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THE TENTH MONTH

Senne 12

(June 19)

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

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On this day is celebrated the commemoration of the glorious angel Michael the Archangel. Now the reason for the celebration of the festival is as follows: There was in the city of Alexandria a great temple which Queen Cleopatra, the daughter of Ptolemy, King of Egypt, had built in the name of the star Zuhel (Venus), and they celebrated a festival in its honor on the twelfth day of the month of Sane. And there was in that temple a great brass idol which was exceedingly awesome, and its name was Zuhel (Venus), and they used to offer up many sacrifices to it on the day of the festival; and they continued to celebrate the festival of that idol until the days of the archiepiscopate of Archbishop Alexander, that is to say for three hundred years and more. When Abba Alexander was appointed Archbishop of Alexandria, the righteous Emperor Constantine was reigning, and the True Christian Faith spread abroad. And Abba Alexander wanted to smash that idol, but some worthless men of the city prevented him, and they said unto him, "We are in the habit of celebrating a festival in honor of this idol. And behold, fifteen archbishops have preceded thee [here], and they did not alter our custom." And Abba Alexander rebuked them severely, and he explained the matter to them, and said, "This idol can do neither evil nor good, but those who celebrate the festivals of idols worship Satans." And Abba Alexander also said unto them, "If ye will hearken unto my advice, let me arrange for you this festival as it ought to have been in olden times, that is to say, let us smash this idol, and [re]consecrate the temple, and turn it into a church in the name of the glorious angel Michael, the Archangel, and we will arrange this festival in his honor. And let the altar be [re-dedicated] to God Most High, and let the poor, and the needy, and the wretched, eat the oxen and sheep which the priests slay, and the glorious angel Michael shall intercede on your behalf with our Lord Jesus Christ." And this good counsel pleased them, and they yielded to his wishes, and they made the temple a church in the name of the glorious angel Michael the Archangel. And that temple became known as the "Church of Caesarea," and it continued to stand until the Muslims reigned in Egypt, and then they destroyed it. And this festival was established by order, and all the people of the districts [in Egypt] celebrated it in honor of the glorious angel Michael the Archangel to his grade, above all the angels, and to his greatness, and the archangel performed many miracles among which is the following: There was a certain man who feared God, and who used to celebrate the commemoration of the glorious angel Michael on the twelfth day of each month, and especially during the months of Hedar and Sane. And there was among his neighbors a rich man who was without mercy, and he used to hate that God-fearing man when he celebrated the festival of the glorious angel, and to laugh at him. When the days of the God-fearing man had come to an end, and the time of his death, when he would rest from the labor of this fleeting world, drew nigh, he commanded his wife to be merciful, and to celebrate the commemoration of that glorious angel Michael, and especially the festivals which fell on the twelfth day of Hedar and on the twelfth day of Sane. Now at the time of the death of the God-fearing man, his wife was with child. And after the man died his wife buried him. And at that time the woman was near her time to bring forth, and the pains of childbirth seized her, and she was in very great tribulation, and she said, "O Michael, angel of God, have compassion upon me, and entreat God on my behalf so that He may deliver me from the tribulation in which I am, and which hath come upon me this day; for with thee there is great grace with God." And when she had said these words, the house wherein she was became full of light, and forthwith she was relieved of her pains, and she brought forth a child whose appearance was godly. And the angel of God, the glorious Michael, came down from heaven, and he blessed the child, and said, "Thus saith God: This child shall inherit the goods of the rich man who hath no mercy, and all his possessions and all his lands." At that moment the rich man was looking out from the window of his house upon the house of the woman, and he heard the voice of Michael, the angel of God, saying, "This child shall inherit the money of the rich man." Then great

