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THE FOURTH MONTH
TAHISAS 08
(December 17)

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

On this day died the holy father Abba Yarokla (Hieroclis), the thirteenth Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. The parents of this holy man were deniers of Christ, but after his birth they believed and were baptized with Christian baptism; before they believed they taught their son every kind of pagan philosophy and learning, and all their books, and after they believed they taught him Christian learning, and he learned by heart the Books of the Church and of the Apostles. After this Demetrius the archbishop made him a deacon, and then he made him a priest in the church of the city of Alexandria, and he protected and cared well for his flock, and fulfilled the work and the Law of the Church. When Abba Demetrius died [the bishops] chose this father, and made him Archbishop of the city of Alexandria, and he shepherded the flock of Christ well, and made them strong in the True Faith; and he converted many pagans and brought them into the Faith of Christ, and baptized them with Christian baptism; but he committed to Saint Dionysius the work of judging between believers. And Saint Yarokla (Hieroclis) taught them, and rebuked them, and converted the heretics and guided them until he brought them back and made them to enter the True Faith. And he sat upon the throne of Saint Mark the evangelist for thirteen years, and he died in peace. Salutation to the blessed Yarokla (Hieroclis).

And on this day also became martyrs the holy women Barbara and Juliana, and ‘Anba Merena (Abba Marina), the righteous man. This holy woman Barbara was the daughter of a judge, who was exceedingly great in the palace, and he lived in the days of the infidel Diocletian; he came from the country of the East and his name was Dioscurus. And Dioscurus made for his daughter a strong palace so that no one should ever see her; and he commanded [the builders] to make two windows, which would open in the bathhouse, and they did so. And when Saint Barbara saw the two windows she commanded the builders to make a third window, [and they did so] and then she made over the bath, with the water in it, the sign of the Life-giving Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. When her father came into the dwelling he saw what the builders had done, and that they had transgressed his command. And he asked them about this, and they said unto him, “Thy daughter Barbara commanded us [to do] this and we did it.” When he asked her, “Why hast thou done this?” she said unto him, “Know, O my father, that everything is completed in the Holy Trinity, and I have made three windows in the Name of the Holy Trinity. And this cross is a copy of the Cross-of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherein was the salvation of the whole world. Turn, O my father, from thy error, and worship thy God Who created thee,” When her father heard these words he was wroth, he drew his sword and ran after her, but she fled from him; and there was a rock in front of her, and that rock split and she entered into it and was protected. And after this she returned and her father took her and handed her over to the governor, who tortured her severely. And there was there a certain woman whose name was Juliana, and she was looking at Saint Barbara when she was being tortured, and she wept for her. And our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Saint Barbara and strengthened and comforted her. And after this her father commanded his men to cut off her head, and the head of Juliana, and they cut off the heads of both of them with the sword, and the two women received crowns of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens; and fire came down from heaven and burnt up her father and Marcianus, the governor. And the bath which Saint Barbara had made for herself in the bathhouse, and on which was the sign of the Cross, became a means of healing unto the sick, for all those who bathed therein were healed of their diseases. Then [certain believers] took the bodies of the holy martyrs and laid them in the church outside the city which is called Galalya; and the bodies of these holy women and martyrs are this day in the church of Saints ‘Abuker

and John the martyr in the city of Mesr (Cairo). Salutation to Barbara. Salutation to him that made strong her mind, namely ‘Anba Merena.

