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January & February 2019





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*Verse*

*of the Month*

**"His name will be called...Mighty  
God, Prince of Peace"**

(Isa. 9:6)



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**SCHEDULE of MEETINGS and EVENTS  
for the MONTH of January & February 2019**

SUNDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
+ English Liturgy 8:00 - 11:00 a.m.	+ Liturgy 8:00 am - 10:00	+ Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.	+ Liturgy from 8-10 am
* * *	+ Thursday Morning + Senior Citizen Club 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.		+ Vespers; Bible Study 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
+ Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:30 a.m.			+ Beginners' Deacons- Meeting 5: 00 p.m.
			+ Elementary Meeting 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Servants' Meeting + 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday. + Boy Scouts 12 pm	+ THURSDAY Family Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Fr. Augustinos	+Arabic Youth Meeting 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Fr. Gawargious	+ College Youth Meeting 6:30- 8:00 p.m.
	Tutoring for new students 6:00-8:00 pm for girls & boys on Thursday 6-8 p.m.		High School & J. High Meetings 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

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## 1. Christmas Liturgy (Merry Christmas)

On Sunday, January 7, 2018, the Church celebrates the Nativity Feast. The Liturgy of the Feast starts Saturday 6, at 7:00 p.m. until midnight, presided by Metropolitan Serapion. The service will be followed by Agape meal in the church hall.



## 2. Feast of St. John the Beloved disciple:

On Friday, January 12, St. John Church celebrates the Feast of the departure of her Intercessor, St. John the Evangelist. Vespers on Thursday, 11 and the Liturgy on Friday at 8:00 a.m., celebrated by H.G.



Bishop Abraham.

## 3. Feast of Circumcision:

On Sunday, January 14, the church celebrates this Lord's Minor Feast. Circumcision was a symbol of our baptism (Gen. 17 & Col. 2:11).



## 4. Feast of Epiphany:

On Friday, January 19, 2018, the Church celebrates the Feast of Epiphany, the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Feast's Liturgy will be on Thursday 18, from 7:00 p.m. starting with vespers then the "Lakkan" followed with the Liturgy and an Agape meal.



## 5. Feast of Cana of Galilee's Wedding:

On Sunday, January 21, the church celebrates this Lord's Feast.

+ This Feast comes concurrent with the martyrdom of St. Demiana and the forty virgins with her.



## 6. Nineveh/Jonah's Fast: (February 18 - 20)

The three-day-fast of Nineveh starts on Monday, February 18. There will be daily late Liturgies (from Monday to Wednesday, from 12 noon - 3:00 p.m.). The Feast of Jonah will be on Thursday, February 21; and the Liturgy from 8:00 a.m. This fast comes always two weeks before the great Lent.



## 7. H.H. Pope Tawadros II:

+ At the end of last November, His Holiness had a successful spine surgery in Germany. May the Lord grant him complete health and strength.

+ His Holiness ordained new bishops.

## 8. H.E. Metropolitan Serapion:



+ His Eminence ordained Fr. Jeremiah a priest at St. Michael church at Semi-Valley to serve with Fr. Marcos Hanna. Congratulations to the new priest and the church wishing them a blessed service.

+ H.E. will celebrate the Liturgy at St. John Church with the clergy meeting on January 4.

+ H.E. will celebrate the Christmas Liturgy at St. John church, January 6.

## 9. Feast of St. Anthony:

(Tuesday, January 30):



## 10. Departure of St. Paula the Anchorite:

(Friday, February 9)



## 10. The Lent:

(Monday, March 4)

The Holy Lent starts from Monday, March 4, until Easter, April 28, 2019.



## 11. Feast of Presentation:

On Thursday, February 15, the church celebrates the Feast of Presenting the baby Jesus to the temple. This is one of the Minor Lord's Feasts. The Liturgy is from 8 a.m.



## 12. Martyrdom of the Apostle St. James:

On Friday, Feb. 17, the church celebrates the feast of St. James' martyrdom, the author of the Letter of Works, Bishop of Jerusalem who presided the Apostles' Counsel.



**13. St. John Magazine thanks the subscribers and reminds them to renew their Annual Subscription for the New Year 2019.**



# TIME



In the beginning of a New Year I would like you to remember an important fact that: Life is Time, and he/she who wastes his time, wastes his or her life.

It is true also that the person who benefits most of his time benefits his life. Your life is composed of minutes and hours. I would like to say to you, Happy New Year. One year had passed away and we are receiving a new year. I don't know whether I should congratulate you on the New Year, or offer my condolences for the past year?! The past year is a period passed from the life of every one that drew him near his eternity. Pages from his life which he will give account of before God and His angels.

We cannot take back nor change any year that passes. Perhaps, in the last year there were many sins or faults that we regretted or repented from, but still we cannot cancel them, they already happened and became now history!

St. Peter denied his master and repented and his sin forgiven, yet his sin became history known to all.

St. Augustine led a corrupt life of sexual immorality, then he repented and his life was completely changed to the opposite and became a treasure, but this holy life did not prevent what was recorded in the past.

God gave us this New Year to be a year of love and goodness. If this year passed away fruitless, then God's will and goal were not fulfilled. How should we act throughout the New Year? It is a blank white page. What are we going to record there in which we would be ready to give account for? The Lord will say to us, "I know your works" (Rev. 2:2). Will we please Him, do His will and improve on the last year? Do we consider ourselves just agents in this life? Should we invest our talents for His glory? All time that is not used in doing good is waste and dead time. Look at your short life and see how many hours did you spend with God and how many hours you spent with Satan in sin, lust seeking or material things. I wonder about those people who kill their time! They are

killing themselves, their lives since life is composed of

units of time. When you do not consecrate your life to God, your time will be cheap, boring, fruitless and without value. There are many saints who lived a very short time on earth, but it was a wonderful life full of great fruits. Every minute in their lives has its value and purpose. St. John the Baptist was a good example for that. He started his ministry at age thirty, six months before Christ, and his service was ended soon and abruptly by his martyrdom. He served for approximately one year or so, yet he prepared a ready congregation to the Lord their God and turned many to the Lord. He baptized thousands of people, witnessed to the truth and died as a martyr, yet he deserved to be called from Christ, "the greatest among those born of women!" (Matt. 11:11). The months which John spent in ministry were of much greater value than the ministry of many other servants. To the contrary, the Bible did not record anything important concerning the life of Methuselah despite the fact that he lived 969 years (the longest life ever lived by a man)!

