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**THE FOURTH MONTH
TAHISAS 29
(January 07)**

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

And on this day is celebrated the greatest of all festivals, the honorable, and great, and holy festival of the Birth of our Lord Christ, of the holy Virgin Mary. Now our fathers, the doctors of the Church, are at one in their opinion that the festival of the Holy Nativity should be celebrated on two days, for the Nativity took place in the last part of the night of the twenty-eighth day, and in the first part of the night of the twenty-ninth day. When Paguemen (i.e. the intercalary month) hath six [days], in that year the festival of the Nativity shall be on the eight and twentieth day; but if Paguemen hath five [days] the festival of the Nativity shall be on the nine and twentieth day. And the [doctors] have ordained and commanded that the festival of the Nativity shall be celebrated two days, for it is the chief of the holy festivals. And the Holy Gospel saith, “And our Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod. And behold there came wise men from the country of the East, and they came into Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He who is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star, and have come to worship Him’” (Matthew ii, 1,2). Now these wise men were of the family of Balaam, and they were diviners, and astrologers, and they watched the stars, and held converse with them. And it was written in their books and in the books of Balaam, that Christ, the King of the Jews, was to be born, for he saith, “A star shall rise from Jacob and a king from Israel” (Numbers xxiv, 17). And God in the operation of His wisdom made these diviners to understand, and he made those who were astrologers to believe in Him. And He showed them this star, and when they saw it they rejoiced, for its appearance was different in very many respects from that of the other stars. Now its appearance was this: That star had the form of a virgin embracing a child in her bosom, and it traveled from left to right, and it traveled by day, and disappeared by night. When the wise men traveled, the star traveled; and when they stood still it stood still. And it was visible to them in one place, and was hidden from them in another. When they came into Jerusalem it became hidden, and when it was hidden from them they were exceedingly sorry, and did not know what to do. And then they came into Jerusalem and asked for Him that had been born. And the number of those diviners was three thousand, and their kings were three, and each of them had one thousand and seventy horses. And when Herod heard about the diviners who had come to Jerusalem on account of the King Who had been born, he was dismayed and was afraid for his kingdom, for he heard from the Jews about him, that the Messiah would be born in the flesh. And he gathered together all the chief priests, and the scribes of the people, and he said unto them, “Where is the Messiah to be born?” And they said unto him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for even thus is it written in the prophet: ‘And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Ephrata, thou shalt not be for ever the least important and smallest of the principalities of Judah, for in thee shall be born and go forth a king and a governor who shall supervise My people Israel’” (Matthew ii, 6). Then Herod summoned unto him the diviners by themselves in secret, and he enquired carefully of them the day when the star appeared unto them. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “When ye have departed enquire carefully about the Child and where He is born, and when ye have found Him come back to me, and tell me so that I may come and worship Him.” Now these words came from him with deceit, for when the wise men had found Him, he determined to kill Him. And when the wise men heard these words from the king, they departed, and that star which they had seen in the East guided them until it brought them to the cave, and it stood over the cave where the Child was; and when they saw Him they rejoiced with great joy. And by the Will of God Joseph and Mary and the Child our Lord Jesus, went out that day to the cave, and at length the diviners found them, for our Lord Christ was reared only at Nazareth. And it was two years after He was born when the diviners came to Him, and

