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THE NINETH MONTH
Ginbot 19
(May 27)

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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 died the holy father and fighter, Abba Isaac, the priest of the monasteries of Debre Macarius. This holy man sprang from one of the small hamlets about Mesr (Cairo), and his parents were poor [in the possessions of this world], but rich in good works, and they inherited the Country of the Living. When the holy elders, the monks, came to Mesr (Cairo) to sell the things, which they had made with their hands, [and were returning,] this saint followed them into the desert of Scete, and ministered unto them. And he served under the yoke of their authority, and became an ascetic, and fought the good fight. And he had no possessions whatsoever, not even a second change of apparel, during all the days of his life as a monk. And if men questioned him, and said unto him, "Why dost thou not obtain a change of apparel like our fathers?" he would answer and say unto them, "I have been a man of the people up to now, and when I was in the world I had not two changes of apparel." And he would also say, "Our fathers wear apparel made of the hair of the camel; is not one set of garments more profitable to me?" And he was wont to weep very often, and if men asked him, and said unto him, "Why dost thou weep?" he would say unto them, "Because my parents died, and left me an orphan." And for many years he continued to mix the ashes from the censers with the bread, which he ate at his table. One day he became sick of a grievous sickness, and one of the brethren brought him a little food, which had been prepared and cooked by fire, and he would not eat it. And when that brother had asked him many questions he said unto him, "This food is good and will cure thy sickness." And Isaac answered, and said unto him, "Believe my, O my brother, I wish to remain sick with this sickness, for three years . . ." And when he became old in days, and his excellences, and his righteous deeds, were many, the elders gathered together, and took counsel that they might make him a priest. And he fled from them, and went into the field where the crops were, and hid himself therein; and the elders went about seeking for him but could not find him. And when they had passed through the field, they sat down on the border of it to rest. Now they had with them a donkey, and that donkey went into the field, and stood still by the place where this father was, and when the elders came into the field to catch the donkey they found this father; and they seized him and wanted to bind him so that he might not flee from them. And he said unto them, "Henceforward I shall know that this is the Will of God." And he went with them, and was made priest, and he added to the commands which were laid on the holy fathers, and he taught the young men good works, and he used to say to them, "Above everything possess ye submission and obedience, for these are the greatest of the virtues." And when the time of his death drew nigh, the young men asked him to dwell in the desert that he might teach them what to do after he [had left them], and he answered and said unto them, "As long as ye see me working do ye work, if ye wish to strengthen the habit of dwelling in the desert. When our fathers died we sorrowed, but when we do even as they did, ye strengthen [our habit of] dwelling in the desert after them." And having said these words he died in peace, and received the crown of praise from our Lord Jesus Christ. Salutation to Isaac the priest.

And on this day also the holy, and mighty, and great, and honorable fighter, the blessed Isidore, became a martyr. This saint was a man of the city of Antioch. His father was an honorable man of the kingdom, and the captain of many soldiers, and his name was Bandala'on; and the name of his mother was Sofia, and she and her husband belonged to Christian families. And when she brought forth her son she called his name "Isidore." And after many days, when his father Bandala'on saw the greatness of the sin and of the transgressions which the Emperor Diocletian, the infidel, committed, he withdrew his son Isidore from him, and they left the estate which was formerly theirs, for they belonged to the nobles of the kingdom. And they took up their abode in the monasteries, where they remained in hiding, and they lived with a man who was called Samuel . . . for the sake of the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And after this, certain heretics and evil persons went

