

ST. JOHN

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

APRIL 1993

VOLUME 5, NO 40

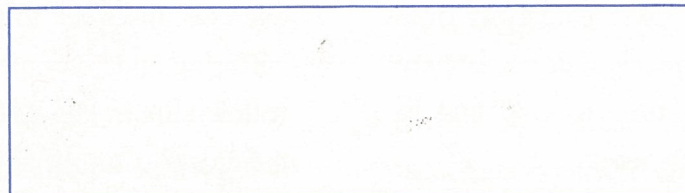
21329 Cienega Ave. Covina, CA 91724 Fax & Tel: (714) 592-8847 Tel: (714) 599-9075

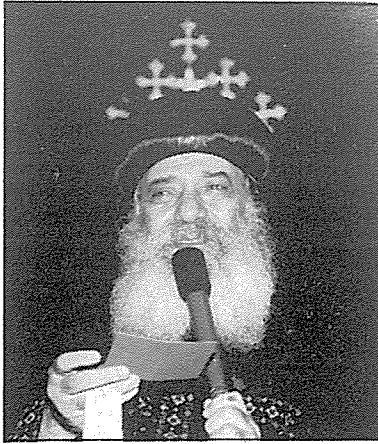


Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
St. John Coptic Orthodox Church
P.O. Box 598
West Covina, CA 91793-0598

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN GABRIEL, CA
PERMIT NO. 116

Address correction requested.
Do not forward.
Return Postage Guaranteed.





H.H. Pope Shenouda III

(Excerpts from “ Reflections on Passion Week” & Translated By Mary Hanna)

1. Our behavior inside and outside church:

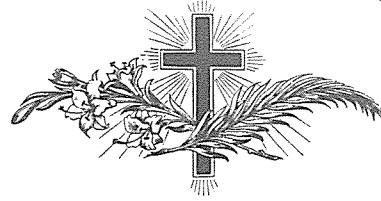
It is very noticeable that many people during passion week are one thing inside church and completely different outside. Inside church...black curtains, sad hymns, solemn readings, concentration on the suffering of Christ. But outside of church, we often laugh, joke around, socialize and think and talk about many worldly issues. We lose all the spiritual depth that we gained inside church. Let us concentrate our thoughts, conversations, and meditations around the events of this holy week and the passion of our Savior.

2. Retreat:

During our regular fasting days we put the words of the Bible before us “*Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly* “ (Joel 1:14). How much more then should we apply this commandment during Holy Week?

This week should be characterized by solitude and retreat with God, by staying away from idle discussions and various means of entertainment and pleasure. Reserve your time to God and to spiritual activities worthy of this week.

How To Benefit Spiritually



From Passion Week

3. Follow the steps of Christ:

Meditate on the events of the week one by one, from Palm Sunday when Christ refused His worldly Kingdom and the Jews gave up their hopes in Him, until they crucified and buried Him.

On Palm Sunday, ask yourself: Is Christ King and Lord over everthing in my life? Do you, like Christ, turn down worldly glory for spiritual and eternal glory? And during the “general funeral” afterwards, consider yourself attending your own funeral (because if you die during this week the church will not hold a funeral for you).

And when the church denounces Judas’ treasonal kiss on the eve of Wednesday’s Pascha, ask yourself in prayer: How often, Oh Lord, have I betrayed You? How many times have I told You words of love in prayers, while my actions show the opposite and my heart is far away from You?

4. Share in the fellowship of his suffering:

St. Paul said “*That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death*” (Philippians 3:10). Can we give ourselves an exercise this week to share in the fellowship of His suffering and be conformed to His death ? Can we follow Him in His suffering and ascend with Him to the cross? Can we say with St. Paul “*With Christ I*



have been crucified; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” ? (Gal. 2:20).

Therefore, in order for Christ to live in us, we have to carry our cross and follow Him. If you have a cross in your life, don't complain about it, but rather rejoice in it and bear it for Christ's sake. *“For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him but to suffer for His sake” (Phil.1:29).*

5. Asceticism:

Whoever puts the suffering of Christ before Him will not take any pleasure in eating and drinking or pampering the body. But in order to succeed in pursuing asceticism, we must satisfy our souls with spiritual food so that it may thrive and overcome physical hunger.

