



It is documented that in recent years the number of those interested in the history of the Christian monastic movement in Egypt has increased considerably both in popularity and reputation and thus we continue with the second half of Volume I of the Paradise of the Holy Fathers.....

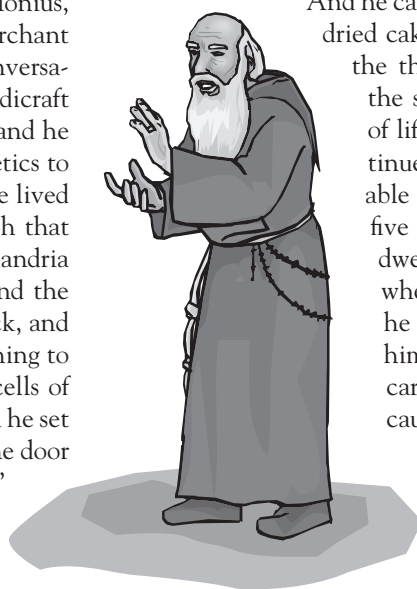
Excerpts from

## *The Paradise of the Holy Fathers...*

# The History of *Apollonius the Merchant*

ΠΙΦΙΡΙ ΝΤΕ ΑΠΟΛΛΟΝΙΟΣ ΠΙΕΨΩΤ

And again another man, whose name was Apollonius, used to dwell in this Mount Nitria; and he was a merchant who had come there to learn to lead the life and conversation of an anchorite. Now this man found no handicraft at the exercise of which he could employ himself, and he could neither fast nor keep vigil like the other ascetics to any great extent. During the twenty years which he lived in this mountain it was his rule of life and triumph that by his own labor and toil he used to buy from Alexandria everything which was required by the brethren, and the things which were needed for the healing of the sick, and carries them to the sick. And it was a marvelous thing to see him going about among the monasteries and cells of the brethren each day, from the earliest dawn, when he set out, until the ninth hour, and he used to stand by the door and say, "Is there, peradventure, 'anyone sick here?'"



And he carried about pomegranates, and dried cakes, and raisins, and eggs, and the things which are necessary for the sick. Now he found this rule of life easy to acquire, and to continue until his old age, and he was able to attend to the affairs of the five thousand brethren who were dwelling in the mountain. And when he died he left whatever he had to another man like unto himself, and he begged him to carry out this ministration, because the place where the monks lived was a desert and was destitute of the things of the world.

### **Spiritual Mediation:**

In the context of this true story passed down through the ages, when referring to Apollonius fasting and keeping vigil were in the context of comparison to the other anchorites and not that of the general population. Certainly Apollonius gave his two mites, his five loaves and two fishes worth of fasting and keeping vigil. His spiritual perfection was the best he could give. By giving his best to the Lord, it was a sweet aroma, good, and acceptable to the Lord.

He did not compare himself to the other ascetics and feel inferior; rather he gave his best and then discovered his special talent which was that of caring for the needs of the sick. Proving God not only accepts our best individually but helps us discover our talents and gifts when we give Him