

SAINT JOHN

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Ordination of Deacon John (Fawzy) Aziz



Verse of the month:
"Now, says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting and with weeping, rend your heart and not your garments" (Joel 2:12)

SAINT JOHN

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H.G. Bishop Serapion.

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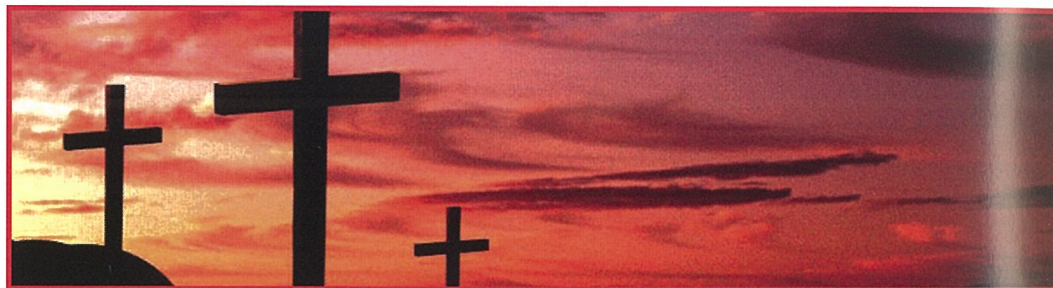
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March, 2012 Schedule:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
English Liturgy 8:00 - 11:00 AM	Liturgy 10:00 - 1:00 PM	Liturgy 10:00 - 1:00 PM	Liturgy (Lent) 9:00 - 12:00 PM	+ Liturgy 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Liturgy 12:00 - 3:00 PM	Liturgy 8-10 AM Vespers & Bible Study 7:00-8:30 PM + Beginners'
Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:15 AM				+ Senior Citizen Club 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Prayer Meeting every first Friday of the Month	Deacons- Meeting 6:00 PM + Elementary Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 PM
Servants' Meeting 12:00-1:00 PM				+ Family Meeting 8:00-9:30 PM	Arabic Youth Meeting 8:00 - 10:00 PM Followed by refreshments	College Youth Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 PM High School & J. High Meetings 7:00 - 9:00 PM

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NEWS of March 2012

1. The Holy Lent:

The Holy Lent started on Monday, February 20, until the Feast of the Resurrection on April 15, 2012.

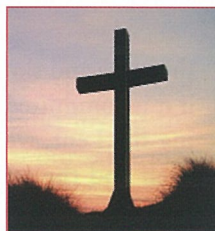
The Liturgies during the Lent will be as follows:

- + Monday, Tuesday & Thursday: from 9:00 am-12:00
- + Wednesday: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon.
- + Friday: 12:00 noon – 3:00 p.m.
- + Saturday: 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

May the Lord grant us a deep and acceptable fasting and prayer season for the salvation of the world and Egypt.

2. The Feast of the Cross:

On Monday, March 19, the church celebrates the Feast of the Appearance of the Cross. The Liturgy will be in festal tunes of Palm Sunday. The procession of the cross takes place during matins prayers 7:30 a.m. Vespers, Sun-day, March 18, from 7:30 p.m.



3. March Saints:

March 5: Departure of Hosea, the first of the Minor Prophets.

March 8: Martyrdom of St. Policarp from the Apostolic Fathers, disciple of St. John the beloved and bishop of Smyrna (Rev. 2:8).

Friday, March 9: Discovery of the head of St. John the Baptist and the departure of Pope Kyrellos 6.

March 17: Martyrdom of the Apostle Matthias who replaced Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:23).

March 21: Departure of Fr. Bishop Kamel.

**March ? : Departure of Fr. Mikhail Ibrahim.

March 26: The Apparition of St. Mary at St. Demiana, Shoubra, Egypt and martyrdom of St. Sidhom Bishay in Domiatt.

4. New Comers from Egypt:

Due to the growing Islamic persecution against the Coptic Christians in Egypt, there are huge number of families fled to America, Canada and Australia asking for asylum and seeking safe refuge and freedom of religion. Many of our brothers and sisters came to the church area and they need a lot of financial help, furniture, used cars and computers, guidance and urgent Christian care.



5. H.H. Pope Shenouda III

His Holiness Pope Shenouda's health is getting better and he resumed his weekly sermon every Wednesday evening at St. Mark Cathedral as usual. May God grant him good health, strength and long life.

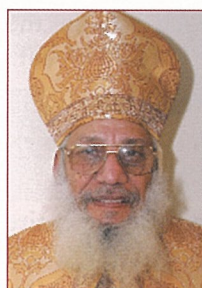


6. H.G. Bishop Serapion:

On February 26, His Grace bishop Serapion blessed St. John Church and ordained 7 deacons. He also promoted Mr. Fawzy Aziz to a full Deacon.

7. The 31st Anniversary of Fr. Gawargious:

St. John's priests, congregation and the board of deacons congratulate Rev. Fr. Gawargious Kolta for his ordination in priesthood on March 15, 1981. May the Lord support him with health, plenty of good fruits and long life.



8. St. John's Senior's Annual Cruise:

The Seniors Fellowship of St. John Church announces that their Cruise to Hawaii is for two weeks from November 7, to 21, 2012. For early reservation and better rates call: Mr. Maher Saleh Tel: (626) 222-6558 or Ms. Hoda Ghazar: (626) 905-4705.

9. St. John Medical Clinic

St. John's Clinic continues its activity every first and third Sunday of the month at 12 p.m., serving new comers and those who have no medical insurance.

10. The Catechumens Weekly Meeting:

Fr. Daniel Habib serves the new members who join the Coptic Orthodox Church, every Tuesday from 6:45 to 8:00 p.m. and then leads a Bible Study to them for one hour from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.

11. St. John's Computer Lab:

Experts in computer teach all the basic lessons to beginners and new comers at St. John's Hall every Sunday and some other days. If you want to join this class enroll in the church Book Store.

12. Tutoring for new students:

The church youth volunteer helping the new-comers' students every Wednesday evening from 6:00 p.m.



The Holy Lent



By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

The Holy Lent contains three kinds of fasting.

The forty-day-fasting in the middle, preceded with one week of preparation, and followed by the Holy week or the Passion Week, which was in the Apostolic era separated alone and not connected to the Lent.

It is considered a first degree fast and the holiest one in the year, because the Lord Jesus put its foundation by Himself (Matt. 4).

The Lent is a period of spiritual storing for the entire year. The person who does not benefit spiritually of it, it will be very difficult to benefit of any time less spiritual. Also, who that practices it indifferently, cannot be vigilant the rest of the year. Therefore, try to benefit of it in its deep hymns, Biblical readings, rituality, spirituality and late liturgies.

The Church Fathers used to make the Lent an opportunity for spiritual revival meetings and exhortation, because people in this time are sensitive to receive the word of God.

Most of the books of St. John Chrysostom and St. Augustine were sermons delivered by them during the Holy Lent. Besides, the early church used to take the period of the lent as a good opportunity to prepare the catechumens before receiving the baptism. There were special classes during the Lent to teach them the principles of Christian faith and confirm them in Christ before baptizing them in Baptism-Sunday and getting ready to celebrate Palm Sunday and the Passion Week and enjoy the glorious Feast of Christ's resurrection.

The sermons of St. Cyril of Jerusalem were mostly preparing the catechumens, edifying them in the faith and explaining the Creed for them during the Lent.

The church showed a great importance of the Holy Lent and gave it special system and rites in tunes and a long period of abstaining from eating, and reading the prophecies, *metanias* (bowing down in worship) and a different spiritual atmosphere.

Also, the church paved the way to the Holy Lent with the Fast of Jonah or the Fast of Nineveh, which comes two weeks before the Lent and carries its same features, tunes and rituals.

What the church meant by that is to lead the congregation to repentance which is the essence of the Fast of Nineveh.

If the Lord Jesus Christ fasted for us forty days- while He did not need it, because He is Holy and sinless- so how much more we need to fast and complete every righteousness as He did.

For these reasons, the church called it "Holy Lent and Great Lent" due to its long period and its sanctity. Truly, sin is the same and sinful at all times, yet it seems more evil and ugly if it is committed during the Holy Lent. **For when we sin during the Lent, we commit double sins, one of them is the sin itself and the other is despising the Lent** and dishonoring its holiness. These are two sins and not one. It shows the hardness of the heart. The Lord Jesus said, "If the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matt. 6:23). **In other words, if the great holy days were also darkened with sin, how great darkness would be the regular days?!**

Also, the monks and saints gave great concern for the Holy Lent that they left their monasteries and wondered in the desert and mountains living in caves a life of solitude in a deep fellowship with God.