6. Spiritual Readings:

Spiritual readings are also food for the soul. The church has organized for us a treasure of appropriate readings for every day of Holy Week, comprised of Gospel readings, Old Testament prophecies that correspond to the events of each day, spiritual explanations and sermons of the church fathers. On Holy Saturday (Apocalypse night) the church reads the entire book of Revelation.

7. Hymns:

The hymns of Passion Week are moving and full of spiritual depth. Hymns also, like reading, preserve the thought from wandering and guide it in a spiritual direction.

8. Prayer:

Since the prayers of the Agpeya are not used

during Holy Week, we are to substitute personal prayers in their place, in addition to the intensive prayers of the church, asking the Lord who bore the sins of the world and died for us to forgive and have mercy upon us according to His great mercy.

9. Confession and Communion:

During this week, each person must sit with himself and remember his sins and put them on Christ's shoulders and tell Him in shame *“Carry O Lord my sins too, with the sins of the rest of humanity. Take my sins and nail them to the cross with you, so that your blood may wipe them away!”*

Look carefully at your sins and know that they are the cause of His crucifixion. Many people cry out of their sorrow for Christ's suffering while they crucify Him every day with their sins. We should not feel sorry for Christ during this week, but should be sorry for our sins that caused Him these pains. As Jesus told the women that were crying over Him: *“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not cry for Me, but cry for yourselves and your children” (Lk 23:28).*

Before the cross, we all stand as sinners, all under the condemnation. *“No one is righteous, not even one ” (ps.14:3).* We confess our sins and prepare ourselves for communion. There are 3 liturgies during Holy Week on Passover Thursday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. (Preceded, of course, by the liturgy of Palm Sunday).

10. Spiritual Stock-up:

Passion Week is not an opportunity to benefit for a week only, but a time to store up spiritual nourishment enough to last us the whole year, particularly needed during the 50 days after the resurrection when there is no fasting.



The Scarlet Cord of Blood Through The Scriptures

By

Fr. Augustinos Hanna

From Genesis to Revelation:

Through the rivers of blood of the sacrifices which started right after the fall of man in the garden of Eden, we find the plan of God for our redemption and salvation. They were types of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which shall be shed on the cross in the fullness of time.

These are some examples of that scarlet cord of which Rahab put in her window as a token of her salvation and security (Joshua 2:18,21): The skin coats (Gen.3:21), Able's offering (Gen.4:4), Noah's burnt offerings (8:20), Abraham's ram and Isaac' sacrifice, the blood of the lamb of the Passover (Exod.12), the four bloody sacrifices of Leviticus). This scarlet cord of blood is penetrating almost every book of the Scriptures till Revelation 1:5 & 5:6 & 7:9-14 & 12: 11 &13:8).

The key verse that explains all these sacrifices in Leviticus 17:11 says: "*For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the alter to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.*"

That is why St. Paul says: "*And according to the law almost all things are purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission*" (Heb. 9:22). The idea of the blood sacrifices in the Old Testament as a type or a shadow of the blood of

Christ, is explained in detail in the Letter to the Hebrews chapters 9 &10.

When the Lord Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Eucharist, He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying:

" Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. 26:26-28).

St. Peter assures the same fact by saying: "*Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.*" (1 Pet. 1: 18-20).

10 Essential Works of the Blood of Christ

1. Redemption: "*In Him we have redemption through His blood*" (Eph.1:7 & Col. 1:14)
2. Forgiveness: "*This is My blood which is shed for the remission of sins*" (Matt 26:28).
3. Cleaning: "*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*" (1John 1:7) "*These are the*



ones who come out of the great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb." (Rev. 7: 14).

4. **Reconciliation:** "By Him- Jesus- to reconcile all things to Himself... having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col.1:20).

5. **Victory over Satan:** "And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb." (Rev 12:11).

6. **Justification:** "Being justified freely by His grace through redemption that is in Christ Jesus by His blood " (Rom. 3:24).

7. **Overcoming the world:** "But God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal. 6:14).

8. **Sanctification:** "For by one offering, He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." (Heb.10:14).

9. **Rescue from judgment:** " Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you." (Exo.12:13).

