

Wednesday, July 26, 2017 | Epep 19, 1733

The Nineteenth Day of the Blessed Month of Epep

Annual Tune | Waters of the river Season

Vespers

Vespers Gospel

Stand in the fear of God and listen to the Holy Gospel. A reading from the Gospel according to our teacher Saint Matthew the Evangelist. May His Blessings be with us all. From the Psalms of our teacher David the prophet. May his blessings be with us all.

Psalms 4:3,4,6,7

But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The LORD will hear when I call to Him. Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us. You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Our Lord God, Savior, and King of us all, Jesus Christ, the Living Son of God to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Matthew 10:24-33

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

And Glory be to God forever

Matins

Matins Gospel

Stand in the fear of God and listen to the Holy Gospel. A reading from the Gospel according to our teacher Saint Mark the Evangelist. May His Blessings be with us all. From the Psalms of our teacher David the prophet. May his blessings be with us all.

Psalms 112:1,2

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Our Lord God, Savior, and King of us all, Jesus Christ, the Living Son of God to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Mark 8:34-9:1

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospels will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of

Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

And Glory be to God forever

Divine Liturgy

Pauline Epistle

Paul, the servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, appointed to the Gospel of God. A reading from the Epistle of our teacher Paul to the Romans. May his blessings be upon us. Amen

Romans 8:14-27

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 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. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

The grace of God the Father be with you all. Amen.

Catholic Epistle

A Reading from the 1 Epistle of St. Peter. May his blessing be upon us. Amen

1 Peter 2:11-17

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. The world passes away, and its desires; but he who does the will of God abides forever. Amen.

Acts of the Apostles

The Acts of our fathers the apostles, may their blessings be with us.

Acts of the Apostles 19:11-20

Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them,

overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

The word of the Lord shall grow, multiply, be mighty, and be confirmed, in the holy Church of God. Amen.

Synaxarium

The Nineteenth Day of the Blessed Coptic Month of Epep, may God make it always received, year after year, with reassurance and tranquility, while our sins are forgiven by the tender mercies of our God my fathers and brothers, Amen.

Departure of Pope John X (1363-1369) the 85th Patriarch of Alexandria and the See of Saint Mark
On this day also, of the year 1085 A.M. (July 13th, 1369 A.D.) Pope John X, 85th Patriarch of Alexandria, departed. He was known by El-Mo'ataman the Syrian, and he was from Damascus, Syria. He was a righteous and knowledgeable man. He was enthroned on the twelfth of Bashans, 1079 A.M. (May 7th, 1363 A.D.). He remained on the throne for six years, two months, and seven days. He departed in peace and was buried in Old Cairo beside Simon the shoe maker.
May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.

Martyrdom of Saint Bidaba the Bishop of Qift, Saint Andrew, and Saint Christodoulas
On this day, of the year 284 A.M., which is the first year of the martyrs, the great saint Anba Bidaba, and his companion, the priest Andrew, his nephew, and St. Christodoulas, were martyred. Anba Bidaba, who was known by El-Gawhary, was bishop of the city of Qift, in Upper Egypt, during the days of the governor Arianus, and the reign of Emperor Diocletian. This great saint was born in the city of Armant to Christian parents who raised him since his young age in a Christian manner. His mother's sister had a son, called him Andrew and raised him in a Christian way. Andrew and his cousin Bidaba liked each other and decided to forsake the world. They eagerly read the Bible and religious books, they widened their comprehension and they became the authority of their times in piety and godliness.

When Bidaba was ten years old he had memorized most of the religious books and spiritual teachings. They fasted two days at a time without food or water and when they ate, they only ate bread and salt, accompanied by fervent prayers day and night. One day while they were thinking about the vanity of this world, they decided to leave their families and live lives of seclusion in a deserted place. They went to the Eastern mount where they found Anba Eisak. This saint comforted and strengthened them to endure the hardships to receive the Eternal Life. Anba Eisak blessed them and commanded them to go to another place where they could live a life of solitude and spend all their time in worship. Then he told Anba Bidaba, 'O, my son you shall shepherd the flock of Christ, many toils, tribulations and great persecutions will befall you.' He told Andrew, 'You also shall receive a crown, after your strife, that has been prepared for you.' They left Anba Eisak and went to the western side and built for themselves a cell.

