

Sunday, July 1, 2012

The strong, Saint Moses the Black

Today we celebrate the martyrdom of the Strong, St. Moses the Black. This saint had a marvelous life story and was transformed from a life of wickedness to a life of holiness. The Synaxarium says about him: “Beloved Ones, contemplate in the power of repentance, and what it did. It transformed an infidel slave who was a murderer, adulterer and robber into a great Father, teacher, comforter, and priest who wrote rules for the monks, and saint whose name is mentioned on the altar in our prayers.”

In this article and the next one, I would like to present some excerpts of his sayings and spiritual teachings to his children. It is an invaluable experience that has been preserved by the church to benefit all generations:

- + You should not have trust in this world lest your trust in God is weakened.
- + Reject the thoughts of the world so you can see God with your heart.
- + Be persistent in prayer so your heart may be enlightened by God.
- + Keep your tongue pure so the fear of God may dwell in your heart.
- + Give the needy with charity and pleasure in order not to be ashamed among the saints nor be deprived of their glory.
- + Reject gluttony so you are not surrounded by Amalek (the devil).
- + Do not be fond of wine, lest it deprives you from the blessing of the Lord.
- + Be compassionate towards the poor so you may be saved, for their sake, in the time of trouble.
- + Remember the saints continually so you may be fervently zealous of their conduct.
- + Remember the kingdom of heaven so you may covet it in your heart.
- + Think of hell fire in order to abhor its works.
- + When you wake up every day in the morning, remember that you will give an account of your deeds so that you will not sin but rather the fear of God will dwell in you.
- + Prepare yourself to meet the Lord so you will act according to His will. Examine yourself and recognize your need so you escape from trouble at the hour of death.
- + Do not trust yourself, but say: “mercy and aid are from God.”
- + Talking during the church service is an indication of the lack of the fear of God in the heart.
- + The most important weapon for virtues is toiling the flesh (Strive) with wisdom. Laziness and carelessness stir up spiritual warfare against us.
- + He who controls his tongue shows evidence that he loves virtue. Lack of control of the tongue is an indication that the heart is void of any good deeds.
- + Hardness of the heart harbors anger but gentleness bears mercy.
- + Excessive sleep brings too many fantasies, but vigil with wisdom brighten the mind and makes it fruitful. Excessive sleep makes the mind cloudy and dark, but vigil with moderation makes it clear and bright. He who sleeps with wisdom is better than he who vigils in vain words.
- + If a man accepts rebuke and reprimand, it yields for him humility, but praise from people, yields extravagance and haughtiness. The love of flattery drives knowledge away.
- + Controlling food urges reduces lust, the lust of food arouses sexual instincts and emotions, but abstinence of food suppresses it.
- + Silence with knowledge tames the mind, but the multitude of words create dullness and lack of balance.
- + Conquering lust indicates perfection of virtue and being defeated by it indicates lack of knowledge.
- + Staying in the fear of God preserves oneself from warfare. but the words of worldly people dims the soul and make it forget contemplation
- + The love of positions troubles the mind, but having them scarcely, enlightens the mind.
- + Revealing what’s on the mind protects man, hiding evil thoughts stirs them up. Those who reveal their evil thoughts, they cast them away and they get rid of them.

We will meet again in the next article to present more excerpts of the sayings and experiences of St. Moses the Black, may his blessing be with us, Amen.

Fr. Yohanna Naseef

fryohanna@hotmail.com

St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, Palatine, IL