We find a good example of that in the life of St. Zossima the priest and his meeting with Saint Maria the famous Coptic repentant woman. The monasticism of St. Shenouda the Archimandrite gives us also an idea of that and also in many Ethiopian monasteries.

May we give double care for these holy days of the Lent, and if we could not fast with complete abstinence long time as the Lord Jesus did; so at least let us practice ascetic life as much as we can, and **if we could not defeat Satan completely as the Lord Jesus did**, so at least let us resist him and let us remember what St. Paul said, "*You have not resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin*" (Heb. 12:4).

How many Lents have passed by us? If we gained one more benefit from every one, our life would have been much better, "growing in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." We need to take the matter serious and not as a routine.



Making the Sign



By

Fr. Augustinos R. Hanna

In the occasion of the Feast of the Cross that we celebrate on March 19, let us reflect on the sign of the Cross that we make; its meaning and power.

All the Apostolic Churches practice making the sign of the cross, as an expression of their deep faith in the power of the cross and loving the Lord Jesus Christ Who was crucified on it for our salvation.

The Sign of the Cross in Christian Tradition and History

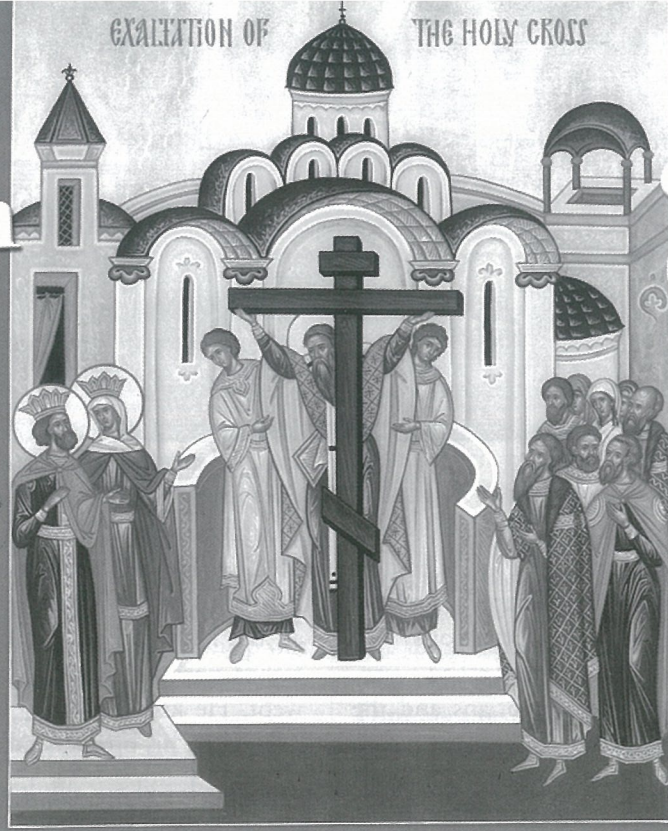
The tradition of the sign of the cross can be traced back to the age of the gospel. St. Matthew the Evangelist referred to it in his gospel as *"the sign of the Son of Man,"* that will precede or accompany the second coming. *"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and . . . they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"* (Matt. 24:30).

The oldest writings about the sign of the cross, by the church fathers, date back to the second century.

Tertullian said, "In all our movements, in our coming in or going out, whenever we put on clothes or take them off, when we awake or sleep, at meals and in all we do, we make the sign of the cross."

St. Athanasius the Apostolic said, "Through the cross, a person can overcome all the tricks of the demons. Whoever wants to experience this should come and see how demonic works of magic are devastated by the making of the sign of the cross, and the demons flee in fear."

St. John Chrysostom said, "The sign of the cross that used to be terrifying to people, now is adored and displayed everywhere. Men and women both do not cease making



of the Cross

the sign of the cross in every place. They wear it on their foreheads, as a sign of victory. We see it everyday at the holy altar, glittering on top of the body of Christ at the Eucharist. It is celebrated in the homes, on the boats, on clothing, in paintings, in the rejoicing of the joyful and the mourning of the sorrowful. . . ."

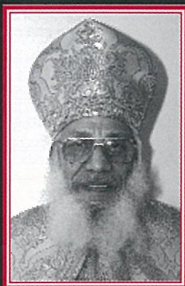
He also says, **"The head that is sanctified by the sign of God does not bow to Satan, but preserves itself for the crown of the Lord."** This sacred sign, from the days of our fathers until now, has voided the effect of poisons and healed the fatal bite of the beasts, **for the cross is a medicine for anger and worldly passions.** With prayer, cross yourself, and the demons will not come near you since you will be armed against them."

St. John Cassian says, "In making the sign of the cross, there is a summary of our most important doctrines. There is a confession of:

- (1) The Holy Trinity,
- (2) Monotheism (one God),
- (3) The incarnation of Christ,
- (4) The cross and redemption,
- (5) A confession of our sins since we were on the left hand side of darkness and death,
- (6) Our salvation as we were moved to the right side.

â(7) And finally, when we make the sign of the cross, we proclaim that we keep the first and greatest commandment. When we touch our head, we proclaim that we love God with our entire mind, and when we touch our chest we proclaim that we love Him with all our heart, and when we touch our shoulders we proclaim that we love him with all our strength.





CHRIST IN

THE BOOK OF GENESIS (17)

By Fr. Gawargious A. Kolta

Joseph reveals himself to his brothers

(Gen. 45:1-15)

After the intercession of Judah, asking Joseph to redeem his brother Benjamin, Joseph got emotional and could not restrain himself before all who stood by him, and asked everyone to go out. He wept aloud, that the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. Then he made himself known to his brothers and said: ***"I am Joseph, does my father still live?"*** His brothers could not answer, for ***they were terrified in his presence.*** They were so troubled and confused that they could get out of their minds or hide themselves in the ground.

St. Ambrose said that Joseph's dramatic self-disclosure foreshadows the self-disclosure of Jesus Christ of whom Joseph is a type. **Joseph's forgiveness for his brothers prefigures Christ's forgiveness on the cross.** A series of parallels might be drawn between Joseph's behavior and that of Christ. Joseph revealing himself to his brothers with loving kindness is an example for our Lord, who stretched out His hands to an unbelieving and rebellious people, desiring to save them. He appeared to those who asked Him not (Isa. 65:1, 2).

St. Ambrose added that as Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, saying: ***"I am Joseph"***, the Lord revealed Himself to the Sanhedrin, when they asked Him: ***"Are you the Son of God?"*** He answered saying: ***"You say that, I am"*** (Mat. 26:63, 64). He also revealed Himself to Pilate, saying: ***"You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world"*** (Jn. 18:37).

Fr. Tadros Malaty said that Joseph did not reveal himself except after driving all the strangers outside. So was the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, who did not reveal Himself after resurrection except to His own, who yearned to the resurrected life and desired to enjoy His risen life. Also, He revealed His resurrection to His church so that we enjoy living with Him and abiding in Him. His crucifixion and burial were realized in public, to proclaim His salvation to mankind.

Joseph comforted his brothers and said: ***"I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved nor angry with yourselves, because you sold me here;***

for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting" (Gen. 45:4-6). He told them that God has made him a father to Pharaoh and lord of his entire house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. ***He asked them to go and bring his father without delay.*** Joseph fell on Benjamin's neck and wept. He kissed all his brothers and wept over their necks. After that, his brothers talked with him.

Joseph did not think about the past in a sick human way, but with a spiritual insight; that is actually a divine gift. Instead of rebuking his brothers for the evil they have done to him, and for the affliction they caused him to pass through along the past fifteen years, he could see the mighty hand of God, and His supreme plan for His salvation from death, not only him but also his father, his brothers, their children, their flocks, and their herds. Joseph concentrated on serious and practical work, saying: ***"Hurry and go up to my father"*** (Gen. 45:9).

St. Ambrose said that as Joseph forgave his brothers, so also **Christ excused His brother's crime** and declared that it was God's providence, and not humanity's wickedness, since he was not offered up to death by humans but was sent by His Father to life (Jn. 4:34). He added that on the cross, Christ said on behalf of the people, ***"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing"*** (Lk. 23:34). He also added that after His resurrection, Christ comforted His disciples when they showed doubts, and said to them: ***"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself"*** (Lk. 24:39). He added and said: ***"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"*** (Mat. 28:18).

