

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
St. John Coptic Orthodox Church
P.O. Box 598
West Covina, CA 91793-0598

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN GABRIEL, CA
PERMIT NO. 116

Address correction requested.
Do not forward.
Return Postage Guaranteed.

21329 Cienega Ave. Covina, CA 91724 Fax & Tel: (714) 592-8847 Tel: (714) 599-9075

ST. JOHN

COPTIC CHURCH COVINA CA
MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 45 SEPTEMBER 1993

PRINTED BY GATEWAY ... SHOHDY N... (714) 534-7003

The **Schedule** of Meetings & Occasions

September 93



SUNDAYS

- + English Liturgy 7:30 - 10:30 A.M.
- + Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:30 A.M.

WEDNESDAYS

- + Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 A.M.
- + Prayer Meeting 8:30 - 9:30 P.M.

FRIDAYS

- + Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 A.M.
- The Deacons Meeting
- + Instructions & Alhan for deacons 7:00 - 8:30 PM.
- Friday Youth Meeting
- + Arabic Youth Meeting 7:30 - 9:30 P.M.

SATURDAYS

- + 1. The Youth leaders and Sunday School Teachers,
Service Preparatory Meeting . . 6:00 - 7:15 P.M.
- + 2. Vespers & Arabic Bible Study 7:30 - 9:15 P.M.
followed by Confessions, Tasbeha.
- + 3. Saturday English Youth Meeting
8:00-9:15 PM. , then Midnight Praise.

FEASTS:

- + **1. The Feast of Nayrouz**
(Saturday, September 11/Tut 1,1710)
Vespers will be served on Friday 10 at 7:30 P.M.
with homily, hymns, gifts and prayer meeting for
the new martyrs in Egypt.
The Liturgy of the Coptic new year 1710, on
Saturday 11, from 8 - 10:30 A.M.

- + **2. Feast of the Cross**
(Monday, Sept. 27):

- + Vespers (Asheya) of the feast: **Sunday**
Sept. 26,.....from 7:30 - 9:00 P.M.
- + Liturgy: **Monday , 27** from 8-11:30 A.M.

Arabic Language Class

Mr. Adly Tawadrous, the Arabic teacher, will continue teaching the Arabic language every **friday & Saturday from 6 - 7 P.M.** The fees are **\$10.00** per month.

Fr. Georgios Travels to Cairo, Egypt For Two Weeks During September

Rev. Fr. Georgios Kolta travels to Cairo, Egypt from Tuesday, September 7 - September 19, to attend the engagement of his son Samuel. St. John Church congratulates her beloved priest with Tasonry Nancy and Samuel wishing them happiness and safety.

During this period, the two Sundays 12 & 19, there will be only one Liturgy in the church to be prayed in Arabic and English.

The Church 4th Annual Festival October 15 - 17

It is expected that H.G. Bishop Reweis will bless our annual festival this year, during the three days from Friday October 15 to Sunday 17. There will be revival meetings and spiritual days, starting with Liturgies and end with vespers, including many social activities, sports and artistic works. One of the goals of the festival, is fund raising to face the church coming large payment (\$175,000.00) due on next February.

12 Proven Ways To Get Along Better With Everyone

1. Before you say anything to anyone, ask yourself three things: (1) is it true? (2) is it kind and useful ? (3) is it necessary ?
2. Make promises sparingly and keep them faithfully.
3. Never miss the opportunity to compliment or to say something encouraging to someone.
4. Refuse to talk negatively about others; don't gossip and don't listen to gossip.
5. Have a forgiving view of people. Believe that most people are doing the best they can.
6. Keep an open mind; discuss, but don't argue. It is possible to disagree without being disagreeable.
7. Forget about counting to 10 when angry. Count to 1000 before doing or saying anything that could make matters worse.
8. Let your virtues speak for themselves.
9. If someone criticizes you, see if there is any truth to what he is saying; if so, make changes. If there is no truth to the criticism, ignore it and live so that no one will believe the negative remark.
10. Cultivate your sense of humor; laughter is the shortest distance between two people.
11. Do not seek so much to be consoled, as to console; do not seek so much to be understood, as to understand; do not seek so much to be loved, as to love.
12. If you want to taste the honey, don't destroy the honey-comb. Don't attack, blame and accuse others as much as you can.

How Do You Spell Love?

A class of very little girls was learning to spell one day. They spelled a number of small words such as "pig," "cat," "dog" "cow," and amused themselves by imitating the sounds that these animals make.

Then the teacher asked Monica to spell love. One would think that she would stand up and say, "Love is spelled L-O-V-E, love." But she didn't do this. Instead she ran up to the teacher, threw her arms around her neck, and kissed her on the cheek. "That is the way we spell love at our house".

The girls laughed but the teacher said, "That is a beautiful way; but do you know another way ?"

