

SAINT MACARIUS THE CROSS BEARER

The synxarium tells us of three saints named Macarius, St. Macarius the great, St. Macarius of Alexandria and Saint Macarius of Edfu. This is the story of yet another St. Macarius preserved for us by Saint Paladius.

The Cross is our salvation and a source of power against evil. Therefore, it is a dearly beloved symbol of Christianity. Let us now contemplate the love of one saint for the Cross and the blessings which it gave him.

When Saint Macarius was eighteen he used to shepherd flocks by Lake Mareotis (in Egypt). One day he accidentally committed a murder. Like Moses, he ran away into the desert, where he learned the fear of God and how to love his fellow man.

Saint Macarius dwelt in the desert without a roof over his head for three years and then built a cell where he lived for 25 years. He was given power over the devils with which he boldly fought.

Saint Macarius used to say about the murder which he involuntarily committed that it was a sin but it was also "the cause of the redemption of his life".

This is also true of Moses the servant of the Lord, who would have not been counted worthy of the Divine vision unless -through fear for the murder- he had left Egypt and come to Mount Sinai. This shows us that spiritual excellence may be reached through tribulation.

Saint Macarius prayed constantly and when he prayed, his arms were outstretched like a cross. When the time came that our Lord Jesus wanted this beloved saint with Him, He took his spirit while he stood up in a corner of his cell, praying with out stretched arms.

When his disciple found him standing, he thought he was praying and joined him. Three hours later, he called to the beloved saint and when he did not reply, the disciple knew that he had joined our saviour in the heavenly paradise. This holy saint did not suffer any sickness, rather the Lord took his spirit peacefully while he was praying.

The disciple tried to bring Saint Macarius' arms against his body, but his arms would not come down therefore, his grave was dug in the shape of a cross.

Saint Paladius heard a voice concerning Saint Macarius which said: "Inasmuch as during his lifetime he loved the Cross, which he carried through his good works, in it also he shall have his rest; and in the same form shall he stand up at the Right Hand on the day of Christ".

Saint Macarius carried his cross practicing ascetism in the harsh weather of the desert and fighting the devils. He suffered through his life to make up for his sins. Yet the power of the Cross strengthened him and on the last day he will be worthy to stand in heaven with God because of his love for the Cross.

The life of Saint Macarius teaches us that spiritual excellence comes from tribulation, when God

guides us. Thus, the Cross, if carried by us will lead us to spiritual excellence.

May the prayers of the blessed Saint Macarius the Cross bearer be with us all. Amen.