And on this day also died the holy father Abba Samuel, Abbot of the monastery of Kalmon. This holy man was one of the men of the city of Dakreluba, in the country of Masil, in the north of Egypt; his parents were holy and pure, and they had no child except Samuel. His father was a priest called Silas, and he saw a vision one night. And a man with a shining face said unto him, “Needs must; and thy son shall become a true and excellent teacher of God all the days of his life.” Now this Samuel was pure from his youth up, like Samuel the Prophet, and he was always thinking in his heart about the garb of the monastic life. One day he found the opportunity and went forth from his father to go to the desert of Scete, and as he was journeying along the road, the angel of the Lord, disguised as a monk, said unto him, “Whither goest thou?” And Abba Samuel said unto him, “I want to go to the monastery of Scete.” And the angel who had appeared unto him in the form of a monk said unto him, “I am going there,” and they traveled together until they arrived in the desert of Scete. And the angel of the Lord delivered him to a certain elder monk whose name was Agathon, and who dwelt in a cave, and was a very righteous man. And the angel of the Lord told Saint Abba Agathon about Abba Samuel, and he said unto him, “Receive Samuel with joy, and array him in the garb of the monastic life; for he shall be thy son in truth, and he shall strengthen thine old age, and thou shalt teach him all the rules of the monastic life.” And when the angel had said this to Abba Agathon, he disappeared from him. And when Abba Samuel came Abba Agathon received him with great joy, and said unto him, “Good is thy coming to me, O Samuel, thou man of God, for God hath sent thee to me in mine old age.” And forthwith he took him into the church with him, and he blessed the cloak made of cloth of hair, and the girdle, and the cap, and the garment of the monk, and put them on him, saying, “The God of the holy fathers, Abba Anthony and Abba Macarius, be with thee, my son Samuel, and be a helper unto thee in all thy tribulation.” And Saint Abba Agathon taught Abba Samuel humility and silence, and he was saying always, “Forgive me, O my father, show me kindness and guide me.” And he bowed before Abba Agathon and said unto him, “Remember me, O my holy and blessed father, so that God may make me to do His Will”; and Saint Abba Samuel learned from Abba Agathon all the path of spiritual monasticism, and Saint Abba Agathon assisted him in everything. And Abba Samuel lived with the elder Abba Agathon for three years, and he did everything, which he commanded him to do. Then Abba Agathon died, and Abba Samuel continued to fast for a week at a time, and to fight a great fight. And he was appointed priest in the church of Saint Abba Macarius in Scete. After a few days they brought the volume of Letters of Leo of Chalcedon to the desert, and one read them to him. And when the elder monks heard this they were exceedingly sorry, and Abba Samuel became zealous, with a great zeal of the Holy Spirit, and he rose up among all the men and seized that unclean volume, and rent it in pieces, saying, “Cursed is every one who shall change the Faith of the holy Fathers.” And when the imperial envoy saw this he was filled with fury, and was exceedingly angry, and he commanded his men to beat the saint with rods of iron, and to hang him up by his arms, and to smite his face; and they did all these things and smote his face even as the envoy commanded. And whilst they were smiting his face one of his eyes was torn out, and then the emperor commanded them to drive him away from the monastery of Scete. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto Saint Abba Samuel and commanded him to depart and to dwell in the monastery of Kalmon; and he departed straightway and dwelt there, and he lived there a few days teaching all the men to be strong in the True Faith. And Makakaz, who was governor and Archbishop of the city of Alexandria, and of all the land of Egypt, heard the report of him, and he came to Saint Abba Samuel, and he beat him very severely and drove him out of the monastery, and the saint went and dwelt in the church in the desert of Kalmon. And in those days the pagan Barbarians came and took him away in order to send him to their own country, and he besought our Lord Jesus Christ to deliver him from them. And straightway they set him upon a camel, but that camel was unable to move at all, and then they beat him very severely; and they agreed to together to leave him, and they departed to their country. And Abba Samuel returned to Kalmon his monastery, and he lived there and devoted himself to asceticism and to the spiritual strife of the path of the monastic