St. Paul also, in his short life labored more than all the apostles (1 Cor. 15:10). Another example, of St. Peter who was able in one hour to convert 3,000 people to Christianity. There are many saints who spent their time seriously and effectively.

Many have lived short life, but it was very precious such as Theodore (Tadros), the disciple of St. John the dwarf and Anba Missaeil the hermit who became a hermit at age 18! You may ask, which unit of time had the greatest impact on humanity? And I answer: "The three hours which Christ spent on the cross from six to nine o'clock! Three hours were enough to save the whole world, and the few minutes of this time was enough to save the right thief on the cross. Is your time a friend or foe?! Is it a blessing to your family and your generation? I hope that this year becomes the best year in your entire life by the grace of God. Happy New Year.



# The Father of Christmas



***“For unto us a Child is born,  
unto us a Son is given, And His  
name will be called...***

***Everlasting Father” (Isa. 9:6)***

“Daddy, did they have a lot of snow at Christmas when you were little?”, my four-year old asked as we drove through gently falling flakes on the way to church. “No,” I replied. “We didn’t have any snow.” Before I could remind him of my upbringing in West Africa, he piped up with the perfect explanation. “I know why, Daddy. It’s because you are older than snow!”

Fathers may seem infinitely ancient to their children, yet there is only one truly timeless Person. Before fathers- or even time itself-existed, there was God the FATHER. Now consider this: the Baby we celebrate at Christmas grew up to say, ***“The Father and I are One”*** (Jn. 10:30). That is the real power of Christmas story!

***St. Paul writes of Jesus Christ, “Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation.”*** (Col. 1:15, 16).

The Lord Jesus has preeminence over everything because ***“everything was created through Him and for Him”***.

Christmas can seem to be so stressful, which isn’t helpful to us. Let’s pause a moment to reflect on the One who created snow and who gave us little children to enhance the season with joy, peace, perspective, and laughter.

# Immanuel

GOD WITH US

***“The virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us” (Isa.7:14 & Matt. 1:23)***

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ within me, Christ at my right, Christ at my left, Christ above and under me...these hymn lyrics, written by a 5th century Christian called Patrick echo in mind when we read Matthew’s account of Jesus’ birth. They feel like a warm embrace, reminding us that we are not alone.

St. Matthew’s gospel tells us that God dwelling with His people is at the heart of Christmas. Quoting Isaiah’s prophecy of a child who would be called Immanuel, meaning “God with us”, St. Matthew points to the ultimate fulfillment of that prophecy- Jesus, the One born by the power of the Holy Spirit to be God with us, God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16).

This truth is so central that Matthew begins and ends his gospel with it, concluding with the Lord Jesus’ words to His disciples; “And surely I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

The lyrics mentioned above remind us that the Lord Jesus Christ is with us always in all ages for He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. He is with us every time.

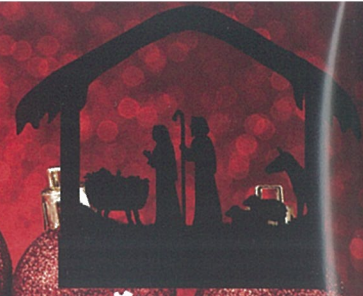
And also, He is with us everywhere who said, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20, see also Psalm 139).

The Lord Jesus is with us in all our circumstances, in joy and sorrow, in health and sickness, in good times and hard times and in life and in death. He neither forsakes us nor neglects us. He promised, “Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands...” (Isa. 49:15, 16).





# From Glory to Poverty: By Mark Hanna Why did You Come Lord?!



Commercials, sales, gifts, holidays, lights, ornaments, Christmas trees, season's greetings, turkey, cakes and great food – a poor boy born in a manger to a virgin mother and His name was Jesus. Nearly 2,000 years ago when the Lord Jesus was born, no one realized that Jacob's ladder had finally touched down on earth and the Son of God Himself came down to our world. It amazes me how the world expected the coming of the Messiah for generations and when He finally did come their searching eyes completely missed Him. Have we become a similar segment of society, not acknowledging Him either? These thoughts led me to wonder how many of us today truly understand why God actually left all the heavenly glory and became man!

God became man in order that men become children of God in Him, St. Athanathius uttered these words to every Christian to keep in their heart just as St. Mary herself did as these events occurred (Lk.2:19). Finally, since Adam's fall God's promise was fulfilled that a Savior would be born from the woman's (Eve) seed that will finally crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:14), which is Satan. Christ's nativity was the first step to fulfillment of that promise. That was a great day for all humanity, yet earth did not celebrate, and therefore, the hosts of heaven rejoiced for and on our behalf. St. John, the Apostle in the introductory chapter of his gospel wrote, "No one has seen God at anytime. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him: (Jn. 1:18).

What a great act of God's love and mercy, which we did nothing to deserve, but to the contrary, yet He desired to restore us once again to our original state (St. Gregory the Great). Mankind in God's image and likeness, His delight amongst all His creation.

On the sixth day of the creation God spoke in the Trinity, saying, "Let US make man in Our image." We were created as a mirror of God's holy nature, yet disobeying His commandment defiled this immortal nature and

sentenced us to death as earthly beings. It was always God's desire to recreate us once again, restoring us to His intended glory prepared for us from the beginning. Since no other way was possible except through His own life-giving touch, He sent His Son to us so that we may become a new creation through Him. As St. Paul wrote, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

In the fullness of time God was born from the blessed Virgin Mary and appeared on earth as one of us in human flesh and blood. As our salvation was His only goal, He died on the cross offering Himself on our behalf as a sacrifice so that His immortal life-giving flesh and precious blood would once again ignite His divinity in us. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself made that eternal promise saying, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever, and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51). Partaking of Him, we become like Him and therefore God became like us to once again make us in His image. As the Church Fathers wisely summed up this great love story saying, "He took what belonged to us (humanity) and gave us what belonged to Him (His Divinity).

\*\*\*

What Child is this?!

- + Some say He was just a good teacher, but good teachers don't claim to be God.
- + Some say He was only a phantom, but phantoms can't give their flesh and blood to be crucified.
- + Some say He was only a myth, but myths don't set the calendar of history.
- + The apostle Thomas expressed it perfectly when he saw Jesus after His resurrection and exclaimed,  
"My Lord and My God"  
(John 20:28).



# BOOKS OF THE HOLY BIBLE



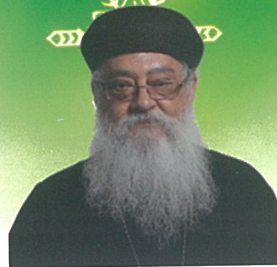
The purpose of this listing is to encourage the memorizing of the names of the Books of THE HOLY BIBLE for the glory of GOD.



