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THE FOURTH MONTH
TAHISAS 12
(December 21)

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

On this day is celebrated the festival of the glorious angel, Michael the Archangel. On this day God sent him to the city of Babylon, and he was the fourth person with the Three Children, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, in the fiery furnace, when Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, threw them into it. And the flames rose up to a height of nine and forty cubits and consumed those who attended to the fire. And Michael beat out the fire with his staff, and extinguished it round about the Three Children and delivered them, and [the fire] did not touch them. And he made the inside of the furnace to be as cool as the dew at the dawn of day, and in it they praised God, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers! Praised and exalted is He for ever." And Michael prophesied seven times that after seven hundred years Christ should be born; and after this the Three Children praised God, saying, "Let every servant of God praise God." And he prophesied seven and thirty times that Christ should live upon the earth three and thirty years, and for this reason our Fathers the Apostles ordained that people should celebrate the festival of Michael the Archangel. Salutation to Michael.

And on this day also died Abba Samuel of Waldebba. Then name of the father of this holy man was Stephen, and the name of his mother was 'Ammata Maryam; they were people of good family and they took this holy man to the country of 'Aksum, and when he grew up they taught him the Books of the Church. Then when his father and mother died he went to Dabra Bankol, to Abba Madhanina Egzi'e, and he put on the garb of the monastic life, and he dwelt there and fought the fight with fasting and with prayer. He ate nothing except withered and decayed herbs, and his drink was water, and he became the servant of the monks, in the grinding of corn, and the drawing of water. And as he found it irksome when his kinfolk came to visit him, he departed to another place. And he devoted himself to fasting, and to standing up, and to prostrating himself so strenuously that at length he crushed his feet (i.e. became flat-footed). Thence he departed to the desert, and he ate no food whatsoever for forty days and forty nights. And the lions, and the leopards, and all kinds of terrifying wild beasts came to him, and bowed down before him, and licked the dust at his feet. One day as he was going along the road he arrived at a valley (or river), which was full of water. Now he had with him a book and some fire, and making a prayer he entered the water, and although it engulfed him and the current dragged him down, yet by the power of God having forced himself across to the opposite bank, he found that the fire was not extinguished, and the book uninjured. And Satan used to try him with phantoms of every kind of wild beast, but he was not frightened because his mind was bound up with confidence in his God. And as Abba Samuel was praying our Lord Jesus Christ came to him, and sealed his whole body and each limb thereof with His spittle, and he became filled with power. And from that day he bound his feet with fetters, and wore sackcloth. And he thrust all his limbs into water, and he recited the Psalms of David five times [each day], and he scourged his back with strips innumerable. And the lions used to peer into his cave like sheep, and of some he used to stroke their bodies, and of others he used to dress their wounds, and pluck out the thorns from [their paws]. And then many disciples attached themselves to him, and of these the first was Abba Zarufael. One day Abba Samuel met Abba Gabra Maskal, of Dabra Laggaso, (now they had never seen each other before,) and they passed the day in describing the great works of God. And at the time for supper, when they were making their prayers, a table came down to them from heaven, and they ate and gave thanks to God. Then one day he met a certain monk from the desert, and when they began to talk about the Mysteries which God had made for them, Abuna Samuel said, "Behold, for twelve years I have been standing in the heights and censing the throne of God with the Four and Twenty Priests of Heaven." And when

he went in and was consecrating the Offering, there came down to him bread and a chalice from heaven; and when he was reading the Praises of our Lady Maryam, he was lifted up off the ground to the height of a cubit, and our Holy Lady, the Virgin Maryam, came and gave him a precious stone which shot out light from it, and some pure incense. And when the time of his departure drew nigh Michael the Archangel came unto him, and he caught him up on his wings and showed him all the delights of the heavenly Jerusalem. And he brought him before the throne of God, and Abba Samuel received from him the promise concerning the man who should invoke his name or celebrate his commemoration. And when he returned to his bed he told his disciples everything, which he had seen, and then he died in peace. Salutation to Abba Samuel.

Salutation to the gathering together in one place of the Sixty Bishops who were against Benates (or Betnas).

And on this day also are commemorated Abba Khadre (Hydra) of Dabra ‘Aswan, and Saint John the Confessor. Salutation to Khadre.

