

The Beginning is opposite to the End; St. Moses the Black and Repentance

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God. Amen.

Aim:

To demonstrate that Repentance and Confession are capable of changing the worst sinners to the most righteous saints.

Introduction:

The Story shows when someone is living the life of sin feels that there are always worries and fears and no peace or real happiness in his life. But when this person think of repentance and coming back to our Lord, he regains back all the blessing success and happiness.

Three main points to discuss

- What was the beginning?
- How did he change?
- Living in the life of grace

First: What was the beginning?

- He was born in year **330 AD** from parents who were idol worshippers and living a sinful life in Nubia, south of Egypt and north of Sudan (temples of Abu Sembel).
- He was born after a barbaric war; he was sold to a Rich man in the market of slaves.
- This person was a vicious slave who was a robber, fornicator, and savage killer. He never obeyed his master.
- His master tried to make him improve his attitude by all means but couldn't. At the end decided to kick him out.
- After he was freed, he was traveling and a gang of thieves wanted to rob and kill him, but he was able to beat all of them and strain them.
- The gang was so impressed by his power and made him their leader. Leader of **70** thieves.
 - Stopping people while traveling and killing them
 - Crossing the Nile and killing the Sheppard.
 - Betting on the Gender of the baby

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Second: How did he change?

He was sitting by himself contemplating to the sky. And his conscience started to remind him with the sins. That the end of what he is doing is eternal death like any animal.

He always thought there must be a creator so he asked from his heart who are you creator? Show me your way and how to come to you.

- One day, he heard a voice saying: "If you want to know the true God, go to the wilderness of Sheheet". He went there and came in contact with Abba Isidore (Isedorous), the priest of the wilderness. Abba Isidore was frightened seeing this huge black man carrying a sword and dressed like a gangster. Moses told him that he is not going to cause any harm and he is searching for the true God.
- Abba Isidore took him in and started to explain to him about the true God. He was very receptive, and showed great repentance and open heart.
- He was introduced to St. Macarius the Great, who baptized him, and as Moses the black started to confess his sins, St. Macarius saw a tablet that was all black, but with every sin confessed a part became whiter until it became all white as snow.
- St. Macarius call him Moses to follow St. Moses the great prophet whom after killing the Egyptian, stayed in the wilderness for 40 years in repentance.
- After testing him for years, St. Macarius put on him the eskeem (habit of monks)

Third: Living in the life of Grace:

- He started to live in the life of grace, prayers, praising, spending nights in learning from the bible and saints stories.
- But of course Satan didn't leave him alone. He tempted with all his past, 11 times in one night.
- But St Isidore the priest was so patient; he kept assuring him and asking him to stick to his guns (prayers, confession and Holy Communion). Finally he took him and showed him Satan on the west and the angels who are helping him from the east.

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- After many years in the life of ascetics, Pope Theophilus (23rd Pope of Alexandria) saw it fit to ordain him a priest. To test him, the Pope exclaimed: "Who is this black and what is he doing here in the Church!" St. Moses upon hearing the words left the Church quietly speaking to himself: "Moses, you do not deserve to be here" The pope sent for him and completed the ordination. After the service the pope spoke to him in front of the congregation of monks saying: "Moses, today you are all white."
- He had a lot of disciples; about 500 monks, among those were the 70 thieves.
- Once many brothers came to visit him in the inner desert. He started to cook a meal of lentils for them and ran out of water. He kept praying until a heavy rain fell and filled all the water storage pots.
- In his old age he had an illness, many sores in his legs that prevented him from walking. Abba Moses was sad because illness prevented him from serving others. When he learned that the illness was from the devil, he forced himself to walk to serve others until he became like a dried and burned wood. The grace of God came upon him and healed him.
- When he became old, once he was sitting with St. Macarius and heard him prophesying saying: "very soon seven will receive the crown of martyrdom." St. Moses replied that he is one of the seven reasoning that because he killed too many by the sword, and he will be killed by the sword.
- When the barbarians came, St. Moses offered himself to them without any resistance. An old monk saw the angels putting crowns of martyrdom on six heads, realizing that he was trying to hide away; he came out of hiding to receive the seventh crown of martyrdom.

Conclusion:

St. Moses the Black is a great example of repentance, obedience, humility, leadership by good example, life of prayer, and service to those less able and those in need. The Church celebrates the martyrdom of St. Moses the Black on the 24th of Baonah which is the First of July. May his blessings be with us always.

Glory is to God, forever. Amen.