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A COPTIC CHRISTIAN BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE
COVINA, CA



JOHN

Congratulations
Class of
2017



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*Verse
of the Month*



*"Behold, I send you out as lambs
among wolves"* (Luke 10:3).

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**SCHEDULE of MEETINGS and EVENTS
for the MONTH of May & June 2016**

SUNDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
+ English Liturgy 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. (In the New Church)	+ Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	+ Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	+ Liturgy from 8-10 am
* * *	+ Thursday Morning + Senior Citizen Club 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	+ Women's Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the Fire Place room.	+ Vespers; Bible Study 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
+ Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:15 a.m. (In the Old Church)			+ Beginners' Deacons- Meeting 5: 30 p.m.
			+ Elementary Meeting 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Servants' Meeting + 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. 2 nd & 4 th Sunday. + Boy Scouts 12 pm	+ THURSDAY Family Meeting 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Fr. Augustinos	+ Arabic Youth Meeting 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Fr. Gawargious	+ College Youth Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
			High School & J. High Meetings 7:15 - 9:00 p.m.

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1. Apostles' Feast:

On Wednesday July 12, the Church celebrates the Apostles' Feast, the commemoration of the martyrdom of Sts. Peter and Paul. The Liturgy and the Lqquan (washing the feet) will be from 8-11:00 a.m.



2 - Martyrdom of St. Ananias the Apostle:

On July 4, we remember the martyrdom of St. Ananias, the Apostle, one of the 70 disciples who baptized St. Paul and restored to him his sight (Acts 9:10-12)

3. Martyrdom of St. James the Apostle:

On July 25, the church commemorates the martyrdom of St. James the Apostle, one of the twelve, and the author of the letter of good works.

4. Fast and Feast of St. Mary (August 7- 22):

On Monday, August 7, 2017, the Fast of the Theotokos St. Mary starts for two weeks until her Feast on Tuesday, August 22nd. During the second week there will be daily Liturgies and revival evening meetings.



5. Feast of Transfiguration (August 19):

On Saturday, August 19, the church celebrates the Feast of Christ's Transfiguration. The Liturgy is from 8:00-10:00 a.m.



6. The Youth Summer Club:

St. John Church started her youth Summer Club from June 12, from 6:00 – 9:30 pm. The program includes bodily exercises and sports, besides some social and spiritual activities (See 1 Tim. 4:8).

7. The Youth Graduation Party:

On Saturday, June 17, St. John Church held her Annual Graduation Party. The Church' priests distributed gifts to Post graduates, College, High School and Junior High. Our best wishes to all the graduates (see pages.....).



8. Other famous feasts during July & August:

- 1) July 1: Martyrdom of St. Moses the Black.
- 2) July 10: Departure of St. Cyril of Alexandria.
- 3) July 14: Departure of St. Shenouda the Archimandrite
- 4) July 15: Departure of St. Bishoy, the wilderness Star.
- 5) July 22: Departure of St. Ephraim the Syrian.
- 6) July 31: Martyrdom of St. Abanoub El-Neheissy



9. H.H. Pope Tawadros II:

- + The Holy Synod presided by Pope Tawadros decided on Pentecost to make the 15th of February each year, (which is the day of the Coptic martyrs in Libya) an Annual Feast of the modern martyrs of our days.
- + The Pope honored the great faith and courage of the children martyrs of the bus in Menya, who refused to deny their faith in Christ and preferred death over betraying Christ.

10. H. E. Metropolitan Serpion:



- + Anba Serapion established a new Coptic American Church in Long Beach, California under the name of "Christ the Good Shepherd". It will be served by Fr. Lazarus Yassa. The first Liturgy will be celebrated on Sunday, July 2nd, 2017. Congratulations to our beloved Metropolitan Serapion, Fr. Lazarus and the congregation of the new church.

11. Rev. Fr. Boules George:

Fr. Boules George, the priest of St. Mark Church in Heliopolis, Egypt served at St. John Church in Covina, for four day-revival meetings from June 1, to June 4, Pentecost and blessed the Church Book Fair.



12. Summer Conventions:

- (1) Children: from July 14- 16.
- (2) Families from July 28-30
- (3) Arabic Youth from August 25 – 27. 2017.

13. St. John Annual Summer Festival (Sept. 29):

St. John Church holds her Annual Grand Festival for three days, around the Feast of the Cross, from Friday, September 29 to Sunday, October 1, 2017. More details in the next issue.

14. Other Activities:

- + Senior Citizen Club and Fellowship every Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- + Women's Meeting is Friday 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the Fire Place Room.
- + The Arabic Youth Meeting every Friday from 8:00-10:00 p.m. in the old church supervised by Fr. Gawargious.
- + The Family Meeting every Thursday from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. Fr. Augustinos, Emad Fawzy, Tamer Wadie and Dr. Nashaat Aziz are serving in this meeting.
- + The Medical office is treating freely the new comers and those who have no insurance, the 1st Sunday after the church at 1347 Grand Ave. Glendora, CA.
- + Food Bank & Botique serves during 2nd and 4th Thursdays, every month from 5:30 p.m.

To Our Dear Graduates

Congratulations! You've made it-all the way
From Diapers to a Diploma!

By Fr. Augustinos Hanna

Of course it has taken you a lifetime to make that progress. But, in a sense, your life is just now beginning. Your graduation not only represents an achievement in your education, but also symbolizes the beginning of a new phase in your life. Maybe it is more education at a higher level. Maybe you will start a career. You may be moving out on your own. You will be leaving old friends behind and making new ones.

Imagine that! The almighty Creator of the universe is interested and active in the details of your life. He cares about what you are doing and thinking. He wants to lead you through many exciting events. He wants to guide you through life's tough decisions.

These are bunch of advices for you to remember in this happy occasion:

1. God Loves you and has a Master Plan for you:

He loves you unconditionally that He sacrificed His only Son for you. You are "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works God has prepared beforehand that you should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Try to discover God's plan in your life and know His good will for you. "He who did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8: 32).

2. You can Know God's Will:

God's will is sometimes easy to find immediately, and sometimes difficult and may take years to figure out. You can know it through the life of prayer. Also, you will discover it through your Bible Study, for God speaks through His word; and the Lord Jesus said, "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine" (John 7:17). Ask yourself WHAT WOULD JESUS DO (W.W.J.D.)? Consulting your spiritual father will help a lot in this regard.

Moreover, God speaks through the details of your life, not through your ears, but through your circumstances. Therefore, don't make plans and then ask for God's approval, but rather ask God to direct your planning.

3. God wants you to grow and to advance:

When it comes to progress, there are no shortcuts. You have to take one step at a time. God wants you to grow spiritually because when you do, your life becomes more meaningful and more satisfying. Growth is a sign of life and health. The Bible says, "Grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). God's bless-

ings help us to grow and advance, not only spiritually, but also socially and in every good deed.

Pope Shenouda used to say, "You should advance, run, and if you couldn't run, then walk forward, and if you couldn't, then creep. But don't stop and don't look behind."

4. The Bible is God's Message to You:

The Bible is the world's most amazing book. More than six billion copies of the Bible have been published since Gutenberg printed the first one five hundred years ago. The Bible has been translated into more than 2000 two thousand languages and dialects.

When you read the Bible, simply, you are reading God's message for you. It is not an option for knowing God and the secrets of the universe. It's the only way for you to accurately discover God's plan for you.

The Bible is your map to heaven, the key to real success and glory, a lamp for your feet and a light to your path. If you want God to honor you, honor Him first by reading His Bible on daily basis. It is your bread of life. Remember that, "He who turns away his ears from hearing the law, even his prayer should be an abomination" (Prov. 28:9).

Read your Bible, memorize it by heart, live it, love it, do it, spread it and teach it. The Bible is the tree of life; eat it up and live-forever (Rev. 22:14).

