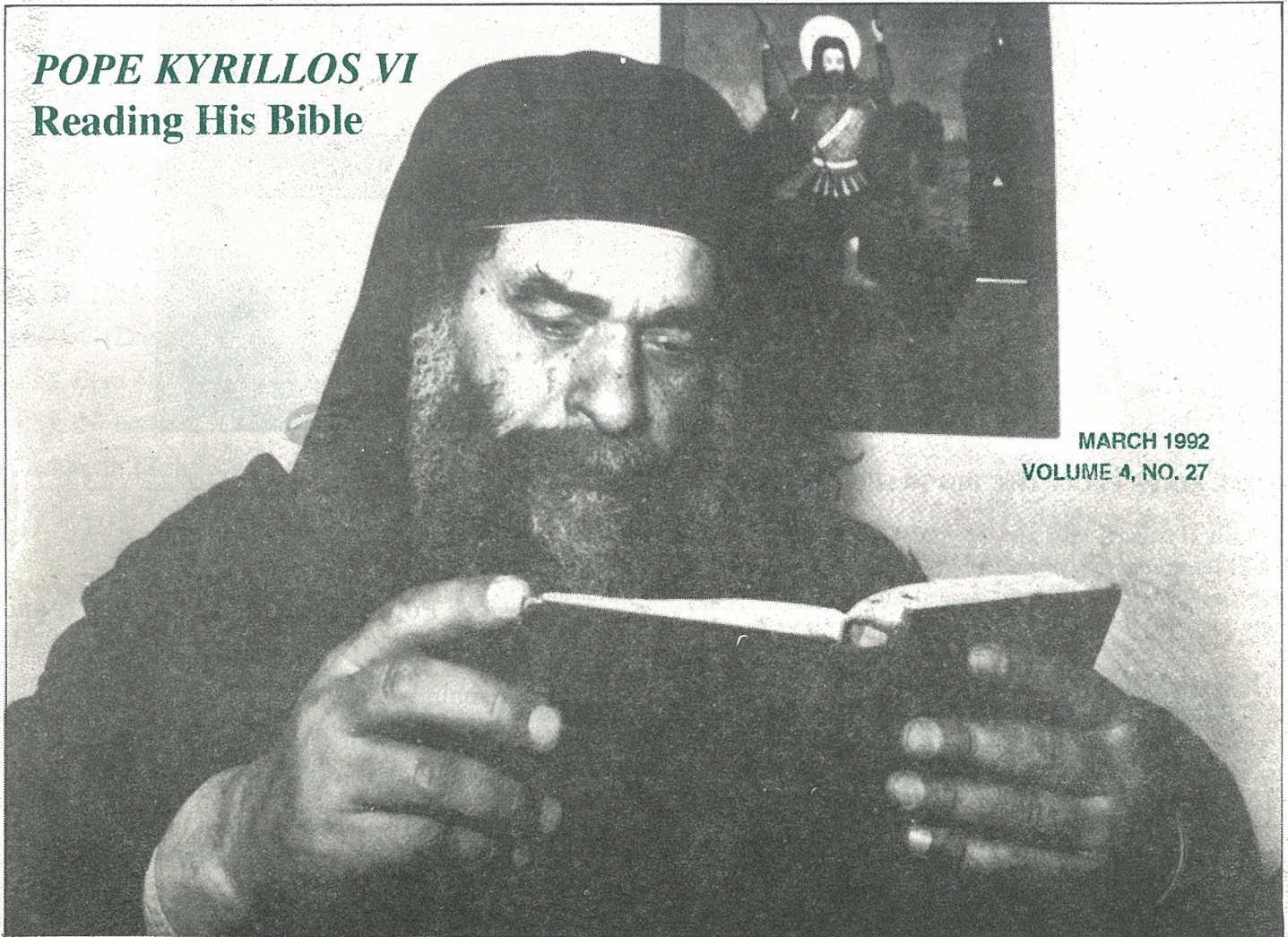


ST. JOHN

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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POPE KYRILLOS VI
Reading His Bible



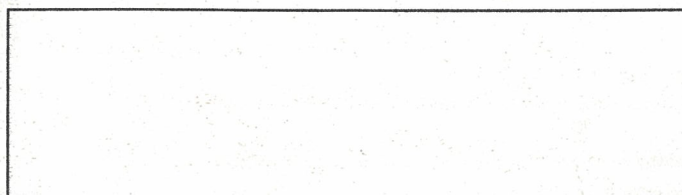
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SOME LINES FROM THE BIOGRAPHY OF POPE KYRILLOS VI

Born in August 1902 and was called Azer. He entered the Monastery of El-Baramous on July the 27th 1927. He was ordained a monk on February 25th 1928 and was named Mina. He was ordained a priest on July 31st, 1931.

