

ST. JOHN

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Bless The Crown of the Year With Your Goodness

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December 1993 Monthly Planner

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New Prayers For The New Year

(1) Jabez' Prayer

"And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying,
'Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge
my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and
that You would keep me from evil, that it may not
pain me!' So God granted him what he requested."
(1 Chronicles 4:10).

It is useful to add this short prayer to our
daily prayers to enrich them. It is composed of four
short, but very important supplications:

- 1) You would bless me indeed.
- 2) Enlarge my territory.
- 3) Your hand would be with me.
- 4) Keep me from evil that it may not pain
me.

(2)

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
Where there is injury, let me sow pardon,
Where there is doubt, let me sow faith,
Where there is despair, let me sow hope,
Where there is darkness,.....light,
Where there is sadness,.....joy,
O Divine Master, grant that I may not seek:
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born
to eternal life. Amen.

Francis of Assisi

A new hymn translated from Arabic
Quoted from the "Parousia" News Letter
of St. Mary's Coptic Church, Cambridge, Ont.,
Canada.

Shepherd of my soul

1. O You whose presence delights my soul,
And Whom in my distress, I call;
My comfort by day, by night my refuge;
My stronghold, whenever I fall.
2. Shepherd of my soul, I beg you to tell
Where do You make Your sheep to rest,
For why should I roam in the valley of tears
And wander, as one who is lost.
3. I charge you to tell me, daughters of Zion
Have you seen the One I adore?
I seek Him in vain, in the night of my soul
But, lo, I can find Him no more.
4. Shepherd of my soul, I shall follow You
O how sweet Your voice is to me!
So guide me, lead me and show me the way
My only desire is Thee.
5. I am my Be-lov-ed's and He is mine too
He calls me His sister and spouse,
O how do I long for the day we shall wed,
In heaven; in His Father's house.

Verses to memorize

- + "You crown the year with Your goodness, and
Your paths drip with abundance" (Psalm 65:11)
- + "We finish our years like a sigh" (Psalm 90:9,10)
- + "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, To preach the
acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18,19)

Are You Willing To Serve?

By

Fr. Augustinos Hanna

(This is a list of services)
Please consider one (or more)
choice(s) and be faithful to it.

* To Seniors:

1. Drive a senior to Sunday
(Wed. or Friday) Liturgy.
2. Drive a senior to the doctor.
3. Drive a senior to the store, or
the bank.
4. Accompany a senior to a park
or a restaurant.
5. Visit a senior at home, or in a
nursing or retirement home.

* Marthas:

6. Emergency services (eg.care
for children, Prepare a meal &
Doing light housework)
7. Help with telephone calls (or
telephone tree).
8. Prepare a dish for a funeral
luncheon.
9. Consolation service
10. Baby - sitting.
11. Help serve or clean up.
12. In children's nursery.
13. Cafeteria work.

* Professional Services & Specialized Skills

14. Doctor - Dentist etc.,...
15. Lawyer 16. Physical therapist
16. Psychiatrist
17. Handyman / woman
18. Carpenter 19. Electrician
20. Plumber 21. Social Worker
22. Nurse's Aide 23. Typist
24. School Teacher
25. Pharmacist 26. Travel agent
27. Photographer 28. Barber
29. Realtor & Broker
30. Translator
31. Notary Public
32. Musician 33. Gardener
+ Other.....(specify)

* Hospitality:

34. Serve coffee, tea, doughnuts
or pastry.
35. Purchase, maintain flowers.
36. Entertain strangers & guests.

* Grounds Beautification Committee

37. Landscaping.
38. Cutting the lawn.
39. Cleaning and keeping order.
40. Providing bathroom supplies
and detergents.
41. Keeping the premises clean
and neat - upkeeping....

* Stewardship

42. Willing to serve in financial,
legal or personnel areas.
43. Willing to serve in main-
tenance management for

church facilities.

44. Ushers.
45. Clean / polish vessels.
46. Launder, press vestments
and iron altar covers & linens.
47. Cleaning the church carpet.
48. Arranging church trips,
conferences and festivals.
49. Church bulletin board.
50. Visiting prisons.
51. Making holy bread (korban)
52. Providing the oblations, oil,
incense, coverings, reading
books, altar vessels, wine and
candels- other ministry supplies.

