

## Lesson No. 8

# SAINT ROWEIS

### References:

El-Keraza

### Notes For Servants:

1. Try to draw lessons for your own benefit from the life of St. Roweis.
2. Pray for your children in Sunday school.

### Objectives:

**General:** The love of God is stronger than all goods in the world.

#### **Specific:**

1. Talk about St Roweis upbringing.
2. Describe his love for God and people and his hatred for worldly possessions.
3. The Saint was not a monk nor a martyr but he attained great depths in holiness.

### Instructions:

1. Review last week's lesson.
2. Church occasion.
3. Tell the story of St. Roweis.
4. Highlight his virtues: abstinence, silence and self-control, love for God and men.
5. Memorize and let the children memorize the verse.

### Bible Verse:

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14:12)*

### Lesson:

## SAINT ROWEIS (Abba Teji)

( 21 Babah /31 October)

Saint Roweis was born in a village called Miniet Yameen in the Egyptian Delta region. His father, Isaac and his mother, Sarah, called him Freig; they were poor peasants, but brought up their son in the fear of God. Because of their poverty, Freig had to work from his boyhood to help his father earn a living. He had a camel whom he called Roweis (meaning 'small head').

Freig lived this simple frugal life for twenty years. As he grew, his heart blazed with love for his Lord, his Church, and his people. Such was his ardour that he memorised whatever he heard of the Holy Bible, the Divine Liturgy, and the sayings of the Fathers. The persecutions suddenly flared up with fierceness and brutality, and Freig, worried that some Christians may weaken and deny their Lord, left his village and went to Cairo, intending to enthruse their hearts. Feeling tired, he slept under a tree by the roadside.

In his sleep, he saw a brilliant vision, two radiant men appeared before him and said "You are weary and hungry, come, partake of the heavenly food". They led him to the Sanctuary where he took communion; they then took him back to where he was. Waking up refreshed and joyous, he went to Cairo, and from there to Upper Egypt. On this journey he took for himself the name of his camel, 'Roweis', out of sheer humility. Like our Lord, he had nowhere to lay his head. As he journeyed, he preached words of comfort and strength. At the same time, he worked for a living and spent his nights watching and praying. Because he prayed with fervour, humility, and tears, many joined him and were thus consoled.

His disdain for the world and its glitter was such that he slept on the earth, with the sky for a cover. On one occasion, he warned a disciple of his, saying, "Mind the scorpion under your foot."; the disciple discovered that it was a gold coin. He started training himself in abstinence, and succeeded in remaining without eating for twenty-six days. On his visits to families in their homes, he would pray for them, bless each member, fill them with the Peace of the Lord, and heal their sick. In his deep love for Christ the King, he persisted in partaking of the Eucharist. He both advised and warned his disciples to prepare their spirits incessantly that they may be worthy of this wondrous Mystery. He was given to see the Glory of God filling the Sanctuary, and His Light over the head of each communicant.

Content with a leather girdle about his loins, with bare head, body and legs, he was assaulted by many ruffians. Once they stoned him, but he did not open his mouth despite his sufferings. When they left him, some of his disciples carried him to a nearby wood store, where they revived him and dressed his wounds. As he sat talking with them, they suddenly saw a fire in the corner opposite them. Naturally, they were frightened, but he said unto them, "Fear not, this is no fire, but the Light of Christ, appearing unto us to prove to us His promise that He will strengthen us upon the bed of languishing."

This divine apparition was by no means a solitary incident, for our Lord appeared to him five other times, once conversing with him. For these numerous revelations, Saint Roweis is entitled, "Theophanires", that is, 'he who beholds God's Revelations'.

Among his practices was his endeavour to control his tongue; he succeeded in remaining without uttering a word for months on end. Knowing this, some wicked men went to him during a period of silence, and tried to rouse him to speak. At their failure they threw a live coal at him, but despite the burn, he maintained his silence. On another occasion they beat him with sticks and failed again.

Though the saint's heart overflowed with love for everyone, he had a special corner in it for the youth.

When Saint Roweis foresaw that his end was nearing, he called his disciples and, advising them to love one another, and blessed them one by one. He then asked for a basin of water and a towel and washed his own body, saying, "behold, I have washed my body, that none would need to do it after my repose".

Because Saint Roweis greatly honoured the Blessed Virgin, he implored her, saying, "Please, allow me to depart from this world on a day of your commemoration". Our Lady graciously granted his request, for he died on the twenty-first day of Paopi (or 'Baba') at 11 a.m.(the twenty-first day of each Coptic month being dedicated to the commemoration of the Blessed Virgin). At the hour of his departure, none was beside him, but a firm believer living nearby attested that he saw a woman whose radiance outshone the sun come down from heaven, receive his pure spirit, and carry it up to heaven. May his blessings be with us all; amen.

**Conclusion:**

1. Holiness is everyone goal and can be given to you if you seek it.
2. Do not sacrifice your Christian morals, no matter what!
3. Have the courage to follow church traditions and dogma even when among non-Copts.