sorrow came upon him, and he sought for a pretext for killing the child, but God protected him through the intercession of the glorious angel Michael. And when the days of the child were ten years, his mother's money came to an end, and the rich man, with small mercy in him, found his opportunity against the woman. And he said unto her, "Give me thy son, and let him minister unto me, and I will feed him and clothe him, and will give thee twenty dinars in gold." When the woman heard these words from the rich man she rejoiced on account of her poverty, and the rich man gave her twenty dinars in gold, and she gave him her son; and having taken him the rich man rejoiced with a great joy, and he said in his heart, "Behold what I have desired is fulfilled for me." Then he made a wooden box as long as the boy was tall, and he forced the boy into the box, and fastened the cover over him, and he carried the box to the river, and cast it into the water, and he also cast the key of the box into the river. And by the Will of God the box floated on the surface of the river until it came to the quay of a certain city, which was not far from the river. And there was a certain shepherd who was watching and tending his flocks near the river, and when he saw the box in the river, he dragged it out, and carried it into his house, and he was thinking by what means he would open the box. And as he was thinking about this matter, God put the thought into his heart that he should go to the river, and straightway he went and found a man catching fish. And the shepherd said unto him, "Cast [thy] net into the river in my name, and I will give thee the price of the fish which shall be caught"; and the fisherman did as the shepherd told him. And a great fish came out from the net, and the shepherd gave him the price thereof; and taking it he went to his house, and he killed the fish to broil it, that he and his household might eat. And having slit open the belly of the fish he found a key inside it, and he said within himself, "Perhaps this is the key of the box." And having inserted the key into the keyhole of the box, the box opened quickly, and the shepherd marveled for he found inside it the boy whom the rich man wanted to kill. When he saw [the boy] he rejoiced in him with a great joy, and he called him "Bahran" because he found him in the river; and the boy became to him as his son. Now the distance of the city wherein the boy was born, from that wherein the shepherd lived, was a journey of ten days. And after many days the rich man in whom there was no mercy wished to go and sojourn with the shepherd, and when the sun was about to set he said unto the shepherd, "Peradventure thou hast a place wherein we can lodge until to-morrow; if thou hast I will pay thee thy charge." And the shepherd brought the rich man into his house, and he called the young man by his name of "Bahran." When the rich man heard this name he asked the shepherd, saying, "Is this thy son?" And the shepherd said unto him, "Yea, I found this young man when he was a little boy in a box in the river, and I took him and reared him as my son." When the rich man, in whom there was no mercy, heard this he was very sorry in his heart, and he knew that the young man was the boy whom he had thrown into the river to kill him. And on the morrow the rich man wished to depart, and he devised a device of Satan and said unto the shepherd, "I want thee to give me this thy son so that I may send him with a message to my house in the city which is called So-and-so, because I have forgotten something which is in my house; and the payment of twenty dinars of gold which I should give to him I will give to thee." And the shepherd rejoiced because of the gold, and he called the young man and said unto him, "O my son Bahran, come that this honorable man may send thee to his house on some business concerning his house, and return to my house in peace"; and the young man said unto him, "Willingly, O my father, whatsoever thou commandest me I will do." Then straightway the rich man wrote a letter to his steward, saying, "When thou hast read this letter kill the bearer of it, whose name is 'Bahran,' and cast his body into a pit. Let no one know about this until I come in peace"; and he wrote on the letter a certain sign which they had agreed upon, and which none but they two knew. And he sealed the letter and gave it to Bahran, and he gave him what money was needful for the journey, and the young man departed. And as he was journeying along the road, he was about half-way between the two cities, behold one day the angel of God, Michael, the Archangel, came to him, riding upon a horse in the form of a soldier of the emperor; and he said unto Bahran, "What hast thou with thee?" And he said unto him, "I have with me a letter from a rich man who hath sent me to his house in such and such a city." And the angel of God, the glorious Michael, said unto him, "Show me the letter," and Bahran being afraid of him gave him the letter. And the angel blew on the paper, and obliterated everything, which was written upon it.

