

**St. Mary & St. Abraam
Coptic Orthodox Church
Presents:**



**Some of the Virtues of Anba Abraam
The Departed Bishop of Fayoum and Friend of the Poor
(1829-1914 AD; Departed 9 June 1914)**

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Some of the Virtues of Anba Abraam

The Departed Bishop of Fayoum and Friend of the Poor

(1829-1914 A.D.; Departed 9 June 1914)

When we speak about the Saint Anba Abraam, we immediately think about his love for the poor. This sometimes masks many other virtues we need to contemplate as we remember him on June 9th, the celebration of his departure. As we consider and contemplate some other virtues, and there are many, we can learn more from his blessed life story: Anba Abraam had acquired many gifts that include: Celibacy & Aestheticism, Obeying the Commandments, Love for the Holy Books, Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, Courage, Healing, Wonders & Miracles, Love, and Charity (Giving) was his ultimate gift.

1. Celibacy & Aestheticism:

Celibacy is to live celibate as an unmarried person and to choose to be wed to Christ. Aesthetic life is a life of simple existence in which the person channels his energy to some cause. Aesthetic comes from the Coptic word “Eskeet” or “the Scale of the Hearts” . It also refers to a region in the desert of Egypt called “Wadi El-Natroon” where early monasticism started and where monastics went to live and purify themselves and the heart became light as they lifted their hearts to God. In the case of Christian monasticism, monks and nuns are required to dedicate themselves to fasting, prayer, and hand work. Anba Abraam desired celibacy and Aestheticism and acquired a large measure of both these virtues in a long celebrated life starting at age 15 and continuing until his departure at the age of 85, spending 70 years in monastic life.

When he was growing up, his father asked him to marry his cousin, which was the custom in Egypt (for a man to marry his cousin) in those days. Anba Abraam politely refused telling his father that he is betrothed to Christ, adding that his cousin will have her reward also and that his father should not worry about her because God will provide for her the best there is. He lived a very strict celibate life abstaining from all things that can arouse the desires of the flesh: “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” (Galatians 5:17-18).

We all know the story about the desire he had to eat pigeons, a very popular Egyptian delicacy. The cook brought in a pair of pigeons and cooked them especial. When the cook brought the fancy meal in, he asked him to take it back. This was repeated many times until the meat spoiled and the smell of spoilage was unbearable. Anba Abraam looked at it and spoke to himself audibly saying: “My soul, eat what you desired” and asked the cook to throw it away. That is the life of a true aesthetic man of God who knew how to control the desires of the flesh.

Anba Abraam knew that it is not the appearance or comfortable life style that is important, but the important thing is the spiritual well being. He slept in a simple room on a small iron bed and wore simple cloths that were very worn out and refused to change the situation inspite of the urging of all that surrounded him. They did not know what he gained in terms of spirituality and

higher stature by living the simple life aesthetics. Anba Abraam used red handkerchiefs used by peasants called “mandeel mihalawi” They became a popular item in his time. This was very well with Anba Abraam.

2. Obeying the Commandments:

He obeyed the commandments, including: fasting, giving, and praying continuously. He showed great restraint and obedience to those in authority. Being accused, he left the monastery without complaint. Asked to become a bishop, he first refused, because he did not desire the glory of this world including being called your Grace “Sayedna or Anba”, but at the urging of his disciples and the patriarch he accepted the responsibility in obedience. When the pope called him in, he went without delay knowing that there were complaints against him. He also was extremely old and had to travel by train for several hours to see the pope.

The commandments are not only concerning the relation with God but also concerning the relation with others and dealing with the temporal state. Anba Abraam treated everyone who came his way with respect, even those who did not show courtesy or respect to him. The story about a servant of a family that invited Anba Abraam every year. The servant mocked Anba Abraam calling him “Sayedhoum” and he was punished for eat with severe stomach pain, but Anba Abraam prayed for him and healed him admonishing him not to do that again.

Anba Abraam made good relations with the government officials in his episcopate invited them to the house of the episcopate and paying them courtesy visits. And when the khedev of Egypt, Tawfik, visited Fayoum, Anba Abraam walked over to the house of the governor to greet him. He also went to the railway station to bid him farewell. The khedev responded to his hospitality and good citizenship saying: ”Inta Ragil Mabrouk Anba Abraam” (You are a blessed Man (of God) Anba Abraam”

3. Courage:

The casual student of the life of Anba Abraam would not believe the stories about his courage and how he took strong stands and spoke out when it was necessary. He showed extraordinary courage. When the English surveyor reduced the episcopate’s land trust from 35 to 6 Acres, Anba Abraam was very annoyed which surprised his closest assistants. He demanded that he sees the head of the region (‘Mudeer El-Fayoum’) and when the ‘Mudeer’ could not settle the dispute, Anba Abraam took his complaint all the way to the highest authority, Khedev Tawfik, the king of Egypt at the time. Following the Example of St. Paul who raised his complaint to Caesar! The land trust was restored.

When young people came to him asking his endorsement of deserting or dodging the draft, skipping military service, he scolded them saying: “If you do not serve in the army, who is going to protect our country!. Who is going to protect us” They were convinced.

