



# Martyrs then the Golden 4<sup>th</sup> Century

St Maurice, the Theban legion,  
6000 with their relatives from the  
very south of Egypt  
won, offer to the idols, I serve you  
and fight for you  
But I have a contract with my God  
I cannot betray him  
10% of the legion to be killed to scare  
the others, eventually , they were all  
martyred- the contract





## TERTULLIAN




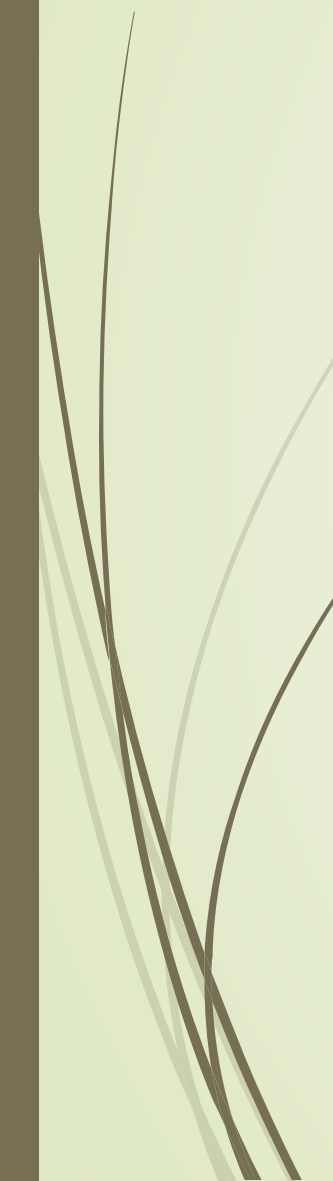
C. 155 - 220 AD

“THE MORE YOU  
MOW US DOWN,  
THE MORE WE  
GROW. THE **BLOOD**  
OF THE MARTYRS  
IS THE **SEED** OF  
THE CHURCH.”



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- I went to St Moritz in Swizerland with a group from St Mark's Church
  - Amazing celebration for St Maurice and the Theban legion
  - The town is named after St Maurice
  - The Bishop spoke in French, couldn't understand a word
  - When I quoted Tertullian, his eyes lit
  - Yes, yes, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity
  - Our unified language is the quote from Tertullian



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- I noticed St Bahnam and his sister in the Commemoration of saints, doesn't sound Greek name
  - He was a son of the Persian King, also converted to Christianity
  - The king killed him and his sister
  - The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity
  - Let St Behnam rejoice at the ½ million converts from Islam in Iran , the real figure is likely much bigger- John can advise
  - Let the current converts rejoice that there was Christian roots-and the martyrs in heaven rejoice too

look at the peace  
in his eyes



14 June 2017

11:33 am

اعدام القس الايراني نادر خاني لرفضه انكار المسيح  
انظروا الي السلام والقوه والايمان التي تملئ عينيه هكذا  
الموت بعين المسيح  
مبروك عليك السما..صلي لاجلنا








There was Christianity in China, till the 7<sup>th</sup> century. We don't know how many martyrs. But there are more Christians now in China than the number of official members of the communist party. Estimate of 100 million again let those who were persecuted rejoice in heaven and let those on earth rejoice in their Christian ancestors









# The golden 4<sup>th</sup> Century



- Peace in Church, end of martyrdom
  - Flourishing monasticism, The Great St Anthony, St Macarios, St Pachomios
  - Nicaea, Pope Athanasios the hero of Faith, Nicaea accepted his formula of Faith “ The creed “
  - But heresies started to trouble the church
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# Arius

