



Christ is crucified again in Egypt.

(Rev. 11: 8)



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*Verse
of the Month*



*"That I may know Him and the
power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10).*

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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) * * * + Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:15 a.m. (In the Old Church) Servants' Meeting + 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. 2 nd & 4 th Sunday. + Boy Scouts 12 pm	+ Liturgy 8:00-10:00 a.m. + Thursday Morning + Senior Citizen Club 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. + THURSDAY Family Meeting 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Fr. Augustinos	+ Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. +Arabic Youth Meeting 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Fr. Gawargios	+ Liturgy from 8-10 am + Vespers; Bible Study 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. + Beginners' Deacons- Meeting 5:30 p.m. + Elementary Meeting 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. + College Youth Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. High School & J. High Meetings 7:15 - 9:00 p.m.
	Tutoring for new students 6:00-8:00 pm for girls & boys on Thursday 6-8 p.m.		

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1. Ascension Feast: (May 25):

On Thursday, May 25, the church celebrates the Major Feast of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ to heaven after 40 days of His resurrection. Liturgy is from 8:00 am.



2. Feast of the Lord's Entry into Egypt (June 1):

On Thursday, June 1, the Church celebrates this Lord's Feast, in which four prophecies had been fulfilled from Isaiah 19:1, 19:19 and 19:25; with Hosea 11:1.

It is a great feast for the COPTS because the Lord Jesus did not visit any other country except Egypt.



3. Feast of Pentecost (June 4):

On Sunday, June 4, The Church celebrates the Feast of Pentecost, which is considered the "Birthday of the Christian church" (Acts 2). We celebrate it also after noon (same day) by the "Worship Service" (Sagda) from 1:00- 3:00 p.m., to be filled of the Spirit.



4- Feast of St. George (May 1)

5- Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist (May 8)

6. Feast of St. Athanasius (May 15)



7- Feast of St. Demiana (May 20)

8. Feast of St. John the Beloved (May 24):

For the consecration of the first church in Alexandria, Egypt under his blessed name.

9. Fast of the Apostles (June 5):

The Church starts the Apostles' Fast on Monday, June 5 for 37 days until their Feast on July 12. May the blessings of our fathers the apostles be with us.



10. St. John's 11th Annual Book Fair (June 1- 4):

St. John Church in Covina holds her 11th Christian Book-Fair and revival meetings in the occasion of the Feast of Christ's Entry into Egypt from Thursday June 1, until the Feast of Pentecost Sunday, June 4, 2017.

11. H.H. Pope Tawadros II:

+ His Holiness presided the Holy Synod in making the Myroun oil.

+ On Palm Sunday, April 9, the holy pontiff celebrated the Liturgy at St. Mark Cathedral in Alexandria, and God saved his precious life from an evil terrorist attack on the church.



12. H.E. Metropolitan Serapion:

+ On March 29, 2017 H.E. travelled to Egypt for making the Myroun oil with the Holy Synod.

+ His Eminence called for a clergy meeting to discuss Egypt's terror attacks against the churches and the Copts.



13. H.E. Metropolitan Tadros & H.E. Benjamin

+ On Wednesday, April 26, H.E. Metropolitan Tadros of Port-Said, Egypt, blessed St. John Church in Covina by celebrating the Liturgy.



+ On Sunday, April 30, H.E. Metropolitan Benjamin of Monofia blessed St. John Church in the Liturgy.

14. Mother's Day (May 14) & Father's Day (June 18)

+ On Sunday, May 14, St. John Church celebrates Mother's Day.

+ On Sunday, June 18, the Church celebrates Father's Day, remembering thier love, kindness, patience and sacrifices, offering them gifts and prayers. May God reward them richly with every blessing.



15. The 30th Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Shenouda Ghatas

St. John Church, congratulates Rev. Fr. Shenouda Ghatas on his 30th Anniversary of his ordination, wishing him health, strength and long life.



16. Senior Citizen Cruise to Hawaii:

St. John Senior Citizen Fellowship holds its Annual cruise to Hawaiian Islands, for 16 days from October 25, to November 9, 2017. For more information and reservation call:



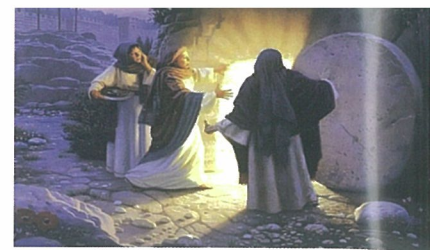
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THE PAPAL ENCYCLICAL OF THE GLORIOUS FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION, 2017

By H H pope Tawadros II

Ekhristos Anesti, Alithos Anesti. Christ is risen. Truly, He is risen



I congratulate you for the Glorious Feast of Resurrection. This year, all Christians worldwide are celebrating it in unisons. We remember the martyrs of Palm Sunday. With their blood, they recorded a new page in the history of our Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church. We remember them with all goodness as the Lord had chosen them. We know that God is the Pantocrator. He governs all our lives. We always thank Him saying 'let us give thanks to the beneficent one.' We remember them with all the martyrs. We remember our beloved country Egypt entreating the Lord to keep her in all peace. May He remove all evil and shadows of evil from the borders of our country Egypt, and of all the regions of the Middle East.

When we meditate on the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we find in the Holy Bible many verses concerning the resurrection. The resurrection is the first and main event in the history of our Christianity. Without resurrection or the cross, Christianity could not exist. One of the many verses that discuss the resurrection in a personal perspective was written by a saint who had not known Christ for a long time, perhaps until middle age. In his adulthood, Christ had appeared to him and introduced Himself. This encounter changed him from Saul of Tarsus to St. Paul the Apostle. In his epistle to the Philippians, while in the prison, he wrote one of the strongest verses about experiencing the resurrection in chapter 3, verse 10. 'That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.' (Philippians 3: 10). This knowledge and spiritual experience of the resurrection is illustrated through four features by St. Paul.

First: 'That I may know Him'. This is a confirmatory statement. This knowledge is personal and not by hearsay. This knowledge is through experiencing Christ personally. To verify this, he said 'That I may know Him'. Job the righteous spoke about this knowledge at the conclusion of the book of Job saying: "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You." (Job 42: 5). Through this knowledge man knows the love of Christ, the commandments of Christ, the salvation of Christ, the behavior of Christ which He placed in our hearts. This knowledge is by experience.

Second: "And the power of His resurrection". This is the second feature St. Paul mentioned. The resurrection has a power. This power is stronger than anything. The resurrection is not a historical event but a functional status for man to live by, experience and enjoy. The resurrection confirms that death is not the end of the road. It was the resurrection that raised Mary Magdalene when she was in doubt. While in her sadness, she thought that Christ was the gardener. When He called her by name, she joyfully greeted Him.

The resurrection alleviated the disciples from their fear. They had been terrified and kept all doors shut. When the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to them, the Bible says: 'Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.' (John 20: 20). Resurrection raises man from sin. Man cannot rise from the impurity of sin except by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ that pleased all mankind when

He was crucified and died on the cross for the sake of all.

Third: 'And the fellowship of His sufferings'. This is the third feature in the experience of St.


Paul. Here we wonder why he mentioned the power of resurrection before the fellowship of His sufferings. In ancient Christian tradition, whenever the cross was hung, they did not depict the body of the Lord Jesus. The reason being that Christ had risen from the dead. The joy of the resurrection is a road through the cross. But Christ is risen now. I remember during one of my visits abroad; I saw a wooden cross with the resurrected Jesus portrayed. Christ is present with the body that resurrected from the dead. 'The fellowship of His sufferings' that is described by St. Paul means that resurrection comes after suffering. The fellowship of sufferings happens when man shares it. There is no glory without pain. There is no crown of life without the crown of thorns. The crown of thorns gave us the crown of life. There is no resurrection without the cross. That is why we go through the fellowship of suffering as human beings and as a church.