They had full knowledge and excellent skills in transcribing the holy books. They did that for little money to support their life and donated whatever was left to the poor and the needy. The bishop of this district came, once he heard about them, and ordained Anba Bidaba a priest and Andrew a deacon. They went to a church in one of the nearby cities once every forty days to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. One day they went to the church, and found the bishop there so Anba Bidaba stood in reverence and respect for the bishop. The bishop was sitting on his chair looking at St. Bidaba, and he was amazed to see the face of the Saint shining as the moon, and light emanating from him and on his head was a crown of gold decorated with precious stones. The bishop asked them to bring this saint and his companion Andrew. When they came to see him, he asked them to stay with him, but Anba Bidaba refused, preferring to live in the barren desert than live under the care of the bishop. Nevertheless, St. Andrew accepted to stay under the care of the bishop. Anba Bidaba returned to his cell weeping and saying, 'I ask you O my Lord Christ to consecrate that place for Thy self that Your Name might be

mentioned in it for ever.' Then he left that place and went to another area further away.

A few days later the bishop sent a messenger to the cell seeking the Saint but he did not find him. The bishop built a church in the name of this saint in that place and consecrated it on the thirteenth day of the month of Koiahk. As for St. Bidaba, he went to the church taking a different way to pray. Many signs and miracles were wrought by his hands, and he increased in grace and blessing. When his fame spread, and his name was acclaimed, many came to him and he healed their spiritual and physical sicknesses. The people asked the bishop Anba Tadros saying, 'We ask you O our father to bring for us Anba Bidaba to be blessed by him and to stay among us for a period of time.' The bishop did as they asked. When Anba Bidaba came to the city of Bahgourah, district of Nagaa-Hammady, there was a man, whose name was John, who had only one daughter, who was attractive. His neighbors were furious against him, and used sorcery against her, for they asked her father to give her in marriage to one of their sons, but he refused. But, the Saint Anba Bidaba prayed for her, and she became as normal as she had been, and God nullified the witchcraft away from her. When her family saw their daughter healed by the hand of that saint, they came and kneeled before him, and kissed his hands thanking him for his act. The Saint told them, 'Thank God and praise Him, for the grace that healed your daughter was not from me.' They left him rejoicing. When it was Sunday and the people were gathered in the church, they brought the Saint to the bishop who promoted him to Hegumen (Archpriest). He stayed with the bishop for nine days then went back to the mountain.

Later on, the bishop of Qift departed, so the people of the area gathered and unanimously decided to nominate Abba Bidaba to be ordained in his place. They decided to go to Pope Peter the First (The seal of martyrs and the 17th Patriarch) to ordain him a bishop for them. The angel of the Lord appeared to the Pope in a vision and told him, 'Go to Upper Egypt and bring the Archpriest Bidaba and ordain him a bishop for the city of Qift, for the Lord has chosen him.' Early next morning the delegations of the believers came asking to ordain the honorable father Bidaba a bishop. The Pope sent four priests with a letter to the Saint. When they arrived, he received the letter from them and read in it, 'It is written in the Holy Bible whoever hears from you, heard from Me, and whoever refuses you, refused Me.' St. Bidaba cried bitterly and said, 'Woe to me the poor sinner for the Devil wishes my perishing.' Then he prayed saying, 'Let it be according to Your Will, O Lord, and not according to mine, for You know that I am weak, powerless, and incapable of handling this position.' The messengers of the Pope embarked with him to the Pope. The Pope asked the people of the parish, 'Who do you chose to be a bishop over you.' They unanimously answered saying, 'Abba Bidaba, for he is worthy for this honorable ministry.' The Pope ordained him a bishop for the diocese of Qift. While he was laying his hand over his head, a voice from heaven said, 'Worthy, worthy, worthy O Bidaba to receive this position.' He remained with the Pope for a few days, during which he celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Whenever he placed his hand over the chalice to make the sign of the cross, the wine changed to blood. The Pope was amazed and looked at the saint and said, 'Truly you are chosen from God.' He asked the Pope to allow him to go to his parish. He embarked in a sailing boat, which had a handicapped man, that did not walk for twenty-two years. While he was getting aboard the boat the saint's leg slipped and stepped over the leg of that handicapped man. The man's legs were healed and he jumped up immediately praising God. All those in the ship praised God and asked the saint to remember them in his prayers and to bless them.