"Oh, yes cried Monica, "I also spell love this way," and she began to put the books in order on the teacher's desk. "I spell love by helping everybody when they need me."

How do you spell love? Do you spell it L-O-V-E and let it go at that ? Or do you spell it by helping others when they need you ? Jesus commands us to love. "*This I command you, to love one another*" (John 15:17). He doesn't say, "It would be nice...please...but "*I command you...*" The greatest commandment is: "*Love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself.*"

How do you spell "love of God"? If you love Jesus, you spell it by throwing your arms around Him every day in prayer and coming to church every Sunday. If you love Jesus, you will spell it by keeping His commandments. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep My commandments." If you love Jesus, you will spell it by coming to Confession and asking Jesus to forgive you when you do something wrong. If you love Jesus, you will spell it by receiving His precious Body and Blood in Holy Communion as often as possible. This is the way God wants us to spell "Love".

The Invincible Power of Anophora

By Fr. Georgios Atalla

Some Christians do not believe that it is important to spend more than two hours in the church, just to attend the Anophora. Others come to Church, but do not know the great benefit of the Anophora. They do not see the Lord in the hands of the priests or during communion. They do not feel the invisible power in the communion. When we partake of Him, we will increase in grace, power, courage, and faith. When we attend the Anophora with fear, reverence and sincerity, we can gain many spiritual emotions and influences; for example:

1- Prayers: When The Lord lived on the earth before crucifixion, He had compassion on everyone, especially on those who asked Him faithfully. Similarly, He will do the same during the prayers of the Anophora. When we ask Him with faith, He will give us what we need, even the earthly and the materialistic needs. He knows our nature and the weakness of the flesh, and He will answer. Then when you ask The Lord to fulfill His will in your life, to forgive your sins, to give you His divine grace, to guide you in this world in righteousness and to deliver you from evil, He will have compassion on you and you will gain many profits. The prayers of the alter will be joined with your prayers and will be submitted to The Lord who exists on together, how much more blessings will be gained when the church and priest pray with faith together.

2- Thanksgiving: We believe that on the alter, there is The Mediator who is giving thanks to The Father on our behalf. Let us carry Him, not on our hands as Simon did, but in our hearts as a sign of love and thanksgiving. Let us remember The Holy Sacrifice, offered to The Father on the Golgotha, when we watch the prayers offered to The Sacrificed Christ on the alter. By giving thanks, we abolish selfishness, pride, envy and jealousy, and we ornament ourselves with meekness, humbleness, love, self denial and sacrifice. During Anophora prayers, let us praise, The Lord always with thanksgiving.

3- Joy: Before receiving The Holy Communion, we feel that we long for Christ and after having Him, we feel joyful and content. This happens to us because we

receive this grace after struggling, repentance and preparation. We remember what it is written for us: "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of The Lamb." (Rev.19:9). That is why we rejoice and sing Psalm 150 during The Holy Communion.

4- Sacrifice: During the prayers of the Anophora, we remember The Holy Sacrifice on the alter. The Lord was a sacrifice by His own free will from His birth to His Ascension. Accordingly, during the Anophora, we who have the love of God, must also be ready, willingly, to be a sacrifice. Christians who commit themselves to Christ, can give their lives as a continuous sacrifice. So we can say with Saint Paul: "For Your sake, we are killed all day long." (Rom 8:36), as The Lord gave Himself a sacrifice to carry the sins of the world (Jn 1:29), so also should our thoughts, intentions, speech and deeds be directed towards this Holy Sacrifice, that is given to us daily on the alter. At the same time we must give ourselves as sacrifices offered daily to Him (Mat 16:24). When we prepare ourselves to have communion, let us submit ourselves to God as a sacrifice, showing with Him the glory in the eternal life (Rom 8:17).

5- Courage: The table of The Lord is the mystery of the courage of the Christians. From His Sacrifice our weak souls are healed and we become brave and fearless, filled with courage and boldness. Saint John Chrysostom said that the Christians in his time were as predatory lions after taking the communion, defeating Satan and all evil powers. They took this power from The Lord Himself being able to defeat and live a victorious life.

6- Repentance: During the prayers of the Anophora, the Christian looks to the sin as a fearful evil, the enemy of God and of his soul. One rejects it with deep penitence and sorrow. When the priest kneels in front of the alter, one must remember The Lord's kneeling in Gethsemane in deep lowliness because of the sin of man. When the priest washes his hand before prayers of reconciliation, one must remember Pilate when he washed his hands and proclaimed himself innocent of the blood of The Just Christ. When the priest carries up the bread and wine, one must remember Jesus on the cross hanged between heaven and earth and His Holy Blood dripping from his Holy Body. When the priest divides The Body, one must remember the wounds of

The Lord. All these can lead us to repentance and sincere commitment to Him. When the priest says "Given for the remission of sins", one must take Jesus as an example that we must forgive the sins of others and look to his sins with shame in order to forgive those who trespass against him. Then his soul will shine with the virtues of Christ and he will be living as an example of Christ before others.