10. **The Right of entering into Heaven:** "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.."(Heb.10:19) & "These are the the ones who...washed their robes in the blood of the lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

Message of the Church Fathers

Mystery of the Cross

By: St. Cyril the Pillar of Faith

The blessed Paul counts the mystery of the incarnation of the Only-begotten worthy of all admiration, and, so to speak, is in amaze at the wisdom and excellence of the plan of salvation, saying, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God* (Rom. 11:33). For consider how the Savior of all and Lord, by Whom the Father brought all things into existence, refashions man's nature, restoring it to that which it was in the beginning by becoming Himself like unto us, and bearing our sufferings for our sakes. For the first man was indeed in the beginning in the paradise of delight, being ennobled by the absence both of suffering and of corruption; but when he despised the commandment that had been given him, and fell under a curse and condemnation, and into the snare of death, by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, Christ, as I said, by the very same thing restores him against to his original condition. For He became the fruit of the tree by having endured the precious cross for our sakes, that He might destroy death, which by means of the tree had invaded the bodies of mankind. He bore suffering that He might deliver us from sufferings; *He was despised and not esteemed*, as it is written (Isaiah 53:3), that He might make us honorable: He did no sin, that He might crown our nature with similar glory; He Who for our sakes was man submitted also to our lot; and He Who gives life to the world submitted to death in the flesh. Is not, therefore, the mystery profound? What doubt can there be of this? Let us, therefore, as we offer Him our praise, repeat that which was sung by the Psalmist's harp: *How great are Thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast Thou made them all* (Psalm 104:24). Edited by: Fr. Matthias F. Wahba



The Divinity of Christ (3)

Jesus Is Lord & God

By
Fr. Augustinos Hanna

In the last two issues I talked about four proofs of the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ:

- (1) The Prophecies
- (2) His Divine Names
- (3) His Divine Attributes
- (4) His Divine Works

In this issue we discuss His Divine Declarations and His Divine Honor.

(5) The Divine Declarations of Christ About Himself:

1. The I AM's of JESUS: "I AM" is the name of God, Jehovah or Yahweh in Exodus 3:14, which the Lord announced to Moses. Jesus used the same Divine name for Himself and said, "I AM the bread of life, the light of the world, the way, the truth and the life, the good shepherd, the Messiah and the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
2. The Lord Jesus is the only person in history who could announce hundreds of Divine claims about Himself, here are some examples :
"I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).
3. He also said, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father"* (John.14:9).
4. *"The Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath"* (Matt.12:8).
5. *"That you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins..."* (Mark 2:10).
6. *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away"* (Matt. 24:35).
7. *"If anyone keeps My word he shall never see death"* (Jn.8:51, 52).

8. *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest"* (Matt.11:28).
9. *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"* (Matt. 28:18).
10. *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth..."* (Jn.8:28).
11. *"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son"* (Jn.5:22).
12. *"Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life"* (Jn.5:24).

(6) The Divine Honor of Christ:

Since the Lord Jesus is equal to the Father and one with Him in nature and essence, so He deserves all the honor and glory offered to God the Father:

1. **The baptism by His name** - and all the other sacraments - is practiced in the name of Christ as well as of the Father and of the Holy Spirit on equal foot, as Jesus said right before His ascension:

"...Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt.28:19).

2. **Worship is due to Him:** The worship that is due only to God alone, as it is written in the Book of Deuteronomy which the Lord Jesus quoted in His third temptation, *"You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve"* (Matt.4:10), these worship and service were already offered to Christ without any objection or reservation from His



side. For example, St. Matthew wrote in his Gospel, *“And behold, a lepper came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean. Then Jesus touched him saying I am willing, be cleansed. Immediately his leprosy was cleansed”* (Matt.8:2,3).

+ Jesus also accepted the worship of people as from the born blind man whom He had healed (John 9:38), and from the tenth leper in Luke 17:16, see also Lk.5:8 & 8:28 & Matt. 28:9 & Rev. 1:17).

+ Note that if Jesus were not worthy of worship (if we assumed that He was not God indeed and just a deceiver - God forbid), He would not have been able to perform all these great miracles which He continued to do till the last moment.

+ It is written about Christ, *“Let all the angels of God worship Him”* (Heb. 1:6).

+ *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth...”* (Phil. 2:5 - 11).

So, Christ is worthy of worship not from men, angels and demons as well (Lk.8:28).