# CHRISTMAS

## TREE & DECORATION IS IT OF PAGAN ORIGIN? REALLY?!

FR. MARKOS HANNA - DECEMBER, 2018



### INTRODUCTION

I will give you a quick rundown for the three terms we are discussing and then will explain extra things concerning their origin.

**First:** the word Christmas ..is of two syllables; 'Christ' & 'mas' 'Mas' is a Coptic noun "κνϥν" means 'birth', so the full meaning of the word 'Christmas' is 'Christ's birth'.

**Second:** Christmas trees...are evergreen and represent life.

### Third: DECEMBER 25th CELEBRATION

Now, why does the west celebrate December 25th?

Before Christ, December 25 was declared a feast to honor Saturn which became 'satenelia' in Rome, i.e. 'the god of light'. Now when some pagans accepted Christ as Savior, they used to celebrate with their friends and relatives the feast honoring Saturn, as part of family tradition!

-So the church in Rome thought to make the celebration for Christ's birth on December 25th so that the Christian members of a family don't go to the pagan festival.

-This December 25th became the Nativity Feast for Christians in the West & East too! In the East the western calendar followed the Julian calendar which coincided then with the Coptic month KIAHK and the day was 29th of Kiahk.

-Now why the difference between West & East now in dates? It's a calendar issue.

**CALENDAR ISSUE:** Here is the real and historic story.

-In the 16th century, and precisely 1582AD, there was a pope in Rome by the name of Gregory the 13th and was fond of astronomy, so he called on two Egyp-

tian scientists and others from Rome and asked them to make a new calendar to replace the Julian calendar which was used worldwide till then and it coincided exactly with the Coptic calendar, that's why all Christians around the world celebrated December 25th-which coincided with the Coptic calendar [AnoMartyro; AM] for Christ's birth, for several centuries.

-The scientists came to a conclusion after thorough study and made a calendar which their calculations' based on the 'solar-sun' different than the 'Sirius calendar- Julian' which is based on the star Sirius and its orbit takes  $365 \frac{1}{4}$  days, and the latter is much more accurate.

-The ancient Egyptians were the first to discover the Sothic cycle, and it was 'Thoth-Tout' the god of writing and learning who initiated it. The ancient Egyptians were aware of the difference between the solar calendar and the Sirius calendar. They discovered that the Sirius calendar is more accurate than the solar calendar. Ancient Egyptians used two calendars in their dealings:

The First; is the civil calendar (solar) of 365 days.

The Second; is the Sirius calendar of  $365 \frac{1}{4}$  days.

The Coptic calendar presently used by the Coptic Orthodox Church is an extension of the ancient Egyptian Sirius calendar of 4241 B.C. and its first month is 'Tout' based on 'Thoth' the originator of the Sirius calendar.

-They presented their work and their calculations showed that there will be [11 minutes and 14 seconds] between the Julian and the Gregorian, which adds up to a day approx...every 128 years.

+And this answers where the difference between East and West in the feast celebration as the East maintained



the Coptic/Julian where The Eastern Orthodox celebrate on January 4 then, and every 128 years it moves one day up, now the Eastern churches celebrate on the 7th of January!

(For example; in 2094 AD the difference will be 14 days, which will push the Feast of Nativity to January 8th, and by 2222AD the Feast will be celebrated on the 9th of January and so forth.)

***NOW, THE SANTA CLAUS OR ST. NICHOLAS known as 'PAPA NOEL'!***

-Actually there were 2 bishops known as Bishop Nicola, one in Rome, I think in the 3rd century and another in Egypt around the 4th or 5th century, and both were very giving and were known as “gift secret giver”.

-It was later commercialized into Santa Claus (German word for short); ‘Nicholas’..they dropped the prefix and was left with ‘cholas’ later distorted into CLAUS or CALAOUS in Germany! Then the name ‘Santa Claus’ came into existence.

### ***MAN'S NATURE***

Man was created and born with an affinity to the Creator, since he was created on the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27) thus, even those whom we call pagans, heathens who worshipped idols, or atheists and worshippers of the demons, did so with inner attraction to a higher power but expressed it in a wrong way to the wrong person/god.

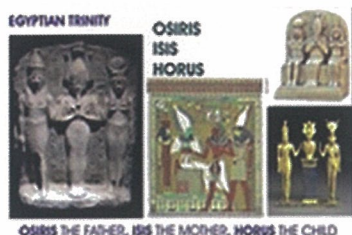
### ***OLD EGYPTIANS (PHARAOHS) TRADITIONS***

+For instance; the Pharaohs, had a sign of life they called it ‘ANKH’



It looked very similar to the cross of the Christians. Where did they get that almost 2,000 years before Christ?! Inner affinity to the Creator.

+They also had the ‘human trinity’; Osiris, Isis, Horus. Why not four or six for example?



The inner affinity to the One Creator which they didn't know then.

+ Also the pharaohs had a virginal birth cow (mythology) which was among the gods they revered. Where

did they get the term “virginal birth”?!

+They also believed in life after death, that's why they buried (not cremated) and mummified, so when the spirit comes back-one day, will locate and find the body it was in to rest in it again!!! Where did they get that?!

Anubis is the Greek name for a jackal-headed god associated with mummification and the afterlife in Egyptian mythology. In the ancient Egyptian language, Anubis is known as Inpu, (variously spelled Anupu, Ienpw, etc.). The oldest known mention of Anubis is in the Old Kingdom pyramid texts, where he is associated with the burial of the king.

-I think you got the idea of the explanation of many things in the past were made and practiced due to the similarity to a higher power, could be the Creator which they did not know then.

+But the Christian traditions are different-despite of the similarities with some old tradition. Christian celebration for Christ's Birth is: ***“keeping Christ in Christmas.”***

### ***RECENT EGYPTIAN HISTORY***

When St. Mark (one of the seventy chosen by Jesus Christ in the Gospel of St. Luke chapter 10) went to Egypt to evangelize and preach in 45 AD, his sandals tore, so he went to a shoe tanner named Ananias to repair his sandals. As the worker was repairing the sandals he poked his hand and it bled, he screamed ‘O one god’ (IyousTheos)!! St Mark was surprised to hear him calling on the ‘one god’ and asked him; do you know who that one god is?! The shoemaker said we know he is there but we don't know who he is or where he is. Then St. Mark started to preach and teach him, and after a while he and his household were baptized and he became the second pope after St. Mark's martyrdom.