We describe many of these accounts in the narratives and events of the martyrs. Our Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church became the "Church of Martyrs" and is renowned by this name worldwide. That is why we say: "The Mother of the Martyrs is so beautiful" meaning the church.


Fourth: 'being conformed to His death'. This is the fourth feature of St. Paul's experience. It means a Christian person treading the path of the Lord, dies of sin. In every liturgy we attend, we hear the conclusion of the Catholic Epistle that says: "Do not love the world or the things in the world" (1 John 2: 15). The focus of a Christian and his heart's desire is continuously towards heaven. 'Being conformed to His death' is clarified by St. Paul in his strong spiritual experiences: "For your sake we are killed all day long." (Romans 8: 36). This spiritual experience written by St. Paul was expressed by the saint several times. He states: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." (Ephesians 5: 14). He gives light to the person who sleeps in sin, or in evil, or sleeps in the love of the world, away from Christ and from the true knowledge of Christ. The person who sleeps does not know the resurrection of Christ, neither experiencing nor living it. St. Paul through the holy words, says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, death of the sin, and Christ will give you light."

My heartfelt congratulations to all. Our hearts ache with pain for the separation of our loved ones the martyrs, but we always remember that they have fallen asleep on the hope of the resurrection. The resurrection of Christ. May God preserve and bless your lives. My message is directed to the fathers the metropolitans, bishops, priests, hegumens and presbyters, to all deacons, ministers, servants, committees of churches and church boards, to all youth, and to all children. To each family in every congregation in our Coptic Church extending to all the continents of the world. In America, Canada, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia.

My greetings and love along with the love of the mother church here in Egypt, we send to you. May you always enjoy the resurrection in your life. Ekhristos Anisty, Alithos Anisty. Christis risen. Truly, He is risen



PASCHAL LETTER OF H. E. METROPOLITAN SERAPION GLORIOUS FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION 2017



“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels”
(2 Cor. 4:7). My Beloved, the Blessed Children of the Holy Church,

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

It is my pleasure to wish all of you the blessings of the Glorious Feast of the Resurrection.

1-We rejoice in the Resurrection of our Lord, because it gives us the strength to face the power of evil. Amidst our celebration and rejoicing in the Resurrection of our Savior, we are following the pain and suffering that our beloved brethren in Egypt are facing, such as the terrorist attacks on the Botroseya (St. Peter) Church, St. George Church in Tanta, and St. Mark Cathedral in Alexandria; the assaults and the forced displacement of Copts in El-Arsish; and the pressure placed on some Christian young women in Upper Egypt, along with kidnappings in some cases.

Additionally, in our American society, we are facing new policies and movements that are in direct opposition to our Christian values and ethics. As we confront the forces of evil, terrorism, and extremism, it makes us feel as though we are earthen vessels.

Indeed, we are earthen vessels! However, the Resurrection of Christ gives us an enormous Treasure, Who is our Risen Lord, Who gives us the power to face the evil forces. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, St. Paul the Apostle wrote, ***“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body”*** (2 Cor. 4:7-10).

How do we overcome the world that lies under the sway the wicked one?

St. John the beloved answers this question by saying, ***“And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”*** (1 Jn. 5:4-5).

Our Faith in the Resurrection of Christ gives us the power to overcome the world.

It is this faith in the power of our Good Savior, which gives us the courage to face the forces of evil and terrorism, which martyred Veronia, Marina, and Magy in the Boutroseya Church.

Yet, the mothers of these martyrs witnessed through their strong faith and overcame the world.

2- We read that Goliath the Giant looked at David and saw him as an earthen vessel. However, David, through his faith, showed the real treasure within his earthen vessel, “So the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was only a youth, ruddy and good-looking...Then David said to the Philistine, ***‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied’***” (1 Sam. 17:42, 45).

My Beloved,

Today, the world comes to us, who carry the name of Christ, with a sword, a spear, and a javelin.

The world disdains and curses us, because of our belief in our Lord and His Life-Giving Cross. To the world, we are seen as earthen vessels, but we should not have fear, because we have a precious treasure within our earthen vessels, so that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

The power of Christ’s Resurrection is manifested in our human weakness and gives us the victory over the wicked-ness in the world.

In his Book, On the Incarnation, St. Athanasius wrote,

“How can you think otherwise, when you see men naturally weak hastening to death, unafraid at the prospect of corruption, fearless of the descent into Hades, even indeed with eager soul provoking it, not shrinking from tortures, rather than to remain in this present life? If you see with your own eyes men and women and children, even, thus welcoming death for the sake of Christ’s religion, how can you be so utterly silly and incredulous and maimed in your mind as not to realize that Christ, to Whom these all bear witness, Himself gives the victory to each, making death completely powerless for those who hold His faith and bear the sign of the cross?” (29:4)

My Beloved,

Let us pray for the peace of the Holy Church and for our beloved shepherd and father, H.H. Pope Tawadros.

Let us pray for every soul facing the power of evil.

Let us pray for the families of the martyrs and the confessors.

May our Lord grant us the power of His Glorious Resurrection and give us the strong faith to overcome the world.

Wishing you many joyous returns

-Metropolitan Serapion

Summary of the Islamic persecution and terror attacks on Egyptian Copts in recent history:



1-1972: El Khanka incident, burning and destroying a Coptic church.

2- 1975: Archangel church in Assiut incident

3- 1981: A bomb at St. George church in Sporting), Alexandria on January 6th (Nativity Eve).

4-1981: El Zawya El Hamra incident, killing many Christians and a Coptic priest, looting their possessions and pharmacies.

5- 1981: Assiut massacre.

6- 1990: Manfalot incident.

7- 1990: Abu Korkas incident.

8- 1990: Abu El Matameer-Al Beheira governorate

9- 1992: El Mansheyya village in Assiut

10- 1994: St. Mary monastery (Almuharraq) in Al Quseyya, murder of 5 monks.

11- 1996: Kafr Demiana incident in Al Sharkeyya.

12- 1997: Ezbet Kamel Takla incident in Bahgoura village (City of Nagaa-Hammadi)

13- 1998: The 1st Massacre of El Kosheh village and throwing the dead bodies at the entrance of the village.

14- 1999: St. George church incident in Heliopolis-Cairo, Egypt.

15- 2000: The 2nd massacre of El Kosheh. village..looting and robbing of Christians' homes, killing, slaughtering and burning the bodies of 19 Copts in front of their families.

16. 2003: Gazra village incident in Al Ayyat-Al Giza.

17. 2005: Abu Sefein Church incident (Kafr Salama Ibrahim)-at Menya Al Kamh Al Sharkeyya.

18- 2006: Displacement of 15 Coptic families from south Hegaza village at Qus (Qena governorate)

19- 2006: Last Friday in Holy Lent; attack in El-Keddisin (Saints) church in Alexandria and three other churches.

20- 2007: Deir Mouas incident.

21- 2007: St.Mary church(Al Dekheila) incident

22- 2007: Saft Medome village incident at Al Wastei

23- 2007: Al Toke village incident in Sohag..in the vicinity of Al Kosheh village, Upper Egypt.

24- 2007: Bany Mansour village incident at El Baliena in Sohag..governorate.

25- 2007: The Baptist Church at Mantout in Abu Korkas (El Menya governorate).

26- 2007: Armant incident.

27- 2008: Attacking, shooting and kidnapping monks at Abu Fana monastery (El Menya, Upper Egypt)

28- 2009: Nazlet Roman village incident at Abu Korkas (Al Menya Governorate)

29- 2010: Nagaa Hammadi incident(shooting and killing 21 Christians as they were leaving the church in Christmas midnight Liturgy)

30- 2010: Al Omraneyya, Giza incident in Nov.

31- 2011: Al keddeesayn Church bombing in Alexandria on New Year's Eve killing 21 Christians.

32- 2011: Maspiro massacre in Cairo killing and flattening by military tanks more than 14 Copts.

