



Coptic Orthodox Christianity

Persecution & Martyrdom



Fall 2018

9



Christian Martyrdom

The Coptic Church is known for its numerous **Martyrs** throughout the ages, who have given their lives for the sake of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Just as the Lord shed His own precious Blood for our sake;
the Church, His beloved, has shed her blood for His Name's sake.*

Note that the word “martyr” has been corrupted in recent times by minority extremist factions who incite violence against others. But a Christian Martyr is **NOT** one who partakes in any form of extremism, violent or terrorist acts.

A Christian Martyr is one who is willing to die for the sake of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without harming others.

Christian Suffering

is Fellowship with Our Lord



- “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall **suffer persecution**” (2 Timothy 3:12)
- “Greater love has no man than this, that a man **lay down his life for his friends**” (John 15:13)
- “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the **fellowship of His sufferings** ...” (Philippians 3:10)
- “and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together**” (Romans 8:17)
- Our life here is short & temporary, compared on the life to come: **“to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you”** (1 Peter 1:4)

What is a Martyr?

- The word **martyr** is derived from the word witness.
- First used for the **apostles** who witnessed to the new **Christian faith**.
- Later, it was used to describe **confessors** who suffered for their belief in our **Lord Jesus Christ**.
- Finally, it was used for those who were **killed** for the sake of their **faith**.
- **Saint Stephen the Archdeacon** is considered the first Christian Martyr in the New Testament (see Acts 7)



Types of Christian Martyrs

- Ones who die for the sake of **faith**
(these are the majority of martyrs)
- Ones who die for the sake of **purity**
(preferring death over impurity)
- Ones who die for the sake of **dogma**
(persecuted for keeping the Church doctrine)

Saint Justina

and the conversion of Cyprian

Cyprian was an infidel who learned sorcery in Africa and excelled over his fellow magicians. His arrogance led him to Antioch to challenge the magicians there and to pride himself over them of his knowledge.

When he arrived there, his fame spread. A young man, the son of one of the nobles, heard about him. This young man lusted for a Christian virgin named Justina. He was unable to obtain what he desired of her neither by money, threats, nor sorcery.

He sought Cyprian's help, that he might make him gain favour with Justina's heart and fulfill his desire of her. Cyprian used all the trickery of his sorcery but failed. Every time he sent her a host of demons, they found her praying, so they came back defeated. When Cyprian failed, he called the demons and told them, *"If you do not bring Justina to me, I shall adopt Christianity."* Indeed, the demons were unable to overcome Justina, and Cyprian realized the futility of sorcery.

Immediately Cyprian rose up and burnt his books of magic. He was baptized by the patriarch of Antioch who put on him the monastic garb. After a while he ordained him a deacon, then a priest. Later on, after he had grown in virtues and in the doctrine of the church, they ordained him Bishop of Carthage around 250 AD. **Bishop Cyprian** ordained **Justina** as head of a convent in Carthage. When Emperor Decius heard of them he had them brought before him, and demanded them to raise incense to the idols. When they both refused, he inflicted upon them many tortures and finally cut off their heads with the sword, thus they obtained **crowns of martyrdom**. May their prayers be with us. Amen.

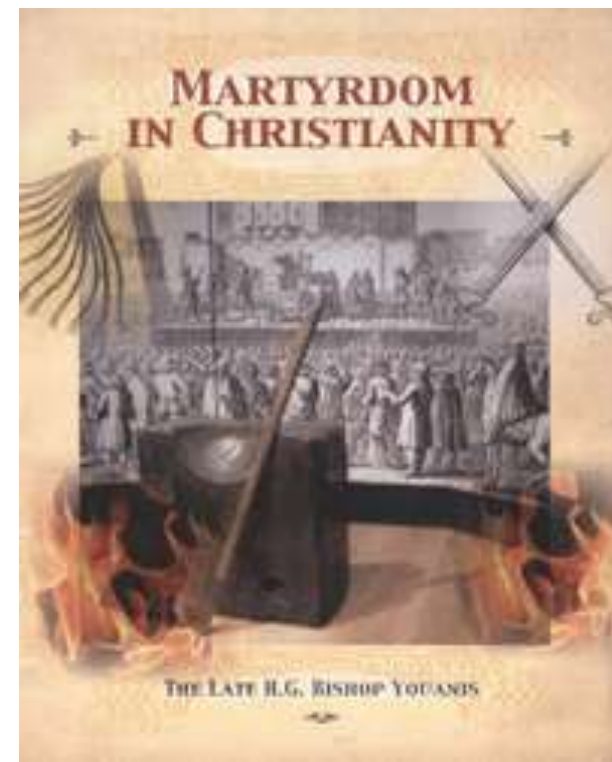


Christian Motives for Martyrdom

Christian martyrs went to their death with joy, calmness and meekness that caused their persecutors to wonder were their motives?