5. Arrange Your Priorities:

Here is an exercise that will help you. At the end of a day, sit down with a blank piece of paper and write down everything you did that day. Now go back and rank your activities according to the following scale:

1. Essential
2. Important but not essential
3. Helpful but not necessary
4. Trivial

When you're done, look at your list. You will see two remarkable things. First, you'll notice how many details there are in one day. How did you do all of that? Second, you'll notice how much time you spent on unnecessary and trivial things, and how little time you spent on essential and important details.

Jesus made a simple statement to help you arrange your priorities saying, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His

righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). He meant, instead of being preoccupied with the details of your life, focus on God first. He also said, "Sit down first and count the cost" (Luke 14:27). Trust Him to arrange your priorities.

6. Discipline Yourself (No One Else Will):

To learn, you must love discipline. Solomon the wise says, "Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge. But he who hates correction is stupid" (Prov.12:1).

You want to grasp everything bigger, better and faster! So how do you find the satisfaction you've been looking for? The key is balance, consistency, and perseverance, all of which come from one thing and one thing only: discipline. Here is our dilemma. We want it all, and we want it now, whether it's an abundance of possessions or positions or pleasures or popularity. But nothing worth-while comes quickly or without discipline. Over life's long way, discipline works in every dimension of your life: financial, physical, mental and spiritual.

If you've ever tried to get rich quick, tried to lose weight by taking a pill, tried to get knowledge by studying at the last minute, or attempted to get close to God by asking for a miracle, you are grasping the wind.

The only way to bring abundance to your life, the kind of abundance that gives you real joy, is to bring discipline into your life. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Discipline begins with small things done daily. You can plan to succeed or you can plan to fail. The choice is yours. Do not be good at making excuses. Discipline is at the heart of discipleship. Acquire good habits; abandon bad habits. Move from involvement to commitment. Use your free time productively. Your dreams will not come true if you are sleeping. Remember that people will be more impressed by what you finish than by what you start.

7. What Would Jesus Do? (WWJD):

WWJD? What do those four letters mean to you? You see them on wristbands and T-shirts, and you wonder, is that just another commercial to sell merchandise?

WWJD? Stands for "What Would Jesus Do?" And it just may be the most powerful question you will ever answer. It is a simple question, really, but the implications are profound and potentially life-changing.

WWJD, can be a guide for making decisions with moral implications. Obviously, you don't have to ask yourself, "What would Jesus do?" if you can't decide what to wear in the morning or what to eat. But let's say you're faced with the choice between telling a lie or being truthful. Jesus is the perfect example because Jesus lived a perfect life. He experienced all of the pressures, temptations and anxieties that we have, but He never did wrong. Of course Jesus was perfect and we are not, so none of us can do what Jesus did all the time, in every detail of our lives. We need help. More than that, we need forgiveness when we sin, which is failing

to live up to God's standard of perfection. Though Jesus did many things to show us how to live, He did something we could never do. He sacrificed His own life for our sins to give us eternal life.

Doing what Jesus did in all situations will make you a better person here on earth. Accepting thankfully what Jesus did on the cross will secure your eternal future. Why not do both?

In every situation ask yourself, "What would Jesus do?" Then do it. The essence of Christianity is new life in Christ. Someone once said, "When you die even the undertaker will be sad!" Like Jesus, if you look for the best in people, you are likely to find value in every person.

Remember that Jesus kept His promises until it hurt. We should do the same. Love as Jesus loved, give and forgive as Jesus gave and forgave others. The Bible asks us to follow Jesus and to imitate Him, "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (1 Jn. 2:6).

8. Stop Worrying and Start Living:

Worrying is one of the most destructive of all human habits because it decreases your effectiveness in other areas. When you worry about something, your thoughts and your emotions focus on events that haven't yet taken place. It's like Mark Twain once said: "I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them have never happened."

Worrying is totally passive. It accomplishes nothing. On the other hand, worrying can literally make you sick while keeping you from accomplishing the things that really matter. Worry can keep you from living your life the way God intended it. Jesus asked, "Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? Of course not. (Matt. 6: 27). Therefore, live longer by worrying less. Before you worry needlessly, ask yourself, "What is the worst thing that could happen?" When you are feeling overwhelmed, remember to take things one at a time, one day at a time. If you prepare for the future, you won't have to worry about it. Never confuse worrying about tomorrow with planning for tomorrow. Prayer changes things; worry changes nothing. Train yourself to practice St. Paul's golden advice, "Be anxious for nothing. But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-8).

9. Learn to Read:

Reading is the gateway for growth. Books contain information, insight, and inspiration, all of which contribute significantly to your mental and spiritual development. Without the guidance of books, you are like a boat at sea without compass or map...you have no direction. This is especially true with the Bible. Build your personal library at home. Read for fifteen minutes every night before you go to bed. Read one book a month. St. Paul advised the young bishop Timothy, "Give attention to reading" (1 Tim. 4:12).



By Mark M. Hanna



Up or down? Sideways or back?

Which way do your friends lead you?

"A friend is a friend," some may say. Others, "a friend is someone that is there for you when you need someone." Yet another says, "A friend is someone with whom you have fun, someone to do stuff with." The answers are numerous and are all fine, but once again, up or down? Sideways or back? Which way do your friends lead you?

Most friendships are based on fun, and enjoyment. Our friends are the cool people who make us laugh. Others base their friendships on similar views on certain issues. Many others base it on trust. **But, how many friendships are based on Christ?**

First of all, let us define what a friendship based on Christ actually is. It is a relationship based on love, trust, respect, wisdom, honesty, and most importantly, all Christian values. Having defined a Christian friendship, let me then ask, up or down? Sideways or back? Which way do your friends lead you? The answer must be up and it must be neither sideways nor back?

A friendship is more than just trust in someone whom I esteem as being dear to me, because we have fun together, or because I can tell him/her secrets. Friendship is forward progress with a friend who looks after me and I after him/her. If I fall, it is my friend whom I expect to help lift me up, if I am depressed it is my friend whom I expect to comfort me and give me hope. One may ask, but I thought it was Christ whom I was supposed to look to in these situations? Yes, you have answered correctly, but shouldn't and don't we actually expect those things of our earthly friends? We should! Often it is our good friends that Christ uses to help us through our problems and/or difficulties.

The greatest thing about a Christian friendship is that it is always a growing experience. Friends look after each other when the church priest is not there to guide

us from going astray. It is a good thing to remind your friends of their mistakes when they go wrong and likewise expect the same of them. I know of two girls whose friendship was of this sort, and one had a profound impact on the other, leading her away from a harmful group. That friendship is ideal, as the one girl cared so much for her friend that she constantly reminded her of her every mistake and how wrong that was. The best thing about that friendship is that the other girl humbly accepted her friend's advice and concern.

Unfortunately, I know of two other male friends who led each other astray. Their friendship was based on nothing but fun and common views on some issues. Their spiritual lives were both dramatically impacted negatively, the more they were together. Whether at church or out, they were both the worst for each other. Neither one of them would tell the other when one did the wrong thing nor did any one of them tell the other anything beneficial. This unfortunate friendship was devastating. Until this day, they remain good friends, but the worst part of this friendship was that those two friends were both much closer to God and the Church prior to their close friendship.

Hold each other accountable—that's friendship. One person wanting to jog every morning my feel lazy on some days and may even quit after a few tries at waking up early in the morning. Two friends agree to jog together every morning will be successful, for if one gets lazy the other will encourage him and if one thinks of quitting, the other will talk her out of it. At the end, both will benefit. Likewise is the Christian friendship, I sin, my friend makes me aware of my mistake. I realize my sin and confess. My friend has in essence saved me. My friend is lazy getting up and going to Church early, I nag them about it and constantly explain to them how much more God appreciates one who seeks Him

diligently (Jeremiah 29:13), and we both benefit and grow spiritually.

