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THE SEVENTH MONTH
MEGABIT 13
(March 22)

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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 forty soldiers, who were holy men, became martyrs in the city of Sebastia. These holy men became martyrs in the days of Alfayanos (Elianu) the king, who was one of the governors of the Emperor Constantine. The emperor appointed him governor over one of the countries [tributary] to Rom, and he commanded him to protect the Christians, and to treat them with respect, and to love them. When Alfayanos (Elianu) came to that country the people found that he worshipped idols, and he commanded all the people to worship idols; but they rose up and cursed him and his idols. And that night forty soldiers made an agreement among themselves to go to that governor, and to receive the crown of martyrdom at his hands. When they were sleeping the angel of the Lord appeared unto them in a vision and gave strength and fortitude to their souls. In the morning they rose up and confessed their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ before their commander Agricolaus, and he was wroth with them and threatened them, and they were afraid of him. And he commanded his men to stone them, but the stones came back upon those who stoned them. And there was near them a lake of water which was covered with ice, and near this was a bath. And the governor commanded his men to throw them into this lake of ice, and they threw them in, and their limbs were split open by the excessive cold. And one of them was afraid of it, and he went forth from the lake and entered the bath house, but he died quickly, and lost his reward, and did not find what he wished for. And one of the warders saw forty crowns descend from heaven and of them nine and thirty rested on the head of the nine and thirty holy martyrs; and one crown remained suspended in the hand of the angel. Then straightway one of the soldiers who were stationed there rose up, and he stripped off his apparel, and went down into the lake with the holy men, and he died and received the crown which was suspended [in the hand of] the angel. And the holy men remained in the lake, and some of them were young, and their handmaidens were encouraging them and urging them to suffer patiently. And the holy men remained in the lake for a very long time, but they did not die; and they did not wish to break their legs in order that they might not die quickly. And God received their souls, and the soldiers were not able to break their legs. After this the governor commanded his men to burn their bodies with fire, and to carry them away on wagons, and cast them into the sea. As they were carrying them away upon wagons, they found that one of them, a young man, was not dead, and they did not put him on a wagon. And his mother took him, and tried to throw him on the wagon with the holy martyrs, but the warders stopped her, because he was alive, and he died on her bosom, and she cast him on to the wagon, with the holy men, and they took him out to the city of Sebastia; and they cast them into the fire, and burnt them, and then they threw them into the river. On the third day those holy martyrs appeared unto the bishop of the city of Sebastia, and they said unto him, "Go to the river and there thou wilt find our bodies; carry them away. Go there with the priests, and deacons, and the people, and bring back our bodies, and bury them in a beautiful tomb." And the bishop, and the priests who were with him, set out by night, and they went to the river, and they found the bodies of the holy martyrs gathered together in one place like bright stars, and there was no portion of their bodies destroyed; and they took them and laid them in a beautiful shrine. And the history of these martyrs was heard in the ends of the earth, and the people celebrated their commemoration, and built churches in their honor in all the ends of the earth, and very many signs and wonders took place through them.

And on this day also Orthodox folk celebrated the festival of the commemoration of the persecution of Abba Macarius the Great, and of Macarius the Alexandrian.

When Valentinus ruled over the Empire of Rom, after Valeno his brother, he afflicted and persecuted the orthodox believing people, because he believed in the abominable Faith of

