

St. John

A Coptic Christian Bi-Monthly Magazine
Vol 26 No. 282 September / October 2014



ST. JOHN Coptic Orthodox Church

2014

The Annual Festival

Friday, Saturday and Sunday September 26th, 27th and 28th

المعرض السنوي لكنيسة مار يوحنا يكوفينا - كاليفورنيا

الإحتفال السنوي والمعرض أيام الجمعة والسبت والأحد 26، 27، 28 سبتمبر 2014

من العاشرة صباحا وحتى العاشرة مساء

الأحتفال يتضمن مسابقات وألعاب وهدايا ومأكولات شرقية
تعال وأدعو الآخرين

DAILY DIVINE LITURGIES

8:00 - 10:00 am

under the Auspices of

H.G. Bishop Serapion

Vespers will be on Saturday 27th from 6:30 to 7:30 pm

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SAINT JOHN

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The 118 Patriarch of Alexandria and 116th successor to the See of St. Mark the Evangelist and the Diocese of Southern California and Hawaii under

H.G. Bishop Serapion.

St. John reflects the Biblical, doctrinal, and spiritual views of the early Church in English and Arabic.

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Verse of the month:

"Looking unto Jesus, who for the joy...endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2)

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SCHEDULE of MEETINGS and EVENTS for the MONTH of (September-October 2014)

Sunday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday
+ English Liturgy 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. * * * + Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:15 a.m. + Servants' Meeting 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. 2nd & 4th	+ Liturgy 8:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m.. + Thursday Morning + Senior Citizen Club 11:00 - 4:00 a.m. Thursday Family Meeting 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.	+ Liturgy 8:00 -10:00 p.m. +Arabic Youth Meeting 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Fr. Gawargious & Dr. Nagi Zaky	+ Liturgy from 8- 10 am + Vespers; Bible Study 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. + Beginners' Deacons- Meeting 5:30 p.m. + Elementary Meeting 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. + College Youth Meeting 6:30- 8:00 p.m. + High School & J. High Meetings 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Teusday			
English-Bible Study 7:30 pm			

Email your articles/comments/requests to Frhanna7@gmail.com

Or visit us online @ www.mystjohn.org

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News of September -October

1. Feast of Nyrouz (Coptic New Year 1731):

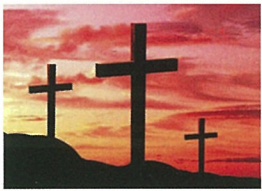


On Thursday, September 11, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Nyrouz, also known as the Feast of the Martyrs and the Coptic New Year 1731 of the Christian Martyrs of Egypt (hundreds of millions).

The Vespers, raising of incense of the Feast will be celebrated on Wednesday, September 10, at 6:30 p.m. There will be a sermon, hymns and other activities. The Liturgy will take place on Thursday morning from 8:00.

2. The Feast of the Cross:

On Saturday, September 27, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Appearance of the Holy Cross. Vespers will take place on Friday the 26th at 6:30 p.m. The Liturgy 8:00 a.m.



3. St. John's Annual Festival (September 26 - 28):

The program contains daily vespers and morning Liturgies, Book Fair, Mediterranean food. Missionary tours for the guests and Fund-Raise (See English cover).

4. Historical Dates from our Recent Days: October 6, 1981; Jan. 25, 2011 & June 30, 2013

(1) October 6, 1981: After one month from the crime of Sadat against the Coptic Christian Church in Egypt by exiling Pope Shenouda III and arresting Christian leaders, he was assassinated by the hands of Muslim Brotherhood.



(2) January 25, 2011: After three weeks from attacking the church of the Saints in Alexandria, Egypt with bombs killing 21 on New Year's Eve, God removed the regime of Mubarak and he is still in prison facing criminal trials until this moment.

(3) June 30 & July 3rd, 2013: God removed Morcy and his horrible Islamic regime and he is still in prison facing many serious criminal trials.

We ask our Holy Synod to record these events in the Church Synaxarium Book.

5. H.H. Pope Tawadros II:

+ The Pope and the heads of Christian churches in Egypt held a meeting with President El-Sisi last August and discussed all the matters concerning Christians in Egypt and the Middle East.

+ His Holiness appointed Bishop Karas to be his secretary in America.



6. H.G. Bishop Serapion & H.G. Bishop Moussa:

On Saturday, August 10, His Grace bishop Serapion attended with Bishop Moussa, the Kiraza Competition at St. John Church in Covina all day long. They celebrated

the Liturgy in the morning and distributed the prizes to the winners from all churches. In the evening, H.G. Bishop Serapion prayed the vespers and delivered the sermon.

7. H.G. Bishop Fam:

Bishop Fam of Tema blessed St. John Church and celebrated the Liturgy, Wednesday, August 13.

8. Kids Camp:

St. John church held her Kid's Camp at big-bear Coptic village.



9. St. John's adults, college, Junior High and children prizes in the Kiraza Competition:

(See the results and picture inside).

10. Harvest Day (Children Halloween Festival)

On Friday, October 31, St. John Church holds this children annual festival, from 6:00 – 9:00 pm. It was originally known as "All Saints' Day." We encourage our children to put on good costumes of angels, prophets, saints and biblical characters. There will be games, plenty of chocolates, candy and refreshments to keep them safe out of the streets.



11. Servants' conference 2014

Crown Plaza Ventura Beach 450 E. Harbor Blvd, Ventura, CA 93001 Phone: 1.805.648.2100
Friday, Saturday, and Sunday Nov 21- 23
Speaker: Fr. Daniel Azer

The Cross in our Life

By H. H. Pope Shenouda

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

ON THE OCCASION OF THE FEAST OF THE CROSS, we mention the following points:

+ Our first relationship with the Cross starts by baptism, where our old Adam is crucified so that sin will never enslave us.