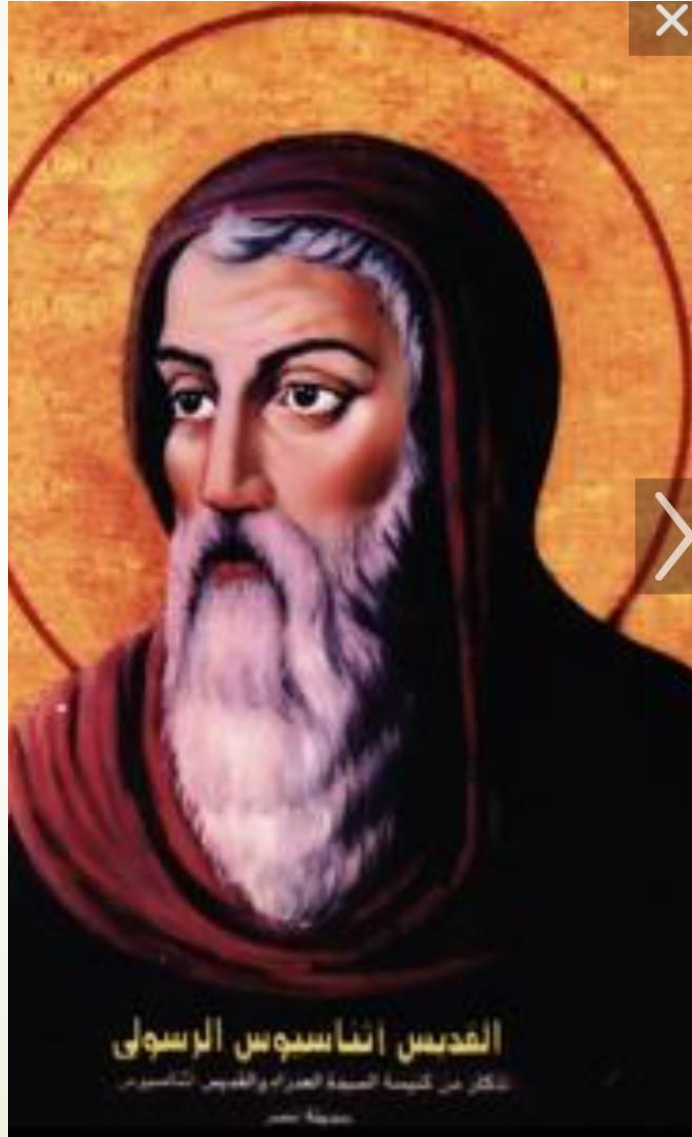



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- Arius was a clever priest in Alexandria, taught that the Son is not equal to the Father, but because Jesus was perfect on earth, he is a model for people to imitate him, by their own effort
  - So, Jesus does not give grace, it is all human effort
  - Pope Alexandros : how could God be the Father without the Son being there , co eternally



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- ➡ But Jesus is the son by nature, we are sons by adoption only through the grace of Jesus
  - ➡ Arius still exists in Jehova's witnesses and in Islam
  - ➡ The root of them is that Jesus was great but is not equal to the Father

# Pope Athanasius





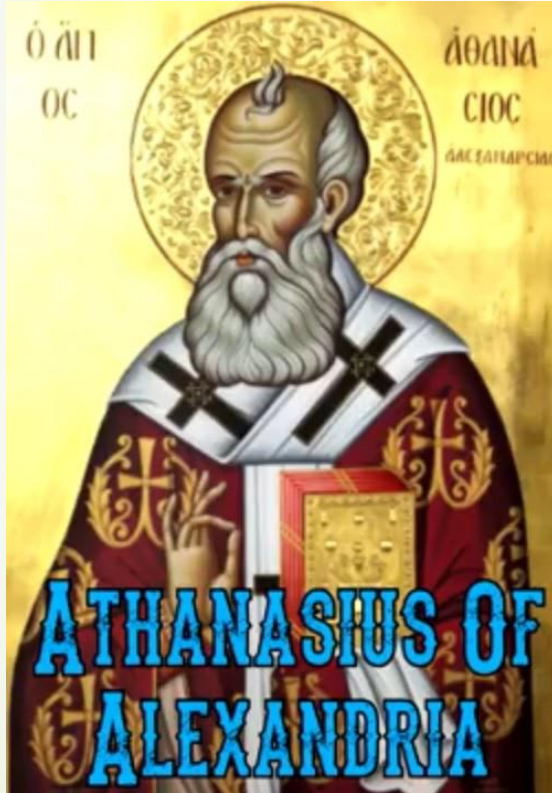
Faced with  
difficult  
challenges , what  
would you do ??





# Pope Athanasius, Contra Mundum

- Spent 23 yrs in exile, the emperor became Arian , and persecuted Pope Athanasius
- He deposed the Bishop of Rome and appointed an Arian one, so they told Pope Athanasius, you are on your own now, the world is against you,he replied and I am against the world





Every year, he sent a  
Festal letter letting all  
the churches know  
when Easter would take  
place that year





# Abba Anthony- Father of all





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- Though a monk, was a great support to Pope Athanasius
  - P Athanasius saw him as his Father
  - He wrote his biography, which became best seller of the time
  - It was a main factor in the conversion of St Augustine
  - P Athanasius kept the scarf of St Anthony when he died

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- St Anthony and St Pachomius were great support to him
  - Arius said : look St Anthony achieved holiness through his own efforts
  - St Anthony went to Alexandria , to say I am what I am , only through the grace of Jesus



How do we  
support our  
priests, and our  
Pope ?



# The temptation that faced St Anthony





**Detail: St Anthony the Great  
Tempted by the Devil (Detail of the whole work)**

Antonio Abate Tentato Dall'oro, Houston  
St Anthony -the Abbot Tempted by a  
Devil (Detail of Gold), Fra Angelico (1395–1455),  
Tempera on panel, 19.7 x 28 cm (ca. 1436),  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.