Holding your friends accountable is not judging. One of the most common misconceptions is that it is wrong to tell my friends or anyone when they err, for many think that it is judging them. No, judging someone comes from lack of love, hate or ill-feelings. To the contrary, holding a friend accountable is out of love and concern for their growth and all around well-being.

What hinders my friend hinders me. A fallen friend will either extend their hand for help or pull you down with them. I have a duty to help my friend and bring them back up before they fall too deeply. However, a fallen friend that insists upon their fallen state is a friend that one should begin to watch out for. Keep them constantly in your prayers, but at the same time distance yourself from interacting with them lest they bring you down.

A Christian friendship is not only about spiritual aspects. A friendship is a friendship, one that encompasses all aspects of each other's individual lives. One can't have a friend whose only shared interest with you is biology and another friend with whom you share all your secrets, and yet another for playing sports and one more for going shopping with. One may have many friends, some from school or college and others from Church. However, I refer only to close friends, true friends. Doesn't a close friend know mostly all things about you? My close friends do. Those types of friends have a duty to keep each other motivated and their concern is also about your education and your grades as well as your spiritual life. If a friend hinders your studying by always asking you to go out when you should be studying, well, you should refuse and once again as a concerned true friend you should advise them that it would be more beneficial to study. A good friend should not hinder you in any way and if I am hindered, then I must carefully consider the situation. How can I once again return to a correct course and how can I lead my friend back with me.

Finally, a friend is someone who genuinely cares about you and you about him/her. Hold each other accountable for your actions. A friend who never corrects you when you err is not a good friend, for that shows a lack of care and concern on their part. Remember, friends edify, uplift, and help each other in all things. Friends are those who help each other grow and excel upwards in all things, anyone else may lead you down, sideways, and back.



Thanks to God & Congratulations to

Dr. Farid Fayek Farid

**Professor of Internal Medicine
at UCLA Medical Center**



For obtaining the Degree of Fellowship of the American College of Physicians F.A.C.P. Wishing him continued success.

St. John Church, Covina congratulates Professor

Dr. Farid Fayek Farid

for obtaining the Degree of Fellowship of the American College of Physicians F.A.C.P. Praying the Lord to grant him health, Strength and long life full of great achievements.

**Jordan Edward
Thompson**

Graduated from Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Marketing and is perusing a career in Digital Marketing. Jordan is the son Kyle & Mary Thompson, grandson of Dr. Lotfy and Lucy Hanna, and grand nephew of Fr. Augustine Hanna.





Issues for the **THE SEVEN D'S** YOUTH

by Fr. Gawargious Kolta



For the sake of their spiritual, psychological and physical growth the church must help the youth to avoid the following seven 'D's,:

- 1- DATING
- 2- DANCING
- 3- DRUGS (AND OTHER ADDICTIONS)
- 4- DRINKING
- 5- DISOBEDIENCE TO LEADERS AND ELDERS
- 6- DOUBTING THE FAITH
- 7- DECEPTION BY THE DEVIL TRICKS AND LIES

1- DATING

The church is not against dating, but we approve dating when we are ready for marriage. Readiness for marriage is important from the social, psychological, financial and professional points of view. It needs also to be under the direction of the father of confession.

Young age youth usually think that they are already mature, and they do not need to ask help when they are drowning in dating problems. Dating at young ages is very harmful and destructive for the following reasons:

1- Dating, most of times, include lustful desires, leading to a sinful life as it destroys our purity and it leads to lawlessness. Because of the weakness of the flesh, many of our youth present their members as slaves of uncleanness (Rom. 6:19). It is not right to try harmful and destructive deeds.

2- Dating of persons in young age causes the destruction of spiritual life (causing lustful thoughts day and night).

3- Dating with the other gender causes distraction in school, church, studying at home, and prayers, leading to great loss of effort and time. There will be no proper concentration in study and with any spiritual activity.

4- Dating causes others to stumble. The Lord said: "Woe to that man by whom the offenses come. It is better to put round his neck a millstone and throw him in the sea" (Mat. 18:7).

5- Dating leads to family problems that will intensify by time, especially when we hide this relation from them.

6- Dating leads to sin, for example, it makes us lie in order to cover that unaccepted behavior, and lying is a sin. The penalty of lying is death, because the wedge of sin is death.

7- Dating is against God's will in our life. Why? If we date in the young age just for fun, we will be selfish because we enjoy, but

makes others stumble. If we date in that young age, looking for a future spouse is also wrong and against God's will, because we are not ready for marriage.

Choosing my future spouse needs prayer and God's guidance and support. He is the source of good gifts. We should ask Him a gift from His hands, because He knows well our needs, our characteristics, our capabilities and our future life. Choosing the future spouse should be in the proper time when the person is ready for marriage.

8- Dating in early age usually does not continue for a long time. Breaking of that relation leads to many psychological problems. This happens when one of the couple rejects the other or does not want to continue this relation. It may lead to depression or hatred.

Usually the youth change their minds from year to year, as they become more mature every successive year.

9- Dating in the early age will destroy our reputation in the society and among the relatives and friends. The bad reputation will continue for a long time, especially for girls.

10- Dating in the early ages is a satanic trick; Satan is a very harmful deceiver, who leads the children of God to commit adultery. Let us read what king Solomon says in the Proverbs about the way of a man with a virgin "There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yes, four of which I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a virgin" (Prov. 30:18, 19).

11- Dating in the young age is not physically and psychological healthy. For example, we cannot place a small bush in the ground in winter, while the instructions notify us to plant it in summer. There is a certain time for the complete maturity of any person.

12- Dating in the young age is time consuming without any benefit. We spend all our time in phone calls, messaging, face book, and e-mails. Time of our life is very precious and we must consume it wisely, gaining proper benefit. If we abuse this precious gift, we will be condemned when we will give account to God in the judgment day.

I am going to give few stories as examples of failure of dating of young age youth and even mature couples, showing the results of breaking their promises.

Story no. 1:

A youth came and told me that he fell in love with a girlfriend and he wanted that she would be his future spouse. She was

one of his colleagues in the Sunday class. I was the father of confession of both. The girl did not mention to me that she fell in love with that young man. He told me that she was shy and that he could not stop his emotions. He also told me that she considered that it was too early to promise him and she asked him to stop this rushing feeling, as they were both still in high school.

I tried to convince him to control his feelings towards her, because she was not ready to promise him or to think about marriage in that age. But he could not control himself and I found him watching her in every place she went to. He did not listen to my advice and continued in his emotions for three years, till both finished high school study. During that time, he discussed with me his feelings in many occasions, and he still refused to listen to my advices. He insisted that she would be his future wife, and he was going to discuss that matter with her parents after they finish their bachelor degree.

He did not control his emotions for seven years, and then he asked her that he would like to visit her parents in order to introduce himself asking for engagement. She came and told me that she did not want to continue in that friendship, and asked me to tell him her decision, but he insisted to continue in that feeling. Then she told him blankly that she did not want to continue in that friendship, because she had still many years to finish her study. When he told her that he would wait any number of years, she told him that she did not want to marry him. When I asked him to quit from that relation he got very disappointed and asked help from another priest, who told him to quit from his dream and to look after his study and his future.

When she finished her study and got a nice job, he directly asked her parents to bless his emotions, but they were polite with him and told him to look for another girl, because they did not feel that they were compatible. I asked the girl to tell him the same warding in order to stop his continuous messages. After one year she was engaged to another fellow, and he came to me crying and asking me to stop this engagement. He told me that all his dreams were vanished and his future was completely destroyed. He started to fall in deep depression. He spent two years under medication, till he was recovered and healed.

