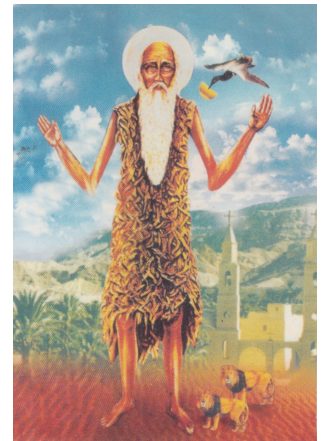


CHURCH STUDY

MONASTICISM



People who live a monastic life are ones who take a vow to live in poverty, obedience and abstinence.



Anchoritic - living in solitude (alone) with no cell but wandered in the desert. (*St. Paul the Hermit, St. Mary of Egypt*)

Communal - Monks lived in a community life in separate cells and assembled occasionally for Divine Liturgies and spiritual gatherings. (*St. Anthony the great, St. Macarius the Great*)

Cenobitic - Monks live in a community inside the walls of the monastery in association with each other, and are headed by an abbot and by rules. (*St. Pachomius the founder of the Cenobitic monasticism*)

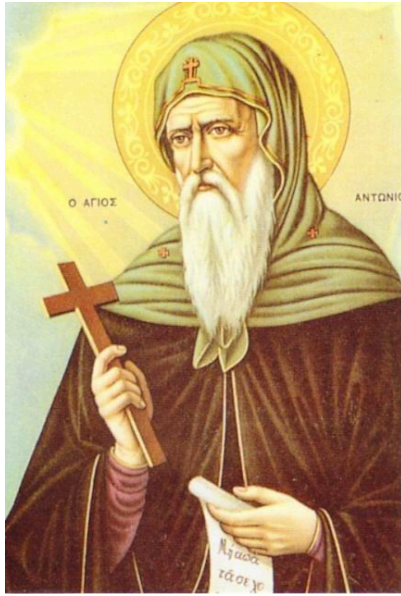
And Jesus said to him: "If you want to be perfect, go sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me."

Matthew 19: 21



ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

The Father of All Monks



Anthony was born in Upper Egypt in AD 251 to wealthy landowner parents. When he was about 20 years old, his parents died and left him with the care of his unmarried sister. In the church he heard the Gospel passage where Christ speaks to the rich man "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven." Matthew 19:21 he felt that these words applied to him. Therefore he gave away his money to the poor. He then left to live an ascetic life placing his sister with a group of Christian girls in a convent.

At that time, monasticism had not yet been established. Those who wanted to live a solitary life went and lived outside the city. This was what St. Anthony did as he dwelt alone, worshipping and living an ascetic life.



The devil fought him with boredom, laziness, and the phantoms of women. He overcame the devil's tricks by the power of the Lord Christ. He went to one of the tombs, and stayed there in solitude for 20 years. Some of his friends used to bring him food. When the devil realized his ascetic life and his intense worship, he was envious of him, and he beat him mercilessly, then left him unconscious. His friends carried him to the church. After he recovered, he went back to the same place. The devil again resumed his war against him, and appeared to him in the form of wild beasts, wolves, lions, snakes and scorpions. But the saint would tell them, **"If any of you have any authority over me, only one would have been sufficient to fight me."** At this saying they disappeared and he cried out, "Where have You been, O Merciful Jesus? Why didn't You appear from the very beginning to end my pain?"

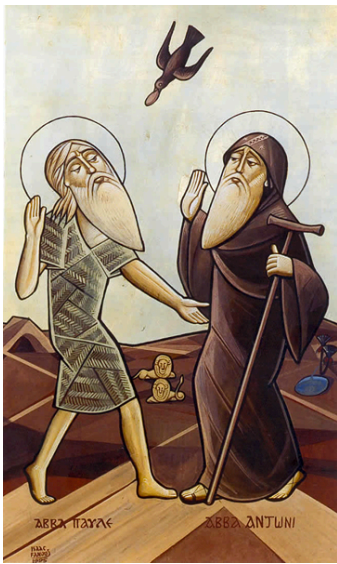
The Lord replied, **"I was here, Anthony, but wanted to see your struggle. Now, since you have not yielded, I shall always help you and make your name known throughout all the world."**



ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

Cont.

One day, he was bored, and he heard a voice telling him, "**Go out and see.**" He went out and saw an angel who wore a girdle with a cross, resembling the holy Eskiem, and on his head was a head cover (Kolansowa). He was sitting while braiding palm leaves, then he stood up to pray, and again he sat to weave. A voice came to him saying, "Anthony, do this and you will rest." He started to wear the tunic that he saw, and began to weave palm leaves, and never got bored again.



People visited him to take his blessing and advice. He saw that these visits kept him away from his worship. So he went far away to the eastern desert. He found a spring of water and some palm trees and he settle there. On this spot now stands the monastery of St. Anthony the Great. A bedouin came to him with bread, and the Lord drove away all the wild beasts from this place, for his sake.

Saint Anthony had a vision where the whole world was full of snares and traps. He cried to the Lord, "Oh good Lord, who may escape from these snares?" A voice replied, "Humility shall escape them without more."

When the day drew near of the departure of St, Paul the 1st Hermit. St. Anthony went to him and buried him, after clothing him in a tunic which was a present from St. Athanasius the Apostolic the 20th Patriarch.

St Athanasius wrote the life of St. Anthony. One of the sections of the book could be called the first monastic Rule.