And the glorious angel, Michael, the Archangel, wrote with his own hand on the paper, saying, "Behold, I the rich man So-and-so have sent unto thee the bearer of this letter whose name is Bahran. As soon as ye have read this letter marry my daughter So-and-so to him, I have given him all the goods in my house, and all my lands. Do not wait until I come back, for I shall tarry on my journey. Let him do what he wisheth in my house, for I have given him authority over all my goods and over my house. Here is the sign which is between thee and me, O my steward, So-and-so." And the angel of God, the holy angel Michael, the Archangel, sealed the letter, and gave it to Bahran, and said unto him, "Go to the house of the rich man, and when thou hast arrived at his house give this letter to his steward, and do not tell him that I met thee on the road, and that I have changed [the contents of] this letter." And Bahran said unto him, "Yea, my lord, everything which thou hast commanded me I will do." And Bahran went on until he arrived at that city, and he enquired for the house of the rich man So-and-so, and one brought him to it, and he gave his letter to his steward. And when the steward had read it, and understood the contents thereof, he recognized the [private] mark, and knew that it was authentic. And forthwith they made a great marriage-feast for Bahran and the daughter of the rich man, and they married them in the church, before the sanctuary of God; and they lived in the happiness of marriage for forty days. And towards the end of the marriage-feast the rich man returned to his city, and when he heard the sound of the music and singing, and the rejoicings, he asked, saying, "What is this sound which I hear?" And certain of the men said unto him, "Thy letter came by the hand of a young man called Bahran, and as in it thou didst command that thy daughter should be married to him, they gave her to that young man whose name is Bahran. And behold they have been rejoicing in the marriage-feast forty days and forty nights. And they have given him all thy money, and thy house, and menservants and handmaidens, and all thy possessions, according to what thou didst command in thy letter." And when the rich man heard these words, he cried out at the top of his voice, and fell down and died; and straightway the Satans took his soul into the lowest Hades. And the young man inherited all his money even as God the Most High had commanded. And the young man Bahran celebrated the commemoration of the glorious angel of God, Michael the Archangel, on the twelfth day of each month, and he knew that it was he who had appeared unto him and breathed on the letter and obliterated what was written therein, and had written other matter in its place. And after this he built a beautiful church in the name of the glorious angel Michael, the Archangel, and he painted a picture of him in it in front of the sanctuary, and through this picture many signs and wonders were made manifest, and the sick were healed. And Bahran was appointed priest of that church, and he ministered therein until the day of his death, and his mother and his son inherited everlasting life through the intercession of the glorious and holy angel, Saint Michael, the Archangel. And on the day of the resurrection this glorious angel bowed before the throne of God, and said, "I beg and entreat Thy compassion, O my God, I Thy servant and messenger, to make known to me all those who celebrate my commemoration upon earth, through Thy righteous promise, for Thou art merciful and compassionate." And God answered and said unto him, "O Michael, chief of the faithful hosts of heaven, behold, I command thee to lift up upon thy wing of fire as many [men] as thou art able to carry upon it, three times." And when Saint Michael heard this he rejoiced and was glad, and he lifted up upon his wing three times [as many as he could of] the men who celebrated his commemoration upon earth and made them to pass by the river of fire. And there were thousands of thousands and tens of thousands of tens of thousands, and no one could number them except God Himself. Therefore, O beloved, it is meet that we should strive, and should celebrate the commemoration of the glorious angel Michael, the Archangel, as well as we are able, even if it be only to give a cup of cold water in his name, even as our Lord saith in His Holy Gospel. And let us ask for mercy from God through the intercession of the glorious angel Michael, that He may deliver us from the net of Satan, the accursed, and may put far away from us all pain (or, sickness) and the plague, and may increase the fruits of our lands in performing His mercy, and may forgive us our sins, and may give rest to the souls of our dead, and may bring back in safety those of our fathers and brethren who are on a journey, and may set peace in our midst, and may strengthen us in the True Faith to our last breath. And this glorious angel Saint Michael the Archangel performed many miracles. Salutation to Michael.

And on this day also is commemorated the death and history of Saint Euphemia. This holy woman was the wife of a man who feared God, and he gave much alms, and kept three festivals each month, that is to say, the festival of the glorious Saint Michael, on the twelfth day of each month, and the festival of our holy Lady the Virgin Mary on the twenty-first day of each month, and the festival commemorating the birth of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ on the twenty-ninth day of each month. And when the day of his death drew nigh, he commanded the saint, his wife, never to fail in giving alms as he was wont to do, and especially to keep these three festivals. And she asked her husband to have painted a picture of the glorious angel Saint Michael, the Archangel, in her house, and to give it to her, and he did this for her; and when he died this saint continued to do as her husband had done. And Satan was jealous of her, and he came unto her disguised as a widow who was a nun, and he came to her and held converse with her, saying, "I am sorry for thee and pity thee. And now I advise you to marry, and to bring forth a son before thy money come to an end, and thou fallest into want at the last." And then he said unto her, "Behold, thy husband hath inherited the kingdom of heaven, and he hath no need of alms." And she answered and said unto him, "I have promised God that I will never consort with another man; even the doves and the ravens do not take second mates. How then can men who are created in the form and likeness of God do this?" And when she would not hearken unto his advice, he changed his form, and cried out against her, saying, "I will come to thee another day"; and she took the picture of the glorious Saint Michael, and drove him away therewith. And when the twelfth day of Sane had come, and she was occupied with the celebration of the festival according to her custom, Satan appeared unto her in the form of the glorious Saint Michael, and he said unto her, "Peace be unto thee ! I am Michael, the Archangel, God hath sent me to thee, and He commandeth thee to cease from these alms, and to marry a believing man. Know thou that a woman without a man is like a ship without a rudder"; and he began to bring to her proofs out of the Old Testament, and to show her how Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and David, and others like unto them married wives and pleased God. And the saint answered and said unto him, "If thou art an angel of God, where is the symbol of the Cross on thee? The soldier of a king never goeth to another place without the symbol of the king on him." When Satan heard these words from her, he changed his form, and he began to choke her, and she prayed to the glorious Saint Michael, and he came unto her forthwith and delivered her from him. And he seized Satan and began to punish him, and Satan entreated him, saying, "God will bear with us until the end of the world. Have mercy upon me and do not torture me"; and he gave her the salutation of peace and went up into heaven. And after she had finished the preparations for the feast in the proper manner, she sent to the bishop and the priests, and they came to her, and she gave them all her money to give to the poor, and the needy, and the destitute. And she took the picture of the glorious Saint Michael, and prayed to it, and laid it upon her face and breast, and then she died in peace. Salutation to Euphemia who conquered Mastema (i.e. Satan).

