Anba Abraam By Father Tadros Y. Malaty

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Whoever accepts "Our Lord Jesus," Who for our sake became poor (2 Cor. 8:9), so that by his poverty we might become rich, does not cease from groaning inwardly, longing to spend and be spent for every man(2 Cor. 12:15), especially those who are incapable of giving back what they receive. Those would be willing to bear the burdens of all people, walking in the way of Golgotha, following the steps of our Master, leaving everything behind, suffering for the sake of all men and singing, "I have been crucified with Christ." Â Â Â Â Our Father "Anba Abraam" experienced practical fellowship with the Lord, so he loved the Lord's least brethren in a wonderful way. Whenever he went, he was surrounded with them, for in him they found their comfort and felt his loving fatherhood. Â Once, on an Easter eve, his disciple told him that Hanna (Bey) (a very honorable title) Nakhla had sent various kinds of food and a turkey. The father blessed the sender, and with a gentle sweet smile asked his disciple to put the food on the tables, and call the poor people, the blind and the patients who were in the first flour of his home to come and eat. He stood watching his children and taking care of them as they ate. Yet he ate only radishes and some butter milk. Â Â Â Â Our Father, the bishop, asked a nun, the superior in a convent in Cairo, to be in charge of the poor. Shortly there after, he decided to visit those poor people while they were eating. He was surprised to find that the food offered to him was a better quality than offered to the poor. This made him very upset and he dismissed the nun at once. Â Â Â Â Once in an *"agapi banque*t" (the "banquet of love"), which the bishopric held for the people, the cook made a table of fried fish for the rich, and another table of cooked fish for the poor. When the bishop entered to have his dinner with them, he saw the two tables, and he firmly ordered the cook to mix the two kinds of fish. He said, "Who wants to eat from the mixture, let him eat, for God does not separate the poor from the rich, all are the same to Him." When his brethren, the "poor" heard this, they rejoiced for his real fatherhood. The rich, moved by his love for his children and his high degree of spirituality, also ate from the mixture. Once a poor woman complained to him of her poverty, he reached his hand under the pillow but did not find any money, he gave her a new shawl, which one of his children had given to him. The next day the owner of the shawl visited our father and asked him about it. He replied, "My son, the shawl is above." Then the man presented it to him saying that he had bought it from the poor woman to return it to him. "Perhaps you have oppressed her, my son!" the bishop said. "No, my father, I gave her the whole price," the owner of the shawl replied. Mr. Leeder, the British writer, related to us, about our father, the bishop, saying: "I have spoken of the poor robe in which the old bishop was wrapped. It was literally like the robe of an early Coptic recluse, one Abba Isaac, who maintained that "the manner of the apparel which a monk ought to wear should be such that if it were cast outside the cell for three days no one would carry it away... Â A rich layman just before my visit did not like to see his bishop in this threadbare cloak, and so went out and bought a garment, soft and sable. Returning to that upper room, he begged the bishop to discard the old robe; here was a new one.

With a wander smile the old man took the robe, and put it under his pillow. Later on in the day, in the crowd which thronged him, he saw a poor illclad *fellah* (farmer), shivering with cold. 'Ah!' he said, 'the Lord has been mindful of you this day, for here is a cloak waiting for the first man who is in need of it.' And when the poor man got out into the daylight, he saw that such a cloak was unsuitable for a country *fella*h; he would sell it and buy a coarse *"gallabie*h," then he would possess both a cloak and spare money to buy food. The man he offered the cloak to was, by chance, the donor, who recognized his gift! Knowing the bishop, he felt that remonstrance of any sort was useless, so he rebought the garment, hoping that when the bishop found that he had done this, he would be persuaded to wear it. Â Again, however, the cloak was tucked under the pillow; and again a poor man received it as of the Lord. And now doubtless the threadbare cloak will persist till the day when the bishop exchanges it for a glorious robe which time cannot corrupt... Â Here in the twentieth century, the succession of those earlier followers of Christ truly survives in the life of the bishop of Fayoum, to carry out in all their literal simplicity the teachings of the Man of Galilee, who Himself having nothing, sought as disciples only those who would sell all to follow Him." It is said that the nobles of the bishopric saw the bishop's home was not suitable, they agreed with their father, to renew and widen it. They collected money for the bishop's house, and when it totaled about L.E. 200, a valuable sum at that time, they brought it to him asking him to make an