

THE MARTYRDOM OF ABBA SARAPAMON BISHOP OF NIKIU

On this day the holy Sarapamon the bishop of Nikiu, was martyred. He was of the family of Stephen, the first martyr, from Jerusalem. The name of his father was Abraham, son of Levi, son of Joseph, son of Simeon, who is the maternal uncle of St. Stephen. At his birth, they named him Simeon after his great grandfather.

When his parents died, he wanted to become a Christian, then an angel of the Lord appeared to him and commanded him to go to the bishop of Jerusalem, Abba John. When Simeon reached him, Abba John told him of the secret of the incarnation of the Lord Christ, but he did not dare to baptize him in Jerusalem because of his fear of the Jews and he remained uncertain as to what he should do.

Then the Lady Mary, the Mother of God, appeared to him, and she told him that he should go to Alexandria to the Patriarch Abba Theonas (16th Pope of Alexandria) An angel of the Lord accompanied him in the appearance of a person until he reached Alexandria, the angel having previously told the patriarch his situation.

The patriarch rejoiced in him, preached to him, and baptized him. He then became a monk. When Patriarch Abba Theonas went to rest, and they installed Peter in his place, (St. Peter seal of the martyrs), he summoned him to assist him with the patriarchal duties, and thereafter he ordained him as bishop over Nikiu. The church rejoiced in him greatly and the Lord manifested at his hands many signs and miracles.

Near his city were ancient Egyptian temples, in which they worshipped idols, and he did not stop asking of the Lord Christ that they be obliterated and destroyed. The water rose and covered them, and he uprooted the worship of the idols from his see completely. He put a stop to the blasphemy of Sabellius, who made the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit out to be a single person.

And when Diocletian denied Christ certain people told him, saying, “Sarapamon is destroying the worship of the idols which are the king’s gods”; and having heard very many complaints he commanded his soldiers to bring Sarapamon to him, and they did so.

When Saint Sarapamon arrived in the city of Alexandria with the messengers of the emperor, Abba Peter the archbishop came to him, and there were many clergy with him, and embraced him, and he saw his face as it were the face of an angel of God.

And when he came to the Emperor, Diocletian had him tortured with various tortures, and our Lord Jesus Christ raised him up sound and whole, and uninjured and without suffering; and many people believed because of him. He threw him to the lions but the lions sat at his feet.

Now the emperor was afraid to add to his tortures lest the multitudes should believe through him. And he sent him away into Upper Egypt, to Arianus, the governor of Antinoe, so that he might torture him there and cut off his head with the sword.

Now at that time Arianus governor of Antinoe happened to be in the city of Alexandria. And Arianus took Saint Sarapamon with him in a ship to go to Upper Egypt, and when the ship reached Nikiu his city, it ran aground and it was impossible to remove it from where it stood.

And Arianus had Saint Sarapamon brought up from inside the ship, and carried him to the north of the city, and they cut off his head with the sword, and he received the crown of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens. And the people took his body with great honour, and carried it to the church and laid it therein, and through it very many signs and miracles were wrought there.

His relics are preserved in a bolster in the Church of Saint Sarapamon in the village of Al- Batanun near Shibin Al-Kom in the province of Minufiya (close to Nikiu). Some relics were also kept in the Church of the Virgin Qasriyat Al-Rihan, Old Cairo.