-My question to you is where did that shoemaker and the Egyptians then know about the ‘one god’?! Who taught them?! Or is it an inner affinity toward the One True God till He reveals Himself to them

### ***Now comes a bigger and serious question, 'DOES CHRITMAS HAVE PAGAN ORIGIN?'***

1- In the Book of Jeremiah 10:2-4 says; “Thus says the Lord, learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of the heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain, for one cuts the tree out of the forest, the



work of the hands of the workman with an axe. They deck (decorate) it with silver and with gold, they fasten it with nails and with hammers that it move not.”

**INTERPRETATION:** Do not trust the stars, trust the One who made the stars.

2- Jeremiah 10:8 says; “But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish. A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine.”

**INTERPRETATION:** Those who put their trust in a chunk of wood, even though it is carved well and clothed beautifully, are foolish. The simplest person who worship God is wiser than the wisest pagan person, who worships a worthless substitute.

3- Jeremiah 3:13 says; “Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice; says the Lord.”

**INTERPRETATION:** worshipping other than God is an abomination and alienates the Lord against those who bow to others but Him.

4- Isaiah 44:14-15 says: “He cuts down cedars for himself, and takes the cypress and the oak; he secures it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a pine and the rain nourishes it. Then it shall be for a man to burn, for he will take some of it and warm himself, yes he kindles it and bakes bread, indeed he makes a god and worships it. He makes it a carved image and falls down to it.”

**INTERPRETATION:** Here Isaiah describes how people make their own gods! How absurd to make a god from the same tree that gives firewood.

Now, from the above verses, we see the Holy Bible warns people against making gods of material to worship, such as wood (which is cut from trees) or otherwise.

+ **CHRISTIANS** do not worship the Christmas tree. Christians do not bow to it. Christians do not create an idol and bow down to it.

-Satan corrupts something good by putting in people's mind, something they are doing had origins and used in the pagan world, what it meant to pagans, and distort it for Christians to stop celebrating Christmas-The Birth of Christ, Who's birth ended his (Satan) kingdom and ended his control on humans, when The Lord Jesus defeated him on the Cross once and for all.

-People, the world and many societies have cor-

rupted Christmas and Resurrection celebrations by making it materialistic and commercial to tarnish the real celebration of both; Christmas-Christ's birth, and Resurrection-defeat over death and Satan. But that does not mean that we have to abandon these feasts, we-Christians, God-loving-people, have to correct the celebrations of these great feasts by returning to its true spiritual meaning, attending church celebrations concerning these feasts, which were changing marks in human history.

**BUT:**

+Having a Christmas tree is a sign of life even eternal life, especially since many other plants die in the winter, evergreens maintain their beautiful colors. Christians do not worship it.



+Having wreaths for Christmas is one of the oldest symbols to greet visitors into someone's home. Also before the birth of Jesus, the Romans placed decorative wreaths outside their doors as a sign that joy and happiness could be found inside.



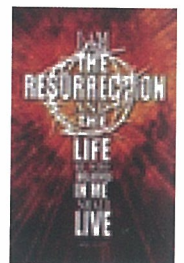
+Having a 'holly' was used since some believed the crown of thorns our Lord Jesus wore on the cross was made of it. This 'holly' is definitely not worshipped.



+Having a Nativity scene is a reminder of the great love of God toward humanity that He sends His Only-begotten Son to live our life, feel our hurt, and save us from perdition. No one bows to the items in the scene and worship it.



+Celebrating glorious Resurrection by having the Resurrected Christ on flags or banners is a great reminder that we are here today because of His redemption for us on the Cross, that's why we are saved and have hope to be in eternity with Him who loved us.



+Celebrating glorious Resurrection by exchanging meaningful gifts reminds us with the gift of life which Jesus Christ gave each and every-one after His Resurrection.



## Readers 'Corner

Dear FR AUGUSTINE,

# Fly The Airplane!

(Author: John Nyquist)

I am a pilot, and one of the things pilots learn in training, and practice routinely, is handling emergencies. For instance, what do you do if the engine fails; what if there is a fire, what if the landing gear do not extend or retract, and so on.

In training, we all learn that the first thing to do in an emergency is, "Fly the Airplane."

You might think that no pilot has to be taught this because it is so obvious.

What happens, however, is pilots can get so wrapped up in solving the problem that they forget the most important thing, flying the airplane. When they put too much attention on problem solving, and not enough on flying the plane they can create an even bigger problem while trying to solve what might be a simple problem.

Our Christian life can be somewhat similar. How so? The first thing we must remember is to love God above all else. When we love God, we strive to do his will, which results in us making good decisions in our lives, and prevents us from making a small issue a much bigger problem.

When asked "What is the greatest commandment?" Jesus



says in Matthew 22:37, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind and all your strength."

*With love & prayers  
Mona & Bhupinder  
Singh*





## BRING THEM UP IN THE TRAINING AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD

by Fr. Gawargious Kolta



Our responsibilities towards raising our children need wisdom, knowledge, and spiritual guidance. It is truly a great responsibility in front of God, the church, and the society. Our children are gifts from God who entrusts the parents to raise them in the fear of God. Therefore, it is very dangerous to neglect their upbringing, or looking-over them. There is no reason or excuse for the parents if they fail to raise their children in the training and admonition of the Lord. They must train up their children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6).

The Lord wants the parents to provide saints to the church. For this reason, the church instructs both the groom and the bride in the marriage ceremony, saying: "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward, like arrows in the hand of a warrior" (Ps. 127:4). Can the parents say the words of Joshua: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). When they stand in front of God in the judgment day, can they say with Isaiah: "Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me" (Isa. 8:18).

The parents feel happy when they give birth to their children; they love them more than they love themselves, and they sacrifice all their welfare for them. They take care of all their needs in order to see them healthy, happy, and successful in their lives and their studies. The Lord symbolizes His compassion, care, and love to mankind by that of the parents (Ps. 103:13), showing His care to us, saying "Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you" (Isa. 49:14).

The parents have to train up their children in the fear of God from their childhood. St. Paul gave us the example of his disciple, St. Timothy, saying: "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). St. Paul witnessed that Lois, the mother of St. Timothy and Eunice, his grandmother taught him the genuine faith from his childhood (2 Tim. 1:5). It is clear from the testimony of St. Paul that St. Timothy was raised up in a good Christian family, whose house was a church as well as many houses of the Christians were.

