



# NEWS of November 2012

## 1. Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 22):

On Thursday, November 22, America celebrates Thanks-giving Day. St. John Church celebrates this day with a Liturgy from 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. followed by breakfast, words and hymns of thanksgiving along with the senior citizen's weekly meeting.



## 2. Nativity Fast (Sunday, Nov. 25):

On Sunday, November 25, the Coptic Orthodox church starts the Advent Fast until Christmas, January 7, 2013. May the Lord grant us an acceptable fast with repentance, deep prayers and tears to bless and save America and Egypt; and to stop the vicious Islamic persecution against Christians in Egypt and Arab lands, and to choose a good President to U.S. and a good Pope to Egypt.



## 3. The 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fr. Daniel Ordination:

St. John Church, the priests, the board of deacons and the entire congregation, congratulate Fr. Daniel Habib on the fourth Anniversary of his ordination in priesthood. May the Lord Jesus Christ grant him health, fruitful ministry and a long life.



## 4. St. John Chrysostom English Bible Study:

Fr. Daniel Habib continues his service in two English meetings for adults Tuesdays evening from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., studying the Book of Genesis. Orthodoxy 101 for Catechumens & Inquirers meets Sunday from 12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.



## 5. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Fr. Augustinos' Ordination:

On November 14, Fr. Augustinos Hanna completes 23 years in priesthood and serving St. John Church in Covina, as well as St. John Magazine. Your prayers for him are greatly needed.

## 6. Pope Shenouda III:

+ On the 14<sup>th</sup> of November every year (for the last 40 years), we used to celebrate the Anniversary of Pope Shenouda's Enthronement, which took place in November 14, 1971. It was a glorious day like the days of creation! Through him, God created hundreds of new churches in the six continents of the world, tens of Theological Schools, ordained hundreds of Bishops, priests, monks and deacons, delivered thousands of great sermons and wrote more than hundred books. What a great heritage he left for us and to the new generations. That day should remain celebrated and remembered forever.



+ An Australian Coptic Newspaper called *"EL-Manara"* issued on September 23, 2012 wrote about preparations for a big celebration for the first year Memorial of the departure of H.H. Pope Shenouda on Sunday, March 17, 2013. They asked all churches of Sydney to share and prepare talks, video clips, pictures, poems and choirs to cover his rich life and works. We hope to do the same to keep his memory live and eternal.

## 7. H.G. Bishop Serapion:

+ On November 14, 1995 Pope Shenouda appointed H.G. Bishop Serapion to shepherd Los Angeles, Southern California and Hawaii. His Grace completed now 17 years in this responsibility.

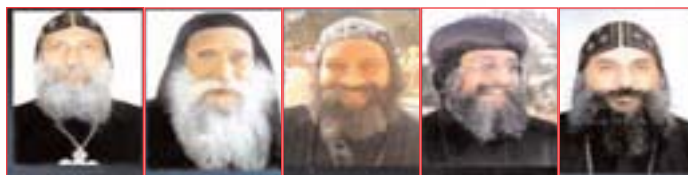


St. John Church in Covina, the priests, the board of deacons and the congregation congratulate their beloved father wishing him health and long successful ministry.

+ His Grace participated in the work of the election committee by Skype.

## 8. Last Moment News about the Coptic Pope 118:

On October 13, the election committee chose five nominees:



- (1) Bishop Raphael
- (2) Bishop Tawadros
- (3) Fr. Rafael Ava-Mina
- (4) Fr. Saraphim El-Soriany
- (5) Fr. Pakhomius El-Soriany.

Then on October 29, the congregation elected three of them,

- (1) Bishop Raphael
- (2) Bishop Tawadros
- (3) Fr. Rafael Ava Mina.



We delayed this issue until today (Sunday, Nov. 4) to announce that God has chosen through the lottery, H.H. Pope Tawadros to be the 118<sup>th</sup> Pope and successor of St. Mark the Evangelist. (see page 20)



# Fields of Thanksgiving



By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

There are many reasons for which we give thanks to God, or considered a matter for thanksgiving, but we rarely do! Some seem normal, while other things make us joyful, and we feel content but do not give thanks. Thirdly, there are matters where the work and kindness of God are clearly shown, but we give thanks momentarily. We will try in this chapter to present some of the fields of thanksgiving:

## Thank God for Creating You:

Does anyone thank God because He created and gave him life?! It was possible not to exist, and God was not obliged to add one to the population of the world! Thank God that your mother was not barren, but was given the blessing of giving birth. Your birth is a great blessing from God; it is said in the Psalm, ***"Behold children are a heritage from the Lord."*** (Ps 127:3). In this context, how beautiful are these lines in the Liturgy of St Gregory, wherein the priest gives thanks to the Lord, saying: "You have created me and You were not in need of my servitude, rather, it is I who am in need of Your Lordship. Out of your great kindness, You have brought me into being where I was not..."

2. Thank God for the beautiful nature around you.
3. Thank God for the Talents He Gave You
4. Thank God for Your Faith:

Do you thank Him for being born a Christian, and without making any effort to reach this faith! Many people desire this faith but cannot find it; they cannot reach it because they face many doctrinal, family, legal and social problems while you attained this faith freely...

## 5. Thank God for Keeping you Alive:

This conforms to what is said in the Thanksgiving Prayer, we thank God because ***"He brought us to this hour."*** My dear brother, your life is a gift from God; He can keep it or end it at any time. He is renewing it for you day by day and hour by hour. You thank Him for this day you are living and this opportunity He has given to you so you can improve your spir-

itual level and do something good.

Thank Him because with this life, He gave you a chance to repent. One writer said, "Millions of millions of those who are in Hell long for one hour of life on earth or even one minute, to offer repentance to God." They want time, however short, to present a full confession for their sins, asking for His forgiveness, one minute to say the phrase of the tax collector, ***"God be merciful to me a sinner!"*** (Lk. 18:13).

If God decides to take your soul now, don't you wish you had a few minutes to distribute all your possessions to the poor, ***"to lay up a treasure in heaven"*** (Matt 6:20)? "Lord, a few minutes to reconcile with all those I fought with, and apologize to them even if they were wrong. A few minutes, Lord, to confess all my sins in detail, even the things that embarrass me and could not be told. I say it without shame before the door is shut and I be left standing outside knocking like the five foolish virgins" (Matt. 25:10-12).

## 6. Thank God for the Religious Environment in which you were brought up

## 7. Thank God for Not Dealing with You According to Your Sins:

This is what David the Prophet said in Psalm 103:

***The Lord is merciful and gracious; slow to anger, and abounding in mercy... He has not dealt with us according to our sins nor punished us according to our iniquities.*** (Ps. 103:8-14).

And we therefore cry out to the Lord in our prayers saying "according to your mercy O Lord, and not according to our sins." Will you not kneel down and say: "I thank you Lord because you endured, and still endure me in my ingratitude!"

## 8. Thank God for His Loving-kindness and Care:

Thank Him for His loving-kindness to you and all your friends, relatives, the family, the church and the nation.

Sit with yourself and review your life since your birth: How many times you pleaded with the Lord and He granted your plea? How many times He delivered you out of your





troubles? How many times He healed you? How many problems He solved for you? How many sins you committed and were not revealed to people? How many times you were given grace in the eyes of others?

Can you count His loving-kindness towards you! All this, put it before you and give thanks in every detail.