* Weddings & Baptisms

53. Deacons' service
54. Rehearsal - church decoration
55. Sewing Baptismal garments

* Church Library

56. Books, magazines, pictures
videos, cassettes, gifts.
57. Publicity-advertising-printing
58. Recording sermons, festivals
and activities (audio & video)

* Lectors

59. Training on reading the
Liturgical Scriptures correctly.
60. Presentations for the youth
and the children.
61. Proclaiming the Word of
God and Bible Study.

* Music Ministry

62. Choir or chorale.

63. Playing your musical instrument in celebrations, trips, retreats, meetings.

* **Sunday School teaching**

64. According to age and grade.

* **Visiting the sick**

65. In hospitals, homes and convalescent homes.

* **Serving the needy**

66. Giving shelter, food, clothes, money, furniture, blankets, toys for the children....etc.

67. Helping in the food- bank.

* **Counseling & peace-making Services**

68. Family problems and divorce cases.

69. Newly married couples.

* **Helping New Comers**

70. Find an apartment and furniture.

71. Apply for a social security card.

72. Opening bank accounts.

73. Get a car, a driver's license, and insurance etc.....

74. Introducing them to the church members in the area to help them.

75. Find good schools for their children.

76. Find a job.

77. Giving them rides to all places they might need.

78. Giving them your experience

* **Missions Commission**

79. Serving a new needy area



80. Wash and mend used clothing.

81. Assist in clothing collection and distribution.

82. Move furniture which has been donated.

83. Provide use of truck/ van for furniture moving.

84. Help on fund raising activities.

* **Services to the World**

85. Church greeting services (eg. Christmas cards- get well- sympathy- birthdays etc.,...)

86. Letter / article writing.

87. Prayer support.

88. Coordinate arrangements for presentations / speakers.

89. Distributing Bibles, cassettes Agpeyas, church Magazines

* **Youth Ministry**

90. Deacons & board of deacons

91. In the library, book shop.

92. In the church cafeteria.

93. Teaching English, Arabic & Coptic languages.

94. In the youth Summer Club.

95. In youth & children's camps

96. Serve as a church bus driver upon need.

97. Assist with purchasing & setting up foods for retreats and activities.

98. Keep an eye on the parking lot during Sunday liturgy.

99. Serve as a Phone-Facilitator passing on information for



involvement and activities.

100. Lead in singing.

101. Babysit during meetings.

* **St. John Magazine**

102. Serve in writing articles, stories, columns & views.

103. Serve as a news reporter.

104. Translate from Arabic to English and vice versa.

105. Revise and proof read.

106. Share in distribution, and Postal services.

107. Bring more subscribers, add names, addresses to the list.

General Instructions:

(1) Please sign up and check the services you want to participate in, to be included on this year's computer printout.

(2) Your commitment and responsibility to fulfill it, will extend from December 1993, until December 94.

(3) Please consider one realistic choice and be faithful to it.

(4) Make a Xerox copy of these two pages and send them back signed and marked to the magazine- (Attention: Fr. Augustinos)

(5) If you want more services, read Matt. 25:14-46 & Rom. 12.

The Right Combination

DEGILSVOO

A lock collector had a most unusual lock. It was a small box. The lock had only one key, but nine key holes. Under each keyhole was a letter of the alphabet. The letters were **DEGILSVOO**. The owner felt sure that if he turned the key in each keyhole using the right order, the lock would open. He also felt sure he could find the right order by unscrambling the letters so that they spelled some word or sentence. But he couldn't unscramble the letters to spell the right combination of words.

One day a ten-year-old boy who was also interested in locks happened to see the box. He studied it for a while and then asked if he might try to open it. The owner gave him permission, and the boy put the key in each keyhole in this order:

G-O-D- I-S- L-O-V-E.

It worked. The lid flipped open. The correct combination was the sentence **"God is love"**.

"God is love" is also the right combination to solving the mystery of who is behind this universe. Jesus came to show us that the Creator of all is a God of love. How do we know that God is love? All we have to do is to look at the life of Jesus Who is God. We see that His whole life was a life of love for us. His death for us on the cross, His resurrection from the dead to give us eternal life, His raising the dead, healing the sick, feeding the 5,000 hungry persons, etc.

God is always love if we will trust Him. St. Paul expressed this when he wrote, "In all things

God works for good to those who love Him." If we give our life to Jesus and live for Him, He will use even the unpleasant happenings in our life for our moral and spiritual good. An example of this is Joseph in the O.T. whose brothers out of envy sold him into slavery. Yet he remained faithful to God. And God made him prime minister of Egypt.

