

August 2

Fruementius (Abba Salama, 4th cent.) pastor

The Church of Ethiopia commemorates the bishop Fruementius on the 26th day of the month of Hamle, which corresponds to July 20 in the Julian calendar and August 2 in the Gregorian calendar.

Fruementius, who also went by his Ethiopian nicknames Abba Salama (father of peace) and Kasata Berhan (revealer of light), was the first bishop of Axum, Ethiopia, and introduced many Ethiopians to Christianity.

The story of his life is told by Rufinus of Aquileia. Rufinus knew Fruementius' brother Edesius, who had shared a prison sentence with Fruementius in Ethiopia. Fruementius lived in the fourth century, was a native of Tyre, and became a disciple of one of the emperor Constantine's court philosophers. As he, his master, and his brother Edesius were returning from a voyage to India, they landed on the eastern coast of Ethiopia, near Massaua. The ship's entire crew was massacred, but Fruementius and his brother were spared and managed to join the court of the king of Axum.

When he became an adult, Fruementius was given permission to visit Athanasius the Great in Alexandria, who consecrated him Ethiopia's first bishop and sent him to build up Christianity in that country.

The conversion of many Ethiopians to Christian faith was probably the result of Fruementius' episcopal ministry.

BIBLICAL READINGS

1 Tim 6:3ff.; 1 Jn 2:1ff.; Acts 5:28ff.; Mt 1:18ff.

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

WESTERN CATHOLICS:

Eusebius of Vercelli, bishop (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)

Centolla and Helen, virgins and martyrs (Spanish-Mozarabic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (26 abib/hamle):

Joseph the Righteous, protector of Mary and Jesus

Abba Salama, bishop (Ethiopian church)

LUTHERANS:

Christoph Blumhardt (d. 1919), witness to the faith in Württemberg

MARONITES:

Founding of the relics of Stephen, the first martyr

Alphonsus de' Liguori (d. 1787), bishop

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

Removal of the relics of Stephen (428), the first martyr and archdeacon

Salome (13th cent.), martyr (Georgian church)

WEST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:

Ahudemmeh (d. 575), catholicos