appointment with a building contractor to agree upon the remodeling of the building. The bishop looked at them saying, "My sons, I have already built, I have built." "Where is the building. our father?!! There is no change in the building !," they asked. **"I have built a house for you in the eternal life**," the bishop replied. Â Mr. Makar Ibrahim El-Barnashawi said, "One day a poor citizen went to his rich relative. Mr. A. (Bey) A.A. asking for a contribution for his wife, who was about to give birth to a child, but Mr. A.A.A. refused, and this sadly distressed the poor citizen. The poor citizen vowed that he would ask for the money from the bishops of the Nazarenes. He went to Anba Abraam and related his story. The bishop said, "Is the bishop for the Christians only?" Then he gave him the only pound which was under the pillow; its value was very high at that time. As the poor citizen was leaving, he met the monk who was surprised that his brother "the bishop" had given the poor citizen all the money that he had, so, he took the pound from him and gave him an Egyptian dollar (20 piasters). The citizen returned to the bishop and complained to him. The bishop called the monk, took the pound from him, and returned it together with the dollar to the poor citizen. Then he said to his brother the monk, "When we left the house of our father late Gabrielle, what did we possess?.. Is not all that we have now, from the hands of Christ? Have we not taken from His hands for the sake of His brethren? Then the bishop firmly sent him away. Â After three days the monk returned to the bishop with uncle Makarious El-Barnashawi, to ask for his forgiveness, which the bishop did grant. Â At that time a letter arrived, containing a money order and a bill of lading, then the bishop called the monk and said. "See..." The monk bowed before him modestly, saying..." I am not like you... Our Lord bestowed upon you the gift of offering." Â Fr. Mikhail Astras the priest of St. George Church of Fayoum, related; "One of the nobles visited the bishop, and handed him an envelope into which he had put it an offering. The bishop accepted it and put under pillow. A short while later, a poor man entered asking for help, the bishop gave him the envelope, and when he opened it, he found ten pounds. A disciple observed this, and hurried to tell the bishop, the bishop replied, "This is his portion, for God knew his need and He sent someone to offer it." Â The bishop's contemporaries related that many persons were coming to Fayoum to bring presents and offerings. The rich men were very generous in their offerings, but he never looked at the amount of any offering, instead he put all the money and gold under the pillow, so that when any person came to him for help, he would reach under the pillow, and give whatever he found. Â It is said that in his time no one was poor in Fayoum, for they all found in the bishop's house their own home from which they could get what they needed. One well-known story is told about three young men who plotted to take advantage of the bishop's love for the poor. Two of them approached the bishop saying that the third had died, and that they had nothing to bury

him. The bishop nodded his head, and gave them an offering saying, "Take it and bury him..." They left laughing, but they were astonished when they found their friend had actually died. Â They tried to return the money asking the bishop for forgiveness. He forgave them but did not accept the money, telling them to bury their friend with it. Â **A Man of Prayer** The mystery of the greatness in our father Anba Abraam is that he was a man of prayer. Â The prayer in our church, is not a troublesome routine, nor a hard law we are subjected to, but rather a taste of sweetness of our being children of God, and a practice in fellowship with Him. Prayer is love!! We converse intimately with Him, and also with love we blame Him kindly!!! In fear we proclaim our repentance, and with joy we thank Him. We do not pray for our own benefits only, but also for the benefits of the church and the whole world. Â Our holy father devoted his life to prayer, as he loved his God, the Lord Jesus. He was filled with power. He was accustomed to gathering all his children every evening, at his residence, to pray the psalms and to read some chapters of the holy Bible in order to help them to understand it. Â The people who slept in the room close to his, related that he used to rise up at midnight to pray the psalms and stay up until dawn. He used to repeat the words: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me," praying it with zeal. All who met him testified that his prayers were very deep in spirit until his senility. Â The English writer "Leeder" said: "It was with deep emotion that I looked into the face of this saint... To doubt his right to the title was impossible for the power of a pure and beautiful soul made itself felt at once, with a force that was almost overwhelming. Â The eyes looked out of a calm, grave face, fringed with a small white beard, which in no way obscured the sensitive mouth. The turban was worn farther back than usual, leaving the broad unwrinkled forehead to suggest that