

September 10

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Barsauma the Nude (ca. 1257-1317) witness

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Barsauma was born in Cairo around the year 1257 into a wealthy and noble family. His name, of evident Syriac origin, means "son of fasting," and fasting did indeed become an important part of the saint's life. An uncle's scheming bereft him of his inheritance, and when his parents died Barsauma found himself abandoned and in dire poverty.

Although he was under the age of twenty, Barsauma did not go to the authorities to claim his rights, but instead decided to leave well-to-do society and lead a destitute life as a vagabond ascetic and beggar. Wrapped only in a cloak, which earned him the nickname 'the Nude,' he lived in Cairo's poorest neighborhoods as a sort of fool-for-Christ.

When persecution against Christians became severe, Barsauma courageously gave witness to his faith and was sent to prison. For this reason, he is commemorated with the title of confessor.

After living for some time in a cave in Old Cairo's church of St. Mercury, Barsauma settled in the monastery of Sahran, south of the city, where he spent the last fifteen years of his life as a recluse.

He died on the fifth day of the month of Nasi of 1317, and was buried at Sahran. Word of his life soon spread throughout the Middle East. Because of the solitary, harsh conditions in which he lived, the Coptic Eucology compares him with Moses, John the Baptist, Paul the Hermit, and Antony the Great.

A READING

Let us come together, O beloved, and joyfully praise this righteous man, our holy father Abba Barsauma, who disdained this world through a life full of suffering, and with great travail loved Christ his Lord.

His name became known throughout the universe, on account of his lofty virtues and his angelic purity.

He strengthened all who came to him from near and far, with perfect charity and mercy.

You are truly blessed, our holy father Abba Barsauma, because you fulfilled the commands of our good Savior.

Pray to the Lord for us, my lord, father and ascetic Abba Barsauma the Nude, so that he may forgive our sins.

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (5 nasi/pàg-w-emén):

James (d. 1088), bishop of Cairo

Barsauma the Nude, recluse (Coptic Church)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS* (6 nasi/pàg-w-emén):

Day of the thanksgiving to God (Coptic Church)

**the month of nasi has only 5 days or 6 in leap years*

LUTHERANS:

Leonhard Lechner (d. 1606), Christian musician in Württemberg

MARONITES:

Menodora, Metrodora e Ninfodora di Bithynia (4th cent.), martyrs

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

Menodora, Metrodora e Ninfodora di Bithynia, martyrs

Founding of the relics of Job of Pochaev (1659; Russian Church)