

'Father Abu Kastour the Martyr'

The story of this beloved Saint begins around the year 193-195 A.D. when he was born in the city of Bradnoah which is the center of Matai city, the provident of El Minya. He was raised in a good Christian house, and when he was only eight years old he was ordained a deacon. After twenty one years of being a faithful deacon, he was ordained a priest within the church in which he served and for the next eighty years under the name of Father Kastour, meaning 'the Soaring Star.' God granted him a son from his wife whom he named Avram (meaning Abraham) after his father. The Lord also granted him a daughter whose name was 'Darmoudah,' (which originates from the name 'Rounudah' which was a name of an ancient goddess in Egypt that was responsible for the harvest). The Lord blessed Darmoudah was many virtues, for she loved helping the stranger, the elderly and the Saints who lived in the wilderness. The Lord also blessed Father Kastour who longed to meet the Saints. He frequently used to go to the mountain where the monks lived, so that he may learn from them and take their blessings. And whenever he would meet any of the monks, he would bow down and perform a Matniah and then greet them with a holy kiss. At one point he spent two month at the feet of these righteous fathers, listening to their teachings.



After returning from his visit to the monks, Father Kastour went to the Church so that he may pray. While he was praying a women entered church weeping, as the men carried her son "Morcou" who was bleeding massively. He had beaten, tortured and martyred by emperor Deklidianous who had sworn to kill all the Christians if they don't start worshiping idols. Father Kastour then strengthened her and comforted her by telling her that her son was now in the Lord's Heavenly Kingdom and that they should continue to abide by the church's teachings.

Torture and Strength

During that time there had been a man between the congregation who watched the Christians go to church and talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, however he wanted to trade them into the emperor so that he may obtain money and favor from the governor Diuneklah. Following the martyrdom of the young boy, Father Kastour called in a special meeting in Church. The man went and told the governor's minister that Father Kastour was teaching the congregation to hold steadfast to their faith and that he could be found in the local church. The minister rewarded him with thirty pieces of silver, which he asked for. That night the soldiers came into the church to arrest Father Kastour, the man ran to Abouna who was preaching to the congregation about martyrdom and the love of Christ and kissed his Cross, saying "Protect me Father Kastour" at which point the soldiers knew who Father Kastour was and arrested him.



Once at the palace the governor asked Father Kastour to worship his idols, at which point Father Kastour bravely replied saying, that the Holy Scriptures say "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve" (Matthew 4:10). The governor then threatened him, saying that he would torture him, but Father Kastour refused to worship the lifeless idols. The emperor's minister then took Father Kastour and began to torture him severely through many different ways.



At first the soldiers took Father Kastour and whipped him severely, hoping that he would forget his righteous faith, but his faith was as strong as a mountain. The congregation in church prayed for him, that God would strengthen him and the Lord Strengthened him and his congregation in faith, and behold there was a beautiful light the appeared and out of it a voice was heard saying "Don't be afraid my beloved Kastour for I am with you."

And after two days of severe torture, the Lord sent him Archangel Michael saying "Peace be to you Abou Kastour, you have found favor with the Lord who sent me to you so that I may heal you," the angel did the sign of the Cross upon the saint and immediately Father Kastour was healed from all his wounds. The soldiers didn't believe, but many people believed and became Christian, and then the soldiers arrested them all. Imprisoned with Father Kastour was also St Bbnoudah. Outside of prison was the man who had betrayed Father Kastour, he couldn't believe his eyes when he saw the miracle, and although he wanted to repent the devil fought him until he killed himself.

When the governor and the minister found out, that Abou Kastour was healed, they became angry and tried to reason with him again and when they failed they ordered him to be thrown into a fire bath. He went into the fire with happiness praying and saying "Who am I and what is my suffering compared to our Lord's suffering." And then the Lord sent the Archangel Michael to Father Kastour; appearing above the fire was the angel saying "Don't worry Abou Kastour, for the Lord is with you and will protect you. Hold on to your faith, even if your blood was shed or if you were burnt to ashes, for the promise of the Lord is with you and will protect you and many people will believe!" And for three days the soldiers left him in the fire and when they came to check on him they were amazed to see him alive and well and that not even his cloth was burned by the fire. And the people chanted and believed in the Lord. They also became very angry with the governor who showed no mercy to this Father's old age. The minister then suggested that Abou Kastour be sent to another governor named Vilvidianous in Old Cairo to be tortured there and that is where he was sent.