He pursued a **life of solitude** at El Natron Valley⁽¹⁾, then in a windmill in El Moukatam mountain⁽²⁾. He built a church at ancient Cairo under the name of **St. Mina**. He lived in this Church till his ordination as a patriarch in 1959. Before his ordainment, he headed the Monastery of Saint Anba Samuel⁽³⁾ the Confessor at **Zawarah**⁽⁴⁾.

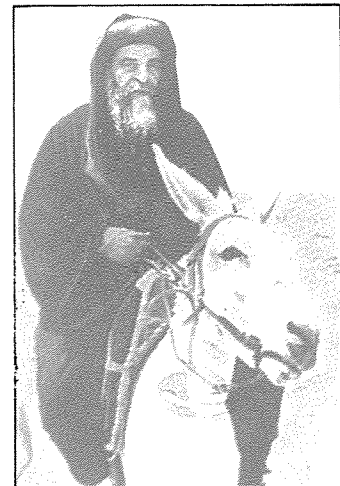
He was ordained a Patriarch, on Sunday May 10th, 1959. In his era, many achievements were carried out. Amongst which are:

The renovation of the ancient cathedral of Saint Mark, the establishment of the Monastery of **St. Mina** at Mariout, and the new cathedral at Anba Rouis. For the first time, in the history of the Coptic Orthodox church, he established Coptic Orthodox churches in Asia, America, Canada and Australia. He sent priests to undertake religious services in Europe and Africa. He restored the body of St. Mark from Italy. In his era, Virgin Mary transfigured at Zaitun. The movements monasticism, translation as well as social service flourished. Many churches were built. He made the sacred unction⁽⁵⁾

1. This valley is situated between Cairo and Alexandria.
2. This mountain is situated at the outskirts of Cairo.
3. Anba- It is a word originating from the word Abba i.e. Father
4. Zawarah is a city in upper Egypt.
5. The sacred unction is used for anointing the body of the person after being baptized, with the view of being sacred as the temple of God.

البابا والرئيس عبد الناصر وامبراطور اثيوبيا في
حفل الافتتاح يوم ٢٥ / ٦ / ١٩٦٨

The Pope, President Abdel Nasser, and
Emperor of Ethiopia on the
inauguration of
the Cathedral (25/6/1968)



ORTHODOXY III

by
Maged Attia

FASTING



One of the major characteristics of the Orthodox Church is the practice of fasting. This is a practice which has its roots in the scriptures. It was practiced by Moses (Ex. 40:28), Elijah (1 Kgs. 19:8), David (2 Sam. 12:16) & (Ps. 109:24), Daniel (Dan. 1:8-16), Joel (Jl. 3:5), Ezra (Ez. 8:21), Esther (Es. 4:3), Nehemiah (Nh. 1:4), and Zachariah (Zch. 8:9). In the New Testament, The Lord Christ fasted forty days and forty nights (Matt. 4:20) and the apostles fasted (Acts 13:2-3 & 27:21). Built on such strong scriptural foundations and inspired by countless examples from the early fathers, the Orthodox Church, has since the Apostolic age faithfully preserved the practice of fasting.

The Orthodox concept of fasting is an expression of love towards God, whereupon, the life of the spirit is elevated above the body. Fasting is accompanied by fervent prayers; deeper reflections on the scriptures, continuous repentance, regular Holy Communion, retreats and prostrations (Metanias). We should fast our hearts and senses,

says St. John Chrysostom, and through this achieve external fasting. Fasting, therefore, is not an abstention from food, drinks and delicacies, rather, it is an abstention from all that is evil and all that hinders our relationship with God.

Fasting is coupled with almsgiving (Isa. 58:3-7). Whoever fasts, says St. Augustine, without offering to the poor has in fact practiced greed. Similarly, St. Basil says, if you fast from bread and water but still, judge others, what benefit do you gain?

