

[Back to
list](#)

THE TWELVETH MONTH
Nehasse 28
(September 03)

[Next](#)

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

[Previous](#)

On this day we have received as an inheritance from the early fathers and doctors of the Church, who were strong in the grace of the Holy Spirit, an order to celebrate the festival of our holy fathers, the patriarchs, our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As concerning our father Abraham, the head of the fathers, who among the children of men hath the ability to describe the virtues and righteousness of this man, who became the father of many nations? He believed on God, blessed be His Name! and was obedient unto Him. And he had confidence in the promise of God until he died, and he never doubted in the smallest degree any of the promises of God. At the beginning the angel of God appeared unto him in a vision by night when he was on the island, and said unto him, "Get thee out from thy city, and from thy father's house, and come unto the land which I will show thee, that is to say the land of Karan (Harran), that thou mayest dwell therein"; and he came to the land of Karan (Harran), which country God showed him. And when his parents died God removed him again to the land of Palestine, and He promised him that he should inherit it; and he had confidence in God's promise until he died, and his heart remained unshaken and free from doubt. Moreover, he knew, and believed, that God would give that land to his seed after him. And after that God appeared unto him at midday in the form of a man, as he thought, and with Him were two angels, and Abraham thought they were like unto all the other men who used to pass along the road every day. And he made a meal for them, and God gave him the promise concerning Isaac his son, one year before he got him. Now, at that time the days of Abraham were one hundred years, and his wife Sarah was far advanced in her days. And Abraham believed God, and doubted not, and when he got Isaac, God commanded him to circumcise him on the eighth day, on which day he circumcised his son. And having believed, according to his confidence, there came to him the seed which God promised him. And God said unto him, "Offer up as a sacrifice to Me thy son Isaac, on the mountain which I will show thee, and that place was Golgotha, where the body of our father Adam was buried," and he neither doubted nor hesitated at the word of God. And he took Isaac and laid him on the altar, and he knew that God was able to take Isaac away, and yet that Isaac should be to him a seed. And having completed the sacrifice of Isaac in his mind, though not in deed, God showed Abraham's righteousness and virtues to all succeeding generations. And then the angel of God called to him, and told him not to stretch out his hands over the young man, and do him no harm whatsoever. And God said unto him, "Behold, it is manifest that thou lovest Me, for thou hast not spared thy beloved son for My sake. Therefore I will bless thee with blessing, and I will multiply thee in great number, and I will make thy seed like the stars of heaven, and like the sand of the sea-shore." And it was even so, and God revealed Abraham's work from that time and for ever, and the report of him and his name were heard in all the ends of the earth. And it is evident why he was called the "Father of Christ" in the flesh, for He appeared from his seed ... And the spiritual fighting of this father, and his virtues, and his righteousness, and his mercy, and his gifts, which were many, were very great. He did not eat every day, but only when travelers came to him and sat at his table, and it is evident from this that he sat with God and His angels before he knew Him, though afterwards he knew them. And tribulation and great sorrow came upon him in his days, for he was separated from his father, and from his kinsfolk, and he was a wonderer on the earth. And when he arrived in the land of Egypt, he was afraid of the infidels in the days of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. And when Pharaoh, King of Egypt, heard the report of Sarah, he called Abraham and asked him, saying, "Who is this woman who is with thee?" And Abraham said, "She is my sister," and Pharaoh took her from him. And that night a terrifying angel appeared unto Pharaoh, and wanted to kill him, and he commanded Pharaoh to send back Sarah to her husband, and said that if he would not do so he would destroy him. And when the morning was come Pharaoh called Abraham and said unto him, "Why didst thou say unto me 'This woman is my sister.' She is thy wife"; and he gave her back to him,