Christian Motives for Martyrdom include:

1. Realizing that to die in Christ leads to eternal **glory**
2. Realizing that this world is limited compared to **eternity**
3. Realizing that we Christians are **strangers to this passing world**
4. Realizing that **there is evil in this world** and accepting tribulation
5. Becoming therefore **unconcerned with anything earthly** or materialistic



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1 Christian Motives for Martyrdom: *to die in Christ leads to eternal glory*



“This is a faithful saying: for if we died with Him, **we shall also live with Him.**”
(2 Timothy 2:11)

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.
He who loves his life will lose it,
and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for **eternal life.**”
(John 12:24-25)

“and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be **glorified** together.
For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the **glory** which shall be revealed in us.”
(Romans 8:17-18)

2 Christian Motives for Martyrdom:
*this world is limited compared to **eternity***



“our **light affliction**, which is **but for a moment**, is working for us a **far more exceeding** and **eternal weight of glory**.”
(2 Corinthians 4:17)

“the **world is passing away**, and the lust of it; but **he that does the will of God abides forever**.”
(1 John 2:17)

3 Christian Motives for Martyrdom: *Christians are **strangers to this passing world***



“if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves **throughout the time of your stay here** in fear.”

(1 Peter 1:17)

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were **strangers and pilgrims on the earth.**”

(Hebrews 11:13)

“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight.

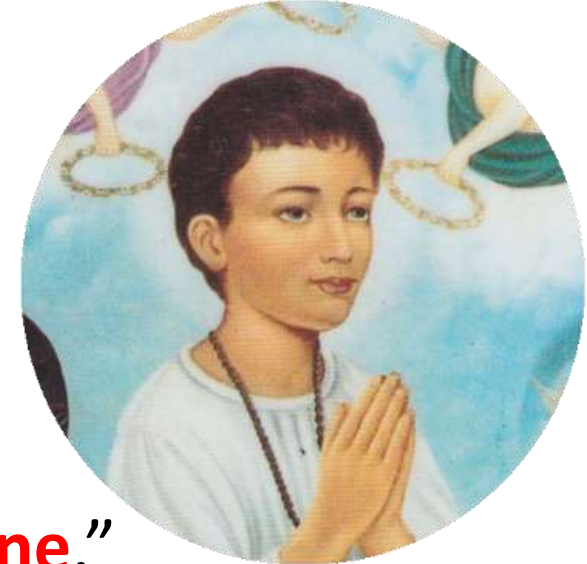
We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be **absent from the body** and to be **present with the Lord.**”

(2 Corinthians 5:6-8)

4

Christian Motives for Martyrdom:

*accepting tribulation as **there is evil in the world***



“We know that we are of God, and the
whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”
(1 John 5:19)

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.
In the world you shall have tribulation;
but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”
(John 16:33)

“And **God will wipe away every tear** from their eyes;
there shall be **no** more **death**, nor **sorrow**, nor **crying**.
There shall be **no** more **pain**, for the former things have passed away.”
(Revelation 21:4)

5

Christian Motives for Martyrdom: *unconcerned with earthly or materialistic matters*



“In My Father’s house are many mansions ...
I go to prepare a place for you.” (John 14:2)

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and **naked shall I return there.**
The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”
(Job 1:21)

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing
out. And having food and clothing, with these **we shall be content.**”
(1 Timothy 6:7-8)

“as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich;
as **having nothing, and yet possessing all things.**” (2 Corinthians 6:10)

“For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to
depart and **be with Christ, which is far better.**” (Philippians 1:23)

Persecution in Early Christianity



1st Century

(Jewish, Pagan & Roman Persecution)

