



The Paradise Of The Holy Fathers

Παπαδικος ἵστε νενιοῖ εθοραβ

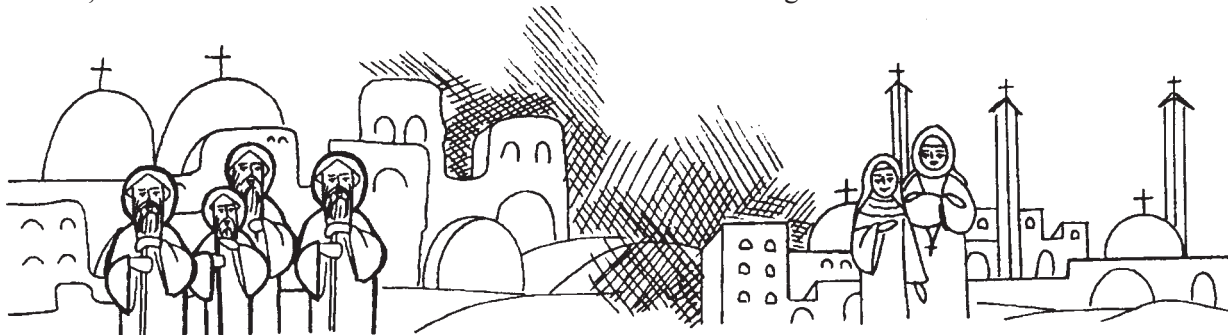
The History of the Blessed Ammonius

Πιφιρι ἵστε Δαμμωνιος ἑμαρωοντ

“**N**ow this man Ammonius and his three brothers (Dioscorus, Eusebius, and Euthymius, referred to as the “Tall Brothers” by Sozomen) and his two sisters were disciples of Rabba Pambo; and when they had attained unto the perfection of divine life and conversation they departed from the desert, and founded two monasteries, one for men and one for women, but they situated the monastery of the women at a sufficient distance from that of the men, for Ammonius did not greatly love the intercourse of speech. It was for this reason that a certain city desired that he should be its bishop, and the people thereof drew nigh unto the blessed man Timothy, Bishop of Alexandria, and entreated him to make the blessed Ammonius their bishop; and Timothy (381-385 AD) told them to bring Ammonius unto him and that he would make him their bishop. Then they took with them much people, and they went to Ammonius to bring him, and when he saw them he tried to find means to take to flight. But when he saw that he would be unable to escape from them, he tried to persuade them, with many oaths, which he would not accept it, but he was unable to make them put away their intentions. And when they would not be persuaded by him, he seized a razor and cut off his left ear at the root and said to them, “Now I am indeed persuaded that I cannot be that which you are urging me to be, for the Law commandeth the man whose

ear hath been cut off shall not draw nigh unto the altar (Leviticus 26:17). So they departed from him and went and informed the Bishop who said unto them, “This law is observed among the Jews, but even if nose was split and he had fine qualities I would make him Bishop.” Then the people went to Ammonius again and entreated him to come and when the pious man would not be persuaded by them, they wanted to take him and to make him come by force; but he said unto them, “If ye do not leave me I will also slit my tongue.” And when they heard this they left him and departed.

Concerning this man Ammonius so wonderful a thing as the following is said. Whenever a carnal thought entered his mind he never spared his body, but he would make a piece of iron hot on the fire and lay it upon his members, so that they might always be in a state of wounds. From his youth up his rule was as follows: whatsoever had been cooked by fire he would never eat. He could repeat the Holy Books of the Old and New Testament by heart, and he would read also the books written by excellent men such as Origen, Didymus, and by Pierius, and by Stephen containing about ten thousand six hundred sayings; concerning this the great fathers of the desert will bear witness. It is also said that this man possessed the power of foretelling events and living in his cell he was so great a comforter to the brethren who lived





in the desert that no other man could be compared to him. Now the blessed Evagrius, who was clothed with the Holy Spirit, and was skilled in examining thoughts, used to say, "I never saw any man who had attained more closely unto impassibility than Ammonius."

Once a certain need of those who were dwelling in the desert call the blessed man Ammonius, and Rufinus who was at that time the prefect also greatly persuaded him, and he went up to Constantinople. And with him there were also the holy bishops and other monks who had come from various provinces to attend the service of restoration of a certain martyrrium which Rufinus had built. And Rufinus wished him to receive him after holy baptism at the

service of restoration of the temple which he had built, and so the blessed man received him from the bishops who had baptized him. Thus, honor which is due to a life of asceticism, and he used to listen to him in everything; and after a short while he died and was buried in martyrrium which is referred to as the "martyrium of Rufinus" and many helpful acts took place at his grave on behalf of those who were worthy of assistance.

In the next issue of the Mighty Arrows we will learn of one, the Blessed Benjamin who fasted for eighty years....and was referred to as the "New Job."

(Excerpts: Budge, E.A., 1994, The Paradise of the Holy Fathers, p.105, 106.)✠

Why is the symbol of the fish so common in Christianity?

Archaeological findings reveal that the fish is one of the oldest motifs of Coptic Art. In the catacombs under Rome, early Christian artists drew fish as decorations; some of these drawings date back to as early as AD 200.

Legend has it that when Christians suffered persecutions for their Faith, they used the fish symbol as a secret sign to identify each other. If a Christian suspected a stranger of being a believer, he would sketch the fish symbol in the sand. If the stranger was not a Christian, he would not understand, but if he was Christian, then he would be aware



of the secret symbol.

In the Greek language, the word 'fish' is an acronym for the expression "Lord Jesus Christ." Son of God, Saviour (that is, in the Greek language, the first letter of each of these words is taken, they form the Greek word for fish). Therefore, it is very likely that the fish was used as a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ and subsequently, Christianity.

The fish also symbolizes elements of several Holy Bible stories such as the feeding of the five-thousand and the Lord Jesus Christ's promise that He would make His disciples 'Fishers of Men.'✠