The houses of the forefathers were churches, where the believers gathered together to praise, worship, and glorify the Lord, and St. Paul mentioned that in some of his epistles (Rom. 16:5, 1 Cor. 16:19, Col. 4:15, Philem. 2). This style of Christian life continued for many generations; thus we find that Christianity offered many scholars, many saints, and many martyrs. There are some

examples of Christian families who trained up their children in the love of God, and they became heroes of faith.

1- St. Macarena's family: They were very rich and very religious. After the father of St. Macarena had passed away, she lived a devout life and she had the responsibility of raising her brothers in the Christian faith. Three of her brothers became heroes of faith in the fourth century: St. Basil the Great bishop of Antioch, St. Gregory bishop of Nyssa, and St. Peter bishop of Sabastia. Then she lived a dedicated life, where many women came to learn from her the devout life and they lived with her. St. Basil, her brother, wrote the story of her devout life and mentioned that his sister used to chant the Psalms all the day and every day, always seeking the heavenly life.

2- St. Theodosia was a widow who had five young boys. She raised them in the fear and love of God, and the love of the Lord. Two of her children, Kosman and Demian, studied medicine and treated people free of charge. Finally they left the world and lived a solitary life. During the persecution of the Christians by Diocletian, they were tortured; as the mother and her five sons refused to worship the idols and they were beheaded.

The Christian houses were houses of prayers, houses of purity, and houses of blessings. In the Old Testament, we can find parents who raised their children, from their childhood, in the fear of God, even before the Law of Moses. Others were careless and did not train up their children to live a pure life, and the parents suffered and the children were lost.

### EXAMPLES:

1- **JACOB**: the father of the twelve tribes was busy with his four wives, who were not living in harmony, and also in feeding the flocks of his uncle Laban. Jacob did not spend time to train his children up in the fear of God. In his old age, he had time to take care of his son Joseph. Joseph was trained up in the fear of God and he lived a pure and righteous life. He refused to lie with Potiphar's wife, and said: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God" (Gen. 39:9). When she caught him by his garment, he left his garment and ran outside. He lived in the fear of God all his life. The Lord was with him, and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper. Joseph's brothers were wicked; two of them became murderers, one of them committed adultery with one of his father's wives, and all of them were full of hatred towards their brother Joseph. They envied him, conspired against him to kill him, and they got rid of him, selling him into slavery, and his father wept long for him.

2- **MOSES**, when he was a baby, his mother nursed him not



only the food of the body, but also the spiritual food, and he was raised in the fear of the Lord. When he was grown up, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasure of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward (Heb. 11:24, 25).

**3- ELI THE PRIEST:** He judged Israel for forty years. He had two corrupt sons; Hophni and Phinehas, who used to lay with the women at the door of the tabernacle. The Lord judged Eli and said: "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them" (1 Sam. 3:13). The Lord had sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house would not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever. When the Philistines fought against Israel, who got defeated, the two sons of Eli died. Thirty thousand of Israel's soldiers were slaughtered and the Ark of God was taken away by the Philistines. When Eli heard that bad news, he fell off his seat and he died.

**4- KING DAVID:** He who offered us the wonderful and great Psalms, that we chant daily, and in every service of the church, did not train his children up in the fear of God. He was busy with the fights of the Philistines, and his continuous escape from king Achish, who wanted to kill him. He did not spend time with his eleven children in chanting his Psalms and praising God. Therefore, one of his sons, Amnon, violated his sister Tamar, two of his sons were murdered, and his eldest son, Absalom committed treason against his father king David, who fled away from his palace. When Absalom and his men tried to kill king David and defeat his men, Absalom was killed by one of the men of king David, yet David mourned bitterly his son (2 Sam. 19-20).

**How we can make our homes houses of prayer?**

**The parents are responsible of teaching their children the fear of God from their childhood. This job can be achieved, if we follow the following:**

1- We have to have a family altar in our homes; a certain place for prayer and reading the word of God daily.

2- We should spend some time every day, to teach our children the great love of our Lord, His salvation and His redemption to mankind; a sign of His love to us.

3- The parents have to teach their children to keep all God's holy commandments, because it is a sign of our love to God (Jn. 14:15). They must be committed to the Bible teachings, so that they can stand the war of the adversary against the children of God.

4- The parents should teach their children the Orthodox belief, the tradition of the church, the holy sacraments, the life of the martyrs and the saints, and the meaning of the church orders. The children must know that they are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. The parents should celebrate with their children the church feasts spiritually, giving recognition to the presence of God.

5- We have to teach our children to walk circumspectly as wise children of God, and be filled with the Spirit, that they can stand Satanic temptations. They must know that the will of our Lord is our holiness. The parents have to make their children aware of the challenges of life in our days. They must know that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Thus they must put on the whole armor of God. (Eph. 6:11). The parents must interrupt their daily life routine, and give time for family worship.

6- We should teach our children not to associate with the evil people, with those who are crooked, with those who speak perverse things or those who live immoral life, in order to live in righteousness.

7- In a certain age, we should make our children aware of other religions and beliefs in the community. The parents should let them know about the Christian cults, who don't believe in the divinity of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

8- The parents should be a good example for their children, i.e. living in harmony, loving each other, caring for each other, and respecting each other. Above all, parents should be an example in keeping God's commandment; being a living Bible. The parents should have complete agreement on the way of raising up their children. The children psychologically suffer when the parents are fighting, especially in front of them.

9- The parents should know the needs of their children in different ages. They should know their readiness for learning, understanding instructions, and comprehending things in different ages. They should know the interests and the capacities of their children from childhood to adolescence. There are many specified books that can help the parents know the needs of their children in the different ages.

The Scriptures contain many biblical verses that urge the parents to raise their children in the fear of God:

+ When the Lord gave the Israelites the Law, He said to them: "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:7).

+ "Chasten your son where there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction" (Prov. 19:18).

+ "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

+ "Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul" (Prov. 29:17).

+ "And you fathers, don't provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). (To be continued)

"Twelve mistakes committed by the parents that could ruin the lives of their children".



# America Counts on Egypt, But Is It So Stable?

By Barry Webb Wednesday, November 7, 2018



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi at the opening ceremony marking the \$8 billion expansion of the Suez Canal in 2015. (Photo: David Degner/Getty Images).

America counts on Egypt as a solid ally in the volatile Middle East. Egypt is a country, along with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, that buttresses the U.S. coalition against Iran and a stalwart in Africa.

But is the government of Egypt as stable as it seems?

