

A COMPANION TO THE COPTIC SYNAXARIUM

**PART TWO
PHAMENOTH - LITTLE MONTH**

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**SAINT MARY COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH
KITCHENER ONTARIO CANADA**

March 2017

THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH THE FIRST DAY

1. The Departure of St. Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem
2. The Martyrdom of St. Alexander of Rome
3. Commemoration of Anba Marcure the bishop.

1. On this day we commemorate the departure of St. Narcissus bishop of Jerusalem. St. Narcissus was consecrated Bishop of Jerusalem about the year 180. He was already an old man, and God attested his merits by many miracles, which were long held in memory by the Christians of Jerusalem.

One Holy Saturday in the church the faithful were in great trouble, because no oil could be found for the lamps which were used in the Paschal feast. St. Narcissus bade them draw water from a neighbouring well, and, praying over it, told them to put it in the lamps. It was changed into oil, and long after some of this oil was preserved at Jerusalem in memory of the miracle.

But the very virtue of the Saint made him enemies, and three wretched men falsely charged him with an atrocious crime. They confirmed their testimony by horrible oath. The holy bishop had long desired a life of solitude, and he withdrew secretly into the desert, leaving the Church in peace.

But God spoke for His servant, and the bishop's accusers suffered great penalties. Then Narcissus returned to Jerusalem and resumed his office. He died in extreme old age, bishop to the last. May his holy blessings be with us Amen.

2. On this day also we celebrate the martyrdom of St. Alexander of Rome. The Holy Martyr Alexander suffered for Christ at the beginning of the IV Century. He was a soldier, and he served in the regiment of the tribune Tiberian at Rome.

He was age 18, when the Roman emperor Maximian Hercules (284-305) issued an edict, that on a designated day all the citizenry was to appear at the temple of Zeus outside the city for the offering of sacrifice. The tribune Tiberian assembled his soldiers and he ordered them to go to this festival, but the youth Alexander, raised from childhood in the Christian faith, refused and he declared that he would not offer sacrifice to devils.

Tiberian, reported to the emperor Maximian that in his regiment there was a soldier, who was a Christian. Soldiers were immediately dispatched for Alexander. During this time Alexander was asleep. An Angel roused him and announced to the youth about his impending act of martyrdom, and that he would constantly be with him during this time. When the soldiers arrived, Alexander came out to meet them; his face shone with so bright a light, that the soldiers in glancing at him fell to the ground. The saint upbraided them and besought them to

fulfill the orders given them. Standing before Maximian,

Saint Alexander boldly confessed his faith in Christ and he refused to worship the idols, adding moreover, that he was afraid neither of the emperor, nor of his threats. The emperor tried to persuade the youth with promises of honours, but Alexander remained steadfast in his confession, and he denounced the emperor and all the pagans.

They began torturing the holy martyr, but he bravely endured all the sufferings. Maximian remanded Saint Alexander back under the authority of the tribune Tiberian, who was being sent to Thrace for the persecution of Christians there. So they led off the martyr, fettered in chains, to Thrace.

At this time the Angel of the Lord made it known to Saint Alexander's mother, Pimonia, about the martyr's deed of her son. Pimonia came to her son, where he stood before Tiberian at trial and again he steadfastly confessed himself a Christian. They subjected him to torture before the eyes of his mother, and then they ordered the prisoner on the way to his final journey, behind the chariot of Tiberian.

The brave Pimonia asked the soldiers to let her go up to her son and she encouraged him to undergo the torments for Christ. The soldiers were astonished at the stoic strength of the martyr and they said one to another: "Great is the Christian God!". The Angel appeared several times to the martyr, strengthening him.

Tiberian imposed the death sentence on the saint. Before death the holy martyr gave thanks to the Lord, for that the Lord had given him the strength to undergo all the innumerable torments and to accept a martyr's end. The soldier, who was supposed to carry out the execution, besought the forgiveness of the saint and for a long while he could not bring himself to lift his hand with the sword, since he saw Angels coming for the soul of the martyr.

The body of the saint was cast into a river. Saint Alexander's mother Pimonia came and took up the remains of her martyred son and reverently gave them burial near the River Erigona. At the grave of Saint Alexander healings at once began. Soon the holy martyr appeared to his mother in a dream, in which he comforted her and related, that soon she too would be transported to the Heavenly habitations. May his holy blessings be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also the church celebrates the departure of St. Mercure the bishop of Telbana (Governorate of Menoufia). This saint was afflicted with Leprosy and he grieved greatly and went to Pope Zacharias, 64th Pope of Alexandria (1004-1032) to ask for his prayers. The Pope grieved for him and prayed for him.

St. Mercure then returned to his diocese and locked himself up in a church dedicated to the holy Mother of God. He stayed for three days fasting and praying, and falling asleep, he rested his head on an icon of the holy Virgin, when he felt the hand of the holy Virgin anointing his whole body. He woke from his sleep to find himself cured.

The saint rejoiced and performed a veneration for the holy Virgin, then he went back to Pope Zacharias, who rejoiced for him and allowed him to resume his ministry. He continued to serve his people in purity and righteousness and when he finished his course he reposed in peace. May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE SECOND DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

The Martyrdom of St. Macrobius (Makrawy) Bishop of Nikiu

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 PHAMENOTH

1. The Departure of St. Cosmas, the Fifty-Eighth Pope of Alexandria.
2. The Departure of St. Porphyry (Porphyrius) bishop of Gaza.
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 Phamenoth 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. Porphyrius of Gaza departed. He was born about the year 346 at Thessalonica. His parents were people of substance, and this allowed St Porphyrius to receive a fine education. Having the inclination for monastic life, he left his native region at twenty-five years of age and set off for Egypt, where he lived in the Nitrian desert under the guidance of St Macarius the Great.

After five years, St Porphyrius was afflicted with a serious malady of the legs. He decided to go to the holy places of Jerusalem to pray for healing. He was miraculously healed. He then gave away all his money to the poor and for the adornment of the churches of God. When the saint was forty-five years old. The Patriarch of Jerusalem ordained St Porphyrius to the holy priesthood and appointed him custodian of the Venerable Wood of the Cross of the Lord.

In 395 the bishop of the city of Gaza (in Palestine) died. The local Christians went to Caesarea to ask Metropolitan John to send them a new bishop who would be able to contend against the pagans, which were predominant in their city and were harassing the Christians there. The Lord inspired the Metropolitan to summon the priest Porphyrius. With fear and trembling the ascetic accepted the office of bishop, and with tears he prostrated himself before the Life-Creating Wood and went to fulfill his new obedience.

The pagans continued to harass the Christians. They passed them over for public office, and burdened them with taxes. St Porphyrius and Metropolitan John of Caesarea journeyed to Constantinople to seek redress from the emperor. St John Chrysostom received them and assisted them.

The emperor issued an edict in 401 ordering the destruction of pagan temples in Gaza and the restoration of privileges to Christians. Moreover, the emperor gave the saints money for the construction of a new church, which was to be built in Gaza on the site of the chief pagan temple.

St Porphyrius upheld Christianity in Gaza to the very end of his life, and guarded his flock from the vexatious pagans. Through the prayers of the saint numerous miracles and healings occurred. The holy archpastor guided his flock for twenty-five years, and reposed in 420 at an advanced age. May his holy blessings be with us all. 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 PHAMENOTH

1. Assembly of the Holy Council on the island of Bani-Omar.
2. The Martyrdom of St. Haboulyous (Hanulius) the prince.

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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." 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 PHAMENOTH

1. The Departure of Abba Serapamon, Hegumen of Abba John Colobos monastery.
2. Commemoration of the Martyrdom of St. Eudokia of Heliopolis
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 monkshood 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 the martyrdom of St. Eudokia of Heliopolis. She began life as a pagan, a Samaritan woman who lived in Phoenicia (present-day Lebanon). Eudokia wasted her early years living a sinful life. With her blinding beauty she led many people into sin and amassed a great fortune.

She was introduced to the Christian faith by the monk Germanos, who was staying at a neighboring house. Under his guidance she became a Christian. She was baptized by Bishop Theodotos of Heliopolis after she had a heavenly vision.

St. Eudokia discarded her previous life to become a nun. She built a monastery near the city of Baalbeck, also known as Heliopolis, and ministered to the many people who came to receive assistance. Because of her beauty, she also had many suitors. One suitor named Philostratos was persistent enough to seek her out in the hope of returning her to her previous life. Eudokia prayed for him and this brought him back to his senses, he was converted to Christianity.

The conversion of so many to Christianity brought Saint Eudokia to the attention of the authorities who had her beheaded in 107 AD.
May her holy blessings be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE SIXTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

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 we commemorate the departure of St. Theodotus the bishop. He was a native of Galatia in Asia Minor, became Bishop of Kyrenia in Cyprus. During a time of persecution against Christians under the impious emperor Licinius (311-324), St Theodotus openly preached Christ, calling on the pagans to abandon idolatry and turn to the true God. Sabinus, the governor of Cyprus, ordered that the Bishop be arrested and brought to trial.

When he heard about this order, the saint did not wait for the soldiers to be sent after him, but immediately went to the governor saying, "I, whom you seek, am here. I have shown myself in order to preach Christ my God."

The governor ordered that the saint be beaten without mercy, suspended from a tree, raked with sharp implements, and then be taken to prison. Five days later St Theodotus was brought to the governor, who presumed that after his tortures the bishop would prefer to renounce Christ, rather than endure new sufferings.

However, St Theodotus did not cease to preach about Christ. At first they put the saint on an iron grate, under which they lit a fire, and then hammered nails into his feet and let him go. Many witnessed the sufferings of the martyr. Astonished at the saint's endurance and his divinely-inspired speech, they came to believe in Christ. Learning of this, Sabinus gave orders to stop the torture and throw the saint into prison.

During the reign of St Constantine the Great, the freedom to confess their faith was given to all Christians, and among those set free from prison was St Theodotus. The saint returned to Kyrenia and after two years serving as bishop he peacefully fell asleep in the Lord in about the year 326. May his holy prayers be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

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. According to the "*History of the Egyptian monks*" (Historia monachorum) St. Apollonius was a monk who was ordained a deacon. During the persecutions, he took it upon himself to go around the brothers and encourage them to martyrdom. He was eventually arrested himself and cast into prison. where a great crowd of the gentiles came to mock him and cry out against him with many blasphemous and impious words.

A man called Philemon was one of them, a famous flute-player, greatly loved by the people. He piled insults upon Apollonius, calling him impious, wicked, deceiver of humanity, worthy of being held in abhorrence by all. After suffering all this and many other even worse insults, Apollonius replied: "May the Lord have mercy on you, my son, and impute to you as a sin nothing of what you have said." These words cut Philemon to the quick. In his own mind he felt the force of something that was more than human, so much so that he instantly declared himself to be a Christian.

Arianus the governor of Antinoe tied them to a tree and ordered arrows to be shot at them. While they were shooting Apollonius, one of the arrows glanced back and struck the Governor's eye and destroyed it. 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,

smearing his eye, and immediately he was able to see. Arianus believed on the Lord Christ, and was later martyred (8th of Phamenoth)

The news of this came to the ears of the prefect of Alexandria, and made him ferociously angry. He gave orders to bring the two saints bound to Alexandria. But while they were bound and being taken to Alexandria, Apollonius began to teach faith in God to those who had bound them and were taking them. Believing in the mercy of God they wholeheartedly accepted faith in God, and appeared before the judge as professing Christians along with those whom they brought in bonds. When the prefect saw that they were steadfastly persisting in believing in God he ordered that they should all alike be cast into the sea, not knowing in his arrogance what he was doing. For them this was not a death but a Baptism.

But their bodies, by the providence of God, were washed up on the shore, whole and cleansed. People came to give them a decent funeral, recovered the bodies, and took them to be gathered together in one sepulchre as a final resting place. From that time to this, they have performed many signs and wonders to the astonishment of all. May their holy blessings 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 blessings be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

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 at Bethlehem of the Tribe of Judah. From his early childhood he studied the Law of God under the guidance of St. Simeon the Elder.

When the Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself to the world, St Matthias believed in Him as the Messiah, followed constantly after Him and was numbered among the Seventy Apostles, whom the Lord “sent them two by two before His face” (Luke 10:1).

After the Ascension of the Savior, St Matthias was chosen by lot to replace Judas Iscariot as one of the Twelve Apostles (Acts 1:15-26). After the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Matthias preached the Gospel at Jerusalem and in Judea together with the other Apostles (Acts 6:2, 8:14). From Jerusalem he went with the Apostles Peter and Andrew to Syrian Antioch, and Cappadocia.

The Apostle Matthias journeyed after this to Amasea, a city on the shore of the sea. During a three year journey of the Apostle Andrew, St Matthias was with him at Edessa and Sebaste. According to Church Tradition, he was preaching at Pontine Ethiopia (presently Western Georgia) and Macedonia. He was frequently subjected to deadly peril, but the Lord preserved him to preach the Gospel.

The Apostle Matthias returned to Judea and did not cease to enlighten his countrymen with the light of Christ’s teachings. He worked great miracles in the Name of the Lord Jesus and he converted a great many to faith in Christ.

The Jewish High Priest Ananias hated Christ and earlier had commanded the Apostle James, Brother of the Lord, to be flung down from the heights of the Temple, and now he ordered that the Apostle Matthias be arrested and brought for judgment before the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. The Apostle Matthias was sentenced to death by the Sanhedrin and stoned. May his holy blessings 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 Phamenoth (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 Antinoe 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, 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.

A dolphin carried the Saint's body, and brought it to the city of Alexandria, where it cast him on the shore. His men took his body, brought it to Antinoe, 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 PHAMENOTH

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 PHAMENOTH

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 Phamenoth 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 PHAMENOTH

The Martyrdom Of St. Basil, Bishop of Cherson.

On this day we commemorate the martyrdom of St. Basil, Bishop of Cherson. At the beginning of the fourth century, St. Hermon, archbishop of Jerusalem (300-312) sent a series of missionary bishops to Cherson, in the Crimea peninsula (between Russia and Ukraine) to preach Christ's Gospel. The first to go were Basil and Ephraim.

Basil remained in Cherson where he preached the Word of God to the pagans of the Crimea. While he was successful in setting many of the idol-worshippers on the path of truth, others rose up against him. He was arrested, mercilessly beaten, and then expelled from the city.

He proceeded to the mountains, and there he settled in a cave where he prayed to God for those who had driven him out, asking that He might illumine them with the light of true knowledge. Soon the Lord presented the unbelievers with a miracle. The only son of an important citizen of Cherson died. In a dream the dead child appeared to his parents and told them that a man named Basil could return him from the dead through his prayers.

The parents then searched and found St Basil with whom they pleaded for him to work the miracle. The saintly Basil replied that he himself was a sinful man and did not have the power to raise the dead. He further told them that the Lord Almighty could fulfill their request if they were to believe in Him. Basil then began praying, invoking the Name of the Holy Trinity. After praying for some time Basil blessed water and sprinkled it on the dead child who soon came to life. Basil returned with honor to the city with the restored family. Many saw and believed and were baptized.

Around the year 309, during the persecution of the Roman emperor Galerius Maximian, when the persecutions arrived in Cherson, the foes of Christ rose up also against St. Basil. During the night of March 7, 309 he was pulled from his house, tied up, and dragged through the streets and, then, was beaten to death with stones and rods. His body was then thrown out of the city to be eaten by the wild life. His remains were left unburied, yet were untouched. During the night the Christians recovered his holy body and secretly buried it in a cave. May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to god forever. Amen.

THE TWELFTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

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 Phamenoth (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.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

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. Today we celebrate the repose of Abba Dionysius, the Fourteenth Pope of Alexandria, from December 28, 248 until his death on March 22, 264 after seventeen years as a bishop. He was the first Pope to hold the title "the Great" (before a Bishop of Rome even).

St. Dionysius was born to a wealthy pagan family around 190 AD. He converted to Christianity at a mature age, probably under the influence of Origen. After his conversion, he joined the Catechetical School of Alexandria and was a student of Origen and Pope Heraclas. He eventually became leader of the school and presbyter of the Christian church, succeeding Pope Heraclas in 231. Later he became Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria & Patriarch of the See of St. Mark in 248 after the death of Pope Heraclas.

During 249, a major persecution was carried out in Alexandria by a pagan mob, and hundreds were assaulted, stoned, burned or cut down on account of their refusal to deny their faith. Dionysius managed to survive this persecution and the civil war that followed.

In January 250 the new emperor Decius issued a decree of legal persecution. St. Dionysius himself was pursued by the prefect Sabinus, who had sent out an assassin to murder him on sight, but he was miraculously saved. St. Dionysius was forced set up a residence in the Libyan desert until the end of the persecution the following year.

In 252 an outbreak of plague ravaged Alexandria, and St. Dionysius, along with other priests and deacons, took it upon themselves to assist the sick and dying, even among the pagans. Many Christians died while assisting pagans and are considered martyrs.

The persecutions subsided somewhat under Trebonianus Gallus, but were renewed under Valerian who replaced Gallus. St. Dionysius was imprisoned and then exiled. When Gallienus, took over the empire he released all the believers who were in prison and brought back those in exile.

About A.D. 255 a dispute arose concerning the millennialist views taught by Nepos, a bishop in Egypt, which insisted on the interpretation of Revelation 20 as denoting a literal "millennium of bodily luxury" on earth. Because he was taught by Origen, St. Dionysius succeeded through his oral and written efforts in checking this Egyptian revival of millennialism. He departed in a good old age 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. Abba Macarius the Great and Abba 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 Abba John the short and Abba 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 PHAMENOTH

1. Martyrdom of Bishops Eugene, Elpidius and Agathodorus of Cherson.
2. The Martyrdom of St. Shenouda (Sinouti) El Bahnasawy.

On this day the holy Bishops Eugene, Elpidius and Agathodorus of Cherson were martyred. They were among the 7 bishops sent by St. Hermon, archbishop of Jerusalem to spread the Gospel in the Crimean peninsula. Only one of the seven died in peace, the other six were martyred.

A year after the martyrdom of St Basil (11th of Phamenoth), three of his companions, Bishops Eugene, Elpidius and Agathodorus, ceased their preaching in the Hellespont, and arrived at Cherson to continue his holy work. They endured many hardships for the salvation of human souls. All three bishops shared the fate of their predecessor: they were stoned to death by the pagans on March 7, 311. May their holy blessings 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 un- harmed, 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 and glory be to God. Amen.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

1. The Departure of Amma Sarah the nun.
2. The Martyrdom of St. Helias of Hnes.

1. On this day we celebrate the departure of the righteous Amma Sarah the ascetic. Amma Sarah was a native of Upper Egypt. Born into a wealthy Christian family, Sarah was well educated and a voracious reader. Moving to the vicinity of a women's Convent in the desert of Pelusium [near Antinoe], Amma Sarah lived alone for many years near the river in a cell with a terraced roof. She attended to the needs of the nearby community.

Amma Sarah was tortured by the insane passion of adultery for thirteen years. She always defeated it by prayer and drove it away from her. At one time, the foul insanity of adultery came to her in bodily form and said to her: "Sarah, you have defeated me"! Amma Sarah humbly answered: "I have not defeated you but the Lord Christ has defeated you". From that time on, the thought of adultery left her forever.

Eventually Amma Sarah received the monastic garb and lived in a closer relationship with the community, serving as spiritual elder. She died around her eightieth year.

Amma Sarah said, "If I prayed God that all men should approve of my conduct, I should find myself a penitent at the door of each one, but I shall rather pray that my heart may be pure towards all."



She also said, "I put out my foot to ascend the ladder, and I place death before my eyes before going up it."

She also said, "It is good to give alms for men's sake. Even if it is only done to please men. Through it one can begin to seek to please God."

Some monks came one day to visit Amma Sarah. She offered them a small basket of fruit. They left the good fruit and ate the bad. So she said to them, "You are true monks of Scetis." May her holy blessings 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 PHAMENOTH

The Departure Of Abba 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 Ouseem, 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 punished those who 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 King Kyriakos of Nubia heard about this, he marched north into Egypt at the head of an army said to number 100,000 men to free the Pope of Alexandria. However, once the Nubian army reached Egypt, the Pope was released from prison.

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.

Pope Michael opposed the enthroning of the Bishop Isaac as a Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch after the death of Iwanis I because he was already the Bishop of Harran.

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 PHAMENOTH

1. The Departure of Lazarus, the beloved of the Lord.
2. The Martyrdom of St. Sedhom Bishay in Domiat.
3. The Departure of St. Basilius, Bishop of Jerusalem.
4. The Commemoration of the Sts. George the ascetic, Belasius the martyr, and Abba Joseph the bishop.

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 commemorates the martyrdom of Sedhom Bishay in Domiat on the 17th. of Phamenoth 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 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 celebrates the commemoration of the Sts. George the ascetic, Belasius the martyr, and Anba Joseph the bishop. May their prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

The Martyrdom of St. Isidore of Chios

On this day St. Isidore of Chios was martyred. This saint who brought Christianity to the Greek island of Chios, was born in Alexandria, Egypt and was martyred in the persecutions of Decius, c. 251 AD.

A Roman officer in the navy, St. Isidore confessed himself as a Christian to the commander of the fleet, Numerian, while they were on the Aegean island of Chios. Because he was unwilling to repent and worship the gods of the state, he was tormented and beheaded.