The right combination to finding out who I am, whose I am, and why I am here, is Jesus. He alone is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Jn. 14:6). He is the key that opens the door to God's forgiveness-the key to love and peace and joy.

Have you ever seen a huge bank vault? The door is huge and thick; the lock very complicated. Yet if you know the right combination the door will open for you with the greatest of ease. So it is with life. It seems difficult at times. The problems are great. Yet if we have the right combination, the door will open for us. The One Who gives us the right combination to life is Jesus: "God is love." Trust Him. Love Him. Serve Him, and live for Him.



Question & Answer

Why fasting 40 days
before Christmas?

Fr. A. H.

Q. Why do we fast another forty days before the advent and Christmas, since we fast the forty days (the lent) which the Lord Jesus fasted, before Easter?

A. As the prophet Moses fasted forty days (twice) in order to receive the word of God in the ten commandments written with the finger of God, so we also likewise fast this forty days to prepare ourselves to receive the Incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ before Christmas.

+ Moreover, fasting is profitable for both, our spiritual and physical life and health (Isa.58).

+ It is a nice chance to substitute the material food with a spiritual food, that is the word of God, prayer, communion, self control, giving to the needy, doing the will of God, serving Christ and growing in the grace.

+ Fasting is found seventy-five (75) times in the Scriptures, forty-four (44) times in the Old Testament and thirty-one (31) times in the N.T.

+ In the Hebrew Language of the O.T. it is pronounced *tsoon* and means to cover the mouth, to fast. In the Greek language, *nacetis*, means not to eat, to abstain from food, to fast.

+ Note, that the three persons who appeared on the mount of Transfiguration shining in great glory, were only the three persons who fasted for forty days. They were the Lord Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

+ In the book of Isaiah, there is a complete chapter about fasting, it is **Isaiah 58**. Read it carefully and study the true fasting requirements and blessings.

And you shall

call His NAME JESUS

PRINCE of PEACE, Mighty God,

Wonderful Counselor, Holy One,

Lamb of God, PRINCE of Life,

LORD God Almighty,

LION of the TRIBE of Judah,

ROOT of DAVID, Word of Life,

AUTHOR AND FINISHER of OUR FAITH,

ADVOCATE, THE way, DAYSPRING,

LORD of All, **I Am**, SON of God

SHEPHERD AND BISHOP of Souls,

MESSIAH, THE TRUTH, SAVIOR,

CHIEF CORNERSTONE, KING of KINGS,

RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, LIGHT of the World,

HEAD of the CHURCH, MORNING STAR,

SUN of RIGHTEOUSNESS, LORD

JESUS CHRIST, Chief Shepherd,

RESURRECTION AND Life,

HORN of SALVATION, GOVERNOR,

THE ALPHA AND OMEGA.

Joy to the world, the Lord is the same
yesterday, today and forever.

MERCURIUS OF CAESAREA, SAINT, a Roman army officer who was martyred in the third century in Caesarea, Cappadocia, and is credited with many subsequent miraculous appearances. Known in Arabic as Abū Sayfayn, he is commemorated by the Coptic church on 25 Hātūr. In addition, two other feast days are observed in memory of this saint: 9 Ba'ūnah, when parts of his sacred relics were brought to Egypt, by Patriarch JOHN XIII (1484–1524); and 25 Abib, when these relics were preserved in a church in Old Cairo dedicated to his name.

The Christian Tradition

Coptic material on Mercurius is plentiful. (1) *Saint Mercurius' Passion Under Decius*, which is substantially in agreement with the principal Greek text (*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca* 1274), is preserved in five manuscripts. The oldest, from the ninth century, is in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (M 588). Others are in the British Museum, London, (Or. 6801); the National Library, Paris (fragment 129.15, 19); and the Morgan Library (M 589), a Fayyumic version from the tenth century. (2) There is a fragment of another *Passion* in the British Museum (Or. 6802) at the beginning of an anonymous text (Budge, 1915). (3) An abridgment of the *Passion* is within an incomplete version of a Panegyric of Mercurius attributed to Acacius of Caesarea in the Morgan Library (M. 588, 589). (4) An account of seven miracles performed at the construction of Mercurius' martyrion in Caesarea is in the Morgan Library (M. 588, 589) and in another version of the Panegyric by Acacius in the British Museum (Or. 6802). (5) Fragments of other miracle stories are in a manuscript from Dayr Anbā Shinūdāh now in the National Library, Paris (129.15, 20), and fragments in the National Library, Vienna (K9456) and K7655 a–b). (6) The complete Panegyric by Acacius (the only one in existence) is in the British Museum (Or. 6802). (7) A panegyric attributed to Saint Basil the Great (Orlando, "Basilio . . .," 1976, pp. 56–58) seems to be part of a pseudo-Basilian CYCLE in which the presence of the Sarmates tribe in Lazica regularly occurs.