And on this day also died the holy father Justus, the sixth Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. This saint was a learned and honorable man of Alexandria, and Saint Mark, the evangelist, baptized him, and his mother, and many others, with Christian baptism. Then Anianus, the perfect deacon, made him a reader, and on another occasion he made him a priest. And he grew up in the Law of the Church, and he knew all the Scriptures, and he frequently sat with Saint Anianus; and he taught the people, and confirmed them in the True Faith. And when Abba Barmeyu died, they took him, and against his will made him Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. And he protected well the Church in all the land of Egypt, and he ruled them rightly and as was fitting. He sat upon the throne of Mark the evangelist for twelve years, and he died in peace, at a good old age, and pleased his God. Salutation to Justus whom Mark baptized.

And on this day also died the holy father Abba Cyril, the sixty-seventh Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. When the father Abba Gebre Christos, the archbishop who preceded him, died, the bishops and elders of the people agreed together, and went up to the monastery of Saint Abba Macarius, of the desert of Scete, and they passed two months there in seeking to find out who was the most suitable man for this holy position. And there was in the monastery of Saint Abba John Kama a certain righteous man, whose name

was Gebre Christos, who had the power of seeing the future by the Holy Ghost. And the angel of God appeared unto him, and said unto him, "Speak to the bishops and say unto them, 'Trouble not, for behold there is among you in the monastery of Saint Abba Macarius, a man who is fit for this honorable position; and his name is Ga'argi.'" And straightway Saint Gebre Christos told them these words, and they took this father against his will, and made him Archbishop of the city of Alexandria. And the Church shone through him, and all the people of the Church in the country of Egypt rejoiced in that appointment. And he was exceedingly learned, and he appointed bishops, and priests, and deacons, and he restored many churches. During his period of office he appointed a second bishop to the country of Ethiopia, whose name was Sawiros. He was the brother of the Bishop of Ethiopia, and had been brought up in his house there [in Egypt]. And when Abba Sawiros arrived in the country of Ethiopia the people rejoiced greatly in him because of his knowledge and his righteousness; and he converted very many from their evil deeds to repentance and the fear of God. And the king of Ethiopia had many wives, and his nobles also, and through the teaching of the bishop they all gave up their companies of wives and each man lived with one wife only. And when he had been in office for eleven years and three and a half months, after partaking of the Holy Mysteries, he died in peace. And they carried his body to the monastery of Abba Macarius, and laid it with the bodies of the archbishops. Salutation to Cyril the archbishop.

And on this day also died the blessed and pure seer of the mysteries of heaven Lalibela [surnamed Gebre Meskel], King of Ethiopia. The parents of this saint having begotten him, they brought him up in the fear of God. And when he had grown up, and had arrived at man's estate, the king his elder brother heard that he would inherit the kingdom, and sit upon his throne, and jealousy came upon him. And he sent and called him, and when he came, and stood up before him, he contrived a matter against him, and he commanded his servants to beat him, and they beat him with very many stripes, from the third hour of the day to the ninth hour; and after this he commanded them to set him before him. And when he stood up before him the king and all his soldiers marveled when they saw that no injury had happened to him; now the angel of God had supported him. Then the king said unto him, "Forgive me, O my brother, for what I have done to thee"; and then they made peace and were reconciled to each other. And God saw the punishment, which he suffered that day, and He made him to inherit the kingdom. And having become king he meditated on the things, which would please God, and he made many gifts to the poor and needy. And when God saw the strength of his live, the angel of God appeared unto him in a dream, and he showed him how he was to build ten churches together, but each being different from the other. And he did as God showed him, and when he had finished the building of these churches, he made his brother's son to inherit the kingdom. Salutation to Lalibela, the builder of churches.

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