7- Blessing of the Saints: The last invisible power in The Anophora is the blessing of all the saints mentioned during the commemoration prayers. When we remember them in our prayers, they will never forget us in front of The Lord in Paradise. These prayers show the unity between us and those whose souls are taken to Him, and through their intercession, we can gain their blessings.

Finally, as we remember The Lord in the prayers of the Anophora, we obey His commandments (Lk 22:19). We not only remember Him, but also remember His Holy Passion and all the events of the Golgotha; a lamb as though it has been slain as seen by Saint John (Rev 5:6). The divided bread in the plate reminds us of The Lords' Body, broken for the remission of our sins, while the wine and water in the cup reminds us of the Blood and water that poured out of His side when pierced with a spear. That is why Saint John Chrysostom said: "The celebration of the Anophora has the same value as that of the death of Christ on the Cross."



Answers of August's Quizzes

1. What 's Gone Is Gone

1. Sheep, Isaiah 53:6
2. Power, Mark 5:30
3. World, John 12:19 KJV
4. Rain, Song of Solomon 2:11
5. Unclean spirit, Matthew 12:43
6. Oil, matthew 25:8 KJV
7. Evening, Psalm 109:23

2. Fasting

1. Philistines, 1 Sam.14:24
2. Saul, 1 Sam.31:13
3. Jonathan, 2 Sam.2:11,12
4. Elijah, 1 Kings 21:17-27
5. Mordecai, Esthter 4:15,16
6. Jesus, Matthew 4:1-10
7. Peter, Acts 10:30-32 KJV

3. Heaven

1. Treasures, Matthew 6:20
2. Satan, Luke 10:18
3. Written, Luke 10:20
4. Baptism, Luke 20:4
5. Spirit, John 1:32
6. Bread, John 6:41
7. Swear, James 5:12



Between The Nayrouz & The Feast of The Cross

The most important two feasts in the Coptic Church during September, are the Feast of Nayrouz (or the feast of the martyrs), which comes on September 11, and the Feast of the Cross on the 27th of September.

There is clear relationship between the two occasions.

1. Jesus is the greatest martyr ever known:

He is the leader of all the millions of martyrs in Christianity. He said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (Jn.15:13). He did not only amaze the world with His new teaching, "Love your enemies", but also because He died for the sake of His enemies, for their salvation and eternal happiness (Rom.5:6-8).

All the Christian martyrs followed His footsteps and sacrificed their lives because they loved Him and didn't deny Him. They sometimes gave their lives in order to keep one of His commandments about purity or honesty unto death.

2. Voluntarily Martyrdom:

As the Lord Jesus said, "I have the power to lay My life down, or to take it, but I lay down it of Myself for My sheep" (Jn.10:18), so the Martyrs were free, as well, to prepare death and torture over life for Christ's sake, to keep their faith and encourage others. We read about hundreds of Christians walked on foot from Damanhour to Alexandria, Egypt, just to join their brothers and die with them! Also St. Policarb, at age 86, asked the gladiators not to put chains in his hands nor push him into the fire because he will go to it with pleasure to meet with Christ who loves most.

3. The Cross overturned the worldly measures upside down:

The cross means love, forgiveness, patience and victory over the lusts of the world and over satan. Jesus rejected all the temptations of the devil and refused to leave the cross, and so did all His saints and martyrs. They carried their cross with great joy and forgave their persecutors and were singing hymns and spiritual songs during their pain and suffering.

They longed to heaven to be with Christ and considered that far better.

A Wedding Night to Remember
by
Mark Hanna

“Thank you very much doctor. A very traditional party. You reminded us of the old days, the eastern music, the belly-dancing. I can’t thank you enough - it was all great. We’re looking forward to your other daughter’s wedding”.

“Thank you for coming, it was our pleasure. I’m very glad you had a good time”.

“Oh doctor, it was all so wonderful, I didn’t dance all my life as much as I did tonight. You went all out in giving Laila the best wedding reception. This is certainly a wedding we will never forget, never!”

“I only have two, all my work all these years was for them. Now I have one more daughter left and I assure you, her wedding is going to be even more fun than this one”.

“Oh honey! All the guest are gone. Laila and Hany just left too. She was so happy. You gave her the wedding everyone dreams of. Everyone enjoyed it so much, except for a few of the servants and deacons from the church, who got up and left when the dancing began. What was the big deal, it was only a few couples dancing together and the belly dancing hadn’t even begun yet”.

“Yes I noticed. That was extremely rude of them!”