An account of Mercurius' miraculous execution of the emperor Julian the Apostate is attached to the *Passion under Decius* in the British Museum (Or. 6801) and is also in the panegyric by Acacius in the Morgan Library (588) (Orlandi, "Passione . . .," 1976, pp. 54–61), where it states that the account is taken from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (chaps. 10 and 11).

The basic account of Mercurius' life is as follows. Born to a pagan Macedonian family of hunters in the third century, he is named Philopater. Later, Gordianus, his father, is miraculously rescued from the jaws of death through the intervention of an angel, an event that prompts him to seek conversion to Christianity. The local bishop who baptized the family names the child Mercurius. As a twenty-year-old soldier, Mercurius distinguishes himself in the Roman war in Armenia, fighting in the cohort of Martenses under the command of Saturninus (Sardonicus or Bartonikos in Coptic). The vision of a dazzling man, an angel, helps him to victory. Consequently, the emperor Decius makes him a general. But the angel tells him his victory came from the Lord, the God of the Christians, of whom he had heard in his childhood from this father, Gordianus, an officer in the same cohort. When Mercurius refuses to accompany those who sacrifice to Artemis, the moon goddess, Decius summons him. Mercurius throws down his arms at the emperor's feet in order to take up the arms of Christ. Decius then subjects him to a series of tortures. He is nailed by his arms and legs over a fire, but his blood extinguishes the fire and he is healed in prison. Then he is hung upside down with a stone hung around his neck and beaten with four-ply cords and burnt with a red-hot iron. Finally the emperor orders him taken back to Cappadocia to be finished off with a sword. The journey is accomplished in long stages. At the moment of execution, the saint's body turns white and emits heavenly fragrances. The execution is commemorated on 25 Hātūr.

The miracles performed by Mercurius on the occasion of the construction of his martyrion in Caesarea are the chief subject of the panegyric attributed to Acacius. The scenes are very lively and much more Egyptian than Cappadocian in feeling. Through his innumerable appearances, Mercurius punishes the rich who wish to evade cooperation in the erection of the church. One appearance is to a rich pagan who is stealing the bricks brought by the faithful. The man is knocked down by his camel, while Mercurius appears to him with his lance, striking his foot. Then the camel seizes him by the foot, and the plan of the building, according to the word of Mercurius, is drawn on the ground with the wretched man's back. Needless to say, he is converted and is instantly healed of his wounds.

Another appearance is in connection with a little love drama evoked for the making of the martyrion. A young man, broken-hearted to see his sweetheart promised in a more worldly match, in-



interviews a wizard, who inflicts a fatal headache on the girl. Saint Mercurius disentangles the threads of the drama on his feast day, at the foot of the shrine containing his relics. The wizard is converted and goes off to be a monk; the girl is saved and marries the repentant young man. Caesarea, the place itself, is mentioned only once.

The most complicated and famous of the miracles of Saint Mercurius is the death of Julian the Apostate in 363. Julian's contemporaries wondered about his sudden assassination [he died in battle in Persia], without being able to explain it other than as a result of divine reproach for the emperor's attempt to bring the empire back to paganism. This idea is expressed popularly by showing Julian, in the middle of his Persian campaign, to be a direct victim of saints who died in previous persecutions.

According to two Syriac sources, *The Romance of Julian the Apostate* and *The Life of Eusebius of Samosata* (Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis 294), the executioner was none other than Mār Qūrus, one of the forty martyrs of Sebaste. And so St. Binon and P. Peeters have taken the view that this identification explains the name Mercurius itself and makes the saint's history under Decius completely apocryphal. The martyrdom at Sebaste alone would suffice to produce the whole collection of the Mercurius material. In 1968 T. Orlandi completely upset this perspective (Orlandi, 1968, pp. 87–105). Indeed, two Coptic versions of the same story juxtapose the two interpretations—in one the executioner is one of the forty martyrs, and in the other Basil sees Saint Mercurius in a vision executing Julian and the next day finds that the saint's lance in an icon is covered with blood. This account is found in *The Life of Basil* by Amphilochius (Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca 247–60), a text

placed in the ninth century according to very old criteria. Orlandi shows that the text was already translated into Latin in the ninth century. A readaptation of two miracle stories can be found in a Sinai Georgian manuscript dated 864, and the miracle about Peter of Sebasteia (Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca 257) is found in an Arabic manuscript dated 855 (Shanidze, 1959, pp. 70–73; van Esbroeck, 1978, p. 384).