+ The Church has carried the Cross during the martyrdom period and in all the perceptions that followed it during the lapse of time....

+ The beauty of the Cross is that the Church carried it with joy and patience, without any complaint or grumbling...

+ The Cross changed into a longing that the Church desires and proceeds towards.

+ The way in which the Christians received death puzzled the pagans. It was a reflection of the Christians' faith in eternal joy and disdain of the world, with all its pleasures and enjoyments.

The prisons turned into temples, where hymns and prayers echoed from the Christians who were joyful to receive death.

+ The third field where we carry the Cross is the narrow gate. A person might constrain himself for the sake of God. He isolates himself from the world and all its desires. He disclaims everything for God's sake...by fasting, devoutness, self control and enduring others' offences.

+ The Cross of weariness could also be included in this field. One toils in one's services for God and labors in (crucifying the flesh with its passions), as the Apostle says, "He toils in struggling and crucifying the thought and overcoming oneself," knowing all the time that he "will receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Cor. 3:8).

Christianity could never be separated from the Cross. The Lord Jesus told us plainly that "...In the world you will have tribulation" and he also said, "And you will be hated by all for my name's sake"

+ We welcome and rejoice with the Cross, and see our strength in it. As the Apostle said, "For the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

+ The Cross could be from inside or from outside. From inside, as the Apostle says, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Therefore, self denial is a Cross. Few are

those who succeed in carrying this cross. As for the outside Cross, it is any affliction that the faithful endures for the sake of God, either of his own will or imposed on him.

The Lord Jesus said about this, "In the world you will have tribulations" (John 16:33). It was also said; "Many are the afflictions of the righteous" (Psa. 34:19).

And "We must though many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

+ But this Cross, with all its sorrow and hardships, is a source of our glory and of our joy. As the Apostle says, "But God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world"

+ St. James the Apostle, advises us by saying, "my brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2, 3).

+ The Church loved the Cross that it was taken as its symbol. She used to teach her children how to love suffering for the sake of God, and planted in their minds the saying of the Bible, "But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed" (1 Peter 3:14). Christianity even considered suffering a gift from God. The Bible said, "for you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29).

+ In suffering and in carrying the Cross, God does not leave His children. If we suffer with Him, we will be glorified also with Him (Rom.8:17).

+ Suffering is considered a gift because of its crowns. The Lord Jesus put carrying the cross as a condition for discipleship. "Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:27).

+ Carrying the cross is not only a condition for living with God, but also a test for the seriousness and abiding in the way of the Lord. For all that, the church put the martyrs on the top of all the levels of saints, because they bore the cross more than others. Therefore, if could bear a cross, rejoice because you will gain crowns, if you did not doubt of complain. It is said, "For the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb.12:2).



NAYROUZ

The Coptic New Year 1731

by Fr. Augustinos Hanna

On Thursday, September 11, the Coptic Orthodox Church celebrates its New Year, 1719. This is known as the Nayrouz Feast.

The word Nayrouz, thought to be of Persian origin, it is originally derived from an ancient Egyptian equivalent adopted by the Persians during their occupation of Egypt. It denotes Coptic New Year's Day, commemorated in the Coptic Church Liturgy but also celebrated as one of the great popular feasts by the whole Egyptian nation. It falls on 1 Tut (September 11) which is the first month of the Coptic Year and takes its name from the Egyptian god Thoth.

The Church started a new era from the year 284 AD, when more than million Coptic Christian martyrs were killed and tortured in Egypt by the Roman Emperors, especially Deoclitian.

Egypt, at the time, was a Christian Country of 20 million populations and it lost about 1,000,000 in the horrible persecution of Diocletian alone!

The Coptic Church of Egypt, as St. Jerome stated, offered more martyrs than the number of all the Churches of the world together.

The Egyptian Christians suffered terrible persecution, vicious attacks, and extermination war from the Roman Empire, then from Muslims from the 7th century, throughout the ages and up till the present moment.

The Coptic Christians were not only deprived of their Human Rights, but also were executed by the sword, burnt, thrown to the lions and wild beasts. They are still carrying proudly their cross and following their Savior. Therefore, it was said that,

"The Blood of the martyrs
is the seed of the Church".

I would rather talk now, not about history, but about the spiritual lessons and values of this occasion. It shows clearly the three major virtues in Christianity:

1. Great Love: The Lord Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13).

The martyrs showed their great love to God who loved them first and gave His only begotten Son to save them. They proved to love Christ more than their own lives.

They could not deny Him but witnessed to Him till the last breath.

Do we really love our Lord? Are we ready, at least, to sacrifice our sinful, selfish, lustful life for His sake?! If we do not feel ashamed of ourselves, repent and keep the first and greatest commandment, we do not deserve to be called the children of the martyrs.

2. Great Faith and Courage:

Martyrs proved their firm faith by shedding their blood as a seal of its authenticity. Had their faith been shaken, they would not die for it. When we review the list of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, we would realize the high cost they paid, and their great courage to endure all these sorts of terrible torments,

"And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mocking and scourging, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, wandered about in sheepskins afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy." (Heb.11:35-28).

3. Great Hope: The army of martyrs is a huge evidence of the great Christian hope in eternal life in Christ Jesus. This hope is like an anchor which grasps the secure port of our heavenly Jerusalem.

St. Paul starts his letter to Titus saying, "In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began" (Titus 1:2). He adds, "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil" (Heb.6:19).

Do we have the same hope? Or did we lose hope thinking that eternal life is not for us?!



