

The Martyrdom of St. George (Girgis) known as El-Mezahem- June 26th

This day also, in the year 675 A.M. (June, 959 A.D.), marks the martyrdom of St. George, the new martyr, known as El-Mezahem. His father was a Moslem Bedouin. He married a Christian woman from the city of Demerah El-kibliah. He had from her three sons, one of them was this Saint, and they called him El-Mezahem. He used to go with his mother to the church at a young age. He also used to see the children of the Christians dress in white on the days that they partook of the Holy Mysteries. He longed that his mother would dress him like them, and allow him to eat from whatever they ate at the altar. His mother told him that could not be, unless he was baptized. She gave him a portion of the blessed Eulogia bread, that they distributed to the people, and it tasted in his mouth like that of honey. He meditated in his heart and said, 'If the taste of this bread that was not consecrated by prayers tastes like this, what will be the taste of the Offering?' His longing for the faith in Christ increased from that time. When he grew up, he married a Christian woman, and he told her that he wished to become a Christian. She told him that he had to be baptized. He went to Birma, was baptized there and was called George (Girgis). When this matter became known, he went to Domiat. The Moslems there recognized him, seized him and tortured him. Then he escaped and fled to the city of Saft Abu-Trab, where he stayed for three years. When his matter became known again he went to the city of Katurah, and remained there serving the church of St. George, then went back to Demerah. When the Moslems of the city of Demerah knew his history, they seized him, and delivered him to the governor who put him in prison.

The Moslems assembled and broke the door of the prison. They beat the Saint severely, split open his head, and left him between life and death. When some of the believers came on the morrow to bury him, for they thought that he was dead, they found him alive. The Moslems convened a council, and threatened him, but he did not change his conviction. They hung him up on the mast of a ship, but the governor ordered that he be taken down and cast him up in prison. His wife strengthened him, and comforted him. She taught him to believe that the punishment which had come upon him was because of his sins; lest Satan lead him astray and he might boast that he became like the martyrs. The angel of the Lord appeared to him, comforted him, strengthened him, and informed him that he would receive the crown of martyrdom on the next day.

On the next morning, the Moslems gathered with the governor and demanded from him that the head of El-Mozahem be cut off. He handed him over to them. They took him, and cut off his head near the church of the angel Michael in the city of Demerah. They cast his body in hot fire for a day and a night. But his body did not burn, so they put him in a barrel and threw him into the river. By the Will of God the barrel landed on the shore of an island, which was inhabited by a believing woman. She took his body, shrouded him, hid him in her house until they built a church for him, in which they laid his body. May his intercession be with us. Amen.