Orlandi therefore distinguishes two separate centers for the blossoming of the legend of Julian: Antioch, where the forty martyrs are the protagonists, and Caesarea, where Saint Mercurius is the executioner of Julian. The explanation in the Syriac tradition would be the result of compiling and harmonizing with word play on Mār Qūrus, Cyrus being the actual name of one of the forty martyrs. This explains the lack of any Passion of Saint Mercurius in Syriac, while in Armenian and Georgian the martyrdom under Decius is well represented.

The Arabic Tradition

Abū Sayfayn means “the father with the two swords”; the weapons that always accompany his image doubtless originate from accounts of Mercurius's execution by Julian the Apostate. Abū Sayfayn is treated in many sources. His martyrdom under Decius is described in a nineteenth-century manuscript in the National Library, Paris (Arabic 4781, fols. 108–117) and in a fourteenth-century manuscript from the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai, in the National Library (Arabic 397, fols. 193–210). The Mount Sinai manuscript follows the Passion with Basil's account of the story of Mercurius and Julian. A collection of eleven miracles is in a manuscript in the National Library (Arabic 4781, fols. 118–51); fifteen miracles are recounted in a seventeenth-century manuscript there (Arabic 4793, fols. 49–122). A panegyric attributed to Acacius has been translated from Coptic into Arabic in an eighteenth-century manuscript in the Coptic Museum, Cairo (Graf 479, fols. 172–91).

Abū Sayfayn appears with his two swords in many icons. In the tenth century Abraham, patriarch of Alexandria, built a church in Cairo in his honor, dedicating it on 25 Abīb. In the eleventh century Patriarch Christodoulos made the church his residence. The saint's relics were moved there in 1488.

According to Delehay (1975), the cult of Abū Sayfayn is most widely spread in Egypt. ABŪ ṢALĪḤ THE ARMENIAN states that a monastery and a large number of the churches were dedicated to him in that country.

In Cairo alone, three churches are dedicated to the saint, one in QAṢR AL-SHAM' in Old Cairo (dating from the sixth century), another associated with a convent of women known as DAYR AL-BANĀT, and a third at ḤĀRIT ZUWAYLAH.

History Is Life

By: Iris H. El Masri

Not long ago, Providence so willed that I sit at a table with a number of foreigners. During the conversation, my host asked: "Since when did you adopt Eutychianism?" I answered: "We never adopted it, nor ever will. We are Orthodox and have been so since Christianity began until now." My host resumed: "But I read somewhere that you have deviated from Orthodoxy." I rejoined: "We never deviated, nor ever will, by the grace of God. But it happened, that when we went to Chalcedon...." Here one of the guests interposed: "When did you go to Chalcedon?" I answered, "We went in A.D. 451." All the present roared with laughter, then my host said gently: "To hear you speak thus, one would imagine that you went this year, or at most last year, and that you were among those who went!"

It was my turn to laugh as I answered: "Such are we Copts - when one of us has attended, we have all attended. And there is no difference between the delegates attending in 451 or in any other year, because our history is one whole indivisible unit. Nay, it is life itself, and not some ephemeral pictures on a screen. The proof of this fact is that the three first ecumenical councils, the only ones acknowledged by the Coptic Church, have decreed laws by which we still abide. Also we still suffer from the baleful consequences of Chalcedon. History is therefore, indivisible, though it appears to us in diverse pictures; it is like unto matter which is never destroyed though it forms change."

Here, I found it compatible to quote the comment Dr. Cyrus Gordon, the eminent contemporary American scholar, made once on our

behavior at Chalcedon. It was: "When the Egyptians went to Chalcedon, they were proud of their Pharaonic heritage, and rightly so; they were proud of their Alexandrian Fathers, and rightly so; they frankly told the whole world what they believed, and when the world refused to listen, they walked out, and rightly so."