the ascetic, in this case, had been governed by a fine intelligence. Taking the cross in his right hand, and holding it closely over our heads, the bishop poured out, mostly in the Coptic language, in tones of rapt devotion, the wonderful prayers and blessings of his Church. Â Of the mere words, I of course recognized little, except the oftenrepeated 'Kyrie-eleison!' (Lord have mercy!) But I was thrilled nevertheless by the childlike earnestness of the man who uttered them; **never had I heard prayer which seemed to establish a link with the throne of Grace with such instant security; it seemed as if earth fell away, to leave this man speaking in the clear presence of God Himsel**f." Â Late Naguib (Bey) Erian said that some believers saw a beam of light coming out of his window at night while he was praying. It is also said that in 1898 A.D, on a Wednesday evening, during the prayer hour the gas lamp hanging from the roof by means of a rope, broke down due to a sudden cut in the rope and caused a fire to flame up. The bishop gave no attention to this matter, but he went on praying. Later he told the people present who were much afraid of the fire: "Why do you have such weak faith? Behold, the fire had been extinguished and none was harmed!." Â His Faith In 1902 A.D our father roamed in Egypt accompanied by his disciple Anba Mettaos, the metropolitan of Abyssinia. At Abu-Kerkas, they were the guests of Adib (Bey) Wahba, who was until that time without a son. He had only three daughters, and his only son died. Adib Bey summoned the saint secretly saying to him, "I have heard that you are a 'man of God' and God hears your prayer. I beg you to ask God to give me a son to inherit my name." He entered the bedroom, prayed on a cup of water and sprinkled the house, then he anointed his wife with oil, saying to her "By God's will you will be granted a son within a year." He blessed them and pointed at an open space saying to Adib: "Who is the owner of this?" "It is mine," answered Adib Bey. "Make it a guest room for the poor," said the bishop. After ten months God granted Adib Bey a son called "Wahbey." The same thing happened with late Gawher, the preacher of the Copts in Tanta, as God granted him the son "Youssef." We hear about too many persons who came to Abbot Abraam, asking his prayers that God might grant them sons or preserve their life.Â Â We would not be exaggerating if we said that hundreds but thousands of miracles had happened through his prayers, for which there is no room here. Â The Christian pilgrim Yowakeem came to him from Cairo, after he had spent all his wealth on doctors because he was dumb. In the evening, people gathered to pray as usual, and when they began to pray "Lord have mercy," his tongue was

healed and he prayed with them. Mr. Fahmy, the son of the Rev. Abdel-Messieh the priest of Sanouris Church, had epilepsy. Doctors were perplexed, but as our father anointed him with oil and prayed for him he was healed. Â Our father Abdel-Messieh El-Baramousy El Saghier wrote that once he stayed a week with the bishop. He saw many persons visiting him. One of them was a woman from "Balout," a village near Manfalout, who was sick for a long time. She spent all her wealth on doctors, but she was not healed from her lameness and dumb... Four men took her to the bishop, and he prayed for her three days, then she was healed and went back to her village, in the streets praising the Lord and thanking Abbot Abraam.Â Â Mr. Ayad Abadir related that when he was transferred to El-Fayoum he saw by himself a young man who was very sick, his relatives took him to the bishop, who made the sign of the cross on him, and prayed for him, then he was healed. When the engineer S.A.Y. was taken sick with cancer, he accompanied his father to the saint, who told him to use some well-known eyedropper in Egypt, called "The Seven Girls Eyedropper." He prayed on it and put a drop of it in his eyes, at once the leukemia disappeared. In 1924, Mr. Mohammed Badr-Eldine, the secretary of the Public Prosecutor General, at Alexandria, related to his colleague Mr. Labib Boulos that his only son was sick and he did his best to get him healed, lastly he sent a letter to Abbot Abraam, who replied to him stating the time when he would be healed, and this actually happened. Â Up till now we feel the effect of his prayers for us. The son of the priest of "Manzalet Demian" Church, in Minieh, was afflicted with Lameness. His family visited the tomb of the saint. In the morning they found their son running, and when they asked him about the matter he told them that a man appeared to him, prayed for him and anointed his limbs with oil. Then he was able to walk. Â **His Asceticism** "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (2 Cor. 9:27). Â As much as the heart is emptied from the mortal love of the world, it will be qualified to be filled with heavenly things. And as far as it is filled with the heavenly things, man will not desire any earthly thing. So our father struggled, refusing everything in order to gain the Food of his soul "Jesus Christ." Â His principal food was beans and lentils; and during nonfasting days it was the milk without fat. Once he desired