“It’s a good thing they left. They don’t know how to have fun and if anything they would have put a damper on the mood of the reception anyway. If you ask me, we shouldn’t have invited them, just like we didn’t invite the priest!”

“I couldn’t imagine their rudeness, but at least some of them had some courtesy and stayed. Not only that, the ones that stayed had a really good time. You saw Sammy dance - and Maha danced also”.

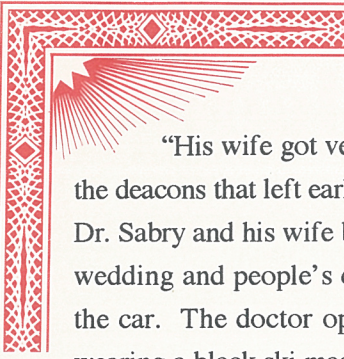
“Don’t upset yourself, all the ones that stayed had a great time and all the other guests said that it was the greatest reception they ever attended. But Sabry, the priest over did it in church. Really he said a lot of things and took such a long time. The deacons also sang too many hymns that just wasted our time. We could have spent that time in the reception hall, with our friends”.

“I’ll be sure to have a word with him and I will also yell at him for the rudeness of the others that left in the middle of the reception. I’m sure he told them to leave- he is probably teaching them to live as saints. Huh! Well, I’ll tell him that some of his saints turned into devils and danced and with the rest of us. As a matter of fact, I’m glad they stayed and danced, this way none of those church people can criticize us for dancing or drinking. Hey! Some of the Sunday School teachers danced, why are we to blame?”

“Anyway, lets go home. I’m exhausted”.

“Oh, did you see Fayez? He got so drunk...”





“His wife got very drunk too. Their son looked extremely embarrassed, infact he left with a few of the deacons that left early”.

Dr. Sabry and his wife both got into their car and drove home talking about the things that happened in the wedding and people’s comments. Upon reaching home, they both struggled out of fatigue to get out of the car. The doctor opened the house door and found in front of him a man dressed in black tights, wearing a black ski mask.

“Hey! What are you doing?” I blurted out as I saw the thief take out a gun. He fired at me nine bullets. I opened my eyes and found myself blinded by an extremely bright light - then my eyes adjusted. I looked around me and found myself surrounded by all the saints and the righteous. I recognized them all. There was a great light coming from the large throne to the left of St. Mary. Moses held a long scroll in his hand and began to read it. It was a list of my sins. A lot of the sins I thought to myself were very trivial. A lot of things were mentioned that I was not aware that they were considered sins. A lot of things mentioned were just thoughts I had. The list was huge, I couldn’t believe that there was a record of all these. Finally Moses was reading the sins of the last day in my life.

“Hold it”, I said, “I’m being blamed for the reception I had done for my daughter? I’m being blamed for getting a belly dancer? I’m being blamed for everyone that danced?” I couldn’t talk anymore and fell to the ground. Then God said to me:

“As long as you lived on earth, there was hope for you, but the blessings I granted you, you used to sin against Me. Your beginning was so great, as a deacon since your childhood. Your parents both brought you up in My fear. You were very righteous in the days of your youth. As a Sunday school teacher you brought up children to know Me, but you yourself turned away from me. Your wife was a very virtuous girl at the time I gave her to you, but you corrupted her with your filthy lifestyle. I gave you two beautiful healthy daughters, you neglected bringing them up in My fear. Many talents and blessings I bestowed upon you, but your heart was in the way of the world. Annually you sent out a check to the My church, but I rejected your gift. I made you what you were, but you rejected Me. I kept on waiting for you to return to Me. I sent you My priests who are My angels working for Me on earth. I sent servants to bring your kids to Me, but you refused. In your daughter’s wedding, you didn’t lift up your heart to Me once. You didn’t ask for My blessing. You instead wanted to rebuke My priest for your ignorance. You defiled My Sacrament, by your evil satanic party. You insulted My servants whom I have set in their hearts the knowledge of good from evil and they left that corrupt atmosphere. All the people that joined in this lude party, are accountable. As for you, you are twice accountable. You knew the commandments and what was required of you. Your fall from My way was a great offense to many and in the last event in your life you caused many to sin against Me. **YOUR JUDGEMENT WILL BE GREAT!**”



Message of the Church Fathers
Saint Athanasius the Great

The Work Of The Holy Spirit In The Old Testament

The books of the Old Testament speak about the work of the Holy Spirit in creation, in men and in the prophets. We find in the Book of Genesis "And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"(Genesis 1:2). Thus, the Spirit is the Creator. Zakariah certifies this meaning when he says, he formed it "Stretching forth the heavens and laying the foundation of the earth, and forming the spirit of man within him."(Zak. 12:1) Hence, as the Holy Spirit is He who created the human soul then He can renew it. The Psalm says "You shall take away their spirit, and they shall die and return to their dust. You shall put forth your Spirit, and they shall be created, and thou shall renew the face of the earth."(Psalm 104:29-30).