And since history is life, it is consequently the story of the people, wherever they are. For this very reason, it recounts the struggle of the nation for freedom and dignity; their aspiration towards liberty, and their heroic achievements. This yearning after the Ideal should be the pivot of our study of history. Moreover, to gain a full appreciation of the history of the Coptic Church, it is essential to know the prominent features of its adherents. The Copts have a very strong leaning towards the mystic and the spiritual. Sir Flinders Petrie depicts this leaning very aptly in the following words: "....a difference in the conception of a period before the existence of time would seem purely academic and indifferent to a Western mind....To the Egyptian mind, however, this difference was in the essence of things. The distinction of eternity before time which the West could hardly grasp or feel to be of any importance has been fastened by the two Egyptian presbyters upon all later Christianity."

Reflecting on the profound impact of the Coptic Church on the Church Universal, this same Egyptologist remarks: "If, now, we try our historical imagination by supposing that there never had been any of the refinements of the Trinitarian controversy; that no monastery had ever sterilized the best of the race; and that the Madonna and Bambino were alike unknown to devotion and to art, we may gain some sense of what changes Egypt wrought in Christianity."

ANGER (2)

Overcoming Anger



What do we do about anger?

When it comes from a wrong motive, when we don't get our own way, when we act in haste, anger is sin. What practical things does God say about dealing with anger? Scripture offers four specific directives in the Book of Proverbs.

1. Learn to ignore petty disagreements:

"A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression" (Proverbs 19:11). {in other translation: *It is prudent for a man to restrain his anger*). In God's eyes, it is glory if you are big enough to overlook an offense. Don't look for a fight. Don't be defensive about your point or your right. Be willing to give. It takes two to quarrel. If you see that there is an angry disagreement coming, back off; leave it. Learn and train yourself to ignore petty differences.

2. Refrain from close association with anger-prone people. Don't hang around them:

"Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man, Lest you learn his ways, and find a snare for yourself" (Prov.22:24,25).

It is true: We become like those we spend our time with. If you spend time with a rebel you will become rebellious and angry. If I hang around people who are negative, you know what happens to me? I become negative (while by nature, we are positive persons).

3. Keep very close check on your tongue:

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (proverbs 15:1).

Someone once said: "The only edged tool that gets sharper with use is the tongue. It is not your leg muscle that's the strongest muscle in your body; it is the muscle in your mouth. Control your tongue. It will literally "turn away wrath."

4. Cultivate honesty in communication...& don't let anger build up:

Listen to Proverbs 27: 4-6, *"Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy? Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy"*.

The New Testament counterpart to this passage is Ephesians 4:25:

"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another."

There is no substitute for total honesty, spoken in love, gentleness, kindness and patience.

Finally, remember:

- * "Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger" (James 1:19)
- * "When angry, do not sin" (Eph. 4:26).
- * "Do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph. 4:26).
- * "Do not give the devil an opportunity" (Eph. 4:27).
- * Take, always, the blessing of reconciliation initiative and be a peace-maker.

Why Grow Up Just To Die?

By: A. Coniaris

A little girl was playing with her dinner. She made a hole in the middle of the mashed potatoes and pretended the gravy was a lake. Then she tried to see if the green beans would float like boats.

Her father noticed this and said, "Julie, eat your food." "I am not hungry," she said.

Her dad replied, "But you have to eat if you want to grow up." Julie had an answer for that, too. "I don't want to grow up," She said, "because when you get big, you get old and then you die, and I don't want to die."

We may smile a bit at Julie's way of thinking. But what is the use of growing up if all it means is that we'll only be closer to the day of death?

The Lord Jesus Christ, the author of life, the conqueror of death, has told us - and has proved it with His own resurrection - that we do not grow up just to die. We grow up preparing for heaven. We grow up that we may pass one day from death to life. We grow up to live with our Savior, eternally in a place He has prepared for His loved ones.

As concerned parents we all want our children to have the best. I'm sure you know many parents who are willing to sacrifice everything for their children - their very lives, if need be. Great as this love is, God's love for His children is even greater. Jesus said once, *"If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"* (Matt. 7:11).

God's greatest gift to His children by far is HEAVEN. It is the gift he gives to those who love Him, serve Him, acknowledge Him as Lord and God, and walk with Him every day.....

HOW DO WE FAST

By Fr. Georgios Attalla

In the beginning of the Christmas Fasting, we must know how we fast and to benefit from fasting. We must consider fasting is not to weaken the body, but to subdue it in order to revive the spirit. Fasting is not a goal in itself, but rather a mean, to overcome the body and its desires and to train its senses. It is fasting from evil and controlling the lust of the soul:

1- We must not eat anything with lust.