to eat a chicken. He asked his disciple to cook it and bring it to him. When the table was prepared he prayed and asked his disciple to take the chicken away and to bring it the next day. The same thing happened on the second and the third days. And on the fourth day the food was spoiled, he looked at it saying to himself "O myself, eat from what you desired!" The same thing happened with his disciple "Anba Marcus," the metropolitan of Esneh. Â The Modest Bishop The man of God, Anba Abraam, loved Jesus Christ, and had communion with God on the basis of going on the way of Golgotha following the Cross, where he left everything willingly. He was refused and humiliated from people for the sake of the heavenly glory. He left all his personal dignity joyfully and without grumbling. He was a loving kind father for the poor and the rich alike, and he was never conceited. Â Mr. Leeder investigated everything about the character and life of our father after he had visited him. He said that he always saw our bishop hiding his hands with the sleeves of his garment in order to prevent anyone from kissing his hands. He also said: "It is usual, I believe, in every Christian church to kneel in receiving a bishop's blessing; but on no account would Anba Abraam consent to any person kneeling before him. "To God alone," he said, "was such homage due." He was distressed that I felt obliged to kneel, but when I explained that my first reverence was to God, and then to His good servant, he gently gave way." Â One of the best habits of our father is that he never permitted a priest or a deacon to carry the Holy Bible while he was reading it, but in a very modest way he went to the lectern and read it as any priest did. He never permitted any of the deacons to say in his presence any statement, that they usually said before reading the Bible to show their respect to him. He absolutely did not distinguish himself from his people, and he never sat on a chair different from that of his children. The bishop never permitted the priests to burn incense infront of him. Â Our father Anba Abraam was very pleased when any of his children called him "Our father, the bishop," and never permitted anyone to call him "Our Master, the bishop." In the sanctuary he used to stand

up all the time during the liturgy, and when he got older and weaker he used to sit down on the carpet whenever he got tired. Â When the Pope Kyrellos V wanted to give him the higher rank of "Metropolitan," he refused completely. Anba Abraam did not change his cross after becoming a bishop, but he kept the same old cross, and lived the same life as before, without any slight change. Â We can clearly see the kindness of this bishop through the stories told by the people: "Once, during the morning service of Sunday (matins) the bishop noticed that the deacons were not keeping harmony in their prayers. After the service had ended he remarked on that to the teacher *(moale*m). The teacher misunderstood him and did not attend the vespers on that day. The bishop inwardly feeling the teacher's anger due to his misunderstanding went to his home asking for forgiveness. When the teacher saw him he wept saying, "I beg you to forgive me." Then the bishop returned to his residence late at night. As his fame spread, he did not leave his children and escape in the desert, flying from vain glory, but he only refused to meet anyone coming to him merely for honoring him. This is what the British writer witnessed; saying: "The old man apparently had no liking for the idea of being sought out by travelers on the purpose of venerating him; this was not his Master's work. If the English man was (speaking about himself) poor, or sad, or sick, or in need for any spiritual ministration, or counsel, then he would see him, but not otherwise." Â When the Prince Serguios (uncle of Nicola the Tzar of Russia) and his wife, heard about him they visited him in 1898. The governor received them, and the Coptic noblemen of El-Fayoum tried to buy new furniture for the bishop's residence, but the bishop refused completely. The visitors came and bowed infront of him on the ground, and he prayed for them. When they offered him a bag full of golden pounds he refused, and lastly he took one pound and gave it to his disciple Rizk. The Prince said that he did not feel such as inspiring awe all his life as at that moment when he was standing infront of this saint, Anba Abraam. Â Explaining The Word Of Truth Anba Isidore said, "He was a scholar in the holy Bible studies, so that he learned the extracts by heart and repeated them from memory. This was a result of his studying the Scriptures at the Monastery of El-Baramous." Some monks said that he read all the Bible every forty days. It is said that he used to collect his people every evening for prayers, and gave someone responsibility for reading many chapters of the Bible, and then he would explain them. He encouraged the priests and preachers to deliver sermons, and he himself used to attend those meetings, and to comment on anything wrong they might say concerning the dogma or the rites of the church. Â It is said that nobody heard him speaking about earthly matters, but all his speech