3. Prayers are directed to Christ:

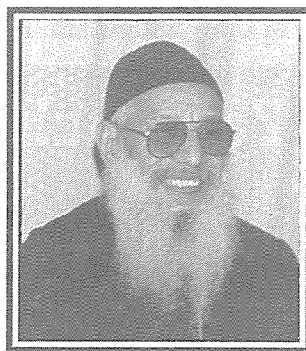
+ *“And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”* (Acts 7:59).

+ The apostles prayed to Him (Acts 1:24).

+ St. Paul prayed to Christ (Acts 9:5,6).

4. The equality in honor between the Father and the Son:

Jesus said, *“For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father “* (Jn 5:21-23).



Fr. Gewargios Attalla

The Witnesses of The Cross

The crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ was implemented in the time of the Jewish Passover, in which the Jews came in large numbers from all over the world to Jerusalem in order to attend the celebration of this great feast. Accordingly, the witnesses of the cross were a huge number of people; some of which were in favor of the execution while the rest were against this cruel and unjust sentence of our good Saviour. We can enumerate those witnesses as follows:

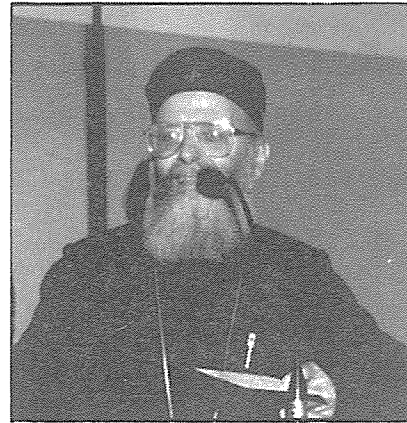
1. The huge number of Roman soldiers (Lk. 23:37)
2. All the Jewish priests, the scribes, the pharisees and the elders (Matt 27:41).
3. The huge numbers of the Jews who were watching the crucifixion (Matt. 27:49).
4. Those who passed by the cross and mocked (Mk 15:29, 30)
5. The beloved Apostle St. John, St. Mary His mother, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene (Jn. 19:25-27).
6. The two thieves crucified with Him, one on either side (Matt. 27:44, Jn 19:18).
7. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (Jn. 19: 38-42).

One must not forget the inanimate creatures which noticed the cruelty of man against their creator. These are:

1. The sun which stopped shining for three hours (Matt 27:45, Lk. 23:44).
2. The veil of the temple was torn in two (Matt. 27: 50, 51, and Lk. 23:45).
3. The earth quaked and the rocks were split (Matt. 27:51).
4. The graves were opened (Matt. 27:52).



The Book of Zechariah & The Passion of Christ



By
Fr. Augustinos Hanna

Zechariah (literally means the Lord remembers), came from a family of priests, and with Haggai was closely involved in the rebuilding of the temple following the return from exile (Ezra 5-6 for the historical background). His name appears in the lists of priests in Nehemiah 12:1, 16. Like Daniel and Ezekiel, he was a visionary. His book distills the wisdom of many of the earlier prophets, and brings the events of the far future into sharp focus.

It is one of the three greatest books in the O.T., full of sharp prophecies about the Messiah and His redemptive suffering and passion, along with the Books of Psalms and Isaiah. It contains detailed references to Christ which are clearly fulfilled in His life.

Christ in the Book of Zechariah

Very clear Messianic passages abound in this book. Christ is portrayed in His two advents as both Servant and King, Man and God. The following are some important prophecies about Christ:

(1) **The Angel of the Lord** (3:1,2), *"Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him (see also Ps 109:6). And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"*

(2) **The Righteous Branch** (3:8; 6:12,13), *'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign; for behold, I am bringing forth My SERVANT the BRANCH" . "Then speak to him, saying, ' Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH ! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; Yes, He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne;; He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace " (see Isa. 11:1,2 & Jer.23:5).*

(3) **The Stone with Seven Eyes** (3:9), *"For behold the Stone that I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes."*



(4) **The King-Priest** (6:13), *"He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."* The Lord Jesus Christ is the King of Kings, King of Glory, Peace and Righteousness and the High Priest (Heb. 7).

