

[Back to
list](#)

[Next](#)

THE FIFTH MONTH
TIR 05
(January 13)

[Previous](#)

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

On this day died Saint Eusegnius, the martyr. This holy man was a soldier in the days of the Emperor Constantine, and he served God, and his charities and alms to the poor and the needy were very many. When the fighters of the Cross-among the stars of heaven appeared unto Constantine, before he believed in our Lord Christ, he did not know what the sign portended. And this Saint Eusegnius went to him, and said unto him, "This is the sign of our Lord Christ"; for there was no one else in Constantine's army who dared to mention the Name of Christ except this holy man. And when Constantine had conquered his enemies by the sign of the Honorable Cross, he became a Christian in truth, and he lifted up the horn of the Christians and of their Faith. And this soldier lived on after Constantine, and after the son of Constantine, until the days of Julian the infidel, and at that time his days were one hundred and ten years. And one day when he was walking about in the open places of the city of Antioch, he found two men fighting together, and he wanted to separate them and to make peace between them; now he was an old man who was held in honor, and he made joy and peace to be between them. And a certain man went to the emperor and made an accusation against this holy man, and he said unto him, "Eusegnius hath become a judge and governor of his own free will." And the emperor had this saint brought before him; and he rebuked him and said unto him, "Who hath appointed thee [a judge and governor?]" And Saint Eusegnius answered and said unto him], "Why hast thou forsaken the worship of God, the God of heaven, in Whose hand is thy soul, and dost bow down to unclean idols, and dost not follow the kings who were before thee? I was a soldier under Constantine like thee, for twenty years, and also under his son, and neither of them had the evil habit which thou hast; for thou hast forsaken God and dost worship unclean idols." And the emperor was exceedingly worth with him, and he commanded his soldiers to hang him up, and to apply lighted torches to his sides; and they did all these things, but the saint endured them all through the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when the emperor was tired of torturing him, he commanded them to cut off his head with the sword. And when the soldiers arrived to cut off his head, he begged them to wait whilst he prayed, and when he had finished his prayer they cut off his honorable head, and he received the crown of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens together with all the saints. Salutation to Eusegnius, who interpreted the mystery of the Cross to the Emperor Constantine.

And on this day also died Abba Matthew, the eighty-eighth Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. This father Matthew had parents of the race of Israel, who believed in Christ and were perfect in good works. The name of his father was Simon and the name of his mother was Barbara, and God gave them two children, and the name of the elder was Jacob and the name of the younger was Matthew. And whilst this Abba Matthew was in his mother's womb, Abba Peter, Bishop of the city of Abures, met her, and when he saw her he got off his donkey and kissed her belly, and said unto her, "Blessed art thou, O woman, and blessed is the fruit of thy belly. Behold there shall go forth from thee a bright star who shall shine in his preaching like Mark the evangelist." When Abba Matthew was fifteen years old his father died, and then he went to Abba 'Abrem, and Komos of the monastery of Saint 'Abufana, and he asked him to array him in the garb of the ascetic life; and the abbot said unto him, "Obtain the consent of thy brother, who is older than thou art, and come back." When Abba Matthew heard this he went back in sorrow of heart, and on the way the angel Michael, who was in the form of a monk, met him, and told him that he should become Archbishop [of Alexandria], and that signs and wonders should be wrought through him. And having come to his brother, he urged him to let him become a monk, and when he refused Abba Matthew went to the monastery of Saint Abba 'Amoni, of the monastery of Tona, and took refuge in the church. And when the brethren had entreated his brother, he