33- 2011: The incidents of the Coptic church in Soal

34- 2011: Samallote incidents (Al Menya)

35- 2011: Aswan incident

36- 2012: Displacement of the Copts from their homes at El Amereyya.

37- 2013: Al khosoos incident and the attacks on St. Mark Cathedral in Cairo on April.

38- August, 2013: Burning 8 churches in Egypt under Morsy.

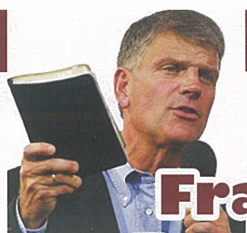
39- 2015: Our Coptic martyrs in Libya (in February)

49- 2016: Al Menya incident

50- 2016: St. Peter Cathedral (Al Botroseya) bombing in Cairo killing 29 Copts, mostly women and children.

51- 2017: Displacement of Copts from their homes in Al Arish city in North Sinai and killing a priest and many others.

52- April 9, 2017: Bombing of St. George church in Tanta and St. Mark church in Alexandria on Palm Sunday right after H.H. Pope Tawadros had just finished the joyful prayers of Palm Sunday, killing and wounding in both churches more than 45.



Franklin Graham: Pray for Christians Being Slaughtered by ISIS in Egypt



Evangelist Franklin Graham is calling Christians to pray for believers who have fled Egypt's North Sinai province after the Islamic State has targeted the group and killed at least seven people in recent weeks.

"Pray for the church in Egypt and throughout the Muslim world as they are being slaughtered mercilessly in many places," he wrote on Facebook. "And share this with others who will pray!"

According to Reuters, 100 out of the 160 families in the North Sinai region left on Friday.

Their flight was prompted by a video released by the Islamic State earlier this week. The group vowed to step up attacks on the Christian minority in Sinai.

"They want to send a message that nobody is safe," Mina Thabet, a worker with the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, told the Washington Post.

"I am not going to wait for death," Rami Mina, who left Friday morning, told Reuters by telephone. "I shut down my restaurant and got out of there. These people are ruthless."

A day earlier, a shopkeeper was killed in front of his pregnant wife and according to eyewitnesses the men then sat down and drank a soda and ate some chips.

"ISIS wants to exterminate them—wipe them out—because they bear the name of Christ," Graham wrote.

So far, a teacher has been shot to death by a masked gunman, another man was beheaded and set on fire, and a plumber was shot dead in front of his wife and children at their home.

"Things were never this bad," one man from El Arish told the Washington Post by phone. "They killed a couple of church leaders in the past, but the killings were far apart. Now we are told that are were making lists of all the Copts there."

Christians are being killed for their faith around the

world," Graham said.

He added that believers would be praying for their persecuted brothers and sisters at the World Summit in Defense of Persecuted Christians in Washington D.C. in May.

While you are here...

We'd like to ask for your help. At CBN News, we strive to bring you the most current, pertinent and reliable news possible. We are able to bring you this important news from a Christian perspective because of the help of friends like you who know how vital it is to have an alternative to the news you hear from major media outlets. Would you help ensure that we can continue to provide this important service to you and our country by considering a special gift today? Or would you become a monthly partner so we know we can count on the resources we need to bring you the best news possible?

Thanks for being a part of the dynamic future of CBN News, as well as helping The Christian Broadcasting Network share the love of Jesus with hurting people everywhere.

According to World Watch Monitor, **Gamal Bishay** 16 years-old was found, in Covenant Thursday, with his throat slit and laying in a pool

of blood in a village in upper Egypt. The murder took place three days after two churches of Tanta and Alexandria were bombed.





THE HOLY SPIRIT APPEARED AS DIVIDED TONGUES OF FIRE

by Fr. Gawargious Kolta



The Holy Spirit descended on the holy apostles and saintly disciples on the day of Pentecost, when they were all with one accord in the upper room. The Holy Spirit appeared in three ways:

1- A sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind that filled the whole house.

2- Divided tongues, as of fire and one sat upon each of them.

3- They spoke with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Thus the disciples were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, purified and made fervent, by the tongues of fire, and evangelized the crowd, through many languages.

The Holy Spirit also appeared in other different forms. He appeared as a Dove in the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mat. 3:16). The Holy Spirit is also resembled by rivers of living water, as was mentioned by our Lord (Jn. 4:14, 7:38, 39) and prophesied by some prophets (Isa. 44:3, Jer. 2:13, Ps. 46:4, 93:3,4). The Holy Spirit is also resembled by oil. In the Old Testament, priests, kings and prophets were anointed with oil by the prophets that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Ex. 30:22-24, Lev. 8:12, 1 Sam. 16:13, 1 Kgs. 19:15, 16). The Orthodox churches anoint the newly baptized Christians by the holy oil (the Holy Chrism - the Myron) that they may receive the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 2:20, 27, 2 Cor. 1:21, 22).

The Meaning of the Symbols: Each of the above mentioned symbols has a spiritual and biblical meaning, which we will discuss in the following:

I- The mighty wind that filled the house reveals the power of the Holy Spirit who filled everyone, present in the upper room. This wind had such a strong sound that filled the whole house and the assembly felt its power. The Lord tried to explain to Nicodemus the relation between the wind and our birth of the Spirit, as He said: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (Jn. 3:8). Christ the Lord breathed on His disciples and said to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them, if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn. 20:22,23). It was also mentioned in the book of Ezekiel, in the visions of the dry bones, that the Lord said to

him: "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: 'Come from the four winds, O breath and breathe on these slain, that they may live'" (Ezek. 37:9).

II- The dove is an innocent, meek and harmless bird (Mat. 10:16) and when our Lord was baptized in the river of Jordan by St. John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in a bodily form like a dove (Mat. 3:16, Mk. 1:10, Lk. 3:22). It is a sign of good news and salvation, as happened with Noah's dove (Gen. 8:11). King Solomon addressed the human soul (the bride of Christ) saying, "My dove and my perfect one" (Song. 5:2). When the Holy Spirit dwells inside the believers, they will become innocent, harmless and blameless as doves (Phil. 2:14-16).

III- The living water is given by God, as He described Himself as the fountain of living water (Jer. 2:13) because from Him comes the Holy Spirit who gives us life (Jn. 14:26). When our Lord talked to the woman of Samaria, He said: "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'give Me a drink', you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water" (Jn. 4:10). He also continued: "Who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (Jn. 4:13,14). The Lord meant by that water, the Holy Spirit whom He gave to His believers. This is clear from the Lord's speech to the Jews on the great day of the feast: "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water". The gospel added saying: "But this He spoke concerning the Spirit whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (Jn. 7:38,39). For this reason the church calls the baptism (the washing of the second birth), "the birth from the water and the Spirit", as was said by the Lord to Nicodemus (Jn. 3:5). It is known that water cleanses our bodies, quenches our thirst and the Holy Spirit washes away our sins and nourishes us and keeps us ready for eternal life.

IV- In the old days, oil was used in treatment of wounds (Isa. 1:6, Mk. 6:13, Jam. 5:14). It is used spiritually as a sign of consecration (Gen.28: 18, 35:14). The oil was used by Samuel the prophet to anoint King Saul and King David (Sam.

10:1, 6, 16:13) and the Spirit of God came upon them (Exod. 30:22-29). **Elijah the prophet** anointed with oil two kings and the prophet Elisha as commanded by God (1 King 20:15,16, 2King 9:3). The altar and its utensils are anointed with the holy oil (the Myron) to be holy for worshipping and offering the sacrifices, as said by the Lord. The oil is used for **healing the sick** in the name of the Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of unction of the sick (Js. 5:14). It was used for lightening the candles; **the Holy Spirit enlightens those who keep Him working in them**; thus keeping their vessels full of oil (Mat. 25:3,4) and the Holy Spirit makes the believers the light of the world, shining by their good deeds (Mat. 5:14-16).

V-The Fire is a symbol of the presence of God. In the Holy Bible the fire has several meanings:

1- The fire of God's protection and guidance: God was leading Israel in the wilderness of Sinai by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day during the forty years of their travel (Exod. 13:22, Deut. 1:33, Ps. 78:14).

