

## St. Refka the martyr and her five sons

### References

Martyrdom in Christianity  
Women Martyrs in Christianity  
Synaxarium 7th of Tut

### Notes for Servants

- ★ Are you ready to give up your life for Him?
- ★ In this blessed occasion we remember our fathers the martyrs, they had faith in their hearts which gave them had courage to face death that astonished the unbelievers, which cause many of them to believe in Christ.
- ★ As we light candles for them, as we read their stories and hear about their miracles with love and admiration we should try to live their lives and to follow in their footsteps.

### Objectives

**General:** Standing firm in faith till death.

**Specific:**

- The children will be able to ...
- A. Sense the characters in the Saints' lives.
  - B. Conclude the reason that we honour them.
  - C. Tell what they should do to be like them.

### Bible Verse

**" Fear not, I am with you. "**

( Is 41:10 )

### Teaching Aids

Candles, a crown made of cardboard (in case there is any) a picture of the Saint to be fixed in the middle... if the servant cannot get a picture of the Saint, he can use a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ blessing children instead.

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### Instruction

- (1) Review last week's lesson.
- (2) Who remembers the verse?
- (3) Remind the children about the church occasions for the coming week.
- (4) Servant may start the lesson by the following questions:
  1. What do you know about the Nairouz feast?

2. What does the word "Nairouz" mean?
3. Who can give me the names of some martyrs?
4. What are the types of affliction received by martyrs?
5. How can we honour saints?

## Story Time

St. Refka the martyr had five sons, Aghathon, Peter, John, Amon and Amona. They were living in a village near Luxor. Once, the angel of the Lord appeared to them and said, "You will receive the crown of martyrdom in a place called Quous near Alexandria. They were very happy and they said to the angel, "We love God. We do not fear death." Then the angel disappeared. St. Refka encouraged her sons to stand firm in faith and to be ready for martyrdom.

They distributed their money and property among the poor and needy, then they went to Quous for martyrdom. They stood bravely before Dionessus and said:

ALL: We are Christians.

LEADER: We punish and torment Christians.

ALL: We do not fear punishment. God is for us. The Lord says "Fear not, I am with you."

LEADER SPEAKS TO REFKA: Woman, forget about these things, burn incense to the gods and worship them.

ST. REFKA: Don't try to convince me for I shall not worship your gods.

LEADER: Save your life and listen carefully to what I say to you.

ST. REFKA: What do you want to say?

LEADER: Burn incense to the idols.

ST. REFKA: Go away servant of Satan.

LEADER: I will cut off your head.

ST. REFKA: I am ready. Do whatever you want. The Lord strengthens me.

LEADER: Swordsman, cut off her head.

ST. REFKA: Please wait awhile till I pray to my God. (Refka and her sons pray: "O Lord. I thank you because you have made me a Christian. I shall offer my life and my sons as a sacrifice to you... Amen.")

LEADER: To whom were you praying?

ST. REFKA: To my Lord and my God Jesus Christ.

LEADER: Ha, swordsman, cut off her head.

ST. REFKA: Before you cut my head off, cut off the heads of my sons first so that I may be assured that they will receive the crown of martyrdom before me.

LEADER: Your sons will burn incense to the idols.

SONS: No, this will never happen.

LEADER: I'll think of other types of punishment.

SONS: We are ready to die in the name of Jesus Christ.

LEADER: What is your name? You answer my question because you are the oldest.

AGHATHON: I am a Christian.

LEADER: What is your name?

AGHATHON: I told you I am a Christian.

LEADER: (speaks to one of the soldiers) Strike him on his mouth and tell him not to give a roundabout

answer. (The soldier strikes Aghathon on his mouth).

AGHATHON: Do whatever you like. I am ready to bear any affliction.

LEADER: Come and burn incense to the idols.

AGHATHON: This is godlessness.

LEADER: I'll put you in boiling oil.

AGHATHON: You have authority over my body, but not my soul.

LEADER: (to the soldiers) Strip off his shirt, strike him with hot rods then throw him into boiling oil. My son deny Christ.

AMONA: I'll never deny my Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ.

LEADER: (gets a gold statue out of his pocket) Worship this statue.

AMONA: I worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (he crosses himself)

LEADER: I'll give you many gifts.

AMONA: I do not want anything.

LEADER: Obey me... you cannot bear punishment.

AMONA: I am not afraid. Jesus said, "Fear not, I am with you."

The leader and the soldiers were greatly amazed. The leader ordered the soldiers to cut their heads off, and to throw their bodies into the sea, but one of the natives gave the soldiers a lot of money and thus he took their bodies. While he was on his way to bury them, he heard a voice saying, "This is the dwelling place of the righteous", so the native buried their bodies in that place. When persecution came to an end, a Church was built on their bodies in the town of Sinbat. Thousands of people visit this Church in August every year.

1. If someone asks you, "Are you a Christian?", how do you answer him?
2. What are the types of punishment that St. Refka and her five sons received?
3. Where is St. Refka's Church?
4. When does the Church celebrate St. Refka's martyrdom day?
5. What is the name of the book that includes the stories of martyrs and Saints?
6. Who can say the verse?

## **Discussion**

- 1 - Follow up the story by talking about it with the children.
- 2 - Continue the discussion while they do the activity.

## **Learning Activities**

Activity Sheet.