Father Kastour was then chained and guarded with four mean soldiers who tortured him along the way. They placed a heavy chain around his neck and placed him in the bottom of the boat, where he prayed and thanked the Lord for letting him suffer for the glory of the Lord, until he arrived to Old Cairo. Once Father Kastour arrived, governor Vilvidianous, ordered our righteous Saint to worship the idols but again Father Kastour refused, so they began to torture him more severely using a large wheel which he was placed upon and pressed with while the wheel was lightened with fire. But Father Kastour continued to pray and the Lord healed him. At one point the soldiers tied him to a tree, ripped his cloth and used a metal comb to glide through his body causing him to bleed severely. The Saint began to pray as the people watched, and the Lord healed him, angering the governor and converting more people to the Christian faith. The governor, mocked the Lord because He was crucified, but Father Kastour told the governor that the Lord came to this world so that He could be crucified and die on the Cross and be raised from the dead so that He may save us from eternal condemnation. The governor then tempted Father Kastour with riches and a high position but Father Kastour declined all of the governor's earthly rewards, because he had set his eyes and heart upon the Heavenly Kingdom. The governor then ordered that this righteous Saint be tortured again. With whips, imprisonment, tools to break his bones, and burning lime which the Lord made cold, the soldiers tortured this heavenly Saint, as he prayed continuously until the Lord healed him, surrounding him with light and beautiful smelling incenses.



One day one of the servants of the governor's wife, who had been watching the miraculous healings of Father Kastour by the Lord, went and told her about what the Saint had endured and how the Lord was always with Him. Being very ill for many years, the governor's wife went behind her husband's notice with her servants and told this righteous Saint to pray for her and heal her, but he told her that he was a sinner and that if she believed in the Lord, she would be healed. Father Kastour then asked the maid to get him some water, he prayed on the water and did the sign of the Cross upon it with his head (since his body was tied to the tree) and told her to give it to her lady. Immediately, she arose, was healed, and began to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. And when the head soldier saw what had occurred, he knelt down and worshipped the Lord Jesus Christ, believing in His divine power. When the governor didn't know what else to do with this righteous Saint, he ordered him to be sent

to Alexandria to governor Armonius because he had the latest tools of torture that he used upon many Christians.

When governor Armonius received Father Kastour, he warned him that he was going to torture him and attempted to scare him. He also told him that he would crown him and make him a king, if he were to worship the idols, but Father Kastour told him that Our Lord Jesus Christ is the King of all kings. The governor then ordered that Father Kastour's long beard maybe pulled from his face piece by piece, and as Father Kastour's face bled he began to pray and the Lord healed him and sent to him the Archangel Michael who restored his beard fully. The governor then trembled and fell upon the ground and said "One and true is the victorious Lord, and there is no other god then He, I believe in Him and so does my household." Father Kastour then arose and went to him and did the sign of the Cross upon him, knowing that a demon in the shape of a bull had possessed the governor, making him tremble on the ground and causing him to shout and wail in a scary tone of a lion. Father Kastour prayed for the governor and asked the demon to release the governor for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so the demon left him, disappearing before everyone. But as soon as the govern regained his strength he swore to kill all the Christians on the face of the earth and ordered that Father Kastour's nails may be pulled out of his hands and feet and that he would be placed in hot lime and vinegar. With thankfulness and happiness Father Kastour endured the horrendous torture and as the soldiers came to mock him, the Lord healed him and restored his health again.



When the governor learned that Father Kastour was healed, he thought that he was a magician and that only a magician can defeat him. So the governor called in his famous magician Sedrakhes and ordered that Father Kastour would be brought before him. The magician and his assistant then worked upon a poisonous potion and then gave it to Father Katsour to drink. Taking it Father Kastour said "although I don't wish to drink anything impure, I will drink it and let it be according to the Lord's will," he then made the sign of the Cross upon it and drank all of it and was unharmed. Embarrassed by what had occurred the magician wanted to ensure the king that he was still powerful so he ordered that a bull would be brought in, and after he put a spell on the bull, the animal



split into two halves that when measured weighed the same. Amazed by his powers the governor gave the magician another chance. Then the magician gave a huge pill that was made out of poison and the teeth of a killer dragon to Father Kastour, saying "if you eat of this poison and remains unharmed I will believe in your God." Father Kastour took it and said "no matter how strong this poison is which had been made by human hands; the Lord's power is much greater." He then made the sign of the Cross upon it and ate it and remained unharmed. The magician then realized that his magic powers were nothing compared to the great power of the Lord Jesus Christ, he then bowed down and worshiped the Lord Jesus. The governor became very angry and ordered that he would be tortured and that a huge chain would be placed upon his neck and that he would be place in the midst of a huge hole within the

ground. The governor then ordered that the hole would be lit with fire and that Sedrakhes would be placed within it. In the midst of the fire Sedrakhes prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and many people believed in the Lord, and so it was that Sedrakhes departed to the Lord's heavenly kingdom on the Fifth day of the month of Abib. Angered by the new believers, the governor ordered that they would be thrown into the hole of fire as well, and they were about 920, that received the crown of martyrdom.