was spiritual and concerning heavens. His life itself was a real sermon for all. For in his days all were close to Jesus Christ, joining the church, and no one dared to abduct any of the children of the church. On 1908 A.D someone tried to spread some heresies in Fayoum, then the father wrote a strong evangelistic letter to his people, so that they might not deviate from the orthodox faith. Â A Christian girl once was seduced by a deceptive non-Christian man who made her yield to him and despise her faith as a price for their marriage. The authorities informed the bishopric office of her desire to change her religion. The bishop did not send any priest, but went personally to the police office to meet her, but she refused to accept his advice. The bishop angrily said, "You don't desire the other religion but you only desire the youth. Your aim is very wicked. Go out and God will do His will." As soon as the girl left the room, she fell on the ground and all believed that she had died. The policemen hurried to the girl thinking that the bishop had killed her. The bishop full of courage approached the girl, blessed some water and sprinkled it over her. She immediately arose and said: "I have seen with my own eyes!" Then she changed her desire for marriage, and lived in righteousness and modesty. Â The same story was repeated with a Christian youth who wanted to change his religion for the sake of money. He refused the bishop's advice, who told him that God would do His will. The youth died in the same day. Â The same thing occurred again with a wicked woman who was presented to the bishop's residence, she had determined to deny the Lord, Jesus Christ. As soon as she left the place she was afflicted with leprosy. Â **His Firmness** Our father was famous for his kindness and modesty, but he was also firm. Kamel Saleh Nakhla related : "He

speaks frankly, giving attention to the truth itself, without taking into consideration to whom it was told." Â The priest of St. Mark's Church in Cairo once did a wrong to a metropolitan. A council was assembled to judge him. Our father asked the metropolitan to forgive him but he refused. While they were praying, the bishop asked the metropolitan to say the Lord's prayer. When the metropolitan began asking God to forgive our sins as we forgive the sins of our debtors, the bishop interrupted saying, "If you believe in this prayer then go to your brother and kiss his head, or else you are deceiving God by saying this prayer." The metropolitan asked the priest for his forgiveness. Â Once the Pope sent for the bishop to attend a council held to judge a priest, who was charged with allowing a bishop who was under the ban of the church, to enter the church, gave him food to eat and, a place to sleep in. The council was assembled under the presidency of the Pope and the charge was read. The Pope announced that the priest must be excommunicated, then he gave the written judgment to Kellini (Pasha) Fahmy to sign and pass to his neighbor. The saint was sitting next to the Pasha. The bishop took the document, read it and said, "I cannot know why this priest should be excommunicated. Did not Jesus Christ command us to be considerate to the poor and strangers?!" Then he declared that he would not sign the judgment. Kellini Pasha said that the Pope had already decided, and the verdict was according to the church law. The bishop replied answering the Pasha's words, "Why was I called to this council if I am not allowed to express my opinion?!" One of the members whispered to the bishop, "Do you know that the man you are speaking to is Kelini Pasha Fahmy?!" "Who is Kellini Pasha?" asked the saint, "Did not Moses speak to God Himself! Leave me in peace!" Then he left the council room and went downstairs. The Pope sent one of the members to him, but he said, "Blessed be the Name of God, I will not go up the stairs of this house again all my life, unless that judgment is brought to me over here and destroyed immediately." The Pope yielded to him and the priest was forgiven. Â **A Patriot** The bishop who had a loving spirit, was a patriotic man more than others. He created the patriotic feeling in his children, offering to the society good citizens, who fulfill their mission firmly and faithfully, not motioned with fear or submissiveness. Â The church must not interfere in politics, for her Master told her, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." At the same time she teaches her children to be honest in their work, suffering for the sake of others, obeying the authorities, praying for the President and all who have authority, and to be loyal in paying taxes etc. Â It is said that some people came to Anba Abraam asking him to pray for them so that they would be exempted from the military service. He replied "If you want to be exempted, who will guard the nation?," and sent them away. Â **His Power In Exorcism Of Evil Spirits** God saw that the bishop's heart was open widely full of love to the poor and rich, to the faithful and unfaithful men, so he bestowed to him the grace of the exorcism of evil spirits. Â The English writer said; "The bishop's power in exorcism of evil spirits has perhaps brought him