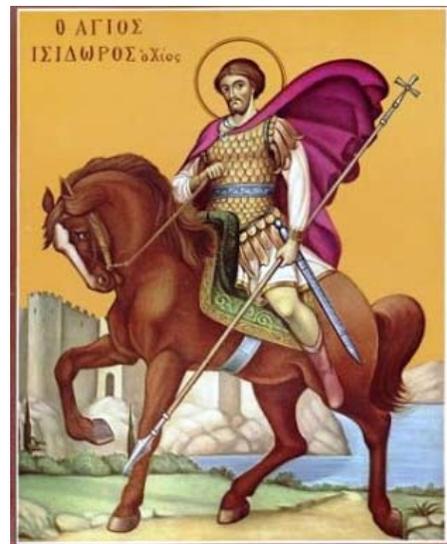
His body was cast into a cistern. A young Christian woman, Myrope, with the help of a friend, retrieved the body although it was guarded by soldiers. On learning that the soldiers would be put to death if they failed to find the body, Myrope went to Numerius and confessed that she had taken Isidore's body, but refused to say where it was then interred. Numerius had her publicly flogged, then thrown into prison.

Before she died, she had a vision of Holy Isidore, who "encouraged her with the news that although she was about to die for what she had done it would not have been in vain because she would be giving her life for Jesus Christ and not for Isidore or their Christian friends." Her body was interred beside Isidore's, and a chapel erected over the graves.

In 1125 his remains were brought from Chios to the Venetian Basilica of St. Mark, which contains a small chapel containing the sarchophogus. His skull was discovered in Chios, encased in a silver and jeweled reliquary, and translated to Venice in 1627.



Remains of the Basilica of St. Isidore in Chios



Saint Isidore of Chios

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

1. The Martyrdom of St. Aristobulus the Apostle
2. The Martyrdom of St. Tomolaus and his companions in Palestine.

1. Today we commemorate the martyrdom of St. Aristobulus, one of the seventy apostles. St. Aristobulus was the brother of the Apostle Barnabas, of Jewish Cypriot origin. He was a follower of St. Paul the Apostle, along with whom he preached the Gospel, and ministered to him.

He was chosen by St. Paul to be the missionary bishop to the land of Britain, inhabited by a very warlike and fierce race. By them he was often scourged, and repeatedly dragged as a criminal through their towns, yet he converted many of them to Christianity. He was there martyred, after he had built churches and ordained deacons and priests for the island.

St. Hippolytus of Rome (5th of Meshir) tells us that he was one of the seventy and that he was the first bishop of Britain. He is mentioned by St. Paul in Rom 16:10.

In 303, St. Dorotheus of Tyre in his “Acts of the Seventy Apostles” wrote, “Aristobulus, who is mentioned by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans, was made bishop in Britain.” May his holy blessings be with us. Amen.

2. On this day in the year 303 AD., we also commemorate the seven holy martyrs: Alexander the Egyptian, Agapius and Alexander from the city of Gaza, Timolaus from Pontus, Dionysius from the city of Tripoli, Romulus, a sub-deacon of the parish of Diospolis and Paesis from the villages of Egypt.

The governor of Caesarea, Urban, had already had two Christians thrown to wild beasts in the public arena for refusing to perform the sacrifices to the Roman gods. These seven saints from different countries then went to the governor and declared that they are Christians. The governor sent them to jail where they were tortured for two days, then they were all beheaded. May their prayers be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

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 canons 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 PHAMENOTH

1. The Commemoration of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin St. Mary.
2. The Commemoration of the visit of Our Lord Christ to Bethany and the consultaion of the high priests to kill Lazarus whom 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) Many of the Jews came to see the Miracle, therefore the high priests consulted together to put the righteous Lazarus to death, whome 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 PHAMENOTH

1. The Departure of St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem.
2. The Departure of St. Michael, Bishop of Naqadah.
3. Departure of St. Joseph of Arimathea.

1. On this day of the year 386 A.D. the holy father Abba Cyril , Bishop of Jerusalem, departed. This father was chosen in the year 348 A.D. as a successor for Abba 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. Cyril's argument was in that he was the successor of St. James, one of the Twelve Disciples.

Abba Cyril 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. Abba Cyril 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 Cyril 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. Cyril 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 Abba Michael bishop of the Chair of Naqadah, departed. With his prayers may the Lord have mercy on us. Amen

3. On this day also the righteous Joseph of Arimathea departed. He was from the city of Arimathea. The Bible tells us that he was a rich man and a disciple of Jesus (Matt 27:57), an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, (Mark 15:43), a good man, and a just... who had not consented to the counsel and deed of them. (Luke 23:50-51) In John 19:38, we are told that he was “a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews”.

In Mark 15:46, we are told that Joseph “bought fine linen,” and Nicodemus, another disciple of Jesus “brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight” (John 19:39) and “took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.” (John 19:40)

In John 19:41, we are told, “Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.” St. Matthew tells us that the tomb was Joseph’s “own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock.” They both laid the Lord in the tomb and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre.

Joseph was with the disciples after the resurrection of the Lord. He preached the Gospel and then departed in peace. His blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE TWENTY THIRD DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

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 send 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.

THE TWENTY FORTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHAMENOTH

1. The Apparition of the Pure Lady the Virgin in the church of Zeiton.
2. The Departure of Abba 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 Cyril 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.

Many spiritual signs appeared before, during, and after the apparition of the Virgin the mother of the Lord's transfiguration. Spiritual beings formed like doves, larger than the doves that we know, appear about midnight or after, appeared suddenly from no where, and also disappeared suddenly.

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.

Th apparitions were accompanied by many miracles of healing for a multitude of people from different religions and nationalities. The media all over the world transmitted the news of the miraculous apparition.

A large cathedral was built across from the church of the apparition that was consecrated by Pope Shenouda III of blessed memory on April 2, 1989. May the intercession of the lady of us all, the pride of our race the holy Virgin Mary be with us. 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 you 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 PHAMENOTH

1. The Departure of St. Onesiphorous , One of the Seventy Apostles.
2. The Departure of Pope Mattheos, the One Hundredth Pope of Alexandria.

1. On this day the great St. Onesiphorus, one of the seventy apostles departed. Orthodox tradition tells us that St Onesiphorus was bishop at Colophon (Asia Minor), and later at Corinth.

St. Paul mentioned him twice in his second epistle to Timothy. He praised him for he sought him out during his imprisonment in Rome.

The persecution of Christians during Nero's reign made Rome a dangerous city for Christians. Paul praises Onesiphorus for his hospitality, kindness, and courage. Onesiphorus is contrasted with the other Christians in Asia who have deserted Paul at this time.

In 2 Timothy 1:16-18, Paul sends greeting to the man's household in Ephesus and makes reference to the help he showed Paul earlier in Ephesus. Timothy, who led the Ephesian church is apparently familiar with these acts. Paul's praise of Onesiphorus is significant because it was written shortly before Paul's death as a final encouragement to Timothy.

Because St. Paul speaks of Onesiphorus only in the past tense, wishes blessings upon his house (family), and mercy for him "in that day", some scholars believe that Onesiphorus had at this point died. Towards the end of the same letter, in 2 Timothy 4:19, Paul sends greetings to "Prisca and Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus", again apparently distinguishing the

situation of Onesiphorus from that of the still living Prisca and Aquila. This is one of the early examples of prayer for the dead.

Both the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches hold that he died a martyr in the city of Parium (not far from Ephesus) on the shores of the Hellespont.

May his holy blessings 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 Abba 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.

The 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 PHAMENOTH

1. The Departure of St. Eupraxia, the virgin.
2. The Departure of Pope Peter VI, the One Hundred and Fourth Pope of Alexandria.

Today we commemorate the departure of Saint Eupraxia the virgin. Saint Eupraxia was daughter of the Constantinople dignitary Antigonos, a kinsman of the holy Emperor Theodosius the Great (379-395).

Antigonos and his wife Eupraxia were pious and bestowed generous alms on the destitute. A daughter was born to them, whom they also named Eupraxia. Antigonos soon died, and the mother withdrew from the imperial court. She went with her daughter to Egypt, on the pretext of inspecting her properties. Near the Thebaid there was a women's convent with a strict monastic rule. The life of the inhabitants attracted the pious widow. She wanted to bestow aid on this monastery, but the abbess Theophila refused and said that the nuns had fully devoted themselves to God and that they did not wish the acquisition of any earthly riches. The abbess consented to accept only candles, incense and oil.

The younger Eupraxia was seven years old at this time. She liked the monastic way of life and she decided to remain at the monastery. Her pious mother did not stand in the way of her daughter's wish. Taking leave of her daughter at the monastery, Eupraxia asked her daughter to be humble, never to dwell upon her noble descent, and to serve God and her sisters.

In a short while the mother died. Having learned of her death, the emperor St Theodosius sent St Eupraxia the Younger a letter in which he reminded her that her parents had betrothed her to the son of a certain senator, intending that she marry him when she reached age fifteen. The Emperor desired that she honour the commitment made by her parents. In reply, St Eupraxia wrote to the emperor that she had already become a bride of Christ, and she requested of the emperor to dispose of her properties, distributing the proceeds for the use of the Church and the needy.

St Eupraxia, when she reached the age of maturity, intensified her ascetic efforts all the more. At first she partook of food once a day, then after two days, three days, and finally, once a week. She combined her fasting with the fulfilling of all her monastic obediences. She toiled humbly in the kitchen, she washed dishes, she swept the premises and served the sisters with zeal and love. The sisters also loved the humble Eupraxia. But one of them envied her and explained away all her efforts as a desire for glory. This sister began to trouble and to reproach her, but the holy virgin did not answer her back, and instead humbly asked forgiveness.

The Enemy of the human race caused the saint much misfortune. Once, while getting water, she fell into the well, and the sisters pulled her out. Another time, St Eupraxia was chopping wood for the kitchen, and cut herself on the leg with an axe. When she carried an armload of

wood up the ladder, she stepped on the hem of her garment. She fell, and a sharp splinter cut her near the eyes. All these woes St Eupraxia endured with patience, and when they asked her to rest, she would not consent.

For her efforts, the Lord granted St Eupraxia a gift of wonderworking. Through her prayers she healed a deaf and dumb crippled child, and she delivered a demon-possessed woman from infirmity. They began to bring the sick for healing to the monastery. The holy virgin humbled herself all the more, counting herself as least among the sisters. Before the death of St Eupraxia, the abbess had a vision. The holy virgin was transported into a splendid palace, and stood before the Throne of the Lord, surrounded by holy angels. The All-Pure Virgin showed St Eupraxia around the luminous chamber and said that She had made it ready for her, and that she would come into this habitation after ten days.

The abbess and the sisters wept bitterly, not wanting to lose St Eupraxia. The saint herself, in learning about the vision, wept because she was not prepared for death. , She asked the abbess to pray that the Lord would grant her one year more for repentance. The abbess consoled St Eupraxia and said that the Lord would grant her His great mercy. Suddenly St Eupraxia sensed herself not well, and having sickened, she soon peacefully died at the age of thirty. May her holy blessings 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 Abba 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 Abba 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 Phamenoth, 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 Plague 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 PHAMENOTH

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 Abba 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 Schema, 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 ourselves to spend 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 hide 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 Phamenoth, 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 PHAMENOTH

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 Abba 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 Abba 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 Abba Macarius II a Metropolitan for the kingdom of Ethiopia in the year 1808 A.D.

After ordaining Abba 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 Koiak 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 Abba 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 KOIAK, 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 Abba Cyril 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 plenteous 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 Abba 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 Abba 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 Abba 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 PHAMENOTH

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 PHAMENOTH

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 Athor. (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 PHARAMUTHI THE FIRST DAY

1. The Departure of St. Silvanus the monk.
2. The Departure of Aaron the priest.
3. The Raid of the Arabs of Upper Egypt on the Wilderness of Scetis.

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 labour 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 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. His prayers be with u. Amen.

3. 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. May God save us from the wiles of the demons and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE SECOND DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHARAMUTHI

1. The Martyrdom of St. Christopher.
2. The Departure of Pope Yoannis the Ninth, the Eighty First Patriarch.

On this day, circa 251 AD., St. Christopher was martyred during the persecution of the emperor Decius (249-251). He was initially called Reprobus. St. Christopher was extremely tall, and with a fearsome face. St. Christopher found a hermit who taught him all about Christ, the King of Kings. The hermit suggested that he spend his life in prayer and fasting, a thing which St. Christopher, a large and probably often hungry man found difficult, he objected. The hermit suggested he then find something else that would please Christ. St. Christopher offered to work at a nearby river, and help travellers across. The fording was dangerous and many people with less strength had drowned. The hermit advised St. Christopher this would please Christ.

One day, a child approached St. Christopher by the river and asked to be helped across. St. Christopher obliged. However, as he entered midstream, the river rose and the child's weight grew and became extremely heavy. It was only by great exertion that St. Christopher safely delivered the child to the other side.

When St. Christopher asked the child why he was so heavy, the child explained that He was the Christ and when St. Christopher carried Him, he also carried the weight of the whole world on his shoulders. The child then vanished.

St. Christopher traveled after this experience and evangelized thousands of people. Arriving in Lycia in Asia Minor, and witnessing to Christians there who were being martyred. At that time, St. Christopher was detained and ordered to offer a sacrifice to the emperor. When he refused, it was decided to attempt to persuade him with money and women. Two women were sent to seduce him, but instead he converted them to Christianity.

After this, it was decided to have him killed, but various attempts to assassinate him failed. Eventually, he was arrested and beheaded. His prayers 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 PHARAMUTHI

1. The Departure of St. John, Bishop of Jerusalem.

2. The Departure of the holy father Abba Michael, the Seventy First Pope of the See of St. Mark.

1. On this day Abba 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 Abba Yacoub, bishop of Lekanah, Abba Christodolus, bishop of Fowa, and Abba 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 PHARAMUTHI

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 PHARAMUTHI

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 sanctifies the soul of man and his body, softens his stony heart, and makes 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 born in Cilicia and was the bishop of Gangra in the early part of the fourth century. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council (Nicaea, 325. A.D.) and was renowned throughout because of his pious and saintly life and his miracle-working.

The Emperor Constantius ordered that a likeness of Hypatius be made during the saint's lifetime. The emperor kept this likeness in his palace as a weapon against all adverse powers.

Once upon returning from Constantinople, St. Hypatius was attacked in a narrow gorge by Novatian heretics and, along with others, was hurled to the ground in mud. At that moment an Arian woman from that group struck him in the head with a stone and, thus, the saint died, and took up habitation in the eternal Kingdom of Christ the God, in the year 326 A.D.

May his blessings be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE SIXTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHARAMUTHI

The Departure of St. Mary of Egypt.

.On this day 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 PHARAMUTHI

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 departed. He was the father of St. Mary, 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 Abba Macrobius, the son of the governor of the city of Kaw, departed in peace. When Abba 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 Abba Severus in his visit to the monastery of Abba Moses, where he saw from the holiness of the monks, their asceticism and devoutness, made him ask Abba Moses to accept him as a monk. Abba 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 Abba 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 Abba Moses.

Abba 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 Abba 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. Abba 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 Abba 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 Abba 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 Abba Yousab, bishop of Akhmeem and the notable Isaac the scribe of the prince Eiz-Eldeen El-Hamawy. Abba 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 Abba 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 PHARAMUTHI

The Martyrdom of the Holy Virgins: Agape, Chionia and Irene.

On this day the holy virgins Agape, Chionia and Irene were martyred. They were three virgin sisters born in Thessaloniki, who, according to Christian tradition, were martyred for their faith in the year 304 AD.

Diocletian's decrees against Christians had been published, the three sisters fled to the mountains. They were discovered and brought before Dulcitus, governor of Macedonia, on the charge of keeping Christian books, in violation of existing law.

The saints were tortured but they remained steadfast in their faith. They were ordered burned and thus obtained the crowns of martyrdom. A woman named Anastasia took their bodies and buried them in honour. May their holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.



THE NINTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHARAMUTHI

1. The Departure of St. Zosima.
2. The commemoration of the Wonder that took place on the hand of Pope Sinuthius (Shenouda I) the Fifty Fifth Patriarch.

On this day is the commemoration of the departure of St. Zosima te ascetic. Saint Zosima was born in the second half of the fifth century, during the reign of Emperor Theodosius the Younger. He became a monk in a monastery in Palestine at a very young age, gaining a reputation as a great elder and ascetic. At the age of fifty-three, now a priest-monk, he moved to a very strict monastery located in the wilderness close to the Jordan River, where he spent the remainder of his life.

He is best known for his encounter with St. Mary of Egypt (commemorated on Pharamuthi 6). It was the custom of that monastery for all of the brethren to go out into the desert for the forty days of Great Lent, spending the time in fasting and prayer, and not returning until Palm Sunday. While wandering in the desert he met Saint Mary, who told him her life story and asked him to meet her the next year on Holy Thursday on the banks of the Jordan, in order to bring her Holy Communion. He did so, and the third year came to her again in the desert, but he found that she had died and he buried her. St Zosima is reputed to have lived to be almost one hundred years of age before he departed in the Lord. 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 PHARAMUTHI

1. The Departure of Abba Isaac, the Disciple of Abba 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 Abba Isaac the Disciple of the great father Abba 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 Abba 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 Meshir, 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 PHARAMUTHI

1. The Departure of Amma Theodora.
2. The Departure of St. John, Bishop of Gaza.

1. Today is the commemoration of the departure Amma Theodora. + She was born to wealthy Alexandrian parents. They educated her well and showered her with expensive clothes and jewelry. She refused to marry because she set her heart on higher service.

After her parents death, she used her inheritance to build a church on the outskirts of Alexandria, where she built a room for herself. She dressed simply and ate frugal food. She spent her time feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick, the stranger and the imprisoned.

After many years, she entreated Abba Athanasius to consecrate her a nun. On examination, he also honoured her with the Schema. Through Divine grace, she had heavenly visions and discernment.

She was elected Amma (mother) to many sisters in a convent near Alexandria. She taught the sisters that prayer, fasting and love were the only weapons of God's athletes against the assault of the evil. She was consulted by many monks and left useful sayings, then departed in Peace.

Here are some of her words: "Let us strive to enter by the narrow gate. Just as the trees, if they have not stood before the winter's storms cannot bear fruit, so it is with us; this present age is a storm and it is only through many trials and temptations that we can obtain an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven."

"A teacher ought to be a stranger to the desire for domination, vain-glory, and pride; one should not be able to fool him by flattery, nor blind him by gifts, nor conquer him by the stomach, nor dominate him by anger; but he should be patient, gentle, and humbler as far as

possible; he must be tested and without partisanship, full of concern for people, and a lover of souls.” Her holy blessings be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the departure of St. John Rufus the bishop of Maiuma near Gaza. He was born in the province of Arabia around 450 AD and studied Law at the Law School of Beirut. He was ordained a priest in Antioch around 475 by St. Peter the Fuller. Upon the return to power of emperor Zeno and the expulsion of Peter the Fuller in 477, John moved to Palestine where he became a disciple of St. Peter the Iberian, the non Chalcedonian bishop of Maiuma (Commemorated on the first day of Koiak). Upon St. Peter the Iberian's death, the bishopric at his monastery of Maiuma passed on to St. John Rufus as the bishop of the city.

This saint wrote the biography of St. Peter the Iberian and of St. Theodosius, the non Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, who was seized by the Chalcedonians, shut up in a room filled with limes and left to die of starvation.

May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE TWELFTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHARAMUTHI

1. The Departure of St. Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem.
2. The Commemoration of St. Antonios, Bishop of Tamoui.

1. On this day, in the year 251 AD., the holy father Abba Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, departed. This holy father studied in the School of Alexandria under Origen, was made Bishop of Cappadocia, and was imprisoned for his faith in the time of emperor Alexander Severus.

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 (his departure on the first day of Phamenoth), 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 Abba Narcissus, for about 5 years.

When Origen visited him, he allowed him to preach in the church, which was not customary in that time. Pope Demetrius objected and St. Alexander responded by ordaining Origen a

priest.

During the persecution of Decius, he was seized and again imprisoned. After making a public confession of faith, he was condemned and thrown to the wild beasts, but they refused to attack him. St. Alexander was then taken to Caesarea where he died in chains in the year 251. The Church recognizes him as a martyr. St. Alexander, despite his great learning and important ecclesiastical positions, was known as an individual of great mildness, especially in his sermons. When put to the test during two persecutions, he remained steadfast in faith and was willing to suffer death for the Faith. May his blessings be with us and glory be to God. 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 PHARAMUTHI

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 Abba Joshua and Abba 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 Pharamuthi, which is the day of martyrdom of their spiritual teacher Abba 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, Abba Yoannis the seventeenth, 105th Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. The parents of this father were pious Christians from the city of Mallowy, 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 Abba 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 creptated, 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 Abba Paula, the first hermit in the Nemr Mount, and consecrated it himself. He was accompanied by Abba Ebraam, Bishop of El- Bahnasa, and an assembly of the notables. Among them was the archon Girgis El-Souroy, 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 Abba 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-Souroy 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 Abba 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 Abba 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 Pharamuthi, 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

The Departure of the Holy Father Abba Maximus
The Fifteenth Pope of Alexandria

On this day, that coincides with the ninth of April, 282 A.D., the holy father Abba 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 Athor (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 PHARAMUTHI

- 1 The Commemoration of the Consecration of the church of St. Agabus, the Apostle.
2. The Departure of St. Alexandra, the Empress, Diocletian's wife.
3. The Departure of Pope Mark (Marcus) VI, the 101st. Patriarch.