Fasting, like prayer and Bible studies can be practiced individually and/ or collectively. For the periods of fasting within the Orthodox Church are most Holy and Blessed days of Christian renewal.

L LENT: This is the greatest fast, whose purpose is to prepare the soul to experience the crucifixion and the joy of the Resurrection (Rom. 8:17). It is marked by unceasing prayers and continuous repentance. It consists for 55 days, that is, a preparation week + the Holy 40 days + Holy

Week.

While most Churches increasingly reduce fasting periods from one generation to the next, the Orthodox Church has faithfully preserved this essential spiritual nourishment. Over the centuries the Orthodox Church has experienced the power of fasting (Mk. 9:29). The following saying by St. John the Tabesee summarizes the Orthodox concept of fasting:

“The bodily fast is to hunger for food and the fast of the spirit is to hunger for Christ”.

Smile & Learn

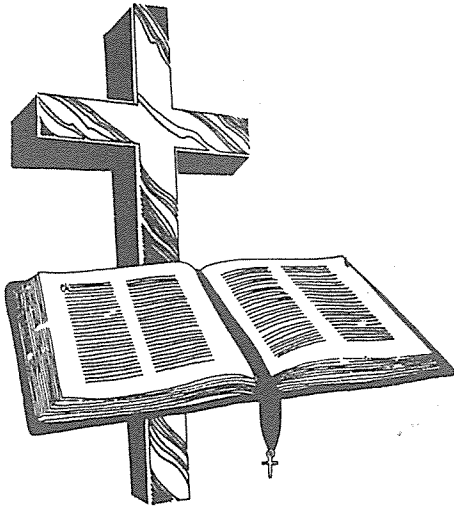
In a prayer meeting someone heard his neighbor praying:

“Lord, fill me with Your Holy Spirit.”

But because he knows the man well as a hypocrite and actor, he immediately prayed:

“No Lord please don't; because he leaks!”

- Many times we also leak and lose the blessings we gain, through our - so called small sins, such as anger, gossip, judging others, etc. . .



The Epistle of ST. JAMES (III)

(Chapter 3)

By Fr. Augustinos

“Life and Death are in the Power of the Tongue”
(Proverbs 18:21)

The Small & Dangerous Member:

The tongue is a small, but a very dangerous member in our bodies as seen from the following Biblical and practical facts:

1. From its location: God put it inside the mouth behind two doors and bars. First, the teeth, and second, the lips - in order to protect and control it. But still it is a very difficult task, that St. James says:
“No man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3: 2 & 8).
2. Salvation and condemnation depend on it: Life and death, here and in eternity are in the power of the tongue (Prov. 18:21). The Lord Jesus said: *“Every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”* (Matt. 12: 36, 37 see also the example of the two dying thieves on the cross and how their eternal future was effected dramatically by their words-Luke 23:39-43).
3. A hypocrite member: *“Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?”* (Jam. 3: 10,11).
4. The tongue “defiles the whole body”: Jesus said *“Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man”* (James 3: 6 & Matthew 15: 11 & Isaiah 6: 5).
5. It is likened to other small things that do serious results: *“The bits in horses mouths, the rudder of the ship, a fire, and a deadly poison”* (James 3: 3, 4, 6, 8).
6. The tongue has the ability to commit hundreds of sins: It surpasses any other organ in the human body in committing sins whether in sort or number or speed and repetition. It can do about one hundred kinds of sins, and tens of thousands in number by repetition, and can be equal to the “ machine gun ” in speed! It was described as *“ a world of iniquity, and is set on fire by hell”* (James 3:6).
7. The tongue is the thermometer of the personality: The tongue reveals what is hidden inside, whether you are wise or a fool, believer or atheist etc..., *“ Your speech betrays you!”* (Matthew 26: 73).

LENT

Great Lent, as distinct from the little fast that precedes the feast of the Nativity, is observed in commemoration of the forty-day fast of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt. 4:2; Lk. 4:2), after which the church observes Holy Week in memory of Christ's passion.

