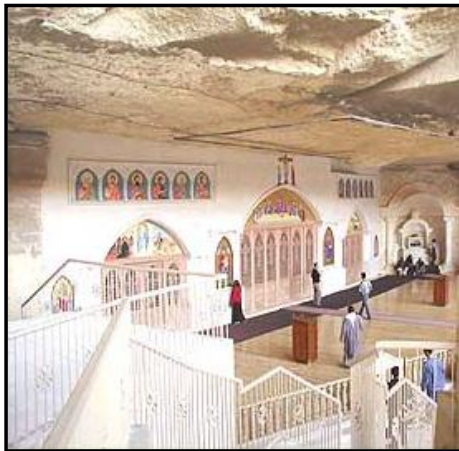
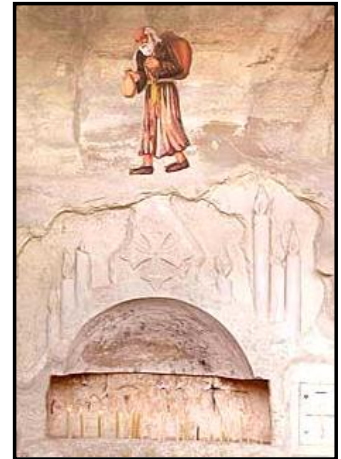


## **Saint Simon the Shoemaker (the Tanner)**

During the Days of El-Mu-ez, the Khalifa of Egypt, one of his ministers prepared a plot against the Christians. He went to El-Mu-ez and said: “The Bible of the Christians says: *If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move.* (Matthew 17:20). So let them prove this to us.” The Khalifa thought to himself, “If the saying of Christ is true, and the mountain can be moved away, that will make the city of Cairo bigger than what it is now, and if the saying is not true, that will give us an excuse to persecute the Christians without being criticized.”

So, El-Mu-ez called St. Abraam (the 62nd Pope – departed 970 AD) and asked him to prove this. The Pope asked for three days, which were granted. All the Copts fasted and prayed. On the third day, St. Mary appeared to St. Abraam and guided him to the man who would perform this sign for him. It was a one-eyed man bearing a pot of water on his shoulder. His name was Simon and he was a shoemaker. St. Abraam took Simon along with some of the priests, monks and people to see El-Mu-ez. He stood with those who were with him on one side of the Mukkatam and El-Mu-ez and his entourage stood on the other side.



The Pope, St. Simon and the believers prayed and knelt down three times, and every time they said, “Kirie layson, Lord have mercy”. Whenever they lifted up their heads after each bow, the mountain would lift up so that the sun appeared beneath it, when they walked, the mountain moved before them and when they bowed down, the mountain was lowered to the ground. The Khalifa was quite impressed and permitted the building and renovation of churches, he even offered a large sum of money which the Pope has refused. St Simon was never found afterwards. His skeleton was discovered in 1991 in El-Muallaka Church.

A Monastery was erected and dedicated to him a thousand years after this miracle. It contains seven Churches and Chapels carved and hidden in a series of caves in the Mukkatam hills. The biggest is St. Mary and St. Simon Cathedral. It was built in 1986 and renovated in 1994. It contains a quarter-circle auditorium to accommodate up to five thousand people. It also includes an educational Centre, a kinder garden, a school for the deaf and dumb and literacy and vocational courses. Visiting this place is an exceptional experience that's not to be missed.