Therefore, when God saw this He said, "My Spirit shall not abide among these men, for they are flesh."(Genesis 6:3). Similarly, when the Children of Israel were disobedient towards God, in spite of the great miracles which He made among them, Isaiah the Prophet said of them, "Neither envoy nor angel, but the Lord Himself saved them, because He loved them and had mercy on them; He Himself redeemed them and took them up and exalted them all the days of the age. But they were disobedient and provoked His Holy Spirit, and He was turned to enmity toward them."(Isaiah 63:9,10) Micah said, "The house of Jacob provoked the Spirit of The Lord." (Micah 2:7)

The Holy Spirit also works in the prophets. This was the case with Moses and Joshua the son of Nun. Therefore, when Joshua wished that Moses might forbid Eldad and Medad when the Spirit came upon them and they prophesized, Moses said to Joshua, "Be not jealous for me. Would that all

the Lord's people were prophets, when the Lord bestows His Spirit upon them."(Numbers 11:29) The Holy Spirit, then, is He who descends on the prophets. He came also upon the judges. It is said of Gothoniel "And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he judged Israel."(Judges 3:10) And again, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah."(Judges 11:29) And concerning Samson, "The child grew and the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to accompany Him,"(Judges 13:24-25) and, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily."(Judges 15:14) David sings, "Your good Spirit shall lead me in a plain country, for your names sake, O Lord."(Psalm 143:10) Furthermore, Ezekiel says, "And the Spirit took me up and brought me to the land of the Chaldaeans, to the Captivity, in a vision, by the Spirit of God."(Ezekiel 11:24)

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the prophets represent God's covenant with the people, "And this is my covenant with them, says the Lord, any Spirit who is upon you."(Isiah 59:21); and through them God sent his laws, "receive my words and my commandments which I charge by my Spirit to my servants the prophets."(Zechariah 1:6).

The prophets advise us to call upon the Holy Spirit in order that He may renew our souls through repentance. Ezekiel says, "Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, says the Lord God."(Ezekiel 18:31,32) David prays in the psalm, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."(Psalm 51:10) Finally Joel the prophet prophesies about the flow of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament at the day of Pentecost saying, "And it shall be after these things that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."(Joel 2:28)

Edited by: Fr. Matthias F. Wahba

Shalom!

Most People, whether they know any Hebrew words other than *amen*, *hallelujah* and *cherubim* or not, have heard the word *shalom*. This noun comes from the root word *shalem*, “to be complete” or “whole”. The basic idea of the root is one of wholeness, unity, fulfillment, and good relationships. *Shalom* occurs about **250** times in the Old Testament and is a doctrinally significant word.

1. Shalom as a Greeting

While not the most common usage, shalom as a greeting is probably the best known today, occurring about twenty-five times in the Old Testament. **2 kings 4:26** is a good example: “*Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?*” in each case, “well” is *shalom*. The idea is: “Are you in a safe and sound condition?” (see also 1 Samuel 17:22).

Modern Israelis use shalom almost like the Hawaiian *aloha*, both as “helo” and “good-bye.” Our idiom “How are you?” in today’s Hebrew becomes literally, “What is your shalom {welfare, peace, prosperity}? The related Arabic greeting is *salaam*.

2. Shalom as Good Relationship

We tend to think of peace as the absence of war or hostilities. The Hebrew word is more positive, suggesting the presence of unity and amicable relationships. This most common usage in the Old Testament occurs about sixty times.

Regarding King Solomon (Heb. *Shelomoh*), whose very name is related to this concept, we read that “*he had peace on every side all around him*” (1 King 4:24). Because David had been a warrior and a man of blood, God rather chose his son Solomon, who was a man of peace, to build the temple.

3. Peace with God

“Peace with God” is theologically the most important usage, and also the most common (about two thirds of the Old Testament occurrences of shalom”). This peace is a gift from God, and cannot be earned. It often occurs with a covenant of peace as God made with Abram (Gen. 15:15).

One of the best-known and best-loved passages in the Old Testament, the Levites’ blessing of peace. It is called the “Aaronic benediction”: “*The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace*” (Numbers 6:24-26).

4. Prince of Peace (Sar Shalom)

“Prince of Peace” is one of Isaiah’s several titles of the Messiah (9:6). The enmity and hostility of men against the Lord and against His Messiah are clearly drawn in Psalm 2 and several other texts.

5. Peace in the New Testament

One of the benefits of the Greek version of the Old Testament (LXX) is that it brought into a world language much of the truth of the Old Testament revelation. Then, building on the Hebrew original, the New Testament picks up these rich concepts and pours them into the Greek word *eirene*.