Many miracles were wrought by his hands during his journey. When they arrived safely at their hometown, the people of the parish went out with candles, crosses, censers, olive branches and palm branches, in their hands to receive him. They took him in a procession until they entered the church and he sat on his Episcopal Chair. He lived in asceticism, as he had lived before, praying continually day and night. His food was bread and salt and his dress was a cloth of hair. He performed many signs and wonders. When Emperor Diocletian incited persecution against the Christians, governor Arianus came to upper Egypt, and seized the Christians. He threw them in prisons, and tortured them severely, along his way until he arrived at Esna. When the saint Anba Bidaba knew of that, he was kindled with a spiritual zeal and said, 'Is it right for me to remain here, and my brothers, the Christians facing unbearable tortures? No, I must go there and die with them as a sacrifice of faith.' He called the people and celebrated a pontifical Liturgy and after he administered to them the Holy Mysteries, he preached to them saying, 'We must not be afraid to be martyred in the Name of the Lord Christ, not be afraid of hot fire, arrows or spears, and swords drawn against our necks. As also you need to be merciful to the poor, comfort the grieved, be vigilant in your prayers and fasting for they are your aid by which you

can overcome obstacles and cast out the devil that weaken your faith in the Lord Christ.' The bishop preached and strengthened his people, and after he made the sign of the holy cross over them, blessed them and bid them farewell saying, 'I shall go to be martyred by the hand of Arianus the governor.' The people cried and wept for his departure, but he comforted and strengthened them.

Afterwards, he left them and went to the city of Esna, accompanied by the blessed Fr. Andrew and Anba Christodoulas. The bishop Anba Bidaba looked at them and said, 'Where are you going?' They replied, 'We are going with you to die for our love of Christ.' The bishop looked at them and saw the grace of God had come down upon them and their faces shining like the moon. He strengthened and commanded them to be steadfast in their faith in Christ. He told them, 'On this night I saw in a vision an angel who had with him three crowns and I asked him to whom did these belong? He said one for you, one for your cousin, and one for Christodoulas, so let us go to Esna.' When they arrived at Esna, they saw a multitude of Christians, bishops, priests, deacons, and believers, being tortured. The governor brought them and ordered them to raise incense for the gods, but they cried saying, 'We are Christians and we do not fear you, O infidel governor. We do not worship these defiled gods that were made by human hands. Our God that we worship, is in heaven, the creator of everything with the Word of His might, visible and invisible, to Whom is the Glory, Honor, and Worship with His good Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the age of ages, Amen.' When the Governor heard their words and saw their steadfastness, he ordered to cut their heads off with the sword.

During that time, Anba Bidaba was standing, watching the Christians being tortured, and he saw angels coming down from heaven, and in their hands, crowns of light for the heads of those who were martyred, and raising them to the heaven with great honor and glory. The Bishop and his companions went forward and cried out saying, 'We are Christians, and we believe in Jesus Christ the Lord of all creatures and the God of every power.' The Governor asked them, 'From where are you?' Then he asked the bishop about his name. The Bishop replied, 'I am the lowly Bidaba.' The Governor said, 'I think you are the bishop of this land, but I am amazed at how you could dare to say these words. Did you not dread my retaliation and fear my authority and majesty? Have you not seen the torture that has been prepared for those who confess that Name?' The Saint answered courageously and said, 'Have you not heard the saying of the Book by the mouth of Lord Jesus Christ, 'Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 10:32-33). Because of this promise, we confess Our Lord Jesus Christ to the utter most breath.' The Governor tried, by promising him money and position once and then threatening him in other time, to change his council and his faith in the Lord Christ, and when he failed, he ordered that the Saint be imprisoned in one of the prisons. When the saints in prison saw him, they saluted him and said, 'Would you vanquish for us this governor, for you have been given the victory from the Lord of hosts.' While they were talking about the greatness and goodness of God, the Archangel Michael appeared to the Bishop and said, 'Hail to you O honored one, let your soul rejoice today for God has accepted all your toil, asceticism, and struggle for the sake of faith. You shall receive three crowns: the first, for your worship and asceticism since your young age, the second, for shepherding the flock on the straight path, and the third, for your martyrdom. You shall be crowned with these crowns with glory and honor to receive the heavenly glories.' The angel ascended, and the Saint stood and prayed saying, 'Hear me O Father the Pantocrator, may my petition rise before You, and You smell it as a sweet incense that pleases You, I ask You O father for Thy people and saints who do mercy for the poor, and accept my soul in Your hands that I may receive the heavenly glories, for to You is the Glory, Honor, and Worship with Your Good Father and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.'