1. This day 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.

2. On this day also, St. Alexandra, the Empress, Emperor Diocletian's wife, was martyred. This saintly woman was admired throughout the empire for her consideration of others. She attained a popularity and prominence previously unsurpassed by an empress.

During one of her many benevolent tours of inspection for the state, her attention was drawn to the plight of a former Roman soldier who turned out to be St. George. It appeared that he was being excessively punished for refusing to worship the gods and for having declared himself a follower of Christ.

Alexandra decided to see for herself what was transpiring in the dungeons and arena in response to a compelling urge to see and talk to St. George. Her visit to the prisoner's cell became a revelation. The brutalized victim of Roman torture spoke to the empress with calm assurance, dismissing his wounds as a small price to pay for the love of the Messiah. Before the evening was out, Alexandra had renounced the pagan gods and had joyfully accepted Christ as her Savior. Her fate was sealed, but nothing mattered except the love of Jesus and her concern for the man who had brought her to the Lord.

Alexandra wasted no time in going to her husband the emperor to tell of her great discovery and to dissuade Diocletian from further torture of her new friend in Christ. Her husband was so outraged by her conversion that he is said to have uttered "What! Even thou hast fallen under their spell!" When she persisted in pursuing her clemency plea for St. George, the emperor's annoyance gave way to aggravation. When she doggedly insisted on mercy and tolerance in the name of the King of Kings, his aggravation became rage.

At length, when Diocletian was convinced that Alexandra had been won over by the Christians, he ordered that she be cast into prison, thereafter to be beheaded along with St. George. She was beheaded two days before St. George. May her holy blessings be with us. Amen.

3. 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. Abba 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 Kodsy, 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 PHARAMUTHI

1. The Martyrdom of St. Antipas, Bishop of Pergamos
2. Commemoration of the ascension of Enoch the just to heaven

The holy martyr St. Antipas was a disciple of the holy Apostle John and was ordained by him bishop of the Church of Pergamum during the reign of the emperor Nero (54-68). He is mentioned in the book of Revelation: "And to the angel of the Church of Pergamum write: the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. I know where you live, where the throne of Satan is, and you cleave unto My Name, and have not renounced My faith, even in those days when Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells" (Rev 2:12-13).

By his personal example, firm faith and constant preaching about Christ, St Antipas began to turn the people of Pergamum from offering sacrifice to idols. The pagan priests reproached the bishop for leading the people away from their ancestral gods, and they demanded that he stop preaching about Christ and offer sacrifice to the idols instead.

St Antipas calmly answered that he was not about to serve the demons that fled from him, a mere mortal (he was famous for exorcising demons). He said he worshiped the Lord Almighty, and he would continue to worship the Creator of all, with His Only-Begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The enraged pagan priests dragged the holy martyr Antipas to the temple of Artemis and threw him into a red-hot copper bull, where usually they put the sacrifices to the idols. In the red-hot furnace the martyr prayed loudly to God, imploring Him to receive his soul and to strengthen the faith of the Christians. He went to the Lord peacefully, as if he were going to sleep (+ ca. 68).

At night Christians took the body of the St. Antipas, which was untouched by the fire. They buried him at Pergamum. The tomb of the martyr became a font of miracles and of healings from various sicknesses. May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

2. On this day also the righteous Enoch was taken alive to heaven. He is the son of Methuselah. The bible tells us "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." (Gen 5:24) In Sirach 44:16, we are told: "Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated, being an example of repentance to all generations." and again in Sirach 49:14: "But upon the earth was no man created like Enoch; for he was taken from the earth."

St. Paul also tells us in Hebrews 11:5: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God". His holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHARAMUTHI

1. The Martyrdom of St. James the Apostle, son of Zebedee.
2. The departure of St. Nicodemus

1. 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 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.

2. On this day also we commemorate the departure of St. Nicodemus who was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. (Jn 3:1) He came to Jesus by night and the Lord discoursed with him about baptism.(Jn 3:3-21)

When the rulers of the Jews conspired to kill the Lord Jesus, he told them:"Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" (John 7:51) After Jesus died on the Cross, Nicodemus came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds, and together with Joseph of Arimathea they buried the Lord (John 19:39) May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to our God forever. Amen.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHARAMUTHI

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 in the year 344 AD., St. Simeon the Armenian, the bishop of Persia and 150 others were martyred during the persecution of Christians by king Sapor II (310-381). St Simeon was brought to trial in iron fetters accused of collaborating with the Roman Empire and of subversive activities against the Persian emperor.

The emperor urged him to worship the sun, and he threatened to eradicate Christianity in his land if he refused. But neither urgings nor threats could shake the steadfast saint, and they led him off to prison.

When they brought him before the emperor a second time, St. Simeon again refused to worship the sun and confessed his faith in Christ. The enraged emperor gave orders to behead all the Christians in the prison before the saint's eyes. Without fear the Christians went to execution, blessed by the holy hierarch, and they bent their heads beneath the sword. 150 Martyrs perished together with their bishop because they refused to accept the Persian religion. May their holy blessings 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 Ellah 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 Ellah 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 Abba 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 blessing be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHARAMUTHI

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 PHARAMUTHI

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 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 PHARAMUTHI

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 11, 49th Pope of the See of St. Mark.
4. The Departure of St. Michael 11, 53rd Pope of the See of St. Mark.

1. On this day the holy father Abba 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 became a monk with a righteous man whose name was Elias, and he lived with him for many years. After the departure of Abba Elias, he went to the mount of Barnug and lived with an old man whose name was Abba 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 Abba 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. Abba 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 Meshir, 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 Athor 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 PHARAMUTHI

The Martyrdom of St. George Prince of the Martyrs

The Holy Great Martyr St. George, was a native of Cappadocia (a district in Asia Minor), and he grew up in a deeply believing Christian family. His father was martyred for Christ when George was still a child. His mother, owning lands in Palestine, moved there with her son and raised him in strict piety.

When he became a man, St George entered into the service of the Roman army. He was handsome, brave and valiant in battle, and he came to the notice of the emperor Diocletian (284-305) and joined the imperial guard with the rank of military commander.

The pagan emperor, who did much for the restoration of Roman might, was clearly concerned with the danger presented to pagan civilization by the triumph of the Crucified Savior, and intensified his persecution against the Christians in the final years of his reign.

St George, when he heard the decision of the emperor, distributed all his wealth to the poor, freed his servants, and then appeared in the Senate. The brave soldier of Christ spoke out openly against the emperor's designs. He confessed himself a Christian, and appealed to all to acknowledge Christ: "I am a servant of Christ, my God, and trusting in Him, I have come

among you voluntarily, to bear witness concerning the Truth.”

Stunned by the bold speech of the valiant warrior, the emperor, who had loved and promoted George, attempted to persuade him not to throw away his youth and glory and honors, but rather to offer sacrifice to the gods as was the Roman custom. The confessor replied, “Nothing in this inconstant life can weaken my resolve to serve God.”

Then by order of the enraged emperor the armed guards began to push St George out of the assembly hall with their spears, and they then led him off to prison. But the deadly steel became soft and it bent, just as the spears touched the saint’s body, and it caused him no harm. In prison they put the martyr’s feet in stocks and placed a heavy stone on his chest.

The next day at the interrogation, powerless but firm of spirit, St George again answered the emperor, “You will grow tired of tormenting me sooner than I will tire of being tormented by you.” Then Diocletian gave orders to subject St George to some very intense tortures. They tied the Great Martyr to a wheel, beneath which were boards pierced with sharp pieces of iron. As the wheel turned, the sharp edges slashed the saint’s naked body.

At first the sufferer loudly cried out to the Lord, but soon he quieted down, and did not utter even a single groan. Diocletian decided that the tortured one was already dead, and he gave orders to remove the battered body from the wheel, and then went to a pagan temple to offer thanks.

At this very moment it got dark, thunder boomed, and a voice was heard: “Fear not, George, for I am with you.” Then a wondrous light shone, and at the wheel an angel of the Lord appeared in the form of a radiant youth. He placed his hand upon the martyr, saying to him, “Rejoice!” St George stood up healed.

When the soldiers led him to the pagan temple where the emperor was, the emperor could not believe his own eyes and he thought that he saw before him some other man or even a ghost. In confusion and in terror the pagans looked St George over carefully, and they became convinced that a miracle had occurred. Many then came to believe in the Life-Creating God of the Christians.

Two illustrious officials, Sts Anatolius and Proton, who were secretly Christians, openly confessed Christ. Immediately, without a trial, they were beheaded with the sword by order of the emperor.

The emperor became even more furious. He had not lost all hope of influencing St George, so he gave him over to new and fiercesome torments. After throwing him into a deep pit, they covered it over with lime. Three days later they dug him out, but found him cheerful and unharmed. They shod the saint in iron sandals with red-hot nails, and then drove him back to

the prison with whips. In the morning, when they led him back to the interrogation, cheerful and with healed feet, the emperor asked if he liked his shoes. The saint said that the sandals had been just his size. Then they beat him with ox thongs until pieces of his flesh came off and his blood soaked the ground, but the brave sufferer, strengthened by the power of God, remained unyielding.

The emperor concluded that the saint was being helped by magic, so he summoned the sorcerer Athanasius to deprive the saint of his miraculous powers, or else poison him. The sorcerer gave St George two goblets containing drugs. One of them would have quieted him, and the other would kill him. The drugs had no effect, and the saint continued to denounce the pagan superstitions and glorify God as before.

When the emperor asked what sort of power was helping him, St George said, “Do not imagine that it is any human learning which keeps me from being harmed by these torments. I am saved only by calling upon Christ and His Power. Whoever believes in Him has no regard for tortures and is able to do the things that Christ did” (John 14:12). Diocletian asked what sort of things Christ had done. The Martyr replied, “He gave sight to the blind, cleansed the lepers, healed the lame, gave hearing to the deaf, cast out demons, and raised the dead.”

Knowing that they had never been able to resurrect the dead through sorcery, nor by any of the gods known to him, and wanting to test the saint, the emperor commanded him to raise up a dead person before his eyes. The saint retorted, “You wish to tempt me, but my God will work this sign for the salvation of the people who shall see the power of Christ.”

When they led St George down to the graveyard, he cried out, “O Lord! Show to those here present, that You are the only God in all the world. Let them know You as the Almighty Lord.” Then the earth quaked, a grave opened, the dead one emerged from it alive. Having seen with their own eyes the Power of Christ, the people wept and glorified the true God.

The sorcerer Athanasius, falling down at the feet of St George, confessed Christ as the All-Powerful God and asked forgiveness for his sins, committed in ignorance. The obdurate emperor in his impiety thought otherwise. In a rage he commanded both t Athanasius and the man raised from the dead to be beheaded, and he had St George again locked up in prison.

The people, weighed down with their infirmities, began to visit the prison and they there received healing and help from the saint. A certain farmer named Glycerius, whose ox had collapsed, also visited him. The saint consoled him and assured him that God would restore his ox to life. When he saw the ox alive, the farmer began to glorify the God of the Christians throughout all the city. By order of the emperor, St Glycerius was arrested and beheaded.

The exploits and the miracles of the Great Martyr George had increased the number of the Christians, therefore Diocletian made a final attempt to compel the saint to offer sacrifice to

the idols. They set up a court at the pagan temple of Apollo. On the final night the holy martyr prayed fervently, and as he slept, he saw the Lord, Who raised him up with His hand, and embraced him. The Savior placed a crown on St George's head and said, "Fear not, but have courage, and you will soon come to Me and receive what has been prepared for you."

In the morning, the emperor offered to make St George his co-administrator, second only to himself. The holy martyr with a feigned willingness answered, "Caesar, you should have shown me this mercy from the very beginning, instead of torturing me. Let us go now to the temple and see the gods you worship."

Diocletian believed that the martyr was accepting his offer, and he followed him to the pagan temple with his retinue and all the people. Everyone was certain that St George would offer sacrifice to the gods. The saint went up to the idol, made the Sign of the Cross and addressed it as if it were alive: "Are you the one who wants to receive from me sacrifice befitting God?"

The demon inhabiting the idol cried out, "I am not a god and none of those like me is a god, either. The only God is He Whom you preach. We are fallen angels, and we deceive people because we are jealous."

St George cried out, "How dare you remain here, when I, the servant of the true God, have entered?" Then noises and wailing were heard from the idols, and they fell to the ground and were shattered.

There was general confusion. In a frenzy, pagan priests and many of the crowd seized the holy martyr, tied him up, and began to beat him. They also called for his immediate execution.

The holy empress Alexandra tried to reach him. Pushing her way through the crowd, she cried out, "O God of George, help me, for You Alone are All-Powerful." At the feet of the Great Martyr the holy empress confessed Christ, Who had humiliated the idols and those who worshipped them.

Diocletian immediately pronounced the death sentence on the Great Martyr George and the holy Empress Alexandra, who followed St George to execution without resisting. Along the way she felt faint and slumped against a wall. There she surrendered her soul to God.

St George gave thanks to God and prayed that he would also end his life in a worthy manner. At the place of execution the saint prayed that the Lord would forgive the torturers who acted in ignorance, and that He would lead them to the knowledge of Truth. Calmly and bravely, the holy Great Martyr George bent his neck beneath the sword, receiving the crown of martyrdom on April 23, 303.

May the holy blessings of this great martyr be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE TWENTY FOURTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHARAMUTHI

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 Pharamuthi).

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. Isidore, 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 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 PHARAMUTHI

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 of 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 PHARAMUTHI

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 Pharamuthi 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 PHARAMUTHI

The Martyrdom of St. Victor son of 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, named after this Saint. His prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

THE TWENTY EIGHTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHARAMUTHI

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 PHARAMUTHI

The Departure of St. Erastus, the Apostle.

Today is the commemoration of the departure of of St. Erastus, the Apostle. He was one of the seventy apostles, served with St. Paul. St. Paul sent him together with Timothy to peach in Macedonia before he went there. In Romans 16:23 St. Paul refers to him as the chamberlain (treasurer) of the city of Corinth.

St. Erasmus served as a deacon and treasurer of the Church of Jerusalem, and later was a bishop at Paneas in Palestine. After he reached a good old age, he departed in peace. May his blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PHARAMUTHI

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 Afrika, 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 PASHONS 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 PASHONS

1. The Departure of the righteous Job.
2. The Departure of St. Theodore of Tabennisi, 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. St Theodore was the son of rich and illustrious Christian parents from Egypt. The yearning for monastic life appeared early in him. Once there was a large party at the house of his parents during the feast of Theophany. The boy did not want to take part in the festivities, grieving that because of earthly joys he might be deprived of joys in the life to come. He secretly left home when he was fourteen and entered one of the monasteries.

Hearing about St. Pachomius the Great, he burned with the desire to see the ascetic. St Pachomius received the young man with love, having been informed by God beforehand about his coming. Remaining at the monastery, St Theodore quickly succeeded in all his monastic tasks, particularly in the full obedience to his guide, and in his compassion towards the other brethren. Theodore's mother, learning that he was at the Tabennisi monastery, came to St Pachomius with a letter from the bishop, asking to see her son. St Theodore did not wish to break his vow to renounce the world, so he refused to meet with his mother.

Seeing St Theodore's strength of mind and ability, St Pachomius once told him to instruct the brethren on Holy Scripture. St Theodore was then only twenty years old. He obeyed and began to speak, but some of the older brethren took offense that a new monk should teach them, and they departed. St Pachomius said to them, "You have given in to the devil and because of your conceit, your efforts will come to naught. You have not rejected Theodore, but rather the Word of God, and have deprived yourselves of the Holy Spirit."

St Pachomius appointed St Theodore as overseer of the Tabennisi monastery, and withdrew to a more solitary monastery. St Theodore with filial love continued to concern himself over his instructor, and he looked after St Pachomius in his final illness, and when the great abba reposed in the Lord, he closed his eyes. After the death of St Pachomius, St Theodore directed the Tabennisi monastery, and later on he was at the head of all the Thebaid monasteries. St Theodore the Sanctified was famed for his holiness of life and a great gift of wonderworking, and he was well known to St Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria. St Theodore reposed in his old age in the year 368. May his holy blessings 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.

THE THIRD DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

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. The holy, glorious, all-laudable Apostle Jason is numbered among the Seventy Apostles. Born in Tarsus, he was appointed Bishop of Tarsus by the Apostle Paul. With the Apostle Sospater he traveled to the island of Corfu where they built a church in honor of the Apostle Stephen the Protomartyr and converted many pagans to the Christian faith.

Seeing this, the king of Corfu threw them into prison where they converted seven other prisoners to the Christian faith: Saturninus, Jakischolus, Faustianus, Januarius, Marsalius, Euphrasius and Mammius. The king had those seven put to death for their faith in boiling pitch.

The king's daughter, the virgin Cercyra, having watched these holy apostles being tortured and turned to the Christian faith, distributed all her jewels to the poor. The king became angry and put her in prison, yet she would not deny Christ. So he had the prison burned, but she remained unharmed. Many people were baptized upon seeing this miracle. He then had her killed with arrows while tied to a tree.

Many believers fled to a nearby island to get away from the enraged king, but as he chased them his boat sank. The new king embraced the Christian faith and in baptism received the name Sebastian. From then on Sts. Sospater and Jason freely preached the Gospel and built up the Church in Corfu until a very old age, when they gave up their souls to God.

May their holy blessings 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 PASHONS

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 Abba 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 PASHONS

The Martyrdom of St. Jeremiah the Prophet

The Holy Prophet Jeremiah, one of the four great Old Testament prophets, was son of the priest Helkiah from the city of Anathoth near Jerusalem, and he lived 600 years before the Birth of Christ, under the Israelite king Josiah and four of his successors. He was called to prophetic service at the age of fifteen, when the Lord revealed to him that even before his birth the Lord had chosen him to be a prophet. Jeremiah refused, citing his youth and lack of skill at speaking, but the Lord promised to be always with him and to watch over him.

He touched the mouth of the chosen one and said, “Behold, I have put My words into your mouth. Behold, I have appointed you this day over nations and kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to rebuild, and to plant” (Jer. 1:9-10). From that time Jeremiah prophesied for twenty-three years, denouncing the Jews for abandoning the true God and worshipping idols, predicting sorrows and devastating wars. He stood by the gates of the city, and at the entrance to the Temple, everywhere where the people gathered, and he exhorted them with imprecations and often with tears. The people, however, mocked and abused him, and they even tried to kill him.

Depicting for the Jews their impending enslavement to the king of Babylon, Jeremiah first placed on his own neck a wooden, and then an iron yoke, and thus he went about among the people. Enraged at the dire predictions of the prophet, the Jewish elders threw the Prophet Jeremiah into a pit filled with horrid, slimy creatures, where he almost died. Through the intercession of the God-fearing royal official Haldemelek, the prophet was pulled out of the pit, but he did not cease his prophecies, and for this he was carted off to prison. Under the Jewish king Zedekiah his prophecy was fulfilled.

Nebuchadnezzar came, slaughtered many people, carried off a remnant into captivity, and Jerusalem was pillaged and destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar released the prophet from prison and permitted him to live where he wanted. The prophet remained at the ruins of Jerusalem and bewailed his nation’s misfortune. According to Tradition, the Prophet Jeremiah took the Ark of the Covenant with the Tablets of the Law and hid it in one of the caves of Mount Nabath (Nebo), so that the Jews could no longer find it (2 Mac. 2). Afterwards, a new Ark of the Covenant was fashioned, but it lacked the glory of the first.

Among the Jews remaining in their fatherland there soon arose inner clashes: Hodoliah, Nebuchadnezzar’s viceroy, was murdered. The Jews, fearing the wrath of Babylon, decided to flee into Egypt. The Prophet Jeremiah disagreed with their intention, predicting that the punishment which they feared would befall them in Egypt. The Jews would not listen to the prophet, however, and taking him along by force, they went into Egypt and settled in the city of Tathnis.

There the prophet lived for four years and was respected by the Egyptians, because by his prayers he killed crocodiles and other creatures infesting these parts. When Jeremiah prophesied that the King of Babylon would invade Egypt and annihilate the Jews living there, the Jews murdered him. In that very same year the saint's prophecy was fulfilled. There is a tradition that 250 years later, Alexander the Great transported the relics of the holy Prophet Jeremiah to Alexandria. May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE SIXTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

1. The Martyrdom of St. Isaac El-Defrawi.
2. Martyrdom of St. Dolagy and her children
3. The Departure of St. Macarius of Alexandria.
4. The Departure of Father Paphnute of El-Bandarrah.

1. On this day Saint Abba Isaac was martyred, who was from the city of Defra, in the north of Egypt. Unto this holy man the angel of the Lord appeared, in a vision of the night, and he woke him up and said unto him, "Go thou to the city of Tuw, that thou mayest receive the crown of martyrdom"; and he rose up to salute his father and his mother before he departed. And they wept over him, and they would not let him go until the angel of the Lord came a second time and brought him out from his city and took him to the city of Gemwa Tuw.