## St Anthony –amazing balance

- He is able to live in total seclusion for 10 yrs, and came out peaceful and relaxed
- Yet will not hesitate to go to Alex twice, 2<sup>nd</sup> time to support the confessors, and he wished to be martyred, but God will not allow

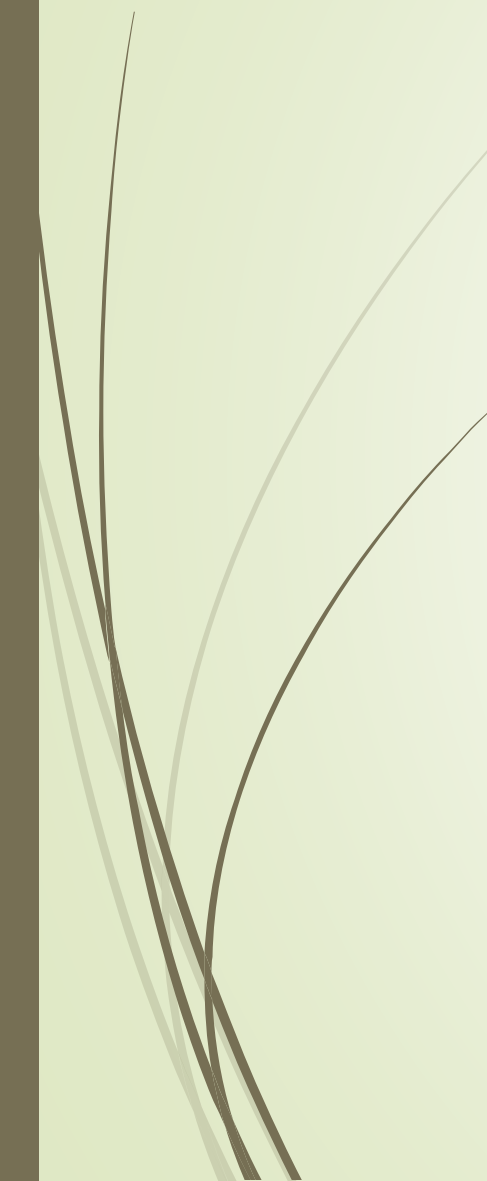

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- Discernment: when to do what ?
  - How can we apply
  - Balance between my life in the world and my church life ? How ?
  - When St Anthony was asked : what is the most important virtue , he replied “ Discernment “




# St Pachomius











A pagan, who converted to Christianity through the love that was offered to him by the Christians when he was conscripted in the Roman army- the Lord's worked in him and them






➔ After the end of persecution ( Pope Peter the seal of the martyrs ), people went into monasticism in large numbers – 311 AD

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- He was the first in the world to organise a community of thousands, spread across 9 monasteries, and one convent-Koinonia, a big family
  - Divided each monastery to houses, each house had a Lead and an assistant.

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- A sizeable group joined him from Alexandria, who could not speak Coptic. Only Greek. Instant translation of his sermons went on all the time
  - 2 conferences a year, one in Easter and the other after Easter. Also 3 meetings a week, one Sat, 2 Sundays
  - Great organisational skills, learnt from the roman army



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- ➡ He would spend half the night in vigil reading the scriptures. Manual work. Helping the poor
  - ➡ Used to recite the scriptures by heart
  - ➡ Our spiritual programme ??

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- ➡ Of course this is advanced spirituality
  - ➡ But, what is the spiritual discipline that suits us ?

# Abba Anthony- Father of all









Got involved even at 95 !

- ➡ St Anthony was 95 yrs when St Pachomios died.
- ➡ He told the brothers who visited :  
“ Abba Horosios has become the Father of Koinonia. He is the new Israel., who sees God with his internal and external eyes, follow him “



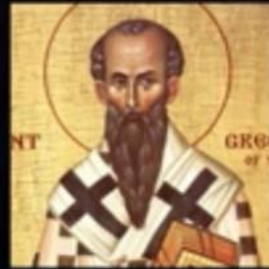
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- Then sent a letter to St Athanasios “ To the athlete in Christ”.
  - Please encourage the monks to submit to Abba Horosios
  - “ Pray for us O our unquenchable light, source of intelligence and boast of the saints”

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- The monks met Pope Athanasios and went back to St Anthony, but at 95, he went in seclusion to the inner mountain
  - St Anthony was asked , why did you not establish a Koinonia ? , I wasn't given the gift. I have anchorites who I guide, but St Pachomios did a first by establishing the community life

# CAPPADOCIAN FATHERS



St. Basil  
THE GREAT  
(329 - 379 AD)



St. Gregory  
OF NYSSA



St. Gregory  
of Nazianzus



DEDICATED TO:

ST. BASIL



- THE NICAEAN CAUSE

- THE EXPANSION OF  
MINISTRY FOR THE POOR

- THE GEOGRAPHICAL  
EXPANSION OF HIS DIOCESE

