

[Back to
list](#)

[Next](#)

THE FIFTH MONTH
TIR 08
(January 16)

[Previous](#)

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

On this day was consecrated the church of Saint Abba Macarius, of the desert of Scete, by the hand of the honorable saint Abba Benjamin, the thirty-eighth Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. This took place after great tribulation had come upon him through Makokaz (Makawkas), the heretic, the Melchite; and Abba Benjamin fled into Upper Egypt, [and stayed there] till the end of ten years. When God had destroyed that heretic Makokas (Makawkas), and the churches and the Christians were at rest and in peace, Abba Benjamin returned to his throne, and lived in his own house. And the chief monks of the holy desert of Scete came to him, and they asked him to go with them and consecrate the new church, that is to say, the church of Abba Macarius; and he rose up and went with them in great joy, and he consecrated the church. And when he began to anoint the table of the altar with the holy Meron oil, the saint saw the hand of God anointing it with him, and he fell upon his face in great fear. And one of the Cherubim raised him up and said unto him, "Rise up, be not afraid, and write for this place a holy rule, for it is God's mystery. And no man shall enter it in pride of heart, nor by bribery, but only him that is appointed thereto; and no man shall dare to speak a vain word therein, for it is a house of the holy things of God. This Canon shall be the rule in this sanctuary for ever. For behold the days shall come when they shall destroy the commandments which their fathers ordained, and they shall not discharge their obligations, and the holy place shall become a place of scoffing." And Abba Benjamin said, "Verily this is the house of God, and this is the door of heaven." And as he was holding converse with the Cherub, he looked towards the west of the church and saw an aged man with a beautiful face, and a long beard, and his countenance was shining like that of an angel. And Abba Benjamin was pleased when he saw that [old man], and he said within himself, "If one of the bishops were to die, I should make this old man bishop in his stead." And the Cherub said unto him, "O Benjamin, whouldst thou make this old man bishop? This is Abba Macarius, the father of all archbishops, and bishops, and monks, and he hath come in the spirit this day to rejoice with his sons; and not an archbishop who was appointed by him, and not one of his sons, will be absent, neither will the spiritual fruits of his monasteries be wanting." And the Cherub said unto him, "If his sons have kept his commandments, and have followed in his steps, they will be with him where he is in glory; but if they have transgressed his commandments they shall not share [his] inheritance with him." And Abba Macarius said unto the angel, the Cherub, "My lord, do not decide about my sons in these words; but if there be left in the bunch only a single grape, the blessing of God shall be on it. If there be left in them love for each other I believe that God will not drive them away from His kingdom." And the Archbishop Abba Benjamin marveled at the mercy of Abba Macarius; and Abba Benjamin wrote a Canon and placed it in the church for a perpetual memorial. And he asked our Lord Jesus Christ that his death might take place as it were today, and in consequence he died on the eighth day of the month of Ter.

And on this day also died the holy father Abba Andronicus, the thirty-seventh Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. This holy man was a deacon, and a son of one of the elders of the city of Alexandria, and he was a wise and a merciful man, and he was learned in the Books of the Church. The son of his father's brother was governor of Alexandria, and because of his office, and the size of his house, this saint did not live in monasteries as did all the archbishops his predecessors, but he lived in his nephew's house in the city of Alexandria all the days of his life and archiepiscopate. And this father was appointed archbishop in the tenth year of the reign of Heraclius, Emperor of Rome, in the nine hundred and thirty-third year of the kingdom of King Alexander (A.D. 621-2). And in the days of his father Kesra (Khusrau), King of Persia, rose up, and he was an infidel and worshipped the sun. And he gathered together his armies, now they were many, and he invaded the country of Rome, and