more visitors from distant parts than any of the other gifts for which he is famous." The son of the singer *(moale*m) of the Cathedral of Cairo, a very intelligent young Copt, who mastered the French and English languages, and of high rank in the government, related to the English writer about the large number of people, Moslems and Christians, who were relieved from the evil spirits by the prayers of the bishop. The young Copt also related in detail how the bishop healed his aunt of evil spirits. Once a man called Abdel-Messieh was possessed by an evil spirit. The bishop was very tired for the evil spirit did not want to go out of the man, and he disturbed the neighbors by his loud crying. The saint asked the people who were present to bring him to the church on Sunday. While the liturgy was being celebrated, and the priest prayed the Sanctification, saying "He took bread on His hands which are holy..., the man cried loudly and disturbed all the church, so that the bishop was obliged to go out from the sanctuary and command him, "In the name of Jesus Christ the crucified Nazarene, stop and do not move!" The man was silent until the end of the service. Then he summoned him in the bishop's residence and said to him calmly "In the name of Jesus Christ come in." Then the man was very worried and the bishop continued, "Why did you make this trouble in the church?" The man replied, "Did you put me in the fire and ask me not to cry? A fire

from the heaven was sent down unto the table, and was about to burn me !" As the bishop rebuked him, the evil spirit went out and the man was healed. Â Mr. Mansour Girgis said that when they were praying "Lord have mercy!" and the bishop was praying, putting, his hand on the head of Masoud, a sick man from Ekhmim, the sick man trembled at the beginning of the prayer and said, "Neither you nor ten persons like you can drive me out!" The bishop: "May God persecute you! Go out!" The evil spirits: "I do not know why you are living until this moment!" Â The bishop: I live to fight you! What is your name? Evil spirit: My name is Abraam, the bishop. The bishop: May God rebuke you. Are there any bishop among the devils? Then he put the cross on his head and the evil spirit cried: "The fire! The fire! I will go out!," and he went out. Fr. Philipos El-Makary said that in 1906 A.D. he saw the bishop exorcising a devil. While he was praying, the devil said in deception, "Forgive me! Leave me for my name is Girgis, a son of baptistery, and my age is seven days." As the bishop did not give him any attention, but continued on praying, he said to him " If you had not the fiery cross in your hand, I could kill you." Then the person cried loudly and the devil went out. Â **His Departure** Fr. Mikhail Saad conveyed to us a simple image of the last moments of our father Anba Abraam before and after his departure. He formed it by the aid of the contemporaries who are still alive. Â The wife of Late Nassif Mahrous said that before our father's departure he summoned Fr. Abdel-Sayed and some deacons, and asked them to pray the psalms outside his room and not to open his door before half an hour had passed. When they opened the door they found him resting in Christ. Â Mr. Makar El-Barnachawi said that Mr. Selim Saeb the governor of Fayoum called his wife and said to her "Oh! The bishop of the Nazarenes died... Look at those horses and the people who are riding them, they are around him crying; "Eqouab! Eqouab." Then he went out and met Mr. El-Barnachawi asking him about the meaning of the word Eqouab." He told him that it means "Holy, and it is the hymn of the heavenly creatures. Â In the day of his death, all the people of Fayoum wept bitterly and many came from all the provinces of Egypt. Someone said that those who attended the funeral there were about twenty five thousands, and others said that there were more than ten thousands. Â Anba Abraam departed from the world, but did not depart from the Church, for his love has no end and he still works on behalf of the salvation of all. Now with a wide heart he prays for us in Paradise. All what he left were: 1. The material things were a simple mattress, a pillow, a quilt, a wooden seat, a small bed and some old furniture. 2. Lists of the monthly gifts offered to the poor families. 3. He left us his glorious life, as a precious treasure. Â With The "Brigadier General" A brigadier general who was working at the province of Fayoum, was to be brought for trial and he was very troubled. Before going to the court he visited Anba Abraam, asking him for his prayers. "Don't be afraid," said Anba Abraam, "You will only be transferred to another province." The words of our father came true. This general was used to visit him yearly and to offer him five pounds for poor people at a time. Â Once he came as he was accustomed and asked the doorkeeper: "Where is Anba Abraam?" The doorkeeper answered: "He is in the Monastery of Azab." The general went there and asked the guard about our father, and the guard told him that he was inside. He entered and found Anba Abraam standing as if he was waiting for him. The general offered him the ten pounds, his vow for two years. Anba Abraam asked him to