- **St John the Baptist** martyred by **Herod**
- **St Stephen** the archdeacon and protomartyr martyred by Jewish mob
- **Sts Paul, Peter & majority of disciples** martyred for their Christian faith
- **St Mark (1st Coptic Pope)** martyred by pagans of Egypt (68 AD) in Alexandria
- **Coptic Pope Milieus** (83-95) elected Pope during persecution against Copts by the **Roman Emperor Damatian**
- **Coptic Pope Kedron** (95-106) martyred during persecution by **Emperor Trajan**

2nd Century

(Roman Persecution)

- **Coptic Pope Justus** (118-129) and **Coptic Pope Eumenius** (129-141) suffer persecution by **Emperor Hadrian**
- **Coptic Pope Markianos** (141-152) and **Coptic Pope Celadion** (152-166) suffer persecution by **Emperor Antonius Pius**
- **Coptic Pope Agrippinus** (166-178) and **Coptic Pope Julian** (178-188) suffer persecution by **Emperor Marcus Aurelius**
- **Coptic Pope Demetrius** (188-230) suffer persecution by **Emperor Septimius Severus**

Persecution of Copts Continues

3rd & 4th (Roman Persecution)

- **Coptic Pope Heraclas** (230-246)
Copts persecuted by **Emperor Maximus the Tharacian**
- **Coptic Pope Dionsyius** (246-264)
Persecution by **Emperor Decius**
- **Coptic Pope Maxiumus** (264-282)
Persecution by **Emperor Aurelian**
- **Pope Peter the Seal of Martyrs** (302-311) was the last to be **martyred** during the great persecution of **Emperor Diocletian**

5th & 6th (Byzantine Persecution)

- **Coptic Pope Dioscorus** (444-454)
exiled by **Emperor Marcianus** to the Island of Gangra
- 200 years of **Byzantine persecution** of Coptic Orthodox Christians since the Council of Chalcedon (451)

The era of severe persecution ends in 311 AD, but future years would also see forms of persecution of Coptic Christians



Persecution of Copts during Early Arab Rule

7th Century

- **Coptic Pope Benjamin I** (623-662)
During his papacy, in 639, an army of 4,000 Arabs invaded Egypt and defeated Emperor Heraclius, ending 200 years of Byzantine persecution.

*When Copts protested about the level of taxation he responded with more **seizure of property and higher taxes**.*

8th Century (Arab Persecution)

- **Coptic Pope Alexander II** (704-729)
*During his papacy, the **Caliph Al-Walid I** (ruled 705-715) **persecuted** the Copts and **taxed** them heavily.*

*His successors continued this persecution; Yazid II (ruled 720-724) went further and ordered the **destruction** of all **crosses** and sacred images in Coptic churches. He required that all Copts who wished to engage in business activity have the mark of a lion **branded on their hands**. Anyone caught without the mark would have his **hand cut off**.*

Modern-Day Martyrs

21 Copts Martyred for their faith in 2015

Roman Catholic Pope Francis:

CATHOLIC HERALD

“The blood of our Christian brothers and sisters is a testimony which cries out to be heard... It makes no difference whether they be Catholics, Orthodox, Copts or Protestants. They are Christians! Their blood is one and the same. Their blood confesses Christ. This is not to minimise differences, nor to turn a blind eye to them. However, in dying for Christ do such divisions among Christians retain real relevance? In dying for Christ one has become the perfect disciple, and enters a real communion with Christ’s Body in heaven.”

The Coptic Church has acclaimed the 21 victims as martyrs by inserting them into their liturgical calendar (February 15), much like our own equivalent canonisation. Pope Francis has informally though publicly called them martyrs ...

The 21 Coptic Martyrs of Libya are role models for all Christians, and a Catholic heart wants to honour them as such. Could we not join the Copts in calling on their martyrs’ intercession before God in whose presence, surely, they now dwell, eternally?

Nothing builds the Church like the blood of martyrs. The 21 Coptic Martyrs of Libya may offer a path to the renewal that the struggling Western Church so sorely needs.