when they entered the cave they found the Child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him, and they embraced Him, and they opened their treasures and brought and gave Him the gold which was His tribute, for He was a king, and incense because He was God, and myrrh, which was a symbol of His life-giving death. And [the angel] appeared unto them again and told them in a dream not to go back to Herod, but to depart by another road and journey to their own country. And they departed and became preachers and announcers of the appearance of God in the flesh. Concerning this day Isaiah the prophet prophesied, saying, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and she shall call his name Emmanuel which is, being interpreted, God with us" (Isaiah vii, 14). And concerning this virgin the prophet Ezekiel prophesied, saying, "I saw the door of the East. And God said unto me: This shall be a means of exit. None shall enter through it, and none besides the Lord God of Israel shall go out there from" (Ezekiel x, 19). And concerning this virgin Daniel the prophet saith, "I saw as it were the Son of man, and a cloud came until it reached the Ancient of Days. And it drew nigh unto Him and ascribed to Him dominion, and sovereignty, and honor, and it made all the people and all he nations worship Him, and His dominion was an everlasting dominion, and there was no end to His kingdom" (Daniel vii). And Isaiah the prophet also saith, "God appeared unto me from Zion, having covered Himself with a covering of flesh like unto myself, and He said unto me, Behold the flesh which I will take from the seed of David, the son of Jesse." And Isaiah the prophet also saith, "Behold, I will assuredly make a new heaven and a new earth, and I will dwell in them with those I love, and they shall rejoice for ever." And also, "God will make a rod from the root of Jesse to bud, and He will put wisdom, and knowledge, and power therein, and he shall do justice to the poor, and he shall smite the earth with the word of his mouth, and he shall slay the perverse with the spirit of his lips." And Isaiah the prophet also saith, "I will set my son to be a sign for the nations, and he shall rule over them, and they shall believe on Him and put their trust in Him, and He shall be for rest and glory, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God." And Isaiah also saith, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. His dominion shall be upon His swathing, and His name shall be called, Great, Counselor, Almighty God, Governor, King of Peace, Everlasting Father who shall come." And Jeremiah the prophet saith, "Thus saith the Lord: In those days great light shall rise up for David, and he shall set judgment and integrity in the earth. And God shall deliver those who believe on Him, from Judah and Israel." And Elisa the prophet saith, "God shall come down from heaven, and shall walk about in the market-places of the children of Israel, and He shall teach the people righteousness, and all nations shall be in submission unto Him, except the nation of the alien sons of Abraham." And Nehemiah prophesied, saying, "God shall come in my own appearance, and His raiment shall be as is my raiment." And Joel the prophet prophesied, saying, "I see the virgin daughter of the tribe of Judah and of the seed of David become a seat for God, and she shall burn like fire. And I asked the Cherubim concerning her, and I said unto him, 'Who is this [virgin]?' And he said unto me, 'This is the virgin, the seat of God, chosen from among the sons of Adam, and by her He shall redeem the abominable nations, and she shall be a helper and a support of him that shall believe on her.'" And David saith in the Psalms, "The Great God said unto me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask Me, I will give Thee the nations for an inheritance, and Thy rule shall be to the ends of the earth. Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and like the vessel of the potter Thou shalt smash them. And now, O kings, get ye understanding, and be admonished all ye who judge the earth. Serve ye God with fear, and rejoice in Him with trembling; strengthen wisdom so that God may not be wroth, and that ye may not perish from the way of righteousness. Blessed be all those who put their trust in Him" (Psalm 2). And the prophet also saith in the 110th Psalm, "I begot Thee in the womb before the Morning Star. God hath sworn, and He will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedek" (Psalm 110:3&4). As he revealed unto Abraham a ram in the thicket, and as water poured out of the rock in the desert, and as the dry rod of Aaron sprouted and blossomed, and as the ass of Balaam spoke, and as water poured out from the jawbone of an ass into the hands of Samson the giant, and water and honey from the bones of a lion, and as the fire burned in the bush before Moses, and the bush was not consumed, even so did our Lady, the holy

Virgin Mary, bring forth our Lord Jesus Christ. And the fire of His Godhead did not consume the Virgin Mary. Salutation to Thy Birth, O Lamp of the darkness.

And on this day also was born Joshua, the judge, of the house of Ephraim, who became the salvation of the children of Israel against the attacks of their enemies, just as the Birth of our Lord became the salvation of Adam and his children. Now formerly the name of Joshua was "Hose'a" but when God delivered the children of Israel from Amalek by his help, he was called "Iyasus" that is to say, "Savior" (or "Redeemer"). After the death of Moses God chose him to be judge over Israel, and he delivered them from slaughter by alien nations, and made them to inherit their land; then he died in peace and inherited the kingdom of heaven.