Joseph was very generous to his brothers and told them that they would dwell near to him in the land of Goshen, and that he would provide for them and for their household, their sons and their sons' sons and their herds (Gen. 45:10-12).

Joseph felt that what he has achieved was not of his own doing, but was of God, and it was for the sake of his father and his brothers. Contrary to what some people do, as they get rich and dignified, they disregard their own relatives, and treat them with great haughtiness. **Joseph was an image of**



our Lord Jesus Christ, who forsook His glory for our sake, then He got glorified again, by the glory that was His, before the world was (Jn. 17:5). He will lift us up with Him in His glory, as heirs to the incorruptible inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4).

St. Ambrose said that our Lord comforted His disciples, and said to them: ***“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”*** (Mat. 28:20).

St. Caesarius of Arles said that we must admire the chastity of Joseph and his generosity. **He repaid hatred with love.** He tenderly kissed each one of his brothers and wept over his neck. He added that Joseph moistened the necks of his frightened brothers with the refreshing tears of his love. He did not recall that pit into which he had been thrown to be murdered and he did not think of himself as a brother sold with a price. Instead, he returned good for evil. Therefore, by the sweetness of true love, blessed Joseph, with God’s help was eager to repel from their hearts the poison of envy with which he knew his brothers had been struck.

Fr. Tadros Malaty said that Joseph symbolized the Lord Jesus, who proclaimed Himself to Saul and said: ***“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads”*** (Act. 9:5). As Joseph’s brothers were terrified from that encounter, Saul was likewise terrified and confused, when the Lord appeared to him, and rebuked him.

The Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard Joseph weeping and crying out, but they could not understand what was going on inside (Gen. 45:2). They were confused; was he weeping out of joy, out of astonishment, or out of grief?

Fr. Tadros Malaty said that **the Egyptians were like those guards by Christ’s tomb**, who saw a splendid light, and felt the earthquake, but they were not able to comprehend the mystery of the resurrection of Christ!

He said that **they were like the companions of Saul of Tarsus, who saw a splendid light and heard a voice from heaven, but they did not enjoy seeing or comprehending the voice of the Risen Christ** who encountered with Saul.

Joseph’s brothers could not answer him for they were terrified. They saw Joseph as though he had died and rose again. They did not expect to see him again, especially with such great authority and glory. They did not imagine being in this horrible situation, but Joseph, in amazing tenderness, said to them: ***“Please, come near to me. I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into Egypt”*** (Gen. 45:4).

This is the same situation with our Joseph, the Lord Jesus. Because of our sins we distance ourselves from Him, but, with everlasting kindness He will have mercy on us. When we hear His voice calling us to enjoy His resurrection, the fear will go away, and we will come near to Him. St. Paul said: ***“But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have***

been made near by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13).

Joseph told his brothers that for two years the famine has been in the land, and there were still five years to come in which there will be neither Plowing nor harvesting. He said that God has sent him to Egypt to preserve the lives of his family and of the world, because the famine was great. **With the same concept, Christ the Lord proclaims to His own, that the Jews sold Him and delivered Him to death** to preserve our lives. Many years of spiritual famine have already passed for the whole world (from the fall of man till the Lord’s atonement), and there still remains many years of spiritual famine for those who do not believe till the end of days, when the believers enter into eternal fulfillment.

Joseph said to his brothers that God made him a father to Pharaoh and Lord of his entire house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. **Some scholars** said that as Pharaoh represented the world of the Gentiles at that time, **Christ the Lord became a Father to the Gentiles, a master on their life, and a ruler over the whole earth**, physically and spiritually. The true Joseph (Jesus Christ) cares for every soul by gathering all to Himself as a good Shepherd (Jn. 10:16).

Joseph was greatly loved by Pharaoh and his servants; thus they were very pleased when they heard the news that his brothers came to Egypt. Joseph had no enemies; because ***“When a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him”*** (Prov. 16:7). Joseph was a blessing for Egypt and for the whole world. He had the fear of God in his heart during all his sufferings, as he said to his brothers: ***“Do this and live, for I fear God”*** (Gen. 42:18). He did not complain when he was sold as a slave to the Ishmaelites, when his master’s wife falsely accused him, or when he was put in prison. He covered all the mistakes of his brothers, and that of Potiphar’s wife. When he was asking the chief butler to mention him to Pharaoh, he forgave them all, and he only said those gentle words: ***“For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon”*** (Gen. 40:15). The same with our Lord Jesus Christ who did not complain during His crucifixion; but for the Joy that was set before Him endured the cross despising the shame (Heb. 12:2). Let us cover the mistakes of others, as the Lord covers our mistakes, and let us be merciful so that we obtain mercy.

(Ancient Christian Commentary on Genesis, II, p.289-292). (Father Tadros Malaty, on Genesis, p. 350-353).

(To be continued)



Psalms 139

Part 2



Edited by Fr. Augustinos

11. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Dense darkness may oppress me, but it cannot shut me out of You or You out of me. You see as well without light as with it. You are not dependent on light that You created for the full exercise of Your perceptions. You are present with me whatever the hour. And being present, You dis-cover all that I think, feel or do. People are foolish to prefer the night and darkness of their evil deeds. So impossible is it for anything to be hidden from the Lord that they might as well transgress in daylight.

A good person will not wish to be hidden by the darkness; a wise person will not expect any such thing. If we were so foolish as to think we were concealed because the place was shrouded at midnight, we might be alarmed out of our security by knowing that, as far as God is concerned, we always dwell in the light. The night glows with a revealing force, **even the night shall be light about me.** Note how David keeps his song in the first person. Let us remember that we do the same when we cry with Hagar, "You are the God who sees" (Gen. 16:13).

12. Indeed, beyond all denial, the darkness shall not hide from You. It veils nothing from You. It hides things from people, but not from God.

But the night shines as the day. It is just another form of day. It shines, revealing all. It shines, revealing all. It shines as the day, clearly and distinctly manifesting all that is done.

The darkness and the light are both alike to You. This sen-

tence seems to sum up all that went before. It emphatically puts a negative on the faintest idea of hiding under the cover of night. The foolish ask, "How does God know?" They must imagine that He is as limited in His powers of observation as they are. But if they would consider for a moment that, they would conclude that he who could not see in the dark could not be God. Assuredly, God is in all places at all times, and nothing can by any possibility be kept from His all-observing, all-comprehending mind. The Great Spirit comprehends within Himself all time and space, and He is infinitely greater than these of any other thing that He has made.

"For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb, I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Your works."

13. For You formed my inward parts: You are the owner of my inner parts and passions, not only the indweller and observer but also the acknowledged Lord and possessor of my most secret self. You not only inspect and visit my most hidden and vital parts, but they are also Yours. You are as much at home there as a landlord is on his estate or as a proprietor in his house.

You covered me in my mother's womb. There I lay hidden, covered by You. You cared for me. You hid me as a treasure until You saw fit to bring me to the light. This is the way in which the psalmist describes the intimacy that God had with him. In his most secret **inward parts**, in his most secret condition, unborn, he was under the control and guardianship of God.

14, I will praise You. This is a good resolve, and one he was carrying out. Those who are praising God are the very people who will praise Him in eternity. Those who want to praise have subjects for adoration at hand. Too seldom do we remember our creation and all the skill and kindness bestowed on our body. But the sweet singer of Israel was better instructed. And so, for the chief musician, he prepares a song concerning birth and the forming and precedes it. We cannot begin too soon to bless our Maker, who began so soon to bless us. Even in the act of creation, He created reasons for our praising His name.

"For I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Who can gaze on a model of our anatomy without wonder and awe! Who could dissect a portion of the human frame without marveling at its delicacy and trembling at its frailty?

The psalmist had scarcely peered within the veil that hides the nerves, sinews, and blood vessels from common inspection. The science of anatomy was unknown to him, but he had seen enough to arouse his admiration of the work and his reverence for the Worker.

Marvelous are Your works. These parts of my body are all Your works. And though they are home works, close under my own eyes, yet they are wonderful to the last degree. They are works within me, and yet they are beyond my understanding, appearing as so many miracles of skill and power. We need not go to the ends of the earth for marvels; they abound in our own bodies.

15. "My frame was not hidden from You."

The substantial part of my being was before



Your all-seeing eye. The bones of my frame were put together by your hand. Before they were arranged, the essential materials of my being were within the range of Your eye. I was hidden from all human knowledge, but not from You. You have always been intimately acquainted with me.