World Ignores Christian Exodus from Islamic World

By Raymond Ibrahim
(The Continuous Nayrouz)

"They were trying to kill us... because we were Christians." — Teenage girl from Homs, Syria. There have been house-to-house searches in Mali for Christians who might be in hiding, and people tortured into revealing Christian relatives. At least one pastor was beheaded.

It is to the media's shame that those who slaughter, behead, crucify and displace people for no other reason than that they are Christian rarely get media coverage, while Israel, which kills only in the context of trying to defend itself from rocket attacks and terrorism, and not out of religious bigotry, is constantly demonized.

Paying jizya [special poll tax for non-Muslims] is not only about money. It is about subjugation.

While the world fixates on the conflict between Israel and Hamas—and while most mainstream media demonize Israel for trying to survive amid a sea of Arab-Islamic hostility—similar or worse tragedies continue to go virtually ignored.

One of the most ancient Christian communities in the world, that of Iraq—which already had been decimated over the last decade, by Islamic forces unleashed after the ousting of Saddam Hussein—has now been wiped out entirely by the new "caliphate," the so-called Islamic State, formerly known by the acronym "ISIS."

As Reuters reported: Islamists insurgents have issued an ultimatum to northern Iraq's dwindling Christian population to convert to Islam, pay a religious levy or face death, according to a statement distributed in the militant-controlled city of Mosul... It said Christians who wanted to remain in the "caliphate" that the Islamic State declared this month in parts of Iraq and Syria must agree to abide by terms of a "dhimma" contract—a historic practice under which non-Muslims were protected in Muslim lands in return for a special levy known as "jizya."



"We offer them three choices: Islam; the dhimma contract—involving payment of jizya; if they refuse this they will have nothing but the sword," the announcement said. The amount of jizya-money demanded was \$450 a month, an exorbitant sum for Iraq.

Hours after the demand for jizya was made, Islamists began painting the letter "n" on Christian homes in Mosul—in Arabic, Christians are known as

"Nasara," or "Nazarenes"—signaling them out for the slaughter to come.

Most Christians have since fled. A one-minute video in Arabic of their exodus appears here—women and children weeping as they flee their homes—a video that will not be shown by any Western mainstream media outlet, busy as they are depicting instead nonstop images of Palestinian women and children.

The Syrian Orthodox bishop of Mosul said that what is happening to the Christians of Mosul is nothing less than "genocide... not to mention the slaughters and rapes not being reported... Forcing more than a thousand Christian families out of Mosul, and turning Christian churches into Muslim mosques, is equivalent to genocide." Of course, the word genocide means to kill or make extinct a people. Others were not as lucky to flee. According to Iraqi human rights activist Hena Edward, a great many older and disabled Iraqis, unable to pay the jizya or join the exodus, have opted to convert to Islam.

Meanwhile, the Jihadies continue destroying churches and other ancient Christian holy sites in the name of their Muslim religion, and murdering any Christians they can find. Among other acts, they torched an 1800 year old church in Mosul, stormed a fourth century monastery—formerly one of Iraq's best known Christian landmarks—and expelling its resident monks.

Most recently, in Syrian regions under the Islamic State's control, eight Christians were reportedly crucified. The Islamic State's call for Christians to pay jizya is not sim-

ply about money. It is about subjugation. Most Western media reporting on this recent call for jizya have failed to explain the accompanying dhimma contract Christians must also abide by. According to the Islamic State, “We offer them [Christians] three choices: Islam; the dhimma contract—involving payment of jizya; if they refuse this they will have nothing but the sword.”

The “dhimma contract” is a reference to the Conditions of Omar, an Islamic text attributed to the caliph of the same name that forces Christians to live according to third class citizen status. In fact, several months back, when the Islamic State was still ISIS, it applied the Conditions of Omar on the Christian minorities of Raqqa, Syria. The Islamic group had issued a directive citing the Islamic concept of “dhimma”, [which] requires Christians in the city to pay tax of around half an ounce (14g) of pure gold in exchange for their safety. It says Christians must not make renovations to churches, display crosses or other religious symbols outside churches, ring church bells or pray in public. Christians must not carry arms, and must follow other rules imposed by ISIS... “If they reject, they are subject to being legitimate targets, and nothing will remain between them and ISIS other than the sword,” the statement said [emphasis added].

The persecution and exodus of Christians is hardly limited to Iraq. In 2011, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom noted: “The flight of Christians out of the region is unprecedented and it’s increasing year by year.” In our lifetime alone “Christians might disappear altogether from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Egypt,” all Muslim majority nations.

Under Saddam Hussein, and before the 2003 U.S. “liberation” of Iraq, more than a million Christians lived in Iraq; Mosul had some 60,000 Christians. Today there are reportedly none thanks to the new Muslim “caliphate.”

In Egypt, some 100,000 Christian Copts fled their homeland soon after the “Arab Spring.” But even before that, the Coptic Orthodox Church lamented the “repeated incidents of displacement of Copts from their homes, whether by force or threat. Displacements began in Ameriyya [62 Christian families evicted], then they stretched to Dahshur [120 Christian families evicted], and today terror and threats have reached the hearts and souls of our Coptic children in Sinai.”

In late 2012, it was reported that the last Christian in the city of Homs, Syria—which had a Christian population of some 80,000 before jihadis came—was murdered. One teenage Syrian girl said: “We left because they were trying to kill us... because we were Christians.... Those who were our neighbors turned against us. At the end, when

we ran away, we went through balconies. We did not even dare go out on the street in front of our house.” In the African nation of Mali, after a 2012 Islamic coup, as many as 200,000 Christians fled. According to reports, “the church in Mali faces being eradicated,” especially in the north “where rebels want to establish an independent Islamist state and drive Christians out... there have been house to house searches for Christians who might be in hiding, church and Christian property has been looted or destroyed, and people tortured into revealing any Christian relatives.” At least one pastor was beheaded.