"The kings of Saba and Arabia shall bring gifts with entreaty, and the kings of the Islands and of Tarshish shall bring in presents" (Psalm 72:10). Hath come, hath come David, the king, was said of old by the little virgin who brought him forth. [Omitted in the Bodleian MS.]

Salutation to Thy Birth, O consuming Fire.

Salutation to your blood which was shed, O ye martyrs of 'Akmim. [Omitted in the Bodleian MS.]

Salutation to the blessed Kuoril, master of three camels [Kuoril the camel man, of the city of Samanud,] and Abba Gize.

And on this day also are commemorated Jacob (James) and Piles (Pilses), and Theodore, the martyrs.

And on this day also died 'Akaryos (Abgar), King of Roha (Edessa). The kingdom of this saint was in the country of Syria, which is called "Saranin," and in the city of Roha (Edessa), and he was a worshipper of idols, and a paralytic, and [although] he had given [much] money to the physicians they would not heal him. And when he heard of the works of our Lord, and the miracles which He performed, and how He healed the sick, and cast out devils, and opened the eyes of the blind, and raised the dead, he sent a letter to Him, saying, "Peace be unto Thee, O God, Who hast appeared in Jerusalem, in the flesh of men. And peace be unto Thy Father Who hast sent Thee down without Thy being separated from Him. And peace be unto the Holy Spirit, Who hath whispered in my mind that Thou art His Messiah, and His equal. Peace be unto Thee, O Thou Who wast begotten in virginity, without the seed of man. And peace be unto those who have believed on Thee. I believe on Thee, and I have turned from the worship of idols to the worship of Thee. Come to me that Thou mayest be King over me, and make my city Thy home (?), and heal my sickness, and cleanse my impurity. What matter the Jews to Thee? They spit upon Thy Name, and they hurt Thee; they are a nation of men of perverted counsel. If in times of old they did not believe on Thee when Thou didst bring them out of Egypt, by working miracles, and didst feed them with manna for forty years (?), and they murmured against Thee so much that Thou didst deliver them over to destruction, how much less will they believe on Thee when they see Thee clothed in the flesh of earth, which hungereth and thirsteth? Dost Thou imagine that their evil disposition will show itself differently because Thou art learned in hidden things?" And these and such like things did the King of Roha (Edessa) send to Him in writing. And when the messengers came to our Lord, He knew what was in their hearts, and He told them what was in the letter before they spoke to Him. And then He took a piece of white cloth and wiped His face thereon, and the exact form and features of His face remained impressed on that cloth, and He sent it with Thaddeus, His disciple, [to the King of Roha (Edessa),] saying, "Take this picture of My Person, and it shall fulfill for thee all thy wants, and it shall heal thee of thy sickness, and shall bless thy city, and direct thy kingdom rightly. I have tested this picture in fire and in water to see if it would change, [but it did not]." And when the messengers came to 'Akaryos (Abgar) they gave him the picture, and he put it in the fire and in water, and neither harmed it. And the city of Roha (Edessa) believed in it, and in

its divine authority, and it worked miracles innumerable. And the king was healed of his sickness and died in peace that day. Salutation to 'Akaryos (Abgar), to whom our Lord sent an indestructible portrait of Himself.