Mani, and in the Faith of Arius, the evil one, and he appointed Lucius, the Arian, Archbishop of Alexandria, and drove the Apostolic Athanasius into exile. This wicked man Lucius sought out Father Macarius the Great, and Father Macarius the Alexandrian, by the command of Waltes, the king, and had them brought from the desert. When they came into his presence he spoke unto them with seductive words and with blandishment and flattery and wished them to enter with him the Faith of Arius; but they would not turn from their Faith at his words, and they were not afraid of him. And they rebuked him, and argued with him gently and patiently, and they made him to see from the Holy Scriptures the rottenness of the Faith of Arius, and the wickedness of his words. And straightway he banished them to a remote island between Rome and Constantinople. And they made ready an Alexandrian ship and soldiers, and they set guards over them, who bound them with fetters of iron, and treated them cruelly in every possible manner. When they arrived at the island, the guards set them before the king of the island, who was an evil man, and a servant of Satan; moreover, he had corrupted the men of the island by his sorcery, until at length they worshipped him, and made him a god; and they used to bow down and worship him. When the king saw the fathers, he [tried to] compel them to worship him, but they would not yield to his command. Nay, they entreated him to turn from his error. But he would not turn at their words, and he shut them up, and put them in prison, and inflicted many severe punishments and tortures upon them, and he afflicted them most grievously. And our Lord Jesus Christ appeared unto them, and encouraged them, and gave them strength to endure patiently. And when God willed that their virtues should become manifest, Satan seized the daughter of the king, and tortured her with so many tortures that her father and her mother sorrowed greatly. Now there were in the city many Satans, who manifested themselves boldly, and who cried out and said, "What have we to do with thee, O Marcarius, and thy companion whom they have exiled from their country?" And the Satan who had authority over the daughter of the king cried out, saying, "If Macarius and his companion do not come hither, I will not go out of the king's daughter." When the king and those who were gathered together about him heard this, they marveled; and they brought Macarius and his companion before the king. And when they had come to him [they manifested their power] over the unclean spirit which dwelt in the king's daughter. And the king enquired of them concerning their business, and they told him everything which had happened unto them, and he entreated them on behalf of his daughter and asked them to heal her. And they rebuked him and said unto him, "Seeing that thou art but a man why dost thou make thyself a god? If it be thou who hast created the heavens and the earth, it is meet that thou shouldst thyself save thy daughter." And straightway they prayed to our Lord Jesus Christ, and they cast out the devil from the king's daughter, and as the devil was leaving her, he cried out and reviled the king, and the people of that island, for their works of iniquity. When the king and the multitudes saw this, they cried out and said, "We believe in the God of these holy men, for we know that there is no other god save theirs in heaven and earth"; and the holy fathers taught them the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the people gathered together those who were sick and suffering into one place, and the fathers prayed over them, and made over them the sign of the Cross, and healed them; and they also gave relief to, and healed many men whom the devils had seized, and they continued to do so for many days. After this they pulled down the temple in the city, and purified the site thereof, and they built there a church, for the site was fair and spacious. And the king commanded and the people brought there a countless quantity of gold and silver, and silk vestments, and everything which was necessary for the furnishing of the sanctuary of God. And our holy fathers commanded cunning workers in metal and smelters to make twelve bowls, each of which weighed a letra, and to engrave on them a portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ, and a portrait of our holy Lady Mary, the Virgin, and portraits of the two great angels Michael and Gabriel. And they ordered them to make twelve bases (or stands) for the twelve vessels, and twelve vessels, and twelve . . . , the twenty-one crosses, each one of which [weighed] three letra. And they ordered them to paint (or, engrave) three shrines (?), and everything which was ordered for the ark of the testimony was complete, and all the vessels thereof; and the remainder of the money they distributed among the poor and needy. And it came to pass that on the eleventh day of the month of Ter, the day whereon our Lord Jesus Christ was baptized, [the holy men] ordered the people of the city to go down to the sea-shore, and to