When he arrived there, he found that the governor was in the bath house, but as soon as he came out the saint cried out boldly before him, saying, "I am a Christian. I believe on our Lord Jesus Christ." And the governor commanded one of his soldiers to take Saint Isaac with him to his house, and to guard him until he came back from the city of Nikiu.

And as Saint Isaac was passing along the road with the soldier, a certain blind man, who was sitting by the wayside, begged him, saying, "Have compassion upon me, O saint of God, and heal my eyes." And Saint Abba Isaac petitioned God for the blind man, and his eyes were opened immediately. When the soldier saw this miracle he believed on our Lord Jesus Christ, and became a Christian. And when the governor returned, the soldier confessed the Lord Jesus Christ before him, and received the crown of martyrdom.

After this the governor tortured this saint very severely, and he sent him to the city of Behnesa [to suffer] divers tortures. And when the saint was on the ship he begged that someone might give him a cup of water, and a certain sailor, who was blind in one eye, gave him a cup of water; and the saint sprinkled some of the water over him, and his eye was opened, like its fellow.

The governor of Behnesa tortured St. Isacc severely but he remained steadfast. The governor commanded the soldiers to behead him, and he received the crown of life.

And there were there certain believing men, and they lifted the body of Saint Abba Isaac upon a wagon, and they drew it with oxen, and brought it to the city of Dafra. And when they could not find a boat to carry it over the river, the oxen forded the river, carrying the body of the saint upon their backs, and the believers brought it into his house. And they built a church in his name, and they laid the body therein, and many signs and miracles took place [there] through it. May his holy blessings be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also we commemorate the martyrdom of Mother Dolagy and her children. Mother Dolagy lived in the village of Esna in Upper Egypt during the reign of Bishop Amonios Bishop of Esna .She was considered to be one of the greatest martyrs who excelled in faith and power. She is considered as the patron Saint of Esna and many regions of Upper Egypt.

After the birth of her fourth son, her husband passed away causing her to become a widow. Her sons names were Soris, Horman, Abonoufa and Shentas who ploughed the land as skilful farmers. Mother Dolagy the great excelled greatly in holding the words of the Gospel dear to her heart which showed great love to all.

In regards to herself and her 4 sons they were pillars of faith to all the people in the village of Esna. Moreover history records that she was extremely rich however she was also very giving, giving much of her money to poor and orphaned in the village. However during that time there reigned an emperor by the name of Diocletian who sent Arianos the governor to Esna because of the big spread of Christianity throughout all the lands of upper Egypt.

On entering the great city of Esna, he was greeted by four youth who were ploughing in the fields. They came to him holding watermelons. So Arianos enquired of these youth what faith they had and who they believed in as well as a general enquiry of the town's belief. On knowing that they were Christians he ordered them to worship the idols. The youth rejected with all authority saying it was better for them to be tortured or killed than offering incense to the idols. They started worshipping the almighty lord in Heaven proclaiming the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit one God Amen. When the people of Esna realised what had happened at the gates of the village news spread rapidly to the city of Gamaleesh.

Mother Dolagy ran to the fields so that she could stand by her sons in front of the Governor Arianos. When she arrived she stood in front of the governor Arianos and her children she strengthened them in the true faith and declared her Christianity. This encouraged her children greatly who were strengthened in their faith. Arianos was so angered by this that he ordered the death of all Christians in the region.

Mother Dolagy and the four sons spent the whole day and night going throughout the city strengthening the people before their death, and history tells us that St Mary appeared to them strengthening them before their martyrdom, promising them that Jesus Christ had prepared heavenly crowns for them in heaven In the morning Arianos came to them promising that if

they worshipped the idols that they would not suffer any pain.

Mother Dolagy screamed in her loudest voice that Jesus Christ was her saviour, from the beginning of time to the end of time. The governor tried every possible means to make Mother Dolagy and her for sons worship the idols, but he failed miserably in all attempts. In anger he ordered that they be killed immediately by cutting off their heads. Mother Dolagy pleaded that the soldiers cut the heads of her 4 sons first so that she could be sure that they did not offer incense to idols after she was martyred.

The Soldiers agreed and cut the heads of her youth on her knees. When she was reassured that her sons had reached heaven, the soldiers cut her head off and she gained the crown of martyrdom.

The people of Esna took the bodies of these pure saints and buried them and built a church in remembrance of them by the name of St Dolagy and her four Sons. During renovations in the church they found the bodies 5 meters below the altar.

May their holy blessings be with us. Amen.

3. 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.

4. 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 PASHONS

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 Abba Athanasius the apostolic, the 20th. Pope of Alexandria, departed. He was born to a Christian family in the city of Alexandria or possibly the nearby Nile Delta town of Damanhur around 297 AD.

His parents were wealthy enough to afford giving him a fine secular education. He was the first patriarch of Alexandria to use Coptic as well as Greek in his writings.

Rufinus relates a story that as Bishop Alexander stood by a window, he watched boys playing on the seashore below, imitating the ritual of Christian baptism. He sent for the children and discovered that one of the boys (Athanasius) had acted as bishop. After questioning Athanasius, Bishop Alexander informed him that the baptisms were genuine, as both the form and matter of the sacrament had been performed through the recitation of the correct words and the administration of water, and that he must not continue to do this as those baptized had not been properly catechized. He invited Athanasius and his playfellows to prepare for clerical careers.

According to Sozomen, Bishop Alexander "invited Athanasius to be his secretary. He had been well educated, and was versed in grammar and rhetoric, and had already, while still a young man, and before reaching the episcopate, given proof to those who dwelt with him of his wisdom and acumen".

St. Athanasius knew Greek and admitted not knowing Hebrew. The Old Testament passages he quotes frequently come from the Septuagint. During his later exile, with no access to a copy of the Scriptures, St. Athanasius could quote from memory every verse in the Old Testament with a supposed reference to the Trinity without missing any.

St. Alexander ordained St. Athanasius a deacon in 319. While still a deacon under St. Alexander's care St. Athanasius become acquainted with some of the solitaries of the Egyptian desert, and in particular Anthony the Great, whose life he is said to have written.

In about 319, when St. Athanasius was a deacon, a presbyter named Arius came into a direct conflict with Alexander of Alexandria. Arius preached against the divinity of the Son. Arius was subsequently excommunicated by St. Alexander, and he would begin to elicit the support of many bishops who agreed with his position.

In 325, St. Athanasius served as St. Alexander's secretary at the First Council of Nicaea. In the Council of Nicaea, the term "co-essential" (homoousion) was suggested by St. Athanasius: it was immediately adopted, and a formulary of faith embodying it was drawn up. From this time

to the end of the Arian controversies the word "co-essential" continued to be the test of Catholic orthodoxy. The formulary of faith drawn up is known as the Nicene Creed.

When the Patriarch Alexander was on his death-bed, five months after the conclusion of the council of Nicea, he called Athanasius, who fled fearing he would be constrained to be made Bishop. "When the Bishops of the Church assembled to elect their new Patriarch, the whole Catholic population surrounded the church, holding up their hands to Heaven and crying; "Give us Athanasius!" The Bishops had nothing better. St. Athanasius was thus elected the twentieth Pope of the See of St. Mark.

Pope Athanasius spent over 17 years in five exiles ordered by four different Roman Emperors, not counting approximately six more incidents in which he fled Alexandria to escape people seeking to take his life. However, during his first years as bishop, St. Athanasius visited the churches of his territory, which at that time included all of Egypt and Libya. He established contacts with the hermits and monks of the desert, including Pachomius, which proved very valuable to him over the years. Shortly thereafter, St. Athanasius became occupied with the theological disputes against Arians within the Byzantine Empire that would occupy much of his life.

After returning from his fifth exile to Alexandria in early 366, St. Athanasius spent his final years repairing all the damage done during the earlier years of violence, dissent, and exile. He resumed writing and preaching undisturbed, and characteristically re-emphasized the view of the Incarnation which had been defined at Nicaea. On 2 May 373, having consecrated Peter II, one of his presbyters as his successor, St. Athanasius departed peacefully in his own bed, surrounded by his clergy and faithful supporters. He had been Pope of Alexandria for forty-six years, and had outlived sixteen Roman emperors.

It was all over, and yet it had only just begun. The man who had been exiled five times, the fiery, prince of the Church, altered the direction of history. It was not a small matter to insist that the Word was changeless, eternal and of God, and to stay the progress of Arianism which threatened to corrupt religion with the belief that the Son was inferior to the Father. He was a man immeasurably above his time, dominating it with the force of his passion.

St. Basil, who came to know him late in life, wrote that he was like a lighthouse, seeing with his ubiquitous eye all that was passing in the tempestuous seas below: treachery, stupidity, shipwreck; and like a lighthouse Athanasius showed them the promised land. Gregory Nazianzen was happier when he wrote that Athanasius came with the sword of a conqueror and the breath of the quickening spirit. May the holy blessings of St. Athanasius, the Apostolic, the defender of the orthodox faith be with us all and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

1. The commemoration of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ to heaven.
2. The Martyrdom of St. John of Senhout.
3. The Departure of Abba Daniel the Archpriest of Sheahat (Scetis).

1. On this day is the commemoration of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ to heaven, to Him be the glory forever. Amen.

2. . On this day also 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.

3. On this day also the holy father Abba Daniel the Hegumen of Sheahat (Scetis), departed. He was a disciple of St Arsenios the great and became Abbot of Scetis after St. Arsenius died. 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.

He later retired to live as an Anchorite. 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 PASHONS

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 Pashons, 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 Abba 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 Abba Zacharias, Bishop of Jerusalem, and Abba Cyril 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 KOIAK, 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 PASHONS

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 Pashons, 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 Theophilos, 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 PASHONS

1. The Martyrdom of St. Theoclia, the wife of St. Justus.
2. The Departure of St. Paphnotius (St. Paphnuti), the Bishop.

1. On this day, St. Theoclia, the wife of St. Justus (Whose commemoration is on the 10th. day of Meshir - 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 PASHONS

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-Zaafran 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 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-Zaafraan, 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 Pashons. 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 Pashons.

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 Athor.
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 Pashons, 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 Pashons, 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 PASHONS

The Departure Of St. Arsenius The Tutor Of the Emperor's Children.

Saint Arsenius the Great was born in the year 354 at Rome into a pious Christian family, which provided him a fine education and upbringing. He studied rhetoric and philosophy, and mastered the Latin and Greek languages. He entered the ranks of the clergy as a deacon in one of the Roman churches, dedicating himself to the service of God.

The emperor Theodosius (379-395), who ruled the eastern half of the Roman Empire, heard about his erudition and piety, and he wished to entrust Arsenius with the education of his sons Arcadius and Honorius. St Arsenius agreed to teach the imperial children, hoping to teach them Christian piety as well.

When he arrived at Constantinople, Arsenius was received with great honor by the emperor Theodosius, who charged him to educate his sons not only in wisdom, but also in piety, guarding them from the temptations of youth. "Forget that they are the emperor's sons," said Theodosius, "for I want them to submit to you in all things, as to their father and teacher."

With fervor the saint devoted himself to the education of the youths, but the high esteem in which he was held troubled his spirit, which yearned for the quietude of monastic life. St Arsenius entreated the Lord to show him the way to salvation. The Lord heard his prayer and one time he heard a voice telling him, "Arsenius, flee from men, and you shall be saved." And then, removing his rich clothing and replacing it with old and tattered garments, he secretly left the palace, boarded a ship for Alexandria, and he made his way to Sketis, a monastery in the midst of the desert.

Arriving at the church, he asked the priests to accept him into the monastic brotherhood, calling himself a wretched wanderer, though his very manner betrayed him as a cultivated man.

The brethren led him to Abba John the short (20th of Paopi), famed for his holiness of life. He, wishing to test the newcomer's humility, did not seat Arsenius with the monks for the meal. He threw him a piece of dry bread saying, "Eat if you wish." St Arsenius got down on his hands and knees, and picked up the bread with his mouth. Then he crawled off into a corner and ate it. Seeing this, Elder John said, "He will be a great ascetic!" Then accepting Arsenius with love, he tonsured him into monasticism.

St Arsenius zealously passed through his obediences and soon he surpassed many of the desert Fathers in asceticism. The saint again heard the Voice while he was praying, "Arsenius, hide from people and dwell in silence, this is the root of virtue." From that moment St Arsenius settled in a solitary cell deep in the desert.

Having taken on the struggle of silence he seldom left his seclusion. He came to church only on Sundays and Feast days, observing complete silence and conversing with no one. When Abba Moses asked him why he hid himself from people, St Arsenius replied, "God knows that I love you, but I cannot remain with God and with men at the same time. The Heavenly Powers all have one will and praise God together. On earth, however, there are many human wills, and each man has his own thoughts. I cannot leave God in order to live with people."

Though absorbed in constant prayer, the saint did not refuse visiting monks with his counsel and guidance, giving short, but perceptive answers to their questions. Once, a monk from Sketis saw the great Elder through a window standing at prayer, surrounded by a flame.

The handicraft of St Arsenius was to weave baskets, for which he used the fronds of date palms soaked in water. For a whole year St Arsenius did not change the water in the container, but merely added a little water to it from time to time. This caused his cell to be permeated with a foul stench. When asked why he did this, the saint replied that it was fitting for him to humble himself in this way, because in the world he had used incense and fragrant oils. He prayed that after death he would not experience the stench of hell.

The fame of the great ascetic spread far, and many wanted to see him, and they disturbed his tranquility. As a result, the saint was forced to move around from place to place. But those thirsting to receive his guidance and blessing still found him.

A certain monk once asked St Arsenius what he should do when he read the Holy Scriptures and did not comprehend their meaning. The Elder answered, "My child, you must study and learn the Holy Scriptures constantly, even if you do not understand their power... For when we have the words of the Holy Scriptures on our lips, the demons hear them and are terrified. Then they flee from us, unable to bear the words of the Holy Spirit Who speaks through His apostles and prophets."

The saint often urged himself on in his efforts with the words, "Rouse yourself, Arsenius,

work! Do not remain idle! You have not come here to rest, but to labor.” He also said, “I have often regretted the words I have spoken, but I have never regretted my silence.”

This great ascetic and keeper of silence was given the gift of tears with which his eyes were constantly filled. He spent fifty-five years at monastic labors and struggles. He spent forty years at Sketis, and ten years on the mountain of Troe near Memphis. Then he spent three years at Canopus, and two more years at Troe, where he fell asleep in the Lord.

Our holy, God-bearing Father Arsenius reposed when he was nearly one hundred years old, in the year 449 or 450.

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The monks heard how the saint often urged himself on in his efforts with the words, “Rouse yourself, Arsenius, work! Do not remain idle! You have not come here to rest, but to labor.” He also said, “I have often regretted the words I have spoken, but I have never regretted my silence.”

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Our holy, God-bearing Father Arsenius reposed when he was nearly one hundred years old, in the year 449 or 450. His only disciples seem to have been Alexander, Zoilos, and Daniel (Pashons 8). May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

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. St Pachomius was born in the third century in the Thebaid (Upper Egypt). His parents were pagans who gave him an excellent secular education. From his youth he had a good character, and he was prudent and sensible.

When Pachomius reached the age of twenty, he was called up to serve in the army of the emperor Constantine (apparently, in the year 315). They put the new conscripts in a city prison guarded by soldiers. The local Christians fed the soldiers and took care of them.

When the young man learned that these people acted this way because of their love for God, fulfilling His commandment to love their neighbor, this made a deep impression upon his pure soul. Pachomius vowed to become a Christian. Pachomius returned from the army after the victory, received holy Baptism, moved to the lonely settlement of Shenedit, and began to lead a strict ascetic life. Realizing the need for spiritual guidance, he turned to the desert-dweller Palamon. He was accepted by the Elder, and he began to follow the example of his instructor in monastic struggles.

Once, after ten years of asceticism, St Pachomius made his way through the desert, and halted at the ruins of the former village of Tabennisi. Here he heard a Voice ordering him to start a monastery at this place. Pachomius told the Elder Palamon of this, and they both regarded the words as a command from God.

They went to Tabennisi and built a small monastic cell. The holy Elder Palamon blessed the foundations of the monastery and predicted its future glory. But soon Palamon departed to the Lord. An angel of God then appeared to St Pachomius in the form of a schemamonk and gave him a Rule of monastic life. Soon his older brother John came and settled there with him.

St Pachomius endured many temptations and assaults from the Enemy of the race of man, but he resisted all temptations by his prayer and endurance.

Gradually, followers began to gather around St Pachomius. Their teacher impressed everyone by his love for work, which enabled him to accomplish all kinds of monastic tasks. He cultivated a garden, he conversed with those seeking guidance, and he tended to the sick.

St Pachomius introduced a monastic Rule of cenobitic life, giving everyone the same food and attire. The monks of the monastery fulfilled the obediences assigned them for the common

good of the monastery. Among the various obediences was copying books. The monks were not allowed to possess their own money nor to accept anything from their relatives. St Pachomius considered that an obedience fulfilled with zeal was greater than fasting or prayer. He also demanded from the monks an exact observance of the monastic Rule, and he chastized slackers.

His sister Maria came to see St Pachomius, but the strict ascetic refused to see her. Through the gate keeper, he blessed her to enter upon the path of monastic life, promising his help with this. Maria wept, but did as her brother had ordered. The Tabennisi monks built her a hut on the opposite side of the River Nile. Nuns also began to gather around Maria. Soon a women's monastery was formed with a strict monastic Rule provided by St Pachomius.

The number of monks at the monastery grew quickly, and it became necessary to build seven more monasteries in the vicinity. The number of monks reached 7,000, all under the guidance of St Pachomius, who visited all the monasteries and administered them. At the same time St Pachomius remained a deeply humble monk, who was always ready to comply with and accept the words of each brother.

Severe and strict towards himself, St Pachomius had great kindness and condescension toward the deficiencies of spiritually immature monks. One of the monks was eager for martyrdom, but St Pachomius turned him from this desire and instructed him to fulfill his monastic obedience, taming his pride, and training him in humility. The saint taught his spiritual children to avoid judging others, and he himself feared to judge anyone even in thought.

St Pachomius cared for the sick monks with special love. He visited them, he cheered the disheartened, he urged them to be thankful to God, and put their hope in His holy will. He relaxed the fasting rule for the sick, if this would help them recover their health. Once, in the saint's absence, the cook did not prepare any cooked food for the monks, assuming that the brethren loved to fast. Instead of fulfilling his obedience, the cook plaited 500 mats, something which St Pachomius had not told him to do. In punishment for his disobedience, all the mats prepared by the cook were burned.

St Pachomius always taught the monks to rely only upon God's help and mercy. It happened that there was a shortage of grain at the monastery. The saint spent the whole night in prayer, and in the morning a large quantity of bread was sent to the monastery from the city, at no charge. The Lord granted St Pachomius the gift of wonderworking and healing the sick.

Toward the end of his life St Pachomius fell ill from a pestilence that afflicted the region. His closest disciple, St Theodore (May 17), tended to him with filial love. St Pachomius died around the year 348 at the age of fifty-three, and was buried on a hill near the monastery. May his holy blessings 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. At age 27, he heard that Youlamis the governor of Egypt was torturing the Christians. He subsequently went to El-Bakroug, (near Demera) and came before the governor, confessing his Christianity.

Polemios the governor tortured him severely, then ordered him to be squeezed on the wheel. A drop of his blood splashed on the eyes of a blind maiden, and she was able to see instantaneously. The maiden and her family converted to Christianity and were martyred by Polemios.

Furious, the governor ordered Epimachus to be crucified and his head to be cut off. The executioner drew his sword but his strength failed. The same thing happened with another executioner, and so with fourteen others. When they failed to cut off his head, they tied a rope around his neck and dragged him until he died.

A deaf and mute soldier touched the body, and he instantly heard and spoke. Some of the Christians from the city of Edku took the body and several signs and wonders took place from it. His kinsfolk from Demera carried the body to El-Barmoun with great honor. The governor of El-Barmoun shrouded the body with expensive shrouds and placed it in a convent. During the reign of the righteous emperor Constantine, the relics were relocated to Pelusium, where a large church was built and named after Saint Epimachus.

His blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

1. The Martyrdom of St. Simon the Zealot (Simon the Canaanite), the Apostle.
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 was martyred. This Apostle was one of the Twelve, and was called Simon the Cananite by Matthew, but Simon the Zealot by Luke (Matt. 10:4; Luke 6:15). The word "Cananite" used by Matthew is believed to be derived from kana, which in the Palestinian dialect of Aramaic means "zealot" or "zealous".

He was a Galilean, and Theodoret says, of the tribe either of Zabulon or Nephthali. Later accounts say that he was the bridegroom at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, where the Lord Jesus changed the water into wine.

St. Simon, after his conversion, was zealous for the honour of his Master, and exact in all the duties of the Christian religion; and showed a pious indignation toward those who professed

this holy faith with their mouths, but dishonoured it by the irregularity of their lives. With the rest he received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, which he afterwards exercised with great zeal and fidelity.

This apostle preached in Egypt, Cyrene, and Mauritania, then returned into the East; for the Martyrologies of St. Jerome, Bede, Ado, and Usuard place his martyrdom in Persia, at a city called Suanir. His death is said to be by crucifixion, at the hands of the idolatrous priests. May his holy blessings 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 PASHONS

Commemoration of the consecration of the church of St. John the evangelist in Alexandria.