#### 9. Thank God for Your Health:

Who gives thanks to God because he can see? But if His eyes caught a disease and began treatment, he then feels the gift of vision, for which he did not give thanks before. Who gives thanks to God because He can walk on his feet? ... It is true the proverb that says, "Health is a crown on the heads of those who are well, only the sick can feel it." It is common that we cannot feel the value of the thing we have unless it is lost.

#### 10. Thank Him also for Sickness:

Sickness in itself is not evil; poor Lazarus was full of sores and dogs licked his sores. But, all this was not bad in itself and did not separate him from God, but on the contrary it was for his own good. When he was taken to Abraham's bosom, it was said that, "*in his lifetime he received evil things; but now he is comforted*" (Luke 16:25).

St Basil the great said, "you do not know what is good for you: health or sickness." The Apostle St. Paul was given a thorn in the flesh for his spiritual benefit, *lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations. He pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from him* (2 Cor 12:8). But God did not answer his prayer, but said to him, "**My grace is sufficient for you.**" Naturally, in our human weakness, we seek good health but we do not know what is beneficial to us. Perhaps Sickness makes me weary, but it helps me enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

#### 11. Thank God also for the good you see and the good you cannot see:

You thank Him for the good you observe by sight, and the good you see by faith. God who calls us to do good in secret, and He sees what is in secret, rewards us openly (Matt 6: 4-6)... Much of the good we now enjoy, God was preparing for us many years long beforehand, and we did not know. And He is still preparing many good things for us, the outcome of which will appear in the future...

#### 12. Thank Him for the grace working in us:

Grace is among the principal matters which we must put at the top of our list of thanksgiving. The Apostle St Paul says, "*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace towards me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the grace of God which was with me!*" (1 Cor. 15:10). Doesn't He deserve all thanksgiving for this grace working in us? We then thank Him for the communion of the Holy Spirit in our lives, which is a part of the blessing given to us. We thank

Him because He made us temples of His Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). The Spirit of God which dwells in us "**will convict the world of sin**" (Jn. 16:8) and "**will teach us all things**" (Jn. 14:26) and "**will guide us into all truth**" (Jn. 16:13)... Do we give thanks always for the work of the Spirit in us?

#### 13. Thank God for the great Redemption He offered us:

There is something more important than all the previous things, for which we ought to give thanks all day and night it is the great redemption offered to us on the cross, without which, we all would have perished. Who of us thanks our Lord Jesus Christ for being crucified for our sake? Because He became incarnated and shed His blood for us?

Who of us, each day and each night remembers the cross of Christ, and give thanks to Him because He paid the price on our behalf, and without this price, the good deeds or repentance or anything else could have been of no use. Christ died for us and we became "*justified freely by His grace*" (Rom. 3:24). Then don't we thank Him for the free salvation we received? This salvation in which we made no effort and which God arranged for us without our asking! Surely we were not worthy "*But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us... in due time Christ died for the ungodly*" (Rom 5:8-6) "*The just for the unjust*" (1 Pet. 3:18).

#### 14. Thank God for allowing us to know Him:


In the prayers of the Liturgy of St Gregory, the priest says, "You gave me Your knowledge," and "You sent me the law for support." Do we thank Him for the good news of the Gospel, all what is in the Holy Bible about God, His work and His dealings and His holy attributes? We knew God in His Book and we saw Him in His Son. "*No one has seen God at any time. The Only Begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him*" (Jn. 1:18) and by Him we knew the Father.

#### 15. Thank Him for His Promises:

We thank Him for the eternal comfort He is preparing for us in the heavenly Jerusalem "*The tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people*" (Rev. 21:3). He promised us saying, "*I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also*" (Jn. 14:3). He also promised us with what "*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him*" (1 Cor. 2:9). Also to sit with Him on His throne as He sits down with the Father on His throne (Rev. 3:21). He promised that we eat from the hidden manna and from the tree of life (Rev. 2:17 & 7). We thank Him for His promise to be with us always, even to the end of the age (Matt. 28:20)... Also His saying to each one of us, "**I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands**" (Isa. 49:16).

**16. Thank Him because He Called Us His Children and Friends** (1 Jn. 3:1). He taught us to pray and say, "*Our Father in heaven...*" (Matt 6:9; Jn. 15:15).





## Looking Forward by Thanking God for the Past



BY MARK HANNA

The Apostle Paul told the Philippians who lived in a region hostile to a pure, Godly life, to do their best at representing Christ as citizens of God's country, "for our citizenship is in heaven" (Philip. 3:20). Living in such a city where those formerly pagan and Jewish people lived was going to be a seemingly difficult life. St. Paul told them that they were called on to forget all their past accomplishments and focus exclusively on Christ. He tells the Corinthians, "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). To the Philippians, he demonstrated to them the heights of his achievements and his worthiness of praise as a Jew, but he tells them, what things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ. But indeed I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ (Phil. 3:7-8).

Having demonstrated his disregard for these former

achievements, St. Paul goes on to comfort the Philippians regarding living as Christians in a non-Christian atmosphere. In a letter written from his prison cell in Rome, he wrote, "Be anxious for nothing, but in all things, with prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

### Adding Thanksgiving to Prayer and Supplication:

His readers may have wondered why he added "with thanksgiving" amidst his advice about not worrying, a natural human impulse. What could thanksgiving which looks to the past, have to do with the future? No one worries or gets anxious about a past crisis, but always about an approaching due date, test, or some other upcoming event.

The great thing about remembering to be thankful is the obvious! In giving thanks to God we remember His past goodness and faithfulness that got us to the present moment. This is why the prayer of thanksgiving thanks God for having, "covered us, helped us, guarded us, accepted us unto Him, spared us, supported us and ... brought us unto this hour." It is a prayer

that remembers God's past goodness and having *remembered* this, the church teaches us that *we can look forward*. From that point all prayer services begin, new days start, and new things to be thankful for come our way.

In remembering how we walked in the shadow of the valley of death, we can thank God for never forsaking us and knowing so, we are confident that He will be with us whenever and wherever in the future. When we remember all the times He delivered us from some seemingly insurmountable problem, we can thank God because He got us thru it and know that He will likewise do so again. We have confidence that in no situation, if we are faithful to God, will He abandon us. This is the confidence that we must have in living the life that God would have us live, a life where we are dependant on Him. St. Peter reassured you and me to "cast ... all your cares on Him; for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Imagine a life with no worry! It is the life our Heavenly Father wants us all to live and enjoy. It is a fantastic life,





though, it sounds so appealing. I mean fantastic in the sense of, 'so hard to believe' or as the dictionary defines it, "so extreme as to challenge belief." This challenge is one that our Heavenly Father is capable of fulfilling if only we believed in His power to accomplish what He promised.

The Church introduces us to the Great Lent season by reminding us of the eternal words of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). The Church reminds us of the three pillars of the Christian Faith, as set out by the Lord Jesus Christ, namely, alms giving, prayer, and fasting. In chapter 6, however, Christ talks to all of us about our care for our everyday existence. He reminds us all of not worrying about food, or clothing, for our heavenly Father will take care of all these needs.

In so comfortably putting our minds at ease, some may think that Carl Marx was correct in declaring religion to be "the opiate of the masses." But Marx did not experience our God, as the Lord Jesus wants all of us to. This is why the Lord Jesus tells us all to look and consider the birds of heaven and the lilies of the field. He tells us to consider things that are before our eyes every day and survive, enjoying life as God intended it. This is why St. Paul tells his readers that *thanksgiving* is a necessary ingredient of receiving anything from God. Moreover, *thanksgiving* for the past gives us the clear perspective to know that God will again fulfill His promise, "My peace I give to you" (John 14:27). This peace that God gives us who trust in Him is no ordinary peace that one can have from meditating or going on a vacation. Rather, St. Paul describes the peace of God as a peace so perfect that it "surpasses all understanding." Just as the dictionary-defined fantastic as "so extreme as to challenge belief," so is the peace of God.