Story no. 2:

A couple were good friends in the church, and they went to the same university after they finished their high school. They were dating in the university, and I as their father of confession found them compatible. They were religious and lived in purity and righteousness throughout their university study. Their friendship became stronger day by day, and they were willing to get engaged after they finish their university study. I found that in the last four years of study that they become more faithful to each other, and I asked them to tell their parents. Asking my advice, I told them to pray and fast for few days, to see the will of God.

When they discussed that issue with their parents, both families agreed and they got engaged. The couple attended together the premarital retreat and they got good knowledge about successful Christian marriage. After the retreat, they answered the 130 questions separately and honestly. As a monitor, I found that about 30 % of the answers showed that they were not compat-

ible. When I met them and discussed with them the differences, both refused to submit to each other. Then I advised them to break the engagement and I discussed that matter with their parents, who agreed to break it.

We can conclude from this story that this mature couple were dating for long time, but they discovered that they were not compatible. What will be the case for young kids who have no experience in life, immature and not ready for marriage, trying to choose the future spouse in that age!

Story no. 3:

A boy and a girl fell in love when they were in high school. She succeeded with honor and was accepted to continue her study in a good university. He went to a community college, because he had been graduated in high school with a low score. After three years, she found that they would be scientifically not compatible. Her family did not agree that their daughter would get married to a person who was intellectually not compatible. The girl broke the relation, but he got disappointed and depressed.

Story no. 4:

A girl 18 years old came and told me that she was dating a man 22 years older than her. She found that he was a good model for successful men. He was smart man and had great eminent job. She told me that he was a well cultured man, in comparison with many ridiculous boys. She was dating this man for a year, without telling her parents. I tried to convince her that her feelings towards this man were dangerous, as it could lead to a miserable marriage. I asked her to take the advice of her parents, who blamed her and told her they would never agree that she continued in that relation. They were too harsh with her that she tried to commit suicide. I went to visit her friend and told him about the attitude of her parents to him. I spent a long time to convince him to stop this relation.

Story no. 5:

A graduate deacon came with his cousin and told me that they were dating for 6 years when she was in high school, and her mother blessed that relation. He told me that he would ask her father after 4 months - after her graduation. After that he came crying and told me that his uncle refused and insulted him badly. I knew that the reason for that refusal was that the boy was not rich enough and he could not achieve a luxurious life for his daughter. No one could convince her father to change his mind. The man was depressed and stayed suffering for long time, until I advised him to marry a well-educated Sunday school teacher, and after 2 years he was ordained as a priest. His cousin married a very rich man, but she died during delivery. Her cousin told me to pray for him, because he accused God, when his uncle refused to let him marry his cousin, asking God's forgiveness. He gave thanks to God because if he had got married to his cousin, he would have lived widow for all the rest of his life, because the rule of the church is that a widow priest cannot marry after the death of his wife. We can learn from that story that if we prayed asking the guidance of God who knows the future, we must trust Him that He will grants us gifts (compatible spouse) from his mighty hands in the proper time.

Watch Out for the Wolf!

It is sad but true: Some people in today's church are preying on innocent Christians. Here's how you can avoid becoming a victim.



What would you do if you became aware that a wolf was stalking you or someone you love? Imagine this nightmare scenario: You are washing clothes beside a rushing river. You think your only son is playing close by, but when you glance over to check on him, you don't see him. You call his name, but there is no reply. You rush to your cabin to look for him but he's not there. Desperate, you sprint outside and search frantically, calling his name. What you see next brings your whole world crashing down: Your son has been mercilessly mauled by a wild wolf. Devastated, you pick up his lifeless body and carry it home.

Spiritual Wolves

As believers, we face an equally ominous danger every day. On St. Paul's last day in Ephesus, he warned the leaders there to watch for it: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). St. Paul knew that after his departure, "savage wolves" would come stalking that would seek to prey upon the flock. The same kinds of spiritual predators abound in our day, and the tragic reality is that our friends and family are being targeted. The Lord makes it clear that we will face the wolf, so we must watch: "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). Watching for the wolf requires us to keep a few things in mind as we probe the wild frontiers in our spiritual journey.

First, we must accept the truth that people are like sheep. The prophet declared, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned, every one, to his own way" (Isa. 53:6). St. Peter explained, "You were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" (1 Pet. 2:25).

Why are we compared to sheep? Someone who grew up around sheep explained that our gentleness and inexperience leave us vulnerable to predators just as sheep are. Like sheep, we move in groups, become anxious in uncertain situations and are prone to wandering if we think the grass is greener somewhere else. Though it may be hard to admit, facing these tendencies in our own nature is the beginning of reducing our vulnerability to spiritual wolves.

Second, we have to realize that to reduce our risks against spiritual wolves; we must come into proper alignment with dedicated shepherds in the context of local churches. Though it's true that the Lord is our Shepherd, God has given us priests to equip us so that we will not be vulnerable to the spiritual dangers of our times (see Eph. 4:11, 14). Priests have the awesome responsibility of protecting and feeding the people that the Lord Jesus has added to the church. They care for the sheep and guide them when they are tempted to go astray. They are a part of the healing process for the injured, and they train others to help with the shepherding as the fold grows. Their responsibilities involve laying down their lives for the safety of the sheep. They must have pure motives, as they

are commanded to “shepherd the flock of God... serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly” (1 Pet. 5:2, 3). For their efforts, shepherds are promised an eternal reward.

Spiritual predators target those who stray from the flock. They sniff out the wounded and the weak. When they come hunting, a true shepherd grabs his club or slingshot and springs into action, just as the shepherd-king David did (see 1 Sam. 17:36). The Lord Jesus viewed this protective response as the difference between a true shepherd and a mere hireling (John 10:12). The importance of our connection with the local church cannot be overemphasized. It is a place of divine protection. No church is perfect, but God uses a healthy church as a spiritual sheepfold.

In biblical times a sheepfold was kind of round up surrounded by a strong wall. Shepherds were usually near water source and almost always had a watchtower for those who were watching for the wolf. Be aware that disappointments with the inevitable imperfections of a church can lead you to a distrust and isolation that attracts the attention of the wolf. Don't stray from your place of protection. Instead, choose gratitude for God's awesome provision of safety within a healthy church, seek to strengthen it for the sake of others, and pursue reconciliation if offenses arise.

Wolves of dogma:

Nothing exhausted and troubled the church of Christ more than the schisms and divisions which were caused by heretics like Arius who denied the Divinity of Christ and Macdonius, Eutichus, Nestorius, Sybilious, and in our modern times those who call themselves Jehovah Witnesses and Seven day Adventists and the like. All those who deviated from the Athanasius Creed and denied the church sacraments and separated themselves from the One only holy Catholic Orthodox Church, are considered spiritual wolves that devoured millions of innocent sheep. They deprived their victims from the real salvation and eternal life.

For such, St. Paul said, “I have fought with beasts in Ephesus” (1 Cor. 15:32). And also said, “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things to draw away the

disciples after themselves. Therefore, watch...” (Acts 20:28-30).

The Islamic wolves:

The Lord Jesus Christ prophesied and warned us in the Sermon on the Mount saying, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn-bushes or figs from thistles?” (Matt. 7:15).

All those who deny the Incarnation of Christ, His Divinity, His cross of redemption, His resurrection and the Holy Trinity are heretics and Spiritual wolves. Listen to St. John warning, “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, who does not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist... if anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine; do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds” (2 John 7-10). “Isis” gangs who carry the flag of Islam and commit the most vicious crimes in the name of their “Allah Akbar” are ravenous wolves. They are more vicious than the natural wolves claiming that they are applying the original edition of Islam according to their Quran! They are responsible for every horrible crime in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, America, France, England, Germany and all-over the world.