And on this day also died Kuoril, the camel man. This holy man was from the city of Samnud, and he devoted himself to fasting and to prayers, and God gave him the knowledge of mysteries, and of things that were hidden. And he had three camels, which he worked according to his needs, and he used to load them with what he required from the flax fields, which he possessed. And he had a certain man, who was one of the men of Faragun, and who was a chief priest of the shrine of our Lady Mary of that city, and his father had held the [same] office before him; and this church possessed much money which had been given thereto by kings and governors. And he used to have charge of the treasury, which was hidden, and the bishop and he, who was under him, that is to say, this chief priest, knew the amount of treasure therein; and then, suddenly, without uttering a word to his son, he died. When the bishop heard of his death he came to the church and demanded the money from his son, who said, "I do not know where the treasury is, and my father, whom the hand of death hath snatched away suddenly, hath never told me." When the bishop heard this he was wroth and he wished to torture him, and the man said to the bishop, "Wait until I have looked for the place where the treasure is, and if I do not find it do with me what thou wilt"; and to this the bishop agreed, and fixed a time. And the young man went into his house and told his wife all the trouble. And she said unto him, "Put thy trust in God, and go to the monks, the fathers of Dabra Abba Makara, and ask them and their neighbors for they will tell thee." And when he had arrived there he asked the monks with tears to make themselves masters of [his] sorrow; and not one of them could tell him anything. Then a certain solitary made a sign to him, and said unto him, "Go to Samnud, and enquire for Kuoril an owner of camels, and tarry with him, and he will tell thee [where it is]." And when he had come into the city of Samnud, and enquired for Kuoril, the people told him [where he was]; and when he arrived there he found him in his house and his three camels were with him. As soon as Kuoril saw him, he knew by the Spirit everything, and what he wanted, and then he brought him into his dwelling and offered him food. And the young man said unto him, "O my father, I cannot eat until I have finished my errand"; and Kuoril said unto him, "Thine errand shall be fulfilled." And after supper each man went to sleep in his abode. And at midnight Kuoril the camel man saw a vision of that man standing by his camels, and when he bowed the man bowed with him, and when he prayed the man prayed with him. And on the morrow he took his camels into the desert to load them with the flax, which he needed, and that man [of the dream] went with him to help him. When they arrived in the fields Kuoril took one camel to load him with flax, and that man took the second camel to load him, but he put a load on the camel's back which was beyond his capacity to carry, and overloaded him very much indeed; and when the animal wanted to raise his load he was unable to move. And that man took a stick to beat him, but the camel cried out in human speech, saying, "O my father Kuoril, do not let this man ill-treat me; he hath loaded me beyond what is right for me." And Kuoril came and lightened the weight of the camel's load, and he said unto that man, "O my son, why didst thou load him with a weight heavier than he could carry? Wouldst not thou be sorry if one laid a heavy load upon thee, and a labor which thou couldst not perform?" And then when they came into their abode he asked him about his sorrow so that he might tell him and reveal to him the place of the treasure; and having made him to swear that he would not repeat his words to anyone else, he said unto him, "There is at the east end of the church a little box, and therein is the treasure." And when the young man went into his house, he told his wife, and they went together to that place and found there a treasure the like whereof in quantity doth not exist in the treasuries of kings; and he told the bishop, who took charge of it. Salutation to the blessed Kuoril.

And on this day also the men of Akmim became martyrs. They were gathered together in the church on the festival of the Nativity, which is to be praised! And they were performing the service of the consecration of the Offering, and they saw our Lord sitting upon the Tabot (tabernacle) administering the Holy Mysteries to the people. And whilst

they were enjoying this happiness Arianus came and attacked them, and he entered the church and seized the two prefects of the city whose names were Behwafa and Wenin, and cut off their heads with the sword. After that he slew the deacons, and the sub-deacons, and those who sang (i.e. the choir), and the steward of the church, and he left not alive neither woman nor child; and he slew so many that the blood ran out of the door of the church and along the road for a distance of twenty cubits. And Abba Venudius, the bishop, and Dioscurus, and Saclabius and his brethren who were with them, Arianus took with him bound in fetters. And behold the memorial of their martyrdom is written in the section for the First Day of the month of Ter. Salutation to your blood, O ye martyrs of Akmim, which was shed mercilessly.

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