



Our Fathers The *Martyrs* and the *Saints*

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Written by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

117th Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark

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Our honored fathers the *m a r t y r s* loved God, not only more than all the pleasures of the earth but more than life itself. The *martyrs* and *saints* suffered death if required of them for His sake, trusting that this life has a continuation with Him in Eternity. Hence, they forsook the world with all that is in it and did not desire anything from it, not even to live in it. Whoever loves God and is satisfied with Him is ready to forsake anything and everything for Him.

The Lord recompenses manifold those who forsake everything for Him. He says, ***“Everyone who has left homes or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and inherit Everlasting Life.” (Matthew 19:29)*** This promise concerns the reward. However, those who forsake anything for God, forsake it not for the reward, but out of their love to God which rules their hearts. Their love to God made them pious, and they said to the Lord, ***“There is none upon the earth that I desire besides You.”***

This last verse applies not only to love but also to



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and St. Dometius.

help. With this verse, Jacob, the weak and scared, was able to meet his brother Esau the strong and violent who had four hundred men (Genesis 32:6). Jacob did not have such an army as Esau, he had only his wives, children, and servants. Also Jacob had prayer. ***“Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. For You said, ‘I will surely treat you well and make your***



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descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.” (Genesis 32:11, 12). I depend on Your power and there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.

The spiritual person sees that God is His Shepherd and Protector. If a problem arises, he delivers it unto God, for God and not himself, is the One who solves his problems. He says, “Who am I? What is my strength and understanding to be capable to solve all my problems? Lord, You know my problems more than I do, You know all the hidden and apparent matters, all the obvious, hidden, and future problems. Through Your wisdom, O Lord, You can solve all my problems. Through Your love, You want to solve them for I completely trust that You love me more than I love myself and You care for me more than I care for myself. I am a child in front of You. ***‘The Lord preserves the simple.’ (Psalm 116:6)***”

Therefore, I leave everything in Your hands, and have comfort in Your faith, trusting that You have many solutions, for ***“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who built it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.” (Psalm 127:1)*** As long as You see my labor, this is



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sufficient, for You are the Almighty God who preserves justice on earth, and You are the Comforter of the weary who carries our grief’s and sorrows. I do not worry about my problems at all, but I leave them in Your hands and *there is none upon earth I desire besides You.*

Whoever meets God does not need any other power, for his power is God Himself. He says with David the Psalmist, ***“The Lord is my strength and song and He has become my salvation.” (Psalm 118:14) “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.” (Psalm 118:8, 9)***

Also, David the Psalmist says, ***“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our***

refuge.” (Psalm 46:1, 7) This is the kind of person that sees that God Himself is his strength. He does not depend on himself, or on his talents, intelligence, capabilities or human hand or human plans. God is sufficient for him, with Him he conquers, and God leads him to His victory.

He does not think how to talk when confronted by an enemy, for God speaks through him. ***“For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.” (Matthew 10:20)*** You do not defend yourselves, but ***“Stand still and see the salvation of***



the Lord.” (Exodus 14:13, 14) The Lord is your strength and salvation. Whoever is satisfied with the Lord does not need any other power, but says, “There is none upon earth that I desire besides You.”

With this principle, young the young shepherd David went to fight Goliath the Giant. He approached Goliath and said, *“You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you*

in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defiled.” (I Samuel 17:45) Yes, Lord, I do not own any weapons like him, but I have Your Name and Your Power. There is none upon earth that I desire besides You. David fought with this Divine power which spared him all weapons of war, “For the battle is the Lord’s.” (I Samuel 17:47) and God is the Conqueror in battles. ✠

Who is the Martyr?

Ήμε πε πωμάρτυροс

Written By His Grace Bishop Serapion

ΠΕΡΙΩΤ ΕΥΤΑΙΗΟΥΤ ΝΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟС ΔΕΒΒΑ СΕΡΑΠΙΟΝ
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In the Christian understanding a martyr is the person, who is killed, because of his faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw this happen in Abu Korkas, where non-Christian extremists entered the Church and killed the worshippers within. Despite the fact that they knew nothing about the worshippers, they killed them just because they were Christians. There is also a higher degree of martyrdom in which the person who is suffering is given the opportunity to escape death if he denies his faith,

and he refuses.

However when there is a quarrel between a Christian and non-Christian over a piece of land or any other reason, and the Christian person is killed, he is not considered a martyr, even if he was a victim and was killed unjustly. Therefore, not every Christian who was killed unfairly or by mistake is considered a martyr. We pray for all those innocent souls, who were killed, and offer our deepest condolences and compassion to their families. But in the Christian understanding, they are not considered martyrs.

Finally, there is yet another example of martyrdom, the confessors, who suffer for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ without the losing of their life. ✠