gather themselves together there. Now they had brought with them the holy oil, with which they had filled a vessel, when they were exiled from Alexandria. This oil had been preserved from the days of the Apostolic Athanasius, for Lucius the Arian had not found it. Thus God had preserved it all those days, and it had remained there, and nothing had injured it; and this took place by the command of the Holy Ghost. At the moment when Macarius made the sign of the Cross with the holy oil over the place of baptism, the water bubbled, and became like that which boiled by the heat of fire in a cooking pot. And Macarius poured olive oil and Myron oil over the face of the water, and it became like shining stars, and there appeared from it light like unto the light of the sun. When the king and the people assembled saw this they were afraid. And our Lord Jesus Christ appeared from out of heaven, and John the Baptist, and the holy angels at the consecration of the water, and the people were baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. And straightway there rose up a beautiful aroma which was sweeter than that of any perfume. When the saints saw this they fell down upon their knees, and remained there. And Macarius made supplication to God as he knelt upon his knees, and said, "My Lord, I beseech Thee to let Thy mercy find me, and to allow the consecration of this tabernacle, and the vessels thereof, to be performed by Thy Divine Hand." And the Lord said unto him, "I consent." And the Lord took the Myron oil from the holy father, and He laid it in His right hand, and He consecrated the Tabernacle, and the vessels thereof. And He said unto Father Macarius, "I command thee to consecrate three ambulacra, and I am with thee. And thy companion Macarius shall serve with thee in this holy service; the first ambulacrum, the middle one, shall bear the name of Mary, who gave Me birth, the Virgin; that on the right shall bear the name of the Holy Cross; and that which is on the left shall bear thy name, for thou hast shed thy blood for My Name's sake, through Lucius, the evil one, in this island." And when the blessed men began to do as the Lord commanded them, David and the angels sang, and sanctified with their words the men of this island; and when the people heard the beautiful voices, they marveled and praised God. And our Lord Christ also commanded Saint Macarius to carry the Offering upon the Tabernacle, and to consecrate [it]. And Macarius said unto Him, "O my Lord, command Peter, the chief of the Apostles, to consecrate this day, for on this day, for the first time, the Offering is carried about, for Thy Name's sake, in this island." And our Lord said unto him, "It is meet for thee [to do this]. It is thou who hast sown in this island, and it is I Who give the increase. Hast thou not heard what I have said by the mouth of Paul my disciple, He who soweth is he who shall eat his fruit early." and when Father Macarius began to consecrate there stood with him the holy fathers Peter on his right hand, and Mark on his left, and all the Apostles surrounded them to help him, and Macarius the Alexandrian was deacon. And Paul read the Book of Paul (i.e. the Epistle), and John read the Apostle (sic) (i.e. the Gospel), and Luke read the Acts of the Apostles, and David read the Psalms, and our Lord and God read the Gospel, for His memorial, which is to be adored, and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a white dove upon the bread and wine; and they set forth the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise ! And when the holy man put his fingers round the cup, they became the color of blood. And all the hosts of the cherubim spread out their wings over the Tabernacle, and Michael and Gabriel and all the Apostles came to help them. And Father Macarius and Macarius the Alexandrian became like each other in form, and they gave the Holy Mysteries to the people. And after the Offering was administered, our Lord Christ took the form of Father Macarius, and He sat down above the throne from which the Gospel was read, and His face shone like the sun, and He gave the benediction to the people and returned into the Tabernacle, and His disciples with Him. And again after seven days our father Macarius prayed to the Lord and made mention concerning the establishing and the maintenance of the Church. And our Lord appeared unto him and said unto him, "Thou art he who art worthy before Me of this great glory." When the elder heard this he bowed low before the Lord, and he wept bitterly, and said, "Remember, O Lord, what Thou didst say unto me: I will take thee back to thy sons the monks of Dabra Sihat, and thou shalt see them before thou goest forth from this body. And if I do not go back they will say, Macarius hath forsaken the monastic life and hath become Patriarch." And the Lord said unto him, "O Macarius, I will fulfill for thee all the desire of thy heart; bring one of thy sons whom thou wouldest choose to be Patriarch." And the holy man said unto Him, "Thou, O Lord, knowest hearts, look then at