The Sexual wolf:

This vicious scoundrel is determined to sink his teeth into the emotionally vulnerable. Drawn to the lonely, insecure and naïve, the sexual wolf stalks his victims when he senses they will be easy pickings. At first, he may limit his methods to flattery, attention and suggestive words. But eventually his lust drives him toward the kill. If his seduction is successful, the results are devastating. Sexual wolves come into our churches and ministries burning with lust and intent on robbing the purity of men, women, unmarried and even married and even children. We need to watch as never before. Sexual wolves fear being discovered more than anything. A spiritual wolf desperately seeks a place where no one is watching. Watching for the wolf means we must repel without apology those who endanger the flock.

If a spiritual wolf threatens you, what should you do to protect yourself? Again, St. Paul's speech

to the Ephesian elders reveals the incredible protection the Lord has given us. The best defense believers have when confronted with a spiritual wolf involves three aspects:

the Word, Watching and Warning.

The Word of God will Keep you alert:

St. Paul was moved to remind the Ephesians that his confidence was in God and “the word of His grace” (Acts 20:32). Knowing God and His Word will plant an automatic wolf-detection system deep in your spirit. Like a spiritual alarm, it will go off in the presence of predators. The Word will build you up and give you an inheritance among God’s people, so be careful when some suggest that shepherds and sheepfolds are unimportant. The Word of His grace will guard you against the errors that distract you from your inheritance.

Watching in prayer will keep you safe.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples that watching was the key to avoiding the enemy’s traps (Mark 13:33; 14:38). Knowing this was a matter of spiritual life and death. St. Paul pled with the Ephesian priests “take heed and alert.” For three years he “never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31). Whatever we are leaders or followers if our sheepfolds are going to remain secure, we must stay in our watchtowers. Warning others will keep everyone informed. It takes more than simply discerning a wolf’s presence to keep us all safe. We must be willing to lift up our voices and become a clear signal to those who are in peril and don’t know it. Watchmen need to cry out when there is a wolf, and leaders need to listen when the sheep sound unsettled. St. Paul was willing to name those who saw as a danger. We must make everyone aware when peril is present. In times of both danger and opportunity, we can be grateful that God has placed His protection around us. Though the wolves are roaming, God has provided places of safety and victory for those He calls His own. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd, and he is passionately committed to His sheep. He calls us to be alert, to watch over one another and to confidently align ourselves in the places He has assigned us to in the kingdom. Nothing can defeat us on the frontiers of faith if we are wise enough to watch for the wolf.

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, The Unchanging Flower & The Mystical Rose



In our Prime Prayer (the Morning Prayer), we call Virgin Mary “The Second Heaven and the Bright and Unchanging Flower, and the ever Virgin Mother”. Sometimes, she is called the “Mystical Rose”.

One of the saints once said, “Eve was a thorn, wounding, bringing death to all. In Mary we see a rose soothing everybody’s hurts, giving the destiny of salvation back to all. Mary was a rose, white for maidenhood, red for love; white in body, red in soul; white in seeking after virtue, red in treading down vice; white in cleansing her affections, red in mortifying her flesh; white in her love of God, red in compassion for her neighbor.”

St. Mary, in our songs and praises is also called, the “True Vine who bears the cluster of life” and the “Olive Branch”. She is likened with the “Dove” and the “Turtle Dove” which symbolize meekness, humility, quietness, purity, patience and peace.

Our blessed Virgin also is the perfect “Bride” and the “Queen” that is praised according to her prophecy by the Holy Spirit, “All generations will call me blessed”.

In the month of August, while we celebrate the Fast that bears her name and the Feast of the Assumption of her blessed body, we remember her, honor and magnify her and show our gratitude to her because she brought forth unto us the Savior of the world; who came and saved our souls.



By Dr. Emile Goubran

Q: How can you worship a God who might send your children to Hell?

Would you send your child to an eternity of suffering, simply because of thoughts in their heads? If your child or children lead wonderful lives, but don't believe that Jesus Christ died for their sins, would you send them to hell? What if they just can't wrap their heads around the concept? Would you still send them to hell? If the answer is no, how can you love and worship a God who you believe would do that to your children? How can you think that is a fair and reasonable thing for anyone or anything to do?

A: There are actually two different questions here which are being run together, the first a psychological question ("How can you love and worship a God who you believe would do that to your children?") and the second a philosophical question ("How can you think that is a fair and reasonable thing for anyone or anything to do?").

The psychological question is nothing more than an emotionally loaded red herring. It is just an inquiry about one's personal psychological state. It is a request for an autobiographical report about one's subjective condition. As such, its answer will be person-relative and have nothing to do with objective truth.

A Word to the Wise: Whenever people pose questions beginning "Would you. . ." or "If you were. . .," then you know immediately that it is a question designed merely to put you in an awkward position, not to get at truth.

The irrelevance of the psychological question to truth is evident from the fact that even if one answered it negatively, it would have no implications at all for the truth of the doctrine of hell. Suppose I were one of those persons who would not or could not bring himself to do X. That implies nothing about the rightness/wrongness of doing X or the truth/falsity that someone does X. It's just about me and my personal psychology.

Moreover, your questions are in any case either based on false assumptions or are ambiguous. For example, you're assuming that God is to be thought of on the analogy of a private person rather than as someone exercising the official capacity of judge. A judge in a court of law would be forced to recuse himself from the case if his son or daughter were brought before him charged with a capital crime, precisely because his personal connection with the accused would tend to compromise his objectivity. Thus, your question is based on a false analogy.

Furthermore, are you talking about small children or adult children? Neither God nor I would send small children to hell, for they are not morally accountable. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 19.14). But adult children are no different than us and will be judged as morally responsible adults, just as we are.

Again, neither God nor I would send anyone to hell "simply because of thoughts in their heads." Where in the world did you

get that idea? People go to hell because they willingly reject God's forgiveness and resist His every effort to save them. In that sense, it's misleading to talk about God's "sending" people to hell. He desires and strives for the salvation of every person, but some freely resist His grace and so separate themselves from Him irrevocably. It's not His doing.

Again, assuming that we are talking about adult children (the only relevant category), what do you mean by "don't believe that Jesus Christ died for their sins"? If they don't believe because they are ignorant of the Gospel message, then they will not be judged on that basis. But if you mean that they knowingly and willfully reject Jesus Christ as their Savior, then, yes, God will judge them on that basis. The problem is not that they simply lack a certain belief but rather that they repudiate God's provision for their sin and so find themselves without a savior from the demands of retributive justice. None of us lives such a "wonderful life" that he deserves to go to heaven. "What if they just can't wrap their heads around the concept?" In that case, we're talking about either small children or mentally retarded adults, who will not be judged on the basis of what they cannot understand. Neither God nor I would condemn them.

So to sum up the psychological question, "How can you love and worship a God who you believe would do that to your children?" I guess I would answer that I know He would condemn them only if they deserved it. I trust in His justice. I also know that He loves them even more than I do and desires their salvation just as He desires mine. The only reason that they would be lost is if they freely and deliberately resisted God, just like a drowning man who again and again pushes away the life preserver thrown to him or the person who knows he has a fatal disease but willfully chooses not to take the antidote despite the pleas of his family. In such cases, how can you blame the rescuer or the doctor for their self-destructive course of action? God's heart breaks for the lost far more than mine does! That is my honest answer to the psychological question of how I can worship and love Him.

As for the philosophical question, "How can you think that is a fair and reasonable thing for anyone or anything to do?"