life. Then the Barbarians came a second time, and he was afraid of them, and he heard a voice, saying, "Fear not, O Samuel, but go into the church and hold no converse with them, and I will cause them not to see thee," and he remained thus. Then the pagan Barbarians arrived and went into the church with their swords drawn and grasped tightly in their hands, and they had their [other] weapons of war with them; and they cried out with outcries which were exceedingly terrifying. And the saint saw them committing sacrilege in the sanctuary, and he was unable to bear the sight of their audacity in the sanctuary, and spoke unto them, saying, "What are ye doing, O ye wicked heretics who have no Lord God to redeem you, according to the evil of your deeds?" And those pagans said unto him, "Dost thou remain here [and think] we cannot see thee?" And they seized him and tied him firmly to a pillar in the church, and they beat him very severely until he was nigh dead; and when he was about to die they released him from his bonds and he fell upon his face on the ground and lay there like a dead man. Then the pagans dragged him out, and brought him to the place where the camels were, and they beat him on his head with their sandals, and they fastened him tightly on the back of a camel, but the camel would not move although they beat it severely; and Saint Abba Samuel wept bitter tears because of his pain. And the camel turned to him and said unto him with the voice of a man who talketh, "It is well that they beat thee. It was meet for thee to die because thou didst transgress the command of the Lord thy God Who told thee to hold thy peace and to speak not." When Saint Abba Samuel heard these words he wept bitter tears and said, "Verily I have sinned, but God is able to put away my transgression." And then the Barbarians took him to their own country. Now they had already carried away into captivity Abba John, Abbot of the desert of Scete, and Abba John and Abba Samuel met there and they comforted each other. And the master of Abba Samuel wished to force him to worship the sun, but he would not obey his command in any way. Then he tied the leg of Abba Samuel to the leg of a maiden with Satanic intent, and sent them out into the desert to attend to the camels. Now his master thought that Saint Abba Samuel would fall into sin with her, and that he would submit to everything which he told him; and Diabolus was the counselor of this man. And in all these things strength was increased in Saint Abba Samuel, and his heart was strong, and he remained thus until his master fell ill and was nigh to die; and Abba Samuel prayed over him and healed him of his sickness. And the report of him was noised abroad in that country, and whosoever was sick came to him, and he prayed over him, and anointed him with oil, and the sick man was healed of his sickness. When Abba Samuel's master saw this he marveled exceedingly, and bowed before him and said unto him, "Forgive me my sin which I committed against thee"; and he loved him greatly and he asked him, saying, "Tell me everything thou wishest, and I will perform it for thee." And Abba Samuel said unto him, "I wish to go back to my own country"; and straightway the pagan made ready many gifts, and he set him on his way in peace, and he departed, and the pagan sent messengers to go with him until he arrived at his monastery. And his sons gathered together about him, and they increased in number exceedingly until they became thousands. And our holy Lady Mary, the Virgin two-fold, the God-bearer, appeared unto him, and she said unto him, "This place shall be my abode for ever"; and from that day the pagans never came to the monastery of Saint Abba Samuel. And this father composed many discourses, and he prophesied concerning the coming of the Muslims, who are the children of Hagar, and their kingdom, and the tribulation which thou would inflict upon Christian folk in all countries. When the time for his departure from this fleeting world drew nigh, he gathered together his sons and he commanded them to be strong in the fear of God, and to perform His behests, and to fight for Him and for the True Faith until the last breath. Then he fell sick of a slight sickness, and he died in peace, and inherited the kingdom of the heavens. It is said concerning him that one of his sons died, and that when Saint Abba Samuel came to him, his soul returned to him and he rose up, and he told Abba Samuel and all the brethren how he had seen the punishment of sinners, and the repose of the righteous; and that brother turned and lay down, and died in peace. Salutation to Abba Samuel of Kalmon.

