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THE ELEVENTH MONTH

Hamle 11

(July 18)

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IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD. AMEN.

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On this day Saint John, and Saint Simon, the son of his father's brother, from the city of Sarmalas, became martyrs. The mother of Saint John was barren, and his father asked our Lord Jesus Christ to give him a son, and he vowed that if He did so, he would make himself a servant of God all the days of his life. And John the Baptist appeared unto him in a vision, and told him that God would give him a son; and when this saint was born he called him John. And he built first of all a church in the name of Saint John the Baptist. And when the boy was grown up and his days were twelve years, his father gave him his flock to tend. And John used to give his food to the shepherds every day, and also to those who passed by on the road, and he fasted until the evening daily. And when his father heard this he went to him in the fields so that he might know if what people had told him about him [was true], and the young man Saint John was afraid lest his father should beat him, and he wanted to flee. And his father said unto him, "Show me thy food [for] this day"; and John answered and said unto him, "Go inside that thou mayest see it." And when his father went inside, and [looked at] the place where things were put, he saw that it was full of hot bread, and he marveled exceedingly and told his mother what had happened to their son. And from that hour they knew that grace was on their son, and they no longer allowed him to tend the sheep. And the saint studied and learned by heart many of the Books of the Church. And his parents asked him to let them arrange a marriage for him, but he did not wish this. And when his days were eighteen years, he was made a priest, and Simon, the son of his father's brother, left the sheep and became his disciple, and he it was who described his miracles. Now God made manifest through him great miracles, and the people used to bring unto him those who were sick with every sickness whatsoever, and he prayed over some olive oil, and anointed them therewith, and they were healed of their sickness. And he rebuked the sick, and said unto them, "Many ills come upon you because of your sins"; and this saint wrought so many miracles that they cannot be counted, and among them are the following: A soldier took and carried off some barley from a widow woman. And the widow came to the saint, and complained to him about the soldier, and the saint cursed him, and his horse died when he had eaten the barley. On one occasion the king's general came to collect tribute, and he had with him a man, one of whose eyes was blind. And that man came to Saint John, and was blessed by him, and straightway his eye that was blind was opened, and he saw well with it. And this holy man could see by the Holy Spirit the deeds of all men, and their sins were revealed to him, and he rebuked them for their sins. And the report of this saint was heard of by a king whose name was Marianus, who had an only daughter, and a serpent entered her belly, and grew up therein, and she was nigh to die; and although her father had given much money to the physicians they were unable to cure her. And the general made known to him the history of Saint John, and how he had opened the eye of his blind servant, and the king commanded his soldiers to send and bring the saint. And Saint John knew by the Spirit that the king wanted to bring him to him, and he feared the fatigue of the journey and the sea. And straightway a cloud caught him up from the city of Sarmalas, and carried him along until it brought him to the city of Antioch, and set him upon the king's bed; and when the king saw him he was troubled and was afraid. And the saint told the king, saying, "I am that poor man for whom thou didst wish to send and bring hither." [And the king brought] his daughter to Saint John, and he prayed over her, and the serpent went forth from her belly without injuring her, or causing her pain. And the king and all the men of the house of the king were blessed by him, and they marveled exceedingly, and they glorified God Who gave such grace to those who love Him and who do His commands. And the king offered him much money and gifts, but he would take nothing whatsoever from him. And the king wished to make him dwell with him, but could not make him do so, and he laid hold upon his girdle so that he might [not] depart, and a cloud caught him up whilst the king was holding his girdle in his hand, and the girdle broke in

the king's hand, and Saint John arrived in his city that night. And the king built a church over that girdle, and it is called "the church of the girdle" to this day. When Saint John consecrated the Offering he could distinguish between the sinners and the good, and those who were fit to partake and those who were not. When Diocletian denied Christ, and worshipped idols, this saint took Simon, the son of his father's brother, and went to the city of Alexandria, and confessed our Lord Jesus Christ before the governor. And the soldiers tortured them severely, and after this they cut off their heads with their swords. And their souls entered into everlasting rest, and their bodies are to this day in the city of Gamnudi, where great miracles and healings take place through them. Salutation to John and to Simon.

And on this day also is commemorated the great saint Abba Isaiah the anchorite, of the desert of Scete. Salutation to Isaiah.