and accused them before the emperor of hiding from him, and refusing to worship idols; and straightway the emperor sent five hundred soldiers and had them brought before him. And they confessed our Lord Jesus Christ, and they said unto him boldly, "When thou didst forsake our Lord Jesus Christ, we forsook thee; thou hast committed great abominations before God." Then the emperor was wroth, and he commanded his soldiers to cut off the head of Bandala'on, and they cut off his head and he received the crown of martyrdom; and Saint Isidore he bound in prison, in order that he might be rebuked. Now at that time the days of Isidore were twelve years. And after a few days they brought him to the emperor having tied a rope, with a heavy iron weight attached to it, round his neck, and he was strong in the Faith; and the emperor asked him, saying, "Is not thy heart softened, and doth it not advise [thee] to turn from thy Faith?" And having refused to turn from the True Faith, the emperor forthwith commanded the soldiers to hoist him on the rack, and to rack his body until his blood ran like water [and they did so]. Then his mother Sofia took a handful of his blood and dashed it in the face of the emperor, and said unto him, "Cursed art thou above all men." And his sister Euphemia also took up stones, and cast them at the emperor and his officers. And the emperor was wroth, and commanded his soldiers to cut the women in halves, through their loins, and they did so, and the women finished their martyrdom. And the saint was hanging on the rack, and watching what was happening to his mother and his sister. And then the soldiers poured red-hot coals upon his body, and after this they cut open his body, and dragged out his bowels, and threw them out into the desert; but neither the fowl of the air nor the wild beasts would approach them. And our Redeemer healed him, and raised him up as he was before, and then the saint went before the emperor. And the emperor commanded them to put him on the iron bed, and to light a fire under him, [and they did so,] and they also put him on the iron bed, and crushed him until his bowels came out; and again our Redeemer raised him up. And then [the emperor] killed him together with eight hundred souls, and again our Redeemer raised him up. And when the emperor saw him, he commanded the soldiers to bind him, and to cast him into a cauldron of brass, and to pour pitch and grease over him, and to light a fire under him, and the soldiers did so. And after a few days he commanded them to cut off his head, and they cut off his head, and forthwith our Lord raised him up from the dead; and behold, this was the third time that our Lord raised him up after he had been killed. And after this they tied a stone to his neck, and cast him into the sea, and at that very moment Saint Michael the archangel brought him out of the sea, and carried him to the place where the emperor was. And the emperor commanded them to hang him upon a tree, in the middle of the city, and they did so, and he died; again our Lord raised him up. This was the fourth time, which he was raised from the dead. And then, the fifth time, they cast him to the lions, and God delivered him as He did Daniel the prophet. And then the emperor commanded the soldiers to cut him in pieces, and to pound them up, and to cast him into the sea in a basket; and the soldiers did so. And forthwith our Lord came down from heaven, (now Michael and Gabriel were following Him,) and He stood upon the seashore, and brought Isidore up out of the sea; and He raised him up and healed him, and there was no injury on him. And the emperor being ashamed, and unable to effect his will, took counsel with his friends, and then decided to send him to the country of Salonika that they might have him tortured there. Then the emperor sent him away, bound hand and foot, and there was a heavy wooden collar about his neck, but the governor of Salonika showed mercy on him, because he had known him in days past. When the emperor heard this he was wroth, and he commanded the soldiers to bring the governor and Saint Isidore to him, and the governor delivered Isidore to him and the emperor placed him in the prison house, being hungry and thirsty. Now whilst the saint was in the prison house he worked great miracles, and healed the sick. And when the nineteenth day of Genbot had come, the emperor commanded the soldiers to take him outside the city, and to hang him upon a wooden cross, at the sixth hour of the day. And the air was filled with angels, and our Redeemer was with them, and promised him many things; and Isidore, the saint of God forthwith delivered up his soul, and received the crown of life. And the number of the years from the beginning to the end of his strife is as follows; he was in prison for five years before they tortured him, and he was in prison for one year in the city of Antioch, and for twelve years he suffered tortures. Salutation to Isidore, and to Euphemia his sister, and to Sofia his mother.

And on this day also eighty-five thousand and seven people became martyrs with Isidore. Salutation to these martyrs of the company of Isidore.