The Prophet Isaiah too realized God's gift of peace and joyously prayed, "You will keep him in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed on *You*; because He trusts in *You*" (Isaiah 26:3). He realized this at a time like our own when war loomed in the horizon. The Prophet Isaiah found this amazing reassurance in trusting God, knowing His past faithfulness. When Isaiah focused on God he found perfect peace. The mind that is stayed or fixed on God is the mind that is assured of God's perfect will and timing. Today, many believe, that it is just impossible to keep our eyes fixed on God only. One must plan, invest and diversify, and in so doing one naturally has to worry about his investments, etc. But this is not how God wanted it to be.

In Proverbs 3:5-6 King Solomon said, "trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your path." The point behind this great confidence in Christ and assurance of His care for us is that He promised the result and that He told us what we can do to receive more and more

blessing. In Malachai 3:10 the Lord God said:

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,  
That there may be food in My house,  
And try Me now in this,"  
Says the LORD of hosts,  
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven  
And pour out for you *such* blessing  
That *there will not be room* enough to receive it.

The foolish rich man prided himself on the blessings he thought he earned, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry" (Luke 12:18-19). He didn't live to enjoy any of those "goods" because that very night, "God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you'" (v. 20). The blessings didn't coming had nothing to do with his abilities or lack thereof. God wanted to bless this man and so He entrusted Him with much but this man was foolish because he thought all this blessing and prosperity were his doing. "Give an account of your stewardship," the Lord will tell such a person, "for you can no longer be steward" (Luke 16:2).

The Apostle James teaches us to look at every blessing and recognize that God is it's source. He writes, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). The soul that feels gratitude to God for His many benefits will easily recognize the source of the blessing rather than just being overwhelmed by the gift. King Solomon after acquiring so much, felt that he had it all and he couldn't stop himself from desiring more and more. He said to himself like the rich fool, "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor" (Ecclesiastes 2:10). Having tried all he desired he realized that it was all "vanity." However, the difference ultimately is King Solomon's final conclusion, "Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all (12:13). King David, his father, expressed it best when he said, "For all things *come* from You, and of Your own we have given You" (1 Chronicles 29:14). This was a heart's thankful expression for God's many gifts. He enjoyed all God's perfect gifts and was thankful to the Great Giver or the Bestower of all good things.

We are all alive today because God has been faithful in the past and performed what He promised. Even those who are alive with God today are alive because God was faithful to them, fulfilling His promises and taking them all to Himself.





# CHRIST IN

By Fr. Gawargious A. Kolta

## THE BOOK OF GENESIS (20)

### 15- Jacob blessed his sons (Gen.49):

As Jacob was about to pass away from this earth, he saw his sons as tribes, from which the people of God would emerge, to enjoy the Promised Land and the Savior Messiah who would come. He told them what he saw through the spirit of prophecy, and said: *"Gather together that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days"* (49:1). In the tribes, he saw the Church that would enjoy the salvation of Christ and grow in the Spirit. He opened his mouth and uttered what he saw through the spirit of prophecy.

St. Hippolytus and Origen said that this chapter attracted more attention than any other chapters of the patriarchal history, because Jacob's blessings of his sons could be interpreted as prophecies of the divine plan of Christ's salvation. He blessed each one with the blessing suitable to him.

St. John Chrysostom said the same interpretation and added that under the inspiration of the Spirit, Jacob foretold what would happen in the last days.

The mystical points in the blessing and the prophecies of Jacob to his sons were interpreted by many scholars:

**1- Reuben:** He was the firstborn and Jacob's fruit from Leah. Jacob counted him as the one who defiled his father's bed, resembles the man who leans on the birthright of the flesh, namely the works of the Law; so he loses the birthright of the Spirit, defiling the Church, the bride of Christ, through his self-righteousness.

St. Hippolytus and St. Ambrose said that the words of Jacob to Reuben were a reproach rather than a blessing. He lost his birthright; and it went to Judah. Reuben represented the Jews, who were counted as firstborn in the knowledge of God; but because of their denial, they lost the birthright. The word bed refers to the holy flesh of Christ on which the saints enjoy their rest; but it was abused by the unbelievers. In the last days, people will violate the Father's bed, namely the church His bride to corrupt it through blasphemy.

**2- Simon and Levi:** were seen as figures for death, for in their anger they destroyed the city of Shechem and killed all their sons, avenging their sister Dinah, who was defiled by Shechem. Jacob rejected their council and their assembly. Jacob said that his soul would not enter their council. St. Hippolytus

and St. Ambrose said that the scribes came from Simon, and the priests came from Levi. Indeed there were brothers yet in their union they consummated the evil by crucifying Christ the Savior. They brought their wickedness to completion and filled up the entire measure of the ungodliness of their fathers in the passion of the Lord (Mk. 23:32). This was also prophesied by Isaiah (Isa. 3:9, 10).

St. John Chrysostom said that the punishment that Jacob foretold was the punishment waiting for them by dividing them in Jacob and scattering them in Israel.

**3- Judah:** Jacob said: *"Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's cub; from being a shoot, my son, you have grown up. He bows down, and slept as a lion and a cub; and who shall rouse him ..."* (Gen. 49:8, 9).

1- Jacob saw in Judah the crucified Lamb; and at the same time, the lion, conqueror by the cross. He saw the Lord Christ coming from the tribe of Judah.

Fr. Tadros and St. Cyril of Alexandria said that It is not enough for us to forsake self-righteousness (Reuben), and reject the council of transgression (Simon and Levi), but we should attach ourselves to the true Judah, in order to enjoy the power of His resurrection working in us. They added that who is Judah, whom his brothers shall praise, but the Lord Christ, who comes from the tribe of Judah; who, with the cross, has put his hand on the neck of the devil, his enemy, and destroyed him, to set humanity free from his authority, in order to let them worship Christ in Spirit and truth.

2- Seeing the Lord Christ, in the seed of Judah, Jacob called Him the lion that came out of the war of the cross, victorious over His spiritual enemies. Although He bowed down, and lied down on the cross, yet even in His sleep on the cross, He has been a lion.

St. Hippolytus said that Jacob saw that David had to be born from the tribe of Judah and Christ from David with regard to the flesh. He added that the brothers, who praise him, are the apostles. Christ is able in the course of the fight against His enemies, to triumph over the invisible powers (Col. 2:15). He has become the Master and Judge of all His enemies



according to the flesh, after being set in this role by the Father (Jn. 5:22). He added that the words: ***“and slept as a lion and a cub; and who shall rouse him”*** meant the three days of Christ’s burial, that is mentioned in the Psalms: “I lay down and slept” (Ps. 3:5). The answer of the verse ***“who shall rouse him”*** is that the Father woke the Son from the dead, as was said by St. Paul: ***“God the father who raised Him”*** (Gal. 1:1). He has loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it (Act. 2:24).

**St. Ambrose** and **St. Hippolytus** said that the words of Jacob represent the true Judah, the true Confessor who was born of the tribe of Judah, who alone is praised by His brothers, as said in the Psalms: ***“I will declare your name to my brothers”*** (Ps. 22:22). He stretched out His hands to those who did not believe, and He will rule in the midst of His enemies (Ps. 110:2). He said that the cub is Himself the lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5). Jacob represented the Son’s incarnation in a wonderful way, when he said: ***“from being a shoot, my son, you have grown up”***; clarifying that Christ sprouted in the womb of the Virgin like a shrub upon the earth and a flower of pleasing fragrance, for the redemption of the entire world. The same mystical interpretation was mentioned by **St. Rufinus**, who added that after the birth of the lion cub, it sleeps for three days, and then awakes.