And on this day also died Saint Abba Gabriel, the seventy-eighth (sic) Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. This saint had believing and blessed parents, and they walked in the way of God, and in His commandments, and according to His good pleasure. And having begotten him, they reared him in the fear of God. One day there came to him certain holy monks, and among them was a righteous elder whose spiritual fight was good. And he saw a beautiful vision, as it were many bishops surrounding the boy, and they laid their hands upon him, and blessed him, and they all said, "So be it, so be it." When the elder woke up from his vision he meditated and said, "The boy shall become great." And he said unto his father, "Teach him well, for assuredly he shall become the head and chief of many peoples; thou wilt not see him at all times." And he told him what he had seen; and the father of the boy praised God, saying, "Shall anything happen to this boy?" And when his days were two (?) years his father died in the mercy of our Lord and God and Redeemer Jesus Christ. Now the boy had an uncle whose name was Peter, and he was Bishop of the city of Behna, and his spiritual fight was admirable, and he was learned in all the holy Books of God of the New and of the Old Testaments, and he took the boy and taught him. And all those who saw the boy marveled at the grace of God, which was upon him, and at his understanding and knowledge, and he was made a deacon. And when his days were twelve years he wanted to put on the garb of the ascetic life, and he renounced this fleeting world. And the Bishop Abba Peter gave him into the hands of the blessed monk Abba Peter the priest, and he became devoted to God, and a fighter, and a man of good piety. And he took the boy and taught him the spiritual fight, and the Rule of the monastic life in a few days, and signs and wonders and spiritual excellence appeared through him; and many men loved him because of his spiritual fight, and his devotion to God, and his humility. And after the death of his teacher, Peter the priest, he departed to the monastery of Saint Anthony, where he lived for many years, fighting the fight with fasting, and prayer, and vigils and unceasing prostrations; and after this he departed to the desert of Scete, to the monastery of Abba Macarius. And he became abbot of the church of our holy Lady, the two-fold Virgin Mary, the God-bearer, in the monastery of Marmos, and he toiled and restored the building thereof. And then he went to Jerusalem, and was blessed in the holy places, and there he was made priest of the church of the Holy Resurrection by the hand of the holy father Bishop Abba Michael. Thence he returned to the city of Mesr (Cairo), and dwelt in the church of Mu'Allakah of our holy Lady the Virgin Mary, copying the holy Books of the Holy Church. In those days the throne of Mark the evangelist remained without an archbishop for a few days, and all the bishops and priests agreed with one consent to make this saint archbishop. And Satan, the hater of what is good, brought certain men who were envious of him, and they did not wish him to be appointed, and they appointed archbishop the holy and spiritual father Abba Athanasius, who is know as "Son of the Crown." And good works appeared from him, and he walked uprightly without blemish, like Abba Athanasius the apostle, and then he died. And again the bishops, and the elders, and the people gathered together, and they set their hands to a document and wished that Abba Gabriel should be appointed archbishop. And again the Enemy of what is good stirred up dissension among the people, and they agreed that the name of Gabriel and the names of others should be written on papers, and that they should be laid on the altar, and that they should pray over them for three days, and should celebrate the Offering, so that God should make known who was to hold this honorable

position and reveal his name. And they did thus, and they brought a little child, who brought forth the paper whereon was the name of this father; and all the bishops assembled and made him prefect of the church of Mu'Allakah. And again his appointment was not completed, and Abba John, who is known as the "son of 'Absadi," was appointed. And at that time the church of Egypt suffered great tribulation. When Abba John was appointed, this father Abba Gabriel went to the monastery of Saint Abba Anthony, and he fought a great fight, and devoted himself to fasting, and prayer, and vigils, and to prostrations by day and by night; and in the strenuousness of his fight he was superior to many. And he lived thus one year (?). And many of the holy monks saw beautiful visions concerning him, and some of them said that they saw him in the city of Alexandria, dressed in archiepiscopal apparel, with many Christians and Gentiles surrounding him. And some of them saw him in the desert of Scete, where he was appointed head of the monastery of Saint Abba Macarius; and some of them saw a countless number of keys handed to him. Many times when he wished to come down from the monastery of Abba Macarius, he became sick, and was unable to come down. And then Saint Anthony appeared unto him, in a vision, and said unto him, "I do not wish thee to go down from the monastery except by the Will of God, and henceforward thou shalt not go down except at His time." And when three years were ended, a certain holy elder of the monks of the monastery of Anthony saw the vision of a glorious angel, who said unto him, "Three years from this time they shall take Abba Gabriel and make him Archbishop of the city of Alexandria"; and that elder went out straightway and told Abba Gabriel what he had seen. One day the governor of the city of Tafihi came to the monastery of Abba Anthony, and with him were the abbot, and many judges (or, officers), and a letter from the emperor ordering them to bring Abba Gabriel quickly, and to make him Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. And they took him against his will, and carried him with great honor to the city of Alexandria, and with him were the father bishops; and all the people rejoiced in him. And that day he and the bishops, and the priests and the deacons, appointed a bishop to Jerusalem, and after this he consecrated Myron (i.e. the holy oil) three times; and he remained thus for one year and on month. At that time Abba Anthony appeared, and said unto him, "Behold, thy departure draweth nigh, and after one year and a half thou shalt depart to God and shalt inherit everlasting life." And at that time great tribulation came upon the Christians, and this father asked God to deliver them from it; and God accepted his petition and delivered them. Then the archbishop returned to his throne, and Abba Gabriel hid himself in a secret place, and no man knew where he was, except a certain believer. And through the excessive intensity of his spiritual fight, by night and by day, his appearance became changed, and his body dried up. And after this God revealed the matter of this father to a certain believer, who pleased God by his works, and he became zealous for him with a divine zeal, and he brought him out of that place, and established him in the church of the Apostles, and he lived there for many days devoting himself to prayer and to sacred duties. And he visited the sick, and provided them with what they needed, and he comforted the believers who came to him. One night Abba Athanasius, the archbishop, appeared unto him plainly, and said unto him, "Be not sad because of the labor and sorrow which hath come to thee, for God hath delivered thee from much toil and tribulation. And behold, there must come upon thee a sickness, so that God may perfect thy patient endurance; rejoice, however, for thou hast received the grace of God, which is great, and thou shalt receive everlasting life, and joy which is unending." And straightway a severe sickness seized him, and he continued to be sick, and he was frightened and disturbed about the departure of his soul from his body, and about his standing before God. And there was before his face a picture of our holy Lady, the Virgin Mary, and to this he prayed continually; and at that time God Most High appeared unto him with a shining face, and comforted him, and strengthened him, and said unto him, "Fear not, but rejoice, for thou hast received the grace of the kingdom of the heavens. At the end of three days thou shalt depart from this fleeting world"; and after three days he died in peace, and was buried in the church of Saint Mercurius with great honor. Salutation to Gabriel the Archbishop.

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