with gifts, and much money, and Hagar her handmaiden also. And when Abraham arrived at the age of one hundred and forty-five years, he departed to God, Whom he loved, and he inherited the Garden of Delight and everlasting life. And he left a memorial for good behind him unto the end of the world. Salutation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And on this day also our fathers and doctors of the Church have commanded us to celebrate the festival of the departure of Abba Isaac, the son of Abraham, the patriarch. This righteous man was produced through the proclamation of God and His angels, by Abraham his father, and Sarah his mother. And he finished his fight, and the work of righteousness, and he was subject to God, the Most High, and to his father Abraham, and it pleased his father to offer him up as a sacrifice to God, but God redeemed him by a goat. We know not whether we are to wonder more at the willingness of his father Abraham to slay him, the child of promise, whom God gave him by Sarah when he was far advanced in years (now God said unto Abraham, "There shall be unto thee seed," and yet he spared not Isaac, through natural affection, because of his love for God, the Most High), or whether we are to wonder (and we know not which is more wonderful) at the subjection of this father Isaac, and his consenting to his father Abraham, even to his slaying him and burning him in the fire. Now Isaac was a child, for the Book of the Law saith that his father made him carry the wood to a place afar off, to the top of a mountain, but the Book of the Chronicle of Days saith that at that time the days of Isaac were seven and thirty years. And this father Isaac submitted to his father Abraham, and he stretched out his neck to the slaughtering knife, and the voice of the angel of God came and said unto him, "Stretch not out thy hand upon him, and do nothing evil to him." And as his father Abraham was called the "Sacrificer" of his son in his mind, even so was this father Isaac called the "Sacrifice" in his mind. And great tribulation and much sorrow came upon him in his days, and he was a stranger to his country. And Abimelech took his wife from him, and when God was wroth with him because of it, he gave her back to him, together with much money and gifts. And this father was exceedingly simple in disposition, for the Book of the Law saith that when the shepherds quarreled together about a well of water, this father left them, and went and dug other wells. And he begot two sons, Esau and Jacob, and he loved Esau because of his strength and might. And when he was far advanced in days, and his eyes were feeble, he called his son Esau and said unto him, "I have become old, O my son, go and hunt the wild animals of the desert, so that I may eat, and my soul shall bless thee." And Esau took his weapons, and went out into the desert. And Rebecca called Jacob and said unto him, "O my son, rise up and kill one of thy goats quickly and take it to thy father so that he may eat and bless thee before he dieth." And Jacob said unto her, "I am afraid lest he shall know that I am Jacob, and lest he be angry with me, for though I want to receive [his] blessing, a curse may come upon me instead of a blessing." And she answered and said unto him, "Let thy curse be upon me, O my son." And this took place through her by the command of God. And Jacob did as his mother commanded him, and he offered [food] to his father, and he ate and blessed him. And this father Abba Isaac arrived at the age of one hundred and eighty years, and he died in peace, and was buried in the grave of his father Abraham, which he bought from the sons of 'Emor and in which Sarah was buried. Salutation to Isaac.

And on this day also our fathers, the doctors of the Church, have commanded us to celebrate the festival of the departure of Jacob the patriarch whom God called "Israel." This [righteous man] followed the examples of his fathers Abraham and Isaac in [the practice of] mercy, and in giving alms, and in sincerity and humility. And his brother Esau hated him because he forestalled him, and bought from him his rights as the firstborn with a meal of lentils; now Esau was the firstborn, and Jacob acted craftily towards him, and received the blessing from his father Isaac. And when Esau threatened to kill Jacob, his father Isaac advised him to go to the father of his mother's brother, and he went there, and he was betrothed to the daughter of his mother's brother, and he tended his flocks for seven years, and he married her. And then he was betrothed to the second daughter of his mother's brother, and he served him for seven years, and also married her. And his mother's brother gave him a portion of his flocks, and it came to pass that when he said unto Jacob, "Let thy wages be the sheep which are all of one color," the ewes brought forth only lambs which were all one color. And when he said to Jacob, "Let thy wages be

the sheep which are spotted all over; thus his wages were doubled, and he had many possessions. And he returned to the land of his father, and he begot twelve sons. And he saw the vision of a ladder on the earth which reached to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And when he woke up he said, "This is the house of God, and the door of heaven"; and that place became the Sanctuary in the city of Jerusalem wherein was to be buried the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. And then he saw a second vision, and it seemed as if God were contending with him, and He caused his hip to be benumbed and He called him "Israel"; and because of this the Jews do not eat the muscles of the hip. And in his days came great tribulation and much sorrow. First of all [his sons] sold his son Joseph as a slave to the Egyptians. And their father asked them, saying, "Where is your brother Joseph?" And they said unto him, "The wild beasts have devoured him"; and because of his excessive weeping Jacob's eyes became blind. And after this there came a great famine in those days, and they found nothing to eat, and at length Jacob sent his sons into the land of Egypt to buy grain. And they came to Joseph their brother, who had become steward to the King of Egypt, and he knew that they were his brothers, but they did not know that he was their brother Joseph. And Joseph made a pretence to them, and said unto them, "Depart and invite your father Jacob to come hither," and they invited Jacob, and he came to the land of Egypt and dwelt there for seventeen years. And when the time of his death had drawn nigh, he called his twelve sons, and blessed them, and he gave Judah sovereignty and made it known that Christ should appear from him, and he blessed him with many words, saying, "The scepter of sovereignty shall not come to an end in Judah, and the rule shall not depart from before his hand until He, to Whom sovereignty belongeth, shall come, Him for Whom the nations wait." And after he had blessed him, Joseph brought to him his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, so that he might bless them, and he made the sign over their heads, and he laid his right hand upon the head of the younger, and his left hand on the head of the elder, and he made his hand [to take] the form of the Cross, indicating that the firstborn should be abased at the appearance of the Cross. And he reached the age of one hundred and forty-six years, and he died with the hands of Joseph resting on his eyes. And Jacob commanded him to bury him in the grave of his fathers, and Joseph mourned for him with a great mourning, and the Egyptians with him. And then he carried him on the chariots of Pharaoh, and with him were the great nobles of the chariots of Pharaoh, and with him were the great nobles of the Egyptians, and they brought him to the land of Canaan and buried him with his fathers. Salutation to Jacob.

And on this day Abba Barsebu (Barsoba), and ten monks who were his disciples, and the captain of the royal horses, became martyrs by the hand of the King of Persia, and eight hundred companions of Isidore. Salutation to Abba Barsebu.

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