If you believe the picture painted by Egypt's state media, the answer is "yes." State media portrays a stable Egypt, safe for tourists to flock to its many archaeological sites and beach resorts, an Egypt that is ripe for foreign investment and growth.

Indeed, on the surface, it appears that President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's government does have a firm handle on things. They have thrown thousands of radical Muslim Brotherhood members and their sympathizers in jail.

On the economic front, the el-Sisi govern-

ment has invested heavily into infrastructure—including building entire new cities. And, in the past several years, the country has claimed an annual economic growth rate of a Chinese-esque 5-8 percent.

Yet, under the surface, there is potential for a large amount of trouble. When el-Sisi first came to power, he was rather vocal in calling for a reformation in Islam. The term he used was *islah*, which is somewhat stronger than our word "reformation." *Islah* means something more like "restructuring" or "repair." After the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, el-Sisi went so far as to call for the desanctification of the hadiths and the sunna, as well as doing away with the books on Islamic jurisprudence (all of which were written in the 9th and 10th centuries). El-Sisi's call for *islah* received some notable support among Egypt's Westernized intellectuals as well as among a handful of the editorialists for Egypt's state-run al-Ahram newspaper and a popular TV talk show host named al-Beheri. But from the clergy? A deafening



silence. From Egypt's allies such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United States, etc.? A deafening silence.

Worse, when el-Sisi asked Ahmad at-Tayyib, the top sheikh at Egypt's Al-Azhar University (the equivalent of the Vatican to the Sunni Muslim world), to condemn ISIS, he received a verbal slap in the face. Since then, el-Sisi has been virtually silent on the subject of *islah* for Islam. He talks about *islah* for the economic sphere, but no more for the religious sphere.

In fact, at a recent speech at Cairo University (a traditional hotbed of fundamentalism), el-Sisi only words for those training to become teachers were to teach that Islam is a religion of peace and toleration. This, of course, totally ignores the problem and takes the whole idea of an *islah* in Islam off the table and puts it firmly under the rug.

It is clear that el-Sisi has come to realize that if he pushes too hard on the issue, or tries to force it down the throats of the Al-Azhar sheikhs, he will lose in a bloody revolution.

Unfortunately, such a revolution may happen anyway, even without el-Sisi getting tough with

Al-Azhar. Caught in his clamp down on the Muslim Brotherhood and their mass arrests have been thousands of secular protesters. This heavy-handed approach to security has angered much of the population. The government tries to keep the lid on things by continually pushing the narrative of Egypt's gains.

But it gets worse.

Reports out of Egypt claim that Al-Azhar itself is dominated by secret Muslim Brotherhood members and their (not so secret) sympathizers.

In other words, Al-Azhar, the bastion of "moderate" Islam in the Sunni world, essentially adheres to the same "interpretation" of Islam as does al-Qaeda, ISIS, the Taliban and the Saudi Wahhabis.

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What does it mean?



By Dr. Emil Goubran

# The New Covenant

In the last supper the Lord said to the disciples “For this is My blood of the **new covenant**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Mat 26:28).

*What exactly is this new covenant?* According to some Biblical scholars the **New Covenant** is considered “a bond in blood sovereignly administered by God.” (See God’s covenant with Abraham by a sacrifice, in Gen. 15:9-18; and Psalm 50:5 where God says, “**Gather My saints together to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.**” This shedding of blood was the seal of truthfulness and the price which the Lord willfully paid for the remission of humanity’s sins against God. God has planned this from the beginning and revealed it through the prophets in the Old Testament. In the book of Jeremiah the Lord says “**Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; My covenant which they broke,... says the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, says the Lord, I will put My Law in their minds, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**” (Jer. 31:31-34). We read the same words in the epistle to the Hebrews verses 8:8-10: “Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, and I will make an end on the house of Israel and on the house of Judah; a new covenant shall be, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took hold of their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt,” because they did not continue in **My covenant**, and I did not regard them, says the Lord. “**For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the**

**Lord: I will put My Laws into their mind and write them in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**”

The main motivation and driving force behind this is found in John 3:16 “**For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**” And the ultimate purpose of all of this is found in Christ’s prayer to God the Father in John 17:21 “**that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us.**” So this was the ultimate purpose of this blood bond (covenant) driven by God’s Love. Therefore, we could say that the New Covenant is a Covenant of Love between God and man with the ultimate purpose of becoming one with the Lord for all eternity in His heavenly kingdom. Since any covenant is an agreement between two parties, in this case between God and man, it has to be by mutual consent. God has demonstrated His love to man and extended His hand and Grace to everyone who is willing to reciprocate by loving God in return. For those who freely choose to accept God’s grace and invitation to become one with Him, the question is “How do we demonstrate our love to God in return of His love for us?” The answer is found in the Lord’s words to His disciples saying “If you love Me, keep My commandments”(Jn 14). This mutual love relationship between Christ and His believers (the church) is expressed in the Bible as a relationship between a bride, the church, and her bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ. When John the Baptist was told by his disciples that a lot of people are now following Jesus, he said “He who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Then my joy is fulfilled.” (John 3:29) Apostle Paul also talked to the believers in the church of Corinth saying “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one Man, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” (2 Co 11:2). Paul also referred to the relationship between a man and his wife as the relationship between Christ and the church “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.” (Eph 5:25).

In the book of Revelations, is a reference to the final chapter in this love relationship between Christ and His church “**Let us be glad and rejoice and we will give glory to Him. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has prepared herself.**” (Rev 19:7). Now in this earthly life, we as believers need to remind ourselves that we have entered into a love covenant with the Lord in which we express our love and gratitude by following the Lord’s commandments, and be good stewards and care takers of everything the Lord has entrusted us to do for the glory of His name.



# Mama Maggie Received Reward from Kuwait

Maha Gabra



**Dear Friends**

***Trust you are doing well.***

Below is a piece of news as published in Egyptian news:-

Egyptian Magda Gubran, famous for Mama Maggie and Mother Teresa of Egypt, won the "Humane and Civil Service Award" at a large ceremony in Kuwait today for her outstanding activity in serving the poor. Egyptian Magda Gubran, In her speech, she presented the award to every poor, elderly, young man and girl looking for himself and herself, where Magda Gubran knelt down on the stage of the ceremony, thanking God.