the countries of Syria and Palestine, and he laid waste these countries, and carried off their goods. Then he attacked the country of Egypt and came to the city of Alexandria, [round about which] there were two hundred monasteries, which were full of monks, and also full of goods and possessions wherewith the monks lived lives of pleasure. And because of this God gave the King of Persia a dominion over them, and he plundered the monasteries, and slew all the monks who were in them, and only the few were left alive who hid themselves from him and escaped; and to this day these monasteries have neither been [re]-built nor [re]-consecrated. And when the men of Alexandria heard what the Persians had done, they opened to them the gates of the city. And Kesra (Khusrau) the king saw in a dream and it seemed as if one said unto him, "Behold, I have given this city into thy hand. Thou shalt not lay it waste, but slay the strong men who are therein, for they are men of violence. And take the king of the city, and bind him in fetters, and send him away." And he ordered the men of the city to bring unto him the strong young men, the days of whose years were from eighteen years up to forty or fifty years, so that he might give each of them twenty dinars in gold, and might enroll them as soldiers to serve in his regiments and armies, and protect the city. And the people imagined that what he said was the truth, and eighty hundred men went out to him. And when he began to count all their numbers, they imagined that they were going to receive gold; but as soon as he had finished counting them all, he slew them with the sword. And then he went up into Upper Egypt, and came to the city Nikyus (Pshati, in the province of Menu). and he heard that in the cells, and in the monasteries and religious houses, there were seven hundred monks whose works were evil, and he killed them all with the sword. And when Heraclius, the Emperor of Rome, heard of what the King of Persia had done, he gathered together his army, and marched against him, and slew all his army, and plundered all his country. And the spiritual fight of this Abba Andronicus was exceedingly good, and he sat for seven years, and he pleased God, and he died in peace in the three hundred and forty-seventh year of the martyrs (A.D. 631), before the kingdom of the Arabs [was established] in the country of Egypt.

And on this day also died the holy father Abba Benjamin, the thirty-eighth Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. This was a man of the city of Barset, and the son of one of the wealthy men thereof, and he became a monk, in his early years, with a certain holy man whose name was Tewenas (Theonas), in a monastery to the west of the city of Alexandria. And he grew continually in good works, and he became very learned in the Scriptures, and in the Books of the Church. One night he saw a vision and it seemed as if one said unto him, "Rejoice, O Benjamin, for thou shalt pasture the flock of Christ." And he told his teacher that he had seen a vision, and his teacher said unto him, "Beware of Satans, lest they lead thee astray by pride." And he added to his virtues and to his righteousness, and then his teacher took him with him, and carried him to Abba Andronicus, and told him of the vision which his son Benjamin had seen; and Abba Andronicus made him a priest, and delivered to him the charge of the church, and he continued to administer the church rightly and well until Abba Adronicus died, and then he was appointed archbishop. And great tribulation fell upon him while he held office. And before the great tribulation came upon him, the angel of God appeared unto him, and told him what would happen unto him, and commanded him to flee, and to take his bishops with him. And this father consecrated the Offering and administered to the people the Holy Mysteries, and he commanded them to be strong in the True Faith, and he made them to know what was going to happen. And then he sent letters to all the bishops, and to all the heads of the monasteries, and commanded them to take to flight. Then he departed into the desert of Scete, to the monastery of Abba Macarius, and from there he departed into Upper Egypt. And Heraclius, Emperor of Rome, had dominion over the churches, and over the believers, and he punished very many of them. And he seized the brother of Abba Benjamin, whose name was Minas, and he tortured him, and burnt his sides with fire, and afterwards he had him drowned in the river. And in those days the Emperor Heraclius saw in his sleep that one said unto him, "Behold there shall come upon thee many people who are circumcised, and they shall overcome thee, and shall rule over the country." Now he imagined that these people would be Jews, and that he would baptize many of them, but the vision which he saw referred to the kingdom of the Muslims. And they were Muslims, and they came to him from the land of Yatreb which is a district and a kingdom in the land of Syria. And in those days 'Amr, the son of As, came to the land of Egypt, and he