On this day the church commemorates the consecration of the church of St. John the evangelist in Alexandria. St. John is the son of Zebedee and the brother of St. James the elder. He preached in Asia minor and established churches there that are mentioned in the beginning of the Book of Revelations. He wrote the Gospel known by his name, three epistles and the Book of Revelations. His biography is commemorated on the fourth day of Tobi. May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

The Departure of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus

Today we commemorate the departure of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus. St. Epiphanius was born (C. 310 AD) into a Christian family in the small settlement of Besanduk, near Eleutheropolis (modern-day Beit Guvrin, Israel), and lived as a monk in Egypt, where he was educated and came into contact with Valentinian groups.

He returned to Palestine around 333, when he was still a young man, and he founded a monastery at Ad nearby. He was ordained a priest, and continued as superior of the monastery in Ad that he founded for thirty years and gained much skill and knowledge in that position. He was able to speak in several tongues, including Hebrew, Syriac, Egyptian, Greek, and Latin, and was called by Jerome on that account Pentaglossis ("Five tongued").

His reputation for learning prompted his nomination and consecration as Bishop of Salamis, Cyprus, in 365 or 367, a post which he held until his death. He served as bishop for nearly forty years, as well as travelled widely to combat unorthodox beliefs. He was present at a synod in Antioch where the Trinitarian questions were debated against the heresy of Apollinarianism.

He opposed the presence of icons in churches and is said to have torn an icon he had seen in a church he was visiting in Palestine. His best-known book is the Panarion which means "medicine-chest". Written between 374 and 377, it forms a handbook for dealing with the arguments of heretics. It lists, and refutes, 80 heresies, some of which are not described in any other surviving documents from the time. He departed in ripe old age in 430 AD.

May his prayers be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

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.

May the blessings of the Pentecost be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

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 PASHONS

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 cannons 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 PASHONS

1. The Commemoration of the Holy and Pure Virgin Mary.
2. The Departure of St. 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 holliness, received the gift of healing and she healed many from their infermities.

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 PASHONS

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 PASHONS

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 Pashons. 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 PASHONS

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."

Then, was the prophecy of Hosea (11:1) fulfilled which says: "... out of Egypt I called My Son." And also the prophecy of Isaiah (19:1): "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. 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).

Habakkuk appears in Bel and the Dragon, which is part of the deuterocanonical Additions to Daniel. Verses 33–39 state that Habakkuk is in Judea and after making some stew, he's told by the angel of the Lord to take the stew to Daniel, who is in Babylon in the lion's den. After proclaiming he is unaware of both the den and Babylon, the angel transports Habakkuk to the lion's den. Habakkuk gives Daniel the food to sustain him, and is immediately taken back to "his own place".

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 Pashons. 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 PASHONS

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 mediated 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 transcribe 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 joseph, and a daughter whom they called Demiana. They lived in a place called "Kantaret-EIDekka".

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 disappointment. 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-Gohari's wife hid herself in a Moslem home to which she had made great favors. But some of those who did not honor his favors, betrayed him by telling his wife was hiding. The governor forced her to tell him about the places they hid 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 iconostasis 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 endowments of the best of land were given, with the necessary provisions and salaries.

Abba Yousab the bishop of Girga and Ekhhim 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 Istanbul (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 Pashons, 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 PASHONS

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 was forced to accompany an Indian merchant, Abbanes, as a slave to his native place in northwest India, where he found himself in the service of the Indo-Parthian king, Gondophares. According to the Acts of Thomas, the apostle's ministry resulted in many conversions throughout the kingdom, including the king and his brother.

St. Thomas was a skilled carpenter and was bidden to build a palace for the king. However, the Apostle decided to teach the king a lesson by devoting the royal grant to acts of charity and thereby laying up treasure for the heavenly abode.

St. Thomas is believed to have left northwest India when invasion threatened and traveled by vessel to the Malabar coast, possibly visiting southeast Arabia and Socotra en route, and landing at the former flourishing port of Muziris (modern-day North Paravur and Kodungalloor)[30] (c. 51–52 AD). From there he is said to have preached the gospel throughout the Malabar coast. The various churches he founded were located mainly on the Periyar River and its tributaries and along the coast, where there were Jewish colonies. In accordance with apostolic custom, St. Thomas ordained teachers and leaders or elders, who were reported to be the earliest ministry of the Malabar Church.

Although little is known of the immediate growth of the church, Bar-Daisan (154–223) reports that in his time there were Christian tribes in India which claimed to have been converted by St. Thomas and to have books and relics to prove it. But at least by the year of the establishment of the Second Persian Empire (226), there were bishops of the Church of the East in northwest India (Afghanistan and Baluchistan), with laymen and clergy alike engaging in missionary activity.

It is most significant that, aside from a small remnant of the Church of the East in Kurdistan, the only other church to maintain a distinctive identity is the Saint Thomas Christian congregations along the Kerala in southwest India.

According to tradition, St. Thomas was killed at Mylapore, near Chennai, in 72 and his body was interred there. St. Ephrem the Syrian states that the Apostle was martyred in India, and that his relics were taken then to Edessa. This is the earliest known record of his martyrdom.

May his blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.



The tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore India

THE TWENTY SEVENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

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 tranquillity at the time of the Orthodox Emperor Anastasius. St. Severus 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 Severus 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.



Tomb of St. Lazarus in Larnaca Cyprus

THE TWENTY EIGHTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

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 Pashons), arrived to the island of Cyprus. The boat that carried his body arrived to Cyprus from Constantinople on the 28th. day of Pashons. The priests and the people came with crosses, gospels, candles and incense and carried his body to the church.

The body of the Saint was anointed and wrapped, they buried him in a marble sarcophagus in the church which he himself had built. 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 PASHONS

The Departure Of St. Simeon the Stylite.

On this day the righteous Ascetic St. Simeon the Stylite departed. St. Simeon was the son of a shepherd. He was born at Sis, now the Turkish town of Kozan in Adana Province. Sis was in the Roman province of Cilicia, and after the separation of the Roman Empire in 395 it became part of the Eastern Roman Empire and Christianity grew quickly there.

According to Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrihus, Simeon developed a zeal for Christianity at the age of 13, following a reading of the Beatitudes. He entered a monastery before the age of 16. St. Simeon's practice of austerity was so extreme and to all appearance so extravagant, that his brethren judged him to be unsuited to any form of community life. St. Simeon was requested to leave the monastery.

St. Simeon discovered a pillar which had survived among ruins in Telanissa (modern-day Taladah in Syria), formed a small platform at the top, and upon this determined to live out his life. Small boys from the village used to climb up and leave him pieces of bread.

St. Simeon spent 47 years upon the pillar. He died in 459. A disciple found his body stooped over in prayer. The Patriarch of Antioch, Martyrios performed the funeral of the monk before a huge throng of clergy and people. They buried him not far from the pillar. May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PASHONS

The Departure of Pope Mikhail the First, the 68th. Patriarch of Alexandria.

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 to himself 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, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI THE FIRST DAY

1. The Martyrdom of St. Carpus the apostle.
2. The Consecration of the church of St. Leontius of Tripoli.
3. The Martyrdom of St. Qozman El-Tahawy and his companions.
4. The Consecration of the church of St. Abe-Fam (Epiphanius) the soldier.

1. On this day is the commemoration of the martyrdom of St. Carpus. He was one of the Seventy Apostles. He was a follower and companion of the Apostle Paul by whom he was appointed as bishop of Troas.

He also preached the Gospel in Crete where he received St. Dionysius the Areopagite in his home. St. Dionysius testifies that Carpos was a man with an exceptionally pure mind, meekness and innocence and that the Lord Jesus, with His angels, appeared to him in a vision.

St. Paul mentioned him in 2 Tim 4:13: "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments."

Enduring many assaults for the Name of Christ, he finally suffered at the hands of the unbelieving Jews and was killed and won the crown of martyrdom.
May his blessings be with us. Amen.

2. This day also marks the commemoration of the consecration of the church of St. Leontius of Tripoli. (22nd of Epiphany) Following the martyrdom of St. Leontius, the soldiers then threw his body outside the city, but a Christian woman by the name of Joanna gave money to the soldiers to take the body. She was the wife of a great nobleman and prominent army commander named Maurus. She then wrapped the body in expensive cloth and also made a icon of him and she hung a lighted lamp before it.

It happened that Emperor Diocletian became angry with Maurus 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. Honour 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, honoured 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 in the icon, 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, and relocated the body to it with great veneration. Many miracles occurred and were attributed to him. May his holy blessings be with us. Amen.

3. On this day also, St. Qozman (Cosmas) El-Tahawy and his companions were martyred. May their prayers be with us. Amen.

4. 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 Antinoe, 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 Tobe 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 PAONI

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 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 Theophilos (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 Abba 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 Paoni, 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 PAONI

1. The Departure of St. Martha of Egypt.
2. The Martyrdom of St. Alladius the Bishop.
3. The Departure of St. Abraam, bishop of El-Fayyoum.

1. On this day 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

2. 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.

3. Today also, the saint Abba 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, Abba 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 Abba 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 Abba Morcos, Metropolitan of El-Behira, who was the acting Patriarch after the death of Pope Demitrius. Abba 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-Fayyoun and El-Giza. He replaced its reposed bishop, Abba 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.

Abba 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 bliss on the third of Baouna, 1630 A.M. (June 10, 1914 A.D.). More than ten thousand Christian and Moslems walked in his funeral procession. 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 PAONI

1. The Martyrdom of St. Shenousi (Sanusi).
2. The Martyrdom of Saint Abba 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 Abba 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- Kedeas, 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 Meshir, 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 Abba 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 PAONI

1. The Departure of St. James of the East.
2. The Martyrdom of Sts. Abba Bshay (Ebsoy) and Abba 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. Abba Bshay (Ebsoy) and Abba 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 Abba 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 PAONI

1. The Martyrdom of St. Theodore the Monk
2. The departure of St. Didymus the blind, head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria.

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.

2. On this day also St. Didymus the blind, head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria in the 4th century, departed. He was born in Egypt 314 AD. When only four years old he lost his sight from disease; and consequently was never taught, as he himself declared, even the usual rudiments of learning.

But his extraordinary force of character and intense thirst for knowledge triumphed over all disadvantages. He prayed for inward light, "but added studies to prayers" (Rufin. ii. 7). He learned the alphabet by touch from engraved wooden tablets, and words and syllables by attentive listening. Thus he became master of various sciences (Socr. iv. 25; Soz. iii. 15; Theod. iv. 26), and attained a truly wonderful familiarity with the Scriptures.

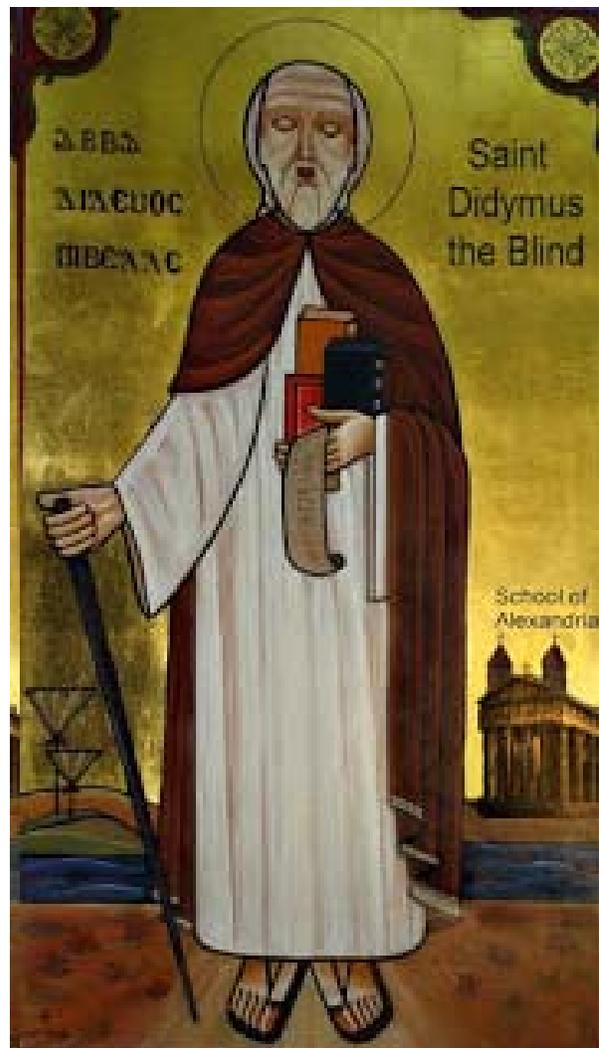
St. Athanasius made the blind scholar head of the Catechetical School in 346 AD., as a fitting successor to Pantaenus and Clement. He was the twelfth who occupied that chair. In his earlier manhood, St. Anthony, visiting Alexandria to support the Catholic cause against the Arians, entered Didymus's cell, and despite his modest reluctance obliged him to offer up prayers, and asked Didymus whether he was sad on account of his blindness. After the question had been twice repeated, Didymus owned that he did feel the affliction painfully. "Do not be distressed," rejoined the saintly hermit, "for the loss of a faculty enjoyed by gnats and flies, when you have that inward eyesight which is the privilege of none but saints."

Jerome stayed for a month at Alexandria in 386, mainly to see Didymus and have Scripture difficulties explained by him. "In many points," wrote Jerome in a.d. 400 (Ep. 84), "I give him thanks. I learned from him things which I had not known; what I did know, his teaching has helped me to retain."

Rufinus was also, for a much longer time, a pupil of Didymus. Palladius, who visited him four times, states that he had a dream of the emperor Julian's death at the exact time it occurred in his Persian expedition. Sozomen says that in arguing for the Nicene faith, Didymus was successful by his extreme persuasiveness—he seemed to make every one a judge of the points in dispute; and Isidore of Pelusium and Libanius speak of his great ability.

He was a great ascetic and was well respected by all. Socrates of Constantinople later called him "the great bulwark of the true faith".

He departed in 398 at age 85 of which 52 years were spent as head of the School of Alexandria. May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.



THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

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 PAONI

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 blessings be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE NINTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

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- Saifain 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.

THE TENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

1. The Martyrdom of St. Dabamon.
2. The Commemoration of the Opening of the Churches during the reign of emperor Constantine.
3. The Departure of St. Yoannis the 16th, the 103rd Pope 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 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.

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 Phamenoth,

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 Pashons, 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 KOIAK, 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 Paoni, 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 and glory be to God. Amen.

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 Numerianus' 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 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 Ansenia (Antioe) 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 Ansenia, 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 martyrs 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 PAONI

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 Martyrdom 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.

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 Paoni, 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 Phamenoth, 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

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.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

1. The Departure of St. John II, 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 II, bishop of Jerusalem, departed. He became a monk in the monastery of St. Hilarion, with the great father St. Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus. His virtues and knowledge became well known, so they chose him a bishop for Jerusalem in the year 387 A.D., after the departure of St. Cyril of Jerusalem his predecessor.

During a visit by St. Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, to Jerusalem, in 394, St. Epiphanius preached, in the Church of the Resurrection, a pointed sermon against Origenism, which was thought to be directly aimed at St. John. After many unseemly scenes, Epiphanius advised Jerome and his friends to separate from their bishop John. To be fully independent from him, Epiphanius ordained Paulinian (Jerome's brother) to priesthood.

Epiphanius attempted to defend his irregular action, but John appealed to Alexandria against Jerome and his supporters as schismatics. The Archbishop, Theophilus (23rd Pope), at once took the side of John. The dispute was prolonged for about four years, and, after some attempts at reconciliation, and the exhibition of much bitterness, amounting to the practical excommunication of Jerome and his friends, the dispute was stopped, by St. Theophilus, who sent a letter to St. Jerome advising him to be reconciled with his bishop St. John.

St. Jerome replied to St. Theophilus saying: “You coax as a father, you teach as a master, you enjoin as a bishop. You come to me not with a rod and severity but in a spirit of kindness, gentleness, and meekness.”

St. John showed a lot of love towards the Jewish Christian minority of Jerusalem and effected a reconciliation of the Greek and the Judeo-Christian communities in Jerusalem by his wisdom. Some Scholars claim that the Catechetical lectures attributed to his predecessor St. Cyril of Jerusalem are actually written by him.

In 415, two years before his death in 417, he was probably directly involved in the discovery of the Relics of Saint Stephen. May his holy blessings 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 PAONI

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 Pharamuthi, 1591 A.M. He became a monk on the third of KOIAK, 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 Phamenoth, 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 Phamenoth, 1603 A.M. (1887 A.D.) and also was appointed as a deputy of the See of St. Mark. After the departure of Abba 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 Abba 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 KOIAK 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 Abba Kyrillos, metropolitan of Ethiopia, and Abba 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 Abba Abraam and another bishop. When Italy occupied Ethiopia, the Emperor departed from his country. Abba 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 Abba 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. Abba 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 Paoni, 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 PAONI

1. The return of the Relics of the Great St. Mark the Apostle to the delegation of the Coptic church in 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 Roman Pope, gave Abba 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 late Pope Cyril VI, 116th Pope of Alexandria renovated the monastery of St. Mina at Mariot and translated the relics of the great saint there on the 15th day of Paoni, 1775 AM. (1959 AD.) In a large celebration attended by clergy and laity. May his blessings be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

The Departure of Abba Nofer (Onuphrius) 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), and he longed to see the servants of God, the Anchorites. He saw many of them, among them 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 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. St. Paphnutius asked the hermit if he could occupy Onuphrius' cell after the hermit's death, but Onuphrius told him, "That may not be, thy work is in Egypt with thy brethren.". He then blessed St. Paphnutius and he delivered up his pure soul. St. Paphnutius wrapped him, and buried him in his cave.

May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

1. The arrival 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.

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.

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 Abba 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 PAONI

1. The Inauguration of the New St. Mark Cathedral in the Abba Rowais complex.
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 Abba Rowais complex.

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.

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 Abba 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 PAONI

1. The relocation of the relics of St. Mark in the new Cathedral in the Abba Rowais complex.
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), Pope Cyril VI celebrated the first Pontifical Liturgy in the new St. Mark Cathedral in the Abba Rowais complex. Following the liturgy, Pope Kyrillos took the box of the relics of St. Mark, and placed it in the reliquary prepared under the altar with great honour.

The celebration was attended by the patriarch Mari Ignatius Yacoub the Third, the Antiochian Patriarch for the Syrian Orthodox, and a number of Syrian, Indian and Armenian Orthodox bishops. Also 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. 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 KOIAK, 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 blessings 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.

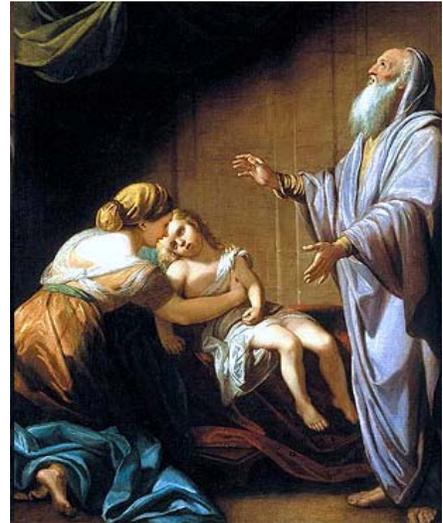
THE TWENTIETH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

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. (Painting by Benjamin West)



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 PAONI

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 Ansenia. 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 PAONI

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 blessings be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE TWENTY THIRD DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

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.

One day, someone mentioned the name of the saint Abba Noub before Arianus, governor of Ansenia. 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-Fayyumy, 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 Ansenia. 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 PAONI

The Martyrdom of the Great Saint Abba 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 PAONI

The Departure of St. Peter the Fourth, 34th Pope of Alexandria.

On this day, 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, Abba 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 Aphtonius 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 PAONI

The Consecration of the Church of Archangel Gabriel.

On this day is the commemoration of the consecration of a church in the name of the honorable angel Gabriel the announcer, in the monastery named after him on the Naklon mount, in El-Fayyoum. This church is still standing until this day.

This area had many monasteries and was inhabited by hundreds of monks.

May his intercession be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE TWENTY SEVENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

1. The Martyrdom of St. Ananias, the Apostle.
2. The Martyrdom of St. Thomas of Shentalet.

1. On this day, St. Ananias, the apostle, was martyred. He was one of the Seventy apostles and became the first Bishop of Damascus. The Lord ordered him to restore the sight of Saul, the former persecutor of Christians, then baptize him (Acts 9:10-19, 22:12). Saul became the great preacher and Apostle Paul. St Ananias boldly and openly confessed Christianity before the Jews and the pagans, despite the danger.

From Damascus he went to preach at Eleutheropolis, where he healed many of their infirmities. Lucian, the prefect of the city, tried to persuade the holy one to offer sacrifice to idols. Because of Ananias' staunch and solid confession of Christ, Lucian ordered that he be tortured. Harsh torments did not sway the witness of Truth. Then the torturers led him out beyond the city, where they stoned him. The saint prayed for those who put him to death. His relics were later transferred to Constantinople. May his blessings 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 Abba 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 Ansenia, 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.

THE TWENTY EIGHTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

1. The Departure of St. Theodosius, 33rd Pope of Alexandria.
2. The Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of Abba Sarabamoun, Bishop of Nikiu.

