



Commemoration of the Saints, Divine Liturgy

Beloved from God Theophilus

Θεοφιλος

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St Theophilus grew up in a small town in Giza, Egypt. His parents died when he was very young and left him and his little sister as orphans. Their babysitter took them to the church in Alexandria where St Athanasius was praying and left them with him. The little boy grew up under the care of St Athanasius who was the 20th patriarch of our church, while his sister lived in a convent.

In the year 376 St Theophilus became the 23rd patriarch of our great church. His sister got married and gave birth to a boy named Cyril who also became a Patriarch of our church after his uncle. St Theophilus wrote a book about the journey of the Holy Family in Egypt after St Mary appeared to him and showed him where they traveled. We remember him in every Divine Liturgy in the Commemoration of the Saints.

When we read this story of St Theophilus, our reaction may be “wow! What a blessed saint. He was great. St Mary appeared to him personally. However, I’d like to take a moment and imagine our reaction to a crucial part of his life if we were around then, his childhood. His parents died and left him and his sister as orphans with no one to care for them. We would probably say “ya haraaaam. How saaad? Who is going to take care of them? How can God allow such a thing?” And so on. Our reaction is totally different. This shows our little faith in God and His will. These two orphans became what we now marvel about and

say “wow!”

Theophilus the orphan became the 23rd patriarch of our great Coptic Orthodox Church. He was so blessed that St Mary herself appeared to him, and over 1600 years later, he is remembered in every Coptic Orthodox Church in the world. His sister got married and gave birth to a son named Cyril, (St Cyril now) who later became a Patriarch after his uncle. Wow!

We should never question God’s will. Our limited minds cannot understand His unlimited wisdom. Whenever we face any type of tribulation we should trust that it is in our best interest. We should ask ourselves if we trust the Lord with our lives. Which are not really “our lives,” but that’s a different story. If the answer is yes, then let Him guide it and direct it. We must glorify God in all situations. A man losing his fortune, a woman losing her husband, a child losing his parents; are all disasters in our limited eyes; Because we don’t know God’s plan. If we knew, we would never ask why. And here our faith is tested. Will we cling more to God in our hardships or will we call him unfair and unjust and deny his presence like many do. We should remember that God’s priority is our salvation. I pray that we stay steadfast in the Lord through good and bad. Nevertheless, if we really stick with Him, we’ll realize that it’s all good and none bad. And glory be to God forever. Amen.



Saint Menas

Mariut, southwest of Alexandria

The ruins of Abu Mina, the great Basilica, discovered by Kaufmann in 1908 during the excavation in this area.

*A church was erected and consecrated by **St Athanasius, XX** (328-373 A.D.) patriarch of Alexandria. Later a great Basilica was constructed in the eastern extremity of the Crypt’s Basilica, by **St Theophilus, XXIII** (385-412 A.D.) during the reigns of the Emperors Arcadius and Honorius. Later during the 8th, 9th centuries many raids and disorders troubled this area; as a result the pilgrims fell away until at length the city was abandoned and the church deserted in the end of the 10th century. In recent times **H.H. Anba Kyrillos, VI** (1959-1971 A.D.) erected a monastic establishment nearby.*