And on this day also took place the assembling of the General Council of the Holy Bishops, and priests, and deacons in the city of Rome in the first year of the reign of Decius, the infidel, when Cornelius held the office of Archbishop of the city of Rome, and Dionysius was Archbishop of Alexandria, and Bandeyos (Flavianus) was Archbishop of Antioch, and Germanus was Archbishop of Jerusalem. And this Council was assembled because of Benates (or Betnas, Novatus), a priest of Sehet (Scete) who said, “He Who denies Christ in the time of persecution shall not be accepted when he repents; and he who hath fallen into fornication shall not be accepted when he repents.” And Cornelius rebuked him for this, once, and a second time, and a third time, but he would not accept the rebuke. And there gathered together against him sixty bishops, and eighteen learned priests, and scribes, and forty learned deacons of the city of Rome, and they disputed with Benates (Novatus?) concerning this matter. And the pretext which he put forward for his views were the words of Paul the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews (vi, 4-6), “If they have received the light, and have tasted heavenly grace, and have received the grace of the Holy Spirit, and if they have fallen into sin they cannot be renewed by repentance a second time.” And the Fathers replied to him, and explained the matter to him, saying, “Paul the Apostle doth not say this concerning the man who repented, but concerning the man who is baptized with Christian baptism each time he falls into sin. And concerning such a man the apostle goes on to say, ‘Shall their head, the Son of God, be crucified a second time, and put to shame by them?’ The apostle makes known that the Cross could only be [found] once, but that repentance can be found at all times. And if a man hath fallen through denying Christ, or through sin, is he not to be accepted through repentance? --As thou sayest, was not the repentance of David accepted? And was not the repentance of Peter, who denied our Lord Jesus Christ, accepted? And did not God give him the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete? And did He not set him over His rational flock? And shall everyone who hath been baptized by his hand be not baptized again, but, according to what thou sayest, perish? This is great folly. Our Lord Jesus Christ hath placed repentance so that it may be found by everyone who hath denied the Faith, or who hath fallen into sin. Depart from this unclean opinion, O Benates (Novatus?), and repent of it, and be not the enemy of God and of thyself, and the enemy of all mankind.” But he would not turn from his evil opinion, and he would not accept the words of the whole Council of holy Bishops; and the bishops anathematized and excommunicated all those who believed in his words.

Salutation to Anicetus and his company who finished their martyrdom by fire.

And on this day also Saint Anicetus became a martyr in the days of Diocletian, the infidel emperor. When this martyr Anicetus saw the tortures, which the emperor inflicted on the believers in order to terrify them, he rose up from among them with a bold heart, and reviled the emperor. When the emperor heard him, he commanded his soldiers to bind him with fetters, and to keep him under guard in the theatre, and to let loose a fierce lion

upon him; and when the lion came up to him he stretched out his right hand, and the lion licked the face and cheeks of Saint Anicetus. When Diocletian saw this he commanded them to cut off his head with the sword, but when the executioner had drawn his sword, he trembled and was unable to wield it. And they threw Anicetus on to the wheel under which was spread out a layer of red-hot coals, and they placed him under the wheel so that his soul might be broken quickly; but God delivered him from these tortures uninjured. And then they threw him into a cauldron in which lead was boiling, and whilst the people were looking on, the angel of the Lord came and plucked him out of the cauldron, and set him before Diocletian. And when Photinus saw this miracle, he rose up naked and embraced his brother Anicetus, and he cursed the tyrant, saying, "O disgraceful one, how wilt thou conquer my brother?" When Diocletian heard this he commanded his soldiers to put collars of iron on their necks, and fetters on their feet and to carry them off to the prison house. Then he commanded them to bring them out and to scrape their bodies with iron combs until their flesh was torn into strips. And he also commanded them to take them into the theatre and stone them with stones, but the saints remained uninjured, and they also beat their sides and backs with whips, and threw salt on their wounds; and they also cast them into the furnace of the baths which had been heated for three days, but it was to them like unto cool dew, and when they opened the bath chamber they found them in converse concerning the great things of God. When the tyrant saw this he was exceedingly wroth, and he commanded them to heat a furnace until the flames came out of the top of it, and therein they cast the righteous martyrs. And standing up in the furnace they prayed for a long time, and they made the sign of the Cross over their faces in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, One God, and they delivered up their souls into the hand of God. And their bodies lay upon the burning coals from the second until the seventh (or sixth) hour of the day, but they were unharmed, and the hair of their heads was not singed. When it was night certain believing men took the bodies and swathed them for burial in a manner befitting their honorable rank, and they buried them in a beautiful tomb, and signs and wonders appeared through them. Salutation to Anicetus and Photinus.

And on this day also are commemorated 'Eusis (Ausic) the martyr, and Abba Antonius, and John the Confessor and teacher from Rome.

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