When I was made in secret. Chastely and beautifully, the formation of our being is described. A great artist will often labor alone, not allowing the work to be seen until it is finished. The Lord fashions us where no eyes can see, and the veil is not lifted until every part is complete. The formation of the inner person precedes in secret, the more solitude the better. The true church is also being fashioned in secret, so that none may cry, "Look here," or "Look there," as if that which is visible could ever be identical with the invisibly growing body of Christ.

"And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." Embroidered with great skill," is an accurate poetical description of the creation of veins, sinews, muscles, and nerves. What tapestry can equal the human fabric? This is worked as much in private as if it had been accomplished in the grave, or in the darkness of the abyss. These expressions are poetical, beautifully veiling, and yet they do not conceal the real meaning. God's intimate knowledge of us from the beginning, and even before, is charmingly set forth. Cannot He, who made us so wondrously when we were not, still carry on His work of power until He has perfected us?

16. "Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. While the vessel still was on the wheel, the Potter saw it as complete (Jer. 18). The Lord knows not only our shape but also our substance. This is substantial knowledge! The Lord's observation of us is intent and intentional; His eyes saw. The Divine mind discerns all things as clearly and certainly as people perceive by actual sight. His is not a hearsay acquaintance but the knowledge that comes from sight.

And in your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. As an architect draws plans and writes specifications, God saw us when we could not be seen. He wrote about us when there was nothing to write about. The great truth expressed in these lines has been considered by many to be the formation of the mystical body of our Lord Jesus. Of course, what is true of man is emphatically true of Him who is the representative man. The great Lord knows who belongs to Christ. His eye perceives the chosen members, who will yet be made one with the living person of the mystical Christ. Those of the elect who are as yet unborn or unrenowned are nevertheless written in the Lord's book. As Eve's form grew in silence and secrecy under the Maker's fashioning hand (Gen. 2:22), so at this hour the Bride is being fashioned for the Lord Jesus. "The Lord Knows those who are His" (2 Tim. 2:19). He has a special familiar acquaintance with the member of the body of Christ. He sees their substance, imperfect though they are. **17. "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!"** David is not alarmed by the fact that God knows all about him. Quite the contrary, he is comforted and feels enriched, as if He had a treasure chest of

precious jewels. God thinking of us is the treasure and pleasure of the believer, who cries, "How costly, how valued, how precious is Your perpetual attention to me!" It is a joy that fills our nature to think on God, to return love for love and thought for thought after our poor fashion.

How great is the sum of them! When we remember that God thought about us from old eternity, that He continues to think about us every moment, and that He will think of us when time will be no more, we may well exclaim, "How great is the sum of them! Such thoughts are natural to the Creator, the Preserver, the Redeemer, the Father, and the Friend, and they flow evermore from the Lord's heart. Thoughts of pardon, renewal, upholding, supplying, educating, perfecting, and of a thousand more kinds perpetually well up in the mind of the Most High. It should fill us with adoring wonder and reverent surprise that God's infinite mind should turn so many thoughts toward us, who are so insignificant and so unworthy!

18. "If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand." This figure shows God's thoughts to be altogether innumerable, for nothing can surpass in number the grains of sand that surround the oceans and seas. The task of counting God's thoughts of love would be a never-ending one. If we attempted the numbering, we would fail, for the infinite does not fall within the line of our feeble intellects.

"When I awake, I am still with You." The thoughts of love are so many that my mind never gets away from them; they surround me at all hours. I go to bed, and God is my last thought, I wake up, and I find my mind wanders away into dreams, it only wanders on holy ground, and the moment I wake up, my heart is back with its Lord. The psalmist does not say, "When I awake, I return to you," but, "When I awake, I am still with You, as if his meditations were continuous, his fellowship unbroken. Soon we will lie down to sleep for the last time. God grant that when the trumpet wakes us (1 Cor. 15:52), we will find ourselves still with him.

23. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

David pleads for the fullest investigation, the most innermost search. Only people of truth could put themselves into such a crucible. Yet we may desire such searching, for it would be a terrible calamity for sin to remain in our hearts, unknown and undiscovered.

Try me, and know my anxieties. Exercise any and every test on me. By fire and by water, let me be examined. Read not only the desires of my heart but also the fugitive thoughts of my head. Know with all penetrating knowledge all that is or has been in the chambers of my mind. What a mercy that there is One who can know us to perfection! He is intimately at home with us. He is graciously inclined toward us and is willing to bend His omniscience to serve the end of our sanctification.

24. "And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me to the way everlasting." Lead me, O Lord, by Your providence, by Your word, by Your grace, and by Your Spirit, lead me forever.



Short Story

A Dream Come True



They called it "A Dream Come True." The staff at Air Canada had been soliciting funds and donations for a year to take a plane full of kids to Disney World for a day, and this was the day. It was earlier, of course, than any day has a right to begin- 4:00 A.M.

I scraped the frost from my windshield and started the car. The Children Aid Society, where I worked, had been offered places for ten children in the Dream Come True flight, and we'd selected ten children, most of them in foster care, with backgrounds of poverty, neglect and abuse- children who would never otherwise get to see the Magic Kingdom. In my bag, I had the legal documents for each child, documents that with their formal language hid the reality of the traumas these young children had experienced.

We hoped that this trip would give them a glimpse into a brighter world, give them a chance to have one day of feeling special and having fun.

The chaos as we gathered at the airport before dawn was incredible. Each child was given a backpack stuffed with donated gifts, and the level of excitement was indescribable.

A little girl with two brown braids asked me shyly if she could really keep the T-shirt in her backpack.

"This is all yours to keep." I explained, showing her the contents of her backpack.

- "Forever?" she asked me.

- "Forever." I said, and she rewarded me with a beaming smile. Several of the children rushed to the washrooms and put on their new clothes they were already wearing. I couldn't convince them that they'd be too hot with all those layers once we reached Florida. Two little girls found a travel checker game

among their gifts and plopped themselves down in the middle of the airport floor to play.

Then there was Corby. He was one of the older children, almost twelve, and he looked cynically at the other children who were almost bouncing around the room. Corby sat on a chair, his arms folded, his backpack tossed on the floor.

When I walked over to him, he just looked at me without saying a word.

"What's the matter, Corby?" I asked. I'd seen his file. I knew he'd been abused and repeatedly abandoned by a mother who breezed in and out of his life as it suited her. I don't think anyone was sure who his father was, least of all Corby. But it's painful to see someone so young look so young look so cynical.

"Nothing." He looked around. "What's really happening, anyway?"

"You know what's happening. First, we're having breakfast. Then we get on the airplane and spend the day at Disney World."

"Right." He shook his head and turned away.

"Corby, it's the truth."

He didn't believe me. Before I could say anything else, the Air Canada staff began handing out juice and muffins, and I found myself busily mopping up spills and making sure everyone got enough to eat. Soon after, we followed the path of stars that had been put in place to guide us to the right plane, and I almost forgot my conversation with Corby as I settled the kids into their seats.

As I sat down, though, I found Corby right beside me" So, he said, "We're really, going on an airplane."

"I told you."

"Where are you really taking us?"

"Corby, we are really, truly going to Disney World."

He shook his head again, clearly beginning to think that I was as foolish as the excited children around him. I, too, had been duped.

None of the kids in our group had ever been on an airplane before, so the trip was almost as exciting as Disney World itself. Everyone had a turn to sit by the window, to visit the pilot in the cockpit, and to order drinks or treats. Before long, we were on the ground again and emerging into ninety-degree Florida weather.

I could tell Corby was stunned. He grabbed one of the airport staff helping to unload the plane. "Is this really Florida?" he asked. The man in coveralls laughed and answered him that this was, indeed, Florida.

As we loaded the children onto the bus that took us to Disney World, Corby hung back. He wanted to sit with me again. After a long silence, he said to me, "I know what's going



to happen. You're going to leave us here, aren't you?"

"No, we're not. We're going to Disney World now, and then tonight, we're going home."

"And do I get to go back to the Mullins?" The Mullins were his foster parents, who had shown this often very difficult boy a great deal of love.

"Yes, you'll go back to the Mullins. I bet they'll be waiting at the airport when we land."

"Right." He didn't believe me about this, either.

The Magic Kingdom worked its magic. All the kids got Mickey Mouse ears, rode every ride once and many of them twice, stuffed themselves with quite unhealthy food, talked to Snow White and Minnie Mouse and all the other characters, clapped loudly at all the shows, and in general had a perfect day. It was exhausting for the adults, trying to keep track of our overexcited charges, but we didn't lose a single child. Not even Corby, who began to smile a little the second time he went through "It's a Small World" and who loved the Haunted Mansion almost as much as I did.