1. Today is the commemoration of the departure of St. Theodosius I, 33rd Pope of Alexandria. Saint Theodosius was elevated to the Patriarchate in 535 A.D. and reposed in the Lord in 566 A.D. He was summoned to Constantinople by the Emperor Justinian I in December 536 A.D. in an attempt to win him over to the Chalcedonian faith, but he refused to be swayed. He was not forced to abandon his belief, but was effectively prevented from administering his Patriarchate by being detained for the rest of his life under Imperial surveillance in Constantinople together with some of his clergy.

The Emperor sent a series of Chalcedonian "Patriarchs" to Alexandria in an unsuccessful attempt to destroy Egyptian "Monophysitism". During his exile in Constantinople, the Empress Theodora (Justinian's wife, who was Orthodox), devoted her self to ease his life in exile, while he devoted his time to writing to his faithful believers in Egypt.

His non-Chalcedonian faith was sincere and deep rooted, he remained dedicated to it till the end of his life even while living among Chalcedonians. While avoiding confrontation with the Chalcedonian Emperor, he still succeeded in aiding and influencing independent churches in Antioch, Syria and Egypt, while advancing their missionary activity. He was assisted in this by Saint Severus who was exiled in Egypt at the time. After St. Severus' death, St. Theodosius became the principal spokesman of the non Chalcedonian churches.

On the accession of Emperor Justin II in 565, St Theodosius was given permission to return to Alexandria, but he reposed in the Lord before departure, and was buried in Constantinople with Patriarchal honours.

St Theodosius was a man of great learning and a great writer. He wrote numerous treatises against the heresies of the "Tritheists", the "Agnoetae" and the "Phantasiastes". He wrote several Coptic sermons as well as expositions of the non Chalcedonian doctrines addressed to the leading Byzantine figures. May his holy blessings be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also, the church celebrates the Commemoration of the Consecration of the Church of Abba Sarabamoun, the martyr, Bishop of Nikiu. May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE TWENTY NINTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

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 blessings 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. May their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF PAONI

1. The nativity of St. John the Baptist.
2. Departure of Pope Cosmas I, 44th Pope of Alexandria.

On this day was the birth of St. John the Baptist, son of Zakariah the priest, whom the Lord called “greatest among those born of women”. His parents were righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (Luke 1:6) And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. (Luke 1:7)

While Zakariah was executing the priest's office before God in the order of his course, the angel gabriel appeared to him and announced to him the birth of his son John. (Luke 1:8) His wife Elizabeth became pregnant, and when the holy Virgin heard she went to visit her and saluted her. When Elizabeth heard the Virgin's salutation, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. (Luke 1:41)

When Elisabeth's full time came, she brought forth a son and they called him John even as he was called by the angel. (Luke 1:57) And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel. (Luke 1:80)
May the intercession of this great saint be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also Pope Cosmas I of Alexandria, 44th Pope of Alexandria & Patriarch of the See of St. Mark. Departed. He was from the town of Abu-Sair. He later became a monk in the Monastery of Saint Macarius the Great.

He was ordained Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, against his will, on 30 Paremhat, 445 A.M. (26 March 729) He prayed to God to let him die and his prayers were answered when departed on 3 Paoni, 446 A.M. (28 May 730), after one year, two months and two days of his enthronement. May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP 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. The Virgin Martyr Febronia suffered during the reign of Diocletian (284-305). She was raised at a monastery in the city of Sivapolis (Assyria). The head of the women's monastery was the abbess Bryaena, the aunt of St Febronia. Being concerned about her niece's salvation, she assigned her a stricter form of life than the other nuns.

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. There remained only the abbess Bryaena, her helper Thomais and St Febronia, who was seriously ill at the time.

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 commander Selinus subjected her to fierce torture. The saint prayed, "My Savior, do not abandon me in this terrible hour!" They beat the martyr for a long time, and blood flowed from her wounds. In order to intensify the suffering of St Febronia, they tied her to a tree and set a fire under it. The tortures were so inhuman, that the people began to demand an end to the torture, since there was no confession of guilt by the girl. Selinus continued to mock and jeer at the martyr, but St Febronia became silent. Because of weakness she was unable to utter a word. In a rage Selinus gave orders to tear out her tongue, smash her teeth, and finally, to cut off both hands and feet. The people were unable to bear such a horrid spectacle and they left the scene of the torture, cursing Diocletian and his gods.

Finally, they beheaded the holy Martyr Febronia. Her body was buried in the convent among the veneration of all the faithful. May her holy blessings 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."

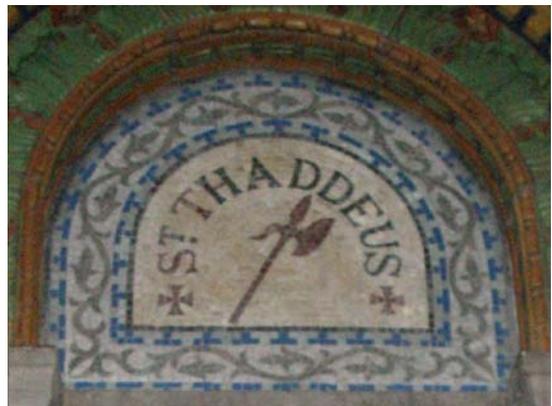
His father asked for him three times, and he responded with the same answer. When he finished the mass, he found his father had departed. The church vessels were stored in a place known only by his father. Banayen the priest went to St. Daniel, the priest of the wilderness of Shiheet, who guided him 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 EPIP

The martyrdom of St. Jude the apostle

Today we commemorate the martyrdom of St. Jude, who was also known as “Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus” (Matt 10:3), one of the twelve disciples. He was the brother of St. James the lesser the first bishop of Jerusalem, also known as the “brother of the Lord”. He is the writer of the New Testament letter bearing his name.

Tradition holds that Saint Jude preached the Gospel in Judea, Samaria, Idumaea, Syria, Mesopotamia and Libya.[20] He is also said to have visited Beirut. According to tradition, Saint Jude suffered martyrdom about 65 AD in Beirut, in the Roman province of Syria, together with the apostle Simon the Zealot, with whom he is usually connected. The axe that he is often shown holding in pictures symbolizes the way in which he was killed.



According to tradition, after his martyrdom, pilgrims came to his grave to pray and many of them experienced the powerful intercessions of St. Jude. Thus the title, “The Saint for the Hopeless and the Despaired”.

May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE THIRD DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

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 Serapamon. 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 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. Abba 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 26th, 432 A.D.). He succeeded St. Boniface I as pope, 10 Sept., 422. During the last year of his Papacy, the Council of Ephesus was convened against the heresy of Nestorius. St. Celestine supported St. Cyril the Great and excommunicated Nestorius. He did not attend the council but was represented by delegates who carried his letter of excommunication. He departed in peace shortly after. May his blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE FOURTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

The Commemoration of the Relocation of the Relics of Sts. Cyrus (Apakir) and John.

On this day, in the year 412, the church commemorates the relocation of the relics of the honourable Sts. Cyrus (Apakir) and John from the city of Konopa, near Alexandria (where they suffered martyrdom in the year 311) to the nearby village of Manuphin.

This Egyptian village prompted fear in everyone, since in a former time there was a pagan temple inhabited by evil spirits. Patriarch Theophilus (385-412) wanted to cleanse this place of demons, but he died. His wish was fulfilled by his successor in the See of Alexandria, the holy Patriarch Cyril (412-444).

St. Cyril prayed fervently in carrying out this project. An angel of the Lord appeared in a vision to the Patriarch and commanded the venerable relics of Sts. Cyrus and John be transferred to Manuphin. His Holiness Patriarch Cyril did the angel's bidding and built a church at Manuphin in the name of the holy martyrs.

From that time this place was purified of the Enemy's influence, and by the prayers of the holy Martyrs Cyrus and John there began to occur many miracles, healings of the sick and infirm. May their prayers be with us, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE FIFTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

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 EPIP

1. On this day, St. Olympas, one of the seventy apostles, was martyred. He is mentioned by St. Paul in Rom. 16:15. 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. Procopius (commemorated Epip 14), 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 EPIP

The Departure of St. Shenouda (Shenoute), the Archimandrite.

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 Abba Bgoul (Bigal) to bless him. Abba 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 Abba 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 Abba Bishoy.

Abba Shenouda had built another monastery, the number of its monks reached 2200 monks, which is still standing and is known as the monastery of Abba Shenouda.

Once, an army commander asked Abba 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.

Abba 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 Abba 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 and glory be to God. Amen.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

1. The Departure of St. Abba 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.

On this day we commemorate the departure of the great Saint Abba Pishoy the perfect man, the beloved of our Good Saviour. He was born in the village of "Shinsha" in the "Menoufia" Province of Egypt, in the year 320 A.D. His parents were devout and righteous abounding in every good work. Pishoi was the youngest of seven brothers. While still in his childhood, his father departed to Paradise leaving his mother to look after the seven children.

One night, his mother saw a vision; an Angel of the Lord standing before her and saying: "The Lord sayeth give me one of thy children that he may serve me all the days of his life". The mother answered saying: "Behold, all my children are before thee, choose whomsoever pleaseth thee". And the Angel stretched out his hand and touched the forehead of little Pishoy. Now Pishoi was of a lean body, and the mother answered and said: "This is the weakest among them all, choose a stronger one my Lord". But the Lord who searches the hearts and is no respecter of person has already chosen the blessed Pishoi to serve Him.

At age 20 (circa A.D. 340), Pishoi left into the wilderness of Scetis (or Ascete, from which the word "Ascetic" was derived), where he met the great Abba Pambo (pronounced Pamwo). This great teacher was a Disciple of Saint Macarius the great, and the teacher of Abba John the Dwarf. This great Saint trained the young Pishoi in the tradition of the great Ascetics of the wilderness of Egypt. Through his obedience and strife, he soon earned a place among the monks and was vested in the Monastic garb by his teacher who surnamed him "the Luminous".

When Abba Pambo departed to Paradise, Abba Pishoi remained with his friend Abba John the Dwarf in the place where the "Tree of obedience" grew. Abba Pishoi gradually increased his ascetic efforts so much so that he fasted for one week at a time and when he ate, he only ate bread and salt. He memorized many of the books of the Scripture, while keeping the tradition of the Desert Fathers: weaving baskets while reciting his Psalmody. One book of the Scripture that had a special place in his heart was the book of Jeremiah, which he often read. At times the Prophet Jeremiah would appear to him explaining the Scripture.

Although he enjoyed the company of his friend John the Dwarf, yet deep inside him was a burning desire for the solitary life. Now Abba John the dwarf perceived in his spirit that desire and one day spoke to him saying: "I know that you are thinking about the solitary life and so am I, so let us spend the whole night in prayer that God may grant us discernment regarding this matter". And indeed the Angel of the Lord declared unto them that they are to depart, with John staying in the place where they both used to live. And Pishoi arose early in the morning and went two miles south of that place where he found a cave, and he lived there for three years where he set his eyes on no one. He exercised his Asceticism more diligently, and practiced continuous prayers, and long vigils, always recalling the Master's words: "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it".

One day while standing for prayer, the Lord Jesus appeared to him and spoke to him saying: "Pishoi my chosen one!" The Saint started to tremble and fell on his face but the Lord held him by the hand and raised him up speaking to him in comforting words.

Abba Pishoi increased his ascetic labours, praying and fasting, and the Lord appeared to him once more encouraging and strengthening him. In a short while the aroma of his virtues filled the wilderness round about him, and many monks gathered around him to be his disciples. Although leading separate lives, Abba Pishoi and Abba John the Dwarf visited often to talk about the things pertaining to the Kingdom of Heaven.

One of the great Syrian Ascetics, Saint Ephreim the Syrian (surnamed the Harp of the Spirit) was once praying, when it was revealed to him that there is a man in the wilderness of Scetis named Pishoi that was his equal in piety. Immediately he arose and took a ship to Alexandria, and from there he travelled by land to Scetis. He met with Abba Pishoi, they embraced each other and prayed together. There was a problem however, neither of them knew the language of the other. Abba Pishoi lifted his eyes to heaven and asked the Lord that he may give him

understanding , and immediately the Lord revealed to him what Abba Ephreim was saying. Abba Ephreim stayed with him for one week then he returned to Syria.

The monks in the wilderness knew about the repeated appearances of the Lord to Abba Pishoi, and they were filled with the desire to witness the appearance of the Lord. Abba Pishoi prayed, asking the Lord to appear to the brethren that they may be strengthened , and the Lord promised that he will appear on a certain date. Abba Pishoi told the brethren and they were very happy. Early in the morning of that day, every one started walking up the mountain where the Lord said He would appear. Every one wanted to be there first.

Walking at the end of the trail was a frail old man who could hardly make it up the mountain, whom hardly any one noticed except for the compassionate Abba Pishoi, who went to him and asked if he could carry him up the mountain. At first the old man felt so light but gradually he became heavier and heavier until Abba Pishoi realized that he was actually carrying the Lord. Abba Pishoi trembled and cried saying: "My Lord, the heavens are not large enough to contain Thee, and the earth trembleth before Thy Majesty, so how can a sinner like myself carry Thee?". And the Lord comforted him and told him that because he carried Him, his body shall not see corruption. Abba Pishoi went up the mountain to watch the other monks looking up to heaven and waiting to see the Lord , but he told them that the Lord came but the eyes of their hearts were blinded so they could not see Him.

One of the virtues in which the great Saint excelled was his hospitality towards strangers. One day he noticed a man walking far off and immediately he went towards him and insisted that he come in to rest his feet. He brought him into his cell and brought water to wash his feet. The "stranger" spoke and Pishoi was filled with awe, "My chosen one Pishoi, thou blessed old man" said the "stranger", and Pishoi prostrated himself before the Lord. Abba Pishoi washed the feet of the Lord then the Lord departed from him. He drank the water but kept a little for his disciple. When the disciple came, Abba Pishoi told him to drink of the water but he would not. But when he saw that the Saint was not pleased with him he finally went to the pot but the water was gone. He came and prostrated himself before Abba Pishoi asking him the truth about the water . The Saint told him and he cried bitterly realizing that he was punished for his disobedience.

In the year 408 A.D. hordes of the "Berber" attacked the monasteries in Scetis devastating the place and killing many of the monks. Saint John the Dwarf came to his friend Pishoi and told him: "my brother, the Berber are coming, and although I am not afraid to die, yet I donot wish that one of them would go to Hell because of killing me, so I am thinking of going into Egypt. Abba Pishoi was pleased with his friends' discernment and decided to go with him. They both departed from scetis into the Valley of the Nile. Saint John the Dwarf into the Monastery of Saint Anthony and his friend Abba Pishoi settled in upper Egypt in the town of Ansana. There, Abba Pishoi met another monk who was to become a companion and a friend to the old man. This monk was no other than Saint Paul of Tamouh. They visited each other frequently, prayed

often together and encouraged each other. Because they loved each other, it was revealed to Abba Pishoi that their bodies shall be buried together.

Many years passed, and Abba Pishoi was close to a hundred years old, and the Lord recalled to Him his chosen one. Abba Pishoi gave up the Ghost in Ansana (Antinoe) on July 15, 417 A.D. The brethren layed his body to rest with great honour, as befits a great Saint of the Church. He was burried just outside Ansana. Three months Later, his friend Abba Paul of Tamouh also reposed in the Lord and was burried beside his friend Abba Pishoi.

At a later date, a Monastery bearing the name of the Saint was established in Ansana, and the Monks wanted to transfere the body of Abba Pishoi into the Monastery. So, they brought the body into a boat to transfere it there, but the boat would not move for two days. Now there happened to live in that area an old monk full of the Holy Spirit, and the name of the monk was Armanius. This monk was moved by the spirit to reveal to the brethren that the Lord has promised the two Saints that their bodies shall be together. Immediately the brethren brought the body of Saint Paul of Tamouh and the boat smoothly glided to its destination. The two bodies were put in one Coffin and remained in that monastery till 842 A.D. During that time, miracles of cure were widely reported all the time.

During the Papacy of Abba Yousab, the 52nd Pope of Alexandria, the Church lived in relative peace. The Pope made a visit to the Monasteries of Scetic during Easter. while there, the monks asked the Pope to help them bring bck the body of their blessed father Abba Pishoi, into the place where he lived, and taught. So, the Pope wrote two letters, one to Abba Youannis Bishop of Ansana, and one adressed to the people of Ansana so that they hinder not the transfere of the body. As soon as the messages of Pope Yousab were received, the monks carrying the messages were lead into the Monastery where the bodies were kept (about one mile south of the Town). The bodies of both Abba Pishoi and Abba Paul of Tamouh were then transferred into a new coffin and taken to the house of Abba Youannis the Bishop, until a boat was found to transport the bodies to Babylon (Old Cairo). From there, the bodies were carried on a donkey into the holy wilderness of Scetis. On arrival, the monks went out to meet the bodies carrying palm leaves and olive branches, with censors and candle tapers. The monks spent the whole night singing praises to the Lord. This historical day was the fourth day of the blessed month of Kiahk in the year 558 A.M. according to the coptic Calendar. May their holy blessings 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.

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 was having a difficult labour, and he asked the two Saints to forgive him for what he had done to them. They prayed to God for her and God relieved her from her difficulty and she gave birth peacefully. 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 "Antioch" (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, Abba Pimwah, the priest of Shiheet." Abba 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. Abba 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 EPIP

1. The Martyrdom of St. Simeon Cleophas, the Apostle, second bishop of Jerusalem.
2. The Departure of St. Cladianus (Celadion), the Ninth Pope of the See of St. Mark.

1. Today is the martyrdom of St. Simeon Cleopas, one of the seventy apostles and the second bishop of Jerusalem. According to a universal tradition the first bishop of Jerusalem was Saint James the Just, the "brother of the Lord,"

After the martyrdom of James and the conquest of Jerusalem which immediately followed, it is said that those of the apostles and disciples of the Lord that were still living came together from all directions with those that were related to the Lord according to the flesh (for the majority of them also were still alive) to take counsel as to who was worthy to succeed James. They all with one consent pronounced Symeon, the son of Clopas, of whom the Gospel also makes mention; to be worthy of the episcopal throne of that parish. He was a cousin, as they say, of the Saviour. For Hegesippus records that Clopas was a brother of Joseph.

About the year 107 he was crucified under Trajan. May his blessings 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. The people and the Bishops in Alexandria elected St. Celadion to the Apostolic Throne in the year 152 AD during the reign Antoninus Pius.

He was born in Alexandria, Egypt and was much loved by the people for he was righteous and wise. When he took over the leadership, he tended the church left to him by his predecessors. His days were peaceful, and nothing troubled the serenity of the Christians and Christianity.

He remained steadfast in his work for fourteen years, six months and three days and departed in the reign of Aurelius and Lucius Verus, on the 9th of EPIP (16th of July), in the year 166 AD. He was enshrouded, and buried with his fathers, the patriarchs.

May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE TENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

1. The Martyrdom of St. Theodore, Bishop of Pentapolis.

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).

St. Theodore together with Irenaeus, his deacon, and Serapion and Ammonius, two readers suffered during the persecutions of Emperor Gallienus. They were tortured and then their tongues were cut. For their resistance under duress, they are considered martyrs.

May their holy blessings be with us. Amen.

THE ELEVENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP.

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, Abba Isaiah, who was a hermit in the wilderness of Shiheet (Scetis), departed. He lived in asceticism first at Scetis in Egypt, then in Palestine. He established a coenobitic monastery near Gaza to house his followers. He was unable to realize his desire for seclusion because of his popularity, so he lived outside the monastery in seclusion. Nevertheless, St. Isaiah maintained contact with his followers through an intermediary, and in that way oversaw the spiritual direction of those in the monastery.

One of his disciples was St. Peter the Iberian (1st of Koiak) the non Chalcedonian bishop of Maiuma (outside Gaza) who visited him frequently and often sent him some vegetables.

In 488, St. Peter the Iberian and his mentor Abba Isaiah were summoned to Constantinople by emperor Zeno to sign the Henotikon, Zeno's attempt to reconcile the Alexandrian church with Constantinople. Abba Isaiah excused himself for health reasons while St. Peter the Iberian chose to go into self exile in Egypt. Abba Isaiah left many useful sayings and departed at the ripe old age of 120. May his holy blessings be with us and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE TWELFTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

1. The Commemoration of Archangel Michael.
2. The Martyrdom of St. Abba Hour El-Siriakousy.
2. The Departure of the great ascetic Abba Sisoës the Great

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. Amen.

3. On this day also the great ascetic Abba Sisoës the Great departed. He was an Egyptian by birth. Having withdrawn the world from his youth, he retired to the desert of Scetis, and lived some time under the direction of abbot Hor. The desire of finding a retreat yet more unfrequented induced him to cross the Nile and hide himself in the mountain where St. Antony died some time before.

Extremely strict with himself, Abba Sisoës was very merciful and compassionate to others, and he received everyone with love. The reputation of his sanctity became so illustrious as to merit the full confidence of all the neighbouring solitaries. Some even came a great distance to be guided in the interior ways of perfection; and, in spite of the pains he took he was forced to submit his love of silence and retreat, to the greater duty of charity.

To those who visited him, the saint first of all always taught humility, as the most necessary virtue. When one of the monks asked how he might attain to a constant remembrance of God, St Sisoës remarked, "That is no great thing, my son, but it is a great thing to regard yourself as inferior to everyone else. This leads to the acquisition of humility." Thus, while he never lost sight of the divine presence, it was ever accompanied with the consciousness of his own nothingness and misery.

