The Lord Jesus Christ promises us, "*He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will also do, and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father*" (John 14:12).

The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ was one of numerous occurrences of healings of "*all kinds of sickness and all kinds of diseases*" (Matthew 4:23). The Lord Jesus Christ healed not only sickness and disease but also darkened hearts and minds as He released people from demonic oppression.

Like their Master before them, the early Apostles participated in God's work of healing, giving all thanks to their miracles to the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ. In the Holy Book of Acts 9:34, St. Peter told a newly restored man who had been bedridden for eight years, "*Jesus the Christ heals you.*"

St. Paul in the Holy Book of I Corinthians 12:9 explained, "healing" as a gift of the Holy Spirit. In the Holy Book of St. James 5:14-15 we learn that "healing" is an established ministry of the New Testament Church and was an important part of its sacramental life.

While many other religious denominations today believe that the healing miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ have somehow passed away, our beloved Orthodox Church has held fast to the belief in "healings" throughout its more than 2000 years of Coptic Christianity. Furthermore, the writings of the early church fathers document and speak often of the healing miracles within the church.

Quite widely known are the supernatural healings, which the Lord Jesus Christ performed through St. Mina (285-309 AD). Mar-Mina is a well-known saint due to his great faith at a young age and the many miracles that are performed through his prayers. St. Mina is commonly referred to as "the Miracle Performer."

St. Mina was born in Egypt, in the city of Niceous, to good Christian parents. The mother who could not have children would pray in front of St. Mary's icon, tearfully asking to be blessed with a child. Once while she was praying this prayer, she heard an "Amen". Thus when she finally had a son, she named him "Mina".

St. Mina's father, Audexios, held an important position in the Roman Empire. When he died Mina was but fourteen years old. St. Mina then joined the army, and was given a very high position due to his

father's prominence. St. Mina was sent by the army to Algeria to serve his country.

Strongly desiring to serve God rather than his country, he resigned from the army after three short years and devoted his entire life to the Lord Jesus Christ. St. Mina became a hermit leaving everything to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. While a hermit, he saw visions of heavenly angels crowning martyrs with beautiful and glorious crowns. One day as St. Mina was contemplating his visions; he heard a voice say, "Blessed are you, Abba Mina, because you have been called for the pious life from your childhood. You shall be granted three crowns; one for your celibacy, the second for your asceticism, and the third because you will be martyred."

Following this St. Mina was overwhelmed by a great desire to live in Heaven. In true faith and with devotion in his heart, he went to the Roman ruler declaring that he was a Christian. St. Mina was severely tortured with endless sufferings. His suffering attracted many pagans not only to Christianity but to martyrdom as well.

The saint's hardhearted assassins tried to burn his young body but the fire had no effect upon it. Obtaining his discarded body, some Christian believers placed it upon the back of a camel and set

out for the Western Desert. While on this journey, the camel suddenly stopped at a certain spot in the desert and could not forcibly be made to move. St. Mina was buried in this particular area. His present monastery marks this spot today at the end of the Lake of Marriute, close to the City of Alexandria.

Several years after his burial, shepherds were tending their sheep at this location and a very sick little lamb fell to the ground. The shepherds were astonished that the sickly little lamb after falling on this particular spot raised itself completely cured. The story quickly spread throughout the countryside and many sick people came to the spot where the small lamb was cured. Just simply lying on this spot cured many.

The daughter of King Zinnon, a Christian king of good repute, became very ill. His counsel suggested that she should visit this spot famed for its healings. When the daughter visited the spot, Mar-Mina appeared to her in a dream and told her that his body was laid to rest there. In the morning she bathed in the lake and was healed. She conveyed her dream to her father upon her return.

Immediately, the King ordered that the body of St. Mina be dug up and a church to be erected at this place bearing his name. Sick people worldwide came

to visit the city founded around the church and were healed through the intercessions of St. Mina the Miracle Performer.

Clay bottles were filled in this city for the many pilgrims who came seeking the blessings of St. Mina. The bottles were filled with water or oil and taken back by the pilgrims to relatives and friends for blessings. These bottles have been discovered in numerous countries around the world bearing the name and picture of St. Mina (Heidelberg in Germany, Milan in Italy, Dalmatia in Yugoslavia, Marseille in France, Dengla in Sudan, and even in Jerusalem).

Following the Arab conquest, destruction of this city famous for its healings, thoughtlessly occurred. The inhabitants were oppressed and a large section of the city burned to the ground. Numerous marble pillars were taken to build mosques and palaces.

In the fourteenth century, in Marriute, a wooden box was discovered. It was taken to the governor of the city and opened. Bones wrapped in a piece of cloth was the contents of the box. The governor ordered his cook to throw the box in the fire. When the cook returned to prepare the next meal, he saw a column of light extending from the fire where the body of the saint unknowingly lay. It was at that time the cook

also noted that neither the bones nor the cloth that contained them had been damaged by the fire. Pope Benjamin in realization of the identity of the bones, ordered the bones and cloth which fire could not consume to be transferred to the church of St. Mina in Fom-El-Khalig.

During St. Mina's short life he was blessed with converting many to Christianity through his great and unwavering faith, which helped him endure cruel persecutions. Following his death, people are restored to wholeness through his undying faith and prayers. The Lord Jesus Christ was truly glorified in St. Mina's faith.

"*Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone among you cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord*" (James 5:13-14).

Did you know that until today our beloved church follows this practice of prayer for the sick? The Orthodox Church has a special prayer of healing which can be prayed at any given time. The priest prays for the sick person anointing him with oil and says:

"O Lord Almighty, Healer of our souls and bodies, who puts down and raises up, who chastises and heals also, visit now in Your mercy our brother (or sister) who is ill. Stretch forth Your arm that is full of healing and health, and raise him up from this bed and cure this illness. Put away the spirit of disease and every malady and pain and fever. And if he has committed sins and transgressions, grant remission and forgiveness, because of Your love for mankind."

With the Miracle Performers' great faith, we should pray neither commanding God to heal nor doubting his ability to heal, but seeking His promised mercy upon all those who are suffering with sickness and disease.

May His promised mercy be upon all those who are in need of His comfort and healing.

Bishop Youssef
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