Lent has been observed by the church ever since the apostolic age. According to the *Constitutions of the Holy Fathers*: "... the fast of Lent is to be observed by you as containing a memorial of our Lord's mode of life and legislation. But let this solemnity be observed before the fast of the passover. ... After which ... begin the holy week of the passover fasting in the same all of you with fear and trembling ..." (*Constitutions* 5.18, p. 443). The penalty for failure to observe Lent is laid down in the *Canons of the Holy Apostles*: "If any bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, or reader, or singer does not fast the fast of the forty days of holy Lent, or the fourth day of the week, and the day of the Preparation, let him be deprived, except he be hindered by weakness of body. But if he be one of the laity, let him be excommunicated" (*Constitutions*, Canon 69, p. 504; *Apostolical Canons* 69, p. 598; Cummings, 1957, p. 122).

Reference to the importance of observing Lent occurs in the writings of the early fathers of the church.

In the early church, Lent began on the day after the feast of Epiphany (see FEASTS, MAJOR), in imitation of Christ, who fasted immediately after His baptism (Mt. 3:16, 4:2; Lk. 4:1,2). Holy Week was observed as a separate fast to coincide with the Jewish Passover, occurring some time between the two months of Baramhât and Baramûdah of the Coptic calendar. Toward the end of the second century, however, Demetrius I established the epact system of computation, and joined the holy fast to Passion Week, as one continuous and uninterrupted period of fasting prior to the celebration of the Resurrection.

Great Lent lasts fifty-five days, being the forty days that Jesus Christ fasted, with the addition of Holy Week as the final week of the fast, and an introductory week of preparation, in view of the particular significance of Lent.

More than one interpretation, however, has been suggested regarding this introductory week. It has been called, for instance, the fast of Heraclius (see above). Al-ŞAFÎ IBN AL-ASSÂL, who antedated Heraclius by several centuries, states that "all men and

women should observe Great Lent for eight weeks extending from the end of winter until the beginning of summer" (1927, chap. 15, p. 142).

Another interpretation was given by certain church historians, such as Jirjis ibn al-'Amîd, and Abu-Shâkir ibn al-Râhib ibn-Buṭrus ibn al-Muhadh-dhab (thirteenth century), who explain that a further week was imposed by the church in view of the difference in the practice of fasting on Saturdays and Sundays. Strictly speaking, unlike other weekdays, fasting on these two particular days should not be a total abstinence between the first canonical hour of the day (6 A.M.) and the eleventh hour (5 P.M.), with the exception of the last Saturday in Passion Week, that is, Great Saturday, on which the body of Jesus Christ was still lying in the grave. To make up for the difference, a week was therefore added at the beginning of Lent.

Throughout Great Lent, the liturgy is celebrated on weekdays between the ninth and eleventh canonical hours, that is, from three to five o'clock in the afternoon, but on Saturdays and Sundays it is held as usual earlier in the day. It is also worthy of note that it is frequently taken from the Anaphora of Saint Cyril, also known as that of Saint Mark.

According to the stipulations of canons 51 and 52 of the Synod of Laodicea (343-381), no weddings or birthdays are to be celebrated during the season of Lent, and the faithful should abstain from activities of a festal nature, or those involving physical enjoyment or pleasure.

From Paradise of The Holy Fathers On Fasting & Abstinence

A certain brother was hungry one morning, and he fought against his inclination and determined not to eat until the third hour; and when the third hour had passed, he dipped his bread in water, and sat down to eat, but he forced himself to wait until the sixth hour arrived, when he said within himself, "Let us wait till the ninth hour." And when the ninth hour had come, he prayed, and saw the working of Satan rising up before him like smoke, and he suppressed his desire [to eat], and his hunger passed away from him.

TOWARDS A PROBLEM FREE FAMILY KNOW YOURSELF

by *Evette Samaan*

Knowing yourself is an important factor in your family life. It refers to understanding your capabilities and limits. If you are really honest with yourself, you will discover an important fact about yourself. You cannot change people, especially your spouse and children.

No matter how hard you try, you do not have control over people's basic qualities. By basic qualities we mean qualities they are born with such as temper and sensitivity.

Let us say you have received a weak cactus plant and you have always wanted a rose. So, you work hard on the cactus hoping it would turn into a rose. You treat it as if it were a rose and give it a lot of water. What is going to happen? Of course, the cactus is going to die! The most you could do for the cactus is to read the instructions and give it its true needs.