Also, when a priest was being tried and about to be defrocked for allowing a deposed bishop to conduct the service in his Church, Anba Abraam did not accept the verdict because he

felt that that priest was helpless, and was unjustly treated. He spoke in opposition and refused to sign the resolution. When one said: “Do you know Anba Abraam whom you are talking to, it is Qualliny Pasha (Lord Qualliny);” Anba Abraam replied: “God Lives Forever, Moses Spoke to God Al-Mighty!” He left the meeting, and threatened that he will never enter this house (the house of patriarchate) again! He left the meeting headed by the pope, and went down from the meeting room on the second floor to the reception room on the first floor. He did not rest until they brought the petition to him, and after he tore it to pieces, he returned back to the meeting room in the house of the patriarchate. This is extreme courage.

4. Wisdom:

He handled difficult situations with great wisdom. The way he left Menya when he felt that the glory of the world is overtaking him because of his generosity with the poor, the Lord’s Brethren. When they did not want him anymore in the monastery, he left with his five companions with no fanfare. When they needed bishops for Ethiopia, he nominated four of his companions without asking to be included and they were elevated before him.

When two bishops were feuding, he resolved the argument with wisdom interjecting the words: “do not forgive us!” instead of “forgive us our sins” to get their attention! it worked: “: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” (Matthew 10:16)

In his first illness, he accepted the advice to seek medical treatment and called the doctor a tool of God for healing. But in his last illness he refused to even be seen or examined by a physician, he knew that his time was completed and that it was time to depart to be in paradise.

When a young lady decided to leave the Christian faith, he rebuked her very harshly, but when she fell ill, he treated her like a precious child. She came back.

5. Word of Knowledge:

He told many people about future situations and incidents that were revealed to him through the gift of knowledge (The Works of the Holy Spirit). This gift is lacking in the Church, toady, and having it is a great spiritual help to all of us. He told one man that his work troubles will be resolved by a transfer with no more harm. This man was a police officer accused of misconduct and was going to lose his job.

He told his followers that the Cholera epidemic will pass. He told the man who mocked him in secret what he did, and admonished him not to do it again. He also healed him twice. He told the police how to catch a killer in the railways station before the killer could escape.

He told about his own healing: “This leg that served the Lord Jesus Christ will not be amputated” He also knew when he was not going to recover from his final illness, and refused to see the physicians who wanted to examine him because he knew it was no use, the hour of his departure was near.

A great blessing for saints and godly people is to know the time of their departure and he was one of those to whom it was revealed, so he was ready to depart the world and be in paradise the place of the living with God.

6. Wonders & Miracles:

We listed 38 wonders & miracles of Anba Abraam during his life and after his departure. There are many more that need to be documented, God willing we will do so. The exorcisms he performed in the name of Christ and the Power of the Cross are some of the more difficult exorcisms.

His prayers brought healing to many in his life and continue after his departure, we documented 38 miracles. In the 80s, a hegomen (archpriest) from Egypt was healed before a major open heart surgery was to take place in London, England. And a couple (husband and wife who are physicians) from Alexandria have offspring, a son whom they named Abraam, after Anba Abraam, after many years of trying unsuccessfully to have a child and not being able to. She was able to conceive through prayers asking the intercession of Anba Abraam.

Our Church building in St. Louis was completed against many odds in 1994 . It is a miracle, a precious gift, received through the intercessions of St. Mary & Anba Abraam. The same bank that refused to lend the Church money earlier, came to the Church with an extremely attractive financial package. The cost of construction was drastically reduced by unconventional means of managing the construction project, the general contracting company did allow the Church to act as its own contractor for a large portion of the work to help reduce cost. The young people of the Church did a major portion of the finishing of the basement (social hall) as volunteers. Members of the Church designed, constructed and assembles the Iconostasis. Many of these things were not possible 10 years earlier, but it became available and workable when the right time came, and the prayers were heard..

7. Love:

The love of the Lord manifested in a complete dedication of his life from his childhood is evident in all the stories about Anba Abraam, departed bishop of Fayoum. His love for his parents is expected, but he also took in his half brother and prepared him, and ordained him a priest.

He loved his seven companions to put them ahead of himself. Four were appointed bishops to Ethiopia and the others became local bishops ahead of him.

He loved the Church to give it every ounce of energy he had. When he was sick, he asked the arch-priest to report about the service in this order: service to the poor, bible studies, and Church services, in details.

Love for his fellowman was extreme. He gave everything he received out of extreme love: The furniture for the episcopate given away so that a threatened wedding of the daughter of one of the flock can take place. The money for new building construction given to the poor. The new cloths he received given away, and the food that came from wealthy homes went to the poor.

He loved his country so much that, he gave an example of good citizenship, by visiting new government representatives to Fayoum and invited them to the house of the episcopate. He walked over to the house of the director of the region to greet Khedeve Tawfik, the king of Egypt at the time, everyone else did ride a horse drawn carriage to get to the place.