**St. Ambrose** and **St. Augustine** interpreted the verse ***“Who shall rouse him?”*** that Christ roused Himself by His own power after He bodily slept in the tomb. The Lord has the power to lay down His life for us, and has the power to take it again (Jn. 10:18). He added that the Lord did all things by His own authority. Therefore He is the author of His own resurrection. **St. Augustine** added that the Lord foretold that when He said: ***“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”*** (Jn. 2:19).

3- Jacob then said: ***“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from his loins, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be expectation of the nations”*** (Gen 49:19). Shiloh means the grantor of peace. It is a privilege that Jacob gave Judah, his son, to carry the royal scepter, until the Messiah comes to include the nations in His spiritual kingdom.

**St. Augustine** said that the Jews were so called after Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob; and from his seed royalty came, kings came, and our Lord Jesus Christ came.

**St. Ambrose** said that Jacob spoke more meaningfully as he said the nations are expecting Him, the Jews and the Gentiles, as in Christ lies the entire hope of the church. Therefore John the Baptist said: ***“He who has the bride is the Bridegroom”*** (Jn3:29). He is alone the Husband of the church, the expectation of the nations, and the prophets removed their sandals, while offering to Him bridal grace.

4- When Jacob addressed Judah, in the following verse, he also meant Christ, saying: ***“Binding his colt to a vine, and his donkey’s colt to its branch, he will wash his garments in wine,***

***and his clothes in the blood of grapes.”*** (Gen. 49:11, 12).

**Fr. Tadros** said that Jacob proclaimed by the spirit of prophecy that both the Jews and the Gentiles will be united together to the vine. The chosen vine has become one holy church, with one faith.

**St. Hippolytus** said that the garment of Christ refers to the church, attached to Him and that garment was washed by the holy pure blood of the Lord.

**St. Ambrose** and **St. Rufinus** said that the Lord Jesus is the everlasting vine, who said: ***“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser”*** (Jn. 15:1). This verse explains the mystery that the Lord Jesus ordered an ass’s colt to be loosened and He sat upon it. **St. Ambrose** said that the One who was bound to a vine, could find rest in the everlasting goodness of the saints. His foal was the people of the nations, onto whom the burden of the law had never been imposed. His ass’s foal was the Jews, who were elected for salvation, and about whom the prophet said: ***“Through the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved”*** (Isa. 10:22, 23, Rom. 9:27). **St. Rufinus** also said that the foal represents the senses of the soul. When one unites with the Lord, and becomes single spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17), he binds his foal to the vine, by saying: ***“But for me, it is good to cling to God”*** (Ps. 73:28).

**St. Hippolytus** and **St. Ambrose** interpreted the verse ***“he will wash his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes”*** that the Lord when He was hanged on the cross, He was like a bunch of ripe grapes as He emitted blood and water, after His side was pierced. They said that He washed His robe in wine at His baptism in the Jordan, not to wash away his stains, for He had none, but to wash away the stains that was ours.

**St. Rufinus** said that the ***Christ’s robe, washed in wine, represents the church***, which He Himself has purified in His blood. It is spotless and faultless, as it is mentioned by St. Paul (Eph. 5:26, 27). He added that St. Peter mentioned that, saying: ***“We are not redeemed through silver and Gold, but through the precious blood of the only begotten Son of God”*** (1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

5- Jacob finally said: ***“His eyes are gladdened from the wine, and his teeth are whiter than milk”*** (Gen. 49:12).

**St. Hippolytus** said that the prophets are the eyes of Christ, when they rejoiced in the power of the Spirit, and prophesied about the passion that He would suffer. They rejoiced because these sufferings were very useful for all nations, that every person can be saved. He added that the milk refers to the commandments, coming from the mouth of our Holy Christ, as pure milk. **St. Rufinus and St. Augustine** said that His teeth which are whiter than milk refers to the words taken by the babes, who are not still qualified for solid food, as it is mentioned by the apostles (1 Cor. 3:2, 1 Pet. 2:2).

(Ancient Christian Commentary on Genesis, II, p.320-334). (Father Tadros Malaty, on Genesis, p. 375-381).







## The Writings of Christ



By Fr. Augustinos Hanna

"But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear" (Jn. 8:6).

History did not report that the Lord Jesus Christ wrote anything. Only one incident in St. John's Gospel, in the story of defending the adulteress, says that **Jesus "wrote on the ground with His finger..."** but didn't tell us what message did Jesus write? It is the only recorded instance of its type. People everywhere have speculated as to the nature of His words. It appears that a foul plot had been planned to incriminate not only the adulteress, but also Jesus. Possibly a crafty lawyer had schemed a way of trapping the Savior. The sinful woman who had been taken in adultery was publicly accused before Christ.

**There are many suggestions regarding these writings...**

### Suggestion 1

"And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what do You say?" We must realize the subtlety of this evil trick. If Jesus had answered, "All right, stone her," the common people would probably have accused Him of preaching what He did not practice. He taught that God loved sinners. On the other hand, if He forbade the stoning, His enemies could order His arrest for contempt of the law.

The Lord was never hurried. He calmly stooped down

and wrote on the ground. Did He write the true saying of Moses or its right interpretation or application? (Lev. 20:10). The lawgiver had declared that if people were taken in adultery, both guilty parties should be stoned to death.

The accusation stated that the woman had been taken in the act. Why, then, had the captors allowed the man to escape? Obviously this was a premeditated plan- not to clean a city, but to trap Jesus.

### Suggestion 2

It might have been that Jesus wrote some of the sins and secrets of the accusers' own past life. If this be the case, how easy it is to understand why, when He said, **"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,"** they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even to the last. The eldest probably had most to hide. If Jesus had indicated that He was aware of their secret sins, they would be afraid to commence the stoning lest He denounce them as hypocrites. They were unprepared to face such a denunciation, and seized the opportunity to slip away.

### Suggestion 3

Perhaps He wrote some of the great passages from their own Scriptures stating that God was full of compassion and overflowing in mercy. He may have reminded them of David, and other important leaders, whose sins were magnified by the greatness of their office. Yet God had mercy on the guilty. If He could be gracious, His people should follow the example. Perhaps Christ wrote all three of these suggestions; and while He wrote, slowly a sinful woman awakened to the realization that He was completely different from any she had ever known. Her life-story might be written under six headings: Her fall, fear, friend, faith, forgiveness, and future. And in the outworking of these we find another problem. Why did Christ say to her, **"Neither do I condemn you?"** This is the spirit of the New Testament; God does not judge anyone before the Day of Judgment. He gives everyone many chances to repent and correct his way.

### Suggestion 4

"When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, **"Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"**

She said, "No one Lord." LORD! We are told that **"no one can say that Jesus is LORD except by the Holy Spirit"** (1 Cor. 12:3).

The work of enlightenment had been progressing in her soul and she realized that He was not an ordinary man-He was the LORD, the just judge Himself. Jesus added, "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more". "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).







When the famous missionary "Robert Movatt" wanted to preach the Gospel of Christ in Namaco, the believers of Cap town wept and tried to prevent him.

They said to him, "President Africanz, the horrible, will tear your body into pieces and he will make out of your skull a cup to drink wine in it".

