July 1

Moses the Ethiopian (ca. 332-407) monk

Moses the Ethiopian, a monk of the desert of Scetis, is commemorated today in the Roman Martyrology and in Byzantine synaxaria.
Moses was born in Ethiopia around the year 332, and according to Palladius' account he was dark-skinned, tall, and robust. A series of adventures and mishaps led him to monastic life.
He had a violent character and had committed several crimes by the time he arrived in the desert of Scetis, perhaps hoping to flee human justice. His experience of anchorite life helped him make a radical conversion to the life of love described in the Gospel. Under the guidance of the desert fathers, especially Macarius the Great and Isidore the Priest, he grew in fervor and conviction, despite the difficulties he encountered as a dark-skinned foreigner.
Moses, who realized that he had received great mercy from God, became a striking example of humility and gentleness for all of the monks of Wadi al-Natrun, as can be seen in the Sayings of the desert fathers which speak of him. For John Cassian, Moses was "the greatest of all saints," and with him, according to Abba Poemen, "the summit of holiness was reached at Scetis."
Moses died at the age of seventy-five, after having been ordained a priest at the request of his brothers. According to the Alexandrine synaxarion, which commemorates him on the 24th day of the month of Ba'unah (July 1 in our calendar), Moses and seven of his disciples were martyred by barbarians, probably in the year 407. He is considered the first native Ethiopian monk.

BIBLICAL READINGS

1 Cor 3:1-8; 2 Pet 1:1-11; Acts 15:13-29; Lk 14:25-35

The twenty-seven Jewish martyrs of Toledo (d. 1488)

In 1488, during a public execution in Toledo, twenty men and seven women accused of being "new Christians" - descendants of Jews who had been forced to convert to Christianity but had secretly continued to practice the Jewish religion - were burned at the stake.
This was the most sensational of the events that, between 1485 and 1504, led to to the elimination from Spain of both "new Christians" and Jews who had remained faithful to their religion, according to the strategy of the Catholic inquisitor Torquemada.
On March 31, 1492 the king of Spain signed an edict that ordered the expulsion of Jews. It was the first in a long series of similar measures taken in different countries of Europe.

A READING

The "new Christians" (converted Jews) had become numerous in Spain; they had allied themselves with the country's important families and had become very influential. The rulers Ferdinand and Isabella charged inquisitors with the order to verify whether the "new Christians" continued to walk according to their ancient customs, and they made them the butt of fantastic tales and bitter satire, sending many of them to the stake.
In 1492, all of the hosts of the Lord, Jerusalem's exiles in Spanish territory, were dispersed to the four corners of the earth.

(Joseph Ha-Cohen, from *Valley of Tears*)

THE CHURCHES REMEBER...

ANGLICANS:
John (d. 1813) and *Henry* (d. 1873) *Venn*, priests, evangelical theologians

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
Simon and Jude, apostles (Spanish-Mozarabic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (24 ba'unah/sane):
Moses the Black, monk (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
Heinrich Voes and *Jan van Esch* (d. 1523), witnesses to the point of bloodshed in Nederlands

MARONITES:
Aaron (2nd millennium BCE), Moses' brother
Gregory X (d. 1276), pope

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Cosmas and Damian of Rome

(d. ca. 303), thaumaturges and anargyres
Barlaam of Chutyn (d. 1192), monk (Russian Church)
Leontie of Radauti (d. 1432), monk (Romanian Church)
Ilia the Righteous Ciavciavadze (d. 1907), poet (Georgian Church)