(5) **The Humble, Peaceful, Righteous King and Savior** (9:9-10):

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey...He shall speak peace to the nations. His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

(6) **The Redeemer who sets free from hell** (9:11), *"Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope."*

(7) **The Cornerstone** (4:6 & 10:4), *"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts, Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"*

(8) **The Good Shepherd who is rejected and sold for 30 shekels of silver, the price of a slave** (11:4, 12,13), *"Then I said to them 'if it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain. So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces*

of silver. And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"- hat princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter"(compare Matt.27:3-10).

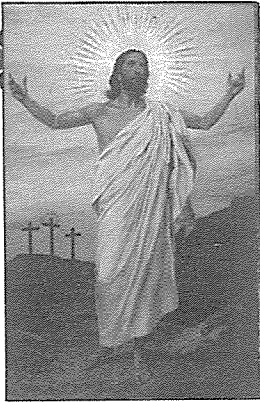
(9) **The Pierced One** (12:10), *"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced"(Jn 19:34, 37)*

(10) **The Cleansing Fountain** (13:1), *"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness". (Eph. 1:7 & 1 Jn 1:7 & 2:2 & Rev7:13,14).*

(11) **The Smitten Shepherd** (13:7), *"Awake O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion, says the Lord of hosts. Strike the Shepherd; and the sheep will be scattered." (Mark 14:27).*

(12) **The Second Coming of Christ with the Saints as a Judge and King** (14:5, 9) *"Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You...And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be-The Lord is one and His name one."*

(13) **The Crucifixion of Christ on the hands of His Nation** (13:6), *"And someone will say to Him, 'What are these wounds in Your hands? Then He will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends."*



The Good Gardener

*“Supposing Him To Be The Gardener”
(Jn.20:15)*

Mary Magdalene was mistaken for thinking of the risen Christ to be the gardener ; but by her mistake she opened for us the door for a wonderful meditation that the Lord Jesus is so indeed. He said that He is the “Good Shepherd”, “the Good Teacher”, the “Good Samaritan”, the “Good Part”, and based on Scriptures we can say that He also is:

1. The “Good Gardener”!

Are we not all the plants of His right hand planting? Do we not all need watering and tending by His constant and gracious care? He Himself says, *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser”* and that is one view of it ; but we may also sing , with Isaiah, *“My well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it..”* (Isa. 5), that is to say, He acted as gardener to it.. The image gives us some suggestions and useful teaching. In one of His own parables our Lord makes Himself to be the dresser of the vineyard. When the owner came to seek fruit in the fig tree that brought forth none, he said unto the dresser of his vineyard, *“Cut it down ; why does it cumber the ground?”* Who was the mediator here between the profitless tree and the axe, but our great Intercessor ? He it is who continually comes forward with, *“Let it*

alone this year also until I dig around it, and fertilize it”. In this case He Himself takes the character of the vine-dresser. Our Lord takes the name of “the second Adam” and the first, Adam was a gardener.

Behold, the Church is Christ’s Eden, watered by the river of life, and he, our second Adam, walks in this spiritual Eden to dress it and to keep it; and so by a type we see that we are right in “supposing Him to be the gardener”.

2. Wonders in the garden of His church:

The first wonder is that there should be a church at all in the world; that there should be a garden blooming in the midst of this sterile waste. Upon a hard rock the Lord has made the Eden of His church to grow. How came there to be oasis of life in a desert of death? How came there to be people for God, separated, and sanctified, and consecrated, and ordained to bring forth fruit unto His Holy Name? Painfully, with wounded hands, has He built each terrace, and fashioned each bed, and planted each plant. All the flowers have had to be watered with His bloody sweat, and watched by His tearful eyes, the nail-prints in His hands, and the wound in His side are the tokens of what it cost Him to make a new Paradise. He has given His life for the life of every plant that is in the garden.

The second wonder, is How come the church of God to flourish in such a climate ? This present evil world is very destructive to the growth of grace,, and the church is not able by herself alone to resist the evil influences which surround her. If you want to know the secret of this miracle, listen to the word of God: *“In that day sing to a vineyard of red wine! I, the Lord, keep it, I water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day”* (Isa. 27:2,3). One of our most beautiful hymns in the church is quoted



from Psalm 80 that says: *“Return, we beseech You, O, God of hosts; look down from heaven and see, and visit this vine and the vineyard which Your right hand has planted”*.