As darkness began to fall over the Magic Kingdom, we rounded up the children in our groups and gave each child a twenty-dollar bill. This was for buying souvenirs in the Main Street gift shops, so that each child could have a personal reminder of this special day.

But this was where I saw a new kind of magic. First the little girl with braids said to me, "I want to buy something for my brother because he didn't get to come. What do you think he'd like? I helped her find a Mickey Mouse hat and yo-yo. Then another child asked for help in picking a gift for "this girl in my foster home who really wanted to come but she couldn't." And another wanted to purchase a gift for the teacher who had given him extra help all year.

So it went, one child after another. My eyes blurred with tears as each of these children-children who had been chosen for this trip because they came from impoverished, traumatic backgrounds-searched for the right gift for someone who had been left behind. Given a little money to spend as they chose, they spent it on others.

Finally, there was Corby.

"Are we really going home?" he asked me once more, but this time he was smiling and confident that he knew the answer.

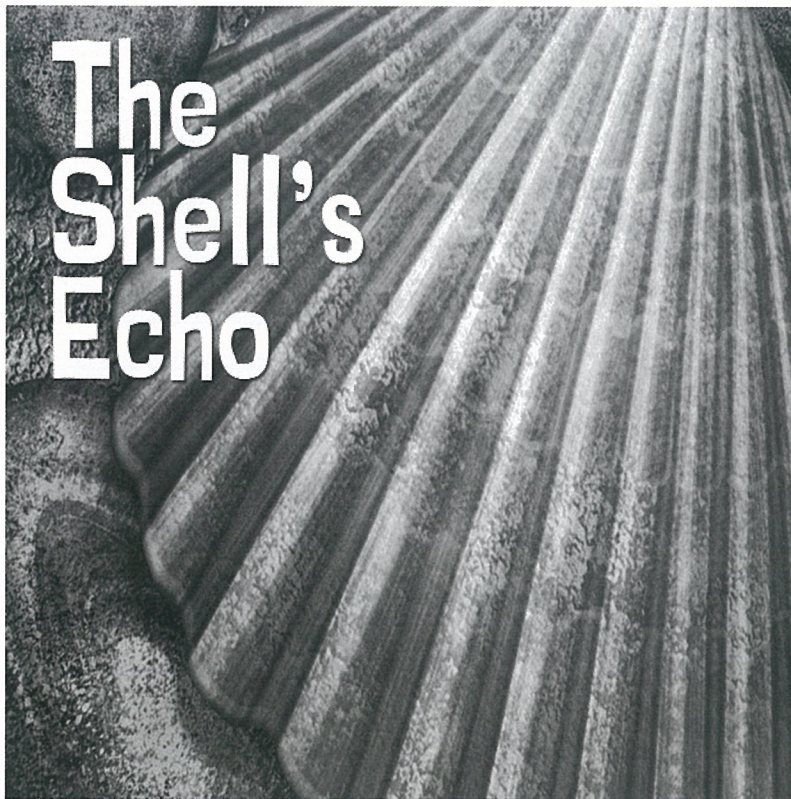
"We're really, really going home," I told him.

"In that case," he said, "I'm going to buy presents for the Mullins."

"I told him I thought that was a lovely idea and walked away before he saw me cry!

Brief Meditation

By Fr. Augustinos Hanna



Have you ever put a sea-shell on your ear and listened? What did you hear? You hear the echo of the sea, the waves and the wind!

No matter how far you carry this small shell with you, one mile or ten thousand miles far from the sea, still you will hear the sound of its own kingdom, the sea.

This exactly is the case with the true Christian. He always bears witness to his real kingdom, the kingdom of heaven. His most favorite speech will always revolve around his beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. His language will always reveal His personality as a spiritual person. Even his decent appearance, outlook, declares, "I belong to Christ, I am a stranger in this world and I am a citizen of heaven" (Phil. 3:20).

Moreover, his silent actions, attitudes, life style and virtues speak as the waves and winds of the sea. God's word, commandments, Bible stories, Church history, sayings of the saints are part of his/her life and voice.

The reflections of the believer on the daily events show that he/she is different person, not abnormal but really different.

Remember always the lesson of the SEASHELL'S ECHO




 A black and white photograph of Rev. Franklin Graham speaking on the set of the MSNBC show 'Morning Joe'. He is wearing a suit and tie, and the show's logo is visible in the bottom left corner.

religion & POLITICS

TOP STORIES U.S. NGO WORKERS

Rev. Franklin Graham Says: Obama Helps Islamists, Ignores Christian Persecution

Rev. Franklin Graham says President Barack Obama has “given Islam a pass,” including ignoring atrocities against Christians in the Muslim world — so much so that the evangelist says he cannot “categorically” say Obama is not a Muslim.

In a stunning interview with MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” on Tuesday, the prominent Christian leader and son of Billy Graham expressed shock that Obama was doing little to protect Christians across the Muslim world against a wave of persecution.

Editor’s Notes:

MSNBC’s hosts were confused by Graham’s strong rebuke of Obama, and queried whether Graham believed the president to be a Christian.

“You have to ask that of President Obama,” Graham shot back. “You can ask me do I believe you’re a Christian. I think people have to ask Barack Obama. He’s come out saying he’s a Christian. So I think the question is what a Christian is?”

Graham added that he accepts Obama’s claim he’s a Christian at face value, but said ultimately **only God knows his heart, while noting that Obama has shown strong empathy toward Muslims and the president has an Islamic back-ground.** “Under Islamic law, under Sharia law, Islam sees him as a son of Islam, because his father was a Muslim, his grandfather was a Muslim, his great-grandfather was a Muslim,” Graham said. “So under Islamic law the Muslim world sees President Obama as a Muslim, as a son of Islam. That’s just the way it works. That’s the way they see him.” Asked if he believed Obama was “categorically not a Muslim,” Graham said, “I can’t say categorically because Islam has got-

ten a free a pass under Obama.”

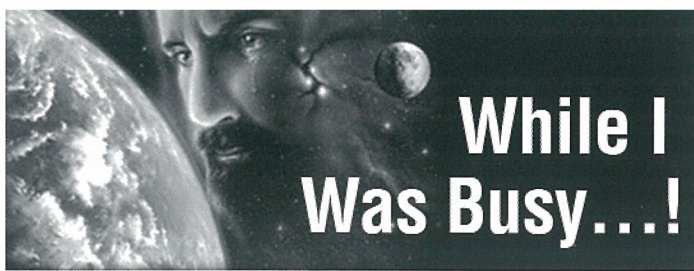
Graham declared that **Obama’s Middle East policies have helped Islamists while hurting Christian minorities** through the region. “We see the Arab spring, and coming out of the Arab spring, the Islamists are taking control of the Middle East. And people like [Hosni] Mubarak was a dictator, but he kept the peace with Israel and the Christian minorities in Egypt were protected.

“Now those Christian minorities throughout the entire Arab world are under attack.

A Newsweek Magazine cover story last week [was about] was the massacre of Christians in the Islamic world. From Europe all the way through the Middle East to Africa into East Asia, Muslims are killing Christians (See the middle page).

“The president can come out and make a statement demanding that if these countries do not protect their minorities, no more foreign aid from the United States. They are not protecting the minorities. The society in these Islamic countries is not protecting the Christians anymore.” Graham claimed Obama is doing little to nothing to help persecuted Christians. “And he’s got the power of the White House,” Graham complained. “He could be speaking to these countries right now, demanding that they protect the Christians in those countries. He’s been quiet about it.” The White House has issued numerous calls for religious tolerance in the wake of violence against Coptic Christians and other minorities in the Arab world.





"While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone" (1 Kings 20:40)

By Fr. Anthony Coniaris

A SOLDIER HAD BEEN GIVEN A DUTY. HE had been charged to guard one prisoner. That's all he had been asked to do. But the prisoner escaped. When asked for an explanation, the guard could only answer: "While I was busy here and there, he was gone."

We have all been assigned by God to guard a priceless treasure: our soul. "What shall it profit a man," asked Jesus, "if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). One day we shall be called upon to return our soul to God. Our eternal destiny shall depend on the condition of our soul when we return it to God. It is not at all difficult to lose one's soul. All one has to do is to be busy about the wrong things. "While I was busy here and there, it was gone."