Asked by the monks whether one year is sufficient for repentance if a brother sins, Abba Sisoës said, "I trust in the mercy of God that if such a man repents with all his heart, then God will accept his repentance in three days."

He often passed two days without eating, and was so rapt in God that he forgot his food, so that it was necessary for his disciple Abraham to remind him that it was time to break his fast. His prayer was so fervent that it often passed into ecstasy, his heart becoming inflamed with divine love.

It was a maxim with him, that a solitary ought not to choose the manual labour which is most pleasing to him. His ordinary work was making baskets. He was tempted one day as he was selling them, to anger; instantly he threw the baskets away and ran off. By efforts like these to command his temper he acquired a meekness which nothing could disturb.

When St Sisoës lay upon his deathbed, the disciples surrounding the Elder saw that his face shone like the sun. They asked the dying man what he saw. Abba Sisoës replied that he saw St Anthony, the Prophets, and the Apostles. His face increased in brightness, and he spoke with someone. The monks asked, "With whom are you speaking, Father?" He said that angels had come for his soul, and he was entreating them to give him a little more time for repentance. The monks said, "You have no need for repentance, Father" St Sisoës said with great humility, "I do not think that I have even begun to repent."

After these words the face of the holy Abba shone so brightly that the brethren were not able to look upon him. St Sisoës told them that he saw the Lord Himself. Then there was a flash like lightning, and a fragrant odor, and Abba Sisoës departed to the Heavenly Kingdom. May his holy blessings be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

1. The Departure of St. Pistentius, 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, Abba Pistentius, 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 EPIP

1. The Martyrdom of St. Procopius (Proconius) of Jerusalem.
2. The Departure of St. Peter the Fifth, 83rd Patriarch of Alexandria.

Saint Procopius was born in Jerusalem to a Christian father and a pagan mother, his name originally being Neanias. After his father's death, his mother brought him up entirely in the spirit of Roman idolatry. When he had grown up, the Emperor Diocletian saw him and was so pleased with him that he took him to court to serve in the army.

When this wicked Emperor launched a persecution of Christians, he ordered Neanias to go with a detachment of soldiers to Alexandria and exterminate the Christians there. But on the road something happened to Neanias that was similar to what happened to Saul. At three o'clock in the morning there was a violent earthquake, the Lord Jesus appearing to him and saying, "Neanias, where are you going, and against whom are you rebelling?" In great fear, Neanias replied, "Who are you, Lord? I cannot recognize You." Then a brilliant Cross, as of crystal, appeared in the sky and a voice came from the Cross, "I am Jesus, the crucified Son of God. By this sign that you have seen, overcome your enemies, and My peace will be with you."

This event utterly changed Neanias's life. He caused a cross such as he had seen to be made, and instead of moving against the Christians, set off with his soldiers against the Agarians (Arabs), who were attacking Jerusalem. He entered Jerusalem victorious and told his mother that he was a Christian. Brought to trial, he took off his army belt and sword and cast them before the judge, demonstrating that he was a soldier only of Christ the King. After harsh torture, he was thrown into prison. There Christ the Lord appeared to him again, baptizing him and giving him the name Procopius.

One day twelve women came to the window of his cell and said to him, "We also are the servants of Christ." Arrested for this, they were thrown into the same prison, where St. Procopius instructed them in the Christian faith and carefully prepared them to receive the crown of martyrdom. These twelve women were then harshly tortured. Beholding their sufferings and courage, Procopius' mother also came to faith in Christ, and then all thirteen were put to death.

When St. Procopius was led to the scaffold, he raised his hands towards the East and prayed to God for all the poor and needy, the destitute and the widowed, and especially for the holy Church, that it might grow and spread and that Orthodoxy might shine to the end of time. He was assured from heaven that his prayer was heard, after which he joyfully laid his head under the sword and went to his Lord, to eternal joy. St. Procopius suffered with honor in Palestinian Caesarea, and was crowned with an eternal wreath of glory, on July 8th, 303.

May his holy blessings 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 EPIP

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 Abba Horesius of Soul, was martyred. May his blessings be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

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."

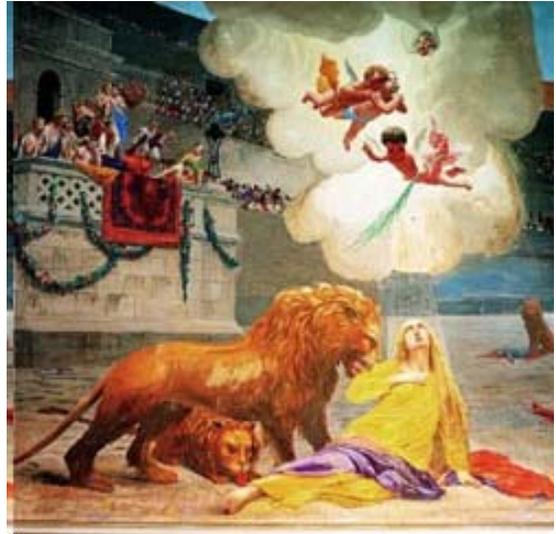
On the next day, a woman came to him and told him that she had a box that her father had brought before his death from the church of St. George in Palestine. This fulfilled the vision, and he went with her and examined the box. Then, he went to Pope Gabriel, 88th Pope, and told him about the vision and 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 EPIP

The Martyrdom of St. Euphemia

On this day, in 303, St. Euphemia, was martyred in the city of Chalcedon. The Governor Priscus circulated an order to all the inhabitants of Chalcedon and its surroundings to appear at a pagan festival to worship and offer sacrifice to idols.

During this festival, forty-nine Christians hid in a house where they secretly attended services praising the One True God. The young maiden, Euphemia, was also among those praying there. Soon the hiding place of the Christians was discovered, and they were brought before Priscus to answer for themselves.



St. Euphemia was separated from her brethren in faith, tortured severely and finally thrown to the wild beasts and she obtained the crown of martyrdom. May her holy blessings be with us and glory be to God. Amen.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

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, (Cleophas), also called the brother of the Lord was martyred. He was one of the twelve disciples and he received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

He was ordained by the apostles as the first bishop of Jerusalem. He headed the first council of Jerusalem and delivered the final judgement of the council.

The Jewish leaders came to him asking him to persuade the Jews that Jesus Christ is not the Messiah but he refused. They took him to the top of the temple and threw him down, then they stoned him to death. May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

1. The Martyrdom of Sts. Patapi, Bishop of Qift, Abba Andrew, and Abba 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 Abba Patapi, (Bidaba) and his companion, the priest Andrew, his nephew, and St. Christodoulas, were martyred.

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 Patapi liked each other and decided to forsake the world. They eagerly read the Bible and religious books.

They went to the Eastern mount where they found Abba Eisak. This saint comforted and strengthened them to endure the hardships to receive the Eternal Life. Abba 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 Abba Patapi, "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."

When the bishop of Qift departed, Pope Peter the First (The seal of martyrs and the 17th Patriarch) ordained Abba Patapi to be in his place. The people of Qift rejoiced greatly at his ordination. 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. He ordained Abba Andrew a priest.

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 Abba Patapi knew of that, he went to the city of Esna, accompanied by the blessed Fr. Andrew and Abba Christodoulas.

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." When the Governor heard their words and saw their steadfastness, he ordered to cut their heads off with the sword. St. Patapi, 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. Pantaleimon, the Physician. Born Pantaleon, the son of a rich pagan, Eustorgius of Nicomedia, he was instructed in Christianity by his Christian mother, Saint Eubula; however, after her death he fell away from the Christian

church, while he studied medicine with a renowned physician Euphrosinos; under the patronage of Euphrosinos he became physician to the Emperor Maximian or Galerius.

He was won back to Christianity by Saint Hermolaus (characterized as a bishop of the church at Nicomedia in the later literature), who convinced him that Christ was the better physician. He was baptised by the priest Hermolaus and received the name Panteleimon.

By miraculously healing a blind man by invoking the name of Jesus over him, Pantaleon converted his father, upon whose death he came into possession of a large fortune, but freed his slaves and, distributing his wealth among the poor, developed a great reputation in Nicomedia, treating patients without accepting money.

Envious colleagues denounced him to the emperor during the Diocletian persecution. The emperor wished to save him and sought to persuade him to apostasy. Pantaleon, however, openly confessed his faith, and as proof that Christ is the true God, he healed a paralytic. Notwithstanding this, he was condemned to death by the emperor, who regarded the miracle as an exhibition of magic.

He was tortured severely with all sorts of torture but the Lord appeared to him and healed him. He was finally beheaded and 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 Pashons, 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 EPIP

The Martyrdom of St. Theodore Stratelates.

The Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates came from the city of Euchaita in Asia Minor. He was endowed with many talents, and was handsome in appearance. For his charity God enlightened him with the knowledge of Christian truth.

For his bravery St Theodore was appointed military commander [stratelatos] in the city of Heraclea, where he combined his military service with preaching the Gospel among the pagans subject to him. His gift of persuasion, reinforced by his personal example of Christian life, turned many from their false gods. Soon, nearly all of Heraclea had accepted Christianity.

During this time Emperor Licinius (311-324) began a fierce persecution against Christians. In an effort to stamp out the new faith, he persecuted the enlightened adherents of Christianity, who were perceived as a threat to paganism. Among these was St Theodore.

Licinius tried to force St Theodore to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. The saint refused adamantly. St Theodore was arrested and subjected to fierce and refined torture. He was dragged on the ground, beaten with iron rods, had his body pierced with sharp spikes, was burned with fire, and his eyes were plucked out. An angel healed the saint's wounded body.

In the morning, the imperial soldiers found him alive and unharmed. Seeing with their own eyes the infinite might of the Christian God, they were baptized not far from the place of the unsuccessful execution.

St Theodore voluntarily surrendered himself to Licinius, and discouraged the Christians from rising up against the torturer, saying, "Beloved, halt! My Lord Jesus Christ, hanging upon the Cross, restrained the angels and did not permit them to take revenge on the race of man."

Going to execution, the holy martyr opened up the prison doors with just a word and freed the prisoners from their bonds. People who touched his robe were healed instantly from sicknesses, and freed from demonic possession. By order of the emperor, St Theodore was beheaded by the sword. May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

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 EPIP

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 Antinoe. 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 persecution.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever, Amen.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

1. The Martyrdom of St. Longinus the Soldier.
2. The Martyrdom of St. Marina (Margaret), 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 EPIP

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 KOIAK, 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 EPIP

1. The Martyrdom of the Saint Abba Isaac.
2. The Martyrdom of St. Hilaria.
3. The Martyrdom of Sts. Thecla and Mouji.
4. The Martyrdom of St. Antonius (Anthony) of Beba.
5. The Martyrdom of St. Abakragoun.
6. The Martyrdom of St. Domadius El-Souriani (The Syrian).
7. The Consecration of the Church of St. Mercurius.
8. The Departure of St. Palamon, the Father of the Monks.

1. This day 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.

2. 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. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 Ansena, 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.

5. 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 later the devil incited persecution against the church, St. Abakragoun bid his spiritual father farewell and took his blessings. He went to Nikiu, 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. 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.

6. 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. Then he was baptized, and became a monk. He performed many great deeds that the brethren were jealous of him.

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.

7. 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 Athor (Vol. I, P. 122). May his blessing be with us. Amen.

8. On this day also, of the year 316 A.M., the saint Abba 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.

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. Pachomius, the father of the monastic cenobite, was the disciple of this saint.

When St. Pachomius 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 Abba Palamon.

Abba 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.

While St. Pachomius was still staying with his teacher Abba 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 your are standing on, hence many will come to you seeking monasticism." He returned to the old man Abba Palamon and told him what the angel had told him, and his intention of fulfilling the Will of God. Abba 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."

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 EPIP

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 Phamenoth, 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 Meshir (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 EPIP

1. The Martyrdom of St. Apamon (Abba Amoun).
2. The Consecration of the Church of St. Abba Fam.

1. On this day 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 Ansenia (Antinoe), 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 their prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

2. On this day also, was the consecration of the church of St. Abba Fam. May his prayers be with us. Amen.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EPIP

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 EPIP

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 sisters and their mother. 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 women 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 EPIP

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 MESORI 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 (Antinoe), 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 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. Abba 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, Abba Abraam, Bishop of El-Fayoum²². 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.

THE SECOND DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

The Departure of St. Paesia

On this day, St. Paesia, 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, Paesia 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 Paesia. 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 MESORI

1. The Relocation of the Body of St. Simon (Simeon) the Stylite to the city of Antioch.
2. The Departure of Pope 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 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 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 tranquillity.

May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE FOURTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

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 MESORI

The Departure of St. John the Warrior

St. John the Warrior served in the imperial army of the emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363). He was sent with other soldiers to seek out and kill Christians. While appearing to be a persecutor, Saint John rendered great help to the Christians. He freed those who had been arrested, warned others of dangers threatening them, and assisted in their flight. Saint John showed charity not only to Christians, but to all the destitute and those needing help. He visited with the sick, and he consoled the grieving. When Julian the Apostate learned about the actions of the saint, he ordered him locked up in prison.

In the year 363 Julian the Apostate was killed in his war with the Persians. Saint John was set

free and devoted his life to service of neighbours, and he lived in holiness and purity. He died in his old age. May his blessings be with us all and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

THE SIXTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

1. The Martyrdom of St. Julitta
2. The repose of Mar Jacob Baradaeus
3. The repose of Abba Wisa disciple of Abba Shenute the Archimandarite.

St. Julitta lived at Caesarea in Cappadocia during the reign of Emperor Diocletian in the third century.

A certain pagan stole all her property, and when Julitta turned for relief to the courts, the pagan reported to the judge that she was a Christian, which placed her outside the law's protection.

The judge demanded that Julitta renounce Christ, for which he promised to return her unlawfully taken property. St. Julitta refused, and for this she was burned to death in 304. St. Basil the Great wrote an Encomium to St. Julitta seventy years after her death as a martyr. May her holy blessings be with us. Amen.

On this day also the church celebrates the departure of the great saint Mar Jacob Baradaeus Metropolitan of Edessa

Jacob was born in 505 at Tal Mawzalt (modern day Verensehir, Turkey) to the Priest Theophilus bar Manu. At the age of 2 he was given to the Phaselita Monastery near Nisibis, where he mastered the Syriac and Greek languages and was given a comprehensive theological education and spiritual formation in the monastic life. Thanks to his spiritual formation in the monastic life Jacob became a theologian as well as a popular preacher and great scholar. Because of his rough, ragged garments he became known as Burd'ono or Baradaeus.

There came a time during the persecutions that followed Chalcedon in the mid-500s that the Syriac Orthodox Church only had three metropolitans left throughout its territory, the rest having been driven into exile or martyred by the East Romans. Seeing this Jacob traveled to Constantinople in 528, being received there



by St. Theodora, wife of the Emperor Justinian and daughter of a Syriac Orthodox priest from Mabug. After sojourning for a number of years at a monastery in Constantinople, Jacob was consecrated Metropolitan of Edessa in 543 by the deposed Patriarch Anthimus I of Constantinople, the exiled Pope Theodosius of Alexandria, the exiled Metropolitan Constantius of Laodicea, and two other bishops imprisoned with Pope Theodosius in the imperial capital.

Following his consecration, Mar Jacob left Constantinople and began his wide-ranging travels in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and Syria. Everywhere he went Mar Jacob celebrated the divine services and taught and encouraged the Orthodox faithful who opposed Chalcedon. With the blessing of Pope Theodosius he also helped the remaining free bishops to consecrate new bishops to replace those executed or driven into exile, eventually consecrating some 27 bishops for the Orthodox of the Churches of Alexandria and Antioch. Among these were Patriarch Paul of Antioch, consecrated with Metropolitan Eugene of Seleucia in 550.

At age 73 he reposed in the Lord after a short illness and was buried in one of the monasteries in Palestine. St. Jacob's relics remained at the monastery of his repose until 622, after which they were translated to the Phaselita Monastery by Metropolitan Mar Zacchaeus of Tella. May his holy blessings be with us. Amen.

And on this day also the holy father and spiritual fighter Abba Wisa, the disciple of Abba Shenute the Archimandarite departed. He was born to pious parents who raised him up in the orthodox faith.

He sought the monastic life at a young age and he went to Abba Shenute the Archimandarite, who accepted him in his monastery, and he lived under his authority for many years.

Abba Shenute the Archimandarite revealed unto him many of the mysteries, which he had heard from our Lord Jesus Christ; and Abba Wisa wrote the history of the strife of Abba Shenute the Archimandarite, according to what he saw and what he heard from him. And having finished his good course, and pleased God, he departed in peace. May his holy blessings be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

1. The Annunciation to St. Joachim of the Birth of the Virgin Mary.
2. The Departure of St. Timothy II (Timotheos), 26th Pope of Alexandria.
3. Departure of Abba Pisentaeus.

1. On this day God sent the great angel Gabriel, and he spoke unto Joachim the righteous man, saying, “Behold, thy wife Anna shall conceive, and she shall bear thee a daughter, and in her shall be joy and salvation for all the world”; which actually took place through Mary, the Mother of God in the flesh.

This righteous man Joachim, and his wife Anna, were very old in days, and they had no child, for Anna was barren, and they were exceedingly sorrowful because of this, for the children of Israel used to thrust aside him that had not begotten a son, and would say unto him, “O thou who lackest the blessing of God.” Because of this the hearts of this righteous man and his wife were sad, and they fasted, and prayed, and entreated God frequently by day and by night [for a child].

And they begged and entreated God frequently, and they vowed a vow to Him that if they got a child they would make him a ministrant in the Temple of God. And Joachim was in the sanctuary praying frequently and making supplication, and behold, slumber descended upon him and he slept, and Gabriel, the angel of God, appeared unto him, and told him that Anna his wife would certainly conceive, and bear a daughter wherein he would rejoice, and because of whom his eyes would sparkle; and likewise all the world would rejoice, and be glad and would be saved through her.

And when he woke from his dream he came to his house, and told his wife the vision which he had seen during sleep; and she conceived forthwith, and brought forth our holy Lady, the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, the object of boasting of all the world.

May the intercession of the holy Mother of God Saint Mary and the prayers of her pious parents Saint Joachim and Anna

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.

St Timothy was born to pious parents who raised him up in the orthodox faith. As a young man he became a monk in the desert monasteries of mount Kalamon. St Cyril the Great had him brought, against his own inclination, to Alexandria and ordained him a priest.

When the Alexandrians heard that the Emperor Marcian had died, in 457 AD, they were able to take advantage of the absence of Dionysius, the general whose forces had propped up the usurper Proterius, and consult among themselves to elect a true successor of St Dioscorus.

The Alexandrian Church agreed upon St Timothy. He was considered as having the same faith as St Dioscorus, being well versed in the Fathers, a man of ascetic lifestyle but with the ability to pastor the Church. The monks and people carried him to one of the major Churches in the city where he was consecrated by two Egyptian bishops and St Peter the Iberian, who had left his monastic home in Palestine and was staying in Alexandria at that time. While he was being carried to his consecration the people, priests and monks heard a spiritual voice saying “Consecrate him by force, even though he be unwilling, and set him on the throne of St Mark”.

Soon after his ordination, St Timothy found himself banished to Gangra, a city in Northern Turkey. On the way there he passed through Palestine. “But when the cities and the inhabitants of Palestine and the seacoast heard it, they came to him to be sanctified, and that the sick among them gain healing for their diseases through the grace of God which was attached to his person; and they snatched torn pieces of stuff from his garments, that they might have them to protect them from evil.”¹

Now even here in Gangra St Timothy was not able to find relief from those who wished him ill. Gennadius, who had become the patriarch of Constantinople after Anatolius, moved the Emperor to have St Timothy sent even further from any civilised place, and so he found himself sent by boat, even in the middle of winter, to Cherson, a region far away and north of the Crimea. Much of the animosity felt against him was due to the correspondence which he maintained with the Orthodox, both against the Eutychians and the Chalcedonians.²

Just as the death of Marcian had allowed the election and consecration of St Timothy, so the death of Emperor Leo in 474 AD allowed an opportunity for St Timothy to be restored to Alexandria after eighteen years of exile.³

On his arrival in Alexandria he was greeted by crowds of people speaking all the different languages represented in the city, with torches and songs of praise, and they conducted him to the great church chanting, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”.⁴

Zachariah of Mitelene mentions that when St. Timothy returned to Alexandria, the Melkite Patriarch Timothy Salophaciolus retired to his monastery and supported himself, as a simple

¹Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle, Book 4. Ch 1. p77, 1899

²Fr. Peter Farrington: St Timothy Aelurus of Alexandria (unpublished paper)

³Ibid

⁴Hamilton F.J. & Brooks E.W. trans. Zachariah of Mitylene, Syriac Chronicle, Book 4. Ch 1. p110, 1899

monk, by the weaving of baskets. St Timothy arranged that he should receive a pension of a denarius a day for his own use.

St. Timothy departed in 477 AD. He was buried with great honour by Peter Mongus who succeeded him. May his holy blessings be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

The Martyrdom of the Sts. Lazarus, Salomi, His Wife, and Their Children.

