



## Anba Abraam (Feast 10 June)

1829 – 10 June 1914

The Friend of the Poor.

# A contemporary saint

- Bishop of Fayoum & Giza
- At 19 he became a monk at El-Muharraq Monastery
- He became abbot of this monastery which became a refuge for the poor,
- Some monks felt this was a waste of the monastery's money and appealed to the Archbishop to kick him out
- He left the monastery and went to Baramos monastery with 4 disciples.

# Disaster...or is it?

- He suffered because he insisted to put others needs before his own.
- In other words, he emptied himself (*kenosis*) for others
- He imitated Christs kenotic incarnation, the ultimate self-emptying for others
- God in turn exalted him as Christ was exalted
- Glory can ONLY come through humility or preferring others before ourselves

# Abraam the humble is exalted

- The abbot at Baramos monastery is the future Pope Cyril V & welcomes him
- He loved the hostile poor Arabs who were living in the area of the monastery and he shared with them everything he had, even his clothes
- Pope Cyril ordains him bishop of Fayoum & Giza where he continued for 33 years
- He left disciples wherever he went. At El-Muharraq he left behind his famous disciple Abuna Mikhail-el-Behery. This father suffered with the troublesome monks who kicked Anba Abraam out, but won them over with his patience & virtue, eventually becoming the confession father of the monastery and performing miracles including saving the monastery from a fire

# A contemporary saint

- In the year 1893 he was seriously ill with his leg, that the doctors decided to perform surgery to cut off his leg. When one of his spiritual children told him, he smiled, as usual, and said "God will not let it happen"
- After 2 months he recovered completely, and went out to the Church, praising God. The Bishop's house was very crowded. The people held the palm leaves and they were waving the olive branches with joy, when they heard of his recovery.

# Famous stories

- Anba Abraam was asked to resolve a dispute between two feuding bishops. It seemed hopeless. Anba Abraam asked that all in attendance stand up to recite the Lord's Prayer together. He led the prayer audibly, and when he came to the verse: "forgives us our sins .." he instead said: "don't forgive us our sins, ..." so, some inquired how come Anba Abraam, he responded: "because we are not willing to forgive each other." This got the attention of the feuding bishops and they realized the need to forgive each other and the dispute was resolved that instant

# Famous stories

- Anba Abraam received furniture for the episcopate. He refused to use it, and asked the servant to put it in storage. When a woman came to him complaining that her daughter's engagement is not going to result in a wedding, because they don't have money to buy furniture for her and her future husband. Anba Abraam told the servant to show her the new furniture, and let her take what she needed.
- Some of the people complained to Pope Kyrillos V about giving away the furniture. Afterwards, there was a collection to build a new house of the episcopate. Anba Abraam gave that money also to the poor and needy. More complaints
- The Pope summoned him. Abraam was an old man, with poor eyesight. It was a Summer afternoon, a ray of the sun through a hole in the shade of the window was mistaken by Anba Abraam as a clothes line for hanging clothes. Anba Abraam threw his Coat on it and it stayed there. The Pope saw how the Lord works wonders to defend this saint on earth. The Pope changed the purpose of the call and instead inquired about his health and gave him 15,000 Egyptian Pounds to build a new house for the episcopate.
- When the people came back to see the Pope, he scolded them for their lack of faith, concluding: "How can I argue with a man of God who was able to hang his coat on a ray of the Sun" The new house of the episcopate was not built in Anba Abraam's life. The money was used to help the poor.

# God delivered the friend of the poor

- This is why the Holy Bible says "*Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble*" (Ps 41:1).
- On the other hand He says "*Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, will also cry himself and not be heard.*" (Prov 21:13)



# Blessed if we give

- He said *"Give and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be put into your bosom. For with the measure that you use, it will be measured back to you"* (Luke 6:38)

# Cursed/condemned if we do not give

- On the last day, God will say to those on His left *"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matt 25:41).  
Why did He give this sentence? He says immediately after this *"For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me. Then, he explains the reason saying "Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me."* (Matt 25:42-45).

# Practical tips

- We can only get good at giving if we START giving
- The minimum 10% is a start...but why should we be stingy with God..
- If we are forgetful or find it hard to part with hard earned cash- set up direct debit
- Giving can involve time, money or effort. It is an act of sacrifice for others, we imitate Christ's Ultimate sacrifice

# Practical tips

- Give money, clothes, food to those badly off around us both here and overseas
- Give time: tutoring help, homework/assignment help, notes to other struggling students.
- Give effort: Food shopping for grandparents, housework to help parents
- Ask yourself: what would I like done for me? Then do it for others!

Questions?