In Ephesians 2:14, St. Paul writes that “Jesus” Himself is our peace” (*shalom*). Good relationships are restored between God and those who accept Christ as their Savior. Christ also initiates good relationships between those Jews and Gentiles accepting the Messiah, who pulls down the barriers between us and creates in Himself “one new man”

Because we have been “*justified by faith, we have peace (shalom) with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Rom.5:1).

Christian Life In Today's Society

By
George Istaphanos

How to live in the world without letting the world live in us? Here are some tips and practices that may help us live a holy life within an unholy society:

1. Examine yourself every night before you go to sleep, before confession and definitely before having communion, to see if you are worthy to approach this precious gift. Pray that God makes you worthy of partaking of that great sacrament because no one deserves it by his own righteousness. Therefore we pray in the Liturgy saying, "Make us all worthy, O our Lord to partake of Your Holies unto the sanctification of our souls, our bodies and our spirits, that we become one body and one spirit. And may have a portion and an inheritance with all your saints who have pleased You since the beginning". When we examine ourselves carefully, confess our sins honestly, judging ourselves strictly, and fix our relationship with God and people, then we deserve to obtain the worthiness of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

2. Flee from sin and reject the temptation:

You must hate sin and realize that no one is above the power of sin because it is written, "*Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared?*" and also, "*For she has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men*" (Proverbs 6:27 & 7:26). Escaping sin is wisdom, honor and real power, contrary to what worldly people think. Joseph fled and won, but David didn't flee and fell. Joseph did not regret his escape, it turned to his glory, but David regretted his

fall, reaped a bitter harvest all his life and it turned to a shameful reputation to him.

3. Grow in grace and knowledge: St. Peter advises every believer to "*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (2 Pet.3:18). You can't preach, discuss or argue with people around you, unless you become knowledgeable of the Word of God, Dogma, Church history and how to testify to Christ and win souls to Him. When we grow in the grace and knowledge, we will set a good example before people through our virtues, and our love to God and to them. We will win others by showing them our love, care through service with a good smile. Unless you know how to swim, you can't save anyone from drowning, or else he will drag you to the bottom of the sea as well.

4. Be filled with the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of holiness, power and wisdom. God commands us, "*Be filled with the Spirit*" (Eph.5:18). And it is written that those "*who are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God*" (Rom.8:14). Ask for God's wisdom and guidance rather than your own.

When you don't participate in worldly deeds or pleasures, you are not odd, but people of the world are. You are a stranger in the world, your citizenship is in heaven (Phil.3:20). As Jesus said, "*My kingdom is not of this world*", He also said, "*You are not of the world, just as I am not of the world*" (Jn.18:36 & 17:16). It is true that we are different in goals, principles, values and faith, but are not abnormal. You are living the angelic life of perfection.



Hebrew, Greek and Arabic Numerals

א	alef	A, α	alfa	1
ב	bet	B, β	beta	2
ג	gimel	Γ, γ	gamma	3
ד	dalet	Δ, δ	delta	4
ה	heh	E, ε	epsilon	5
ו	waw	Ϝ ¹		6
ז	zayin	Z, ζ	zeta	7
ח	het	H, η	ēta	8
ט	ṭet	Θ, θ	thēta	9
י	yod	I, ι	iota	10
כ	kaf	K, κ	kappa	20
ל	lamed	Λ, λ	lambda	30
מ	mem	M, μ	mu	40
נ	nûn	N, ν	nu	50
ס	ṣamek	Ξ, ξ	xi	60
ע	'ayin	O, o	omicron	70
פ	feh	Π, π	pi	80
צ	çadeh	Ϛ ²		90
ק	qof	P, ρ ³	rho	100
ר	reš	Σ, σ	sigma	200
ש	sîn	T, τ	tau	300
ת	taw	Υ, υ	ypsilon	400



¹This consonant dropped out of Greek early and is retained only to represent the number 6.

²This consonant dropped out of Greek early and is retained only to represent the number 90.

³The Greek equivalent of the Semitic *qof* dropped out very early such that it is not even retained as a numeral. Thus there arises here a misalignment between Greek and Hebrew consonants.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH

(Part I)

It has long been overdue that our church, and moreover, our people, must recognize the importance and certainly the critical thought that is behind the history of the development of Christian doctrine or dogma, and the importance in transporting such all-together meaningful knowledge to those who simply have had no exposure to such material, or deemed it useless to one's spiritual struggle. Thus, to combat such complacency by the majority of today's Coptic Church, two points of keen interest must be stated, one from the historical perspective, and the other a bit closer to one's modernized heart, from the spiritual point of view.