Jesus taught the reality of hell, and I have good reasons for thinking that he was who he claimed to be, the divine Son of God, and therefore an authoritative teacher. Moreover, there are no good defeaters of this doctrine, given such facts as (i) the universal reality of human evil and our profound need of forgiveness and moral cleansing,

(ii) God's holiness and justice,

(iii) God's will for universal human salvation and efforts to draw everyone freely to a saving knowledge of Himself.
(iv) Human freedom.



“My People, Egypt”

(Isaiah 19:25)

by John Awad
From St. John Youth



On May 21st, 2017, I received my diploma for completing graduate school while at the George Washington University. That day was one of celebration and joy. Thousands of families of various ethnic and religious backgrounds came together to see hundreds of their children achieve lifelong dreams after years of hardship, toil, and struggle. Adorned in our graduation regalia, we took pictures, smiled, hugged, and stood reminiscing over the last four years regarding how much we learned and accomplished in our short time spent in the capital of the United States. And in one of those pictures, I, along with fellow Muslim and Coptic classmates, held proudly the flag of our home nation, Egypt.

I speak of Egypt because Egypt is a part of me. No matter where I go or what journey I embark on, I will always be an Egyptian American. Egypt is the country that reared my mother and father. Egypt is the land in which many of my aunts and uncles, first cousins, and numerous other relatives live today. Egypt is the land of my Coptic heritage, a heritage that extends thousands of years to the people of ancient Egypt. It is a heritage that I am proud of and share with all whom I come across. I am inextricably tied to Egypt, and Egypt to me. Thus, as long as I live, how could I ever forget my country Egypt, and my brothers and sisters living there daily in fear for their lives?

In recent weeks and months, our Coptic community has been the target of numerous bombings and bloody massacres carried out by radical Islamic militants seeking to destabilize Egypt, eliminate Coptic Christians, and drive a gulf between us and our Muslim brethren in the country. In the last year alone, we have had a myriad of killings aimed at bringing our community to its knees. According to the Eshhad database (<https://eshhad.timep.org/database>) an “online platform that

aggregates and collates alleged religious persecution and sectarian attacks in Egypt”, there have been over 500 incidents of sectarian violence directed at Copts in Egypt since 2013 alone. Prominent among these are the following:

- May 26, 2017- at least 29 Coptic Christians killed by gunmen as they rode buses to visit Saint Samuel the Confessor Monastery in Minya
- April 9, 2017- 29 killed in bombing St. George’s Cathedral in Tanta and 18 killed in bombing at St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Alexandria
- February 2017- 7 killed in various incidents throughout Arish, including shootings and a beheading while over 140 Coptic families were forced to flee Arish for Ismailia due to pressure by Sinai insurgents
- December 11, 2016- 29 killed in a bombing in St. Mark’s Cathedral in Cairo.

Aside from these larger attacks, there have been isolated incidents including the murder of a Coptic storeowner in Alexandria on January 3rd, the murder of a Coptic husband and wife as they slept in Menoufia on January 6th, the slaying of a Coptic doctor in Assiut on January 13th, and the killing of a man on January 17th in Masr al-Qadima. All of this is indicative of the larger problem within Egypt—that Copts have been increasingly targeted and murdered for their faith while the Western world is largely silent.

But we in the West, afforded the liberties of democracy and free speech, do not have to be silent. While our brothers and sisters at home suffer greatly, with little in the way of freedom of speech and few options for respite, we possess an incredible platform to speak

out regarding these persecutions. In fact, it is our moral obligation to do so, and to do anything less is an evil in and of itself. Our Lord Christ at the beginning of His ministry reiterated the fundamental tenets of His mission as laid out in Isaiah 61:1-2: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19). Our families in Egypt are brokenhearted. They have lost so much and suffered for so long. They live in daily fear for their lives because of an unfair and naïve hatred perpetrated by darkness. They have been shot, bombed, burned, stabbed, beaten, and imprisoned for their love for Christ. And yet they still believe in Christ and they still love others and they still desire a unified Egypt where Muslims and Christians dwell together in peace and harmony.

We can learn so much from our families in Egypt if we pay attention to their patience and unwavering faith in these dark times. They neither call for retaliation nor death for the perpetrators of these crimes, crying out instead, “we forgive you”. And in terms of their faith, they shout, “with our soul and with our blood we redeem the cross”. They truly follow in the footsteps of the martyrs before them, who shed their blood so our Church can survive and so we can worship in safety in the US, Australia, Europe, Africa, Bolivia, and elsewhere while they cannot enjoy these same freedoms. Without their sacrifices, none of us would be able to sit where we are today and worship in peace each day.

The late Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, author, political activist, and Nobel Laureate among other things was quoted as saying, “The opposite of love is not hate, it’s indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it’s indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it’s indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it’s indifference.” Likewise, in the same thought, St. James in his epistle writes that “to him who knows to do good, and does not do it, to him it is a sin” (James 4:17). Therefore, in this light, it is our duty to make known the suffering of our Coptic brethren at home. We must tell the public around us what they are facing daily and how they are discriminated against in both law and everyday life. We must share proudly—both in person and social media—with our neighbors who we are and what we believe. We must keep alive the traditions handed down to us by our forefathers, the traditions that martyrs like Saints Abanob and Moses

the Strong and Mena sought to preserve. We must remember the names of every single person killed and lost in these attacks, asking for their prayers on our behalf and praying for the repose of their souls.

In practical terms, we can donate our money and time to charities like the Saint Verena Charity, Coptic Orphans, and others that visit the families of those martyred and offer financial, emotional, and spiritual support during these trying times. We should support efforts, such as those by Coptic churches across North America, to raise money for metal detectors to be placed outside of every church in Egypt for security purposes. We should reach out to members of our government to make them aware of these persecutions and ask that they not only condemn these killings but also offer support to Egypt and its Coptic people in the midst of these dangerous times. The United States and its citizens can have a sincerely positive humanitarian influence when we unite our voices together to say that we can no longer accept discrimination of any minority whether they be Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu or any other religion, creed, and ethnicity. And having been a persecuted minority back home, we should reach out to the marginalized minorities in the West and seek to serve them with love, drawing on our own experiences to fully engage these communities and assist them with all their needs.

Finally, we should live as Christ taught us, loving those who desire to harm us, blessing those who curse us, doing good to those who hate us, and praying for those who spitefully use and persecute us (Matthew 5:44). We genuinely pray for those who commit these atrocities that they may find love and peace, and turn away from this evil to find the Truth. We also pray for our Muslim neighbors in this time of Ramadan, that their holy month may be blessed and that we would live together as brothers and sisters in peace and harmony. We strongly condemn any harm against the Muslim community in the US as well, and seek to always maintain cordiality, peace and unity together as we build a better future here in the West.

Lastly, let us never forget our Coptic families. They died because they found something worth dying for, and that is something we should never be ashamed of. To forget them, is to forget our identity, and to essentially forget ourselves. May God watch over us always: Long live Egypt and long live the Egyptian people.



Bible IQ

Doves, Love Birds



The annual “wedding season” is upon us, and even if you aren’t invited to any nuptials this year, you’re probably aware that dove images (and sometimes live doves) are very much connected with weddings. Doves are among the few bird species that mate for life, which is why they have long been associated with matrimony. They are also the most mentioned birds in the Bible and are connected with some pivotal events in the Scriptures. ***See how much you know about these loving and highly symbolic-birds.***

1. How many times did Noah send out a dove from the ark?
2. Why do Christians use the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit?
3. What book refers several times to a man’s true love as “my dove”?
4. What other birds besides doves could the Israelites offer as sacrifices?
5. Which Gospel mentions Jesus’ mother Mary offering a sacrifice of doves in the temple?
6. Jesus told His followers to be as innocent as doves but as wise as.....?
7. What prophet lamented, “We moan mournfully like doves? We look for justice, but find none”?
8. When Noah’s dove returned to the ark a second time, what was in its beak?
9. According to the Song of Solomon, the cooing of doves is a sign of what season?
10. What Old Testament prophet’s name actually means “dove”?