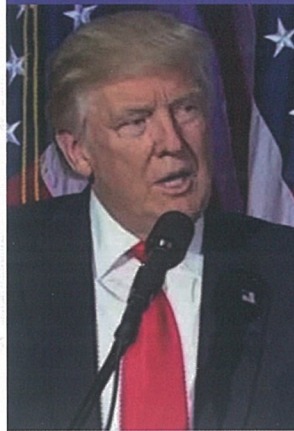
2- The fire of God's presence and call: The fire was always kept burning on the altar, a sign of God's presence (Lev. 6:12,13). The Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush and the bush was not consumed (Exod. 3:2-6). It was mentioned that God is a consuming fire (Exod. 24:17, Heb. 12:29). Daniel the prophet, saw the throne of God a fiery flame and its wheels a burning fire (Dan. 7:9).

3-The fire of cleaning and purifying: When **Isaiah** the prophet saw the glory of God, he felt unclean, and he said: "**Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: 'behold this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged'**" (Isa. 6:5-7).

4-The fire of accepting the sacrifice: When **Moses** the prophet and his brother Aaron offered a sacrifice, fire came out and consumed the **burnt offering** that was on the altar (Lev. 9:24). **David** the king, offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, the Lord answered from heaven by fire on the offerings (1 Chr. 21:26). The same happened when king **Solomon** finished building the temple, prayed and offered sacrifices, and fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices (2 Chr. 7:1). Also, when **Elijah** offered a burnt sacrifice the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the sacrifice and licked up the water that was in the trench (1 King. 18:38).

5- The fire of punishment the wicked: The Lord rained brimstone and fire on **Sodom and Gomorrah**, from the Lord out of the heavens (Gen. 19:24). When **Ahaziah**, the evil king of Samaria, sent to **Elijah a captain of fifty with his fifty men** and asked him to come down from the top of the hill, the man of God was sad for the wickedness of the king. He let fire to

President Trump condemns and consoles



President D. J. Trump condemned on air the Islamic terrorist evil attacks against the Coptic Christians of Egypt on Palm Sunday in two churches, April 9, 2017, killing and wounding more than 60 innocent people. He extended his condolences and prayers to the victims' families.

come down from heaven and consumed the captain and his fifty men. This happened twice (2 King. 1:7-12).

6- The fire of teaching and testimony: On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit **came upon the disciples** of the Lord in the form of tongues of fire, and sat upon each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues (Act. 2:3,4). The Lord has given His disciples the promise of the Holy Spirit, before His crucifixion, saying:

"He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (Jn. 14:26).

They could **testify of Christ** and bear witness to all nations. The Holy Spirit guided them into all truth, told them all things to come (Jn. 16:13), as the Lord foretold them: "**He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you"** (Jn. 16:14). The Holy Spirit still makes us **spiritually fervent, guides us into all truth**, and tells us things to come (Jn. 16:13). The Lord said also: "**He will convict the world of sin"** (Jn. 16:8).

7- The fire of condemnation: This fire is prepared for Satan and his soldiers, as well as the sinful, the wicked and the unprofitable people. The Lord will say to them: "**Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"** (Mat.25:41). He also declared this to the Jews, saying: "**Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire"** (Mat. 13:40-42). It was also revealed to St. John that on the judgment day, the beast, the false prophet, and their followers would be cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, to be tormented forever (Rev. 14:10, 20:20).

The day of Pentecost is a great day. It is the birthday of the church. Let us pray with one accord, saying: "**O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who is present in all places and fill all, the treasury of good things and the Life-Giver, graciously come and dwell in us and purify us from all defilement, O Good One and save our souls"**. (The third hour prayer, in the agepeya).



BY FR. AUGUSTINOS HANNA

Perseverance of Job and its Happy Ending



"YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF JOB AND SEEN THE END INTENDED BY THE LORD THAT THE LORD IS VERY COMPASSIONATE AND MERCIFUL" (JAMES 5:11).

Why Good (God's) People Suffer?!

This is not the story of a man suffering silently, patiently in the night. This is the story of a man yelling at God- a man who wants answers now. This man is Job.

And he has just lost nearly everything he has spent his life working for: his riches, his children and his health.

He has just one quick question for the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. It is the same question a mother asks after watching her kindergarten son get crushed under the wheels of a school bus. It is the question an aging grandfather asks when he finds out he has cancer. It's the question a middle-aged father asks after learning he's been laid off from the company he has dedicated himself to for the past 30 years.

Why? Why? Why?!!! The entire book of Job is wrestling with the question WHY, and why me?

For Job, self-perceived wise men answer the question. But they answer it wrong. Then for Job and for us, God answers the question. It's not a complete answer.

But it was complete enough for Job.

Behind the Scenes of Job

Job, a wealthy man who loses his riches, children, and health (1:1). **Eliphaz**, the three of Job's friends who try to convince him that he sinned (2:11).

Bildad, the second of Job's friends to speak (2:11).

Zophar, the third friend to speak (2:11).

Elihu, a bystander who argues with Job and his friends (32:2)

Job's wife, who tells her husband to curse God and die, so the suffering will end (2:9).

Plot Job is a rich man who owns thousands of sheep, camels, cattle, and donkeys. He's also blessed with a large family of 10 children. But he loses them all in one tragic day. Raiders take his herds and kill his servants. A windstorm crushes a house where his children are eating. Then he Job breaks out with skin ulcers all over his body.

What to look for:

The format. As a kind of road map to the book, notice the three cycles of debate between Job and his three friends. Each cycle run like this. Friend #1 talks, Job replies, friend #2, Job, friend #3, Job. (The one exception comes at the end of the third cycle, when friend #3 keeps silent. Instead, a bystander adds his thought about the matter). This routine takes up most of the book.

Job's persistence that he is innocent:

Like many others in his day, Job believes that health and wealth are signs of God's blessing- disease and poverty are signs of sin. Because Job knows he has done nothing to deserve the horror that has invaded his life, he is left wondering why God is putting him through all this. Bitterness begins to engulf him as he sarcastically complains, "God destroys the innocent along with the guilty. When a good person dies a sudden death, God sits back and laughs!" (9:22).

Author and date:

The writer is unknown for sure. Some scholars think it is Job himself. Others think that Job wrote some notes, then Moses found them when he came to Median and added to them to comfort his people during their oppression and affliction in Egypt. The writer used the Hebrew name for God, Yahweh, a term sometimes translated Jehovah or the Lord. The story seems to be set sometime in the era of Israel's founding fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Several clues suggest this. As was common in Abraham's day, his wealth was measured by his herds, and he acted as the priest for his family by offering sacrifices to God. In addition, he was raided by Sabeans and Chaldeans, who lived in patriarchal times. Some think the book of Job was written in Arabic language because the Land of Uz (near Edom southeast of Canaan) was in Arabian Peninsula and the names of Job's friends seem Arabian.

Most important than that, there is No mention at all to the Law of Moses or to the Tabernacles or the Red Sea, which proves that it was written before the time of Moses. Jewish

writings from the second century B.C. speak about the book of Job, showing that it was well respected by then. But the purpose of the book is clear. It corrects the ancient misunderstanding that suffering is God's punishment. The fact is, as the book of Job dramatically shows, good people are not exempt from suffering. Even Christ's disciples, in the case of the born blind man, thought that what happened to him was due to his sin or his parents sins; but Jesus said, "neither he sinned nor his parents..."

Big Scenes from Job

Job is a godly man who lives near the desert, perhaps east of what is now Israel. He is rich in herds and servants to tend them. He is also rich in children, with seven sons and three daughters.

Satan, however, decides to test Job's loyalty to God. And God allows the test. Some tribes kill the herdsmen and then steal Job's cattle, donkeys, and camels.

A mysterious fire kills the sheep and their shepherds. And a windstorm crushes the home of his oldest son, where all the children have gathered for a meal.