And on this day Saint Abba 'Esi and his sister Thecla became martyrs. This holy man was one of the men of the city Bedir in the West, in the district of 'Eshmunayn; and he had many goods and possessions in abundance, and estates and flocks and herds. He gave the

hair of his flocks to the poor and needy, and he gave large alms to those who were in want; he feared God exceedingly, and his goods multiplied very greatly. His sister Thecla also feared God. The name of his father was Elias and the name of his mother was Mary. And they asked their son ‘Esi, saying, “O our son, we want to have thee married during our lifetime, and to rejoice in thee before our death”; but he did not wish this by any means, and he said unto them, “Pray ye for me, O my blessed father and mother. Everything else which ye command me to do I will undertake gladly, but this thing I cannot do, and do not speak to me about it.” And they left him alone and spoke no more to him about marriage, for they loved him very much. And then his father died, being eighty years of age, and in that same year Diocletian the infidel commanded that all the Christians should worship idols. And Saint Abba ‘Esi went to the city of Alexandria to buy goods, and he had in that city a friend whose name was Paul, who was grievously sick, and Abba ‘Esi remained with him until he recovered from his sickness. And in those days the Christian peoples suffered very great tribulation, and Abba ‘Esi and Paul his friend used to buy good food and provisions and take them to the saints who were in the city of Alexandria, and they used likewise to visit frequently those who were shut up in prison in great tribulation for the sake of the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and comfort them. And these men used to minister unto them like slaves, and the saints prophesied to them, saying, “Assuredly ye shall receive the crown of martyrdom.” And in those days they brought Saint Victor, the son of Romanus, to the city of Alexandria. And when Abba ‘Esi and Thecla his sister saw the jealousy of him which existed, now he had rejected the royalty of this fleeting world, Abba ‘Esi drew nigh unto the governor. And confessed our Lord Jesus Christ. And the governor commanded his soldiers to torture him with severe tortures, and to beat him many times with whips. And they hacked off his limbs with hatchets, and they set lighted torches on his body, and they wound red-hot chains about his body, and they lighted a huge fire in the furnace of an oven, the flames whereof rose to a great height, and they cast Abba ‘Esi into that fire. And he prayed, saying, “Thou didst deliver the Three Children from the fiery furnace, and Daniel from the jaws of the lions, O my Lord Jesus Christ, and thy martyr Victor from the flame in the furnace of the baths, O my Lord, help me and deliver me, and send thine angel to deliver me from this torture, for Thine is the glory for ever and ever Amen.” And when he had said these words, behold Suri’el, the angel, came down from heaven, and he stood by the right hand of Abba ‘Esi the virgin, and he said unto him, “Peace be unto thee, O righteous man, Abba ‘Esi, fear not, for God is with thee, and He shall deliver thee from all thy tribulation.” And straightway the fiery furnace became like cool dew, and the angel split asunder the walls of the furnace, and he seized the hand of Saint Abba ‘Esi and brought him out therefrom, safe and uninjured. And straightway Saint Abba ‘Esi went to the governor and cried out, saying, “Be ashamed, O governor, thou and thy infidel emperor, and thy filthy idols.” And when the people saw Saint Abba ‘Esi alive and uninjured they marveled exceedingly and cried out with one voice, saying, “We are Christians, and we believe in the God of Abba ‘Esi,” and the soldiers cut off their heads and they received crowns of martyrdom. Then the governor commanded them to take Saint Abba ‘Esi to the prison house, and they did as the governor commanded. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto his sister Thecla, and commanded her to go to the city of Alexandria to visit her brother. And she rose up in the city of Antinoe and came to the river, and searched for a boat but could not find one, but a spirit boat appeared, and she embarked in it, and our holy Lady Mary, the two-fold Virgin, the God-bearer, was in that boat, and Elisabeth her kinswoman, and they comforted the sister of Abba ‘Esi. And Elisabeth said unto her, “I had an only son, and they cut off his head wrongfully,” and the other said unto her, “I had an only Son, and they crucified and slew Him through envy.” Now Thecla did not know who they were, and she did not think that what had appeared unto her was merely a vision. And straightway she arrived in Alexandria, and then she knew that what had appeared unto her was a vision. And she asked questions about her brother Abba ‘Esi, and they brought her to the prison, and she entered therein. And when she saw [him] she and he rejoiced with very great joy, and they agreed together to become martyrs. And when it was midnight Suri’el, the angel of the Lord, appeared unto Saint Abba ‘Esi, and took him on his shining wings by the command of God and carried him up into heaven, and showed him the city of God, Jerusalem, which is in the heavens, and all the saints went forth to meet him and to salute