One can go on and on:

In Ethiopia, after a Christian was accused of desecrating a Koran, thousands of Christians were forced to flee their homes when “Muslim extremists set fire to roughly 50 churches and dozens of Christian homes.”

In the Ivory Coast—where Christians have been crucified—Islamic rebels “massacred hundreds and displaced tens of thousands” of Christians.

In Libya, Islamic rebels forced several Christian nun orders serving the sick and needy since 1921 to flee and killed several Coptic Christians, causing that community also to flee.

In Muslim-majority northern Nigeria, where hardly a Sunday passes without a church bombing, Christians are fleeing by the thousands; one region has been emptied of 95% of its Christian population.

In Pakistan, after a Christian child was falsely accused of desecrating a Koran and Muslims went on an anti-Christian rampage, an entire Christian village—men, women, and children—was forced to flee into the nearby woods, where they built a church, to permanently reside there.

On the other hand, all the crimes being committed by Muslims against Christians are simply motivated by religious hate, because the Christians are Christian.

It is to the mainstream media’s great shame that those who slaughter, behead, crucify, and displace people for no other reason than because they are Christian, rarely if ever get media coverage, while a nation such as Israel, which kills only in the context of being self-defense, and not out of religious bigotry, is constantly demonized.

Christians

The world's most persecuted people

The former Chief Rabbi is appalled at the lack of protest about the treatment of Christians round the globe, and so should we be

[Meriam landing in Italy after finally being freed]

One woman, at least, is safe. Throughout much of her pregnancy, she had been in prison in Khartoum, capital of the Republic Sudan, living with the dread expectation that she would be hanged once her baby was born. Her crime was that she had married a Christian and been accused by the authorities of apostasy, renouncing her faith, even though she maintained she had never been a Muslim in the first place. On Thursday, Meriam Ibrahim's eight-month ordeal finally ended when she was flown out of the country to Rome where she, and her new baby daughter, met the Pope in the Vatican. But it has been a different story for the 3,000 Christians of Mosul who were driven from their homes in northern Iraq last week by Islamist fanatics who broadcast a fatwa from the loudspeakers of the city's mosques ordering them to convert to Islam, submit to its rule and pay a religious levy, or be put to death if they stayed. The last to leave was a disabled woman who could not travel. The fanatics arrived at her home and told her they would cut off her head with a sword.



Most people in the West would be surprised by the answer to the question: who are the most persecuted people in the world? According to the International Society for Human Rights, a secular group with members in 38 states worldwide, 80 per cent of all acts of religious discrimination in the world today are directed at Christians.

The Centre for the Study of Global Christianity in the United States estimates that 100,000

Christians now die every year, targeted because of their faith – that is 11 every hour. The Pew Research Center says that hostility to religion reached a new high in 2012, when Christians faced some form of discrimination in 139 countries, almost three-quarters of the world's nations.

All this seems counter-intuitive here in the West where the history of Christianity has been one of cultural dominance and control ever since the Emperor Constantine converted and made the Roman Empire Christian in the 4th century AD.

Yet the plain fact is that Christians are languishing in jail for blasphemy in Pakistan, and churches are burned and worshippers regularly slaughtered in Nigeria and Egypt, which has recently seen its worst anti-Christian violence in seven centuries.

Short Stories & Comments

by Fr. Augustinos Hanna

1. Worried about the Past!

Grandfather: "I am worried about my future,"
Grandson: What makes you worry about your future, Grandpa?" Grand father: "My past!" If you want not to worry about the sins of your past, then confess your sins and repent, because the Bible says: * "Repent therefore and be converted, that

your sins may be blotted out...." (Acts 3:19). * "If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). * "I have blotted out, like a cloud, your sins." (Isa. 44:22). * "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more (Jer.31:34 & Heb. 8:12)

2. Forget the past; don't look behind

St. Paul said, "One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. I press on" (Phil. 3:13) In his book, "Stop worrying and begin life", Dale Carnegie said, 'Most people act wrong by either living in the past or in the future. You cannot change the past, it is history now. And you can't live scared from the future, or else you will lose the present. Victor Hugo, wrote once, "If God had intended that man should look backward, He would have given him eyes in the back of his head." Jesus said once, "Anyone who puts his hand to the plow and then keeps looking behind him is not fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). If, while driving your car you look into the rear view mirror too much, you'll never make it to your destination, and you may kill yourself and others on the way.

3. An Investment in God's Word

John Wanamaker, an outstanding merchant of the 19th century, began his career as an errand boy at \$1.25 a week and later became one of America's leading businessmen. When asked what he considered to be the best investment he had ever made, he replied, "I have, of course, made large purchases of property in my lifetime, involving millions of dollars. But when I was only 11 years old, I made my biggest purchase of all. From my teacher in a little mission Sunday school, I bought a small red leather Bible. It cost me \$2.75. I paid for it in small installments from my own money that I had earned." The Bible was Wanamaker's greatest investment because its priceless truths brought spiritual vitality to his life and gave him strength of character. By reading and believing in God's word he not only established a solid foundation for his life, but he was also guided by God in everything he did. To invest part of one's time daily in reading God's Word in seeking His guidance and wisdom is an investment of incalculable value.

4. What Have You Done for Me?

There is a true story of a person who was converted in an Art Gallery in Dusseldorf, Germany, while contemplating a painting of Christ on the

cross. The picture bore the inscription: "I did this for you. What have you done for Me?"

