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THE FIRST MONTH
Meskerem 01
(September 11)

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

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This blessed month of Maskaram is the first of the circle of the years of Egypt and Ethiopia. The [first] day and the night of this month are equal--twelve hours. Then the day during this month Maskaram diminisheth because this month is the first of the circle of the years of Egypt and Ethiopia. Now it is meet that we should make therein a great feast in all purity, because this day is holy and blessed, and we should remove ourselves from evil works. And we should begin [to do] good works and new, whereby God is pleased, even as Paul the apostle saith: "Behold, every work is made new in Christ. Behold old works have passed away, and behold new works are known, and every work is from God" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Thus hath God had pleasure over us in Christ, and He hath given us the ministration of His mercy and compassion. And Isaiah the prophet saith: "The Spirit of God is upon me; therefore hath He appointed me and sent me to preach to those who are in captivity, and to those who are in prison, and to set them free, and to the blind that they may see the light, and to those who are bound that they be set free, and to preach the year of the mercy of God" (Isaiah 61:1-2). And David saith: "Thou hast blessed the crown of the year [with] mercy, and the desert is satisfied with dew by Thy blessing" (Psalm 65:11).

On this day also Job the righteous man washed in the water of the Tekaze and was healed of all his sickness. And the people were in the habit, when the river Tekaze was full of water, of dipping themselves in the new water, whereby they were blessed for all the rest of the year.

On this day died the holy Apostle Bartholomew, who was one of the Twelve Apostles. To this apostle the lot fell that he was to go to the city of El-wah (the great Oasis, Al-Hargah). He and Peter went together to the people there, and they preached to them, and called them to the knowledge of God. After that they performed before them signs and great wonders, which terrified their hearts. After this Peter contrived to go into the city, and there he sold Bartholomew to be a slave, and Bartholomew worked in the vineyard with his master. And when he was preparing the young plants for planting out, they burst into flower and bore fruit immediately. When the son of the governor of that city died, Bartholomew the apostle raised him up from the dead. And all the people believed, and Bartholomew strengthened them in the knowledge of God. After this our Lord Jesus Christ commanded him to go to the city of Barbar (i.e. the city of the Barbarians), and He sent to him Andrew the apostle with his helper to help him. And the people of that city were exceedingly wicked, and they would not receive the apostles who were working before them signs and wonders. And God commanded one of the Dog-faced cannibals to submit to the apostles, and not to resist them in anything, which they ordered him to do, and they took him with them to that city. And the men of that city brought out wild beasts against the apostles to eat them up, and straightway that Dogface rose up against those wild beasts, and rent them asunder, and he also slew a great many of the men of that city. Because of this all the people were afraid and they turned, and did homage at the feet of the apostles, and they submitted to them, and they entered the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ--to Him be glory! And he appointed priests over them, and built churches for them, and the apostles left them praising God.

And Bartholomew the apostle departed to the cities, which were on the seacoast, whereof the people knew not God, and he preached unto them and converted them to the knowledge of God. And they believed on our Lord Jesus Christ. And Bartholomew the apostle commanded the men to be pure, and to be remote from fornication. When Agrippa the king heard of him he was exceedingly angry with him, and he commanded his servants

to put the Apostle Bartholomew in a hair sack and to fill the sack up with sand, and to cast him into the sea; and they did so. And thus Bartholomew consummated his martyrdom.

On this day died the holy father Abba Melyos, Archbishop of the great city of Alexandria, the third from Mark, the apostle and evangelist, and this archbishop was appointed in the twelfth year of the reign of Vespasian the Emperor of Rome, fifty-four years after the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. He pastured and guarded the flock of our Lord Jesus Christ nobly, and he sat on the Episcopal throne twelve years. And he pleased God and died in peace.

