



Saint Anasimon, Queen of the Beasts

It is said that Anasimon was the only daughter of the Roman emperor, a pious woman. She read extensively about the lives of the fathers and fell in love with the ascetic life. She lived in the palace with a pious, evangelical spirit. When her father died, she was appointed queen against her will, as she desired the monastic life.

Her exit to the wilderness

A year had passed since her accession to the throne, during which she had given much to the poor and needy and freed countless slaves. Finally, she decided to leave everything behind and devote herself to worship. She wrote a letter to the patriarch, which she left in her room. She stripped off her clothes and put on a simple gown, and then, barefoot, she slipped out of the palace in the middle of the night to set out from the city and walk into the wilderness.

Thoughts of returning to the palace fought her, but she insisted on enduring all the cruelty of the wilderness, worshipping God. Suddenly, one day, while she was praying, she saw a lion approaching her. She prayed to God and made the sign of the cross over it, and immediately it calmed down. In fact, a number of lions surrounded her, petting her and she petting them. She felt as if she had become a queen over the beasts. But she longed to be stripped even of the honor that the beasts gave her, so she made it in her heart to live in the last row, serving everyone without asking for honor. She walked to Egypt until she approached a women's monastery called the Monastery of Jeremiah. She pretended to be crazy, and when the nuns caught her, fearing that she would be harmed, she pretended to be comfortable with them and asked them to serve her and clean the bathrooms. She seemed like a "fool" and only slept on a garbage dump.

Anba Daniel in the Monastery of Jeremiah

One night, the monk knocked on the door of the monastery. When the porter asked him about his wish, he replied that he wanted to spend the night with his teacher in the monastery for fear of being exposed to wild animals. But the abbess refused to open the door. He told her that he had come with Anba Daniel, the priest of the desert. The abbess was delighted and opened the door, and everyone went to welcome him. Before they left, he asked them if there were any nuns or sisters there. They told him about the "fool." Father Daniel went to her, but she did not pay him any attention or greet him. The nuns used to say to him, "She is crazy." But he replied, "Truly, I am the fool, the ignorant, and the poor one."

When everyone had left, the disciple wanted to rest, but Abba Daniel told him not to sleep and see this mad woman. He took him with him to where she was sleeping, and they found her standing praying and making metanoia, with light coming from her hands and angels surrounding her. The disciple quickly called the abbess, who, seeing the sight, screamed and hurried to her asking for her forgiveness. When the nuns came crying and apologizing to her for what they had done, she fell completely silent.

In the morning, the nuns went to where she was sleeping and found that the girl had fled, leaving behind a note that read: "I am the wretched one. Because of my wretchedness and the enemy's obstinacy towards me, he expelled me from among you and removed me from your faces that are full of life. (You will find more about these saints here on the website of St-Takla.org in the sections on the Lives, Synaxarion, History, and Sayings of the Fathers.) Your insulting me was a gain for my soul, and your annoyance with me was a fruit that was gathered every day. Your independence from me was a benefit and a capital that increased every day and hour. Blessed is that hour in which it was said to me, 'You foolish one, you madwoman.' And you are forgiven on my part, innocent of sin. And I will answer for you before you and before the pulpit for my sake. There is no mocker among you, nor one who loves the throat, nor clothing, nor fame, but all of you are pure."

Some people went out to look for her outside the monastery, but she had completely disappeared.

Priest in Alexandria entered the church at dawn on Maundy Thursday and smelled a strong, fragrant incense. He did not know its source, so he began searching for it. He entered the sanctuary and found an awe-inspiring man standing before the altar in reverence. He fell down before him. The man hurried and stood up the priest and asked him for some flour and a blessing to use in the Divine Liturgy attended by four hundred people. The priest asked him about the whereabouts of these brothers, and he replied that it was not for him to know, but if he wanted to, he could offer this blessing. The priest offered this blessing and then asked the man to take him with him. The man apologized, saying that he could not. When the man insisted, he said, "I will give you an answer on this day next year."

A year passed that seemed very long in the eyes of the priest until Maundy Thursday came, and he entered the church to smell the same scent and meet the same person and offer the same gift, and he began to ask him to take him with him, and when he insisted very much, he told him to take a similar blessing and wait for him on this day the following year outside the city at the western gate.

Another year passed and the priest took the blessing and went out of the city. After a while, he found the person coming towards him. He asked him to hold on to him and found himself as if he were being carried on a cloud. He was in a very beautiful church, the likes of which he had never seen before.

After a while, the Divine Liturgy began and everyone took communion... The priest saw an elderly man standing at the door of the sanctuary, supported by two people, one on the right and the other on the left. When the priest asked about him, he was told: "She is a virgin, Saint Queen Anasimon, who has joined the group of pilgrims who gather together annually from Maundy Thursday until Easter Sunday."

The priest wanted to stay with them, but the man told him that he needed to return to his church and shepherd God's people. He did, and he sent him back to Alexandria. This man visited the priest annually until the priest's death was near.