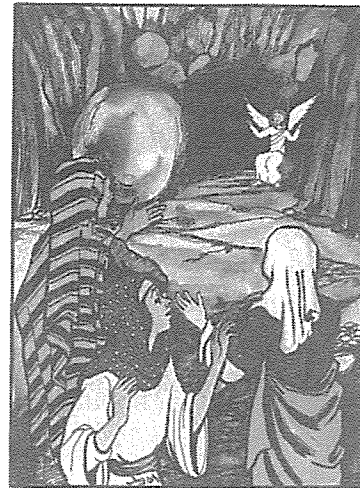
3. Deliverance from fears: Our Good Gardener is very kind and mighty, *“A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoking flax He will not quench”* (Matt.12:20). The serpent of old will have a hard time to approach again. When Adam was the gardener, the serpent got in and had a chat with his wife, and mischief came of it; but supposing Jeus to be the gardener, woe to you serpent: there is a blow for your head within half a minute if you could dare to show yourself within the boundary.

4. A warning for the careless:

Supposing Him...the gardener, many are to the church what weeds are to the garden. They are not planted by God; they are not bringing forth fruits to His Glory. Jesus warned: *“Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up”*. He also said, *“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away “* (John 15:2).

5. Comfort for those who suffer:

Many of us have been made to suffer much physical pain, which often bites into our spirits, and makes the heart heavy. Are you ready to complain against the aLord for all this? I pray you do not so. Take the supposition in your mind, that the Lord has been pruning you sharply, cutting off your best boughs, and you seem to be tormented with the knife. He said, *“And every branch that bears fruit, He prunes, that it may bear more fruit”* (Jn.15:2). Put your finger to your lip and be quiet, until you are able from your heart to say, *“The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord”*. *“If we suffer with Him, we will also be glorified with Him”* (Rom. 8:17).



Who Shall Roll Away The Stone?

By
Fr. Gewargios Attalla

When Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome were in their way to the tomb of our Saviour early Sunday morning with their spices proved that they did not expect a Resurrection. Two of them at least had witnessed the burial, hence their great concern was the practical act: " who would roll away the stone for them from the entrance of the tomb" (Mk. 16:3). They were confronted with this difficulty; but their great love to Christ carried them to the tomb. As they approached, they found the stone rolled back and the difficulty vanished. Sometimes as we may find great difficulties in our lives; and we think that these are of no solution. When we reach to this conclusion the Lord will send somebody to roll away the stone. He will order the angels to remove the barriers and guide us in the right way and confirm His great love to us.

Remember this Bible verse:

" I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loves me and gave Himself for me" Galatians 2:20.



On Losing Weight

By

Mona Tanios

We are so conscious of losing weight. We hop on the scale every morning, hoping to lose those extra few pounds that are keeping us from being fit, healthy or better looking. People will pay money in fitness centers to lose that weight, will be so dedicated in exercising, will sweat hard, will deprive themselves from favorite dishes and food to lose that weight. Finally, we are all aware that being overweight is also dangerous! We might end up with a heart attack! If not, at least we are short of breath, tired and sleepy.

You know what? This is not my issue, but just for the sake of comparison and argument.

Sin over my conscience and my soul is also a heavy weight that I carry throughout my life. It is keeping me from running fast, eagerly into my spiritual path. It makes me even look bad in so many ways: in the sight of God, angels, saints and even people. It is so dangerous as well, it could be fatal (heart attack) to my life with God, that is if I do not run to Abouna (the doctor) repent and confess about it, accept the treatment and follow my prescription.

This is the way to lose that weight. So come now to confession, grab the opportunity, repent in these holy and wonderful days of the holy lent. May be we could start being conscious as well to what goes into our mind not only what goes into our stomach. Can we sweat and suffer in fighting temptations? Can we arrange for a daily spiritual exercise and be so dedicated to it? Get rid of that

weight which is keeping you from breathing freely, from being joyful...the weight that is coming between you and God. You will feel younger "So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Ps.103:5).

Feel the freedom with God, enjoy His kingdom on earth: "Thy Kingdom come". Lose that weight so that you may fly up high in spirituality, don't let the gravity of sin put you down to hell. Please go and lose that weight.