And on this day died the righteous and excellent Abba Melki. The fathers of this righteous man were among the nobles of Kuelzem (Kolsum, i.e. Clysma), which city is on the borders of Egypt; they were rich in gold and silver, and they gave alms to the poor and needy. His father loved God exceedingly, and he had no son. One day he saw the children learning their lessons, and in their hands were tablets whereon were written, "Let us remember our fathers who have taught us by their lives so that we may become children of God. O God, make their souls to have rest in the heavens with the righteous and the martyrs." And when the father of Abba Melki heard these words from the mouths of the children he was very sorrowful saying, "Woe to me, for I have no son. Who will remember me when I die?" And he and his wife gave themselves up with zeal to fasting, and prayer and the giving of offerings. And God heard their petition and He gave them two children at once, a boy and a girl; and they rejoiced greatly in them. And the father brought them up as Christians, and he called the boy Melki, and his sister Sefna, which is being interpreted "Dove." And he had them reared very carefully. And when the boy was seven years old his father took Melki to a teacher, and he taught him all the Books of the New and Old Testaments. And the Holy Spirit came upon him in full measure, and he did not play with the other children or indulge in games with them, but he read the Scriptures day and night. And when the boy was twelve years old, the parents of the children called him and spoke with him about their wish to take a wife for him, so that they might have a memorial; but Melki was not pleased with this, and pretending to agree with them he said, "I consent to your words, and that which ye order me to do I will do." Now his soul wished to flee from the world. Then Abba Melki said unto his father, "I wish to make a festival for the children who are at school with me"; and his father gave him ten hundred dinars in gold so that he might make a feast according to his desire, and he ordered the servants and the waiting men to minister unto him according to his wish. Then Abba Melki mounted his horse, and went out before his father and said unto his serving men, "Take ye one hundred dinars in gold and make haste and prepare a feast for us; I will go alone and invite my companions thereto." And his serving men hearkened to his voice, and turned away, and he departed by himself. The money, which he had, he distributed among the poor and needy, and his horse he gave to a certain poor man, and he had nothing left except the clothes, which were on him. And as his return was delayed his serving men sought for him, but they could not find him, and they turned back weeping; and they told his father and mother and they wept a bitter weeping. His sister's eyes by reason of her excessive weeping went blind and she died. And Abba Melki went to Debra Tur, which was the monastery of his mother's brother Mar 'Awgin. And this 'Awgin was a righteous man and he worked many signs, and under his authority there were seventy-two chosen monks. And Abba Melki prostrated himself at his feet, and he said unto him, "I wish to dwell under thy shadow, and I wish thee to array me in the garb of the monk." And Abba 'Awgin said unto him, "From what city comest thou?" And he told him that Kuelzem was his city, and that he was the son of 'Awgin's sister; and when 'Awgin heard this he rejoiced with a great joy, and he permitted him to be a probationer for three years, and he arrayed him in the garb of monasticism. And he contended with such great vigor in the ascetic life and kept such strict vigil always, that his fame was heard of in all the country of Persia. And when he had been a monk for three years God gave unto him the gift of healing and he was able to drive out devils by his word. One day whilst he was walking about by himself reciting the Psalms he came to a place where there was a hollow, and in the hollow was a fig tree, and there were a great many shepherds weeping there. And Abba Melki said unto them, "Why do ye weep?" And they said unto him, "The son of the governor of the city was eating figs here, and whilst he was doing so a great snake