the aged metal-worker, for he is strong in the holy Faith, and he hath never known intercourse with women." And our Lord said unto him, "Let it be as thou sayest; in truth he is a good man." Then the saint called this metal-worker, and made him a deacon; then he appointed him a priest, and after that he raised him grade by grade until finally he attained the office of archbishop. And he named him John. And all the heavenly host cried out three times, saying, "Worthy, worthy, worthy is John, the Archbishop, the son of Macarius, the new sprout of Mark the evangelist"; and the king and all the people heard these words. And our Lord opened the eyes of the mind of John the Archbishop, and he gazed after our Lord Christ as long as he was able to see Him, and he uttered many words. And he saw the sanctuary filled with the spiritual hosts, and the prophets, and the holy apostles. And our Lord Christ called Abba Macarius the Great, and Abba Macarius the Alexandrian, and He said unto them, "Blessed are ye, and blessed shall be the men who shall remember you upon earth, and they shall inherit life everlasting. And I swear unto you by Myself that whosoever shall suffer because of the toil which ye have endured for My Name's sake in this island, and shall see it and shall declare it in the church as he praiseth Me, he who hath heard from his (?) father all good things, such shall never lack anything. And I will deliver them from all their tribulations, and I will forgive them their sins, and at the moment of their departure from this world I will send the angels of mercy to take their souls to everlasting pleasure, and to My kingdom, which ye have imagined. And in every religious house, or city, or church, or building of the Orthodox wherein this story shall be proclaimed, I will dwell, and I will set My blessing, and My peace therein, until the end of the world. Whosoever shall contradict this history it would be better for him if he had never been born upon the earth. If they repent truly I will forgive them. Verily I say unto you, as ye have confessed Me before men I will confess you before My Father Who is in heaven, and before the holy angels." And again He said unto them, "The time hath come for you to return to your city"; and He gave them the benediction, and went up into heaven. Then straightway the blessed fathers gathered together all the people, with the king, and told them that they were going to return to their own country, and they commanded them to keep all the Law of our Lord Christ, and to honor John the Archbishop. And they committed to their charge many things, and exhorted them to turn neither to the right hand nor to the left from the True Faith. When the people heard them they were dismayed, and they wept bitterly, and the holy men wept together with them; and they dismissed them in peace, and blessed each of them. And straightway an angel of the cherubim came, and lifted them up, and carried them on his wings, and in a single night brought them to Alexandria and let them descend into the city before the gates of the monastery of Abba Timothy the Archbishop at dawn on the First Day of the week. When Abba Timothy heard of this, he rejoiced with an exceedingly great joy, and when he saw them again he wept with many tears, and bowed down to the fathers. And they also bowed down before him, and they embraced each other, and they conversed about what had happened to them, and they told him of the conversion of those foreign peoples to the Lord, and of the wonders which had taken place. And the archbishop marveled, and all the people who heard marveled, and they praised God; and Macarius the Egyptian, and Macarius the Alexandrian, remained there eight days. And the angel of the cherubim appeared again, and he carried them on his wings and brought them to Dabra Sihat, and a cherub cried out in the air, saying, "O sons of Abba Macarius, behold your father hath come back from exile, bearing the fruits of the Holy Ghost"; when the monks heard this, they all went forth from their cells; now the monks were in number fifty thousand. Among them was Abba John the "Short," and Abba Besoy, and they embraced his hands and his feet, and they wept bitterly when he told them all that had happened unto him. Then they rejoiced because they saw his face again, and he rejoiced with them, and blessed them in the Name of our Lord Christ. Therefore it is meet for us who are of the Faith of our Lord Christ, and all the men of Rome, and of every city and country, to rejoice on this day. And we command you to make it a festival each year, as a memorial of those fathers who fought strenuously, like Peter and Paul, and those who shed their blood for the Name of our Lord Christ our God, that is to say Abba Macarius the Great and his spiritual brother Macarius the Alexandrian. It was the thirteenth day of the month of Magabit on which Lucius exiled them from the city of Alexandria to the island which we have already

mentioned, and it was on the same day of Magabit on which they returned, and arrived in the city of Alexandria.