2- We should not be confident that the outside fasting of food is enough alone for the purity of the body, unless it is accompanied by the fasting of the soul. If the body only fasts and we are still bound to many sins, then we will not benefit from subduing the body.

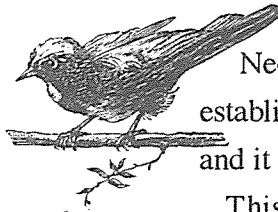
3- Fasting should be accompanied by repentance, sorrow, regret and humility. David said: 'I humbled my soul with fasting.' (Psalms 35:14). We must understand the true meaning of fasting and we must know how to obtain God's mercy, taking the repentance of the people of Ninevah as a perfect example. God is pleased with the affliction that comes out of a repenting soul (1 Kings 21:27-29).

4- Fasting should be accompanied by stopping worldly pleasure, and minimizing our daily engagements and labors. Instead, there must be spiritual exercises, to build our spiritual lives. The purpose for the spiritual exercises is for the soul to get accustomed to practicing specific virtues. St. Paul said: 'I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man' (Acts 24:16). As we commit many sins in our talking, let us exercise silence, on which we train ourselves during fasting. As the lamp of the body is the eye that can make our bodies full of light or darkness, let us exercise and learn how to control our eyes to keep them pure.

5- In our spiritual life, fasting and prayer cannot be separated. The Lord tells us: "This kind can come forth by nothing, but prayer and fasting." (Matthew 9:29). If we consider fasting as a flaming charcoal, prayer would be the incense. Both of them compliment one another.

6- Fasting must be accompanied by giving alms. As prayer accompanies fasting, so does alms in order for fasting to be acceptable. This is very clear through the speech of God to Isaiah about the acceptable fasting: "To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh?" (Isiah 58:6,7).

NEWS



Needless to say that this Seminary was originally established by St. Mark in the first Christian century and it was well known as the School of Alexandria.

1. The praises of "Kiyahk" will start Saturday Dec. 11, from 7:15 P.M. till mid-night, after the vespers and the youth meeting.

2. New Year's Eve, will be celebrated Friday, December 31, at 8:00 P.M., with vespers, spiritual words, hymns, entertainment, contests, Santa-Clause, children's choir & prizes, and the candel light prayer vigil until 12:15 A.M.

We owe the Lord a Million thanks for all His great benefits during the last year. Also it is a great opportunity to receive the new year 1994, in the best place which is the "Throne of Grace" asking God's blessings, protection and guidance.

The New Year Mid-Night Liturgy will start from 12:15 till 1:30 A.M. Every believer is invited to renew his covenant with Christ, to fill his lamp with oil, to have Communion and a fresh start.

3. The Winter Youth Conference, will be held at a new retreat area on the mountains of Arrowhead (6,000 feet elevation) from Tuesday, Dec. 21-24. It is for a limited number of 60 college and high school students. The cost, including transportation, is \$ 55. The priests of the church and the youth leaders will attend, supervise and serve.

Cairo Seminary Centennial:

4. On November 22, 93, H. H. Pope Shenouda III celebrated the Centennial festival of the re-opening of the Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt.

This school reached its climax on the hands of Pople Shenouda and was expanded to contain many new specialized institutes for the Bible, Pastoral and Missionary work, beside eight branches in Egypt, two in U.S. and one in Australia.

Hundreds of bishops, priests, monks, deacons, sunday school teachers and leaders, laymen, women and youth graduated from it since its new founder Archdeacon Habib Guirgis reopened it on 1893, but the majority were under Pope Shenouda.

4. Ordination of a new priest for Archangel Michael church, Orange County, CA:

on his 22nd anniversary, Nov. 15, H.H. Pope Shenouda ordained **Dr. Harvy Ragheb Hanna** - a previous pharmacist - as a priest with Rev. Fr. Felimon M. Michael. The new name of the new priest is **Fr. Athanasius Hanna**. He, as well as his wife Tasonry Hemmat, have just graduated from L.A. Seminary this year as "A" students.

We congratulate both of them with Abouna Felimon, the church and the Seminary for this Divine choice wishing them a blessed fruitful ministry.

5. Rev. Fr. Gabriel Abd-El-Sayed the priest of St. Mark Church, in Jersey City, NJ, has passed away on Dec. 1st. Fr. Gabriel was a pioneer as the first priest to shepherd the Coptic community in America. He had a degree of Ph.D. in church history and taught this subject in both Seminaries of New York and Los Angeles. His departure indeed is a big loss. St. John Church of Covina, CA prays that the Lord may repose his soul in the paradise and comfort his family and congregation.