Source:

<http://catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2015/02/24/can-catholics-recognise-the-21-murdered-coptic-christians-as-martyrs/>

Coptic Martyrdom

(2010-2011)

- Jan 7, 2010
Machine gun attack at **Christmas** celebration in **Nag Hammadi** claims the lives of **6 Christian** worshippers and **1 Muslim** officer.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nag_Hammadi_massacre
- Dec 31, 2010
Bombing of a Coptic Church during **New Year's Eve** service in **Alexandria** by Islamic fundamentalists leaves **21 dead** and 79 injured.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Alexandria_bombing
- May 7, 2011
Burning of 3 Coptic churches in **Imbada**, and destruction of Christian houses and businesses leaving **15 dead** and 232 injured.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Imbaba_church_attacks
- Oct 9, 2011
Copts in **Maspero**, Cairo attacked during peaceful demonstrations; **24 Coptic** Christians killed, 212 injured (mostly Copts).
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maspero_demonstrations

Coptic Martyrdom (2013-2017)



- July 2013
Dozens of churches burned by Muslim Brotherhood supporters throughout Egypt following the July 3 change in presidential regime
- Feb 15, 2015
beheading of **21 Coptic Christians**, who were kidnapped by ISIS militants in **Libya** and murdered for refusing to denounce their Christian faith
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015_kidnapping_and_beheading_of_Copts_in_Libya
- Dec 11, 2016
bombing of Botroseya Church of the Apostles **kills 29** and **injures 47**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Botroseya_Church_bombing
- Feb 2017
terrorist groups in the Sinai call for attacks on Christians In separate attacks, at least **7 Christians** are killed in city of El Arish in **Sinai**.

Coptic Martyrdom (2017-2018)



- Apr 9, 2017 – Bombings of two churches kill **45 people** and injure 130 during **Palm Sunday** processions at Saint Mark's Church in **Alexandria** and Saint George's Coptic Orthodox Church in the **Tanta** region (north of Cairo).
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palm_Sunday_church_bombings
- May 26, 2017 – gunmen execute **28 Christian pilgrims** traveling in a bus during a visit to the monastery of Saint Samuel the Confessor in Minya Governorate.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minya_bus_attack
- Dec 29, 2017 – a gunman who was later identified as an Islamic extremist shot multiple people at Saint Menas church in **Helwan**, killing **11 people**.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_on_Saint_Menas_church
- Nov 2, 2018 – **7 killed** and 7 wounded when extremists loyal to ISIL open fire on bus carrying Coptic pilgrims between Cairo & **Minya** travelling to **monastery**.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018_Minya_bus_attack

A Coptic Viewpoint on Martyrdom

Sorrow

*Sorrow for those who cause senseless suffering; praying for their enlightenment.
“yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service”
(John 16:2)*

Grief

*Praying for the consolation of those grieving and suffering.
“if one member suffers,
all the members suffer”
(1Cor 12:26)*

Joy

Rejoicing for the spirits of the martyred saints who rejoice in Paradise in the Glory and Eternal Comfort of the Lord.



“God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 21:4)

Coptic Christians

“Coptic Christians have been nominated for the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize for their **refusal to retaliate against deadly and ongoing persecution** from governments and terrorist groups in Egypt and elsewhere,” the [Coptic Orphans] organization said.

“The Copts, who are the indigenous people of Egypt and number as many as 20 million around the world, have been the **victims of centuries of violence and oppression for practicing their Christian faith**, chiefly in Egypt.”

Copts have suffered much in recent years from Islamist violence in Egypt, where several churches have been bombed, including on Christmas Eve, and other places, such as Libya, the site of the beheading by ISIS of 21 Coptic Christians. The Church has canonized them as martyrs.