And on this day also died the holy father Abba Dionysius, the fourteenth Archbishop of Alexandria. This holy father had parents who were pagans and unbelievers, and he studied many kinds of learning, for his father belonged to an honorable family. Now this father took great care of him from his youth up, and he taught him every kind of learning and wisdom, and at length he became a teacher of the pagan sages. As he was sitting down one day, behold a certain old woman, who was a Christian, passed by, and she had with her a quire of a book containing an Epistle of Saint Paul the Apostle; and she said unto him, "Take this quire, and buy it from me." And when he had read it he found in it strange speech, and he found that it was admirable. And he said unto her, "For how much wilt thou sell it?" And she said, "For one dirham of gold"; and he gave her three dirham of gold, and said unto her, "Go, seek and find the rest of this book and bring it unto me." And she went and brought him three more quires, and he gave her nine dirham of gold. And having read them through he found the book to be [still] incomplete, and he said unto her, "Go, and search for the rest of this book." And she said unto him, "I found these quires among my father's books. If thou dost want a complete Book of Paul the Apostle enquire among the men of this church." And he said unto her, "If I were to enquire of them would they give it to me?" And she said, "Yea." And he went and enquired for the Book of Paul the Apostle of one of the priests, and he gave it to him, and he read it, and he learned it by heart, and he used to recite it openly without the book, saying, "Believe on our Lord Jesus Christ." Then he went to Saint Abba Demetrios the Archbishop, and he asked him to baptize him with Christian baptism, and Demetrios taught him everything he wanted, and baptized him, and Dionysius became perfect in the doctrine of the Church; and Abba Demetrios made him a teacher of the children of the Church. When Yarokla was appointed archbishop, he made this man his deputy in the city of Alexandria, and he dispensed judgment among the believers; and he gave him authority to administer the work of the archiepiscopate. When Saint Abba Yarokla died, all the people agreed and they appointed this father, Saint Dionysius, Archbishop of the city of Alexandria, and he protected his flock well and carefully. And great tribulation and much sorrow came upon him during the days of his office, for he was appointed during the days of the reign of Philip, who was a lover of the Christians. And when Decius rose up against Philip, and made war on him, he conquered him and slew him, and reigned in his stead. And he afflicted the believers with a very great affliction, and slew many martyrs among the archbishops and bishops, and others. And very many men fled in fear and terror, and came into the desert, where some of them died. And the soldiers of this emperor seized this father, and they treated him with very great indignity. Then Gerlawos destroyed that infidel, and reigned in his stead; and in the days of this emperor the affliction of the sons of baptism diminished and died down. When he died and Valerius reigned in his stead, the persecution of the Church broke out again. And his governors seized this holy father, and shut him up in prison, and tortured him with manifold cruel and severe tortures. Then they required of him to worship idols, and he answered and said unto them, "We will not worship idols, and we will only worship God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit." And the emperor was exceedingly wroth with him, and he killed many men in front of him, in order to terrify him; but the holy man was not afraid of him; and the emperor banished him and he remained in exile for many days. After this the emperor brought him back from exile, and he said unto him, "I hear that thou dost consecrate the Offering secretly by thyself." And the holy man answered and said unto him, "We will not give up our prayers, and our consecration of the Offering neither by night, nor by day." Then the holy man returned to the people who were with him, and he said unto them, "Go ye and consecrate the Offering, and even if I am remote form you in the body, I shall be thinking of you in the spirit"; and the governor was wroth and sent him back into exile. And God raised up against this infidel a host of barbarians, and he was afraid of them; and they slew him and gave the empire to his son. And his son was an exceedingly wise and an understanding man, and he released all the believers whom his father had shut up in prison, and he brought back those who were in exile. And he wrote a letter to the archbishops, and to all the bishops, and he said unto them, "Fear ye not, neither be afraid.

Open your churches and light your lamps, for no evil whatsoever shall befall you.” And this holy father lived the days which remained to him in peace and quietness. In the days of this father there arose many disputes because of the Faith. Certain men of error appeared in the country of Arabia, and they said with the wickedness of their deeds, “The soul dieth with the body, and then riseth up with it on the day of the Resurrection.” And a Council assembled to deal with them, and the members thereof anathematized them, and cut them off. And again others were [in favor of] Sabellius. When this Father Dionysius had grown old, there appeared Paul of Samosata, Archbishop of the city of Antioch, who denied the Son. And a Council against him assembled in the city of Antioch, but Father Dionysius did not come with them because of his old age, he sent an epistle full of all kinds of learning, and grace (or, courtesy), and he revealed therein the True Faith, and counsel and goodness. When he had arrived at a good old age he departed to God, having sat upon the throne of Mark the evangelist twelve years.

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