

ST. JOHN

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The Feast of Christ's Entrance Into Egypt

On the first of June of every year (24 Bashans) our Church celebrates the feast of Christ's entrance into the land of Egypt.

This incident happened as a fulfillment to the prophecy of Isaiah the prophet (750 B.C.) which says: "The Lord is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt." (Isa 19:1)

St. Cyril the great (the 24th patriarch of Alexandria) said that the "cloud" was a symbol to the Virgin Mary, who carried the child Jesus on her arms as they escaped from king Herod to the land of Egypt.

The route of the Holy Family inside Egypt was as follows:

- The Holy Family reached, first, the city of Farama on the Red Sea.
- On the second day they entered into a village called Basta, where a man named Kallom welcomed them at his home.
- After a few days the child Jesus went with His mother seeking water to

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drink. As they walked, they passed by a heathen temple, all the idols of which, immediately fell down and shattered to pieces. This was to fulfill the second part of Isaiah's prophecy: "The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence."

This miracle angered the governor of the region, who then asked the family to leave the city.

- From there they traveled to Belbeis, where they lodged for a few days before leaving for Samanoud.
- They then traveled into the desert, and spent some time at the present site of the Syrian Monastery in Wadi-el-Natrun.
- Afterwards, they went to Babylon (Old Egypt) where the church of Abo-Sarga was later built.
- From there they went to Matariah where a very old tree, which the Family rested underneath, still survives until today.
- Then they traveled from Maadi by ship to upper Egypt and visited Gabal-el-Terr (the bird's mount), near Ashmonen, Menya.



- Their final visitation was to Mount Coskam, where the current Dayr el-Muharraq is located.

Excerpt from the Gospel of St. Matthew:

"When Herod died, an angel of the Lord, suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.'" Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel, and dwelt in the town of Nazareth."(Mat 2:19-23)

The entire period that the Holy Family remained in Egypt was two years, five months and twelve days. The most of their time was spent in traveling from place to place. The reason for their many unscheduled travels was due to the persecutions they faced from pagan priests. The priests were angered because as our Lord passed by their pagan temples, the idol "gods" and statues would immediately collapse to their destruction, falling on their faces.

This parallels the incident of when the Philistines captured the Ark of God and brought it into the house of their god Dagon. "And when they rose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold; only the torso of Dagon was left to it."(1Sam 5:4)

Some Biblical reasons of why we have to be proud of our native country, Egypt:

- Egypt was the only country in the world which the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Family visited outside of His birthplace, Israel.
- Egypt has a distinguished place in the scripture from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation. In Genesis, Egypt was likened to the garden of the Lord (Gen 13: 10). And in revelation : “ The great city which spiritually is Egypt, where also the Lord was crucified”(Rev 11:8). That is for the great and continuous persecution which the Christian Orthodox Church suffered in Egypt throughout the ages. And that is why we can call Egypt as the second Jerusalem.
- Egypt became a refuge, not only for the Lord Jesus, but also to many prophets, like: Abraham (Gen. 12), Jacob (Gen. 46), Joseph (Gen. 37), Moses (Exodus 2), Jeremiah (Jer. 43:6,7).
- At Alexandria, Egyptian Jews translated the Old Testament into Greek (The Septuagint) between about 250 and 150 B.C., and this became the Bible of Early church (see the encyclopedia of the Bible, volume 1, page 662).
- The Egyptian Orthodox Church is a unique church which was a subject of a prophecy by Isaiah the prophet (750 B.C.). “There will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt” (Isa 19:19). This prophecy had been fulfilled when St. Mark the evangelist and author of the second gospel established the Egyptian Church - which is well known as the church of Alexandria - in the middle of the first century.
- The church of Egypt is an apostolic church, the one that kept the true faith for all the churches of the world by defending the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, and dictating the Nicene Creed by St. Athanasious, the 20th pope of Alexandria.