HOW TO BUILD A LASTING & SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE (6)

17- Financial Planning:

In successful marriage, husbands and wives consider that they are stewards over God's resources. They consider money as a tool, but not the goal of their life. They know that money is a gift from God and it should be used properly and wisely. They believe that love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10), and that it may cause great destruction and perdition. The two do not put their trust on money or hunt for it. They do not put richness as a priority in their marital life. They know that money can destroy their marital life, and that they may also lose their eternal life. Because none of them is a wasteful or careless spender, they will not lose harmony in their marital life. They consider that oneness is the main character of successful Christian marriage, and that both must sacrifice for each other.

The two spouses keep a monthly budget plan. They do not purchase expensive materials to show off, or pretend to be rich. They plan that one of them is responsible of paying the bills, purchasing the needs of their home, and any other expenses. Any major expenses and purchases are discussed and agreed on by both spouses. After reaching a joint decision, they set priorities for their purchases. The couple does not buy more than they can afford.

In successful marriage, each spouse is not a careless spender; each of them considers the budget of the family, its limitation, and avoids debts. They regularly sit down and count the cost, and watch carefully their credit cards. Both spouses consider that giving their tithes is a holy commandment that must be kept willingly and in love, because God loves a cheerful giver. They believe that not giving their tithes is a type of robbing God (Mal. 3:8). Both consider that giving tithes takes the priority over their home needs.

In successful marriage, both husband and wife have one joint bank account. No one of them hides any part of his/her income from the other. There is trust between them. They feel that both are in one boat, and they must row in harmony in order to enjoy a healthy relation, full of love, respect and unity. If they have shortage of money or financial problems, they ask for good financial advice. In successful marriage, husbands know that their wives



By Fr. Gawargious Kolta

need to feel safe and comfortable by having enough income for their needs. Usually before marriage, women make sure that their future spouses have sufficient income to meet their needs. In some marriages, many problems may happen if the husbands' income is not sufficient for the needs of the family.

Willard Harley in his book "His Needs, Her Needs" mentioned that the first need of women is to have sufficient money to live comfortably. Women may not marry men for money, but they want their spouses to earn at least enough to sup-

port the family.

In successful marriage, wives are not intensely unhappy due to their husbands' low income. They try to work in order to increase the family income, even while their children are still very young, simply because their husbands can't handle the basic monthly expenses on their own. Nowadays most women want to have a career early in life not only to support their future families, but also to feel happy on their achievements, having their dual role as homemakers and employees.

In successful marriage, husbands feel happy when their wives have good achievements in work; not only because their wives support them financially. They are not jealous because of their wives' success at work. They try to help them in their housekeeping and purchasing the daily home needs. Husbands do their best to help their wives in raising the children. They consider that their wives have the right and privilege to be homemakers and full-time mothers.

Harley said women should have the choice of homemaking or career and work. They consider that employment is their right and privilege. When that choice is imposed by their husbands, it is against women's rights and it deprives many of them of getting married. They have the choice of whether or not to work, once they have children. Sometimes husbands, who have low income, change their values and are forced to let their wives work to support them financially, because their sole income is not sufficient.

He continued to say that he met many couples caught in that trap. The husbands work as hard as they can, coming home tired every night, but their paychecks are not enough to support a comfortable life. Their wives seem

to have a poor quality of life. He sympathized with those men who were trapped in that situation. Sometimes they work two jobs in order to meet their wives' needs for money, and by that, most of them sacrifice spending quality time with their families. The following story illustrates the sufferings of a man and his wife due to the shortage of husband's income.

A young woman insisted to marry a man, who was working with a low income; while she was in her first year in college. She did not listen to the advice of her parents, her younger sister, all her family members nor her father of confession. She lived with her husband a poor quality life. After five years, her sister achieved her bachelor degree, and earned good income from a respectable job. She got married to a man who earns good salary, and after one year she gave birth to a beautiful baby.

The older sister told her family that she could not give birth to children because her income and her husband's salary were not enough to raise children. She started to compare between her sister's style of life and the unhappy poor quality life which she lived. She and her husband could hardly pay the rent of their apartment, their bills and other needs. Her sister lived with her husband and their child in a well-furnished house, having luxurious cars and respectable jobs. She became increasingly discontent and aware of how trapped she was, and after about eight years of marriage, she admitted that she did a big mistake. But, she did not resolve her problem by separation, or divorce, because her husband was affectionate and loyal to her. She said to her family that leaving a man who did not make enough money would be a selfish thing to do. At the same time, the husband worked harder to meet his wife's financial needs.

When her parents found out that she was suffering from shortage of money, they advised her to ask her husband to study another career, and work a part-time job. They promised to help her financially during his study till he could finish it. This plan saved their marriage, and the husband got a better job and both began to earn enough money to live a comfortable life.

Financial Problems:

To achieve successful marriage, we must avoid family problems which would happen if the couples do not know how to manage their financial matters. Serious problems may happen:

- 1- When a husband wants to be rich very fast he works for long periods, and neglects the emotional needs of his wife and his children, who need his love more than money. Wives need to spend quality time with their husbands.
- 2- When one spouse is tightfisted, and he/she controls the budget, considering that spending money is drainage

of their wealth. A miser husband always makes confrontations with his wife, which choke their marital relations for he considers his wife a frittered and careless person.

3- When one of the spouses decides on major expenses and purchases alone, without considering the budget of the family, especially as credit cards make spending money easy, leading to increased debts.

4- When one of the spouses is a careless spender, purchasing expensive materials to show off, or to pretend to be rich, the other spouse tries to control the finances of the family. This makes the careless spouse disappointed, and feels that he/she is controlled and starts to resist.

5- When one of the spouses abuses money and spends it on gambling or on other bad habits, his/her spouse will make limitation to her/his allowance, and takes the leadership of the house and the family financial responsibility, and that will arouse fights between both.