When he finished his petition he saw the Lord our Savior and around Him the angels coming to comfort him, saying, 'My consolation O beloved Bidaba, I am with you.' Then the magnificent procession ascended to heaven. On the next morning, the governor ordered all the prisoners brought to the place where the people of the city gathered. When they saw the saints they cried saying, 'We are Christians and we believe in one God, the God of Anba Bidaba.' The governor became enraged and brought the Saint and those who were with him and ordered their heads cut off. The blood flowed like streams. The skies were filled by the pure angels welcoming the spirits of those righteous saints. St. Bidaba, St. Andrew, and St. Christodoulas received the crown of eternal life. May their blessings be with us. Amen.

Martyrdom of Saint Panteleimon the Physician

This day also marks the martyrdom of the honorable St. Panteleimon, the Physician. This saint was born in the city of Ta'madan. His father, whose name was Astochius (Asturius), was pagan, and his mother, whose name was Unala (Ulane), was Christian. They taught him the medical profession. A priest lived near their house, and every time Pantaleemon passed by him, and the priest saw his stature, his comeliness, his knowledge, and his wisdom, he was sorrowful for him for he was away from God. The priest entreated God in his prayers, to guide Panteleimon to the way of salvation. Having repeated his petition to God for Pantaleemon's sake, the Lord told him in a vision that he would believe through him. The priest rejoiced, and started to speak to him whenever he passed before him, until a friendship grew between them. The priest started to explain to him the corruptness of idol worshipping and the nobility of the Faith of the Lord Christ and the noble life of its followers. He also told him about those who believe in Christ, and the signs and wonders wrought by their hands. When Panteleimon, the Physician, heard that, he rejoiced and desired to perform these signs to perfect his medical profession. One day, he was passing through the market-place of the city, and he saw a man, whom a serpent had bitten, lying on the ground and the serpent was standing up before him. He said to himself, 'I will put to test the words of my teacher, the priest, who told me, 'If you believe in the Lord Christ, you shall work miracles in His Name.' He drew near that man, and prayed a long prayer, asking the Lord Christ to manifest His Power in healing that man, and in killing that serpent, so that it might not harm anyone else. When he finished his prayer, the man rose up alive, and the serpent fell down dead. Pantaleemon's faith increased; he went to the priest, who baptized him, and he went on practicing medicine. One day a blind man came to Pantaleemon that he might heal him, but his father sent him away. The Saint asked him, 'Who was asking for me?' His father replied, 'It was a blind man, and you can not heal him.' The Saint told him, 'You shall see the glory of God.' He called the blind man back, and asked him, 'If you can see will you believe in the God Who shall heal your eyes?' The man said, 'Yes, I will believe.' The Saint prayed over him a long and a profound prayer, and then he laid his hand upon the eyes of the blind man, and said, 'In the Name of the Lord Christ receive your sight.' Straightway, he received his sight and believed in the Lord Christ. When his father saw that, he also believed. The saint brought them to the priest who baptized them. When his father departed, the Saint set his slaves free and gave all his money to the poor. He treated the sick freely, and asked them to believe in Christ. The other physicians were jealous of him, and they laid accusation against him, the priest and many others who had believed, before the Emperor. He brought them and threatened to torture them if they did not deny the Lord Christ. When they did not yield to his threats, he tortured them severely then cut off their heads. The Emperor exaggerated in torturing St. Panteleimon, he cast him to the lions which did not harm him, and the Lord strengthened and healed him. Finally, the Emperor ordered to cut off his head and he received the crown of martyrdom.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

Divine Liturgy Gospel

Stand in the fear of God and listen to the Holy Gospel. A reading from the Gospel according to our teacher Saint Luke the Evangelist. May His Blessings be with us all. From the Psalms of our teacher David the prophet. May his blessings be with us all.

Psalms 65:12,13,14

You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfillment. I will go into Your house with burnt offerings; I will pay You my vows, Which my lips have uttered And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Our Lord God, Savior, and King of us all, Jesus Christ, the Living Son of God to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Luke 21:12-19

But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My names sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will

put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My names sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls.

And Glory be to God forever