- Finally, Egypt was blessed by the appearances of our lady St. Mary in the church of Zytun (1968) and Shobra (1986).
- Egypt, which was the “Mother of civilization” in the ancient times, has now become the mother of spirituality and blessing to the rest of the world, hence deserving the Lord's words:

“Blessed be Egypt My people” (Isa 19:25).

Who are the Seraphim and the Cherubim?

We hear those two words in the divine liturgy and repeated in hymns and psalmodies. Who are they?

They are high rank angels, heavenly creatures of virtuous nature. They are holy, powerful and obedient serving spirits, that praise and worship God.

The word 'Seraphim' is the plural of the word 'Saraph' which describes those who are ignited with fire. This signifies that they are fervent and powerful in their love to God.

These heavenly hosts are mentioned in Isaiah 6:1-7, praising God without ceasing, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.”

They are always present before the divine throne enjoying the divine presence, but the scriptures did not mention that they participated in serving mankind as other angelic hosts.

The Seraphim have six wings, with two they cover they faces, with two they cover their feet and with two they fly. Covering the face denotes to fear and respect covering the feet signifies dignity.

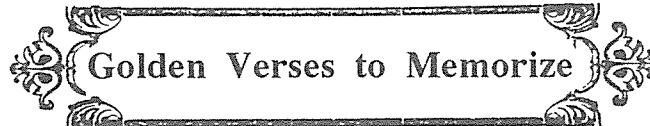
The Cherubim (Carobim) is the plural form of Cherub (Caroub), meaning, fullness of knowledge. The word Cherubim is also mentioned several times in the Holy Bible and the word Carobim is mentioned in the book of Genesis.(Gen. 3:24) It is also mentioned when speaking about the tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai, and the altar of the old testament. God talked to Moses the prophet between the two Cherubim, which was on the Ark of the Covenant during the journey of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai (Exo. 25:18-22). The name of this angelic host was associated with God considerably that David the Psaltest said about God, “He who sits above the Cherubim and rides on a Cherub”(Ps. 18:10).

When God appeared to Ezekiel the Bible mentioned: “Then the Cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them and the glory of the God of Israel was over them” (Ezek. 11:22).

The sculpture of Cherubim on the temple of Solomon was to declare the presence of God in the altar before all the children of Israel.(1Kings 6:23)

The Cherubim also praise God as the Seraphim. This is why the priest in the divine liturgy prays: “You are He, round whom stand the Cherubim, full of eyes, and the Seraphim with six wings, praising continuously; Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your holy glory.”

The scriptures tell us that the fallen angels were from the Cherubim i.e. the angels of knowledge, because knowledge leads to pride, and pride leads to fall. The devil said, “I will be like the Most High.” (Is 14:14, Ezek 28:14-19) But the seraphim, the angels of love never fell because “love never fails.”(1 Cor. 13:8)



Golden Verses to Memorize (I)

How can you memorize by heart the Biblical Golden verses with their references ?

The first rule:

Start with the easy verses of which the number of the chapter is the same number of the verse.

12 Examples:

1. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4 & Luke 4:4)
2. “Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4)
3. “ The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Romans 5:5)
4. “All night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping.” (Psalm 6:6)
5. Ten occasions show the importance of the word of God in our daily life. (Deuteronomy 6:6)
6. Jesus said: “ I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)
7. “He who endures to the end shall be saved. ” (Mark 13:13)

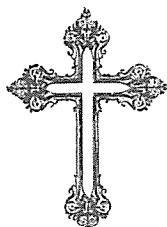
8. “ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13)
9. “He who despises the word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded.” (Proverbs 13:13)
10. The fall of the devil because of his pride, after he was a great angel when he said: “ I wil be like the the most high.” (Isaiah 14:14)
11. “ The Lord shall fight for you, and you have only to keep silent.”
(*in other translations, the last part is: to keep still. / or "you shall hold your peace."*) (Exodus 14: 14)
12. The establishment of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt in the prophecies of Isaiah the prophet, year 750 B.C.: “ IN THAT DAY THERE WILL BE AN ALTER TO THE LORD IN THE MIDST OF THE LAND OF EGYPT. ” (Isaiah 19:19)