And on this day also died Abba Joseph, the light of the world. This holy man learned all the philosophy of this world in his father's house, so that those who saw him marveled at him, and all the Books of the Church; and when he was grown up his father took him to the bishop, who made him a deacon. And God, Who willed the salvation of his soul, sent Michael, the angel of light, to him, and he said unto Joseph, "Dost thou love this fleeting world? Is not it and everything which is therein dross?" Thereupon Joseph began to fast and to pray, and he asked God to guide him into the path, which he should follow. Now there was a certain monk on the borders of Walka, whose name was Abba Zacharias, and who was of the kinsfolk of Abba Joseph, and he took Joseph secretly, and arrayed him in the garb of the monk, and carried him away to the country of Tegre, where he learned to work with his hands, and he wrote and weaved and performed all the work of the monastic life. Then they came into the desert of Barka, and each dwelt alone and labored in the ascetic life; and they fed upon the fruits of the desert, and the roots of trees. And they lived there, and the elephants, and serpents, and lions, had knowledge of them, and they worked many miracles by the might of their righteousness. Abba Nathaniel carried a red-hot pot on his hand, and went round holding it in the presence of his brethren. And Abba Joseph having smashed the pot in which he used to cook, join the pieces together without spilling his mess of pottage. And when [the monks] wanted to baptize Gebre Kher, who was about to die, he said unto them, "I will baptize myself with my own hand, for our Lord Jesus Christ hath this day made me a bishop." Then each of the saints showed forth the beauty of his deeds, and they carried Joseph to the bishop, and he was made a priest. When Abba Zacharias died, Abba Joseph departed into another desert, and he fasted for forty days and forty nights, standing up and not speaking; and when he fell down through exhaustion, Michael the angel came and raised him up. And he also stood upon the edge of a great precipice with his arms extended like the arms of a cross, for forty days and forty nights, without taking a rest; and Satan came and cast him down into the abyss; and Saint Michael received him on his wings, and restored him to the place where he had stood. And he also went into a stone cave, and remained there for forty days and forty nights without food and drink; and the demons came and frightened him, each with his own hellish devices, but the angels made him strong. And he used to make eleven thousand prostrations at a time, until his brains ran down through his nose. And from that place he wandered about through all the mountains of Tegray, and he journeyed through the land of the South, and he came to the tomb of Yared, and he saw gates of light before the door of his cell, which was open, As he was returning thieves found him, and they stoned him with stones, and beat him with sticks, and they speared him with spears, and left him lying prostrate. And our holy Lady, the Virgin Mary, came and healed him. One day he found the body of a dead woman, and when he had made over it the sign of the Cross, she rose up like a woman waking out of a sleep. And he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem thrice, and received the blessing of the holy places. And he visited the tombs of Peter and Paul and the tombs of all the Apostles, and he traveled as far as Bartos and India. When he came to a river, which was full of water, he used to make the sign of the Cross over it, and then walk over the water on his feet; and the lions and the leopards followed him tamely. When he lacked food he would say a blessing over some stones, and they were turned into bread. And he went to Debre Libanos, to the monastery of our father Takla Haymanot, and received the garb of the monk from Abba Tewolde Medhin. And Abba Tewolde wished to try him, and he gave him six crushed and broken twigs to plant; and having planted them they grew up into trees, which exist to this day. And many men and monks came to him, and lived under his authority, and they dwelt in one habitation near a church, which had been built in the name of our holy Lady, the Virgin Mary, the God-bearer, and in the Name of God the Father. And one day in a vision our holy Lady the Virgin Mary gave him incense, and he offered up incense with the Four and Twenty Priests of heaven before the throne of the God of Hosts; and the Apostles used to come to him, and bless him. One day a leopard snatched away a child from his mother, and when she had adjured the animal in the name of Joseph, the leopard brought the child back three days later. And he made it the rule for all his sons that they should possess neither money

nor cattle, that they should not eat flesh or drink wine, old or new, that they should learn humility and meekness, that they should not utter words of emptiness, and that they should not laugh or joke in church; these and similar rules he laid down for them in their Canon. And having finished his life of labor and fighting, he died in peace, and was buried in the Church of Heaven) which is called Debre Tabor; and through his body countless signs and wonders took place. Salutation to Joseph.

And on this day also is commemorated our great Abuna Egzi'e.

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