give the money to the guard. The general went to the guard and said to him: Anba Abraam asked me to give you this money. The guard wondering, said: "Where is Anba Abraam? He died! This is his tomb!" The general also was amazed, and said: "I was speaking with him!" They entered together again, but they did not find him! Â The same thing happened with a family from Assuit who came for his blessing. He appeared to them, and when they wanted to offer him money as they were used to, he said, "I don't need this money, but there are many poor families living near the church," and mentioned them their names in order that they might go and help them. Â A Light On His Grave While a some worker was digging his grave, sun had set. As he couldn’t carry on, so he asked for light. Then behold, something like a bright dove appeared that lightened the whole place until he finished the saint's grave. Â The Repentance Of An Attendant The owner of the Book Store of *El-Mahaba* mentioned that when they put the saint's

icon on their annual calendar in 1957, an attendant who used to go to some Christian families, to give injections to their patients, saw the icon in all the houses he used to visit. He asked: "Who is the priest who had this dull and black face, that I always see in the houses of those Christian families?" At night he was awakened as he heard someone saying: "Are you not pleased with my picture?" The voice was repeated, and the man felt that his legs were paralyzed. He wept bitterly. Next day St. Abraam appeared to him and told him that God had forgiven him. He stood joyfully, praising God. From that moment he used to buy the calendar and distribute it. Â **A Summary of His Life** Â V In the year 1829 A.D. (1545 Coptic) in a village called "Galad," 27 km. south west of Mallawi, in the area of the diocese of Deirout, was born the child Boulos Ghobrial. His parents were righteous and loving God. Â V He was sent to the "Kuttab," i.e., the church School. His teacher Roufail took care of him, taught him reading, writing, arithmetic, the Holy Scriptures, church hymns and the psalmody. He was very intelligent and anxious to learn everything. Â V When he was eight years old, his mother was sick. A few weeks later she died, and left her only child. As he loved praying and reciting psalms, he found in God what satisfied his emotions and filled all his heart. Â V When he was fifteen years old, he became famous among his mates. The priests recommended him to "Anba Youssab," the bishop of the diocese, who ordained him a deacon during his visit to the village church. Â V As he loved the life of contemplation, so he was admitted to St. Virgin Mary Monastery "El-Meharrak" at Assuit, when Father Abdel-Malek was the president of the monastery. He was very decent, active, and he loved all the monks. They recommended him and he became a monk when he was nineteen years old, in 1564 C. (1848 A.D). His new name was Fr. Boulos El-Meharraki.He was distinguished by: 1. His patience and self-control. 2. His interest in almsgiving. Â Anba Yakoubos, the bishop of Minieh, heard about him, he asked him to come to the "bishop's residence" and to remain with him. Fr. Boulos worked day and night, and he changed the "bishop's residence" to a shelter for poor men. Â V His great desire for contemplation urged him to ask the bishop to allow him to return to the monastery after he had spent four years helping the bishop. Then the bishop ordained him a priest, and allowed him to return to the monastery in 1863. Â V At that time there was a problem regarding Father Abdel-Malek, the president of the monastery, but Father Boulos did not interfere in this problem. The monks chose him to be the new president of the monastery. He opened the doors of the monastery for poor people, also young men heard about him and came, asking him to teach them, and after a short time they became forty monks, among them: 1. "Anba Marcus," bishop of Esneh and Luxor, who was born at "Tasa," Assuit, in 1565 Coptic, 1848 A.D. He became a monk in 1586 at El-Meharrak's Monastery, and he grew up under the leadership of Fr. Boulos, the monastery's president. Pope Kyrilos chose him in 1592 C. to teach the new monks at El-Baramous' Monastery. He met his spiritual father again after five years absence, and he remained with him until 1595 Coptic, when he was ordained a bishop for Esneh and Luxor. Up till now the people of Esneh still remember much about his pure life, his holiness, deep love for prayer, his modesty, and his special care for everyone, and about his renewing of old churches and constructing new ones. 2. Fr. Mikhail El-Behery. He was one of his students, and lived the same life of his teacher. In 1925 Anba Lucas, bishop of Manfalout wrote a book about his biography. 3. Anba Mattaous, bishop of Ethiopia. Â V As usual the devil was furious when he saw that the monastery was opened for poor people, and young monks were filled with love to Jesus Christ. He made some of the monks think that Fr. Boulos was wasting the money of the monastery, and they rebelled against him. Â V In 1586 C. (1870 A.D) Fr. Boulos was asked to leave the presidency of the monastery after being the president for five years. He went with four of his students to Cairo to meet "Anba Marcos," bishop of El-Behera and the acting Pope. They asked him to let them go to the Monastery of Anba Bishoy at the "Natroun Valley," where they remained for a short period. Afterwards they went to El-Baramous' Monastery in 1587 C. At that time the president of this monastery was Fr. Youhanna (John) El-Nassekh, who became later Pope Kyrilos. He was so glad to receive them and he offered them cells to stay in. Â V Fr. Boulos devoted all his time to praying and study, but his deep love to the poor people did not

