



## The 40 Martyrs of Sebastia

Πίζμε ιτ άμαρτυρος ήτε Σεβαστε

Written by Marianne Abdou  
St. Mary Church, Pompano Beach, Fl

**P**ERSECUTION...  
a word feared by  
many people.

Not an easy thing to go through but many people went through it, even little children, by simply confessing their faith and their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. A great example for us, as youth, in confessing their faith is the **40** Martyrs of Sebastia. A group of **40** youth of different nationalities, gathered together to declare their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ to Emperor Agricolaus; an idol worshipper. At night an angel appeared to them to strengthen them. In the morning they went to the emperor to tell him that they are Christians. He tried to persuade them to leave the faith or they will be faced with many hard tortures, but if they obey his decree and worship the idols, he promised them with many things.

They greatly refused and as a result he placed them in prison. The Lord Jesus appeared to them encouraging and strengthening them. Next to the prison were two big lakes; one icy and one warm. The emperor ordered that they be placed in the icy lake and if any of them deny their faith, he would be



**40 Martyrs of Sebastia**

placed in the warm lake. They stayed in the lake for three days until death except one of them denied his faith and was tempted to get in the warm lake. The soldiers took him and placed him there; he also died but lost his heavenly crown. One of the soldiers next to the lake saw angels coming from Heaven with crowns to place on the thirty-nine that died and only one crown remained which belonged to the youth that denied his faith at the last minute. The soldier ran quickly and jumped in the icy lake and cried out saying "I am Christian" and died receiving the last crown. The soldiers tried to burn the bodies of the saints but they would not burn,

so they threw them in the river. After 3 days, the martyrs appeared to the Bishop of Sebastia in a vision and told him their story. The bishop, priests, deacons and the congregation went to get their holy bodies out of the river, taking them back to the city. They placed them in a beautiful shrine.

We commemorate these Holy **40** Martyrs on the 13th of Baramhat— the 7th Coptic month. May their blessing and strength be with us all. Amen.✙