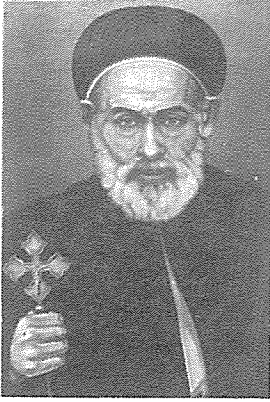
From Paradise of the Holy Fathers:

On Fasting

Abba Joseph asked Abba Poemen what was the proper way in which to fast, and Abba Poemen said unto him, “ I prefer the man who eats everyday a very small quantity of food, and who does not satisfy his cravings for food.” And Abba Joseph said unto him, “When you were a young man, didn't you fast for two days at a time, O father?” Then the old man said to him, “Yes, I did, and three days at a time, and four days at a time, and even a week at a time; and the old men, like men of might, have tried all these by experience, but they have found that it is beneficial for a man to eat an exceedingly small quantity of food each day, and because of this they have delivered to us an easy way to the Kingdom.”

Abba Daniel used to say, “ In proportion as the body grows, the soul gets weaker; and the more the body becomes weaker, the more the soul grows.”





Anba Abraam
(Bishop of Fayyum)

Saint Abraam I, or Aphraam (1829-1914), bishop of the Fayyum noted for his holiness and devotion to the poor (feast day: 3 Ba'unah, June 10) .

Bishop Abraam was born under the name of Bulus. According to the Copto-Arabic Synaxarion, his birthplace was in the district of Mallawi of Minya. He received his early education in the village scriptorium, where he read the Bible, memorized the Psalms and practiced church singing. He was ordained deacon at his village church by Anba Yusab, bishop of Sanabu.

At the age of nineteen he took the monastic vow at Dayr al-Muharraq near Asyut, under the name of Bulus Ghubriyal al-Muharraqi. There he remained for the next five years, during which he was elevated to the rank of Hegumenos.

In the meantime, his monastic colleagues elected him head of their monastery. Because of his devotion to the poor, the monastery became a refuge to all the less fortunate people of the community, whom he aided unreservedly by the use of its income. In the long run, the monks became dissatisfied with his ways, which they considered as sheer dissipation of the fortunes of the monastery. They complained

to Anba Marcus, archbishop of Beheira, who decided to relieve him from the headship of al-Muharraq.

Eventually, he moved to the monastery of Our Lady, known as Dayr al-Baramus in Wadi al-Natrun. There, he concentrated on biblical studies and became closely acquainted with the head of that institution, John the Scribe (Yuhanna al-Nasikh) who later became patriarch Cyril V. Later, in 1881, Pope Cyril V appointed him bishop of Fayyum, where he became identified as the father of the poor , who became known as ekhwat el Maseeh' (brethren of Christ). When the patriarch offered to elevate him to the rank of metropolitan, he declined on the premise that the Bible mentioned only the titles of presbyter and bishop.

His sanctity became known, and people of all faiths, including Muslims, came to seek his blessings. He gave all his possessed to the needy and was able to conduct a strict ascetic life in his busy life as a bishop. The stories of miracles which he performed soon became so numerous that not only were the people of Fayyum touched by his holiness, but even people of far off places and countries. At his death on 3 Ba'unah (June 10, 1914) his funeral was attended by more than ten thousand people, including Muslims as well as Copts. His remains were deposited in the grave he had prepared for himself at Dayr al-Azab in the Fayyum, which became a pilgrrmage. *May the blessings of this Great Saint be with us all Amen.*

Self Criticism : *Shortcomings*

*Telling half of the truth
& Concealing the other half !*

Half the truth does not represent the truth. It is considered sometimes a kind of lying and cheating, because it does not give a full picture of the truth. Therefore, telling half of the truth and hiding the other half, does not please God or people.

