Desert Fathers

- St Macarius the Great: Fr Luka Maher
- Monastic Family Tree

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https://www.youtube.com/embed/f8DV844BSSY

- St Macarius the Great, the lamp of the wilderness, the Father of Monasticism in Scete
- 4th Century AD, born in 300 AD in Menufia. His father was a priest and had no children, but he saw a vision of an angel telling him that God will give him a son and he will be known all over the earth and will be a father to many spiritual children.
- He was named Macarius which means "Blessed"
- He was obedient to his parents, and He was ordained a reader and started to study and read and learn
- His parents saw that marriage wasn't on his mind so they wanted to marry him off. So they found someone for him to marry and they made them get married. God willed that this woman wanted to live the same kind of life as St Macarius - a life of virginity and celibacy and monasticism. She died very soon after... his parents also departed soon after.
- The icon of St Macarius he has his hands up notioning that he doesn't want anything from this world
- He left the world and went to live in a small hut outside the village. The people saw all his virtues and his life of prayer, so they went to the bishop and requested him to ordain Macarius a priest... even though he resisted, eventually they ordained him
- He used to finish his service and then go out to his hut and stay there... this is before the days of monasticism.
- The devil doesn't leave someone like this
  - There was a young man and woman who couldn't get married and they fell into sin with each other and she got pregnant. The girl told her parents that it was St Macarius that did this. They went to him and to the people and said "look what your priest Macarius did - the man who you revere and who gives you Communion and who you talk about all his virtue" and they accused him of doing it. He tried to defend himself but to no avail - his parents said he must pay to support her and the baby
  - The day came for her to give birth and she was in labor for four days - they told her we've never seen anything like this... God must be punishing you for something!
  - She confessed that she accused this righteous man of doing this heinous act
  - They went to ask for St Macarius' forgiveness and it's said they kept doing Metanoias from their house to his hut

    - St Macarius' disciple saw all this and went to tell St Macarius "St Macarius the truth is out! God never leaves his servants!"
    - St Macarius said "why are they coming here?"
    - He said "they're coming to ask your forgiveness and kiss your head and apologize and honor you!"
    - St Macarius said "Let's flee!!" - flee from what?
    - "I can withstand being rejected... but I cannot withstand to be honored"
- He left his city and his hut and fled until he reached Scetis
- The Cherubim appeared to him and said "God has granted this desert to you and your sons after you as an inheritance" - sounds like the promise to Abraham
- He started to get tempted by some sins that he didn't even get tempted with when he lived in the city... so he decided he would travel to the Eastern desert to visit St Anthony
- Go and read the conversations between St Macarius and St Anthony - two greats in monasticism, each one more humble than the other and more spiritual than the other
    - "The devil places sins in front of me like food in a feast - pride, lust, greed, etc."
    - "Don't worry Macarius all of us get tempted like that, the solution is fasting and prayer!"
- 2400 Monks came to be disciples in Scetis in the life of St Macarius
    - All of their stories got written down because they lived together and gathered every day for meals and prayer etc. Contrarily, the disciples of St Anthony lived in seclusion and most of their stories and sayings don't exist.
    - St Arsenius
    - St Isidore
    - St Moses the Strong
    - Maximos and Domadios
- Extreme Piety and Humility
    - Cluster of Grapes
        - The people brought a cluster of grapes to Macarius and said we want to give this to you as an offering to God
        - St Macarius gave it to one of his monks who needed it more
        - That monk gave it to another who gave it to another until... it went back to St Macarius
        - St Macarius gathered them and told them he was so proud of them because they love their brothers more than themselves
    - The Donation
        - Someone went to St Macarius and wanted to make a donation to them - St Macarius told him "we don't take money here we don't need it. But the guy insisted, so St Macarius took it.
        - He put all the money in a stack and rang the bell for all the monks to come
        - When they came he said "Oh my brothers, this man loves God so much and he brought this offering for God. Whoever needs or wants anything, please come and take as you need." - Every monk looked at it and turned away and went home.
        - St Macarius saw the guy sad and looking to the ground so he said to him "Don't be so sad! You are giving us something that we can't take with us when we die... and we are all dead to the world here!"

    - The man got on his knees and said "For the sake of Christ's love, make me a monk like them. I want to have this great hear that doesn't want anything"
    - St Macarius encouraged him and said "No!! You have a great heart and you can be much greater than us! Take this money to your city and do something great with it! This is a grace from God!"
    - So the man went back to his city, spent all his money to do good things and came back to St Macarius to be a monk
- Disciplining the Monks
    - Someone came to him and said "I feel like you don't discipline those who do something wrong"
    - What do you mean?
    - "In the monastery there needs to be some kind of discipline but I see you're being too nice to them even when they do something wrong"
    - He replied: "My son... 12 years I've been forcing and training my eye not to see the faults of others, and you want to come and take this virtue from me?"
    - Because of his humility, he had good administration of all his monks
- The Adulterous Monk
    - One day some monks came and told him "So and so monk is hiding a girl in his cell"
    - He agrees to go and search the monk's cell.
    - They go in the cell. He sees an upside down basket and deduces that the girl must be hiding under it... so he sits on it. And of course, he's very elderly so none of the monks dared to ask him to move or to check under him. They searched the rest of the room and found nothing
    - When he got up to leave, he tapped the monk and said "Blessed are you my son"
    - The monk repented of his sin because he knew that St Macarius knew what was happening, but guarded him
- 29:36

Monastic Family Tree

Similar to “Useful Charts”

Bubbles for each monastic - birth and death day, other names

Lines indicate “disciple of”

Vertically, it’s a timeline. Horizontally it’s based on geography (e.g. Scete, Red Sea, Sa3eed, Tammoh, North along Mediterranean).

Focus on Egyptian monastics

Early

Paul of Thebes

Anthony the Great

Nitria

Abba Pamo (Pambo) - 303 AD - 373 AD: First to join Amoun in Nitria (Amoun is the disciple of St Antony)

Abba Hor, Pior, Or

Serapion of Nitria

Cronius

Bessarion

Chaeremon

Tall Brothers

Isaac of the Cells

John of Egypt

Macarius of Alexandria

Macarius of Egypt

Albianos

Pambo

Pishoy

Sisoes the Great

Ammonas of Egypt

Kellia

Scetis

Abba Macarius

Maximus and Dometius - first under Abba Agabus in Syria, and then under Macarius the Great

St Moses the Strong

Abba Isidore

Abba John

Abba Arsenius

John Cassian

John the Short

Macarius of Alexandria

Pishoy

Abba Poemen

Samuel the Confessor

Paphnutius - disciple of Abba Isidore and Abba Macarius

Visitors

Jerome

Palladius of Galatia

Need Categorizing

Abba Hedra - disciple of Abba Poemen