allowed him [to become a monk], and he went to the monastery of Saint Abba ‘Abufana, and Abba ‘Abrem made him a monk; and he fought the spiritual fight with fasting and prayer until he attained the power of the monks. And after a year Abba Peter went out to Abba ‘Abrem, and he saw Abba Matthew, and his patience and his prudence, and he asked Abba ‘Abrem to give him to him so that he might be his disciple. And the bishop took him with him against his will, and he dwelt with him, and he kept vigil all night long from the time of sunset to sunrise. And when it was eighteen years since he was born, the bishop took him and made him a priest against his will. And when Satan observed his vigils he entered into the heart of a certain beautiful woman, who showed him her person, and solicited him with evil desire; and Abba Matthew seeing her prayed to God with tears, and even asked for death. Then he went in to the bishop and entreated him to send him away to his monastery. And when the bishop prevented him he came into the Episcopal treasury and took a priestly vestment of great price, which belonged to the bishop, and he slit it into strips, every part of it, with a razor, and then he restored it to its former place. And on the following day the bishop said unto Abba Matthew, “Bring me the priestly vestment, for I must officiate at the Eucharist this day”; and when he brought it to him, it fell down before him like wooden shavings. When the bishop saw this he was very wroth, and he said, “Who hath done this thing?” And Abba Matthew said, “I did it, because thou didst prevent me from going away. Is doing this a greater sin than falling into fornication?” And the bishop sent him away in wrath, and he wrote an order of excommunication concerning him to the men of the monastery, ordering that he should perform two hundred prostrations each night and day, and that he should dwell neither in a cell nor in a house, but in the church at the time of prayer; and Abba Matthew fought this spiritual fight for two years. When the bishop heard of his patient endurance he sent him his blessing and removed the ban of excommunication. And then his brother Jacob came to him, and became a monk, and he fought until he had conquered Satan. And then Abba Matthew went to the monastery of Abba Anthony, and he dwelt there, fighting strenuously. And there was there a certain righteous monk whose name was Jacob, and he saw a vision in which it seemed that a shining angel came unto Abba Matthew, and embraced him, and gave keys into his hands. And when Abba Jacob awoke he told this to Abba Matthew who straightway, because he hated empty praise, wandered round the country from city to city. One day whilst Abba Matthew was officiating in the office of the Eucharist, he saw our Lord Christ sitting upon the altar, and He lay in the paten like a little child. And at the time when he broke the Offering, he stood up for a long time with his hands stretched out and covered with blood, and he continued to weep abundantly, and he was afraid: and he told this vision to no man. And his teacher saw him and he marveled at his standing still so long a time, and then he prayed to God to reveal to him this matter. One day when they were consecrating the Offering as usual, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared unto them, lying upon the paten in the form of a child, and He was broken up by the hand of Abba Matthew like bread. And straightway he marveled and said, “Glory be to Thee, O God, Who hast given unto us sons of men this great gift.” When Abba Matthew saw this he fetched some iron nails, and drove them into his knee every Friday until a worm came out there from. Thence he departed to Dabra Kueskuam, and he dwelt there, and he fought so strenuously that at length when he gazed upwards he could see our Lord Jesus Christ sitting on the right hand of His Father; and when he looked downwards he saw Him in the abysses in great glory. When Abba Gabriel the archbishop died they (i.e. the bishops and priests) appointed Abba Matthew to succeed him as archbishop against his will, and when he refused they set guards over him, and the following day all the bishops told him that they had seen a vision and that he was suitable for the office of archbishop. When Abba Matthew heard this he knew that they would not let him go, and he took a razor secretly and drew it across his tongue and cut it off. And that night our Lady Mary came to him, and anointed his tongue with oil, and healed it, and it became as it was before [he cut it]. And they took him to the city of Alexandria, and when they were enthroning him on the sixteenth day of the month Nahase (Aug.-Sept.), the day of the festival of the death of our Lady Mary, a voice was heard from heaven, saying, “He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy.” And they brought the head of Mark the evangelist that they might lay it in his breast, and the head flew up and kissed his mouth. And from that time he never sat upon his throne at the time of the Offering, and he never entered into the house of any man on the Fourth and Sixth Days of the week. And he prophesied that David (i.e. David I, who was abdicated A.D. 1411, and died 6th Oct. 1413)

would reign as King of Ethiopia though his brother Wedem ‘Asfare (or Germa ‘Asfare, who reigned till 1382) was reigning. And this father performed many miracles in his days, and he healed the sick, and raised the dead by the bandlet, which was on his head. And in his days there was appointed a deputy governor over Mesr (Cairo) who was a wicked man, and he imposed a tax on the archbishop to which he had never been submitted before; and when he refused to pay it he beat the archbishop severely, and carried him into his habitation. That night Abba Matthew entreated our Lady Mary to receive his soul from the torment of this world, and she appeared unto him, and held converse with him, saying, “Be not sorrowful; after eight days thou shalt rest.” And on the following day Abba Matthew called the bishops, and priests, and deacons, and all the people, and he told them about his [coming] death, and he exhorted them about the word of the Faith and blessed them. And when his sickness increased he took a picture of our Lady Mary, and prayed a long time, and he kissed the picture and made the sign of the Cross over his face, and he blessed all the people of the city who believed in Christ, and he died on the First Day of the week. Salutation to Abba Matthew, the doubly blessed.

And on this day also became martyrs Yarewenyos, and many men and women, and Negirus (Longinus) of Rome, Alexandra who visited Arsenius, and ‘Awshia.

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