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THE FIFTH MONTH

TIR 01

(January 09)

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

On this day Stephen, the Apostle, Archdeacon and Protomartyr, became a martyr. This holy man, as the Book of the Acts of the Apostles testifieth, was full of grace, and of the Holy Spirit, and of power, and he used to perform signs and miracles among the people. And the Jews were envious of him, and they seized him and brought him into their synagogue, and they said, "We found him blaspheming God and Moses, and saying that Jesus shall change the Law of Moses, and shall overthrow this holy place." And those who were sitting round in the Sanhedrin looked at the face of the blessed Stephen, and saw that it was like unto the face of an angel of God. And they said unto him, "Is this thing true which is said concerning thee?" And the saint answered and said unto them in a loud voice, "Hear ye, O our fathers and brethren. The God of praise appeared unto our father Abraham in the country between the rivers (Mesopotamia), before he had left Harran, and He said unto him, Get thee out from thy country and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I will show thee; and he went forth from Harran as God commanded." And again God commanded him to speak, and then Stephen talked to them about the birth of Isaac, and concerning Jacob and his sons, how they sold Joseph, and how Joseph knew his brethren when he was chief. And Saint Stephen talked with them until [he came to] the building of the sanctuary. And then he lifted up his voice and said unto them, "O ye stiff-necked men, ye dense of heart, at all time do ye resist the Holy Spirit, even as did your fathers who persecuted the prophets who prophesied, and who preached concerning Christ, Whom ye killed, and Who hath risen from the dead." And when they heard this they gnashed their teeth upon him. And Saint Stephen being full of faith, and of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven, and he saw the glory of god, and Jesus Christ at the right hand of God His Father, and he said unto them, "Behold, I see heaven open, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God His Father." And when they heard [this] they shut their ears, and took him that they might stone him with stones, and they deposited their apparel with Saul, that is to say Paul. And they took Stephen outside the city, and stoned him, and he prayed to God on their behalf, and he knelt down on his knees and said, "Receive my soul unto Thyself, O God." And he said, "Let not this sin be reckoned unto them"; and he was like unto his Lord. And when he had said this he died, and certain believing men came and carried away the body of the saint, and they lamented for him with a great lamentation, and buried him. Salutation to Stephen.

And on this day also Saint Lavendus (Leontius) became a martyr. This saint lived in the days of the Emperor Maximianus, the infidel, in the country of Syria. When the Emperor heard about him, and knew that he was a fighter of the spiritual fight, and that he worshipped God, he sent and had him brought before him. And he offered him very much money, and tried to persuade him to forsake the worship of God, and to serve his idols. And Saint Lavendus (Leontius) laughed at him and spurned his gifts, and his money, and his honors, and despised his punishments, and cursed his unclean gods. And straightway the Emperor was wroth exceedingly, and he commanded his soldiers to hang him up on the wheel, and to torture him severely; and they did to him as the emperor commanded, but God brought him out sound and uninjured. Then the emperor commanded them to beat him with clubs, and to boil oil and fat in a large cauldron, and to cast the saint into it; and they did this to him. And the saint endured all these tortures, for our Lord Christ make him strong, and enabled him to endure, and He raised him up whole and uninjured. When the emperor was tired of torturing him, he commanded them to cut off his head with the sword, and thus he received a crown of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens. And many signs and wonders were made manifest through his body, and the fame of him was heard throughout Syria; and they built churches and monasteries in his honor. In one

of his monasteries Saint Severus, Archbishop of the city of Antioch, was baptized when he was a child. Salutation to Lavendius (Leontius).

And on this day also died Saint Macarius, the sixty-first Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. When Abba Michael, the Archbishop, his predecessor, died, the bishops, and chief priests, and elders of Egypt, gathered together, and they all went up to the desert of Scete, and they took up their abode in the monastery of Saint Abba Macarius, and they enquired carefully of the desert monks, and the righteous men who dwelt in cells and caves, and asked them who was fit for the honorable office of archbishop; and one of the righteous men told them about this saint. And the priest Macarius, who dwelt in the monastery of Saint Abba Macarius, said, "He is better than all others for this office"; and they searched for him, and seized him against his will, and as they bound him, he cried out "I am a sinner and am not fit for this work"; but they did not hearken to his words, and they made him archbishop against his will. And he appointed bishops and priests in every district of Egypt, and he restored many churches, and in his days all Christians lived in peace and safety, for twenty-seven years and thirty-one days, and he was well pleasing to God, and died in peace. Salutation to Macarius.

