February 9

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Maron (d. ca. 410) monk

Among the many monks of Syria who dedicated themselves to the most arduous and rigorous forms of asceticism, Theodoretus of Cirrus writes of one who, "having decided to live in the open, made his dwelling on the summit of a hill." This is Maron, a monk who left an indelible imprint on the history of the Eastern churches, although little is known about his life. He is commemorated today by the Maronite church, which is named after him.

This hermit, who spent his entire life exposed to the elements and totally dedicated to prayer, exerted a strong influence on the monastic movement in the Cirrus region and, later, in the diocese of Aleppo.

Maron was greatly appreciated as a teacher of the spiritual life, and his assiduous relationship with God made it possible for him to teach those who came to him to combat their spiritual ills by relying first and foremost on prayer.

A century after his death, the monastery of Beth Morum (St. Maron), near Apamea, was flourishing. When the Arabs invaded Syria, many Christians of Chalcedonese faith gathered at this monastery where Maron was remembered, and formed an independent church that came to be called the Maronite Church.

Maron is still greatly venerated in the mountainous regions of Syria and Lebanon, and Byzantine Christians also commemorate him in their sinaxaria on February 14.

BIBLICAL READINGS
2 Tim 2:10-17; Jn 12:22-30

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (1 amsir/yakkatit):
The Council of the 150 fathers in Constantinople (381)
Andrew of Sapheca (15th cent.; Ethiopian Church)

LUTHERANS:
John Hooper (d. 1555), bishop and witness to the point of bloodshed in England

MARONITES:
Maron, monK

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Leavetaking of the feast of the Meeting
Nicephoros of Antioch (d. ca. 257), martyr