But Movatt was not scared and insisted to go. He went and preached the Gospel. After few months, President Africanz believed in Christ and was baptized. He became one of most sincere friends of Movatt and one of his strongest assistants in spreading the Gospel of Christ.



Some foreign, new comers confuse the pronunciation of the letter P with the letter B.

It happened once that one of those people went to a landlord to rent an apartment. He asked the owner, "May I bark anywhere any time freely?"

The owner laughed and said, "Sure, you can bark anywhere, any time freely!"

When the tenant asked about the amount to pay, the owner asked him to pay the rent plus \$50 parking.

The man got mad at him and said, "Didn't I ask you about barking and you said barking is free any time anywhere?!"

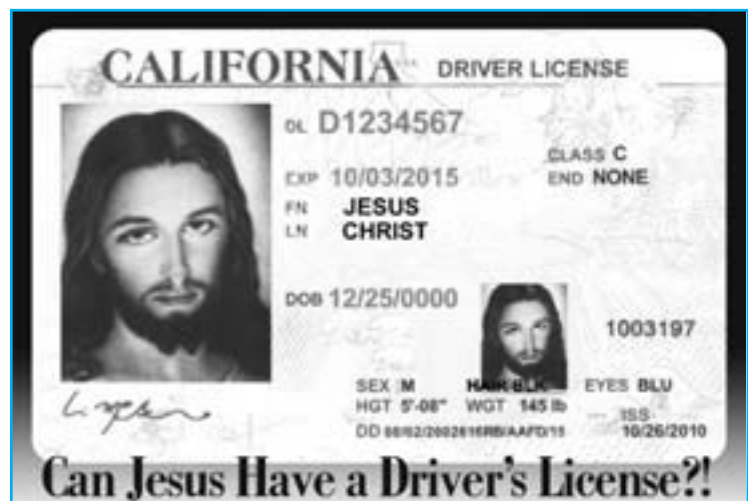
The owner replied, "I am still saying that barking is free, but parking costs you \$50.00."



A businessman from Wisconsin went on a business trip to Louisiana. Upon arrival, he immediately plugged his laptop into the hotel room port and sent a short E-mail back home to his wife, Jennifer Johnson, at her address, [Jennjohn@world.net](mailto:Jennjohn@world.net).

Unfortunately, in his haste, he mistyped a letter and the E-mail ended up going to Jean john@world.net, a Jean Johnson in Duluth, the wife of a preacher who had just passed away and was buried that day.

The preacher's wife took one look at the E-mail and promptly fainted. It read: "Arrived safely, but it sure is hot down here!"



Someone once said, "Jesus Christ can't have a driver's license in America now!"

When he was asked, "Why?"

He answered, "Because He has no enough information to write the name of His Father and His grandfather!"





Typed by Margo Tadros

### [36] Even at the Hour of Death!!

There was a very devout woman who was ill with cancer. She turned to God with prayers, communion and fasts were held for her. The cancer entered a very critical stage and when her final hour approached she called for me.

At that time I was a bishop, and was able to visit people more than I can now, so I went to her and stood beside her bed listening to her complaints.

**She told me, "I am very sad because many doubts are going round in my thoughts about whether prayer, fasting and communion are of any value, and where is God's mercy and response?!"**

So often I have prayed for these thoughts to leave me but they persist and I get anxious and say, "Shall I lose my life now, and lose my chance of eternal life too, because of these doubts?"

**So I said to her, "Do not be anxious, for they are not your thoughts."**

They are just doubts which the Devil casts into your mind. Your prayers prove that you do not accept them and that these thoughts are not from you. God will not allow a good woman like you to suffer here and in eternity as well.

You are like Lazarus who received his full share of misfortunes on earth, but was deemed worthy to go to the arms of Abraham on his way to a happy eternity with God...

**If God wants to take you to Him, this is not against His mercy nor against prayer, for eternity is a delight which the Saints eagerly desire."**

Then I read an absolution for her and she relaxed and departed, to the amazement of the devils who fight the Saints even at the hour of death!!

### [37] Coping with Being Honored

Saint Antonius the Great said: **"Many people can endure being insulted, but they cannot bear to be honored. For to be able to endure being honored is harder than to put up with insults."**...

Being honored might push some people towards pride so that they feel superior to others or ignore them, or mistreat them. It may make them change their surroundings, friends and way of life. It might induce them to become conceited and talk arrogantly with people...

All this goes to show that they have not been able to cope with being honored since it has changed their character and behavior towards others.

As the poet said, "When my friend's family becomes a rich family, I can be sure that I have lost my friend."

**As for the person who is inwardly strong, or the person who is as humble as the Virgin Mary, then being honored cannot change him.**

Whatever position he gains, whatever wealth or titles, power or knowledge, and however much the people praise him, he remains the same...

It is a wonder how in spite of all this he does not lose his simplicity and humility or his good relationship with people and does not abandon his former friends or seek a new environment which he considers more in keeping with his new dignity...!?

### [38] Collecting Experiences

If we were able to collect the experiences of all the Father Priests, especially the elders and those who have been successful in their ministerial work, we would have a treasure store for use in pastoral work...

The same goes for our Father Bishops...

If only there could be a group that specialized in the task of gathering this information, and if only the Fathers would write to let us know about their pastoral experiences and the ideas which have proved successful in their lives and about the obstacles which they have encountered and how they have surmounted them, and give examples of God's intervention in





the ministry and His direction...

We say this because many Fathers have departed this world of ours and their many experiences have been buried with them, to our great loss. How valuable they would be if only they had remained.

The first step of the project is to set down the names of the Fathers and then contact them and record their experiences...

#### [39] Is the Leader Led?

Some of them said to me, "What is wrong is not what this great man has done but what those around him have done, for they have led him astray by their bad advice".?

#### [40] Preparing a Priest to go Overseas

Preparing a priest for life abroad, outside Egypt, is not an easy matter. Not every one is suited to it, whether it is because of his type of spirituality, or his gifts, or proficiency in the foreign language or social skills.

If you find a person who is suitable, he may not feel it is the right thing for him.

And if he does find it suits him, then his wife might not agree to go and live abroad.

And even if both he and his wife agree to it then the church where he serves, and his people who love him may not agree.

If the right person is found, and agreement concluded on all sides, even though this may only be after a lot of effort and persuasion, there remains before us another problem which is, how to fill the gap that he will leave in the Church at home.

This requires a repeat of the story: the suitable person must first agree, and his wife must agree, to accept the priesthood, then the Church must approve him and recommend him.

#### [41] People are the stands they take

Sometimes history praises a person for a particular stand he has taken, for manliness, heroism or nobility...

Or history might remember him for a brilliant word he has spoken which cannot be forgotten because of its depth and influence.

Another person, on the contrary, may have his name recorded by history in connection with some shameful or disgraceful situation which has broken his character!! His whole life is forgotten and this incident is all that remains.

**So people are really the stands that they take, and such stands reveal the hidden qualities of people** especially when it comes to those situations which cannot be forgotten.

What a lot of people there are who were not known for anything at all... but just one incident brought them fame!



