



# The 49 Elders of Sheheat

ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕΤΕ ΙΝΑ ΝΗΣΕΛΛΟΙ ΝΤΕ ΨΙΖΗΤ

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**E**mperor Theodosius the Less was emperor of Rome from 408 AD to 450 AD and the only son of Emperor Arcadius. He did not have a son. He wrote to the Elders of Sheheat asking them to pray to God to give him a son. St. Isidore wrote back to him saying that God did not will for him to have a son who would take part with the heretics after him. When the Emperor read the message, he offered thanks to God. Some people advised him to marry another wife to have offspring from her who would inherit the Empire after him. He responded that he could not do anything except what the Elders of Sheheat commanded. Then he sent to the Elders of Sheheat an envoy with one whose name was Martinos to consult with them.

Martinus had a son named Zius who accompanied him on his visit to the elders in order to receive their blessings. When they arrived and the elders read the message, they took the messenger to the body of St. Isidore, for he had departed. They called on him saying, *"Our father, we have received a letter from the Emperor, what shall we answer to him?"* A voice came from the pure body saying, *"What I had said before, I also say now, that the Lord will never give him a son to take part with the heretics, even if he marries ten women."* The Elders wrote back to the Emperor recounting what they had heard.

When the messenger wanted to return, the pagan barbarians attacked the monastery. One of their great elders, whose name were St. Youanis, called upon the brethren and said, *"The barbarians have come to kill us. Whoever amongst you would like to become a martyr, let him stand, and whoever is afraid, let him hide inside."* Some of them hid, but he remained with forty eight elders. The barbarians slaughtered them all.

Martinus and his son were in hiding. The son looked up and saw the angels placing crowns of glory on the elders who were killed. The son said to his father, *"I see spiritual beings putting crowns on the heads of the elders. I shall go to receive a crown like that."* His father replied, *"And I also shall go with you, my son."* Both revealed themselves to the barbarians, who killed them and they received the crowns of martyrdom.

After the barbarians had gone, the monks who were in hiding came out. They took the bodies, and placed them in a cave. There they sang every evening. Some people from the City of Batanoon came and took the body of St. Youanis and returned with it to their city. After some time, they returned the body to its place. Also people from Fayoum stole the body of Zius son of Martinus and when they arrived to Lake Fayoum, the Angel of the Lord returned it back to its place beside the body of his father. The elders tried many times to move the body of the son Zius far from the body of his father Martinus but could not. Every time they moved it, it goes back beside the body of his father. One of the fathers heard during the night, *"Praise God, we were not separated in the flesh, nor are we separated when we are with Christ, why do you want to separate our bodies?"*

When persecutions became rampant and the attacks on the Wilderness continued, the fathers relocated the bodies to a cave built beside the Church of St. Macarius. At the time of Anba Theodosius, the 33rd Pope of Alexandria, a church was built for the martyrs. When Anba Benjamin, the 38th Pope of Alexandria, came to the Wilderness, he arranged a feast day for them on the 5<sup>th</sup> Amshir, which was the day of the relocation of their bodies to this church.

After a long time had passed, the church building



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deteriorated and they moved them to one of the cells. Later Ibrahim El-Gohary built a church for them around the end of the eighteenth century, where they placed the bodies of the saints. The church is still in existence today in the Monastery of St. Macarius. The cell in which they were kept is known today in Coptic as the cell of Ehmil Epseet or the Cell of the 49.

The Church commemorates the 49 Elder Priests of Sheheat, Martinos, the envoy representative of the emperor, and Ziuz his son on the twenty-sixth day of the Blessed Month of Tubah.

May their blessings be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen. ✙



## The Names of the 70 Apostles

ΜΙΡΑΝ ΗΝΤΕ ΠΙΩΒΕ ΗΔΑΠΟCΤΟΛΟC

- |   |                             |                           |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. St. Mark the Evangelist 30 Baramoudah  | 27. Bashans*                | 49. Quartus               |
| 2. St. Barnabas 21 Kiahk                  | 28. St. Carpus 1 Baramoudah | 50. Patrobas              |
| 3. St. Luke the Evangelist 22 Babah       | 29. Epaphras                | 51. Zenas the Lawyer      |
| 4. St. Matthias the Apostle 8 Baramhat    | 30. Epaphroditus            | 52. Sosthenes             |
| 5. Joseph Known Justus                    | 31. Mnason                  | 53. Philemon              |
| 6. St. Cleopas 1 Hatour                   | 32. Amplias                 | 54. Archippus 25 Amshir   |
| 7. St. Stephen 1 Tubah                    | 33. Urbanus                 | 55. Antipas 16 Baramoudah |
| 8. St. Philip the Deacon                  | 34. Simon the Tanner        | 56. Tertius               |
| 9. St. Prochorus the Deacon 20 Tubah      | 35. Stachys                 | 57. Lucius the Cyrenian   |
| 10. St. Nicanor the Deacon                | 36. Apollos                 | 58. Onesiphorus           |
| 11. St. Timon the Deacon 26 Babah         | 37. Epaenetus               | 59. Tychicus              |
| 12. St. Parmenas the Deacon               | 38. Herodion                | 60. Narcissus             |
| 13. St. Nicolas the Deacon                | 39. Quadratus 24 Tute*      | 61. Achaicus              |
| 14. St. Ananias 27 Baounah                | 40. Asyncritus              | 62. Artemas               |
| 15. Lazarus the Beloved of the Lord 17    | 41. Phlegon                 | 63. Pudens                |
| 16. Paramhat                              | 42. Gaius                   | 64. Trophimus             |
| 17. Andronicus 22 Bashans                 | 43. Aristarchus             | 65. Nereus                |
| 18. Junia 23 Bashans                      | 44. Eutychus 1              | 66. Erastus 29 Baramoudah |
| 19. Arislohulus 19 Baramhat               | Nasei                       | 67. Aquila                |
| 20. St. Onesiphorus, (Friska) 25 Baramhat | 45. Simon                   | 68. Alexander             |
| 21. Judas Known as Barsabas               | Cleopas 9                   | 69. Rufus                 |
| 22. Silvanus                              | Abib                        | 70. Jason 3 Bashans       |
| 23. Olympas 6 Abib                        | 46. Manacn                  |                           |
| 24. St. Titus 2 Nasei                     | 47. Hermas                  |                           |
| 25. St. Agabus 4 Amshir                   | 48. Linus                   |                           |
| 26. St. Phorus, (Fournos) 30              |                             |                           |



According to  
H.G. Bishop Matthaos