And on this day the saints of Akmim became martyrs, and their history is as follows: There was a certain man of the men of Akmim who was a judge, and he was rich in gold and silver, and his name was El-Sidmalyos, and he begot two sons whose names were Dioscurus and Saklabius (Aesculapius), and they were reared in the fear of God, with fasting and prayer. And when their father died they wished to adopt the monastic life; and the angel of God appeared unto them and [commanded] them to go to the monastery of Abba Moses, the desert monk; and having gone to him they put on the garb of the monk, and they fought the spiritual fight strenuously, and performed signs and wonders. And after a few [days] Dioscurus was made a deacon [and] priest, and Saklabius a deacon, and then it happened that Diocletian denied the God of heaven, and commanded Arianus, the governor of Ensena (Esneh) to slay [all] the Christians who would not sacrifice to his gods. And Arianus arrived in Akmim and he seized Peter, the bishop, Abba Bunudyas, and he bound him, and came into his city. And Michael, the angel of God, appeared unto Dioscurus and Saklabius, and told them that they were to receive the crown of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens, and on the twenty-eighth day of the month of Tahsas they and twenty-four monks went to Arianus. And when they arrived in the city of 'Akmim they found the Christians, together with their wives and children, in the church of Christ our Redeemer, ready to celebrate the festival of the Glorious Birth and to die for His Name; and Abba Benudyas (sic) the bishop came with them. And on the following morning Abba Benudyas read the Liturgy, and when he came to the passage wherein is said "Holy," the angels cried out, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory." And the saints saw our Redeemer sitting upon the Tabot (tabernacle) and the angels standing round Him raising the Offering, and He placed the Offering in the hand of the priest that he might present it to those assembled there. When Arianus heard [this] he was filled with great wrath, and he came into the church, and seized the two elders of the city whose names were Behwafa and Wenin, and cut off their heads with the sword. And after that he killed the deacons, and the sub deacons, and the singers, and the steward of the church, and he left neither woman nor child alive; and at length their blood ran out of the door of the church, and flowed down the road for a distance of twenty cubits. Then [the officer] took Abba Bunudyas (sic) the bishop, and Dioscurus and Saklabius, and the brethren who were with them, and carried them before Arianus, who persuaded them to worship idols. And when they refused to do so, he commanded soldiers to beat Dioscurus and Saklabius until their bones were shattered, [and they did so], but the angel of God appeared unto the saints, and healed them. And Karyon and Philemon, the chief officers of the guard of Arianus, and the forty soldiers who were with them, saw this miracle, and they believed on Jesus Christ. And the governor commanded his soldiers to cast them into a red-hot oven, and they finished their martyrdom on the thirtieth day of the month of Tahsas. And several of those who were gathered together there cast themselves into the oven, without any man compelling them to do so, and they finished their martyrdom. And on the first day of the month Ter, whilst

Dioscurus and Saklabius were shut up in prison, Michael the Archangel appeared unto them and made them strong to finish their martyrdom. And on the following day Arianus held converse with them concerning their worshipping idols, and when they refused to do so, he commanded the soldiers to gouge out the eyes of Dioscurus, and the saint took up his eyes and put them back in their sockets, and they were as they had been before [they were gouged out]. And Lucius, an officer, and his company of soldiers believed in Christ, and the governor cast them into a pit, and they completed their martyrdom. And then Arianus commanded the soldiers to kill the saints, and whilst they were praying the Lord Jesus Christ appeared unto them and gave them the covenant that whosoever invoked their names, and commemorated them, and wrote a history of their strife should be numbered with the company of the righteous. Then the soldiers came and cut off the head of Saint Dioscurus with the sword, and Saklabius they cut in halves, and the four and twenty monks they split in twain, from their heads to their feet, and they were crowned on the first day of the month Ter. And Samuel, who was a kinsman of theirs, swathed their bodies for burial, and he buried them in the church, which was consecrated in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. And the number of the martyrs who were slain is eight thousand one hundred and forty. Salutation to Dioscurus and Saklabius.

And on this day also became martyrs, excepting those who died the day before, whom Diocletian killed, sixty priests, one hundred and thirty deacons, fifty-three singers, eighty stewards (i.e. vergers) of churches, forty-two judges, one hundred and fifty sub deacons, eight thousand four hundred and ninety members of the laity, and their elders Ledianus (Lydianus), and Tadres (Theodore), and Paul.

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