## The Islamic Taquia (Permissible Lies)!

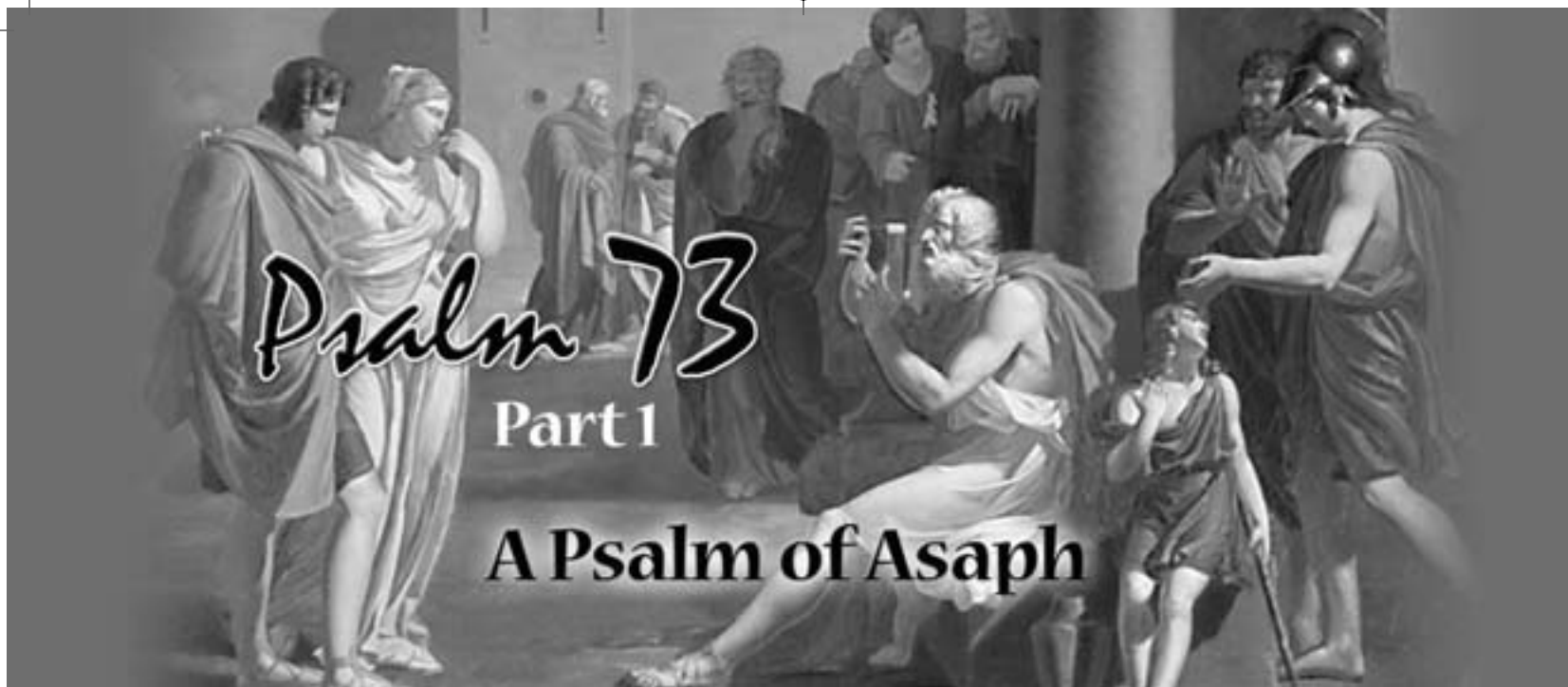
Islam has a principle that is foreign to Christianity in regard to the necessity of always speaking the truth. It is called Al Taqiyya. The term means to guard against or to prevent harm. It absolves Muslims of guilt from telling lies in certain situations.

**A Muslim can lie to extend the purposes of Islam;** for self-preservation; and to restore harmony to argumentative factions. It is Al Taqiyya that permits Islamic nation diplomats to tell bald-faced lies to the press core of free democracies and the exact opposite to Arabic and Farsi journalists. (Koran 2:225; 3:28-29)

**Al Taqiyya also permits oaths to be taken and vows made that are not kept provided they were not spoken with sincerity of heart.** For instance, a person who embraces the taqiyya concept could vow to uphold and to defend the US Constitution and then deliberately circumvent it with no pangs of conscience.

Americans need to demand answers for: Why this administration tries to eradicate all references to Islamic Terrorism from the US conversation? Is it because it wants to give appearance that they have brought Al-Qaida and Islamic Terrorism to an end?





This is the second psalm ascribed to Asaph, and the first of eleven consecutive Psalms bearing the name of this eminent singer and “Maestro” of David’s huge choir. King Hezekiah “commanded the Levites to sing praise to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph” (2 Chr. 29:30). Asaph was the author of these 12 Psalms: Psalm 50 then Psalms from 73 to 83,

#### **SUBJECT: Psalms 73 & 37**

Curiously enough, Psalm 73 corresponds in subject to Psalm 37; it will help the memory to notice the reversed figures. The theme is the ancient stumbling block that Job’s friends could not get over; the present prosperity of the wicked and the sorrows of the godly. Heathen philosophers have puzzled about this, while to believers it has too often been a temptation.

#### **DIVISION**

The psalmist declares his confidence in God and plants his foot on a rock while he recounts his inward conflict, v. 1.

He states his temptation, vv. 2-14.

He is embarrassed about how to act, but he ultimately finds deliverance from his dilemma, vv. 15-17.

The fate of the ungodly is described with awe, vv. 18-20.

The psalmist condemns his folly and adores the grace of God, vv. 21-24.

He concludes by renewing his allegiance to God, whom he takes afresh to be his portion and delight, vv. 25-28.

#### **COMMENTARY**

1.

**“Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart.”**

In other words, only God is good to His people, to the covenant ones. He cannot act unjustly or unkindly to them. His goodness is beyond dispute to those who are pure in

heart. If we cling to purity and holiness, they will prevent us from being carried away by those hurricanes of infidelity that still come from the world. Oh, my God, however perplexed I may be, let me never think ill of You. If I cannot understand, let me never cease believing in You. It must be so; it cannot be otherwise. You are good to those whom You have made good. And when You have renewed the heart, You will not leave it to its enemies.

#### **Verses from 2 – 14**

**“But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled. My steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, for there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like other men. Therefore, pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish. They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression. They speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens and their tongue walks through the earth. Therefore, his people return here, and waters of a full cup are drained by them. And they say, “How does God know! And is there knowledge in the Most High!” Behold, these are the ungodly, who are always at ease; they increase in riches. Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence, for all day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning.**

2. This begins the narrative of a great soul battle. It is a spiritual marathon, a hard and will-fought field, in which the half defeated become fully victorious.

**“But as for me.”** He contrasts himself with God, who is ever good. He admits a personal lack of good, compares himself with the clean in heart, and then confesses his defilement.





The Lord is good to his saints, am I one of them? Can I expect to share His grace? Yes, I do share it. But I have acted unworthy, unlike one who is truly “pure in heart”.

**My feet had almost stumbled,** Errors of heart and head affect one’s conduct. There is an intimate connection between the heart and the feet. Asaph could barely stand, his uprightness was going, and his knees were bowing like a falling wall. When people doubt the righteousness of God, their integrity begins to waver. **My steps had nearly slipped.** Asaph could make no progress in the good road; his feet slipped like one on a sheet of ice. He was weakened for all practical action and in great danger of sin and a disgraceful fall. How ought we to watch the inner man, since it has so forcible an effect on the outer character? The confession in this case is, as it should be, plain and explicit.

3. **For I was envious of the boastful,** “the foolish” is the generic title of the wicked. They are beyond all others fools, and one must be a fool who envies fools. Some read it “the proud”, who by their ostentation invite envy, and many a mind that is out of gear spiritually becomes infected with that wasting disease. It is pitiful that an heir of heaven should have to confess, **I was envious,** but it is even worse to say, **I was envious of the boastful.** Yet this acknowledgment is, we fear, due from most of us.