6- When the wife believes that she should keep her salary for her own needs and her pleasures. Although some husbands agree on that wrong financial behavior, just to avoid problems with their wives, yet they really feel disappointed.

7- When one of the spouses is against giving tithes or any donations to the church or any other charitable purpose, while the other believes that it is a holy commandment that must be kept willingly and in love.

8- When one of the spouses hides part of the family income from the other, because he/she wants to feel free of the control of the other. This usually happens when he/she interferes in her/his spending. This causes disputes and fights between the two.

9- When one of the spouses abuses the family riches on going to lewd and immoral places, while the other does not like to live a worldly life, considering that it is against the love of God (1 Jn. 2:16). Problems and conflicts happen.

10- When one of the spouses wants to give their children too much allowance, while the other considers that this attitude may spoil the kids and lead them to an immoral worldly life.

All these problems between the couples can be usually attributed to shallow spirituality, absence of the fear of God, absence of oneness, rejection of submission to one another, absence of sacrifice, and selfishness. Such couples need marital counselling and the advice of a financial expert to guide them.

(To be continued)

Help Wanted

by Fr. Augustinos Hanna

"You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive" (Matt.20:7)

YES, here is work in Christ's vineyard for old bodies. It is the eleventh hour, and yet He will let us work. What great grace is this! Surely every old man ought to jump at this invitation! After men are advanced in years, nobody wants them as servants; they go from shop to shop, and employers look at their grey hairs and shake their heads. But the Lord Jesus will engage old people and give them good wages too! This is mercy indeed. Lord, help the aged to enlist in your service without an hour's delay. But will the Lord pay wages to worn-out old men? Do not doubt it. He says He will give you what is right if you will work in His field. He will surely give you grace here and glory hereafter. He will grant present comfort and future rest; strength equal to your day, and a vision of glory when the night of death comes on. All these the Lord Jesus will as freely give to the aged convert as to one who enters His service in his youth. Let me tell this to some unsaved old man or old woman and pray the Lord to bless it, for Jesus' sake. Where can I find such persons? I will be on the look-out for them and kindly tell them the news.



Honor God

"Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor; and who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30).

Do I make the honor of God the great object of my life and the rule of my conduct? If so, He will honor me. I may for a while receive no honor from man, but God will Himself put honor upon me in the most effectual manner. In the end it will be found the surest way to honor to be willing to be put to shame for conscience' sake.

Eli had not honored the Lord by ruling his household well, and his sons had not honored the Lord by behavior worthy of their sacred office. Therefore the Lord did not honor them, but took the high priesthood out of their family and made young Samuel to be ruler in the land instead of any of their line. If I would have my family ennobled, I must honor the Lord in all things. God may allow the wicked to win worldly honors' but the dignity which He Himself gives, even glory, honor, and immortality, He reserves for those who by hold obedience take care to honor Him.

What can I do this day to honor the Lord? (1) I will promote His glory by my spoken testimony and by my practical obedience. (2) I will honor Him by keeping His commandments (John 14:21, 23). (3) I will honor Him by serving Him, "If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor" (Jn.12:26). (4) I will honor the Lord by my possessions and with the first-fruits of all my increase (Prov. 3:9). (5) I will honor the Lord by investing the talents that He gave me for His glory, edifying His Kingdom, the church, on earth and raising funds for my eternity (Matt. 25:14-30).

Our days are 70 & with strength 80 in Psalm 90

By Fr. Augustinos Hanna

“The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off” (Psa. 90:10).

The Holy Bible reminds us always that The days of our lives on earth are very short. Human’s life is so fragile and measured by days and even those days are uncertain. No one can guarantee that he/she will live till the age of 70 or 80. Every day we watch and hear stories of children and youth who die very early by different kinds of illnesses and accidents.

Despite of the shortness of our days and their uncertainty, for no one knows when, how and where his/her life ends, the vast majority of people are distracted by the world attractions and do not even think or prepare themselves for the moment of departure.

On the occasion of the end of the year, we have to remember the end of the world and the end of our lives on earth. These are some of the Biblical descriptions and analogies, that prove our lives are so short:

1. Vapor: “What is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (James 4: 14).
2. Handbreadth: “Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You” (Psa. 39:4, 5).
3. Shadow: “Surely every man walks about like a shadow; surely they busy themselves in vain” (Psa. 39:6).
4. Grass: “My days are like a shadow that lengthens, and I wither away like grass” (Psa. 102:11).
5. Flower: “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower fall away” (1 Pet. 1:24).
6. Runner, eagle and swift ships: “My days are swifter than a runner...they pass by like swift ships, like an eagle swooping on its prey” (Job 9:25).
7. Breath and weaver’s shuttle: (Job 7:6, 7).
8. Pilgrimage & Sojourn: (Gen. 47:8).

Therefore, we must use our life well, for death comes soon, evening or morning, night or noon. We must get ready for our eternity, loving and serving God and people, laying up our treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:20).

Let us remember that our days are 70 and with strength 80 in psalm 90.

The Beautiful Masterpiece God is Making You

(Author: Unknown)

But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are thee clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand. (Isaiah 64:8)

A huge chunk of beautiful marble lay in the courtyard of the Florence, Italy cathedral for almost a hundred years. The sculptor commissioned to carve it had made a mistake while attempting to carve the stone, and most people thought it was beyond repair.

