



The Martyrdom of St. Peter

“Seal of the Martyrs”

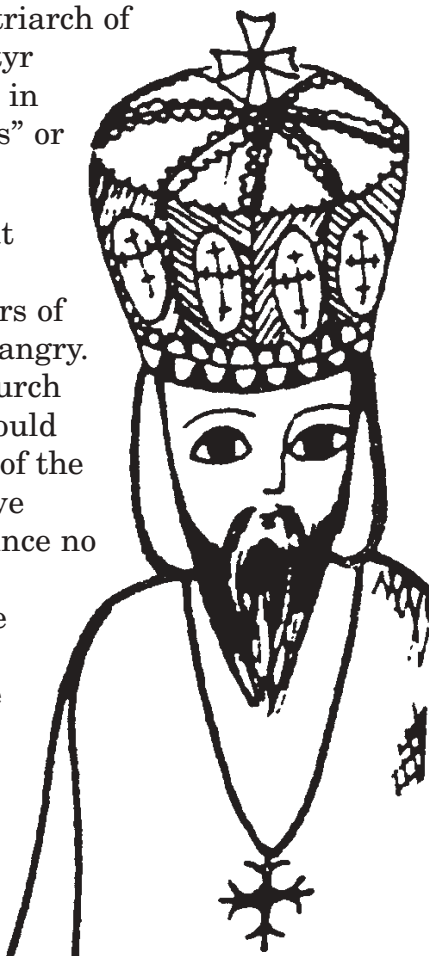
Persecutions under the reign of Emperor Diocletian were the fiercest and longest of all known persecutions, lasting over ten years, and not ending till the Patriarch himself was martyred.

Since **St. Peter**, the 17th Patriarch of Alexandria was the last martyr under Diocletian, he is called in Church history, “Ieromartyros” or “Seal of the Martyrs.”

When Diocletian realized that Christianity in Egypt was increasing despite many years of persecution, he became very angry. He ordered the torture of Church leaders, thinking that this would hinder the growth and spirit of the Church. Six of the most active bishops were arrested, and since no torture was great enough to weaken their faith, they were martyred. When **St. Peter** heard of their martyrdom, he knelt down and thanked

God deeply for keeping
them steadfast in the
faith till the end.

Soon after this,
St. Peter





was arrested and led to prison.

When the children heard of their beloved father's arrest, they gathered together in one accord, and went to the prison, fighting for their father's freedom. When **St. Peter** heard their voices, he asked the officers to allow him to speak to them and dismiss them in peace, so that no more trouble would arise because of him. **St. Peter** comforted the multitudes and told them to leave in peace. As loving disciples they did not want to leave their master behind, but did so in obedience. Then **St. Peter** requested to visit the Church of St. Mark before being led to his execution. His request was granted, and when he knelt down and prayed warmly to God to accept his life, a voice was heard saying, "Amen."

When **St. Peter** was led out to be beheaded, no officer dared to touch him, for they beheld his face as that of an angel. Finally, after being offered 25 pieces of gold, one officer was encouraged and beheaded **St. Peter**. In tears, the faithful rushed to carry the saint's remains back to the Church and place him on St. Mark's Throne, which he refused to sit on through out his papacy because of his humility and love for the great Evangelist and Apostle. They prayed the Rite for burial and laid him to rest . A period of peace followed the martyrdom of this great saint despite persecution towards Copts in later years and times.

May the blessings of **Abba Peter**, Seal of the Martyrs be with us, Amen.