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THE NINETH MONTH
Ginbot 30
(June 07)

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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 pure and holy father Abba Michael, the sixty-eighth Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. This father was a learned man, and he studied the Books of the Church from his early years, and many of them he knew by heart. And his pure soul desired to fight the spiritual fight under the divine rule of the monastic life, and to become a soldier of God from his early years. And he went to the desert of Scete and dwelt near the monastery of Saint Abba Macarius for many years, and he was made a priest. And after this he went to the city of Sengar of the country of Egypt, and he shut himself up in a cell for a period of forty years, and considerably more, and he fought a great spiritual fight in that cell. And the fame of him, and of his virtues, and his righteousness and knowledge, became noised abroad, and the bishops and the elders of the people agreed together and they seized him and made him Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. And in his archiepiscopal office he walked in the right way in purity, and he rejected all worldly possessions, and he did not possess himself of a single dirham or of a single dinar. Of the stipend, which came to him as his due, he expended a little on his own maintenance, and the rest he gave to the poor, and the needy, and the destitute. And he had made at his own expense objects for sacred use in the churches and many books. And he read the Scriptures frequently to the people, and he admonished them once each day from the Scriptures and once by his own mouth. And having ended his good course God wished him to rest from the toil of this world, and to receive the crown of life in the kingdom of the heavens, and He brought upon him sickness for a day and a night, and he never spoke again. And when he was dying he glorified God, and he made the sign of the Honorable Cross over his face, and delivered his soul into the hand of God forever. And all the days of his life were ninety years and eight months. Salutation to Michael.

And on this day also died the Apostle Sisticorus, one of the Seventy-two disciples. This holy man followed our Lord Jesus Christ for a period of three years, and after the Ascension of our Lord he followed the holy apostles. And he was filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and he followed Saint Paul the apostle, and carried his Epistles to many cities, and he taught many Jews and Gentiles, and baptized them with Christian baptism, and he went into their synagogues in the countries of the East. And great tribulation and sorrow came upon this saint, and then he died in peace.

And on this day also died Saint ‘Arwa, a fighter of the spiritual fight, and a conqueror of the desire of the flesh, an Israelite woman...And there was a certain man in Israel who had many possessions, and he had a wife whose name was ‘Arwa, and there was no woman like unto her for grace and beauty in those days. And her husband departed on his business to a far country, and he commanded his brother to take care for the ruling of his house. And his brother came and said unto ‘Arwa, “I have loved thee for years, but I have been afraid [to show] my love for thee because of thy husband; but now he hath departed, and is far away, I want to lie with thee.” And ‘Arwa said unto him, “Even if my husband hath departed, and is far sway, is God far away? Even if my husband cannot see me, God can see me from heaven.” And he went forth from her, and a devil met him [and said unto him . . .] “Get thee back to her, and I will perform all thy desire for thee.” And he went back to her and said unto her, “Wilt thou consider [this]? If thou wilt lie with me I will treat thee well, but if thou refusest me I will bring upon thee a beating.” And ‘Arwa said unto him, “What canst thou bring upon me?” And the man said unto her, “I will set up against thee a witness from among the nobles of Israel.” And she said unto him, “For what reason wilt thou set up [this] witness against me?” And he said unto her, “Because thou hast married another man.” And ‘Arwa said unto him, “I will not lie with thee. Thou art my husband’s brother. Say what thou wishest, but God will deliver me from thy hand.” And when she refused him, he went on the following day to the governor, and to the