But in 1505, another young sculptor by the name of Michelangelo came across the piece and thought he could do something with it. For three years, he worked steadily, carefully shaping the marble into an 18-foot tall image of the young shepherd boy David - a sculpture that would define the great artist’s career. Much like Michelangelo, God is our Sculptor. He finds us broken, lost, and in desperate need of work. Then, after putting our faith in Christ, He begins to chisel us - scraping and chipping away our imperfections and making us more and more into the image He wants us to be. This sculpting we undergo isn’t always a pleasant experience. That’s because sometimes we have idols and imperfections chipped away to which we’ve grown very attached. But Our Master Sculptor knows what He’s doing. Trust Him to mold you throughout your life into the masterpiece He’s created you to be and thank Him that He’s set you free from the imperfections that hinder you! Prayer Challenge: Ask God to help you submit to His daily sculpting in your life as He transforms you into His image.



The Sin of Doing Nothing!

The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:1430-)

By Fr. Augustinos Hanna

In Matthew 25, the Lord Jesus told us two parables about preparation for His second coming. The first parable was about the ten virgins, and its lesson is about preparation through having oil in our lamps and being watchful. The oil here stands for being filled with the Holy Spirit who makes us ready to shine and to keep watchful and waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom. The second parable was about being watchful through working and investing our talents for God's glory, the welfare of others and raising funds for our own eternity. In this article I will focus on the parable of the talents. We summarize it as follows: A certain man traveling to a far country called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. He gave the first one five talents, to the second two, and to the third one, to each according to his ability; and immediately he went on a journey. The first who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them. His lord said to him, 'Well done good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your servant. And likewise the second one who had the two talents won other two and heard the same answer. Then the third one, who received ONE talent, came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid you talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours!' But his lord answered and said to him, "You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown....Therefore you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore, take the talent from him and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has more will be given, and he will have abundance;

but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Jesus Christ condemns the one-talent man: Christianity is a positive religion. It condemns the negative morality, and considers it a sin when you do nothing when we ought to be doing something. Someone once said, "I never harmed a fly!" The answer to that is, "The fly you never harmed carried the plague that killed millions of people!" In the same chapter 25 of the gospel of St. Matthew the Lord Jesus has shown us that the judgment will be according to our works, and those who did nothing good will be condemned. "I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." For this He reserves the harshest punishment: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). What was the fatal sin of the rich man's story with the beggar Lazarus in Luke 16:1931-? He just did nothing good to Lazarus. He was selfish, cruel, stingy and busy in living luxurious life. He dug in the ground and buried his talents! The gospel did not say that he was a murderer or a thief of adulterer or a gambler. He went to hell for doing nothing good and did not deserve a drop of water because he did not do one single act of mercy! This one talent man and that rich selfish man buried their talent in the earth. They are like many people today who make cemeteries of their lives by burying their talents!

Created for good works: In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul summarize our complete salvation in these verses, "By grace you have been saved through faith,,,,,,for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:810-). We have been designed, equipped, and tooled to serve our fellow humans, and through such service to serve and glorify God. Medical science tells us that if you are of average weight, this is what your body does in 24 hours: Your heart beats 193,600 times.

Your blood travels 168,000 miles. You breathe 23,040 times. You inhale 438 cubic feet of air. You eat 3 13/



pounds of food. You drink 3.9 pints of liquid. You generate in energy 450 foot-tons. You speak 4,800 words. You move 750 major muscles. You exercise 7,000,000 brain cells.

Why is all this energy expended in 24 hours? Why all this activity of the body? St. Paul answers, "We are created in Christ for good works" (Eph.2:10). We are created to love God and serve Him with our whole being. We are created to express our faith in works of love that glorify God.

Why Do We Ask for Daily Bread? We pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." But we forgot that we ask for our daily bread in order that we may use the strength it gives us to do something for God, to do His will, to make His Kingdom a reality on earth by doing good to others. This is what we promised Him when we pray the Lord's Prayer each day. So, do something good every day and don't bury your talents. Follow Christ's footsteps and make Him your personal king.

Discover your talents, develop and use them We learn from this parable that each one of us has, at least, just one talent, and that we have to use it well for God's glory and for our brothers' goodness. For in so doing, we shall uncover other talents. "For to everyone, who has (a talent and develop it), will more be given, and will have abundance." One talent we can all possess and cultivate in the ability to be kind, to have an understanding heart and mind, to be tolerant and well-disposed toward others. In using this talent we need not wait for a great event, since all around us there are those who need a little bit of human affections, a little bit of kindness to make them feel that they, too, belong to life and are important to God and need His salvation. It is not that we have to do miracles or some great and heroic deeds, but that we leave out some tiny but significant gestures

that would bring joy to someone else. Saying, "I love you"; being appreciative; sending a note; making a phone call, giving someone a pamphlet or a magazine or inviting him/her to the church or a spiritual meeting, or giving a small gift...all these small works of love and kindness will be applauded in heaven and will please the heart of your Savior that He will tell you in the Last Day, "Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much" So don't waste your time in-vain, but do something good every day and don't despise those little expressions of love that mean so much to the Lord and to others and to your eternity. The more you discover your talents, use them, develop them, the more you will be able to invest them. Do you have a kind heart, then visit the poor, the sick, the widows and orphans and the prisoners and give them as much as you can, love, encouragement, money or whatever they may need. Do you have the talent of speech or singing or just listening and smiling, invest your talents and you will discover that they will do miracle and save souls and spread joy around you.

"Who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17) Christianity teaches that doing nothing is a sin, especially when you know to do good and keep negative. In the parable of the "Good Samaritan", the Jewish priest and the Levite committed this sin by doing nothing good to the traveler who fell among the thieves and was left half dead and passed by on the other side (Luke 10:30-37). The Lord Jesus called such men "wicked and lazy" (Matthew 25:26). Romans 12, is a golden chapter that puts all what we said into action; and gives us a great list to help us discover our gifts and talents, develop, use and invest them to double them by God's grace and our faithfulness.

