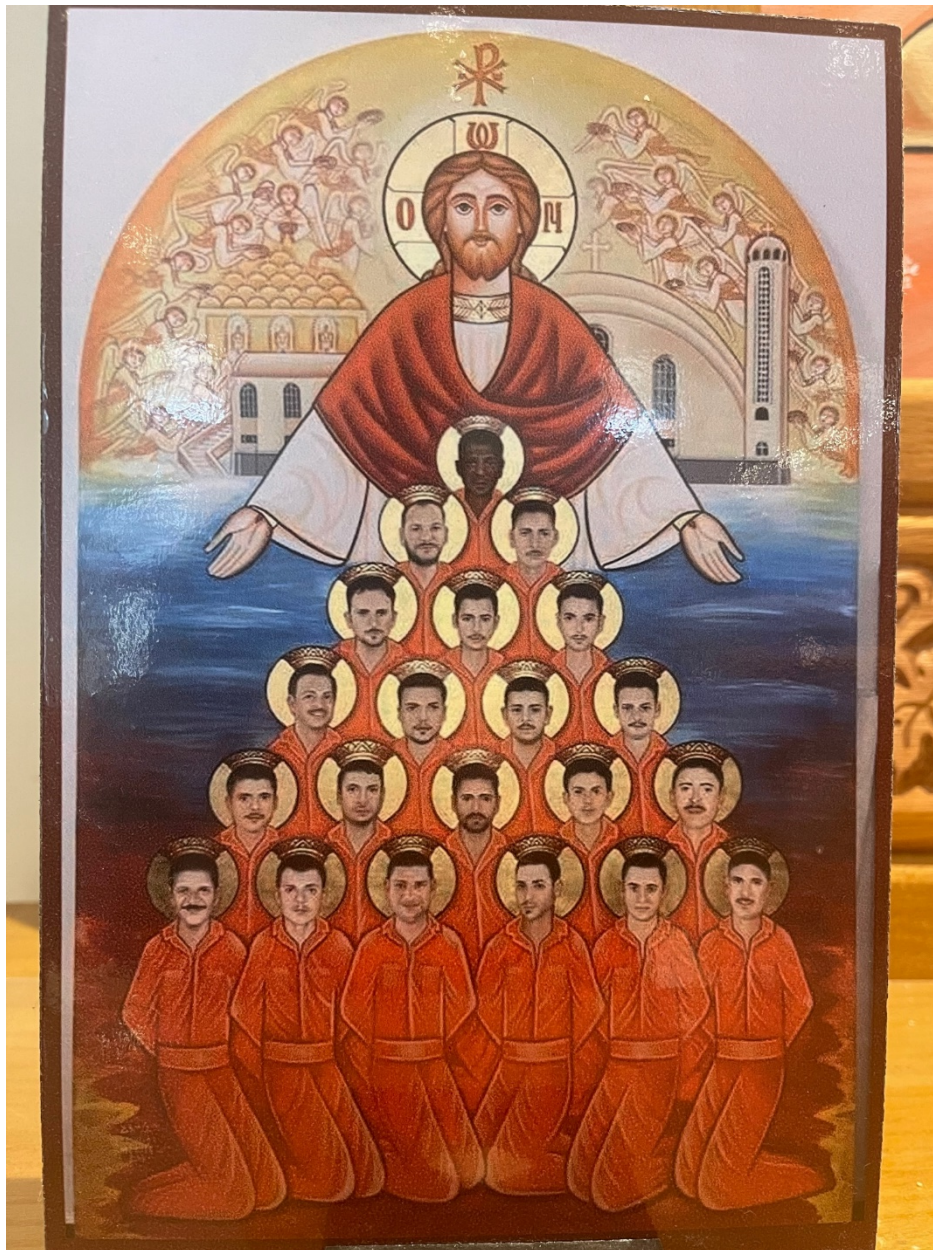


The 21 Martyrs of Libya



On February 12, 2015, 21 men were martyred by beheading for the name of Christ. This vicious attack was aired live via videos over the internet. These men were 20 Coptic Egyptian Christians and 1 from Ghana, Africa. They were construction workers that came to Libya to work and to be able to send money back to support their poor families. These men came from different villages in Egypt (13 of them alone from Al-Our Village, Minya Governorate) and were kidnapped in the city of Sirte, Libya in two separate attacks on December 27, 2014, and in January 2015.

After the beheadings, the Coptic Orthodox church released their names, but there were only 20 names listed. In the video, the leader's victim was of black African descent, in contrast to the others, who were ethnic Copts. It was later learned that this 21st victim was named Matthew Ayariga and that he was from Ghana. He was not originally a Christian, but he saw the immense faith of the others, and when the terrorists asked him if he rejected Jesus, he reportedly said, "Their God is my God, I am a Christian", knowing that he would be killed.

When the remains of the 21 bodies were found, the bodies of the 20 Egyptians were returned to Egypt except for the body of Matthew Ayariga. On September 29, 2020, Matthew Ayariga's remains were finally received in Egypt by the new church in Al Our, the Church of the Martyrs of Faith and Homeland, a shrine built in honor of the 21 martyrs. The family members of the other martyrs "expressed their joy at the return of the remains of the martyr Matthew Ayariga", saying "Our joy is complete."

The 21 martyrs of Libya were recognized by Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Church, as official martyrs and saints of the Coptic Orthodox Church one week after they were killed. On May 11, 2023, Pope Francis and the Vatican announced that the martyrs would be officially recognized by the Catholic Church and added to the calendar of saints.

The names of the martyrs are:

Bishoy Adel Khalaf	Samuel Alhoam Wilson	Hany Abdel-Masih Salib
Melad Mackeen Zaki	Abanoub Ayad Attia	Ezzat Bushra Nassif
Yousef Shokry Younan	Kirillos Shukry Fawzy	Majed Suleiman Shehata
Samuel Stéphanos Kamel	Malak Ibrahim Siniot	Bishoy Stéphanos Kamel
Mena Fayez Aziz	Girgis Melad Sniout	Tawadros Youssef Tawadros
Essam Badr Samir	Luke Ngati	Jaber Mounir Adly
Malak Faraj Abram	Sameh Salah Farouk	Matthew Ayarig