On this day nine saints became martyrs, that is to say, Lazarus an aged man, and his wife Salome, which is being interpreted “Weeper,” and their seven children, whose names are ‘An’imo, Antonitus, and ‘Ozya, and Lazarus, and ‘Astibam and Semuna, and Marcolus. And this elder Lazarus was one of the teachers of the Law of Moses in his days, and his father was one of the Seventy-two translators who translated the Book of the Law and the Prophets for Ptolemy, King of Egypt. And this just man taught his children the Law of Moses.

And when Antiochus, King of Rome, reigned over the country of Asia, and the land of Judah, he besieged Jerusalem, and reigned over it, and he afflicted the people of Judah, and he punished them with many punishments. And he compelled them to break the Law of Moses and to eat what was forbidden to eat by the Law of Moses, that is to say the flesh of swine and such like; and there were many who broke the Law of Moses, and who set themselves under his authority.

But these saints kept the Law of Moses, which had been given to them by God, and Antiochus tortured them severely, and he beat them, and sawed their bodies with an iron saw, and cut off their limbs; and the righteous woman Salome, their mother, encouraged them and made them to endure until they had finished their martyrdom.

And after all of them [were dead], she cast herself into the fire of her own free will, and did not wait for them to throw her into it; and they received crowns of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens. And it is right that thou shouldst know, O thou who readest this, that our fathers and doctors of the Church have commanded us to celebrate a festival in honor of the saints of the Old Dispensation, in their divers degrees, and to pay far more honor to them than to the fathers of the New Dispensation, because they did far more than the later fathers. May their holy blessings be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE NINTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

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 MESORI

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 Abba Klog, the bishop, Abba Nehro, who was from Tersa and Abba 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 MESORI

The Departure of St. Moisis, Bishop of Ouseem

On this day, the holy father Abba 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. Abba 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 Abba 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, Abba Moisis foretold incidents before their occurrences. For example, once he told Abba 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 MESORI

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 Phamenoth.

Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

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 MESORI

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. Theophilus, 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 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 Cyril (Pope Cyril 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 MESORI

The Commemoration of the Departure of St. Mary Known as Marina, the Ascetic

Marina, born Mariam, was the daughter of wealthy Christian parents. Marina's mother died when she was very young and she was raised in devout Christian life by her father Eugenius. As her age of marriage drew near her father wished to retire to the Monastery of Qannoubine in the Kadisha Valley of Lebanon after he had found her a husband. When Marina learned of her father's plan she asked why he intended to save his own soul "and destroy mine". When asked by her father, "What shall I do with you? You are a woman", Marina answered that she would renounce women's clothing and live as a monk, in the body she was supposed to take. She then immediately shaved the hair from her head and changed her clothes. Her father, seeing his daughter's strong determination, gave all his possessions to the poor and traveled with her to the Kadisha Valley to live in monastic community life, sharing a cell with her under the name Marinus.

After ten years of prayer, fasting and worship together her father died, leaving her alone. Marina increased her level of asceticism and continued to conceal the fact that she was a

woman. The other monks attributed her soft voice to long periods of prayer and strict ascetic life. One day, the abbot of the monastery sent her with three other monks to attend to some business for the monastery. As the journey was long, they were forced to spend the night at an inn. Also lodging there was a soldier of the eastern Roman front. Upon seeing the beauty of the inn keeper's daughter the soldier seduced her and defiled her virginity, instructing her to say, "It was the monk, Father Marinus, who has done this to me" should she conceive child.

After some time, it was discovered that the inn keeper's daughter was pregnant and, as was agreed, she told her father that Marina was to blame. On hearing the story, the man went furiously to the abbot of the monastery. The abbot calmed the man and told him that he would see to the matter. He called for Marina and reprimanded her severely. When she realized what was happening she fell to her knees and wept, confessing her sinfulness (without explicitly stating how she had sinned) and asking forgiveness. The fact that there was no attempt to deny the fault made the abbot so furious that he told her to leave the monastery. She left at once and remained outside the gates as a beggar for quite a long time. When the inn keeper's daughter gave birth, he took the child and gave him to Marina. She fed the child with sheep's milk, provided by the local shepherds, and remained caring for him outside the monastery for ten years. Finally the monks convinced the abbot to allow Marina to return; he accepted but he also imposed heavy penalties upon her. She was to perform hard labour in cooking, cleaning and carrying water in addition to her regular monastic duties.

At the age of forty, Marina became ill. Three days later she died. The abbot ordered that her body be cleaned, her cloths changed and that she be transferred to the church for funeral prayers. While fulfilling these tasks, the monks discovered that she was in fact, a woman! This made them very distressed. The monks informed the abbot, who came to her side and wept bitterly for the wrongs he had done. The abbot then called for the inn keeper and informed him that Marina was actually a woman. The inn keeper went to where the body lay and also wept for the pain and suffering which he had unjustly brought upon her. During the funeral prayers, one of the monks, who was blind in one eye, received full sight again after he touched the body. God also allowed a devil to torment the inn keeper's daughter and the soldier. This caused them to travel to where the saint was buried. There they both confessed their iniquity in front of everyone and asked for forgiveness.

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

THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

1. The feast of the Assumption of the holy Virgin Mary
2. The Departure of St. Mattias IV (Mattheos), 102nd Patriarch of Alexandria.

Today the church commemorates the Assumption of the holy Virgin Mary to heaven. This is the account of the Assumption according to St. Theodosius 33rd Patriarch of Alexandria:

Now, it came to pass that when the 206 days were completed (after the dormition of the Virgin), they all got up and went by her holy mortal remains. It was the night of the 15th of Messori and the morning of the 16th. They spent all night awake, vigilant and praying. At ten O'clock that night, we heard thunders and shrieks of jubilation. It was a choir of angels going down on the grave, then the psalmist David playing on the harp said, "Arise O Lord into Thy rest, Thou and the arc of Thy holy resting place."

At this very instant, the place became full of fire; the Lord revealed Himself on the Cherubim's chariot, with the Virgin's soul in His bosom, adorned with her heavenly garment. Full of fear, the Apostles fell like dead on the ground. When He had helped them on their feet, banishing their fear, He said to them, "Hail my fellow brothers and the virgins here present with you, rise to see my Mother's glory." Then He shouted over the tomb saying, "Arise, O holy body that has been for me a temple, take this soul that has been my every day tabernacle. Arise O mortal body according to your nature, take your immortal soul to be altogether immortal, so that I take you to the abode of the living. Arise, O corruptible and perishable body according to nature, take your imperishable soul and be altogether everlastingly imperishable and eternal. Arise! why are you lying in the grave? Array yourself in your soul in order to come with me to my Father, Goodness itself, and the Holy Spirit, as they yearn fervently for you. Arise, O body that had built up within you my flesh, without knowing it, take your soul that has been for me a dwelling place. Arise, you who are free, go and proclaim to the whole world that liberty with which I bought all my creation. Arise, O holy body, get united to that blessed soul, regard her as your resurrection in the face of all the creation. The inhabitants of heaven will carry you away when they will see you arrayed in your immortal soul. They will say to each other, "Who is this one that has risen from the dead ahead of all the universe, arrayed and adorned in this manner? Could it be the house of the Lord, the gate of heaven? Let us sing a song of praise to our God on her behalf, for the Lord loves her more than all the dwellings of Jacob, which is the choir of the saints.' My Living Father and the Holy Spirit will embrace you, to receive and keep you, for you have been a dwelling for their unique nature. The four beasts, the chariot of the Trinity's throne, that are full of eyes on all sides will be indeed amazed, when they will see you clothed and adorned with my Divinity's glory. Arise, to be united with your soul as of old, I am waiting for you."

After He said these words upon the tomb of stone, that tomb opened at that very moment. It had been closed as was Noah's Ark which nobody could open save God who had previously

closed it. Soon after that, the venerable Virgin's body rose, embraced her soul, like two brothers coming from foreign countries, they were united and became one. At that moment, David the psalmist coming nigh unto them, made the strings of his harp quiver saying, "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." When this was done, the Lord ascended into heaven, blessing the Apostles and those who will abide by His law saying, "Peace be with you my companions. I give also my peace to the tomb that has been the dwelling place of my Mother's body. I will set there forever and ever my blessing, my grace and my support for the visitors whose heart is full of straightforward trust in me and who glorify me in the indivisible unity. I give my peace also to those who, at all times will celebrate my Mother's memory with merciful spirit and righteousness." He blessed them. The Apostles ceased to see them, but the voice of the eternal powers that were singing ahead of them was still ringing in their ears, saying, "Alleluia, praise and honour the Lord, give unto the Lord the glory due unto His holy name. Alleluia. Bring unto the Lord, O ye children of God and sing His praises in His holy temple. Alleluia." Then they understood, that day, these words, "virgins are brought to the king." These virgins were the soul and body united in one. And why he said, "After her, will be brought all her companions." These are her good deeds. Therefore, they went back to Jerusalem glorifying and giving thanks to the Lord. May the intercessions of the holy Virgin Mary be with us all. Amen.

2. On this day also, of the year 1391 A.M. (August 15, 1675 A.D.) Pope Mattias IV (Mattheos), 102nd Patriarch, departed. This father was born to pious Christian parents, who were righteous, merciful and benevolent.

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 exhausted himself with vigilance, prayers, worships, and kneeling more than was required from the other monks.

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.

He was ordained on Sunday, 30th of Athor, 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.

During his papacy Pope Mattias endured some hardships, which he endured in patience

When the time of his departure drew near, 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. May his prayers be with us and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

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.

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

1. The Departure of St. Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople.
2. The Martyrdom of St. Eudaemon, of Armant (El-Armanti).

1. Saint Alexander (325-340) was a vicar bishop during the time of Saint Metrophanes, the first Patriarch of Constantinople. Because of the patriarch's extreme age, St. Alexander substituted for him at the First Ecumenical Synod at Nicea (325). Upon his death, Saint Metrophanes left instructions in his will to elect his vicar to the throne of Constantinople.

During these times St. Alexander had to contend with the Arians and with pagans. Once, in a dispute with a pagan philosopher the saint said to him, "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ I command you to be quiet!" and the pagan suddenly became mute. When he gestured with signs to acknowledge his errors and affirm the correctness of the Christian teaching, then his speech returned to him and he believed in Christ together with many other pagan philosophers. The faithful rejoiced at this, glorifying God Who had given such power to His saint.

The heretic Arius was punished through the prayer of Saint Alexander. Arius had operantly agreed to enter into communion with the Orthodox. When the Emperor asked him if he believed as the Fathers of Nicea taught, he placed his hand upon his breast (where he had cunningly concealed beneath his clothes a document with his own false creed written upon it) and said, "This is what I believe!" Saint Constantine (May 21), unaware of the deceitful wickedness of Arius, set a day for receiving him into the Church. All night long Saint Alexander prayed, imploring the Lord not to permit this heretic to be received into communion with the Church.

In the morning, Arius set out triumphantly for the church, surrounded by imperial counselors and soldiers, but divine judgment overtook him. Stopping to take care of a physical necessity, his bowels burst forth and he perished in his own blood and filth, as did Judas (Acts 1:18).

St. Alexander, having toiled much, died in the year 340 at the age of 98. Saint Gregory the Theologian mentioned him afterwards in an encomium to the people of Constantinople. May his holy blessings 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 prayers of the martyr Eudaemon, the pure faithful, and Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

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. Macarius 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 (Abba 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 Abba 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.

THE TWENTIETH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

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: Maximilian, Iamblicus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Constantine and Antoninus, 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 MESORI

1. The Commemoration of the Virgin, the Mother of God.
2. The Martyrdom 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 intercessions be with us. Amen.

2. On this day also is the commemoration of the great saint Irene. Irene was born in the city of Magedon in Persia during the fourth century. She was the daughter of the pagan king Licinius, and her parents named her Penelope.

Penelope was very beautiful, and her father kept her isolated in a high tower from the time she was six so that she would not be exposed to Christianity. He also placed thirteen young maidens in the tower with her. An old tutor by the name of Apellian was assigned to give her the best possible education. Apellian was a Christian, and during her lessons, he told the girl about Christ the Savior and taught her the Christian Faith and the Christian virtues.

One day, a dove flew through the window carrying an olive branch in its beak, depositing it upon a table. Then an eagle swooped in with a wreath of flowers in its beak, and also placed it upon the table. Finally, a raven flew in carrying a snake, which it dropped on the table. Penelope was puzzled by these events and wondered what they meant.

Apellian explained that the dove signified her education, and the olive branch stood for the grace of God which is received in Baptism. The eagle with the wreath of flowers represented success in her future life. The raven and the snake foretold her future suffering and sorrow.

Apellianus told her that the Lord wished to betroth her to Himself and that Penelope would undergo much suffering for her heavenly Bridegroom. After this Penelope refused marriage, was baptized by the priest Timothy, and she was named Irene (peace). She even urged her own parents to become Christians. Shortly after this, she destroyed all her father's idols.

Her father advised her to give up this madness, but when she failed to comply he flew into a rage, threatening to have her trampled in the arena by wild horses. While Licinius was at the

arena arranging the stampede to take his daughter's life, he was somehow accidentally trampled himself.

Irene hurried to the side of her father, and as he lay mortally wounded she prayed to the Lord that he be spared. Her prayer was answered. Licinius recovered, repented, and was baptized into the Christian faith. For this he was promptly removed from office by the Persian King.

The king told her that he would restore her father to his post and allow her to go free if she disavowed Christ. She declined and was thereupon cast into prison. There she was subjected to inhuman torture and was given just enough food to sustain her until the next flogging. After the king's death, she was released.

Miraculously regaining her health, she carried the message of the Christ throughout the land, converting thousands to Christianity. Three consecutive kngs: Savor, Numerianus and Savorian, all failed to halt Irene's advancement of Christianity. Further imprisonment, torture and abuse of mind and body having failed, it was decided that Irene should be put to death. She was beheaded on the 5th of May, 384.

May her holy blessings be with us and glory be to our God forever. Amen.

THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

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 MESORI

The martyrdom of thousands of Christians in Alexandria

Today the church commemorates the martyrdom of thousands of Christians in Alexandria during the papacy of Pope Dionysius the Great. From 249-263, pestilence and disease ravaged the Roman empire. At its worst, plague killed 5,000 people in Rome in one day.

Alexandria, the great city in Egypt, was not safe from the crisis. The Christians in the city had already suffered from persecution and famine, and desperate people turned to violence. On top of all of this, the plague struck—nearly every single family in the city suffered at least one death.

The city was in chaos—corpses lay in the streets and homes, unburied, and the smell of sickness and death was everywhere. All of this inspired fear in Alexandrians—as soon as anyone fell ill, they were abandoned by their family and closest friends.

Up to this point, Christians in Alexandria had suffered under Roman persecution, and they were forced to gather in secret to worship. Sometimes they came together at a hidden location, other times they all went to sea in a boat to be safe.



When the city fell apart from fear, sickness, and death, Christians stood tall—they disregarded the danger from the persecution, and from their own exposure to the plague, and cared for the suffering. They tended sick and dying people, carrying the dead on their own shoulders for a proper burial. They cared for the pagans who persecuted them, whom their own families had thrown out into the streets for fear of being infected by them.

The Pope of Alexandria, St. Dionysius, described their service: “most of the brethren through their love and brotherly affection spared not themselves, but without regard to their own peril visited those who fell sick, diligently looking after and ministering to them and cheerfully shared their fate with them, being infected with the disease from them and willingly involving themselves in their troubles. Not a few also, after nursing others back to recovery, died themselves, taking death over from them ... the very pick of our brethren lost their lives in this way, both priests and deacons and some highly praised ones from among the laity”.

Because these Christians willingly gave their life in the course of living their faith with heroic virtue, Pope Dionysius recognized them as martyrs.

May the holy blessings of these martyrs be with us all and glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

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. His father's 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.

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 Phamenoth, 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 honoured 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 MESORI

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 Egypt to Christian parents. When he grew up, he longed for the monastic life, so he went to Abba Anthony (Antonius), under whose direction he remained for a while. Then he went to Abba 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. 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 Abba 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.

When Abba Michael, bishop of Assiut departed. He was ordained a metropolitan for Assiut. When Pope Yoannis IXX, departed, Abba Macarius was enthroned on the throne of St. Mark. on Sunday, February 19th, 1944 A.D.

After his enthronement to the Patriarchal chair, a major contention arose between the Holy Synod and the General Coptic Community Council (Maglis El-Milli). 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 Abba Paul.

Later, the Pope returned from the monastery, and the people received him with joy and reverence. The Holy Synod convened, with Abba Macarius presiding, on January 1st, 1945, and issued many important resolutions and rules.

The Pope suffered from a severe weakness two weeks before his departure that forced him to rest in his residence. 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.

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 saint. May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

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 MESORI

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 MESORI

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 MESORI

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 Abba 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 Abba 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.

THE THIRTIETH DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF MESORI

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 DAbbak (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 Ansabashy (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. He was ordained a bishop of Crete by St. Paul.

When the Apostle Paul was taken like a criminal to Rome to stand trial before Caesar, Titus left his flock in Crete for a time and went to Rome to be of service to his spiritual father. After Paul's death by martyrdom, Titus returned to Gortynos, the chief city of Crete.

After bringing the light of faith to the surrounding regions, the holy Apostle Titus died peacefully at the age of 97 in 105 A.D. At the time of his death, his face shone like the sun. 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 monastery, in Wadi El-Natroun. He was ordained Patriarch during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Selim II, on the 22nd day of Pharamuthi, 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

The Departure of Abba Poemen, the Hermit.

Our Venerable Father Poemen (340-450) was an Egyptian by birth and a great ascetic of Egypt. As a boy, he visited the most renowned spiritual men and, from them, gathered tangible knowledge as a bee gathers honey from flowers. Poemen once begged the elder Paul to take him to Elder Paisius. Seeing Poemen, Paisius said to Paul: "This child will save many; the hand of God is with him."

In time, Poemen was tonsured a monk and attracted two of his brothers to the monastic life as well. Once his mother came to see her sons, but Poemen did not permit her to enter, but through the door asked her: "Do you desire more to see us here or there in eternity?" The mother withdrew with joy saying: "Since I will surely see you there, then I do not desire to see you here."

In the monastery of these three brothers at Scete, governed by Abba Anoub, Poemen's eldest brother, this was their Rule: at night, they spent four hours of working with their hands, four hours of sleep and four hours of reading the Psalter. During the day, from morning until noon, they spent in alternating work and prayer; from noon until Vespers they spent reading and, in the afternoon, they prepared supper for themselves: the only meal in twentyfour hours and that usually consisted of some vegetables.

Concerning their life, Poemen himself speaks: "We ate that which was given to us. No one ever said: 'Give me something else or I do not want that.' In this manner, we spent our entire life in silence and peace."

In 407 A.D. the monastery was overrun by raiders, scattering the monks. Abba Poemen and Abba Anoub, along with a handful of monks, fled to Terenuthis, on the river Nile. After leaving Scete, Abba Poemen and his group first lived in an abandoned pagan temple. The various raids on Scete were a turning point in desert monasticism. The ensuing diaspora resulted in Abba Poemen and his group keeping alive the collective wisdom of the monks of Scete by creating the bulk of the Apophthegmata Patrum (Sayings of the Desert Fathers).

Abba Poemen's personality was described as that of a wise shepherd (Poemen means shepherd). He was known for his tolerance of the weaknesses of others. Poemen lived a life of mortification as an ascetic and died peacefully at the old age of 110.

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 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, Abba 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 Abba Paul (Abba 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 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 Mallawy, and was known by the name of Yoannis El- Mallawany. 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 Pharamuthi (April), which perished multitudes of people and devastated many families. Pope Yoannis went to Upper Egypt to visit and strengthen his flock and 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. When the Pope felt ill, he asked for a boat, which he sailed in. He departed in the boat on his way, and was buried in the monastery of the Saint Abba Bishiah in El-Biadiah. 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 DAY OF THE BLESSED MONTH OF EL-NASI

And if the month of EL-NASI containeth six days he (i.e. the priest or monk) shall read the following; any if it hath only five days, he shall read it likewise.

On this blessed day, O believing, beloved, and Orthodox brethren, it is meet that ye should magnify our Lord Jesus Christ and His honorable Blood, and that we should praise God the Most High, and multiply His praises, and exalt His highness exceedingly, because He hath given unto us the grace of His goodness and the greatness of His compassion, which have brought us to this hour, which is the end of the revolution of the Coptic year. And we are sound and healthy in our bodies and souls, and we are strong in the True Faith, following our holy fathers. And God shows patience towards us, and He hath mercy upon us, and He waiteth for us to turn from our transgressions and from our evil works. And He doth not destroy us, as He destroyed many nations who were before us, but He abideth us patiently, and He waiteth for us to turn from our sins, and our transgressions, and our folly, and for us to rouse ourselves up out of our sluggishness, and for us to rise up from our fall. And it is meet that we should weep before Him, and cry to Him to set aside His abomination of our transgressions, and our many sins, and that we should ask Him to strengthen us in the True Faith in this world, and in that which is to come, and during all the days of our life, and to preserve us from the snare of Satan, our Enemy, so that we may arrive at the end of this coming year, and that we may be strong in the True Faith, and joyful in good works, and healthy in our bodies. And let us ask Him to give rest to the souls of those who have died among us, and may He set grace in our country, and bless our land, and bring us into our abode in houses in joy, and in peace, for ever and ever. Amen.

Glory be to God Who is glorified in His Saints. Amen.