Christian Martyrs

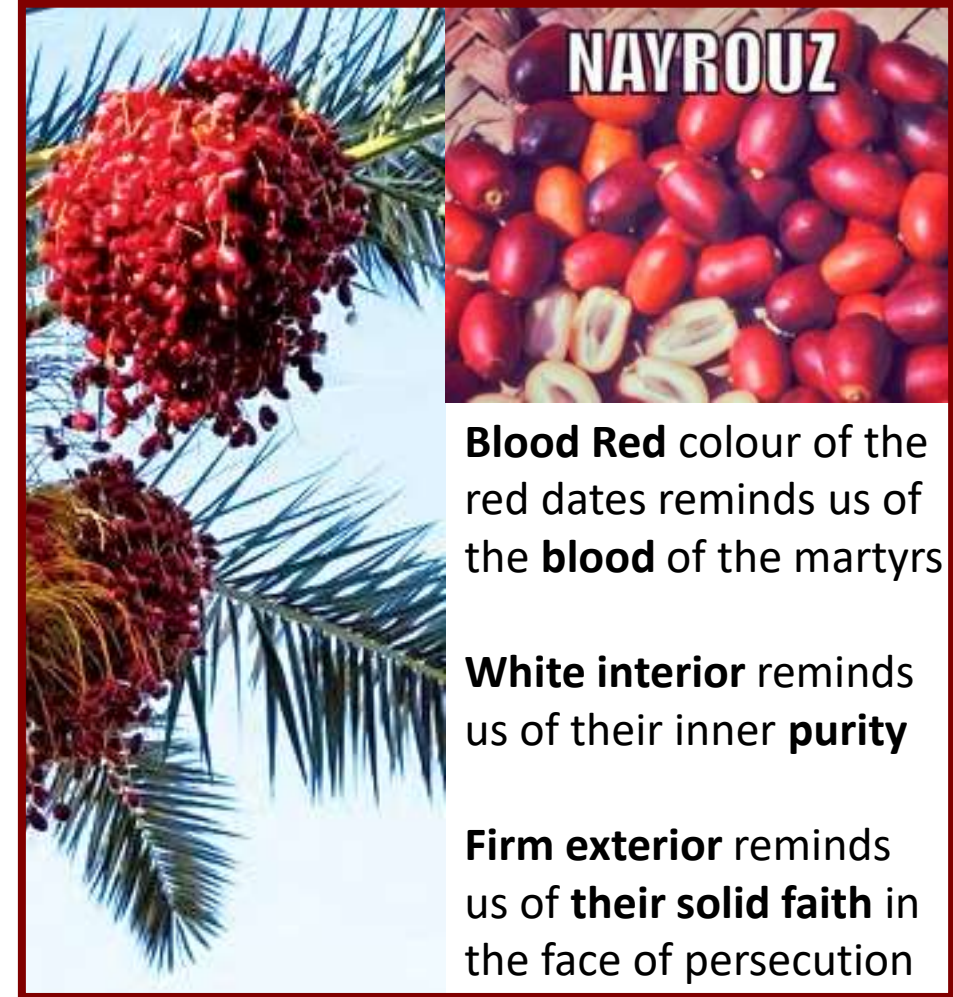
Heroes from all walks of life

- Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Nuns, Monks
- Nobles, Princes/Princesses, Governors
- Officers, Soldiers (many high-ranking)
- Laity, Farmers, Craftsmen, Servants
- Children, Young Ladies & Men, Youth, Mothers
- Philosophers, Scholars
- Magicians (converted to Christianity)
- Formerly Pagan including Pagan Priests
- Groups (e.g. entire villages & communities)
- Penitents coming back to the Lord



Coptic New Year (Nayrouz) honours the Martyrs

- The start of the Coptic Year is celebrated on the 1st day of the 1st Coptic month (Thoot) which corresponds to **Sept 11**
- Known as the Feast of “**Nayrouz**”, celebrated in Festive Tune with rejoicing and reverence
- Commemorates **Coptic Christian Martyrs**
- Traditionally, **red dates** are eaten on this day to remind us of those whose blood was shed
- Countless Martyrs are amongst the saints chronicled in the Coptic “**Synaxarion**” (a living chronicle of the lives of Coptic saints)
- **AM** = Anno Martyro (Year of the Martyrs): Coptic Calendar Year was reset to start at **284 AD**, the reign of the cruel Roman Emperor Diocletian who decreed the slaughter of Christians



Blood Red colour of the red dates reminds us of the **blood** of the martyrs

White interior reminds us of their inner **purity**

Firm exterior reminds us of **their solid faith** in the face of persecution

Saint George of Cappadocia

known as the Prince of Martyrs

Synexarion Reading of Nov 16 (Hathor 7 in Coptic months)

On this day, we celebrate the commemoration of the consecration of the Church of the great martyr St. George the Roman (Mari Girgis) in the city of Lydda in Palestine. He was born in Cappadocia in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) to a wealthy Christian family.

This saint had received the crown of martyrdom at the hands of Persian Emperor Dadianus on the 23rd of the Coptic month of Parmoute in the year **303 AD**. His mother hid his body in her home town Lydda until the end of the era of persecution.

