St. Sarapamon, Bishop of Niku

філарет σαραπαμων πατριαρχος λειτουργος

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St. Sarapamon, Bishop of Niku (Nakiyos) was raised as a Jew in Jerusalem. When his father passed away, St. Sarapamon desired to become a Christian. The Lord, hearing the cry of His lost sheep, sent an angel to St. Sarapamon that commanded him to go to Abba John, Bishop of Jerusalem, who then taught St. Sarapamon the mystery of the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Sarapamon was then ready for the sacrament of baptism, but he feared the Jews. The Virgin Mary appeared to him and told him to go to the city, Alexandria. As St. Sarapamon embarked on his journey, the Lord sent him an angel in the form of a good shepherd who can hear the cry of a stray sheep, which desires to be a part of the flock, the Lord heard St. Sarapamon’s prayers and guided him to Christianity.

Likewise, as a sheep that knows its shepherd, St. Sarapamon recognized the Lord’s voice and followed His commands. In order to recognize God’s voice and to see His messengers, one must come with a pure heart that is open to God’s will and be ready to carry your cross; journeying through the path that God has chosen. After St. Sarapamon was baptized, he became a monk and was later ordained by His Holiness Pope Peter as Bishop of Niku.

During his service, St. Sarapamon performed many miracles in the Lord Jesus Christ’s Holy Name and eventually paganism was eradicated from his diocese.

St. Sarapamon (4th Century), Church of St. Mena, Fum Al’Khalig

Hereditary Diseases

His Grace Bishop Serapion, Bishop of Southern California

Hereditary diseases are those which people are born with due to genetic disorders transmitted from their parents. There are many of these diseases such as some forms of diabetes mellitus, heart diseases, blood disorders, cancers, and immunodeficiency diseases.

These hereditary diseases are a big challenge to modern medicine. Medical research has been successful in diagnosing and identifying the responsible genes for many of the hereditary diseases. In addition, there has been great success in the treatment of many of them. For example, those who suffer from diabetes can be treated with insulin, diet, and exercise.

We need to distinguish between treatment and cure. For instance, diabetes mellitus is treatable, so that the diabetic does not suffer intolerably as long as he is on a certain medical regimen. While the illness is hereditary and treatable, the person needs to be medication compliant for life.

From the spiritual and pastoral aspects, hereditary diseases have a special importance. Those patients who suffer from these diseases are in need not only of medical but also of spiritual care to help them endure the illness.

The parents of children who are born with these diseases suffer a lot of pain for their children. This requires extending the spiritual care to them to help them to cope. Here arises the question: What have these innocent children done to deserve this suffering which they have inherited from their parents?

The human conscience becomes even more perplexed with regard to hereditary diseases especially when medicine has advanced and is able to diagnose and identify many of the hereditary diseases before birth. Hence the confusing question arises: Should there be abortion if the parents know that the fetus has hereditary disease, in compassion for the sibling and parents?

We have said and we say again that there should not be abortion even if we are sure of the diagnoses. This is because the fetus is a living being since the moment of fertilization. As we have no right to kill the baby after its birth should it be with hereditary disease, ir-
As we cannot dispute the wisdom of God regarding babies born with hereditary diseases, then we have no right to interfere by using human methods and act against God’s will if God permits us to discover the hereditary disease before birth.

In the same way as children suffering from hereditary diseases prompted medical researchers and doctors to work hard to specify these diseases and find ways for their treatment, also if we do not kill these fetuses, this will prompt the medical researchers and doctors to find treatment for these illnesses.

Until the middle of May 1993, the maximum medicine attained with regard to hereditary diseases was the early discovery and the treatment of some of these diseases. Beginning in May 1993 until present genetic engineering is being used and improved to cure children suffering from hereditary diseases such as immunodeficiency diseases.

The amazing medical achievements of today led me to meditate upon the spiritual meaning of such accomplishments:

1. It is a message of hope for cure for those with hereditary diseases.
2. It led to the thought of children with hereditary diseases such as those of immunodeficiency diseases that were detected in the womb being cured at one day and three days old. What would have happened if their parents had resorted to human methods?

The governor ordered to bring him to worship the idols. This saint prayed and the earth opened and swallowed up the 70 idols and the 140 priests who were serving them.

When the governor beheld the destruction of his idols and their priests, he believed in the Lord Christ.

The governor went with the Saint to the governor of Athribis who tortured Saint Julius with great severity, but the Lord Christ strengthened him. Once there was a feast for the idols and they decorated the temple with ornaments, lamps, and statues and with palm branches. They closed the gates till the following day to start celebrating the feast.

The saint asked the Lord to blot out their idols. The Lord sent his angel who cut the heads of the idols, blackened their faces with ashes, burnt up all the palms, and all the idols in the temple. On the following morning when the people came dressed to celebrate the feast and saw what had happened to their gods, they recognized their weakness. The governor of Athribis and a large number of people believed in the Lord Christ.

The Saint then went to the city of Towabo along with the governor of Samanoud and the governor of Athribis, and they met Iskandros its governor. First he refrained from torturing them, but later on he ordered his men to cut off their heads. Julius and his two sons, Tadros and Yunias; his slaves; and the governors of Samanoud and Athribis and many people were martyred. They numbered fifteen hundred. They took his body with the bodies of his sons to Alexandria for it was their hometown.

May His prayers be with us and glory be to our God, forever. Amen.†