

Life of St. Mina

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St. Mina (15 Hatour)

On the Fifteenth day of Hatour, Saint Mina was martyred. His father, Eudoxious, was a native of the city of Nakiyos and was its governor. Eudoxius' brother was envious of him and he brought charges against him before the Emperor, and the Emperor transferred him and appointed him governor over Africa. The people were pleased with him because he was merciful and God-fearing.

His mother Euphemia had no children. One day, she went to church on the festival of our Lady, the Virgin Saint Mary at Attribes, where she saw the children in the church wearing their beautiful clothes with their parents. She heaved a sigh and wept before the icon of Our Lady Saint Mary, entreating her to intercede for her before the Lord, in order that He would give them a son. A voice came from the icon saying, "Amen." Euphemia rejoiced in what she had heard and realised that the Lord had heard her prayers. When she returned to her home and told her husband about it, he replied, "May God's Will be done."

The Lord gave them a son and they called him Mina, according to the word that his mother heard. While he was growing up, his parents taught him to write and they reared him in a Christian manner. When he was eleven years of age, his father died at an old age; his mother also died three years later. Saint Mina devoted his life to fasting, praying and living a Christian life. Because of everyone's love for him and his father, they placed him in his father's position. In spite of that, he did not forsake his worshipping.

When Diocletian had reneged Christianity and issued his orders for the worship of idols, many were martyred for the Name of the Lord Christ. This saint left his position and went to the desert, where he stayed many days, worshipping God with all his heart.

One day, he saw the heavens open and the martyrs crowned with beautiful crowns. He heard a voice saying, "He who toils for the Name of the Lord Christ shall receive these crowns." He then returned to the city over which he was governor and confessed the Name of the Lord Christ. Knowing that he belonged to a noble family; they tried to dissuade him from his faith and promised him honour and precious gifts. When he did not change his mind, they threatened him and the governor ordered him to be tortured. When the governor failed to turn him away from his faith in the Lord Christ, he sent him to his brother so that he might influence him, but he also failed. Finally, he ordered his head to be cut off, his body to be cast in the fire and his ashes to be scattered in the wind.

The body remained in the fire for three days and three nights, but it was not harmed. His sister came and gave the soldiers, money and they let her take the body. She put it in a sack made of fronds and decided to go to Alexandria, as her brother had previously advised her. She embarked with her brother's body on one of the ships to Alexandria. During their trip, beasts came out of the water and attacked the passengers aboard the ship, who were very frightened. The saint's sister prayed to the Lord and asked that her brother intercede. While the passengers were in fear, fire went forth from her brother's body and burned the faces of the beasts. They dived immediately into the water, and as they reappeared, the fire burned them again; they finally dived and did not reappear. When the ship arrived at the city of Alexandria, they carried the sacred body with respect and honor and entered the city with a venerable celebration, placing it in the church, after having shrouded it in expensive fabrics.

When the time of persecution ended, the angel of the Lord appeared to Pope Athanasius and informed him of the Lord's appeared command, which was to place the body of Saint Mina on a camel and to take it out of the city without letting anyone lead it, but to follow it from a distance until it stopped at a place that the Lord has designated. They walked behind the camel until they arrived at a place called Lake Bayad, in the district of Marriot. There they heard a voice saying, "This is the place where the Lord wishes the body of his beloved Mina to be placed." They lowered the body and placed it in a coffin, then they situated it in a beautiful garden and many miracles happened through the body.

Following this, the people of Pentapolis (the five cities) rose against the cities around Alexandria. They were getting ready to face the enemy, when the governor decided to take the body of Saint Mina with him to be his deliverer and his strong protector. He took the body secretly and through the blessings of this saint, he overcame the berbers and returned victorious. The governor decided not to return the body of the Saint to its original place and wanted to take it to Alexandria. On the way back, and the camel carrying the body knelt down and did not move from its place, in spite of frequent beatings. They moved the body to another camel, but again this second camel did not move from its place. The governor finally realised that this was the Lord's command. He made a coffin from a special wood and placed the silver coffin in it. He returned it to its place and invoked Saint Mina's blessings, then returned to his city.

When the Lord wanted to disclose the location of Saint Mina's holy body, He did it in the following manner. One day a sheep with mange slipped down the water of a well near the place of the saint's body. The sheep then came out of the water and rolled over in the sand of that place, and instantly the sheep was healed. When the shepherd saw this miracle, he was amazed. He started to take some of the sand and mixed it with water and smeared it over every manged sheep, as well as on those with other infirmitities, and immediately, they were healed.

The news of these miracles spread through all the countries until the Emperor of Constantinople heard of them. He had an only daughter who was leprous. Her father sent her to the place where the saint's body was, and asked the shepherd how these miracles were happening. When she knew, she took some of the sand, moistened it with water, smeared it on her body and slept the night in that place. In her sleep she saw Saint Mina saying to her, "Arise early and dig in this place. You will find my body." When she woke up, she found herself cured, began digging as she was told and she found the holy body. She sent word to her father, informing him of the news, who rejoiced exceedingly, thanked the Lord and glorified His Name. He then sent men and money and built a church in that place, which was consecrated on the fifteenth day of the month of Baounah. When Arcadius and Honorius reigned, they ordered a city to be built there. Multitudes of people came to that church, asking for the intercession of the blessed saint Mina. The Lord honoured him with many signs and wonders that appeared from his pure body.

When the Arabs came to Egypt, some of them attacked the city, and the church was destroyed, only ruins remained. When the late Pope Kyrillos VI was consecrated Patriarch over the See of Saint Mark, he took interest in building a large monastery in this area (Marriot) in the name of Saint Mina. There are two churches in the monastery, visited by many Christian worshippers who go there to receive blessings and to pray. He also bought one hundred acres of land and built a fence around it. He ordained a number of monks who had a high degree of scientific and religious education. This development has continued in the reign of the current Patriarch, Pope Shenouda III with more architectural development and the consecration of many monks.

May the intercession of Saint Mina be with us; Amen.