Psalms (55:6): “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.”

Word Connections

- prophet ended up...
- Lord’s command, but you know where the yona, meaning “dove”. Jonah fled from the 10. Jonah, which in the original Hebrew is the turtle is being the turtledove.
- old King James Version, reads “The voice of 9. Spring, of course (2:12). The wonderful 8. A freshly plucked olive leaf (Gen 8:11). 7. Isaiah (59:11). translation) (Matt. 10:16). 6. Snakes (or serpents depending on your not rich. sacrifice, so we know Mary and Joseph were 5. Luke (2:24). Doves were the poor folks’ same family- as sacrifices. 4. None. The Old Testament Law allowed only doves and pigeons-which are of the “dovey” (as well as lovey) book of the Bible (1:15, 2:14, 4:1, 5:2, 5:12, 6:9) 3. The Song of Solomon, certainly the most God descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. 2. All four gospels state that the Spirit of 1. Three. When it did not return the third times, Noah knew it had found a resting place, so the floodwater had receded (Gen. 8)

Answers [opposite direction]

The 70 Seventy



In Luke 10, the Lord appointed 70 seventy men to go out as missionaries-and as apostles. Though not so prominent as the twelve, the seventy carried out their missions with fervor and enthusiasm.

The Tradition of the Church confirms that the Seventy remained true to the Lord and their calling, fulfilling a vital role in the spread of the gospel. There were not random choices of accidental volunteers but true disciples, true apostles, whose labors carried the message of their Lord throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.

Though lists of the Seventy vary somewhat, all are remembered in the calendar of the Church and the record of their work is preserved in accounts handed down through the centuries from place to place, especially in these locations where they labored. To tell the stories passed down in the Church connecting all the Seventy would fill a book of considerable size, but the compromise of telling the stories of a few, both prominent and relatively obscure members, will relate the conviction and faith of this illustrious body.

Barabbas, a Jew of the tribe of Levi, was born in Cyprus of wealthy parents. He is said to have studied under Gamaliel with Saul of Tarsus, who was to become Paul the Apostle. Originally named Joseph, he was called Barnabas (son of consolation) by the Apostles (Acts 4:36) because he had a rare gift of comforting the hearts of people. He who sought out Paul when everyone else was afraid of him, bringing him to the apostles. And it was Barnabas who was first sent by the apostles to Antioch to find out what was going on there (Act. 11:22).

Barnabas sought out Paul to work with him, and their long association was broken only when Barnabas was determined to take his cousin Mark, who Paul did not trust just then, on a missionary journey. The mutual relationships among the three were later healed (Col. 4:10). Many Ancient accounts say Barnabas was the first to preach in Rome and the first in Milan, but he was martyred

in Cyprus, and then buried by Mark at the western gate of the city of Salamis.

Among the more prominent of the Seventy was the Apostle Titus, whom Paul called his brother (2 Cor. 12:18), and his son (Titus 1:4). Born in Crete, Titus was educated in Greek philosophy, but after reading, the Prophet Isaiah he began to doubt the value of all he had been taught. Hearing the news of the coming of Jesus Christ, he joined some others from Crete who went to Jerusalem to see for themselves. After hearing Jesus speak and seeing His works, the young Titus joined those who followed. Baptized by the Apostle Paul, he worked with and served the great Apostle to the gentiles, travelling with him until Paul sent him to Crete, making him Bishop of that city. It is said that he was in Rome at the time of beheading of St. Paul and he buried the body of his spiritual father before returning home. Back in Crete, he converted and baptized many people, governing the Church on that island until he entered into rest at age of ninety-four.

There are many less prominent among the Seventy who also labored for Christ unto death. Aristarchus, whom Paul mentions several times (Acts 19:29; Col. 4:10, Philemon 24), calling him a "fellow laborer," became bishop of Apamea in Syria. Sosthenes (Acts 18:17); 1 Cor. 1:1) became bishop of Caecarea, and Tychicus (Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12; Titus 3:12) succeeded him in that city. Simeon (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3) son of Cleopas (who was the brother of Joseph the betrothed of the Virgin Mary) succeeded James as bishop of Jerusalem. Aristobulus (Rom. 16:10), the brother of the Apostle Barnabas, preached the gospel in Britain and died peacefully there.

The lives of these few are quite representative of the Seventy who were instrumental in helping to plant the Church throughout the world.

Many became bishops, but the names of all are numbered in heaven in the Book of Life, as faithful servants of the Lord, apostles and foundations of the Church.

Satan Schemes, God Redeems

By Joni Eareckson



"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." (Genesis 50:20)

God always exploits Satan's evil intentions and uses them in His own service -- just one more example of God's ability to work "out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (Ephesians 1:11).

Satan intends the rain that ruins a church picnic to cause Christians to grumble against their Lord; God uses the rain to develop their patience. Satan plans to hinder the work of an effective missionary by arranging for him to trip in the jungle and break a leg; God allows the accident so that the missionary's godly response to pain and discomfort will bring glory to Himself. Satan brews a hurricane to kill thousands in a small village in Bangladesh; God uses the storm to display His awesome power, to show people the awful consequences that sin has brought to the world, to drive some to search for Him, to harden others in their sin, and to remind us that He is free to do as He pleases. We will never figure Him out.

Satan schemed that a seventeen-year-old girl named Joni would break her neck, hoping to ruin her life; God sent the broken neck in answer to her prayer for a closer walk with Him.

As a friend once said, "God sends things, but Satan often brings them. Praise God that when Satan causes calamity, we can answer him with the words that Joseph answered his brothers with when they sold him into slavery, 'You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.'"

Sovereign Lord, You are all-wise and powerful, able to abort devilish schemes always to serve Your own ends and purposes. Suffering is a mystery but not so much a mystery that I cannot trust You.

Short Stories



1- THE OBEDIENT WIFE

There was a man who had worked all of his life, saved all of his money, and was a real miser when it came to his money. Just before he died, he said to his wife, "When I die, I want you to take all my money and put it in the casket with me. I want to take my money to the afterlife with me.

And so he got his wife to promise him with all of her heart that when he died, she would put all of the money in the casket with him.

Well, he died. He was stretched out in the casket. His wife was sitting there in black, and her friend was sitting next to her. When they finished the ceremony and just before the undertakers got ready to close the casket, the wife said: "Wait just a minute!" She had a box with her. She came over with the box and put it in the casket. Then the undertakers locked the casket down, and they rolled it away.

So, her friend said 'Girt, I know you weren't fool enough to put all that money in there with your husband?' The loyal wife replied, 'Listen, I am a Christian, I can't go back on my word. I promised him that I was going to put that money in that casket with him. -You mean to tell me you put that money in the casket with him!!!?

-Sure did,' said the wife. 'I got it all together, put it into my account and wrote him a check. If he can cash it, he can spend it!'



SUMMER IS HERE!

At last, the days of summer have arrived! Even if your own school days are long behind you, there is still something pleasant and unique about the change of season at this time of year. On the long, slow, hot days of summer, life slows down, and nature invites us to savor moments of relaxation with friends, family and the beauty of the outdoors.

5 Ways to benefit most of the summer?

1- Keep God first:

Keep Jesus at the center of your life, through daily Bible reading and study. Remember that “In Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Always, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). When you put Christ as your first priority, He will also make you number one, because He promised, “I honor those who honor Me; but those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Sam. 2:30). So, make for yourself a good program to read and understand as much as possible of the Bible every day and share that with your friends.

2. Select:

Select good friends who share with you

your views, and love the Lord, the church and the Bible.