"TAKREEM throughout the year in addition to the annual ceremony, and this celebration is celebrated by 9 creators who contributed to the development of society and make 423 million Arabs proud. (meaning honouring) " is an institution that keeps pace with the outstanding achievements of the Arab world and highlights their achievements, individuals and institutions, regardless of sex, religion, political beliefs or geographical presence. "Honoring" conferences, lectures, meetings and workshops

Candidates are selected for each category of "honor" in a very serious process regardless of gender, religion, national origin, political affiliation or age, to be of Arab origin, except for the candidates of the category of "international contribution to Arab society".

The process of selection of winners to two stages, during which the studies of the achievements of each candidate individually evaluated, and the Council is invited to conduct an in-depth review of the achievements of candidates, and includes the Council of experts in the nine areas that comprise categories of "honor", and dealing with each category in a separate form Other than that, prepare short lists of candidates in order to proceed In the second stage, the arbitral tribunal is invited to review the shortlist that the selection board has prepared for each category, to select one winner for each category of "honor", to be competent, distinguished and unique with different expertise and contributions, and with maximum The features listed in the criteria determined by each category.

It is worth mentioning that the members of TAMRIM family participate in the meetings during which the files of the candidates are presented and studied in an advisory capacity, without participating in the evaluation.

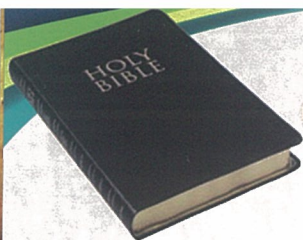
Thanks for all your prayers and support.

***May our Lord continue to bless you and bless all that you do***

***EC Egypt***







## AMAZING FACTS From the Bible

By Fr. Augustinos Hanna



## Bible Contest



### Who said this?

1. How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?
2. I Am Who I Am.
3. Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.
4. Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet.
5. As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you?"
6. How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him, but if Baal, then follow him?
7. All things come from You, and of Your own we have given You?
8. Is there any mediator between us Who may lay his hand on us both?
9. He who wins souls is wise?
10. An excellent wife is the crown of her husband?
11. If I perish, I perish?!
12. Remember me, O my God for good?
13. I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You?
14. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel?
15. But you, Bethlehem, though you are little. Yet out of you shall come forth to Me, the One to be ruler whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting?
16. But to you who fear My name; the Sun of Righteousness shall arise?
17. It is more blessed to give than to receive?
18. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and keep oneself unspotted from the world.
19. Our Lord was crucified in the great city called Sodom and Egypt?!
20. Blessed are those who do His commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city?

1. Some of Goliath's relatives had 12 fingers and toes (2 Sam. 21:20).

2. A young girl named Rhoda ran excitedly to announce Peter's arrival from prison, and forgot to open the door for him (Acts 12).

3. Hebrew is written right to left (like Arabic).

4. Jews did not celebrate their birthdays.

5. Moses sweetened water too bitter to drink, in Marah by throwing a tree in it (Exodus 15:22-25); the tree was a symbol to the cross.

6. Bodies of criminals were not usually buried, but were left for the dogs and vultures.

7. In the time of the Old Testament, the oldest son received twice as much inheritance as a younger son.

8. Joshua killed 31 kings (Josh. 12:24).

9. The sun and the moon stood still to wait for Joshua to win a battle (Josh. 10: 1 -27).

10. After the death of Joshua, Israel fought against a king named Adoni-Bezek who had the habit of cutting the thumbs and big toes of the kings he conquered, and they arrested him. The first thing they did to him was cutting off his thumbs and big toes. Adoni-Bezek said, "70 Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather their food under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me" (Judges 1:5-7). Yes, "Whatever, a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

11. The Olympic Games started in Old Testament times – 776 B.C.

12. Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1005 songs. (1 Kings 4:32). He had 40,000 stalls of horses (1 Kings 4:26).

13. Balaam had a talking donkey (Numbers 22:22).

14. God is not mentioned at all in the book of Esther.

15. Judah sold his brother Joseph to the Ishmaelites for 20 pieces of silver, and Judas sold his Master Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, which were used to buy a cemetery because it was "blood money." (Gen.37:28 & Matt. 27:3-8).



# Meanings of Christian BAPTISM

Most people think that the Christian baptism is just one of the rites which we practice once in our life-time when we were babies and we do not need anymore to waste time to talk about it!

This is totally wrong and the more we understand the meanings of our baptism, the more we benefit spiritually. Therefore, let us study the meanings of this baptism from both, Old and New Testaments.

## 1. Baptism is essential for our salvation:

+ The Lord Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus: "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (Jn.3:3, 5).

+ The Lord said to the Apostles, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mk. 16:16). He also said, "Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

+ The Apostles applied this rule in the Day of Pentecost, when 3,000 persons believed and asked what to do to be saved, St. Peter answered them, "Repent and every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts. 2:38). So, it is necessary as the seal of our faith in Christ.

## 2. The Christian church believed and practiced that from the beginning until now and put it in the Creed:

"We believe in one baptism for the remission of sins."

3. **Baptism is a second birth** and a new spiritual creation from God: It is clear from the second verse in the Bible that, "The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters, and God said, 'Let there be light and there was light'" (Gen.1:2, 3). The church fathers interpreted this verse as a type of baptism and called it "The Sacrament of Enlightenment and second birth."

St. Paul confirmed that by saying, "According to God's mercy, He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). "Which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn.3:6).

## 4. Baptism is the spiritual circumcision of N. T. :

In Genesis 17, we find the covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants, to circumcise every male Child in the 8th day; it meant purity and cutting off the lusts of the pagan and join the people of God. St. Paul explained that circumcision was a type of our baptism by saying, "In Him (Christ) you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without



By Fr. Augustinos R. Hanna

hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism" (Col. 2:11, 12).

5. **Baptism unites us with Christ in His death**, burial and resurrection: "We were baptized into Christ's death and were buried with Him through baptism and were raised with Him in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4, 5).

6. **By Baptism we become children of God** and of the spirit and put on the garment of Christ righteousness: "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:26, 27).

## 7. By Baptism we get saved from condemnation:

St. Peter explained the ark of Noah which was the only way of salvation from God's wrath by the flood, that it was a type of baptism (see 1 Peter 3:18-20).

8. **By Baptism we are delivered** from the authority of the devil and of the old man and the body of sin:

St. Paul explained that by the type of crossing the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh who was a symbol of Satan and said, "Our fathers were baptized into Moses in the cloud (the Spirit) and in the sea (water)" (1 Cor. 10:1-3; see also Rom. 6:6, 7). Therefore, we practice the rite of renouncing Satan, and declaring our new faith in Christ in baptism.