people, and they all gathered together, and he said unto them, "The wife of my brother has married another man whilst her husband is away traveling." And they brought out 'Arwa, and set up witnesses, and the brother said unto them, "Did ye see her lying with a man?" And certain false witnesses said, "We saw her lying with a man." And the governor commanded them to bring her outside [the city], and they dragged her by the neck of her garment. And the governor and the people stoned her with stones, and the blood ran down from her face, and she died, and they buried her because of her beauty. Now formerly the children of Israel would not bury the dead body of a person whom they had stoned, but this woman they buried. And a certain Egyptian merchant came that way with five loaded camels, and he heard a voice in that grave, and he went to look at the grave, and he found 'Arwa lying in the grave, and her face was shining like the sun. And when she saw him she gave him her hand, and she said unto him, "Lift me up, and give me water to drink." And he lifted her up, and gave her water to drink; and he took her to his abode, and had a physician brought, and the physician healed her, and she became very much stronger than before. And the Egyptian loved her, and said unto her, "Come, lie with me." And 'Arwa said unto him, "Fear God and love thyself. Dost thou never think about the Day of Judgment, and the end of the world? I will not lie with thee. Why should I wrong my husband?" And the Egyptian left her, and went out. And the slave of the Egyptian, a Hebrew, came and said unto her, "I want to marry thee." And 'Arwa said unto him, "Get thee gone from me, dog that thou art!" And the Hebrew departed from her. And the Egyptian had a boy, an only son, and he had no other child, and the Hebrew, the slave of the Egyptian, killed the boy with a hatchet, and carried the body to the place where 'Arwa slept, and laid it down by her, and he placed the hatchet within reach of the grasp of her hand. Now the Hebrew wished to kill 'Arwa because she refused to lie with him. When the mother of the child woke up, she missed her son, and wishing to give the child suck she searched for him and found him dead by the bed of 'Arwa, whom the Hebrew made out to have committed the deed; and 'Arwa herself lay there sleeping. And the mother of the child came out, and wept with a loud voice, and all the people assembled, and came to 'Arwa. And the Egyptian said unto her, "Why hast thou done evil to me and killed my son? I saved thee from death and raised thee up from the grave." And 'Arwa said unto the Egyptian, "Thou didst entreat me well, and didst raise me up from the grave. Why should I kill thy son in return for the good, which thou didst do me? Was it evil that I wished thee when some time ago thou didst ask me to let thee marry me? Nay, I refused because I feared God. Shall I commit a greater sin and kill a soul? I have not killed thy son." And the Egyptian said unto her, "Get thee out, and be gone from me"; and she went out. And he gave her one hundred dinars wherewith to maintain herself, and he said unto her, "Be gone, for I cannot contain myself in this matter; I know [not] what hath come upon me", and she departed. And as she was going along she came to a city where she saw a man being hanged on a tree, and she said unto those who were hanging him up, "Why are ye hanging that man?" And they said unto her, "Because he hath carried off our money"; and she said unto them, "How much money hath he taken?" And they said unto her, "One hundred dinars"; and she gave them the money, and said unto them, "Take him down from his cross." And the man from the cross went and said unto [his creditor], "Who paid thee my debt of one hundred dinars and redeemed me?" [And his father said unto him], "I thy father did not redeem thee, but a woman, a widow, redeemed thee." And the young man went and followed 'Arwa, and he found her, and said unto her, "What beauty! I wish to lie with thee." And 'Arwa said unto him, "I have delivered thee from the fire of earth, and thou wishest to bring me into that which is in the heavens, and thou dost not counsel me for good"; and when he saw that she feared God he left her. And he went to several of the men on a ship in the sea, and he called them and said unto them, "There is a handmaiden which I will buy with all my money, and I will sell her to you if ye will pay me my price"; now he had seen 'Arwa, and her beauty, and her pleasing face. And there was a certain man there with much gold, that is to say one hundred dinars, and the man whom 'Arwa had redeemed from hanging sold her to that man with the money. And the man who bought her made her to embark in a ship, and he loved her, and wanted to lie with her; and he took her hand. And the sun became dark, and the winds blew with great violence, and the waves rose up, and were about to sink the ship. And all those who were in the ship cried out, and they wept, and prayed to God. And 'Arwa said, "Thanks be to God, He who