Grief-stricken at the news, Job tears his robe and shaves his head and said: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (1:21).

With his wealth and children gone, Job now suffers a third great loss, his health. He becomes infected with a painful skin disease that covers his body with open, festering sores. We can only guess what kind of disease it is; smallpox, chronic eczema, ulcerous boils. Whatever it is, it's agonizing. Job's wife can't stand to see him suffer. "Why do you still trust God?" she asks. Why don't you curse him and die?" (2:9).

Job absolutely refuses. "Don't talk like a fool" he replies. "If we accept blessings from God, we must accept trouble as well.

Three of Job's friends come and sit silently with him for seven days. Finally Job breaks the silence. "I wish I had been born dead and then buried" (3:16). One by one, his friends respond. They are certain Job has sinned, and he won't find relief until he repents. "In my experience," Eliphaz says, "only those who plant seeds of evil harvest trouble" (4:8). Bildad asks Job, "Why don't you turn to him and start living right? Then he will decide to rescue and restore you" (8:5). Zophar then says to this tormented man who has lost nearly everything, "God has punished you less than you deserve" (11:6).

In the hard debate that follow, Job maintains his innocence and retaliates, "Miserable comforters are you all" (16:2). Eventually, he turns his attack heavenward: "You,

God are the reason I am insulted and spit on" (17:6).

A forth and younger man named Elihu joins the gathering. He takes on the whole group He's angry with Job for blaming God instead of himself. And he's angry at the three men for not being able to prove Job wrong.

As the youngster drones on, a storm begins rolling in.

Suddenly, from out of this storm, God speaks to Job, answered him by raising 30 questions, (that took four chapters from 38-41) no human can answer.

"How did I lay the foundation for the earth?" (38:4). "Where is the home of light, and where does darkness live?" (38:19). God's point is clear: there are some things that human beings can't understand. And suffering is one of them.

"I am the Lord All-Powerful, but you have argued that I am wrong," God accuses Job. "Are you trying to prove that you are innocent by accusing Me of injustice?" (40:2, 8).

Finally, Job was embarrassed, "I have talked about things that are far beyond my understanding," he admits. "I have heard of You by hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (42:5).

The Happy Ending

God now turns His attention to Job's friends. "I am angry at you," God says, "for not telling the truth." Then He orders these men to go to Job-the man they had been wrongly accusing in a very cruel way, He will punish them for their foolishness.

Each man expresses his sorrow to Job, and gives him gifts of gold and silver. "Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning, for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. After this Job lived on hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations (Job 42:12-16).

In Ezekiel 14:14, we find God honoring Job again and considered him one of the great heroes of faith and patience, equal to "NOAH, DANIEL and JOB". Also, the New Testament referred to Job and his great perseverance, saying: "Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord- that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful" (James 5:11). Finally, note that the suffering and patience of Job was a little shadow of the suffering and patience of whom is greater than Job; whom St. Paul referred to saying: "May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and ***into the patience of Christ***" (2 Thess. 3:5).



THE COSMOLOGICAL EVIDENCE for a Creator

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the expanse proclaims His handiwork." (Ps 19:1)

Does scientific evidence support the belief in a higher intelligence that could have created the universe?

In cosmology, the term "Big Bang" refers to a theory that explains the origin of the universe. In 1927 Georges Lemaître, a cosmologist and astrophysicist, noted that the expanding universe could be traced back in time to a single point, which would be the beginning of the expansion of the universe. Based on the rate of expansion, scientists placed this point at 13.8 billion years ago, which would be the age of our universe.

The term "Big Bang" was coined with derision in 1949 by Sir Fred Hoyle, a British scientist in astronomy, who did not believe that the universe could have a beginning. He believed that the universe has no beginning and no end. But over the years his view was shared by fewer and fewer scientists as more evidence came in support of the Big Bang theory which gained more and more acceptance. Now most scientists acknowledge that the universe has a beginning.

In the book of "Genesis" the Bible starts with the verse "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen 1:1). According to the laws of logic, anything that has a beginning must have a cause.

William Lane Craig, a modern Christian apologetic philosopher, presents the following argument called "Kalam cosmological argument" as follows:

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause
2. The universe began to exist; therefore:
3. The universe has a cause

This leads to his next argument, which goes as follows:

1. The universe has a cause;
2. If the universe has a cause, then uncaused, personal creator of the universe exists that transcends the universe.
3. Therefore, the uncaused personal creator of the universe is beginning-less, changeless, immaterial, timeless, spaceless & enormously powerful.

The Bible also says that the universe has an end as mentioned in the 2nd epistle of Apostle Peter:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. And the earth and the works in it will be burned up." (2 Pet. 3:10)

According to Wikipedia: "The heat death of the universe is a plausible ultimate fate of the universe in which the universe has diminished to a state of no thermodynamic free energy and therefore can no longer sustain processes that increase entropy. The theory of heat death of the universe stems from the second law of thermodynamics, of which one version states that "entropy(gradual decline into disorder) tends to increase in an isolated system (like our universe)". This shows that scientific evidence supports the Bible accounts regarding the fate of the universe.

In conclusion:

1. The "Big Bang Theory", with all its supporting scientific evidence, shows that our universe has a beginning, and therefore points to the existence of a personal creator as the cause of its existence as stated in the Bible (Gen 1:1).

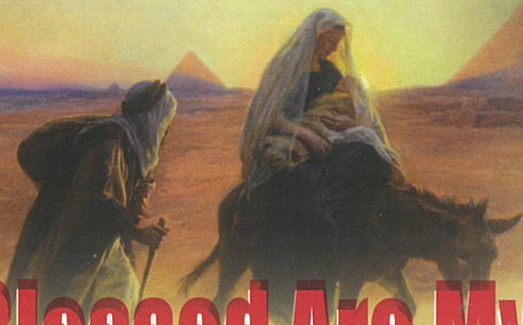
2. The 2nd law of thermodynamics determines the ultimate decline of the universe known as the "Heat death of the universe", which again was stated in the Bible. (2 Pet. 3:10)

As Christians, we believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Therefore, when the Bible says that God created the heavens and the earth (the universe) we believe (trust) it. When the Bible says that the universe has an end we believe it.

However, it is always a good practice to be able to convince others with the evidence that God has revealed to us through science. That is what Apostle Peter has asked the believers to do when he said "be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope in you, with meekness and fear" (1Pe 3:15)

References:

1. William Lane Craig: Reasonable faith, 3rd edition, 2008.
2. Wikipedia, English encyclopedia



Blessed Are My People Egypt

Hymn By Mark M. Hanna

1. O People of Egypt Rejoice today
For the Lord Jesus
blessed you this day
When He came to Egypt as a little boy
* Blessed are My People Egypt

2. Isaiah prophesied a long time ago
That Jesus would visit Egypt
And that Egypt's idols would all fall
* Blessed are My People Egypt

3. The prophecy was fulfilled
When the Holy Family fled from Herod
And they took refuge in Egypt
* Blessed are My People Egypt

4. The Pagan idols shook and shattered
Everywhere the Lord Jesus Passed by
The gods of Egypt fell before the Lord
* Blessed are My People Egypt

5. St. Mary carried the baby Jesus
While St. Joseph looked for a home
They all traveled throughout our land
* Blessed are My People Egypt

6. When the Lord Jesus wanted a drink
The flowing Nile gave Him sweet water
And the Lord gave Egypt everflowing blessings
* Blessed are My People Egypt