end. So he loved the Arabs who were living in the area of the monastery and he shared with them everything he had, even his clothes. Â V In 1597 C. (1881 A.D.) the Ethiopian Emperor, John Kassa asked Pope Kyrilos to ordain a metropolitan and three Bishops for Ethiopia, then he chose the four fathers who were accompanying Fr. Boulos. They were: * Fr. Ekladious El-Meiry who was ordained a metropolitan of Asmara with the name "Anba Boutros" (Peter). * Fr. Ekladious El-Khaldy El-Moharreky who was ordained bishop of Addis Ababa with the name "Anba Mettaous." * Fr. Solimon El-Delgawi El-Moharraky with the name of "Anba Lucas," bishop of Axum. * Fr. Mikhail El-Masry El-Moharraky, bishop of Kadgod, with the name of Anba Marcus (Mark). At the same time Anba Isaac the metropolitan of Fayoum and Giza departed, then the four bishops asked the Pope to ordain their father as a bishop for that diocese. The Pope and the people agreed, and all the people of Fayoum became very pleased and joyful on that day, for the ordination of their new bishop "Anba Abraam," in Abib 1597 Coptic. Â V During his time, the diocese of Fayoum became a great vine, under which shadow the poor and rich sat with great delight. Â V When the Khedive Tawfik visited El-Fayoum, a great feast was prepared. Anba Abraam was sitting very near to the Khedive. He ate only salad, and when the Khedive asked him about that he answered that the day was Friday, and the Christians were to fast on all Fridays. Then he ordered fruits for Anba Abraam and asked him to meet him again. He went to meet him at the railway station before he left, and the Khedive welcomed him fervently saying to him "You are a blessed man." Â V The rulers and governors, even the tyrant ones found comfort in his presence. Â V The British High Commissioner heard about him and asked to see him. The governor of the province of Fayoum, the responsible men and the nobles were ashamed because of the poor furniture of the bishop's residence and its old buildings. But the kneeling down of the British man in solemnity to the father, and the kissing of his hands and the cross surprised them very much. Â V Mr. Wasif Boctor Bishara one of the noble of Keneh relates that around 1898 Mohammed Bey Nohey, the governor of Fayoum province was transferred to Keneh, and there he had a welcoming party, I was one of the guests, and I remember that the main conversation during the whole party was about the life of saint Anba Abraam, his words and his good deed. During the conversation the governor was deeply afflicted. Â V In the year 1902 he made a trip with his disciple Anba Mattaous, the metropolitan of Ethiopia. They visited Upper Egypt and went up as far as Luxor. On his return the governor of Fayoum, the commandant of police, the police men, the nobles and all the people were joyfully waiting for him at the station. Â V In the year 1893 he had some trouble with his leg, that made the doctors decide to have it amputated. When one of his spiritual children told him about this he smiled as usual, and said "God will not let this happen. I am sure He will let them down!" After two months he recovered completely, and went out to the church, praising God. The bishop's residence was very crowded. The people held palm leaves, and they were waving olive branches with joy! Â V After he had spent 33 years, as a bishop, rich with deep fellowship with God and real worship, serving everybody sincerely, tiring continuously for the poor, using the gift of healing and exorcising of evil spirits, he was sick in bed for a month. So the people gathered to get his blessings, specially when they knew that he refused to call a doctor saying, "I am flying to the Lord Jesus." And it happened on Thursday 2 Baouna 1630 C., 9 June 1914 after sunset that our blessed father departed to Paradise. Â V Those who attended his funeral were more than ten thousand persons. Some have estimated them to be twenty five thousand, Christians and Moslems. But the history of Anba Abraam has not ended. In every Egyptian house there is still a lot to be told about him, for he was really a God's loving man. Â V On the third of Baouna 1860 C., 10 June 1964 the church celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his departure, under the care of Pope Kyrilos VI. The Holy Council of Bishops decided that his name should be added to the saints in the Holy Eucharist. For the heart that can hold love for the whole church never stops love after this physical body is taken off, so that on the day of the Lord it would be clothed with a spiritual and imperishable body. Â May the blessing of our blessed Father be with us. Amen.