putteth his trust in God shall not die, and he who believeth in Him shall not perish.” And ‘Arwa said unto those who were in the ship, “O ye who didst buy me wrongfully! O ye who didst sell me wrongfully! I am not a handmaiden, but a woman who is her own mistress. If ye will do what I tell you I will pray to God to guide you out of this tribulation”; and they said, “We will do what thou tellest us to do.” And she said unto them, “This man who sold me did so because I would not let him lie with me; this is an act which God doth not desire.” And all the men brought out money, ten thousand dinars, and they gave it to the man who had bought her, and he set her free. And ‘Arwa prayed to God, and the storm died down, and the winds stood still, and there was a complete calm. And they all loved her and wanted to fall upon her, and [each] of them said, “I, I.” Then straightway there came a mighty wind, which broke their ship in pieces, and they were all scattered about in the sea and they sank; and all their money was left with her. And she made pantaloons, and oiled herself (?) like a man, and she arrayed herself in her apparel, and departed in a ship. And she came to a large island, and a city of men, in the midst of the sea, and she went on and came at length to the king. Now when the king saw ‘Arwa, he thought that she was a young man, whose beard had not yet sprouted. And she said unto the king, “Behold, my money is much, there is a ship full [thereof]. Those who owned it have perished, and sunk in the sea, and as thou seest, I am left alone a weak woman; and all the money, which they left, is with me in my hand. I am afraid that I shall be destroyed, and I wish thee to take charge of it. I will write a letter, and will send to the men belonging to the house of each of the dead men, and then their kinsfolk can come and take the money [from thee], each man taking what is his.” And when the king saw that she had not stolen their money, and that she was beautiful . . . he took all the money. And the fear of God came upon ‘Arwa, and God heard her petition, and many sick persons were healed by her prayers. And she went to the seashore, and entered a cave and lived [there] praying to God. And the king of that island fell sick, and came [nigh unto] death. And all the people gathered together and went to him, and they said unto him, “Behold, thou art going to die; who wilt thou appoint to be king after thee?” And he answered and said unto them, “There is a young man who brought me much money in a ship, and him do I appoint to be king over you after me”; and they were all pleased, and they said, “He shall reign after thee.” And they finished their business, and the king died. After this they made ‘Arwa to reign over them, and they believed her to be a young man, and she was worthy to reign, and love for the kingdom entered into her heart. And again she thought in her heart, saying, “The kingdom will make me to be remote from God,” and she wanted to refuse [to reign] over them. And she gathered the people together, and said unto them, “Those among you who have daughters, or sisters, adorn them with gold, and array them in raiment of fine linen, and precious stones, and bring them hither to me; and the maiden among them whom I shall choose shall be my wife.” And they all brought their sisters and their daughters before her, even as she commanded them, and they were all adorned with gold and gems, and they set them before ‘Arwa; and the mothers went forth leaving their daughters with her. And ‘Arwa stripped off her apparel, and stood up naked before the maidens; and when they saw that she was a very beautiful woman, they marveled and held their peace. Then they said, “We are well pleased that she shall reign, and that she shall not marry a man, and that she shall not assume the apparel of a man; we are well pleased that she shall reign.” But she refused to do so, and went back to her cave. And the report of her was heard in every country in those days, and of how she prayed to God, and healed the sick by her prayer. And after many days the husband of ‘Arwa came from afar into his house. Now he was silly, and blind and a paralytic, and he found there his brother, and he said unto him, “What hast thou done with my wife ‘Arwa?” And his brother said unto him, “We found thy wife lying with a man, and we stoned her and killed her”; and the husband of ‘Arwa was silent. And after many days he heard the report of how she used to heal the sick by her prayers. And the husband of ‘Arwa went to his brother, and entreated him, saying, “There is a woman on a certain island who healeth the sick by her prayers, and God heareth her prayer; take me thither.” And his brother said unto him, “Hast thou strength enough to travel thither?” And the husband of ‘Arwa said unto him, “Let us go, peradventure God will be merciful unto us”; and the two of them set out together. And they met the young man whom ‘Arwa had redeemed with one [hundred] dinars. (Now he had become blind), and also the Hebrew slave, who had slain the son of his mistress, and

