prophet, in the den.

Then he left the cave and lived on the roof of the church. He endured the summer heat and the winter cold, until his skin became dark from much worship and asceticism. He remained in this state for fifteen years.

During his days, a great persecution befell the Christian nation. The churches were shut and the Christians were forced to wear blue turbans. As for this saint, the ruler seized him, severely smote him, then cast him in prison. When he was released, he went to the monastery of El-Shahran, where he lived on the roof of the church and he increased in his asceticism. He did not replace his white turban. The rulers of that time from princes, judges and others, visited him and saw his white turban, but no one dared to force him to wear a blue one for they knew that the power of God was with him. The saint continually asked and supplicated God to take his anger away from

His people. Having completed his strife, he departed at a good old age, in the year 1033 A.M. He was then sixty years old, and was buried in the monastery of El-Shahran.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

4. Today also, in the year 1346 A.M. (September 7th, 1629 A.D.), Pope Yoannis XV (John), 99th Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was from Mallowy, and was known by the name of Yoannis El-Mallowany. He became a monk in St. Antonios monastery, and was ordained Patriarch in the 7th of Tute, 1336 A.M. (September 18th, 1619 A.D.). He was chaste, knowledgeable, and just in his judgements. He was modest, impartial, and only sought the truth. He was zealous about the church, compassionate to the priests, loving to the poor, and provided shelter for strangers. He did not desire anything of this world, but rather he was absorbed in prayer and worship, day and night.

In the year 1340 A.M. (1623 A.D.), a grave epidemic befell Upper Egypt. It lasted from the month of Tubah (January) till the month of Baramoudah (April), which perished multitudes of people and devastated many families. Pope Yoannis was in Upper Egypt, and returned to Cairo in 1341 A.M. In year 1342 A.M. another severe epidemic spread through the land, which was less severe than the first. The Pope went to upper Egypt again in the second year of the epidemic, then returned to Cairo. On his way back, he passed by the city of Abnub, and he spent a night there. He suffered abdominal pain. It was said that he was given a poison where he spent that night. The owner of that house had concubines besides his wife and the Pope admonished him for that. When the Pope felt ill, he asked for a boat, which he sailed in. He ceased in the boat on his way, and was buried in the monastery of the Saint Anba Bishiah in El-Biadih. He was on the Chair for nine years, eleven months and twenty-two days.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

The Sixth Day³³ of the Blessed Month of El-Nasi

A Thanksgiving To God

Come all you faithful people, whom have been bought by the pure Blood of our Lord, and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us glorify Him for what He bestowed upon us from His benevolence and goodness, and abundantly gave us from His blessings and richness. He brought us to this day, which is the last day of the Coptic year, and we are physically healthy, steadfast in our faith, and following the footsteps of our holy fathers. We greatly thank God for He did not deal with us according to our bad deeds but He lingered on us, and kept us, to this day, in peace, awaiting our return to Him in repentance, so that he might grant us forgiveness.

So let us weep before Him with deep sighs for the transgressions and sins that we have committed. Let us repent from all our hearts on all that we have committed, from inequities and

³³In leap years.

trespasses, and commit ourselves before Him to live pure and chaste lives. We ask Him to strengthen us in the True Faith, to preserve us from the snare of Satan, to grant us His perfect peace, and to repose the souls of our departed ones with the intercession of the Virgin Lady St. Mary, and all the angels and the saints.

Glory, Honor, and Worship to Our God now and forever and unto the age of ages. Amen.

Thus Far The Lord Has Helped Us

I Samuel 7:12

INTRODUCTION

“Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversion. ” (Hebrews 13: 7)

Since the early Apostolic era, the history of our glorious church has not been, at any time, without heroes of faith. Their strife was clear particularly in the early times and especially in the eras of persecutions. Hundreds of thousands were martyred because of their strong faith in their God. They defended their faith, and their church, till the last drop of their blood without fear from torture or persecution.

All of these heroes were not only a shining light in their times or a blessing to their generations, but they continue to light the world and shine to many – the weak and the strong – with their pure and chaste life, as the Bible says, “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.” (Daniel 12:3)

Many lives were changed after reading the history and strife of those martyrs and saints. Many of the believers were strengthened by the life history of those saints to become more established in the faith and to grow in grace.

It is true what one of the saints said, “It is very desirable for the meek to hear the life history of saints. ” Because of that, the church arranged the reading of a part of the Book of Synaxarium, which contains the Biography of Saints, after the reading of the Acts of our holy fathers the apostles. May their life be an example and a model for us to act like them and to follow in their footsteps so we might have a share and fellowship in the glory of the inheritance of those saints.

Between your hands, dear reader, is the English translation of the Coptic Synaxarium Volume I (Tute-Babah-Hatour). May the Lord help us to continue this work and to bless those who do not spare any effort in the translation, editing and the production of this book.

May the intercession of the pure Virgin St. Mary, St. Mark the Evangelist, St. Bishoy the beloved of our Good Savior and all the saints that are honoured by our church in this text and the prayers of H.H. Pope Shenouda III be with us all. Amen.

Feast of St. Anthony the Great
22nd of Tubah 1703 Martyrdom
31st of January 1987 A.D.