In the early part of the reign of Emperor Constantine the great, the faithful built a church after the name of the martyr St. George and placed his pure body in it. This holy church was consecrated on this day, and **many miracles and healings were manifested from his holy body**.

The blessing of his prayers be with us all. Amen.



Feast Day (Martyrdom)

May 1
(Coptic Parmoute 23)

Consecration of Church

Nov 16
(Coptic Hathor 7)

Saint George of Alexandria

named after Saint George of Cappadocia

Synexarion Reading of Nov 16 (Hathor 7 in Coptic months)

On this also, St. George (Gawargios) of Alexandria, was martyred. He was the nephew of Armanius the Governor of Alexandria. George's father was a merchant in the city of Alexandria, and had no son at first. As he travelled to the city of Lydda in Palestine and attended the feast of the consecration of the Church of Saint George the great martyr, he prayed to God, through the intercession of His great saint, to grant him a child. God answered his prayers, and gave him a son, whom he named George and raised him up in a Christian manner.

\When his parents died, his uncle (Armanius) kept him until he turned 25 years old. His uncle had an only daughter. One day, she went with friends on an outing near a monastery outside the city. She heard its monks praising and singing sweet hymns. She was touched by what she heard, and asked her cousin George about it. He explained that those monks had forsaken the world to worship God, and he guided her to the Christian faith.

When she returned to her father, she told him that she had believed in the Lord Christ. Her father tried to reason with her, to dissuade her, to lure her with great promises, and finally threatened her. When she did not heed his words, he ordered her beheaded, thus she received the crown of martyrdom. Later on, when the Governor found out that his nephew (George) was the cause of his daughter's conversion to Christianity, he tortured him severely. He then sent him to Ansena where its governor also tortured him and finally beheaded him, thus he also received the crown of martyrdom.

The blessings of their prayers be with us all. Amen.



Feast Day

Nov 16

(Coptic Hathor 7)

Remember the story of Elisaha's relics (bones) (2 Kings 13:20-21)

*“Then **Elisha died**, and they **buried** him.*

*And the raiding bands from Moab invaded the
land in the spring of the year.*

*So it was, as they were **burying a man**, that
suddenly they spied a band of raiders;
and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha;
and when the **man** was let down and **touched** the
bones of **Elisha**, he **revived** and stood on his feet.”*

Relics of the Martyrs Venerated



Crowns of Martyrdom

Excerpt from Coptic Veneration of Saints & Martyrs:

**“Axios (Worthy),
Axios (Worthy),
Axios (Worthy) is Saint ...**

**A crown of gold,
a crown of silver,
a crown of pearl stones
on the head of Saint ...**

**Amen. Amen. Amen. Alleluia.
Glory be to our God.”**



Carrying the Cross:

There cannot be resurrection without a crucifixion

Learning from the martyrs ...

- Martyrs accepted to carry their **cross**
- Each of us has their individual **cross** to carry (*perhaps not to the extent of martyrdom, but each individual is asked to endure some suffering according to their ability*) ...
God only gives me what I can handle, and God is there to carry the burden with me.
- Each of us who carry their cross and follow Christ will also **rise** with Christ to eternal **glory**



Excerpt from Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Prayer

***“the sinners who have repented,
count them with Your faithful;***

***Your faithful,
count them with Your martyrs”***

Saint Demiana



How many of us ever stand up and tell other people what we believe about Jesus Christ?

Being one of Jesus' disciples will not be always easy, for as Jesus said:

"Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils ... You will be dragged before governors and kings for My sake, and bear testimony before them and the Gentiles ... Do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you will say ... It will be given to you in that hour... You will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."
(Matthew 10:16)

Toward the end of the third century, there lived a Christian man named Marcos. He was the ruler of two districts in Egypt. Marcos had only one daughter called Demiana.

Her beauty and good character were legendary. Her father loved her dearly, and did his best to raise her in a true Christian manner.

Demiana loved to pray and read the holy books in the seclusion of her room.

When Demiana was older, her father wanted her to get married to one of his noble friends, but Demiana refused.

She said that she gave herself up as a bride to Christ, and that she intended to live without marriage all her life, so she could serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Demiana also asked her father to build a house for her on the outskirts of the city, so that she could live in it, with her friends, as a nun away from the world and its temptations.