**“When I saw the prosperity of the wicked...”**

His eye was fixed on one thing; He saw the wicked in the present and forgot their future. He saw their outward display and overlooked their soul’s discomfort. **Who envies the bull, his fat, when he remembers the butcher?! The rich man had more reason to envy Lazarus, than Lazarus had to be envious of the rich man (Luke 16:19-31).**

4. **“For there are no pangs in their death.”**

This is mentioned as the chief wonder. We usually expect that at least at death the wicked will become troubled, for the notion is still prevalent that a quiet death means a happy hereafter. The psalmist observed that the reverse was true. Careless people become case-hardened and continue presumptuously secure, even to the last. Some are startled at the approach of judgment, but many more have received a “strong delusion, that they should believe the lie (2 Thess. 2:11). With the surgeon’s drugs and their false peace, they slide into eternity without struggle. We have seen the godly tied with doubts and anxieties that have risen from their holy jealousy. Yet the godless know nothing of such bands. They care for neither God nor devil.

5. **“They are not in trouble as other men.”**

The prosperous wicked escape the killing toils that afflict the mass of mankind. Their bread comes to them without

care, their wine without stint. They have no need to ask, “Where shall we get bread for our children or clothing for our little ones!” Ordinary domestic and personal troubles do not appear to harass them.

**Nor are they plagued like other men.**

Fierce trials do not attack them, they do not smart under the divine rod. While many saints are both poor and afflicted, the prosperous sinner is neither. They are worse than others and yet are better off. They plow the least but have the most fodder. They deserve the hottest hell but have the warmest nest. All this is clear to the eyes of faith, which understands the riddle, but to the dim eye of the senses, it seems a puzzle. They are to have nothing hereafter; let them have what they can here. They only possess what is of secondary value, and their possessing it teaches us to set little store by transient things. If earthly possessions were of much value, the Lord would not give so large a measure of it to those who have the least of His love.

6. **Therefore pride serves as their necklace.**

They are as great in their esteem as if they were aldermen of the New Jerusalem. They want no other ornament than their own pomposity. No jeweler could sufficiently adorn them, for they wear pride as a better ornament than a gold necklace.

**Violence covers them like a garment.**

In their boastful arrogance, they array themselves. They wear the devil’s colors and are fond of it. As soon as you see them, you perceive that room must be made for them. Regardless of the feelings and right of others, they intend to have their way and achieve their ends. They brag and intimidate, threaten and nag, as if they had a license to ride over people.

7. **Their eyes bulge with abundance.** In cases of obesity, the eyes usually appear to be enclosed in fat, but sometimes they bulge. In either case, the countenance is changed, loses its human form, and is assimilated to that of fatted swine. The face here is the index of the man, the man who has more than suffices, he is gluttoned and surfeited with wealth, and yet he is one of the wicked that God abhors.

**They have more than heart could wish:** Their wishes are gratified; their greediness is exceeded. They call for water and the world gives them milk. They ask for hundreds, and thousands are lavished at their feet. The heart is gluttonous beyond measure, yet in the case of certain ungodly millionaires, it seems that their wishes are exceeded and their food surpassed their appetite.

[To be continued]





## Muslim Trafficking Networks Target Coptic Women

By Gary Lane

CBN News Sr. International Correspondent

Monday, October 08, 2012

CAIRO, Egypt — Recent attacks against churches are driving thousands of Egyptian Christians to seek asylum in the West. Many of them are women who fear they are targets for abduction, forced conversion, and forced marriage by Muslims. CBN News traveled to Cairo to investigate the trafficking of young Egyptian Christian women.

### The Abduction of Mary

Magda Kaiser, a Coptic Christian, is distraught over her missing daughter, Mary.

"She was our only daughter, so we spoiled her," she explained. "She got whatever she wanted, but she was very shy." "We were close friends," Kaiser continued. "She never went anywhere without me. She always asked me to go with her because she was afraid of being alone, by herself." Mary, an exceptional student, won mathematical achievement awards. At the age of 19, she entered university to study pharmacology. That's where she befriended a Muslim classmate. One night when the two women went out together for pizza and a movie, Mary suddenly fell ill. Friends last saw her entering a taxi.

"We knew she was missing because she didn't come home that night," Kaiser said. "We believe her Muslim friend put drugs in her food and hired people who abduct young Christian girls to kidnap her." A day later, police informed Mary's family they had located her not far from Cairo, in the town of Kerdasa. They said Mary had converted to Islam and had married a Muslim vendor.

### Foul Play?

Magda and her husband suspected foul play. They believed their daughter had become a victim of a vast, Islamic human trafficking network - one targeting young Christian women. "All this was coordinated between the government, police, the Wahhabis, Salafis. Everyone was in on it," Kaiser said. Officials summoned Mary to the police station where her father waited to see her. "Four veiled ladies and four bearded men walked in to the police station, accompanied by two policemen with machine guns," Kaiser recalled. "As they walked by, my husband screamed out our daughter's name, 'Mary!' As Mary turned around to acknowledge him, one of the bearded men pushed her away and punched her in the face," she said.

Overcome by rage, Mary's father demanded to talk to his daughter. The police refused and ordered him to leave. They said they closed the case because Mary was now a Muslim. The Kaiser home used to be one of much joy, laughter, and hap-

piness. But five years after Mary's disappearance, her bed remains empty. The emotional hurt still lingers. **Her family said that she was a devout Christian - there's no way she would have willingly embraced Islam.**

**A Common Occurrence** Abduction cases like Mary's are now common place in Egypt.

A new study found the number of disappearances and abduction of Egyptian Christian girls is increasing. Kidnappings of underage females and mothers of young children are also on the rise.

George Washington University professor Michele Clark is one of the authors of the study. She testified recently before the Helsinki Commission, debunking arguments that suggest Christian girls are leaving their faith and families simply for romance. "They say yes to friendship, romance, to hope, a future, safety and security. Nevertheless, (they) did not consent to being ripped from their family without ever being able to see them again," she said. Nor, she added, did these Christian women consent to being forcibly converted to a religion other than their own, or consent to a life of captivity.

### Expert: US Must Intervene

So, what should be done? Middle East analyst Walid Phares said the Obama administration must openly discuss the matter with Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi. "The perpetrators in Egypt must know from the media, from public discussion, that our officials are demanding from the president of Egypt and demanding from the future, or current parliament, that these issues be at the table, that the constitutional committee that is looking at the future constitution take in consideration these elements," Phares told CBN News. Clark also said the Egyptian government needs to create a national registry documenting the disappearance of minors.

"The Egyptian government will request an annual accounting of all cases of disappearances, including open and ongoing cases as well as prosecutions that resulted from these investigations," she said. Meanwhile, Egyptian leaders are still debating the possibility of imposing a strict interpretation of shariah- law on the society, law that tolerates forced conversion and forced marriage for non-Muslim women!

As for Magda Kaiser, she said she will not give up searching for her daughter. "She will still be my daughter no matter what happens to her," Kaiser said. "I will keep trying to get her back. I believe in God's promises and I trust the Lord will never forsake us."

"And I ask everybody to pray for us, and to help us" she continued. "I am confident the day will come when I will see her or meet her again."





# US Embassy Warns Women Missionaries in Egypt

**By John Waage**

CBN News Sr. Editor

**Sunday, September 30, 2012**

The U.S. Embassy in Cairo has posted a warning for American citizens, particularly female missionaries, living in Egypt. Officials cautioned on the embassy website that the government has “credible information suggesting terrorist interest in targeting U.S. female missionaries in Egypt.”