7. Egypt is the only land
Other than Israel
That the Lord Jesus has visited
* Blessed are My People Egypt

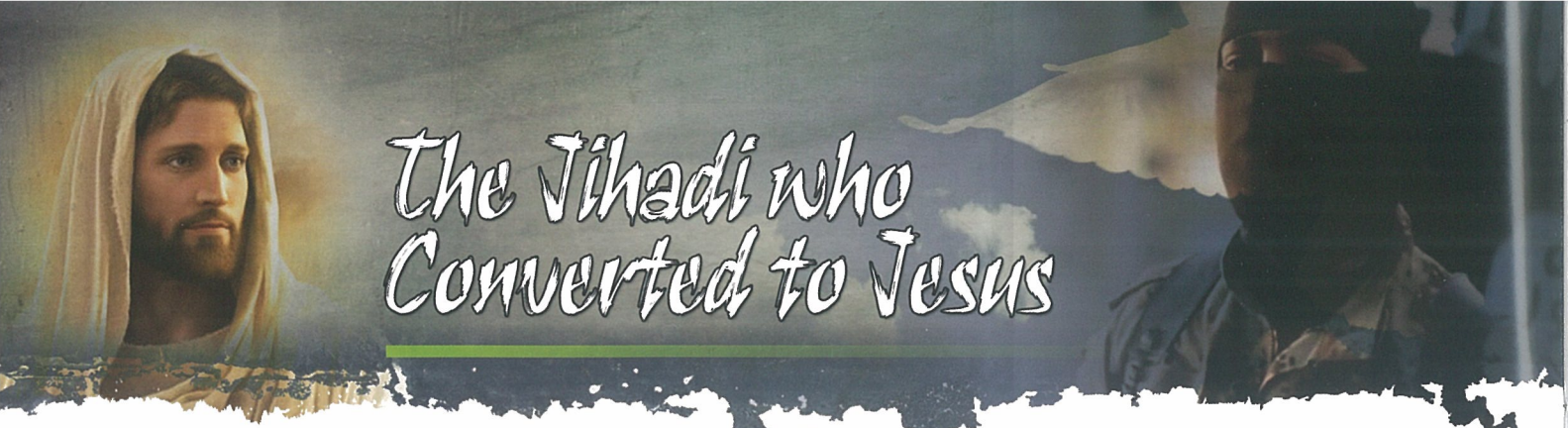
8. Blessed are My People Egypt
Said the Lord of Hosts to Isaiah
Hundreds of years before the birth of Christ
* Blessed are My People Egypt

9. Isaiah prophesied in Chapter 19
and also in verse 19 saying,
In Egypt there will be an altar to the Lord
* Blessed are My People Egypt

10. This altar is the Coptic Church
Built by St. Mark the Evangelist
This is the Church blessed by the Lord Himself
* Blessed are My People Egypt

11. No other Country received honor
of a prophecy about its Church
Except Egypt and the Coptic Church
* Blessed are My People Egypt

12. We rejoice today and sing and praise
For the Lord Jesus blessed our land
When He came with Joseph and St. Mary
* Blessed are My People Egypt



The Jihadi who Converted to Jesus

ISTANBUL — When 22 Christian refugees gathered in the basement of an apartment in Istanbul early on a recent Sunday afternoon, it was quickly clear that this was no ordinary prayer meeting. Several of them had Islamic names. There was an Abdelrahman and even a couple of Mohammads. Strangest of all, they jokingly referred to their host — one of the two Mohammads — as an irhabi. A terrorist. If Bashir Mohammad took the joke well, it was because there was once some truth to it. Today, Mr. Mohammad, 25, has a cross on his wall and invites other recent converts to weekly Bible readings in his purple-walled living room. Less than four years ago, however, he says he fought on the front lines of the Syrian civil war for the Nusra Front, an offshoot of Al Qaeda. He is, he says, a jihadi who turned to Jesus. It is a transition that has surprised everyone, not least of all himself. Four years ago, Mr. Mohammad tells me, “Frankly I would have slaughtered anyone who suggested it.” Not only have his beliefs changed, but his temperament has, too. Today, his wife, Hevin Rashid, confirms, with a hint of understatement, that he is “much better to be around.”

The conversion of Muslim refugees to Christianity is not a new phenomenon, particularly in majority-Christian countries. Converts sometimes stand accused of trying to enhance their chances of asylum by making it dangerous to deport them back to places with a history of Islamist persecution.

Mr. Mohammad’s particular experience, however, does not fit easily into this narrative. He lives in a majority-Muslim country, has little interest in seeking asylum in the West and treads an unlikely path followed by few former jihadis. His is a story that began in a Kurdish part of northern Syria, Afrin, where he grew up in a Muslim family. Mr. Mohammad flirted with extremism in his teens. His cousin took him to hear jihadist preachers as a 15-year-old, and he adhered to some of the most extreme interpretations of Islam, “even the ones you haven’t heard of.” But when war broke out in Syria, after the country’s 2011 uprising, Mr. Mohammad initially joined the secular Kurdish forces in their fight for autonomy. Mr. Mohammad’s subsequent ideological journey rarely made complete sense. But by his account, he became traumatized by the deaths he witnessed on the front line, which in turn re-energized his interest in the extremist versions of Islam that he had learned about as a teenager. “When I saw all these dead bodies,” he said, “it made me believe all these

things they said in the lectures. It made me seek the greatness of religion.” Or, at least, his violent interpretations of that religion. When a friend invited him to defect in summer 2012 to the Nusra Front, a group that seeks to establish an extremist state, Mr. Mohammad readily agreed. As a Nusra fighter, he continued to witness extreme brutality. His colleagues executed several captives by crushing them with a bulldozer. Another prisoner was forced to drink several liters of water after his genitals were tied shut with string. This time, however, Nusra’s propaganda made the violence seem tolerable. “They used to tell us these people were the enemies of God,” Mr. Mohammad said, “and so I looked on these executions positively.”

When I first met Mr. Mohammad, in his basement, I guessed at none of this. In fact, I was there to observe one of his guests, a Yazidi who had converted two months earlier. Mr. Mohammad seemed to be the group’s glue and behaved as though he had been born and bred a Christian. It was Mr. Mohammad who led the first prayers and chants. (“People who have fled their homes,” began one, “God bring them safety.”) And it was he who distributed the coffee afterward. His calm poise was jogged only when his guests jokingly referred to him as the irhabi, a sobriquet that sent a sheepish smile across his youthful face. Mr. Mohammad wears a cross and has one on the wall of his living room, where other recent converts join him for weekly Bible readings.

Patrick Kingsley / The New York Times

In his previous life, however, Mr. Mohammad said he was an angry man whose temper frightened his relatives. When he briefly returned home for his family’s Kurdish New Year celebrations in March 2013, Mr. Mohammad was repulsed by what he saw as blasphemous celebrations, whose origins lay outside the Islamic tradition. Indoctrinated by his months with Nusra, he spent his leave in isolation with Ms. Rashid, who was then his fiancée. Both she and his parents tried to persuade him not to return to the front line, but he ignored them.

But back at the front, Mr. Mohammad finally began to question Nusra’s motives. Scanning government territory through his binoculars, he says he saw Syrian government soldiers executing a line of prisoners with a bulldozer and concluded there was little difference between their behavior and that of his colleagues.

Disenchanted, he risked execution himself by deserting Nusra, and returning home to Afrin. “I went to Nusra in search of my God,” he said. “But after I saw Muslims killing Muslims, I realized there was something wrong.” The next year, he and his wife fled the war entirely, leaving for Istanbul and joining around 2.5 million other Syrians in exile in Turkey. Still a zealous Muslim, Mr. Mohammad prayed so loudly that his upstairs neighbors complained. “They used to ask me, ‘When are you going to turn into a prophet?’” He still required Ms. Rashid to cover her hair and neck, and planned for her to wear a niqab, or full-face covering. It was nevertheless Ms. Rashid herself who unwittingly prompted her husband’s rejection of Islam. In early 2015, she fell seriously ill. As her health worsened, Mr. Mohammad described her condition in a phone call with his cousin Ahmad — the same cousin who had taken him to jihadist lectures as a teenager. Ahmad was now living in Canada and, in a move that shocked Mr. Mohammad, had converted to Christianity.