8. Love For the Holy Books:

It is told that Anba Abraam completed the reading of the Holy Bible: Genesis to Revelation every 40 days. this amounts to reading the Bible 9 times every year. He also knew the Coptic language and the hymnals very well, and sang with the congregation in Church services. Although he did not preach, he attended the sermons and bible studies and answered the questions of the speakers and congregation with the authority of a man of God who has a large measure of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

9. Charity/Agape (Love Giving): Anba Abraam's Ultimate Gift:

Anba Abraam can be summarized in one word: Love Giving, Charity. This is the reason the Church attaches to his name the title: "Friend of the Poor." In the Paradise of Monks there is a story about one monk who gave everything and there was nothing left to give. When a person came asking alms, he gave him his personal bible. The brothers asked the Abott, thereon how can he read his bible, the Abott replied: "He became a bible unto himself" This describes exactly Anba Abraam. When he departed, they counted his positions. They found the clothes he was wearing, the bible, agpeya, wooden cross he used from the time he was ordained priest, and the staff of episcopate. This is Anba Abraam, the Departed Bishop of Fayoum, The Friend of The Poor. May his blessing be with us, Glory be to God Forever. Amen.

The Complete Story of Anba Abraam (two parts) is in St. Mary & St. Abraam Coptic Orthodox Church Home Page: <http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Heights/2894>

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(Building Loan/Essays Book)

Doxology for Anba Abraam, Bishop of Fayoum:

The lamp that lights
Fayoum and all Egypt
For His wonders and miracles
 and his love for Christ
 The one with crown of jewels
 The friend of the anchorites
 The friend of the righteous and prophets
Who followed our Lord Christ
He is Anba Abraam
The Bishop of Fayoum
The true shepherd
The teacher of virtues
 David taught us in truth
 That blessed are those
 Who love the meek and poor
 The Lord will save their souls
Like our Father Abrahaam
The Father of Issac and Jacob
You loved to show mercy
And completed all commandments
 You were used to witness to the truth
 You were used to eat with the poor
 With great humility
 You loved your sheep
The lovers of material things
Sought new buildings
But you built in heaven
Heavenly new places
 How many are your wonders
 You healed the sick
 You prophecied about great things
 You cast out the Devils
You became an example
With your pure example
With love and mercy
And witness to the truth
 Ask the Lord on our behalf
 Our father anba Abraam
 The Bishop of Fayoum
 So He may forgive us our sins.

Praises “Tasbeeh”:

Khen Ephran., em-eviot, nembi epsheri, nembi ebnevma thouav . tetrias en omosios. Axios, Axios, Axios, te-agia maria ti parthenos.

Axios Axios, Axios, ava abraam bi-episkopos

Meaning:

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God Amen. Worthy Worthy Worthy St. Mary the Pure Virgin. Worthy Worthy Worthy St. Abraam the Bishop.

"Halleluia Vai Be pi. eheo itah, epshoice samiov. Maren theleel enten enouv emoon enkhitf. Oh epshoic eak-eh nahmeen, Oh epchoice ak eh soteen nenmoit. Evesmarout enge vi ethnio khenevran, eme-epchoice. Allelluia"

Meaning:

This is the Day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Lord Save us, Lord ease our way. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Halleluiah.

This comes from Psalm 118 and is sang in Arabic, Coptic, or English in Church Liturgy

Song:

This Is the Day, This Is the Day, This Is the Day The Lord Has Made, The Lord Has Made. Let Us Rejoice, Let Us Rejoice and be Glad In It and be Glad In It.

Glory Always be to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit
Now and Forever. Amen

Please call or write. We really would like to hear from you. Also remember to **pray continuously and rejoice always**. A prayer of thanksgiving is always appropriate (In all conditions, concerning every condition, and upon all conditions). Pray for others before you pray for yourself, ask for spiritual gifts before you ask for material gifts. Follow the example of Anba Abraam and show more love for the poor. Praises are the highest level of prayer, don't miss the praise (Tasbeha) services of your Church. God Bless You and Yours.



His Holiness Pope Shenouda III
117th Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch
of the See of St. Mark (1971-)
Church Dedication and Altar Consecration, Oct. 1, 1994
St. Mary & St. Abraam Coptic Orthodox Church

The Church Needs Your Help in Paying the Bank Loan . Please send Tax Deductible Contributions to: Church Building Payment Fund

St. Mary & St. Abraam
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St. Mary & St. Abraam Coptic Orthodox
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This publication is the fifth in a series:

- 1) Brief Commentary on the Book of Revelation**
- 2) Essays for Orthodox Youth,**
- 3) Rituals, Signs, and Symbols**
- 4) Anba Abraam, The Bishop of Fayoum**
- 5) Anba Abraam, The Bishop of Fayoum:
Part II: Wonders and Miracles**

We are trying to cover various topics for the English speaking members of our congregations in their language. All donations go to paying a loan for church building project for the Coptic Orthodox congregation in St. Louis. Through your prayers and financial support, we were able to get the building completed but we still owe the bank \$500,000. All donations are tax deductible. And more important, "The Lord Loves a Cheerful Giver" May the Lord use this publication for the Glory of His Wonderful Name. Please call or Write if you need more help in understanding our Christian faith.

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