A seventy-year-old man was dying in the hospital. The priest was summoned to administer last rites. He began to talk to him about his soul. The dying man replied, "I've been too busy. I haven't had time for my soul." Then the pastor figured that in his 70 years God had given this man 3,640 Sundays- 3,640 opportunities! "While I was busy here and there, it was gone!"

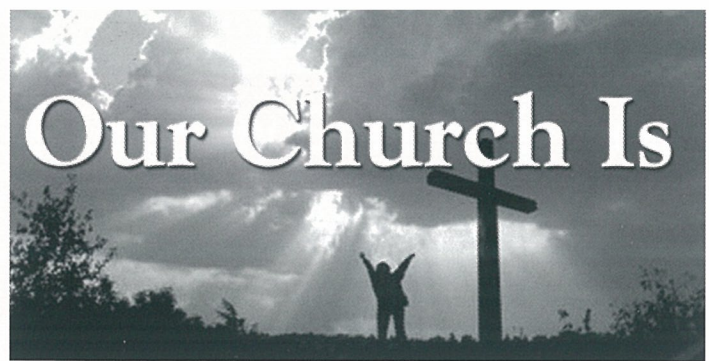


By Fr. Augustinos

A CHRISTIAN ARTIST WANTED TO DEPICT the above fact by drawing two pictures. In the first one, he drew a very busy business man sitting in his office and on his desk there were tons of files.

The Lord Jesus was standing at his door knocking gently. But the man said to him, "Sorry Lord, I am so busy now, I have no time for You, please come later."

In the second picture, he drew the same person sitting at the same desk, seems very busy as before, and this time the angel of death intruding into his office without knocking. When he saw him, he said with a trembling voice, "O, no, please sir, give me another chance, I am not ready yet". But the angel of death replied and said, "Sorry, I am very busy, I have no time, come with me right now!"



By Lucy Hanna

1. A Place for Worship:

The primary reason we meet together in Church is to focus our attention on God, giving Him our worship and receiving His blessing and inspiration.

Each of our services is an occasion of spiritual refreshment in which we worship God in many different forms: With prayers and supplications, hymns, praise, singing psalms, spiritual songs and by lifting our hands with expressions of thanksgiving. In gathering together around the Holy Communion, we worship the Lord as one body, renewing our vows of love, faithfulness and gratitude for His great salvation and abide in Him.

We invite you to join us in the Sunday and weekdays services.

2. A Place for Learning:

To us, studying the Bible, the lives of the saints, Church history, teachings, rituals, canons and dogma is vital because it, not only sharpens our intellect, but it is also a spiritual guide. We accept the Bible as God's Word, a Book that is alive and relevant to our life today. We accept the lives of the saints as role models to emulate. We invite you to join us on Saturday evening vespers, raising of the incense and Biblical Studies.

3. Place for Fellowship and Friendship:

Nothing quite compares with the joy of Christian friendship. St. John the beloved made it the sign of the true spiritual life to love one another. He said, "***We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.***" (1 Jn 3:14).

We invite you to join us in the social hour following the Sunday Divine Liturgy and in other social gatherings and activities, family conferences, picnics, festivals and Summer Club.

4. A Place for Service:

The Church is the best place to practice the practical love and charity. There are so many kinds of services available to everyone according to his talents, time and circumstances. In Romans 12, you can find at least 10 kinds of services, choose for yourself one or two of them to build the Church of Christ and invest your talents for eternal life (Matt.25:14-39).





Coptic News Update

Muslim Council in Egypt Evicts 8 Christian Families, Seizes Their Property

Assyrian International News Agency

By Mary Abdelmassih, February 9, 2012 National and international rights groups have consistently criticized the recourse to the so-called “reconciliation meetings” — dubbed “Bedouin sittings” — that take place between Copts and Muslim assailant after every attack on Copts. The meetings are conducted under the auspices of state security. Last week a series of meetings were held by radical Muslims to decide on the fate of the Copts in a village in Alexandria, and Muslims insisted that the whole Coptic population of 62 families must be deported because of an unsubstantiated accusation levied against one Coptic man. Copts in the village of Kobry-el-Sharbat (El-Ameriya), Alexandria, were attacked on January 27 by a mob of 3000 Muslims led by Salafi leaders, who looted and torched homes and shops belonging to Copts. The violence was prompted by allegations made by a Muslim barber named Toemah that a 34-year-old Coptic tailor, Mourad Samy Guirgis, had on his mobile phone illicit photos of a Muslim woman. Mourad denied the accusation and surrendered to the police for fear for his life. Muslims looted and torched his workshop and home after he surrendered to the police, and his entire family, including his parents and his married brother Romany, were evicted from the village. He is still in police detention.

Three “reconciliation meetings” were held at the El-Ameriya village police headquarters. They were attended by Salafi and Muslim Brotherhood representatives from neighboring villages, as well as church representative. Muslims demanded the eviction of all Coptic inhabitants from the village because “Muslim honor had been damaged.” Many believe that the mobile phone story was fabricated as an excuse to start violence against the Copts. According to the police, the woman in question denied the story and no photos were found on Mourad’s mobile phone, according to Ihab Aziz, a Coptic-American activist who is presently in Egypt. During the first reconciliation meeting it was agreed that only Copts who were directly involved with the Mourad incident would be evicted, and the church demanded compensation of

two million pounds for the innocent Copts whose homes and businesses were torched on January 27. Muslims, especially Salafis from the neighboring villages, refused any kind of compensation and insisted on the eviction of all Copts.

On January 30 a Muslim mob attacked Copts in Kobry-el-Sharbat for the second time, and torched three Coptic homes in the presence of the security forces, “which took the role of an onlooker and made no effort to stop the violence,” according to Joseph Malak, lawyer for the Coptic church in Alexandria. “This proves that the assailants were not afraid of the security forces or the law.” Muslim representatives demanded the eviction of the wealthy Coptic merchant Abeskayroun Soliman, together with his four married sons and their families, accusing them of causing sedition by shooting in the air when Muslims broke into and torched their home while the family was inside. “No one was wounded due to the alleged shootings, which the family says never took place. The police authorities issued an arrest warrant for two of the Soliman sons,” said Ihab Aziz.

The Solimans have been in hiding with a Muslim family which saved them from their burning homes, and is presently giving them protection. Muslims threatened that if eight Coptic families were not evicted by February 3rd, all remaining 54 Coptic families in the village would be subjected to violence after Friday prayers. They called it “Friday of Eviction” and “Friday of Clean-up.”

On Wednesday February 1, a hastily organized reconciliation meeting was arranged by security authorities, and was attended by Ebeskharion Soliman and one of his sons. The terms of the agreement which resulted were:

eviction of eight Coptic families, namely three of the Mourad families, in addition to five Soliman families.

selling of the assets of the wealthy Abeskayron Soliman family within three months by a committee, under the supervision of Salafi shaikh Sherif el Hawary. Soliman has no right to get involved in the sale or even accompany a prospective buyer.



The Committee is to collect any money accrued from the sale of his land, properties, businesses as well as collect promissory notes pending from business transactions by the Soliman-owned chain of stores.

In case of non-implementation of this Agreement, all Copts in the Kobry-el-Sharbat village will be attacked, their homes and property completely torched. Abeskhayron Soliman signed the agreement, which most Copts viewed as “humiliating.”

Father Boktor, who attended the meeting, described the reconciliation agreement as “utter injustice.”

Wissa Fawzi, member of the Maspero Coptic Youth Union in Alexandria, said that Soliman has nothing at all to do with the Mourad story, but signed the agreement to save his family and the Copts in the village, “otherwise there would have been a massacre of the Copts on that Friday.” He said that Security authorities pressured Soliman into accepting the terms of the agreement by threatening him with refusal of police protection for him and his family. “What constitutes the real crisis is the complicity of security officials in the process of displacement,” said Fawzi.

Copts in Kobry-el-Sharbat were stunned after hearing the news of the eviction of the “top Copt” in their community, whose wealth is estimated at more than 20,000,000 Egyptian pounds. “There is a feeling of humiliation and being completely under the mercy of the radical Muslims,” said Rami Khashfa of the Alexandria Maspero Youth Union “they are terrorized and are scared of the future. Copts in the neighboring villages are also scared.” He said that Copts in the village are thinking of moving elsewhere. Speaking on US-based Christian TV channel Al-Karma, Magdy Khalil, head of the Middle East Freedom Forum, said that reconciliation meetings made up of Salafis and members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and arranged by security officials are illegal and forced eviction is one of the crimes under international law. “Who gave them the right to form a committee headed by a Salafi to sell Christian property? This is thuggery and blatant targeting of Copts.” Khalil called on the Coptic Melli Council, which is the civilian body that represents Copts in the Egyptian State, to protest this agreement and ask for the return of the Copts to their homes. “If we accept it, this will open the door for an avalanche of forced evictions.” He believes that radical Muslims have a bigger plan they hope to achieve by terrorizing the Copts, namely displacing and dispersing them from places with high Coptic population density, taking their property and weakening them economically. Ihab Aziz, like many others, believes that “Coptic capital” is targeted everywhere in Egypt. He said that members of the Egyptian parliament have been made aware of the El-Amerya forced displacement, and the issue will be brought before parliament shortly.