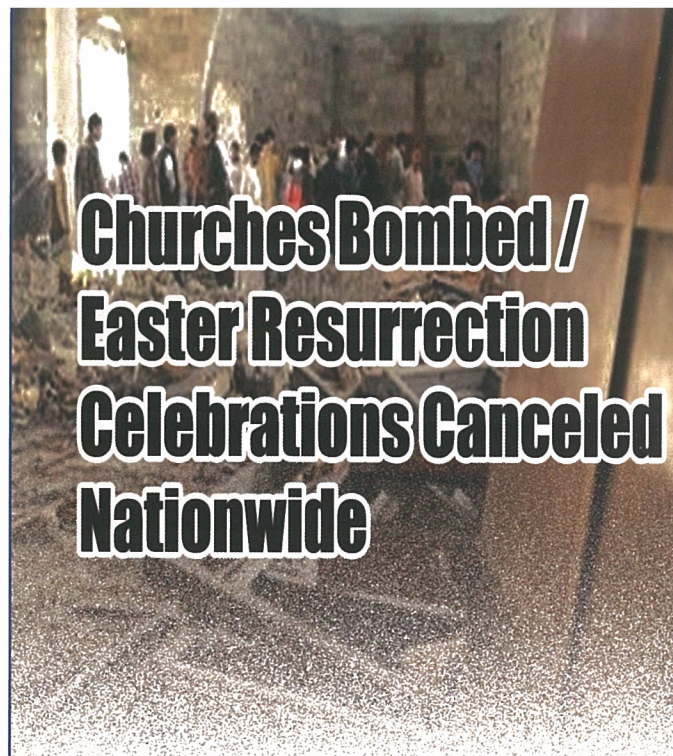
An enthusiastic convert, Ahmad asked Mr. Mohammad to place his telephone close to Ms. Rashid, so that his prayer group could sing and pray for her health. Horrified, Mr. Mohammad initially refused, since he had been taught to find Christianity repellent. But he was also desperate, and eventually he gave in.

When Ms. Rashid improved within a few days, Mr. Mohammad ascribed it to his cousin’s intervention. Intrigued, he then began to entertain a sacrilegious thought. He asked his cousin to recommend a Christian preacher in Istanbul who might introduce him to the religion. He was put in touch with Eimad Brim, a missionary from an evangelical group based in Jordan called the Good Shepherd, who agreed to meet with him. Mr. Brim said Mr. Mohammad was quickly persuaded by the benefits of a conversion, despite the lethal danger in which it would place him. “It was Bashir who was looking for Eimad,” said Mr. Brim, who also confirmed other parts of Mr. Mohammad’s narrative. “It was easy.”

Exactly why he sought solace in Christianity, rather than a more mainstream version of Islam, no one can explain. ***Reading the Bible, Mr. Mohammad claimed, made him calmer than reading the Quran. The churches he attended, Mr. Mohammad said, made him feel more welcome than the neighborhood mosques.***

In his personal view, Christian prayers were more generous than Muslim ones. But these are subjective claims, and many would reject the characterization of Islam as a less benign religion, much as they would reject Nusra’s extremist interpretation of it.

For Mr. Mohammad and Ms. Rashid, perhaps it was their dreams that sealed their conversion. As the couple began to consider leaving Islam, Ms. Rashid said she dreamed of a biblical figure who used heavenly powers to divide the waters of the sea, which Mr. Mohammad interpreted as a sign of encouragement from Jesus. Then, Mr. Mohammad himself dreamed Jesus had given him some chickpeas. The pair felt loved. ***“There’s a big gap between the god I used to worship and the one I worship now,” Mr. Mohammad said. “We used to worship in fear. Now everything has changed.”*** For Mr. Mohammad, all this has nevertheless come at a high price. His rejection of Islam makes him a target for his fundamentalist former allies and he fears they will one day catch up with him. If they do, however, he reckons he now has the greatest protection of all. “I trust,” he says, “in God.”



Churches Bombed / Easter Resurrection Celebrations Canceled Nationwide

Craig Huey April 16, 2017 Persecuted church

Over 40 Christians were killed by two suicide bombers at two Egyptian churches on Palm Sunday.

Now many, if not all the churches have decided not to hold public services on Easter because they cannot count on the Egyptian government for protection.

God loves the Egyptian people. In fact, the Christians in this country date back to the very first Christian churches. And our prayers go out to all the victims.

Our Lord sides with innocent victims of oppression (Jeremiah 22:3). Our omnipotent, all loving, omniscient, merciful God knew these horrific attacks would happen before they did.

Let's remember, God did not cause this persecution. The Muslim terrorists did. Human freedom...free will...is why Christ died. God did not remove our freedom on the cross. No, he redeemed it.

Because of the cross, with the power of the Holy Spirit, God can use our human freedom to advance His will, His glory, and His Kingdom.

Jesus grieves with the victims in Egypt. He wants us to grieve for our brothers and sisters in Christ. We can minister by prayer. Watch these two videos...one showing the terrible devastation...and the other with Tony Perkins with a powerful perspective.

Watch the special report, about 2 minutes. Watch Tony in this 3 minute video. Let me know what you think. Email me at craig@electionforum.org

Tags: Christian persecution

Christians of Egypt hit by ISIS in Palm Sunday bombings

A PAIR OF BOMBS ATTACKS AT CHURCHES IN Egypt killed at least 44 (increased because of the injured that died later), shattering the Christian festival of Palm Sunday for the country's Copts, the Middle East's largest Christian community. One bomb ripped through a church in the Nile Delta town of Tanta, while a suicide bomber set off his device at an Alexandria cathedral where Coptic Pope Tawadros II had held Palm Sunday Palm Sunday services. The attacks were quickly claimed by the Islamic State, which has become a persistent menace in Egypt since an insurgent movement in the Sinai Peninsula proclaimed its allegiance in 2014.

In keeping with ISIS sectarian absolutism, the Sinai militants, who in recent years had killed more than 1,000 soldiers and police, soon expanded their target to include Egypt's Christian community, which makes up about 10% of the population. In February dozens of Christians fled north Sinai for Ismailia on the Suez Canal, fearing for their lives following weeks attacks.

Egypt's President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi declared a new state of emergency in response to the bombings, but he faces accusations that his government is failing to do enough to protect the Christian minority. It's tough charge for a leader who promised a return to security and order following a military coup in 2013.



KHALED ELFIQI/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

Security personnel investigated the scene of Sunday's explosion inside Mar Girgis Church. The blast killed 29 people and wounded another 69, an official told state media.

Bombs Kill Dozens in Egyptian Churches

Readers Corner

Dear Augustine,

Believers in China are pleading for Bibles... but there is a critical Bible shortage!

With your gift now, you can help American Bible Society provide Bibles to waiting Christians in China... for just \$1 each.

God has opened the door to China, allowing us to provide 150,000 new Bibles for waiting hands and open hearts in China. Every DOLLAR you give today will help answer the pleas of a Chinese Christian who is waiting for their First Bible. Your gift will provide the paper necessary to print Bibles... so that someone in China can engage with Scripture for the first time.

Bibles were once illegal and destroyed in China, but now the people of China can have a Bible of their own... with your help. With 1 million new followers of Jesus joining the church in China every year, there are not nearly enough copies of Scripture to go around. And many who live in rural areas struggle to survive on \$1 a day. They could not afford a Bible even if they could somehow find one to purchase. So they need our help!

Yours in Christ,



Robert L. Briggs

Senior Vice President of the American Bible Society

Real Story Washing Toilets !



..."those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled' (Daniel 5:19).

Paul desired a career in the building industry. Early in his career, he was working with a large ministry to help direct several of their construction projects.

As the projects were completed, Paul was asked to stay on for future projects. To keep him busy he was given a number of jobs - one of which was cleaning toilets. He recalls getting down on his knees each day and complaining to the Lord, "Lord, I'm a college graduate!"

Discouraged, Paul told the Lord, "I will not leave here until You promote me. Please give me contentment with my circumstance."