To understand and appreciate the course of Christianity and the development of Christian ideas over the first five centuries, one has to keep in mind certain major events and figures that not only were of great influence leading to the golden age of patristic teaching, but, if anything, were the deciding factors in determining the faith we so passionately grasp now. In other words, to understand the doctrines and pillars of the Orthodox faith, we must also recognize the history-making process and cause of such works. Otherwise, Chalcedon will never be understood, Athanasius fight will never be appreciated, and the customs that the Jews tried to impose on the Greeks at the Apostolic council will only seem oblivious. Apprehension of doctrines and rules of faith with a taste for history is a foremost key to a knowledgeable Orthodox life.

In relation, spirituality will be deemed a waste without the element of understanding our faith. Where spirituality was ignored, knowledge became dangerous. Some of the most dangerous heretics came as result of extreme intellectual emphasis without the discerning sense of a spiritual guide to the words of the Bible, but also the sayings of the fathers of the time. If there is to be balance in Orthodoxy, the Church always supplied numerous examples of spiritual intellects from the Catechetical School to our most recent patriarchs.

With a lengthy introduction in hand, one has to now commence unto a journey of christological controversies, battles of papal supremacy, and an avalanche of justified and misguided excommunications throughout the ecumenical movement to finally come upon what are the true doctrines of Christianity, and which dogmas have remained to this day as the essence of the Orthodox church, the Coptic Church in particular. Although the analysis of all battles against heresy and wrongdoing in the church are appropriate in due time, the first and one of the most dangerous stumbling blocks to new Christians was Gnostic teaching, the subject of this chapter.

Among the many schools of thought to roam and prosper in the early dates of Christianity, these particular teachings, at times differing greatly among there dozen or so sects, came to be the focus of late

apostolic teachers and apologists alike for not only did it present a considerable halt to active Christian proselytizing, but Gnostic systems were more often than not very similar to the pagan systems from which the converts were changing. The Christian heads had to be watchful until this ever dangerous heresy faded away in the course of the third century, and so it was regarded by the Church fathers as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, danger to the truth of the faith.

The main aberrations of the multitude of Gnostic misgivings that were common among the Gnostic sects are listed below:

1) There was a distinct and at times insurmountable gap between the perfect and eternal world and the material world we abide in, and the separation is due to certain intermediaries (up to 365) that needed to be known and mastered.

2) The soul was regarded as a perfect entity trapped in the lustful and fully evil material called flesh, and that it longs to reach the place of eternal bliss by conquering the steps or *aeons* that separate the evil from the spiritual worlds. There was no notion of unity and uniqueness between the rational soul and our bodies.

3) Finally and most importantly, redemption of the human is achieved only through knowledge, with the redeemer and revealer of this secret teaching regarded as different people according to each group. This knowledge is written in certain gospels available to the few chosen ones, and since they are the *knowers*, and the Greek for knowledge is *gnosis*, these sects are known as Gnostics.

THE REFUTATION

THE SOUL: The Gnostics maintained that once the soul had been released from the body by death, it immediately began to

ascend to heaven, thus prompting the a counter argument by the first of the major figures against Gnosticism, Irenaeus. He maintained that as Christ descended into hell for three days, our soul will be separated but united again with heavenly bodies at the Second Sabbath, and that, just as the divinity and humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ are inseparable and should not necessarily be regarded as two separate entities but one perfect union in one perfect person, so is the same view of the soul and body of the human being who are united forever except between death and the General Resurrection.

THE GOSPELS: As the Gnostic sects maintained their ways in developing and using their own gospels to prove that they had some ultimate teaching not found in the common gospels available (Mark, Matthew, Luke & John), Irenaeus here also realized the great importance of having an authoritative list of books which alone would be considered canonical and which would be accepted without question by all the churches. He therefore specified which should be (an his New Testament is almost identical to that contained in the modern Bible) and defended his choice by rational arguments. These books contain teachings handed down from the earliest times, teaching transmitted from the apostles to the bishops, who were their successors of the apostles, and in turn to the faithful of all the churches. *"The tradition of the Apostles which is made manifest in the whole world can be observed in every church by all who wish to see the truth."* (*Against Heresies, 3:24:1*)



DOCETISM: As a result of the Gnostic view that all that is in this world is utterly evil and without purity gave way to another

In Remembrance of September 81 Events

+ When Sadat, on September 5, 81 exiled Pope Shenouda III, the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church- the largest Christian denomination in Africa and the Middle East - put him under house arrest in a desert monastery in Egypt, and arrested hundred Bishops, Priests and Christian Leaders, the Los Angeles Times published a big picture of the pyramid with a huge cross laying upon it with a comment :

“Christ is being crocified again in Egypt”!

+ Now while we celebrate the Nayrouz Feast of the Christian Martyrs of the Coptic Church throughout the first three centuries, we can say that the Era of martyrdom for religion did not end yet in Egypt. In the Era of the International Declaration of Human Rights, Moslim fundamentalists still committing their barbaric crimes everyday against the Copts in Upper Egypt under the sight of the government which seems encouraging them by taking no action whatsoever. The only excuse is to call them “terrorists”!