him. And the angel also showed him the habitation of the righteous and the martyrs, who labored for the Name of Christ, and he saw Jerusalem, the Great City, whereof the greatness, and glory, and beauty, and the appearances of its spaces the tongue of man is unable to describe. The decorations thereof are of gold and silver and precious stones; in it is a light which is brighter than the sun a million times. And the angel of God took him and showed him an exceedingly great chamber wherein were three hundred pillars of marble, and the decorations of the chamber were of gold, and silver, and precious stones. And in that chamber were one hundred guards, and they were decorated and girded with girdles of gold, and each of them was five cubits in height, and the like of them existed not in the world. And he said unto the angel, "Who [built] this great chamber? For there is no man in the world who could build a chamber like unto this." And the angel said unto him, "O my brother, Abba 'Esi, if all the kings of the earth were to gather together, with all their wealth, they could not buy one of the pillars which is in this chamber", and as I looked, I marveled and I praised God. And I said unto the angel, "O my lord, unto whom doth this great, and beautiful, and glorious chamber belong?: And the angel said unto me, "All this hath been given unto Victor, the son of Romanus, the general, who rejected the sovereignty of this fleeting world, and all its delights, and who bore the cross of his death and who followed his Lord. Therefore did our Lord Jesus Christ give unto him this great and never-ending sovereignty instead of the sovereignty of this fleeting world." And I said unto him, "My lord, I wish thee to inform me what these thrones are, and what are these trees with the beautiful fruit, and what are these shining crowns?" And the angel answered and said unto me, "All this place is the rest and joy which God hath prepared for those who celebrate the commemoration of the holy martyrs upon the earth; hearken now that I may tell thee--Whosoever shall build a church in the names of the holy martyrs, or shall bury their bodies, or make an offering of the fruits of his labor on the day of their commemoration, or light a lamp, or feed the poor, or buy a book for their church, or write a book of the fight and martyrdom, or do good deeds on the day of the commemoration according to his ability, and even if a man cannot do these things and can only give a cup of cold water he shall not lose his reward, and his reward shall be in heaven, saith our Lord in the Holy Gospel. And when the man who hath been wont to celebrate the commemoration of one of the martyrs, or one of the righteous, dieth, that martyr or that righteous man shall come before our Lord Christ, and he shall say unto Him, 'O my Lord and God, give me this soul, for it was wont to celebrate my commemoration when upon earth'; and He will give that soul unto him straightway. And if that soul be that of a great sinner, a voice shall go forth from God, the Sustainer of the Universe, in the face of Michael, the archangel, saying, 'God, the Sustainer of the Universe, hath commanded, saying, "Let alone this soul, cast it to the martyr that he may make intercession for it, and let it be given unto him as a gift from the Lord God.'" And they shall do unto that soul as God commanded, and it shall be given unto the martyr or unto the righteous man, and the martyr shall take it and carry it to his abode. And He will command that that soul shall be washed and arrayed in beautiful apparel, and made to sit upon one of the thrones which ye see, and crowned with an incorruptible crown; and it shall rejoice with all the saints and live for ever." After he had told me these things, that angel of light took me upon his wings and brought me into the prison house, and he saluted me and went up into heaven; and I marveled greatly at the great gift which God giveth unto those who fight for His holy Name. And in the morning the governor commanded his soldiers to bring him out of the prison house, and they brought him out, and his sister was with them. And he tortured them severely on the wheel, and with burnings with fire, and with iron nails, and they flayed their heads; but the Lord raised them up whole and uninjured. When the executioners were weary of torturing them, the governor handed them on to the governor of the city of Antinoe in Upper Egypt, so that he might send them away thither. When they had sailed for a period of twenty days, the boat stopped by the river bank, and the governor commanded his men to cut off the heads of the saints Abba 'Esi and Thecla his sister. And the saints rejoiced exceedingly, and they prayed, and after they had finished their prayer the soldiers cut off their heads with a sword, and they received crowns of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens. And God commanded a certain priest whose name was Abba 'Ori, from the city of Satnuf, to take their bodies, and to prepare them for burial with costly cloths and pure unguents, and to lay them in a pure place; and he hid