came out and swallowed him up, and the boy hath gone into its belly." And whilst they were telling him this, the father of the boy with the people of the city arrived, and their clothes were rent and they were beating their faces; and he made entreaty to Mar Melki on behalf of his son. And Mar Melki said unto him, "Fear not, O my son, believe in God and thou shalt see a wonderful thing," and he turned his face towards the east and stretched out his hands and prayed for a long time. And when he had finished his prayer he summoned the serpent in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and commanded to cast up the boy from inside him; and he cast up the boy who had suffered no pain whatsoever. And Satan, who was inside the serpent, cried out and said, "Whither can I go from thee, O Melki, thou man of Kuelzem?" And having said these words he dissolved himself into smoke. And when the father of the boy saw that his son was alive he brought gold and silver to the holy man. And Melki refused to accept it from him, but he said unto him, "Let us become partners in the building of a monastery for me." And the father of the boy rejoiced and he built him a monastery, which contained 300 cells for the monks, and he enclosed the building with a wall and provided iron gates therefore. Whilst they were building the church they found in one corner a huge stone, which could not be raised by 300 men, but by the prayer of this righteous man the church was built out of that stone even as the builder wished. Then there assembled there 500 souls and they were chosen monks. And the report of the holy man was heard throughout the country, and the people used to bring unto him the sick folk who were suffering from sicknesses of every kind, and those who were possessed of devils, and they were all healed of their diseases through his prayer, and the men of Persia and Rome were saved through the intercession of this righteous man. And when Satan, who is the enemy of good, saw this righteous man, he was jealous of him, and he went to the daughter of the King of Rome and drove her silly, and she dried out and said, "There is no healing for me except through Melki of Kuelzem." And the king her father hearkened unto her, and sent 400 men from his army out unto all directions so that they might bring Abba Melki with care to him, and he took an oath that if they did not do so he would cut off their heads with the sword. And the soldiers who had been sent out found the holy man with difficulty, and they bowed down at his feet, and they told him the king's message, and about the illness of his daughter, [and said,] "Tell us what thou sayest." And Abba Melki said unto him, "I am an old man, and I cannot travel to Rome." And the soldiers said unto him, "If thou wilt not go with us the king hath promised to put us to death." When the holy man heard this he was very sorry, and he said unto them, "O my children, go ye your way, I and you will meet at the gates of Rome"; and when they heard his words they departed. And at the end of the year, on the day when he knew through the Holy Spirit that they would arrive in Rome, he prayed a prayer to God, and the Holy Spirit lifted him up and bore him to the gates of Rome. And when the envoys found the holy man there they rejoiced greatly and they told the king of his arrival; and the king rejoiced greatly and went out and received him and brought him into his palace and seated him upon his throne, and told him concerning his daughter's sickness. And Abba Melki ordered that she be brought, and when they had brought her, the devil hurled her down and rent her until they thought that she was dead. And straightway Abba Melki rose up and prayed a long time, and he sprinkled water over her face and anointed her with oil, and he commanded Satan in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ to go forth from her. And Satan went forth from her in the form of a black man, and the holy men seized him, and shut him up in the house, and marked him with the sign of the Cross so that he should not go out. And when the king saw this, he bowed down at Abba Melki's feet, and he brought to him many possessions for the needs of his monastery, and the holy man refused them. And the king said unto him, "O my father, dwell here and I will build thee a monastery"; and the holy man said, "I cannot forsake my children." And the holy man dwelt in Rome for a few days, and healed their demoniacs. And when he went out to return to his city, the king rose up and set him on his way with [an escort of] soldiers, and he came to the gates of the palace. And the holy man saw a great mass of stone, which had been hollowed out and had been placed at the mouth of a fountain of running water, and a stone bowl so that horses might drink out of it. And he said unto the king, "Give me these stones for the use of my monastery." And the king said unto him, "Who will carry for thee the stones which twelve men could not lift and carry them outside the city. If however, thou hast the strength [to carry them] do thou what thou pleasest." Then the holy man brought the Satan

forth from the place wherein he had bound him, and he suspended the hollow stone from his neck, and he bound the bowl on the top of his head, and he ordered him to go before him. When the king saw this he marveled exceedingly, and he turned and glorified God. And Saint Abba Melki made the Satan to come into his monastery carrying these stones, and he ordered him to set them down at the gates, and they are there to this day. And he shut up the Satan in a cave and sealed him with the sign of the Cross so that he should not go forth again and tempt men. And when this holy man had been a monk for forty and five years, a voice came unto him from heaven saying, "Behold the day of thy death hath drawn nigh, and there remains unto thee three days only before thou shalt enter into everlasting joy." Then the holy man summoned his children and he commanded them to serve God and to keep themselves away from the error of Satan. After three days there came unto him the fathers of the monks, Abba Antony, and Abba Macarius, and Abba Sinoda, and Abba Besya, and Abba Pachomius, and they said unto him, "Come, O our brother, and rejoice with us in the kingdom of the heavens." And when they had said this unto him, his soul went forth from his body and the angels took it up into glory singing as they went, and they said, "He hath toiled in the world and he shall live for ever"; and they brought him into the Garden of Delight. And the archbishops, and the bishops and the priests assembled and they buried him in the church, and innumerable signs and wonders took place at his grave.

And on this day is celebrated the festival of Raguel, the angel, one of the nine archangels, who informed Enoch concerning the fire which burneth, and the destruction of the world; and he is the angel of lights. May the intercession of this angel be with us all.

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