Sometimes we do the same thing to our love ones. We tend to kill them by trying to change them and refusing to cater to their true needs. Since we cannot change people, we really need to learn

how to accept them the way they are. Acceptance means dealing with our loved ones in a realistic way. Through acceptance we could practice our understanding, care and respect. Acceptance teaches us how to be tolerant to differences. However, it does not mean accepting the inappropriate behaviors, and incorporating them into our life style.

Since we cannot change others we could alter our behavior to fit their needs rather than rearrange them to fit our fantasy. It means searching for the most efficient method to get the best out of our loved ones.

Suppose you have a child who is "hot-tempered" and "stubborn", do not try to change these qualities. However, you could redirect your child's behavior. Utilize these negative qualities positively so instead of being "hot-tempered" or "stubborn", your child could become "enthusiastic" and "persistent". This way you get the best out of him.

Remember, God's plan for us is not to rearrange us, but rather He wants us to yield to Him our qualities so He could redirect them to His Glory.

Short Story

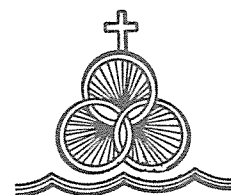
The Mushroom Dinner

A lady invited several friends to a mushroom steak dinner. When her maid opened the can of mushrooms, she discovered a slight scum on the top. Since the guests were expected at any moment, the lady suggested, "Give the dog a little, and if he eats it, it is probably all right."

The dog licked it and begged for some more, so the dinner was completed.

After the main course, the maid came in to serve dessert. But her face was ashen white. She whispered, "Ma ' am, the dog's dead." There was only one thing to do. Sometime later the guests were reclining after the doctor left, in various stages of recovery from the use of a stomach pump. When the maid entered again, the lady asked, "Where's the poor dog now?" Came the reply, "Out on the front steps, where he fell after the car hit him."!!

We should be careful not to create false impressions...



"I Believe, Master, Help My Unbelief"

During one of the many times Jesus was surrounded by a crowd, a man brought his possessed son to him. "Teacher, I brought my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid, I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they couldn't" (Mark 9:17). As soon as Jesus heard this, he told him "bring the boy to Me." In other words, Jesus is saying what are you waiting for, bring him to me, for I have no doubt that you brought him here knowing only I could heal him.

We deal with similar situations in our everyday life. Many problems that must be solved and needs that must be fulfilled arise daily. We, however, futilely try everything to solve the problem or fulfil the need, without realizing that what we really need is a miracle from God to save the situation. After all, God is always telling us: What are you waiting for, bring this problem to me.

After the possessed child was brought to Jesus, his father asked "If You can do anything, take pity on us and help us. "I You can!" Jesus replied, "everything is possible for him who believes" (Mark 9:23). By this, the Lord Jesus is asking: Do you have faith? Because only be faith can things happen, and the more faith you have the more power you get.

The father of the possessed child had some faith, after all, he did bring his son to the Lord to be healed. He, however, had some doubt as well. For many years, he took his son from one doctor to another, but non could cure him. His honesty about his doubt was portrayed in one single statement: "I believe, Master, help m y unbelief" (Mk. 9:24).

This is a very honest, sincere, and strong short prayer that says, "I have faith, but my faith is not strong enough, Lord, strengthen my faith."

How can we strengthen and grow in our faith? The answer is prayer, persistent prayers that are honest, sincere and strong is the way. We want our prayers to be

heard and answered, and to feel growth and improvement in our faith, behavior, and spiritual life.

But how do we make our prayers heard and how do we make them honest and powerful? Our Lord Jesus said, "When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matt. 6:6). In prayer, it is important to begin with the Bible, after which, certain preparations should be performed. First, count your blessings so you can thank God for them in your prayer. Then, remember the sins which you have committed that day and mention them in prayer to the Lord while asking for His forgiveness. Finally, think of the special things you would like to pray for, whether they are for yourself or for those who asked you to remember them in your prayers.

After these preparations, you are ready to pray powerfully and sincerely. Prayer is the key, as Jesus told the father of the possessed child, "this kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting" (Mk. 9:29).

by
Dalia Atalla



FASTING

by POPE SHENOUDA III

We will study fasting from the dogmatic point of view (not spiritually).

The Coptic Orthodox Church is the only conservative Church about fasting. Protestants and Catholics neglect it. Protestants say that:

1. Fasting should be practiced secretly (Matt. 6:17-18).
2. They do not believe in fixed fasts (days or hours). A person may fast individually whenever he wants and in whatever manner he likes. No authority from the Church.
3. They speak about Col. 2:16-17 and 1 Tim. 4:1-3 (vegetarian).