Knowing her deep desire for a righteous life, her father reluctantly granted Demiana her wish, and built her a large palace. Demiana changed the palace into a convent, and lived in it with forty of her friends. They were all unmarried girls, and the Lord's hand was with them, giving them strength and comfort.

At that time Diocletian the Emperor began to torture and kill the Christians who refused to worship his idols (Apollos and Artemis).

When Marcos was invited to kneel before the statues and offer incense, he refused. But Diocletian convinced him by promising to give him a higher position in the Roman Empire.

When Demiana heard that her father had knelt before the idols, she left the palace and went immediately to him. She said, "How could you deny your Savior who shed his blood to save you, and kneel down to stone idols. What you did, my father, is cowardly and shameful."

When Marcos heard his daughter's words, he came back to his senses.

He immediately went before Diocletian, and crossed himself in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In front of everybody he cried out in a loud voice, "Let every one know that I worship the God of heaven and earth, my only God and Lord Jesus the Christ."

Diocletian was troubled and tried his best to change Marcos' mind, but this time the Holy Spirit had filled his heart, and he testified boldly that he would never deny his Savior, even if it meant his death. Diocletian was furious, and ordered the soldiers to kill him.

When the Emperor learned that it was Marcos' daughter Demiana who had changed her father's mind, he ordered one of his commanders to take one hundred soldiers and attack her palace.

"First, try to convince her to worship our idols", said Diocletian. "But, if she refuses, threaten her, torture her, and even kill her so that she will be an example for the other Christians."

When Demiana saw the soldiers approach the palace, she prayed to God to strengthen their faith. Then she told her friends, "If you are willing to die for Jesus' sake, you can stay; but if you cannot stand the torture, hurry and escape right now." The forty virgins all decided to stay.

When the commander relayed Diocletian's message to Demiana, she answered, "How can I leave my Lord and God Jesus Christ and bow in front of blind, dumb, and deaf statues! You and your Emperor should be embarrassed of your shameful deeds. Even if you kill me, my faith will not be shaken."

The commander ordered the soldiers to torture Demiana in cruel ways. As she felt the terrible pain through her body, she lifted her eyes up toward heaven and prayed, "My Lord Jesus, who was crucified in order to save me, give me the strength to withstand the pain."

The forty virgins were watching and crying, but Demiana told them, "Do not cry, my sisters. Our Lord Jesus Christ was tortured and killed because He loved us, even though He did not commit any sins. How much more should I welcome death in His name, especially if I am sure of the heavenly glory awaiting me!"

After the soldiers got tired of torturing Demiana, they threw her half-dead body in jail. The Archangel Michael appeared to her, touched and healed her wounds.

The next day, the commander thought that Demiana had died, but she stood in front of him in perfect health and he was puzzled. When some people saw what had happened, they cried, "We are Christians. We believe in the God of Demiana. We have no other God but Jesus Christ." The commander was even more troubled, and killed all of them.

The torturing of Demiana continued in an even more cruel way for many days, but again, and again, the Archangel Michael appeared and healed her.

On the last day before her martyrdom, our Lord Jesus Himself came to her and told her, "Have courage, my chosen one. I have prepared for you the crown of your wedding in heaven. Your name will be remembered forever as it will be the cause for many miracles, and in this place a great church will be built to honor your blessed name."

Finally the commander ordered the soldiers to behead Demiana by the sword, along with the forty virgins. The total number of people who were martyred with Demiana was about four hundred.

Years later, when the righteous King Constantine reigned, he asked his mother, Queen Helen, to bury Saint Demiana and those with her in great honour.

A church was built in her name.

These days, Saint Demiana also has a great convent and many churches in Egypt and abroad bearing her name.

May the prayers and blessings of Saint Demiana and the 40 virgins be with us all.



Faithful Church

- *The Coptic Church has passed the test of time, persevering through political and theological turmoil, as well as martyrdom, persecution and discrimination.*



Supplemental (4 minute) Video

Coptic Church built to honour the 21 Martyrs of Libya

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OT1yCjyYXW8>



February 15, 2018 marked the third anniversary of the beheading of 20 Egyptian Coptic Christians and a Ghanaian Christian, carried out by IS on the Libyan coast.

World Watch Monitor has visited Upper Egypt's Minya province, where a new church is to be inaugurated in remembrance of these 21 martyrs of Libya.