When St. Anthony felt that the day of his departure had approached, he commanded his disciples to give his staff to St. Macarius and to give one of his cloak to St. Athanasius and the other one to St. Serapion his disciple. He died at the age of 105 in the year 356. His disciples buried him in the desert.

The church celebrate his feast on the 22nd of Toba.

From the saying of St. Anthony: "Our life and our death is with our neighbour. If we gain our brother, we have gained God, but if we scandalize our brother, we have sinned against Christ"

ST. MACARIUS THE GREAT



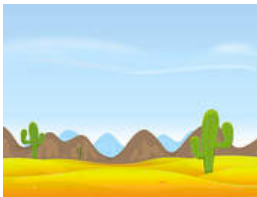
One of the founding fathers of Monasticism

Born in Egypt, around 295 A.D. from good and righteous parents. His father's name was Abraham and his mother's name was Sarah and they had no sons. In a vision at night, his father saw the angel of the Lord, who told him that God was about to give him a son, and his name will be known all over the earth, and many will follow him and become his spiritual sons. Shortly after this vision, they had a son and called him Macarius, which means "Blessed".



When he grew up his father forced him to get married against his will. He asked his father if he might go to the wilderness. He went to the wilderness and prayed to the Lord Christ to direct him to do what is pleasing to Him. While he was in the wilderness he saw a vision, one of the Cherubim took his hands, and went up to the top of the mountain, and showed him all the desert, and told him, "God has given this desert to you and your sons for an inheritance."

**MANY MONKS
GATHERED
AROUND HIM**



When he returned from the wilderness, he found that his future wife, had died. After, his parents died, he gave all he had to the poor. When the people of the village saw his chastity and purity, they took him to the bishop who ordained him a priest for them. They built a place for him outside the village, and they went to him to confess and to partake from the Holy Mysteries.

St. Macarius went to Scetis, where he spent the rest of his life. He dwelt in the inner desert, in the place the Monastery of St. Mary, El-Baramous. He went to visit St. Anthony the Great, who put on him the Holy Eskiem

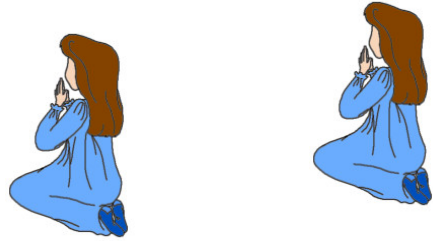
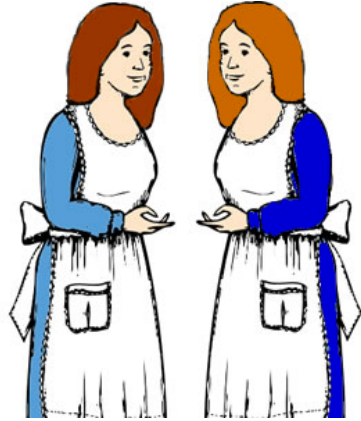


ST. MACARIUS THE GREAT

One day he thought that the world had no more holy people, so a voice came to him from heaven saying: "In the city of Alexandria there are two women who fear God." He went to see them. When he entered, they welcomed him, washed his feet, and when he asked them about their story, one of them told him, "we are not related but we married two brothers we asked them to leave us to be nuns but they refused. So we committed ourselves to spend our life fasting till evening with many prayers. When each of us had a son, whenever one of them cry, any one of us would carry and nurse him, even if he was not her own son. Our husbands work as shepherds, we are poor and only have our daily bread and what is left over we give it to the poor" When the saint heard these words he cried saying:

"Indeed God looks to the readiness of the heart and grants the grace of His Holy Spirit for all those who wish to worship Him."

Cont.



Abba Paphnotius, the disciple of St. Macarius, said, "I asked my father to say a word to me and he replied:

"Do no evil to anyone, and do not judge anyone. Observe this and you will be saved."



St. Maximus and St. Domadius went to the desert to St Macarius

St. Macarius departed in peace in 392 AD. Our Coptic Church celebrates his departure on the 27th of Baramhat.

ST. PACHOMIUS

THE FOUNDER OF THE CENOBITIC MONASTICISM



- ❖ St. Pachomius was born to pagan parents in Upper Egypt.
- ❖ In his very early 20s, he was called to serve in the Roman army.
- ❖ During his service he encountered local Christians, who brought food and comfort daily to the troops. He was impressed by their love.
- ❖ He vowed to become a Christian after his military service ended.
- ❖ In year 314 he was baptized and began to practice the ascetic life.
- ❖ Three years later he went to the desert under the guidance of St. Palamon.
- ❖ He heard a Voice telling him to found a monastic community
- ❖ Then he had a vision in which an angel came to him and gave him the rule for the Cenobitic life.
- ❖ The rule balanced the communal life with the solitary life; monks live in individual cells but work together for the common good.
- ❖ He gave everyone the same food and attire. The monks were not allowed to possess their own money or accept anything from their relatives.
- ❖ St. Pachomius lived the rest of his life in fervent prayers managing his monastery, performing wonders, fighting the demons.
- ❖ He died around the year 348 at the age of fifty-three, and was buried on a hill near the monastery.
- ❖ The church celebrates his departure on the 14th of Bashans.

*St. Pachomius
considered that an
obedience fulfilled
with zeal was greater
than fasting and
prayer.*