Discussion:

Read: *"The Spirituality of Fasting"*.

1. Should fasting be practiced secretly or not? (Matt. 6:17-18) - Distinguish between individual worship and the worship of the congregation. Example: Individual, personal, or private prayer (secretly), but at the same time we have congregation prayer (all people pray together). Also there is private donations and public donations (1 Chron. 29:3-9), Public contributions are not against giving individually.

2. The same for fasting: All the congregation fasts together; Read: Esther 4:16, Jonah 3:5, Nehemiah 9:1, Ezra 8:21. [Public Fasting]

3. Public fasting is a Biblical teaching.

4. In the New Testament, St. Paul and all the people fasted in the ship (Acts 27:21). They were fasting when they laid hands on Saul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2).

5. Fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays is not private, but all people are fasting. But the depth of fasting should be kept secret, the ascetic practice of your fast.

6. They fast to have the oneness of worship, the oneness of soul.

7. Protestants reject fasting in certain times, appointed by the Church (Zachariah 8:19). Protestants do not have the same respect to the Old Testament as they have for the New Testament, as if we have a new religion. "... I did not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17-19).

8. They misunderstand what is written in Col. 2:16-17 regarding Jewish customs and feasts and keeping the Sabbath day (Lev. 23:2-3). Also to keep the commandments concerning clean and unclean animals.

9. Vegetarian: From the beginning Adam and Eve were vegetarians, (Gen. 1:29-30) and animals also were vegetarians.

10. After the flood and exiting the Ark of Noah, they were permitted to eat meat but without blood (Gen. 9:3-4), because the spiritual standards of the people were not high.

11. When God was the host for the Israelites in Sinai, He gave them the Manna which is vegetarian food (Numbers 11:7-8 & 11:32-34).

12. St. Paul in 1 Tim. 4:1-3 is speaking about the sect of Mani in the 2nd & 3rd century who abstained from meats, wine, and marriage.

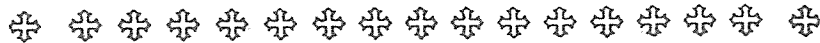
13. There is a difference between being ascetic (Monks) and to defile meat. We eat meat after we ending the fast.

14. The prophet Daniel did not eat meat because

at that time Pagan Kings were eating what was sacrificed to the idols, (Daniel 10:2-3) for a certain period only (3 weeks).

15. John the Baptist was an ascetic not a heretic.

16. It is the authority of the Church to organize and to regulate because through organization, people may fast, pray and worship together in one spirit.



Church News

1. The Great Lent started on March 2nd. It is 55 days which end with Easter on April 26. It is the Holiest season in the Coptic Orthodox year. The Lent is celebrated in the Orthodox Church by: Fasting and abstinence with fervent prayers, late liturgies, giving alms, much reading of The Bible, training to obtain new virtues and getting rid of old sins and bad habits.

2. On the 19th of March, the Coptic Church celebrates the second Feast of the Holy Cross. We will celebrate the Holy Liturgy starting 7:00 A.M. on Thursday the 19th.

3. Pope Shenouda III will visit New York for about 12 days starting March 4th. and will give lectures to the Coptic Orthodox Seminary in New Jersey. H.H. will also hold meetings with the

clergy and bless the whole congregation.

4. The Sinod of Coptic Orthodox Priests of California held their monthly meeting on Feb. 27th at St. Athanasius Coptic Church and decided to travel to New York to welcome H.H. Pope Shenouda, attend his seminar for the clergy. Also they decided to prepare a study and by-laws for a clergy pension and medical insurance.

5. The Memorial Day, long week-end family conference of St. John Coptic Orthodox Church will be held in a new retreat area at Capistrano, CA. The places are limited. To reserve contact Mr. George Farag, NOW!

Wednesday Liturgy: 9:00 - 11:30 A.M.

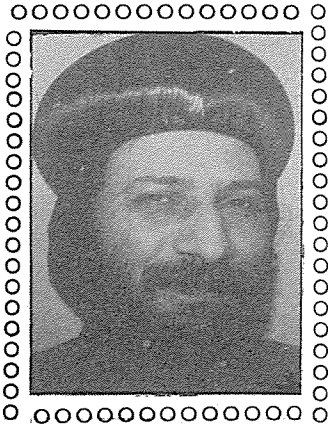
Friday Liturgy: 2:00 - 4:30 P.M.

RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING MYSELF

- I will be joyful, that life may give me wings.
- I will be courageous, that there shall be not binding fears.
- I will be balanced, that neither work nor play nor rest nor worship shall lose its proper share.
- I will be self-reliant, that thoughts of failure shall not hold me back.
- I will be good-tempered, that annoyance shall not irritate.
- I will be patient, that discouragement shall not seem final.
- I will be persistent, that the will may carry through to completion.
- I will be prepared, that emergency shall not find me in confusion.

The Voice of My Beloved! Knocking

Translated by
Raafat Youssef



By H.G. Bishop Kyrillos

God opens His doors for whoever knocks on them. He stretches His hands all day and night long (Isa. 65:2). He hopes for us to return to ask and to enter with Him to see His light and behold His hand which is always stretched for giving. The spiritual elder says, "Your hand is stretched for giving and no one wants to take. Your door is open and no one wants to enter. Your light is shining in our eyes and no one wants to see. You call loudly and no one wants to listen". The Lord has waited for who might knock on Him, but no one knocked on Him, and when He gave up, out of His compassion, "He became man" to knock on each heart. He who listens and comes to Him, He will by no means cast out (Jn. 6:37). He came to comfort the those who labor and are heavy

laden (Matt. 11:28), and to forgive our sins and cleanse our iniquities. As the priest calls from the alter, "Come, drink from the Lamb's side to be fulfilled. Come closer to receive forgiveness of your sins. Come near to be cleansed of your iniquities."

HE SPOKE TO US THROUGH HIS SON AND HE BETROTHED US TO HIS SON:

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb and the Shepherd, the Savior and the Redeemer, suffered the hardships to establish a beautiful way which is full of His spiritual feasts to follow and see Him; that our joy will be complete (Jn. 16:22).

The Heavenly Father presents the most precious and expensive gift, by speaking to us through His Son. Moreover, He beautified and betrothed us to His Only Begotten Son. Therefore we don't have any greater gift except to cling and follow His steps.

WE FOLLOW THE LAMB WHEREVER HE GOES:

In His birth, we follow Him with our hearts in order to become His dwellings. In His circumssion, we cleanse our hearts and bow down to His living words. In His entry into the Temple, we behold inside within

us the old days and say, release your servant in peace from the prison of sin. In His coming to Egypt to bless it, we hurry to listen for Him saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people" (Isa. 19:25), and open the temples of our hearts to destroy its idols and make them an alter for Him. We follow the Lamb to the Jordan River to see Him baptized from John the Baptist. Our joy is there when He was emerged in the water leaving for us the wedding dress and His ring for us to wear them in the Baptizery, to be beautified for Him and our souls betrothed to Him, until the Lamb's glorious coming for our wedding. In His entry to Jerusalem as King, we raise our unfailing voices saying, "THY KINGDOM COME", and make the body to be His Temple and the heart His House; then I drive out, flip and get rid of what is not appropriate and make my heart a house of prayer, house of purity, and a house of blessings.

On His road to the Cross, we accompanied His death by our love, obedience and alms giving. We direct ourselves to His life giving death and His glorious resurrection and cry, "Oh Who by Your life giving death, destroyed death our killer; don't let its

authority abide over us, O Master. Oh Who by Your burial in the tomb buried our sins, help us not to repeat them again. Oh Who by Your Holy Resurrection destroyed the devil's kingdom; raise us from our sins.

SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING OF FEASTS:

Our Church is full of joyful spiritual feasts, which teach us that the real joy is independence from sin and by following Christ with our hearts, Who said, "If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (Jn. 8:36).

For the sake of humanity which Satan imprisoned in the worldly desires, Christ came to grant us freedom from slavery and the devil's dominion. In Christ is the freedom with which our imprisoner the devil, was imprisoned by God with eternal chains in darkness, and freed his prisoners and captives from his rule.

My dear brothers, let me ask you: Is there any joy in a prisoners' heart within the jail walls? Does he rejoice with feasts and special occasions and memories? Do changes in his food, drink, or visitation make him happy? However he rejoices in the Truth when his chains are loosed and become unshakable outside the jail walls and then he will be joyful.