The Holy Great Fast (Lent)

By Fr. Matthew Attiya (Australia)

The Holy Great Fast (Lent) takes the believer on a spiritual journey of fasting accompanied by prayer and almsgiving. It provides an excellent opportunity for repentance and spiritual revival in preparation for the holiest week of the Church calendar, the Passion Week.

Fasting is not merely an abstinence from food, but it is a spiritual practice in abstaining from what is earthly in order to purify the heart for what is eternal.

Saint Paphnotious, in his dialogue with Saint John Cassian, divides fasting into three areas:

1. Concerning the body

– the believer abstains from food and drink

2. **Concerning the morals** – the believer abstains from sin, lust and evil behavior

3. **Concerning the soul** – the believer loves the crucified Lord, Christ, leaving everything with joy to be occupied with Him.

+ **Saint Isaac the Syrian** comments, “Merely by beginning to fast, the heart and mind is eager for union with God.

+ **Saint John Chrysostom** warns us that it is the inward fasting that is required before the outward fasting – “How can we achieve external fasting without first achieving internal fasting? We should fast our hearts, senses, minds and intentions, and through this we shall achieve external fasting.”

+ **Saint Augustine** advises the believer saying “Do you want your prayers to rise up to heaven? Let your prayers have two wings which are fasting and alms.”

Good News in Hepatitis C

- NO Injections

There is good news coming for Hepatitis C, even Genotype 4

There are reports of new drugs being developed that can cure Hepatitis C in three months without injections.

To learn more about this, please contact

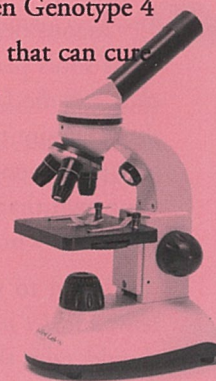
Mrs. Amani Hanna.

Community liaison for

Dr. Peter Ruane & Dr. Rick Strycker

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What Is A Sober Mind?



ST. PAUL SAYS, "FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7).

"Exhort the young men to be sober-minded" (Titus 2:6)

St. Peter also says, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Pet. 5:8). The ingredients of the word "sober" are: considerate- cautious- humble- self-denying- chaste- serious.

1. Considerate

You must be considerate and thoughtful, and not rash and heedless. To be sober-minded, is to make use of our reason, in reasoning with ourselves and in communing with our own hearts- to employ those noble powers and capacities, by which we are distinguished from, and dignified above the beasts, that we may not receive the grace of God in them in vain, but being rational creatures.

You learned to talk when you were children, when will you learn to think seriously-to think to the purpose?

Floating thoughts your heads are full of, foreign and impertinent ones, when will you be brought to close and fixed thoughts, to think with concern and application of the great things that belong to your everlasting peace and welfare?

Learn to think not only of what is just before you, which strikes the senses, and affects the imagination, but of the cause and consequences, and reasons of things, to discover truths, to compare them with one another, to argue upon them and apply them to yourselves, and think which deserves to be first considered.

Inconsideration is the ruin of thousands, and many precious souls perish through mere carelessness. *"Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways"*. Take time to think, desire to be alone now and then, and let not solitude and retirement be uneasiness to you, for you have a heart of your own that you may find talk with, and a God nigh unto you, with whom you may have a pleasing communion.

Learn to think freely; God invites you to do so: *"Come now, and let us reason together"* (Isa.1:18). We desire not you should take things upon trust, but inquire impartially into them, as the noble Bereans, who searched the scriptures daily,

whether those things were so which the apostles told them (Acts 17:10, 11).

Learn to think what you are, and what you are capable of; think who made you, and what you were made for; for what end you were endowed with the powers of reason, and attended by the inferior creatures; think what you have been doing since you came into the world- of the great work you were sent into the world about- of the vanity of childhood and youth- and how unavoidable the years of them are past away as a tale that is told- and whether therefore it be not time for you to begin to be religious and to enter in at the strait gate. Do nothing rashly, but always speak and act under the government of the great law of consideration. Ponder the path of your feet, that it may be a straight path. Some people take a pride in being careless, and so they glory in their shame. But be not you thus negligent....

2. Cautious

You must be cautious, and prudent, and not willful and heady. The word in the text is the same that is rendered, ver. 5, to be discreet. You must not only think rationally, but when you have done so, you must act wisely, and so as will be most for your true interest; look before you, look under your feet, and pick your way, not as fools, but as wise. Those that govern themselves, God will guide, but will justly leave those that love to wander endlessly.

Put away childish follies with other childish things, and do not all your days think and speak as children.

Therefore, in every case of moment and difficulty, be willing to be advised by wise friends, and depend more upon their judgment who have had longer experience of the world, than upon your own. Consult with those who are wise and good; ask them what they would do if they were in your case, ask your spiritual father and you will find safely, or if it should not prove well, it will be a satisfaction to you, that you did not do it without advice and deliberation.

What brighter character can be given of a young man, than to say, he is wise? Or what blacker, than to say, he is willful? See the former in Solomon, who calls himself a child (1 Kings 3:7), and yet his father calls him a wise man, that knows what he is to do. See the later in the character of the rebellious son, that was to be stoned to death, against whom the indictment runs thus, *"He is stubborn, he will not obey the voice of his father and mother"* (Deut.21:18-20). Those are the fools whom there is little hope of, that despise wisdom and instruction (Prov.1:7). He that will not be counseled, cannot be helpful. If you want to be sober and wise, study the Scriptures, by them you will get more understanding than the ancients, than all your teachers (Ps. 119:99,100).

Be earnest with God in prayer for wisdom, as Solomon was; and the prayer was both pleasing and prevailing in heaven. *"If any-one lacks wisdom, let him ask of God*



who gives all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5).

It is not a promise with a perhaps, but with assurance, *'it shall be given him'*. To all true believers, Christ himself is, and shall be made of God, wisdom" (1 Cor.1:30).

3. Humble

You must be humble and modest, and not proud and conceited. It is recommended to the younger to be clothed with humility (1 Pet.5:5), that is, to be sober-minded.

"Let no man think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but think soberly" (Rom.12:3). Keep up low thoughts of your-self both outward and inward; of your attainments and improvements, and all your performances, and all the things you call merits and excellencies. Boast not of a false gift, of what you have not; nor be puffed up with what you have. Does your face shine? Be as Moses was, he did not know that the skin of his face shone, remember your defects and infirmities. Learn from your Master who was lowly in heart (Matt.11:29).

4. Self-denying

You must be temperate and self-denying, and not indulgent of your appetites. It is the same word in the text (sober), that in ver. 2 is translated temperate, and some think it properly signifies a moderate use of meat and drink, to save our mind from being clouded, and our wisdom from being corrupted, that is our hearts from being overcharged with drunkenness. We usually put a sober man in opposition to one that is drunk, or addicted to drunkenness. So, let us then warn young men to dread the sin of drunkenness; keep at a distance from it; avoid all appearances of it, and approach towards it. It has slain its thousands, its ten thousands, of young people; has ruined their health, brought diseases and shame upon them, and cut them off in the flower of their days. Take heed of the beginning of this sin, for the way of it is downhill; and many, under pretense of an innocent entertainment, and passing the evening in a pleasant conversation, are drown in to drink to excess, and make beasts of themselves, and you should tremble to think how fatal the consequences of it are, it extinguishes convictions and sparks of devotion and provokes the Spirit of grace to withdraw, and it will be the sinner's eternal ruin, if it be not repented of, because it is written *"the drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God"* (1 Cor. 6:10).

5. Chaste

You must be chaste and not wanton and impure. "The lusts of the flesh which are manifest, adultery, fornication, uncleanness..." are called youthful lusts.

"Flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim.2:22). For God's sake, and for your own precious soul's sake, flee these youthful lusts; dread

them as you would a devouring fire, or a destroying plague, and keep at a distance from them; 'Abstain from all appearances of these sins; *"hating even the garment defiled by the flesh"* (Jude: 23).