The Bible warns us that “**Bad company corrupts good manners**” (1 Cor. 15:33). Bad friends will teach you drugs, sex and poisonous garbage that destroy your mind soul, morals, reputation and future. So, keep yourself clean. Also, select some activities in the church to invest your talents and hobbies and consult your father of confession

3. Enjoy:

Enjoy good sports, in the church summer club, such as basket ball, volley ball or rackets and some light entertainments like ping-pong or chess etc.

St. Paul advises his young disciple Timothy saying, “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8).

4. Incorporate spiritual reading:

Make time for some reading during your downtime or leisure time. Do not spoil much time before TV or face- book or cell phone. Nourish your mind and soul by reading church history, biography of the famous saints and heroes of faith. Read St. John magazine and other good magazines and pamphlets. Visit the church bookstore and you will find wonderful selections of books, tapes and videos. Note that reading is a biblical advice, “**Give attention to reading**” (1 Tim. 4:13).

5. Pray:

Prayer and talking to God your Savior is a great privilege and enjoyment. The Lord Jesus gave us a living example by His prayers at the early morning and at midnight and in all occasions. He joined everything with His prayer.

He showed us that prayer is a heavenly power that can move mountains and move the hand of God that controls everything. It is the secret of the successful happy and victorious life.

You can pray wherever you are, no matter how far from home. Try to begin or end each day with a thanksgiving prayer and enrich your prayer with your own supplications for your family, friends, even enemies if exist, and for your leaders and country and for the safety and salvation of the entire world. The word of God teaches us to pray unceasingly. The church teaches us to pray seven times a day through the Agpya book of prayer. Consistent prayer will help you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and to have strong impact on others around you. Wherever your summer plans take you, I pray that this season will be filled with peace and refreshment for your mind, body and soul. I love to hear from you, so let me know what is going on in you corner of the world this summer. May God bless you during the long, beautiful days that lie ahead!

Congratulations

Wedding

Baptism



St. John Church and the Deaconesses congratulate
Mariam Youssef & Andrew Kravig
on their blessed Marriage, wishing them health, happiness and building a true Christian home on the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ, His word and His church.



St. John Church congratulates
Rachel Aziz & Andrew Boghdady
on their blessed Marriage, wishing them health, happiness and building a true Christian home on the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ, His word and His church.



St. John Church congratulates
Melissa Soule & Andrew Aziz
on their blessed Marriage, wishing them health, happiness and building a true Christian home on the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ, His word and His church.



Congratulations to Mina & Marina Said for the Baptism of their child
Patrick
May the Lord Jesus bless his life; grant him health and growth in body and spirit.



St. John church congratulates Ramez Tawfik & Rasha for the baptism of their son
Alexander (John)
May God bless his second birth and grant him health, strength and long life in Christ.

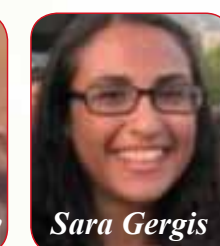
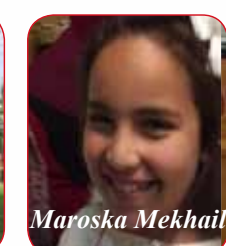
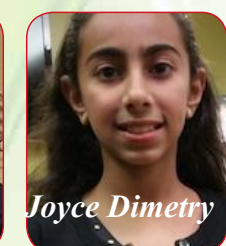
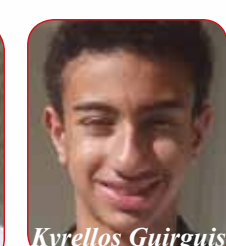
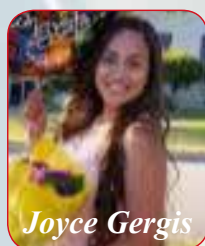
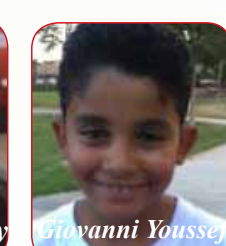
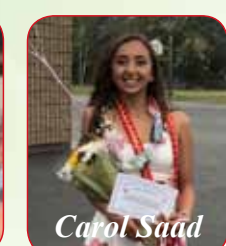
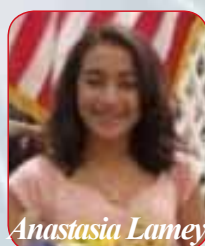
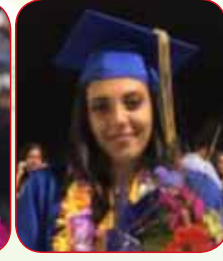
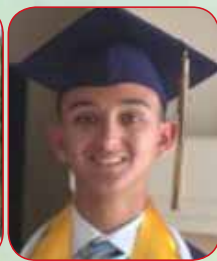


Congratulations to Naeem & Amira Girgis Said for the Baptism of their child
David
May the Lord Jesus bless his life; grant him health and growth in body and spirit.

Graduation.2017

St. John Church, Covina congratulates her beloved children, the College, High School and Junior High graduates, class of 2017, praying that the Lord Jesus Christ may bless their lives with continuous success in both spiritual and practical life:

John Boutros Mariam Tadros Andrew Saleeb Michael Hadeed Anna Shehata Beshoy Kamel Angie Nasseif



معرض الكتاب السنوي

أجتماعات أبونا بولس جورج يونيو ٢٠١٧



حفل الخريجين

Graduation 2017

College

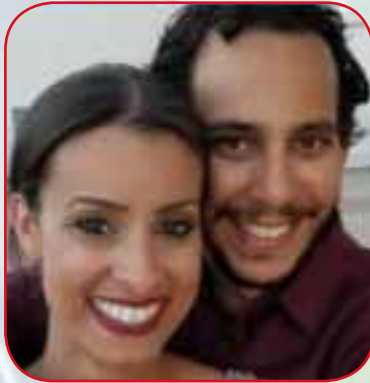
Post Graduates



Mina Habib

+ Congratulations Mina on completing your Master's Degree in Structural Engineering. We are so proud of you. Thank God for His grace; we pray that He may continue to bless you in every step you take- Dad. Mom and Michael.

+ St. John church, deacons & Sunday school congratulate Deacon Mina Habib for his great achievement and success asking the Lord Jesus to bless his life and goals, and reward him for his blessed service, good example and fruits.



Christine Soliman

Congratulations Christine and Dr. Jacob for having Master Degree and wish you to complete your PhD soon



John Awad, MD

Congratulations Dr. John for your wonderful accomplishment and graduating from George Washington University School of Medicine. We ask the Lord Jesus to bless your life, talents, services, activities and grant you continuous Success- St. John Church, Family and Church Magazine.

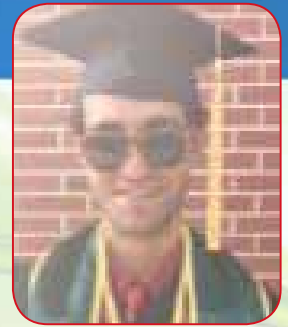


Diane Bolose

Congratulations Diane for earning MBA, a Master of Business Administration from California State University in Fullerton. May our good Lord continue to bless you always in all the fields of life-St. John Church, and Family



Monica Ghaly



Matthew Tadros



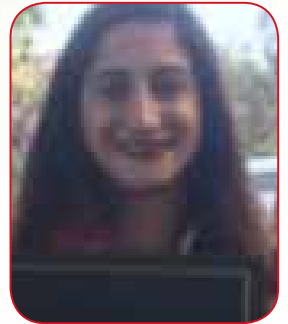
John Sedaros



Youssef Beshay



Andrew Zakaria



Joan Hana



Mark Bolose



Mariam Saad



Andrew Misak



Mina Boutros