God's children are free even inside jail; The children of the world are prisoners within their freedom. Chains or locks can't bind the freedom of God's children, nor can the walls of jail trap their souls from escaping. For example, St. John the beloved disciple who rested his head on Christ's chest and heard the words of Christ's beating heart. When he was through into exile, was bound and guarded. However, there he rested his head on the Rock of all ages and saw the heavenly hosts around the glorious Throne. Is this exile? Is this prison, while Heaven is opened? Likewise, our teacher St. Paul the apostle among guards in a jail...He moves his heavily chained hands with his pen to write to us about the glorious freedom of the children of God. Therefore, chains were far from his heart and locks were far from his thoughts.

Prison is a heart filled with the world and empty of God's love. We ask our Lord Jesus Christ to stretch His hands, release our chains and free us from locks. We hope God will fill us, so that the heart lives in peace, the thoughts grow and emotions rejoice saying with the angels: "Glory to God in the Highest of thoughts and on my earthly heart peace and good will in all my emotions."

Living Away from Home

Undoubtedly, as this generation of ours has grown, prospering not only psychologically but financially also, it has placed itself in a trap of moral reformation to, in reality, participate in this foreign country's process of Americanization. We have agreed to live and exist, away from our precious motherland, in a melting pot of many assimilated cultures. Yet, as we have been pressured to do, we have refused to speak, preach, or at times be even proud of our heritage, our traditions, our history. Instead, we moved on to fit in a harsh and unforgiving community. It is ironic that because of religious persecution we left Egypt to keep our religious rituals intact, but now we have forgotten them, and opted for the more liberal side of life. We have forgotten or ignored many traditions, not necessarily Coptic, customs, and in many cases our own identity that distinguishes us from the rest of the world. Now, and only now, we have to stand tall and proud, proclaiming our existence. We cannot allow ourselves to change in the face of dishonor due to a sinful and immoral environment.



Instead, we must voice our outcries and plead our peers to wake up and rise to the perils of true Orthodox Christianity. Then, with faith as the pillar holding up our historical and valuable church, we might in all humility cleanse ourselves of all evil from this world and preach our beliefs to be the lone narrow path of salvation.

As we have been tentative to reveal our roots, they have died and now we live on new soil. We live in a society that has bred us to be new human beings. Instead of aiding our fellow members of Christ in our homeland, we have been preoccupied with our own works, jobs, lives and family life. What selfishness! While we have, to put it mildly, very comfortable lives, our fellow Christians are on the verge of, literally, death, but still continue on with undeniable faith, strong enough to make them modern day saints. It is never too late to share in the grace and works to help those who are unfortunate. It is written, "**Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: To visit widows and orphans in their trouble and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.**" (James 1:27) Are we abiding by God's commandments and words? Let us redeem ourselves in front of our Lord. If not, we will receive the just

penalty for all the mishaps and mistakes that we committed during our worthless lives.

It also cannot be denied that numerous families have disintegrated so drastically. If that wasn't the case, then the parents caved in and joined in the American way of life, the sinful, unholy and unfaithful way of life, and in turn Orthodox Christianity was lost not only outside the family scenario, but also inside the private home. Why don't the parents teach and educate their offspring about the faith's history, about the Way's history, or simply about the saints' history. The children will grow to love those magnificent and inspiring stories. Instead of taking into their lives examples of television characters or fellow peers, they will take in symbols of a true Christian or sainthood. The parents must take full responsibility to better the lives of their lost and hopeless children and teach them the right path to live under a Coptic Orthodox setting and a spiritual surrounding. Unless we all take action to improve each other's lives, we will lose our identity, our Christian pride, our traditions, and what is treasured most, the beloved family.

Being a Coptic Orthodox Christian one must learn to win the love of others, to spread the word

of God to all people and nations, become a crusader for the sake of our Lord, to conquer all temptations and lusts supplied by this culture and world of ours, to preserve, know and always be proud of our church history, and lastly set an example for others to follow in their way of life so that they might head in the right path of righteousness. Otherwise, one will become a defamation in the face of God, and responsible for unforgiven atrocities. If we hold bondage together and finally decide to actually be Coptic Orthodox Christians then we might reach our destiny, becoming chosen ones on the day of Judgement.

by

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