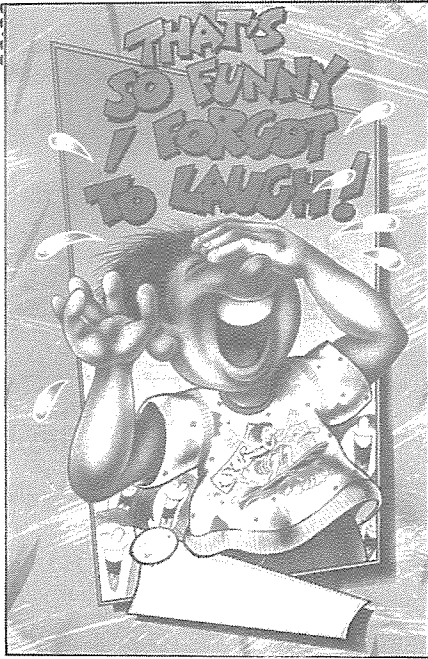
"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1, 2).

Nine Requisites Enough For Contented Living

Dr. Wafaa Michael, M.D.

1. **Health enough** to make work a pleasure.
2. **Wealth enough** to support your needs.
3. **Strength enough** to overcome difficulties.
4. **Grace enough** to confess and forsake your sins.
5. **Patience enough** to fail until some good is accomplished.
6. **Charity enough** to see some good in your neighbor.
7. **Love enough** to move you to be useful and helpful to others.
8. **Faith enough** to make real the things of God.
9. **Hope enough** to remove all anxious fears concerning the future.

And above all **Satisfaction** with what God allows us to have.



From the Jewish Folklore

From the Jewish folklore comes this story of unfair rejection. A young man is riding on the train to Lublin, Poland. Trying to make small talk with an older merchant, he opens with a surefire conversation starter. "Can you tell me the time?"

The merchant tell him, in direct terms, there he can go.

"What?" the astonished young man asks. "I ask you a simple question and you answer with rudeness. Why, what's the matter with you?"

The merchant sighs wearily, tells him to sit down, and begins his explanation. "All right, I'll tell you what's the matter. You ask me a question. I have to give you an answer, no? That starts a conversation. We talk about the weather, politics, business, and so on. One thing leads to another. It turns out you're a Jew. I am a Jew. I live in Lublin, you're a stranger there. Out of hospitality, I must ask you to my house for dinner. You meet my daughter. She's a beautiful girl; you're a handsome young man. You date a few times. You fall in love. Finally, you come to ask for my daughter's hand in marriage. So why go to all that trouble? Let me tell you right now, young man, I won't let my daughter

marry anyone who doesn't even own a watch!

Music

Boss: "Ben, I wish you wouldn't sing at your work."

Ben: "I wasn't working, sir - I was just singing."

Sunday School Students

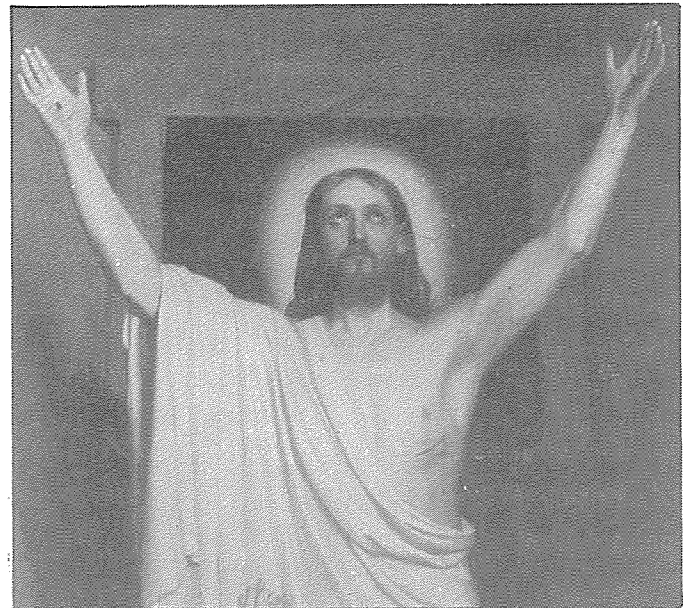
A Sunday School teacher was presenting the story of Lot. She related how God told Lot to take his wife and flee from the city. Unfortunately, she looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt.

Teacher paused and Michael asked, "What happened to the flea?"

Food

Waiter: We have a very up to date place here. Everything is cooked by electricity.

Customer: I wonder if you would mind giving this steak another shock?



"... I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies."

John 11:25