St. Polycarp of Smyrna

On the 29th of Amshir, we commemorate the martyrdom of St. Polycarp of Smyrna (also known as Izmir). St. Polycarp was a disciple of St. John the Evangelist's. In St. John's vision, an angel instructed him to write a message for St. Polycarp: "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life'" (Revelation 2:8-10).

During his time on his See, he shepherded his flock well, and remained on his chair for a long time. He wrote many articles and discourses about the Holy Advent, Death, torments of hell, the Virgin St. Mary, and many other topics. He attracted many souls to the Lord as a result of his style of teaching. Because of his knowledge, he helped settle a dispute with St. Arikestus over the date of the Easter feast in 157 AD.

When Emperor Marcus Aurelius arrested St. Polycarp, he told him "Swear and we will set you free; curse Christ and we will spare your life." However, St. Polycarp replied, "I have served my Lord Christ for 86 years and He never harmed me, so how can I blaspheme against my King Who saved me?" Marcus Aurelius then said "If you do not fear the wild beasts, I will make the fire consume you if you do not repent" and St. Polycarp said, "You threatened me with fire that burns for a while, then burns out, for you do not know the everlasting fire of judgment and the eternal punishment that are awaiting the evil ones. Now why are you lingering? Do whatever you want."

The emperor ordered to place him in the middle of a fire, but it did not harm him. However, when he ordered soldiers to stab St. Polycarp, he received the crown of martyrdom in 167 AD.

Some of the believers took his body, shrouded and buried it with great honor.

May his blessings be with us all.

Sources:
- Coptic Reader
- https://www.copticchurch.net/synaxarium/6_29.html?lang=en