Fr. Shenouda Anba Bishoy

INTRODUCTION

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” (Hebrews 13:7)

We thank our Lord and God Jesus Christ for enabling us to bring to your hands the second volume of the Coptic Synaxarium. This volume includes the three blessed months: Kiahk, Tubah and Amshir.

We offer our thanks to all our beloved fathers in North America who contributed with their encouragement and advice. Our special thanks to Rev. Father Tadros Malaty for his continuous support, kind words and constructive advice to improve the quality of the work.

We followed the text “The Saints of Egypt” by De Lacy O’Leary, in translating the names of the saints and cities. In translating quotations from the Bible, the New King James version was used to make it easier for our young generation to follow the text.

Dear reader, you probably read or heard that the holy council of our Coptic Orthodox Church is in the process of reviewing the Coptic Synaxarium. This is a very blessed and important step. We must keep this valuable text up to date for the benefit of future generations. That should not contradict the translation of the text that is available in our hands now, for two reasons. First, reviewing the text is a time consuming and a long process. Meanwhile we should not deprive our children of exploring the heritage of their church. Second, all translated materials are stored on computer disks, which will facilitate any future changes.

May the Lord help us to continue this work and to bless those who do not spare any effort in the translation, editing and the production of this book.

The publishing of this volume commemorates the feast of St. George and the eighteenth anniversary of the enthronement of His Holiness, Our Blessed Father Pope Shenouda the Third.

May the intercession of the pure Virgin St. Mary, St. George the Prince of the Martyrs and all the saints that are honored by our church in this text and the prayers of H.H. Pope Shenouda III be with us all. Amen.

Feast of St. Mina the Wonder Worker
15th of Hatour 1706 A.M.
24th of November 1989 A.D.

Publishing Committee

INTRODUCTION

'As this, O Lord, is the command of Thine Only-Begotten Son, that we share in the commemoration of Thy saints, graciously accord, O Lord, to remember all the saints who have pleased Thee since the beginning. ' (The Liturgy of St. Basil)

We thank our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ for enabling us to bring to your hands, dear reader, the third volume of the Coptic Synaxarium. This volume includes the three blessed months: Baramhat, Baramoudah , and Bashans .

The biography of the saints and the martyrs is very pleasing to the Christian soul. Their spirituality, struggles, virtues and sacrifices, enlightens, educates, strengthens, and sets an example for us. Martyrdom in Christianity has a profound philosophical concept which depends upon strong spiritual basis. Monasticism also provides another side of human sacrifice by forsaking the world and everything in it to adhere to the One, its Creator. We cannot overlook the laity that gave their lives, efforts, endurance, and support to the faith and church, setting an example for us to follow.

As we put this third volume in the hand of our loving and benevolent God, we ask Him to make it a blessing for everyone who reads it. The reading of this text should confirm our faith, as well as strengthen and establish us in a holy and spiritual life; a life which is worthy of Him Who loved us and gave Himself on our behalf.

May the Lord help us to continue this work and to bless those who do not spare any effort in the translation, editing and production of this work.

May the intercessions of the pure Virgin St. Mary, St. George the Prince of the Martyrs, all the saints that are honored by our church in this text, and the prayers of H.H. Pope Shenouda III be with us all. Amen.

Feast of the Apostles
5th of 4bib 1708 A.M.
12th of July 1992 A.D.

Publishing Committee

INTRODUCTION

“As this, O Lord, is the command of Thine Only-Begotten Son, that we share in the commemoration of Thy saints, graciously accord, O Lord, to remember all the saints who have pleased Thee since the beginning.” (The Liturgy of St. Basil)

We thank our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ for guiding, supporting, and enabling us to bring to your hands, dear reader, the fourth volume of the Coptic Synaxarium. This volume includes the blessed months: Baounah, Abib, Misra, and the little month (El-Nasi, Intercalary days).

As we put this fourth volume in the hand of our loving and benevolent God, we ask him to make it a blessing for everyone who reads it. The translation, preparation, and production of this text have been a great inspiration and blessing for us.

The index at the back of this volume is general and comprehensive; it covers the fourth volume as well as the previous three volumes.

We hope, dear reader, that we were able to provide you with a valuable addition to your spiritual library. We do not claim perfection but we will try to strive for perfection in future editions.

We have used many references to verify the names of persons and places. Some of these valuable texts were ‘The Saints of Egypt’ by De Lacy O’Leary, Coptic Encyclopedia, and the Ethiopian Synaxarium. Names that had more than one spelling are given with the less familiar spelling between parenthesis.

We ask Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to bless those who gave their time and effort translating, editing, proof reading, and producing the text. May the Lord reward them a hundred fold in this life and grant them a share and inheritance with His saints in the heavenly kingdom.

May the intercessions of the pure Virgin St. Mary, St. George, the Prince of the Martyrs, and all the Saints that are honored by the church in this text and the prayers of H.H. Pope Shenouda III be with us all. Amen

Feast of St. George,
Prince of the Martyrs
23rd of Baramoudah 1711 A.M.
1st of May 1995 A.D.

Publishing Committee