+ Pray for the new Coptic (Christian) martyrs of Egypt, that their blood do not go in vain but convert the wolves into lambs.

+ Help and give donations to their families.

+ Inform heaven and earth about these massacres to stop them immediately and to pay compansation to the victim’s families.

Bear Fruits Worthy of Repentance

By Fr. Georgios Atalla

This was said by John the Baptist (Mat 3:8). Life of Repentance must show fruits, otherwise every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into fire (Mat 3:10). There are many sinners who repented and turned that showed the fruits worthy of repentance.

Saint Paul repented deeply of his previous persecution of the Christians (Gal 1:13). After conversion on the road to Damascus, his zeal for our Lord was unbound and he became a supreme example of a fruit worthy of repentance, saying: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all long suffering as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life." (1Tim 1:15,16).

Paul fulfilled God's word and also His commands. He delivered the Gospel of Christ without charge. Paul served The Lord with absolute fidelity. He was a faithful servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God (1Cor 4:1). He has been entrusted with a stewardship and has made himself a servant to all, that he might win the more (1Cor 9:19). Saint Paul told us about his sufferings for Christ (2Cor 11:22-33), showing the fruits worthy of his repentance.

We also must bear the fruits of repentance for every tree is known by its fruits (Lk 6:44). The Lord cursed the fig tree and it withered away because he found no fruit on it (Mat 21:19). The Lord will be happy and is glorified, when we bear much fruit (Jn 15:8). He wants to his garden (my soul) and eat its pleasant fruit (Song 4:16). Life of repentance needs to clean our souls from thorns and stones to make the word of God fall on a good ground and can bear fruit with patience (Lk 8:15). It needs to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. It needs to walk in the light of Gospel, in The Holy Spirit and not fulfill the lust of th flesh (Gal 5:16-26). Life of repentance means that we have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, having the fruits to holiness and at the end everlasting life (Rom 6:22).





Teenagers' Table of Excuses

*From "The Mission" Youth Magazine
By Sandra Henein (Kitchener, Ontario)*

To save time, please give excuse by number.....

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. I thought I told you | 2. I don't know |
| 3. It wasn't in writing | 4. I forgot |
| 5. I didn't think it was important | |
| 6. You didn't ask | 7. I'm busy |
| 8. That's your job, not mine | |
| 9. I took out the garbage last month | |
| 10. I don't understand Arabic | |
| 11. I'll pay you back when I set my allowance | |
| 12. Oprah said homework isn't important | |
| 13. I didn't think it was a sin | |
| 14. I still have time, the exam is this afternoon | |
| 15. Wait, I'm on the phone! | |
| 16. I'll do it later | |
| 17. My room isn't messy, it's got character | |
| 18. Don't rob me of my childhood! | |
| 19. You want me to be happy, don't you? | |
| 20. I only live here | |

* **One day** an angel welcomed a priest and a politician at the Pearly Gates of Heaven. The priest was taken to a nice house to stay in for eternity while the politician was given a beautiful Palace. The politician was very happy but confused. He asked the angel, "Why am I being treated so well and the priest isn't?" The angel replied, "Priests come here all the time, but it's a rare occasion when we get a politician!" (By Michelle Iskander, Cambridge, Ontario)

1. Friends

Deuteronomy describes a friend as a person "who is as your own soul" (13:6). Having a true friend is one of life's most beautiful experiences. But the depth and significance of friendship depends on the people involved. Identify the "friends" in the verses below.

- Who spoke to Moses face to face, "as a man speaks to his friend"?
- He was David's closest and most beloved friend.
- What were the names of Job's three "friends"?
- What were the names of Nehemiah's three friends?
- Jesus said this friend was asleep
- Which centurion gathered his close friends for a meeting with Peter?
- Which Old Testament Patriarch did James describe as "a friend of God"?
- Who said the greatest love is to "lay down one's life for one's friends"?

2. Marriage

Monogamous marriage between the sexes is highly esteemed in the Christian tradition. Here are some verses about marriage. Can you supply the missing word (s) ?

- Jesus said, "A man shall.....be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one....."
- Jesus warned, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put....."
- St. Paul advised the Corinthians: It is better to marry than to....."
- St. Paul argued, at the very beginning of Christianity, that "the unbelieving husband is.....through his wife, and the unbelieving wife isthrough her husband".
- "Let marriage be held in.....among all."
- The husband should give to his wife her.....and likewise the wife to her husband."
- "The wife should not.....from her husband...the husband should not.....his wife."
- In the.....they neither marry nor are given in marriage..."
- "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage.....of the Lamb."