them until the end of the persecution, and until a church could be built for them. Then they laid their bodies in it, and great signs and wonders took place through them; now the number of those who were martyred with them was four hundred and seven souls. Salutation to Abba ‘Esi and to Thecla, and to the company of people who suffered with them.

And on this day also died Saint John of Damascus. This holy man was the son of Mansur, and he belonged to a great and honorable family in Damascus, and he was reared in the knowledge and fear of God. He studied and learned philosophy under his teacher Kuezma, a monk and a philosopher of Karili. When he had finished his studies Kuezma and Mansur, the father of John, agreed together, and he went to the monastery of Saint Mar Saba the martyr. When his father died he became scribe to the governor of the city, and he did not conceal from him his secret. In those days rose up Constantine, the son of Leo, the heretic and maker of war against pictures of the Godhead, and he troubled the churches. And this Saint John, although he held no office in the Church, sent letters to all the believers to strengthen them in the True Faith, and [he urged them] to bow down before holy pictures, and brought testimony from the Divine Books. And when the heretic emperor heard this he gnashed his teeth upon him, and he had a scribe brought, and he made him write a letter, copying the handwriting of John, and sent it to the governor of Damascus. And he made accusations against John, saying, “John who was with thee hath sent me this letter [urging me] to go to war with thee. and to lay waste and plunder thy city.” And having heard these words the governor believed [them], and he cut off the right hand of Saint John wherewith he used to write. And taking his hand Saint John went to the picture (or image) of our Lady, the holy Virgin Mary, and he entreated her with many tears, saying, “O my Lady, hath not this thing happened unto me through contending for the worship of thy picture? Heal thou me now by thy prayer and by thy knowledge.” And after he had slept a little our holy Lady the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, appeared unto him, and she made his hand to be as it had been formerly; and when he awoke he gave thanks to our holy Lady the Virgin Mary. And he went to the monastery of Mar Saba, and became a monk under the abbot, and the abbot handed him over to a spiritual elder to teach him the rules of the monastic life. And the elder said unto him, “O my son, do nothing with the learning which thou hast from outside, but learn to be silent”; and through the abundance of his humility John overcame his Satanic pride. And one day one of the elder monks died and he had a brother who asked John to write a funeral discourse and to weep for his brother. And John said unto him, “I am afraid of the command of the elder my teacher.” And the brother said unto him, “It will not be known to anyone.” And when the brother had made many entreaties to John, he wrote a funeral discourse for him, which made very sorrowful him that heard it. When his teacher heard of it he was wroth with John, and he drove him out of his abode, and John took refuge with the other elders. And when they had pressed the elder [to forgive John] he said unto them, “Can the latrine of the monks be purged of his doctrine?” When John heard this he did as he commanded, and that elder seeing the excellence of John received him with joy and brought him into his house. The our holy Lady, the Virgin Mary, the God-bearer, commanded the elder to forgive him. And John composed many Discourses, and these Discourses [are extant] to this day. And the Archbishop of Jerusalem made John a priest against his will, and he continued to fight for the retention of sacred pictures, and for the True Faith; and he reviled kings and governors until [he reached] a green old age. And when the time for his removal from this world arrived, he departed to Christ Whom he loved. Salutation to John of Damascus.

And on this day also died Yeres Kela, and ‘Elkolonitos, and Eugenius the father of ‘Anba Merina (Abba Marina).

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