The governor then ordered that Father Kastour be placed within a pot full of burning sulfur, lead and animal fat (sheep), and that the pot be brought to a boil. And when they had left him there for over an hour, they came back and found him unharmed. So the governor became very angry and ordered that Father Kastour would be through into prison until he can come up with a new way to torture him. While in prison, Father Kastour who was by now 109 years old, was continually praying to the Lord or strengthening the other believers who were in prison ensuring them that the Lord was with them and that He would not forsake them. As Father Kastour was praying, there appeared a beautiful bright cloud that came from heaven and sitting upon it was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, with the Archangel Michael and Angel Gabriel on His sides. The Lord Jesus Christ then appeared to this righteous Saint and told him to be patient and asked him what he needed. Father Kastour then replied and

asked the Lord to take care of his congregation back home. He then also asked the Lord that his body maybe returned to his village and that a church may be built there so that the name of the Lord maybe glorified there, (for there was only one church in the whole town). The Lord then comforted Father Kastour and told him not to be afraid and that the day of his departure would become a holiday and that Father Kastour would be the intercessor for many, who will call upon him in days of trouble and tribulation, and that whatever they ask from the Lord using Father Kastour's name would be granted, because he was righteous. The Lord then also told him, that whoever takes care of Father Kastour's church, or whoever offers "Holy Bread" or offerings in the name of Father Kastour, would be repaid for his good deed within an hour. And that whoever preserves Father Kastour's story of martyrdom or names his son after Father Kastour would be granted whatever he may ask if it is fit. The Lord then healed Father Kastour, and told him to have confidence because He will be with him until the day of his blessed departure and that He would send His angel to care for his blessed body after his martyrdom. Father Kastour then rejoiced and continued to pray thereafter, glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ for His love and Kindness.

Before this blessed Saint's departure, God sent him St Julius Alaagafsy, who was know for writing the autobiographies of many other Saints, so that he may write the story of this righteous Father. St Julius asked Father Kastour that he would bless him and his household and told him that he would take care of his body after his martyrdom. Father Kastour told St Julius that he wasn't worthy of his visit and asked him to ask the governor to speed up his request for martyrdom.

Month and days later, after the governor had failed to convince him to forsake the Lord, the governor ordered that all of the Christians may be brought in from prison so that maybe killed and that Father Kastour would be the first among them. Father Kastour was extremely happy and his face was filled with light, as he raced the soldiers and leaped for joy to the designated place because he was finally going to be with the Lord. And so when he reached the place where he was going to be beheaded, he asked to soldiers if he can pray; with their permission he kneeled down and prayed to the Lord, asking Him to accept his soul. He then did the sign of the Cross a beautiful light appeared and from it the voice of the Lord was heard saying "My beloved Kastour, come to me so that you may find rest in the place of comfort." Father Kastour then rejoiced and asked the soldier to do him the favor and cut off his head and so he departed on the 17th day of the month of Tout during the year 304 A.D. On that day, the governor also martyred several other faithful Christians, who also obtained their rightful crowns from heaven.

After Abu Kastour's martyrdom his body, by the grace of God was returned to his hometown as he had requested, so that his neighbors and friends may receive the blessing and glorify God. St Julius took care of this righteous Father's body, but so God can fulfill His promise, Abu Kastour's body was placed upon two large stones which miraculously floated upon the Nile River for days, traveling from the city of Alexandria to the village of this holy Saint, that is Bradnoah which is the center of Matai the provident of El Minya, even though the water of the Nile flowed towards Upper Egypt. Along the way to Bradonah, nearby villagers saw the blessed body of the Saint with the stones floating above the Nile, they argued over the body for they wanted to keep it, so some of the villagers suggested that they would follow the body with their boats so that they may see where God wanted to rest the body of His blessed Saint. And so the body continued to flow in the water until it reached the blessed Saint's village. The villagers of Bradonah received it with joy and took his blessed body from the Nile and placed it in his house, which became a sanctuary and later a huge church which was consecrated on the seventh day of the blessed month of Amshir. The inside of this blessed church now holds three churches that were named after the blessed Virgin Mary, St. George the prince of the martyrs and the righteous father St. Abu Kastour.



He lived for 109 years in prayers and righteousness, struggling 80 years for the sake of his righteous faith in the Lord. He fathered his children in peace and virtue, teaching them how to live with the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ and how to abide in the Christian faith through the fulfillment of the Seven Sacraments of Church and the Lord's Holy Commandments. Whenever someone was in need of him, he always came through for them by the

grace of the Lord. Through his intercession we ask him to pray for us so that we may also love God as much as he loved Him.

Pray for me, I the Sinner!