Americans were warned to “exercise vigilance, taking necessary precautions to maintain their personal security.” Egypt has been the scene of fevered anti-American demonstrations outside the embassy in recent weeks, as Muslims protest against a film they believe dishonors Mohammed. The climate has deteriorated for Egyptian Christians as well, as a Coptic priest claimed Friday that a group of Christians had fled their town in the northern Sinai because of threats from Islamists.

Also on Friday, the chairperson of a House subcommittee said she would block \$450 million in aid to Egypt requested by the Obama administration until U.S. relations with Cairo’s Muslim Brotherhood-dominated government can be reviewed.

Representative Kay Granger (R)-Texas said in a statement, “I am not convinced of the urgent need for this assistance and I can not support it at this time....I have placed a hold on these funds.”





God loves to use weak people. Everyone has weaknesses. In fact, you have a *bundle* of flaws and imperfections: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. You may also have uncontrollable circumstances that weaken you, such as financial or relational limitations. The more important issue is what you do with these. Usually we deny our weaknesses, defend them, excuse them, hide them, and resent them. This prevents God from using them the way he desires.

God has a different perspective on your weaknesses. He says, *"My thoughts and my ways are higher than yours,"* (Isa. 55:9) so he often acts in ways that are the exact opposite of what we expect. We think that God only wants to use our strengths, but he also wants to use our weaknesses of his glory.

The Bible says, *"God purposely chose... what the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful."* (1 Cor. 1:27) Your weaknesses are not an accident. God deliberately allowed them in your life for the purpose of demonstrating his power through you.

God has never been impressed with strength or self-sufficiency. In fact, he is drawn to people who are weak and admit it. Jesus regarded this recognition of our need as being *"poor in spirit."* It's the number one attitude he blesses (Matt. 5:3).

The Bible is filled with examples of how God loves to use imperfect, ordinary people to do extraordinary things in spite of their weaknesses. If God only used perfect people, nothing would ever get done, because none of us is flawless. That God uses imperfect people is encouraging news for all of us.

A weakness or *"thorn"* as Paul called it (2 Cor. 12:7), it not a sin or a vice or a character defect that you can change, such as overeating or impatience. A weakness is any limitation that you inherited or have no power to change. It may be a *physical* limitation, like a handicap, a chronic illness, naturally low energy, or a disability. It may be an *emotional* limitation, such as a trauma scar, a hurtful memory, a personality quirk, or a hereditary disposition. Or it may be a *talent* or *intellectual* limitation. We're not all super bright or talented.

When you think of the limitation in your life, you may be tempted to conclude, "God could never use me." But God is never limited by our limitations. In fact, he enjoys putting his great power into ordinary containers. The Bible says, *"We are like clay jars in which this treasure is stored. The real power comes from God and not from us."* (2 Cor. 4:7) Like common pottery, we are fragile and flawed and break easily.



Hundreds of Coptic Christians crowded the intersection of Bergen Avenue and Vroom Street in **Jersey City** yesterday afternoon, to witness the unveiling of a **street sign in honor of Pope Shenouda III**.

Among those attending the ceremony to rename the intersection Pope Shenouda III Way were U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez, Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy and His Grace Bishop David, the general bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Archdiocese of North America Prior to the unveiling ceremony, roughly 400 people packed into St. George & St. Shenouda Church, at 835 Bergen Ave., for a standing-room only ceremony with prayers and hymns in memory of the Pope Shenouda was the 117th pope and Patriarch of the Orthodox Coptic Church based in Alexandria, Egypt.

He served from Nov. 14, 1971 until he died on March 17, 2012 and in that capacity presided over several million Copts worldwide. Members of the clergy remembered Pope Shenouda as a poet, writer, educator, "father and shepherd." "The life of his holiness was so special in so many ways," Bishop David said. "Anyone who came in contact with his Holiness was impacted one way or another. He was not just a leader, he was a poet and a sensitive man ... His love was evident in the way he led the church. He loved everyone." When Pope Shenouda became the church's leader in 1971, the only Coptic Church in New Jersey was St. Marks on West Side Avenue. Now there are more than 20 churches in the state, church officials said.

There are also 30,000 Copts in the city, said Maggi Khalil, a community organizer and Jersey City municipal prosecutor. "We are here today to name a street after someone who is so very much deserving of it," Healy said. "Pope Shenouda ... was recognized for emphasizing education for all of our youngsters but also for reaching out, not just to other Christian communities but other cultures and religions of all kinds." Ward E Councilman Steven Fulop co-sponsored the council resolution to have the intersection named for Shenouda with Ward C Councilwoman Nidia Lopez.

"We gather proudly and faithfully to remember the longtime spiritual leader of millions of Christians in Egypt and around the world," Menendez said, adding that he's called on the current government of Egypt to respect the right of Copts to worship in freedom.







St. John Church congratulates,  
**Nardine & Waleed Maseh**  
On their marriage, wishing them blessed  
happy fruitful life in Christ.

\* \* \*



The Church congratulates,  
**Marina Hanna and Sherif Khalil**  
on their engagement. May God complete  
their marriage in joy and peace.  
Congratulations to their families.

\* \* \*



St. John Church congratulates  
**Wael Fayek & Hiedy Michell**  
on their engagement. May God complete their  
marriage in joy and peace.



St. John Church congratulates;  
**Nevine and Sherif Salib**  
on their marriage. May the Lord Jesus Christ  
grant them a happy, successful long life full of great  
values and deeds. Congratulations also  
to their two families.

\* \* \*



St. John Church congratulates,  
**Dimiana & Adams**  
For their marriage; may the Lord bless their life  
together and grant them joy, peace, harmony and a  
Christian home built on the Rock of God's word.

\* \* \*



# Selecting our 118th Pope

The new Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church will be chosen on 4 November 2012, as announced by the Nomination's Committee on 16 October 2012.

The Nominations Committee in Cairo announced the new dates for the papal selection process, with the election on 29 October 2012 and the altar ballot 6 days later on 4 November.

"Due to the early conclusion of the eliminations stage, the Nominations Committee has seen it fit to expedite the remainder of the process, so that the 118th Pope of Alexandria will be enthroned in November 18, earlier than expected."

This press release can also be viewed online via the Coptic Orthodox Church Centre Blog:

[www.CopticCentre.Blogspot.com](http://www.CopticCentre.Blogspot.com)

Fast is scheduled to start next week for three days from October 31 – November 2 before the Divine Lottery that will determine who the 118th Coptic Pope will be.



The remaining 5 candidates are:

- Bishop Raphael of central Cairo
- Bishop Twadharos of Al Beheira
- Father Rafael Ava Mina
- Father Pakhomius Al Suriany
- Father Seraphim Al Suriany



The candidates prayed 5 liturgies during the last week in Al Surian Monastery, St Mary's Church in Maadi, St Mark's Church in Klot Bek, the Diocese of Damanhour and St Mina's Monastery.

On Monday, October 29, Papal election took place in St. Mark's Cathedral in Al Abbassiya, Cairo.

Three of the nominees got the highest votes:

Bishop Raphael got 1980 votes.

Bishop Tawadros got 1625 votes. Fr. Rafael Ava-Mina got 1530 votes.

The Coptic and National media broadcasted the event which was received with great cheer and applause.

On Nov 4, 2012, God declared through the lottery that the new Coptic Pope is **H.H. Tawadros II**