Paul felt totally forgotten by God. A few months later, Paul received a phone call from a man in the Midwest who owned five successful businesses who wanted to interview Paul for a job. This came as a total surprise to Paul. As he drove to the interview, he told the Lord, "I only want your will in my life, nothing else. I am content to remain obscure for the rest of my life if I have You. You must override my lack of experience for me to get this job."

The owner of the company asked Paul a surprising question: "If I asked you to clean a toilet, what would you do?" Paul sat there, stunned. He wanted to burst out laughing. Paul assured him that he would simply pick up a sponge and start cleaning.

Amazingly, Paul was hired even though other candidates were more qualified. After several months of success, Paul asked his boss why he hired him. His boss replied, "Paul, I still have a large stack of applications from people who wanted this job. Do you remember the first question I asked you in the interview? I asked each one the same question. You were the only one who said he would clean the toilet. Paul, I am a wealthy man, but I grew up dirt poor. I clean my own toilets at home. I can't have people running my businesses who are too proud to clean a toilet."

Sometimes God places us in situations to see if we will be faithful in those before He is willing to promote us to greater things!

Alvina Karas

OCTOBER 22, 1923 – FEBRUARY 26, 2017



Though Alvina Karas had six children, 14 grand-children, and 8 great-grandchildren of her own, she was a Teta of many. Born on October 22, 1923 in Assiut, Egypt. Alvina was the third child of eight siblings, six sisters, and two brothers. Alvina was a bright and diligent student, graduating from "Sannawi" (High School) as the top of her class, and second in all Egypt. Despite having received a full scholarship for medical school, she chose instead to marry and start a family with her beloved husband, Sarkis Karas, a government official in Cairo. Together they had six children, Eva, Samy, Samir, Mona, Amany and Adel. In sacrificing her own medical aspirations, she instilled in her children the diligence and motivation of hard work, it turn raising four physicians, a veterinarian, and an engineer. She also went to great lengths to help raise her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

While living in Shoubra, Egypt, she assisted in the development of a church by donating a piece of land adjacent to her home, acting as treasurer on the board for decades, and serving as a Sunday school teacher.

In 1981 she moved to California, following three of her children: Eva, Samir and Adel. Amany joined two years later. Alvina displayed thoughtful, selfless, Christian traits by supporting her family whenever they called upon her from managing a busy medical practice for her son-in-law, to aiding her son's growing business. While doing so, she was adored by both patients and customers alike. She even took it upon herself to learn additional languages such as Spanish and Tagalog, which made her a favorite among the nursing staff when she was hospitalized later in life. Alvina's love for God and the Bible was inspirational to generations of young women who considered her to be a god-mother and role model to them. She excelled and delighted in Biblical studies and trivia. In fact she was a scholar in the Bible. She herself became a living Bible and taught the word of God to her children. She helped them even in their medical school and used to study with them and recite the lessons and exams! Alvina raised up five of her children to be physicians, besides of ten of her grandchildren and their

spouses also physicians! What is astonishing that she was authority in grammar of the Arabic language! She is considered the second after Pope Shenouda in mastering the Arabic language!

She had a passion and enthusiasm for the simple pleasures in life-sitting on the porch, enjoying the mangos she grew in her garden, even eating a piece of gibna-roumy (cheese) and bread. Like her husband Sarkis, she loved nothing more than to be surrounded by her family-and we were always more than happy to oblige. Alvina exuded love and joy in everything she did. She was entertaining to everyone, young and old, of all cultures, including her grandchildren's friends who found her to be a magnetic personality. She was zealous about helping others, especially the needy in Egypt. She discretely sponsored struggling families with monthly income, generated by her concept of using the interest on deposited money to come their needs. She was very generous with the poor and hospitable to relatives and friends and encouraged her family members to do the same, and would have loved the idea to become more widespread.

Perhaps most memorably, Alvina had a real visceral love-love with grit, the kind of love that endures, suffers, persists, conquers, and forgives endlessly. She was an unstoppable, untiring force of nature that flourished unhindered for 93 years; bringing light and awe to literally everyone she met. She spoke of love often, perhaps because she understood it in her bones better than anyone else. Her great faith helped her endure the chock of losing her son Adel in a hate crime after September 11, 2001. Indeed she deserves the title to be the "Ideal Mother."

We mourn for the loss of our beloved mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. Her joyous presence at the heart of our family gatherings will be sorely missed. However, our sorrow is overshadowed by the joy and assurance we have in knowing that she is finally reunited with her husband Sarkis, her son Adel, her brother Zarif, her sisters Naema, Wedad and Soad, and most importantly with her beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. She is finally home.

Congratulations



St. John Church congratulates
Antony N. Selim and Sara
for the baptism of their first baby-boy

Mark A. Selim

by the blessed hands of H.E. Metropolitan Serapion. May the Lord Jesus Christ grant him health, strength and growth in the grace and knowledge according to the image of his patron saint St. Mark the Evangelist.

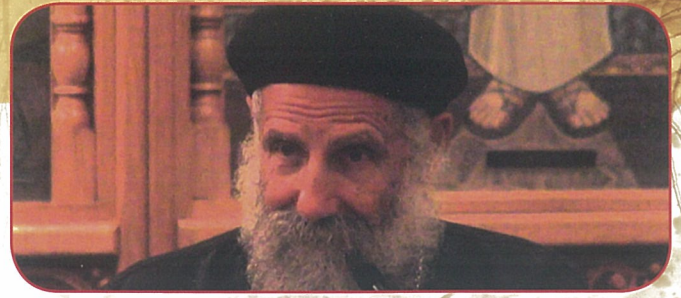
Congratulations also to his parents' families.



St. John Church and family congratulate

Beatrice Andrawis

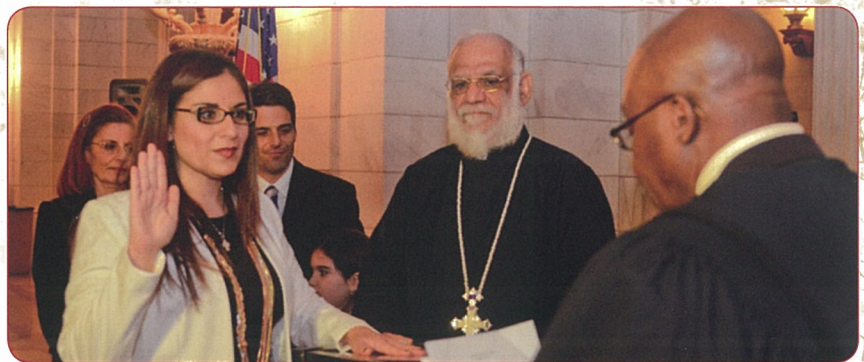
For her naval deployment. She honorably served and was commended by her chain of command for numerous accomplishments during the 7 month deployment. Thank God for your safe return. We wish you every blessing and success- **Mom Dina, Dad Raafat, Ronnie and Carol.**



St. John Church congratulates the very
Rev. Archpriest

Fr. Luka Sidarous

for his golden Jubilee, 50 years in priesthood. May our Risen Savior Jesus Christ support him with health, power and fullness of the Holy Spirit, asking God to complete the other half century with abundant fruits.



St. John Church in Covina, California
congratulates her honor

Judge Sherrie Mikhail Miday

for being the first Coptic Orthodox
Egyptian-American elected Judge in
U.S. history.

Sherrie Miday, a first-generation Coptic-Egyptian-American lawyer born in Cleveland, Ohio became the first elected official in U.S. history of Egyptian origin on November 8, 2016. Sherrie Mikhail Miday is the daughter of Archpriest Fr. Mikhail Edward and his wife Seham, of St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church in Cleveland. The judge-elect presided over both types felony criminal and civil court cases started on January 5, 2017, Congratulations to the gifted Judge Sherrie, her husband and family and to our dear Fr. Mikhail, wishing her wisdom, health, strength, every blessing and continuous success.