+

For Kids Only The Mystery Verse!!!

By Dr. Rose Mary Hanna

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD STOOD BEFORE THE SHEPHERDS OUT IN THE FIELD
AND SAID ".....

FIND OUT THE HIDDEN VERSE USING THE CODE BELOW.

A=26 B=25 C=24 D=23 E=22 F=21 G=20 H=19 I=18 J=17 K=16 L=15 M=14
N=13 O=12 P=11 Q=10 R=9 S=8 T=7 U=6 V=5 W=4 X=3 Y=2 Z=1

"
18 25 9 18 13 20 2 12 6 20 12 12 23 13 22 4 8
21 12 9 7 19 22 9 22 18 8 25 12 9 13 7 12
2 12 6 7 19 18 8 23 26 2 18 13 7 19 22
24 18 7 2 12 21 23 26 5 18 23 26 8 26 5 18 12 9
4 19 12 18 8 24 19 9 18 8 7
7 19 22 15 12 9 23"



+ MEMORISE THE VERSE AND SEND
DECEMBER THE 25th WITH YOUR
AND YOU WILL HAVE A PRIZE .
+ THE CORRECT ANSWER WILL BE

THE ANSWER BY
NAME AND ADDRESS

PUBLISHED NEXT ISSUE.



SMILE

* From Reader's Digest, Nov. 1993

After I was deployed to **Egypt** for the Operation Bright Star training program, I spent a weekend pass sightseeing in Cairo. A local offered to take my picture on his camel. "Free, he said, No charge."

I thanked him and handed him my camera. The man then blurted a command, and his camel sat down, allowing me to board. After taking the whole roll of film, the man said, "That will be \$ 5.00" !

-- "But you said you would take my picture free."

-- "Yes, that was free," he agreed. "But it costs \$ 5 to get you down from the camel."!!

* Smile Again

By Dr. S. Malek



+ Peter: I haven't slept for ten days.

John: Aren't you tired?

Peter: No, I sleep nights!

+ Smart #1: What starts with "T", is full of "T" and ends with "T" ?

Smart 2: A Teapot.

+ Husband: Honey, this lettuce tastes funny.

Wife : It shouldn't. It's clean, I even washed it with soap....

+ Waiter : What would you like for dinner Sir?

Customer: A hot dog.

Waiter: With Pleasure.

Customer: No, with Mustard.

+ - When does ten plus ten equal ten?

- When you add it wrong.

+ - Tell me two things you can never eat for breakfast.

- Lunch and Dinner.

* (From the Los Angeles Times, Nov.26, 93
Ask An Expert, ANNE & NAN)

Bible Cake a heavenly treat

Dear Anne and Nan: I lost my recipe for a Scripture cake, can you help me out? It was all the fruits and nuts mentioned in the Bible.

Rita Thibodeau

Dear Rita: Here's the recipe:

4 1/2 cups 1 Kings 4:22 (flour)

1 cup Judges 5:25 (water)

2 cups 1 Samuel 30:12 (raisins)

2 cups Jeremiah 6:20 (sugar)

2 cups 1 Samuel 14:25 (honey)

2 pinches Leviticus 2:13 (salt)

6 Jeremiah 17:11 (eggs)

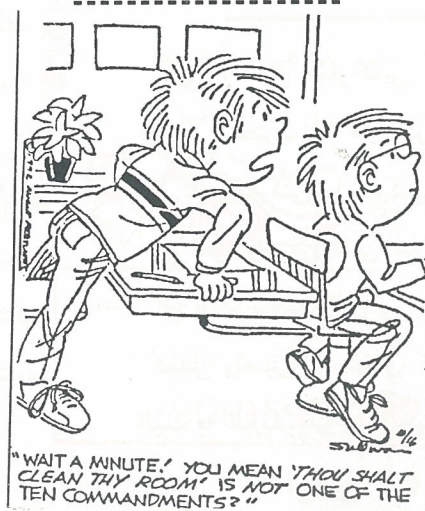
1 cup Judges - 4:19 (milk)

2 teaspoons Amos 4:5 (leaven)

Season to taste with 2 Chronicles 9:9 (spices)

Bake in moderate oven (350 degree) in tube pan for 50 minutes.

(This is a real recipe...please try it)



"WAIT A MINUTE," YOU MEAN 'THOU SHALT CLEAN THY ROOM' IS NOT ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?"