+ Covet not to know these depths of Satan, but take a pride in being ignorant of the way of the adulterous woman. See all temptations to uncleanness coming from the unclean spirit, that roaring lion who goes about seeking to devour you.

+ Remember what the apostle prescribes, as that which ought to be the constant care of *the unmarried, to be holy both in body and spirit, and so to please the Lord*" (1 Cor. 7:34). Solomon warns the youth of entangling in the snares of the evil woman! (See Proverbs 6, 7).

+ Pray earnestly to God for His grace to keep you from this sin, and that the temptation never be sudden, but find you awake, and aware of it, and armed against it with the whole armor of God.

+ Get your heart purified by the word of God, and sanctified by divine love.

6. Serious

You must be serious, and not frothy and vain. This meaning we commonly give to the word here used. Him that is serious, we call a sober man; and put this last of the ingredients of this sober-mindedness, because it will have a very great influence upon all the rest.

Not that we would oblige young people never to be merry, or had any ill-natured design upon them to make them melancholy; no, religion allows them to be cheerful; it is your time, make your best of it, evil days will come, of which you will say you have no pleasure in them, when the cares and sorrows of this world increase upon you and we would not have you to anticipate those evil days.

It is mentioned as an instance of the promised prosperity and flourishing state of Jerusalem, that *the streets of the city shall be full of boys, and girls playing in the streets thereof* (Zech.8:5).

Solomon says, *"Go your way, eat with joy, and drink with a merry heart, for God now accepts your work"* (Eccl.9:7).

God expects to be served by us with *"joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things"* (Deut.28:47).

The merry heart does good like a medicine. The holy heavenly life, spent in the service of God, and in communion with Him, is without doubt the most pleasant, comfortable, fruitful, powerful and secure life any one can live in this world.





By Henry Kissinger

Henry Kissinger, the most famous living practitioner of international statecraft.

NEW YORK - USA - In a remarkable admission by former Nixon era Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, reveals what is happening at the moment in the world and particularly the Middle East. Speaking from his luxurious Manhattan apartment, the elder statesman, who will be 89 in May, is all too forward with his analysis of the current situation in the world forum of Geo-politics and economics. "The United States is bating China and Russia, and the final nail in the coffin will be Iran, which is, of course, the main target of Israel.

We have allowed China to increase their military strength and Russia to recover from Sovietisation, to give them a false sense of bravado, this will create an altogether faster demise for them. We're like the sharp shooter daring the knob to pick up the gun, and when they try, it's bang.

The coming war will be so severe that only one super-power can win, and that's us folks. This is why the EU is in such a hurry to form a complete super-state because they know what is coming, and to survive, Europe will have to be one whole cohesive state. Their urgency tells me that they know full well that the big showdown is upon us. O how I have dreamed of this delightful moment.

"Mr. Kissinger then added: "If you are an ordinary person, then you can prepare yourself for war by moving to the countryside and building a farm, but you must take guns with you, as the hordes of starving will be roaming. Also, even though the elite will have their safe havens and specialist shelters, they must be just as careful during the war as the ordinary civilians, because their shelters can still be compro-

mised. "After pausing for a few minutes to collect his thoughts, Mr. Kissinger, carried on: "We told the military that we would have to take over seven Middle Eastern countries for their resources and they have nearly completed their job. We all know what I think of the military, but I have to say they have obeyed orders superfluously this time. It is just that last stepping stone, i.e. Iran which will really tip the balance.

How long can China and Russia stand by and

watch America clean up? The great Russian bear and Chinese sickle will be roused from their slumber and this is when Israel will have to fight with all its might and weapons to kill as many Arabs as it can.

Hopefully if all goes well, half the Middle East will be Israeli. Our young have been trained well for the last decade or so on combat console games, it was interesting to see the new Call of Duty Modern Warfare 3 game, which mirrors exactly what is to come in the near future with its predictive programming.

Our young, in the US and West, are prepared because they have been program-med to be good soldiers, cannon fodder, and when they will be ordered to go out into the streets and fight those crazy Chins and Russkies, they will obey their orders.

Out of the ashes we shall build a new society, there will only be one superpower left, and that one will be the global government that wins.

Don't forget, the United States, has the best weapons, we have stuff that no other nation has, and we will introduce those weapons to the world when the time is right.



Coptic Lady, “Mama Maggie” Nominated for 2012 Nobel Peace Prize

Christian ministry leader “Mama Maggie” Gobran has been nominated for the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize by several members of the United States Congress for her selfless work offering aid and assistance to the impoverished people of Cairo’s garbage slums.

Congressmen Frank Wolf, Bill Huizenga, Joseph Pitts, Robert Aderholt, and John Carter all signed a letter to the Norwegian Nobel Committee Council urging council members to consider “Mama Maggie” for the prestigious award. The deadline for nominations closed on Wednesday of last week.

“Ms. Gobran is a woman of the utmost integrity and her tireless work has served thousands of Egyptians, including countless children. She has given a voice to the poor,” the letter to the Norwegian Nobel Committee read.

Gobran is the founder of Stephen’s Children, a ministry based in Cairo dedicated to helping families living in Cairo’s garbage slums, providing assistance to both Christian and Muslim children, and helping impoverished rural communities in Upper Egypt. She is referred to by locals as “Mama Maggie” and has been dubbed the “Mother Teresa of Cairo, Egypt.”

“It is through her deep religious and moral commitment that Mama Maggie has succeeded in creating an organization that serves the most poor, desperate, and vulnerable population of Egypt,” the letter to the Norwegian peace committee read. “Clothed entirely in white, Mama Maggie is almost an angelic presence in Egypt’s slums, embodying the virtues of generosity, gentleness and charity.”

Stephen’s Children has provided services to over 25,000 families in Egypt. In 2010 alone, Stephen’s Children assisted

communities through 80 clinics, 80 community education centers, 65 camps, and 5 vocational centers.

Projects are focused on providing health and educational services to neglected children of Cairo’s garbage slums and other places of poverty in Egypt. Stephen’s Children encourages impoverished communities to “experience love, build self worth, and seize hold of the hope that is found in Jesus Christ,” according to the ministry’s website.

Gobran herself is a Coptic Christian who grew up in a middle class family in Cairo – sheltered from the city’s vast poverty and festering slums. Prior to finding her calling and devoting her life to the disadvantaged families of her native Egypt, Gobran was a successful marketing manager and distinguished computer science professor at the American University of Cairo.

Gobran’s path changed following a visit to Cairo’s slums where she was shocked to find children and families living in squalor and destitution. She said the experience made her question God until she realized her own calling to help those in need.

“You know, we don’t choose where to be born, but we do choose either to be sinners or saints, to be nobody, or the heroes. If you want to be a hero, do what God wants you to do,” the inspirational leader said this past August at the 2011 Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit.

At the summit the humble woman shared with the audience the story of her life and transition into becoming a charitable leader saying, “true love is to give and forgive, to give until it hurts.”



Congratulations



Dr. Mina & Helena Youssef

On their marriage and new stage of life.

We pray that the Lord Jesus whom you loved and served bless you, keep you and make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; and lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace, joy, health and success (Num. 6:24-26).

-Grandma Dr. Dolly Tadros, Soad, Wahid & Julie Tadros and their children Christy, Jonathan & Corrina, and Mariam Youssef.

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"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jer. 1:5)

St. John Church, Covina, congratulates Dr. John Josephson and Dr. Nancy (Selim) for the birth of their baby girl,

Abigail Grace

May the Lord Jesus bless her and grant her health and growth in stature and grace.



Rafik Momtaz and Alice Hou

On their Marriage, praying that God may bless them, fulfill their dreams and grant them joy, health and a Christian home built on the Rock.

+++



St. John Church congratulates Eng. Ezzat Ebrahim and Dr. Caroline for the baptism of their baby boy

Carrez

May Christ, the Lord bless him and grant him bright future in God's love.

+++

St. John Church congratulates Fady and Marian for the baptism of their child

Philopatir

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless his life and grant him health, strength, physical and spiritual growth.

+++



Demetri and Nadine Wyman

For their marriage. May the Lord bless them and grant them new life happiness, peace and success.



St. John Church congratulates

Gehan Ramsy

For her graduation as a Medical Assistant. May God bless her and grant her happiness and continuous success.





Ordination of Deacon John (Fawzy) Aziz



Ten Commandments Scouts Hike XIII

St. John Church Feb 26, 2012