ruled over it, and dwelt therein for three years. In the one hundred and nineteenth year (sic) of the martyrs ‘Amr came to the city of Alexandria, and he destroyed the fortress thereof, and he burned many churches, and he burned the church of Saint Mark the Evangelist, on the sea-shore, which is known to be now under the earth (i.e. submerged). And he likewise burned the monasteries and the churches which were round about the city of Alexandria, and he carried off as spoil all the goods which were in them. Then the captain of the soldiers brought ships to the church of the Blessed Mark, and he thrust his hand into the sarcophagus and found the body of Saint Mark and carried it to this ship. And when ‘Amr, the son of As, learned the story of Abba Benjamin, and why he had fled, he wrote his letter and sent it into every district in Egypt, saying, “Come, be not afraid, and govern thy people and thy churches.” And Abba Benjamin came forth from the place whither he had fled in the tenth (?) year of the reign of the Emperor Heraclius, and in the third year of the kingdom of the Muslims. And ‘Amr, the son of As, honored Abba Benjamin with great honor, and he commanded his soldiers to give back the churches, and all their possessions, and all their lands to his priests. And he said unto him, “Pray for me, for I am going to the country of the West, and I will become the king over the Five Cities, and when I come back I will do whatsoever thou desirest.” And Abba Benjamin said unto him, “God shall make straight thy path”; and he told him everything that would happen unto him. And when ‘Amr wished to go away, they brought nigh the ships so that the soldiers might depart, and outside the port they took all the ships, except the ship in which was the head of Saint Mark the Evangelist, for that would not go out of the port. And all the sailors gathered together, and tied ropes to that ship, and to these they tied other ropes and hauled, but the ship would not leave the port. And ‘Amr, the governor, said, “Burn this ship,” but the captain was afraid to do so, and he told ‘Amr that he was afraid, because of the head of Saint Mark the Evangelist which was in it, and he revealed the matter to him. And the governor sent to Abba Benjamin and told him about the head of Saint Mark the Evangelist, and that night Abba Benjamin saw a vision, and in it Saint Mark said unto him, “Prepare for me a place with thee.” And when Abba Benjamin heard these words he rose up, and went to the governor, and told him [about the vision], and he said unto him, “This is the head of Saint Mark the Evangelist.” And as soon as Abba Benjamin had taken from the ship the head of Saint Mark, that ship left the port immediately. When the governor saw this he marveled exceedingly, and he gave Abba Benjamin much money, and commanded him to build a church for Saint Mark; and Abba Benjamin built a beautiful church for him, and laid the head and body of the saint in it. And this father fought strenuously with the pagans, and he converted many of them, and brought them into the True Faith and confirmed them. And in the days of this saint God brought a great and severe famine upon all countries, and no famine which had ever been before it was so dire. And countless people died of this famine, and their bodies were cast into the highways and market-places of the cities. And Abba Benjamin suffered from a disease in his foot for twenty years, and he died in peace; and all the days of his archiepiscopate were nine and thirty years.

And on this day also [died] Melkeyas (Malachi) the prophet and righteous man, whom they call “Malak.” This prophet was born after the people returned from the Captivity, in a place which is called Sufas. When he was a young man he followed a good course of life, and all the people honored him for his righteousness, and for this reason they called him “Melkeyas” (Malachi), which is, being interpreted, “angel” (or “prince”), because his appearance was exceeding goodly; and he described in his prophecy everything which was to come to pass. And the angel of God used to appear unto him by night, and hold converse with him, but the people never saw the angel, and they only heard his voice; now some of them were worthy to see his face openly, even as it is written in the Book of Judges. And being still a young man he died and was buried with his fathers in his own field. Salutation to Melkeyas (Malachi).

Salutation to Andronicus, who after living on the top of a pillar for seventy years died before the coming of the Muslim kings into Egypt.

Salutation to Abba Benjamin who was so learned in the Scriptures that he was made Archbishop of Alexandria.

Salutation to the consecration of thy house [O Mark the Evangelist], by Abba Benjamin.
[These salutations are omitted in the Bodleian MS.]

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