9. **Healing**: It is clear from the type of the prophet Elisha healing Naaman the Syrian from leprosy by emerging into the water of River Jordan seven times (1 Kings 5). Leprosy is a fatal and contagious disease that stands for sin. He was healed through that type of baptism.

10. **Baptism sanctifies us**, and confirms us in Christ through anointing of the Myrrour oil that accompanies the baptism, and by it the Holy Spirit descends upon the person who is baptized. The church used it as a substitute of laying of the Apostles' hands. That is why it is called the sacrament of confirmation and it gives us the opportunity to be filled with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21, 22; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27, Eph. 5:18).

11. **Baptism prepares us to enter into heaven** with those who arrayed in white robes and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7: 14, 15).

12. **It is true that baptism is ONE and cannot be repeated (because it is a type of Christ's death once);** but you can revive its work by repentance all your life.



# "Greater than Jonah is here"

(Matt. 12:41)

By Fr. Augustinos Hanna



On the occasion of Nineveh's fast, which takes place from January 29 to February, 1, 2019; it would be nice to make some comparisons between Johan and Jesus and between their two generations. This will help us understand why the Lord Jesus said, "Greater than Jonah is here"!

1. **Jonah received a message from God to go to Nineveh and preach repentance to them.**

+ The Lord Jesus Christ received the same message from His heavenly Father to go to the world and save it, and His first sermon was, "Repent and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1: 15).

2. **The reaction of the two was opposite to each other.** Jonah rejected his mission and fled to Tarshish.

+ But the Lord Jesus accepted His mission delightedly and said, "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me and to complete His work" (Jn. 4:34).

3. **Jonah disobeyed God**, and gave a deaf stubborn ear and tried to escape from God as Adam did before! But he understood later that God is in control on both land and sea (Psalm 139:7-12).

+ On the other hand, Jesus obeyed to the point of death (Phil. 2:8).

4. **Jonah refused to serve Nineveh** as a wicked heathen city; because he knew from the prophecy of Nahum that God would use them as a rod of discipline against Israel and the people of Nineveh were very vicious and cruel.

+ The Lord Jesus loved the world and came to redeem it, despite its wickedness and cruelty, knowing that they would crucify Him.

5. **Both Jonah and Jesus slept in a ship.** Jonah's sleep was of one fleeing from responsibility; but

+ Jesus slept out of exhaustion from His daily busy ministry.

6. **Both of them were exposed to a mighty storm.** Jonah was about to drown because he was disobedient; + but Jesus could calm the sea because He is Perfect.

7. **Jonah was swallowed u by a large whale**, stayed three

days in its belly and came out to life miraculously when he repented inside the belly of the fish.

+ He was a type of Christ who stayed three days in the tomb, then He rose from the dead by His own power for our justification (Matt. 12: 39, 40).

8. **The message of Jonah was harsh**, terrible and threatening, "After forty days, Nineveh shall be overthrown" (3:4).

+ But the message of Jesus was the greatest joyful message of good tidings, love and salvation from sin, Satan, death and hell.

9. **The period of Jonah's message** was only three days; and was NOT accompanied with any miracles; while: + Jesus' message took three years and was accompanied with daily miracles of healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, feeding the multitudes.

10. **Despite all of that**, the people of Nineveh deeply repented in ashes; but:

+ While the generation that enjoyed the pleasant preaching and the great miracles of Jesus Christ rebelled against Him and crucified Him!

Therefore, He said, "The men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment with His generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and indeed a greater than Jonah is here" (Matt. 12: 40, 41).

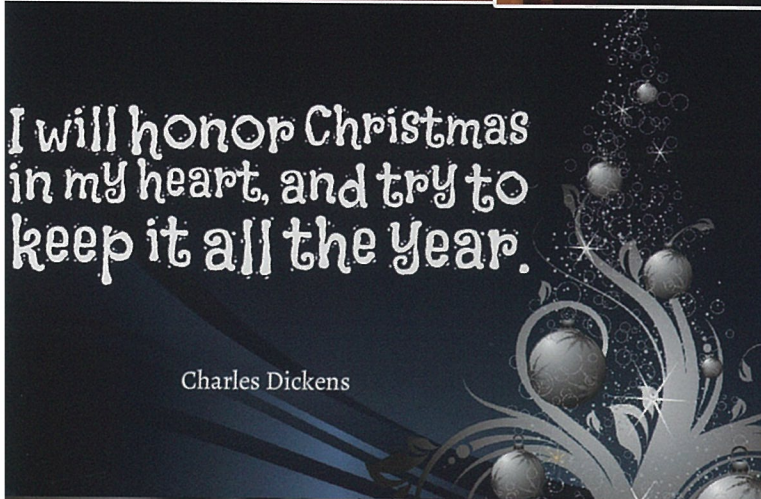
11. **When the entire city of Nineveh**, 120,000 populations repented and got saved; Jonah was angry! + While the Lord Jesus Christ rejoices for one single sinner repents (Luke 15:7).

12. **Moreover, the greatest difference between both Jonah and Jesus**, was declared by the Lord when He concluded the book of Jonah with this statement of blaming Jonah; "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.....but

+ "should I not pity Nineveh, that great city in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons would have perished"?!



# القس بولس جورج يعظ بكنيسة ماريوحنا



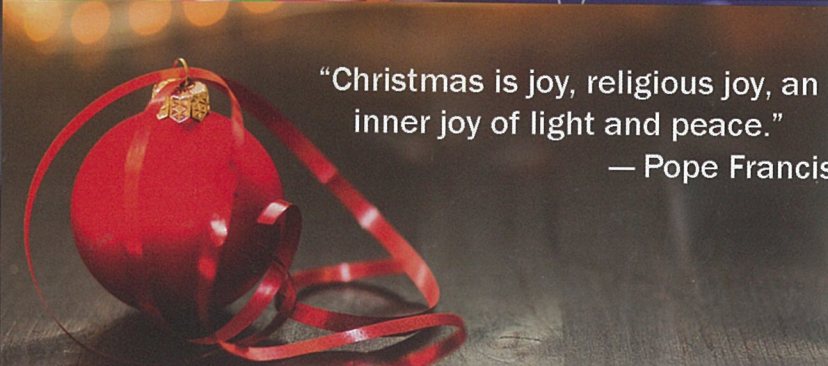
Charles Dickens



May your days be merry and bright with the light of God's love



Freya Stark



"Christmas is joy, religious joy, an inner joy of light and peace."  
— Pope Francis





# لقطات من عام ٢٠١٨