When a witness swears at court to tell the truth, the judge asks him to tell "THE WHOLE TRUTH" and nothing but the truth. The whole truth is required, or else there will be no truth at all.

Each party wants to say only what is in his favor, and hides what could be taken against him. For example, a husband may complain bitterly of his wife, so that any listener would think that she must be a devil ! But after listening to the wife you will be surprised by discovering the other half of the truth, which the husband hid deliberately. You may find out that the husband has similar or more serious faults, which caused his wife's faults, and vice versa. Accordingly, we should not believe one party without listening to the other . The truth will be completed if we give both sides a chance for confrontation.

Someone may think he is smart to conceal half of the truth, but he is in fact deceiving himself in the first place, because he can not deceive all the people all the time, and can not deceive God who will reveal the whole truth in the due time. Moreover, he is a loser, for he will lose the trust and respect of others in all what he says or does.

On the other hand, it is not right to mention the faults of others and hide their good points and virtues, because this also is just a half truth.

So, let us be courageous enough to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, without swearing. Let us now face our weaknesses, and attack our lack.

Meeting Times

1. Sunday Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:30 A.M.
2. Sunday English Liturgy 8:00 - 11:00 A.M.
3. Wednesday Liturgy from 8:00 - 10:00 A.M.
4. Friday Liturgy 9:00 - 11:00 A.M.
5. Saturday Vespers from 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. including Bible Study from the Old & New Testaments.
6. The Arabic youth meeting: 7:30 - 9:30 P.M.
7. The youth meeting (English): Saturday from 7:30 - 9:00 P.M.
8. The deacon's meeting: Friday 6:00 - 7:30 P.M.
9. The Sunday school teacher's meeting: Sunday following the Liturgy at 1:00 - 2:00 P.M.

Church News

1. On May 28, 91 His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, ordained our beloved deacon Farouk Samaan a priest under the name of Fr. Samuel Samaan to serve the church of St. Antony & St Abanoub in Corona and Norco. St. John's Church thanks His Holiness the Pope for his good choice, and congratulates "Abouna Samuel" wishing him the best in his new ministry.
2. His Grace Bishop Yacoubos of Zacazik visited St. John Church Friday June 7, and talked to the youth about the "Characteristics of The Church of The Apostles". His Grace, also will bless us by serving the Divine Liturgy on Friday, June 14 from 9-11 A.M.
3. The church held her 2nd. annual Family Conference in Arrowhead Springs, through the long weekend, May 25-27. More than 200 persons attended, and seventy of the youth had their own program. We had three guest-speakers, Rev. Fr. Salib Sorial who talked about "The Family Problems, Cause And Remedy", Rev. Fr. Dr. Youssef Abdu, talked about the "Democracy of The Christian Family", and Rev. Fr. Bassillios, from St. Louis who shared in the final open discussion. Fr. Georgious talked about "Parents and Children". The conference was a great success and blessing, and the participants requested to make it twice a year.
4. The church will make a picnic on Thursday the 4th of July, to Catalina Island for one day in a private beach with a tour inside the island, and dinner. The cost is \$ 40.00 per person. For reservation, call Mr. Samir Tadros, Phone (714) 860-6241.
5. The church will also make her second annual trip to Egypt for three weeks, from July 13th. to August 3rd. For reservation call Mr. Ramsis Wassef, Phone (818) 285-1569.
6. The church is planning to open the summer club, for youth, children and families, starting from Saturday June 15.
7. A new public phone was installed in the open area, close to the library, and its number is (714) 599-9075. The other church phone # is (714) 592-8847 and it is the same church Fax number.
8. The church doubled its parking lot area and prepared a large piece of land, about two acres, to be used as a summer club, basketball,volleyball, ping-pong, and other games and activities. The church thanks Mr. Azmy Tadros, Mr. Samir, and Mr. Wahid Tadros who performed this great service, asking the Lord to reward them richly for a job well done.