had thrust the hatchet into the hand of ‘Arwa, and who was then leading his master the Egyptian, (who was ill and blind). And the young man whom ‘Arwa had saved from his cross was leading his father, and the brother of her husband, who had stoned her with stones, was leading his brother, the husband of ‘Arwa. And they all arrive before her, and came into her presence, and ‘Arwa knew them all, but they did not know her; and she went back into her cave and then returned to them. And her husband said unto her, “Behold, I will give thee all the money thou wishest; heal me.” And she said unto him, “I do not take money from sick people, but I will take it from thee; there is much sin with thy brother, let him describe everything which he hath done.” And the husband of ‘Arwa said unto [his brother], “This woman speaketh well; confess all thy sin.” And the brother of ‘Arwa’s husband said unto him, “I visited thy wife, and asked her to let me lie with her and she refused me. And I set up four lying witnesses against her, and I made the people stone her with stones, and I killed her.” And ‘Arwa’s husband said unto him, “Thou didst entreat her evilly in killing my wife. We had the same father and the same mother, and as for what is passed, what can I do? Let it be forgiven thee.” And ‘Arwa prayed to God, and her husband’s eyes were opened, and his feet set free, and the whole body of the man whose brother had killed ‘Arwa was made whole. Then the father of the young man whom she had saved from crucifixion said unto her, “My son hath become blind; pray to God on his behalf.” And ‘Arwa said unto him, “Thy son hath [committed] many sins; let thy son confess the sins which he hath committed, and I will pray [for him].” And the blind man said, “Thou sayest well; I will confess my sins. A certain woman was journeying along the road, and she found me hung on a tree, and she redeemed me for one hundred dinars. And I loved her and I wanted to lie with her, and she refused to let me. And I saw certain idle seamen on a ship, and I called them and sold her to them for ten thousand dinars. And as soon as I came away from them, my eyes went blind, and the dinars turned into stones.” And ‘Arwa said unto the young man before his father, “Thou art a liar [by nature], but God hath now made thee to speak openly”; and she prayed to God, and he was made whole, and his eyes were opened. And then came the Egyptian, the master of the Hebrew slave, and he said unto ‘Arwa, “Thou seest that my slave is blind; pray to God that He may heal him.” Now the Egyptian did not know that ‘Arwa was the woman whom he had lifted up out of the grave. And ‘Arwa said unto him, “His sin is great, and therefore he is blind and sick; let him now confess everything which he hath done and I will pray for him.” And his master said unto the Hebrew, “Tell thy transgressions, and if thou wilt not tell the, I will leave thee here and return to my country.” And the Hebrew said to his master, “An Israelite woman sojourned with us, and I asked her that I might lie with her, and she refused me. And I killed thy son, and took him to her whilst she was sleeping, and I laid him down by her, and I thrust the hatchet into her hand, and I wished thee to kill her because she would not let me lie with her.” And having confessed his sin, ‘Arwa prayed to God and the man was healed straightway. Now there were men of that island, and others, near her, and when their business was finished they returned to their district. And her husband was left alone with her, and she drew nigh unto him and said unto him, “Thy wife, of whom thou speakest, was she like me?” And her husband answered and said unto her, “Thy nose, and eyebrows, and eyes resemble hers, and if she were not dead and buried I could imagine that thou wert she, and would grasp thee with my hands and carry thee off.” And she said, “I am indeed thy wife ‘Arwa, whom they punished wrongfully, and who was killed, and sold as a slave for thy sake. For thy sake I endured the sun, and the cold, and the heat, and for thy sake I traveled over sea and land”; and when she had told him this they were silent, and both of them wept. And after this he asked her that he might lie with her, and she refused, and said unto him, “I cannot do it at this moment; I will wash and come to thee.” And she rose up, and went to her cave and washed, and then came out. And having dressed herself in clean apparel, she prayed to God, saying, “If Thou lovest me receive my soul, and let me not lie again with a man”; and she bowed low and died. And her husband came in and found her dead, and he buried her. Salutation to ‘Arwa.

And on this day also is commemorated Dimadis the martyr.

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