“YOU GIVETHEM TO EAT”

(Matt. 14:14 – 22)

By Fr. Antony Coniaris

A woman from Russia was visiting New York City some years ago. She maintained a stoic “Ours is better” attitude through a tour of Lincoln Center, the Empire State Building, and a cruise around Manhattan. Then her hostess took her to a supermarket. The veneer of smugness cracked as the Russian woman stood amid seemingly endless aisles of fresh vegetables, red meat and frozen foods. She had never seen anything like it before. She broke down and wept. This may be true, but as someone said jokingly, “America has more food to eat than any other country in the world and more diets to keep us from eating it.”

The Greatest Threat

The force that poses the greatest threat to international order today is not the Soviet Union, not the Islamic World and not inflation, none of these. “The most potentially explosive force in the world today is the frustrated desire of poor people to attain a decent standard of living.” So says the report of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger.

Jesus and Hunger

Jesus addressed this number one problem of the world when He ordered His disciples to feed the hungry multitude: “You give them something to eat,” He said.

Commencing on these words of Jesus, Stephen Neil wrote: “Jesus is much concerned with loaves and fishes and other very material entities. He tells us that we are not to take anxious thought about such things. But, though He reminds us that man shall not live by bread alone, He never for a moment doubts that man shall live by bread. ‘Give ye them to eat’ still stands as His command to His church. If at any time the church has been inclined to spiritualize this command, to think that it has fulfilled its duty by providing man with spiritual food and so preparing him for life in heaven as a compensation for poverty and hardship on earth, the word of Christ is there to rebuke it.”

“You give them something to eat.” Church members who deny their responsibility for the needy in any part of the world are just as guilty of heresy as those who deny any major article of the faith. To refuse to feed the hungry is in itself a denial of a major article of the faith of Christ.

“You give them something to eat.” How right Berdyaev

was when he said, “The question of bread for myself is a material question, but the question of bread for my neighbor is a spiritual and a religious question.”

“You give them something to eat.” Ghandi said once, “There are so many hungry people that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.” There is a story which says that when God decided to visit the earth, He sent an angel to survey the situation. The angel returned and reported that most of the people lacked food. Then God said, “I will go but I will become incarnate in the form of food for the hungry.” So He came as the “Bread of Life”.

So why does television have to display such awful pictures just about the time I sit down to enjoy my dinner?

There are many things that we can do to become part of the answer to this number one problem of hunger. Here are some:

Jesus Must Feed the Hungry through US

1. If Jesus is to feed the hungry, He must do it through us. A person tells of seeing on the street one day a little girl cold and shivering in a thin dress, with little hope of a decent meal. He became angry and said to God, “Why did you permit this? Why don’t you do something about it?” That night He replied, “I certainly did do something about it. I made you.” “You give them something to eat.”

Jesus was able to feed the five thousand because there were people in the crowd who were willing to bring Him whatever little food they had: five loaves and two fish. Jesus sends none away empty except those who are full of themselves; those who are unwilling to share.

The disciples determined their resources – five loaves and two fish. We, too, should start by taking inventory. Most of us have far more than five loaves and two fish.

God can work miracles if we are willing to bring to Him our five loaves and two fish. Frank Buchman once said, “Suppose everybody cared enough, everybody shared enough, wouldn’t everybody have enough? There is enough in the world for every-one’s need, but not for everyone’s greed. St Augustine wrote:

Find out how much God has given you and from it take what you need; the remainder which you do not require



is needed by others. The superfluities of the rich are the necessities of the poor. Those who retain what is superfluous possess the goods of others.

St Basil wrote,

“He who steals clothes (or food) from the poor is a thief. He who has clothes (or food) and does not clothe (or feed) the naked (and hungry) is also a thief”.

We read in the early Christian (1st Century) document “The Didache”:

“Share everything with your brother. Do not say ‘It is private property.’ If you share what is everlasting, you should be that much more willing to share things which do not last.”

Listen to St Gregory of Nyssa:

“All things belong to God, Who is our Father and the Father of all things. We are all of the same family; all of us are brothers. And among brothers it is best and most equal that all inherit equal portions.”

Fasting

2. In addition to sharing what we have, another way we can help feed the hungry is through fasting. It has been estimated that if the rest of the world ate the way Americans do and used as much petroleum in growing food as we do, the known world resources would be used up in less than 30 years.

We need to fast more than we do and to use the proceeds of our fasting to feed the hungry. One church in Texas decided that for every pound they lost, the members would give one dollar for world hunger.

We need to heed the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

“Is not this the fast that I choose . . . Is it not to break your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked to cover him.” (Isaiah 58:67-).

Gather Up the Leftovers

3. In addition to sharing and fasting, a third way to help feed the hungry is by being less wasteful. In John’s version of this miracle we read, “And when they had eaten their fill, He (Jesus) told His disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments left over, that nothing may be lost’” (Jn 6:12).

The striking thing is that Jesus did not leave the leftovers scattered around. His power to feed the multitude did not tempt Him to be careless or to presume to waste God’s gift of precious food. We’re not told how Jesus used the twelve baskets full of leftovers. For that, we can use our imagination. What we do know is that Jesus treated food as a precious gift.

Our modern “throw-away society” can learn something from the apostolic “gathering-up society.” It has been said that your garbage disposal probably eats better than do 30% of the people of the world. A study revealed that Americans toss in the garbage cans as much as ten billion dollars worth of edible food every year. In just one restaurant in New York City the owner says they dump at least ten pounds of butter and one hundred pounds of meat every week. That amounts to two-and-a-half tons of meat and one-quarter ton of butter every year wasted in just one restaurant. The waste of food and consumer goods in our nation is sinfully appalling.

If we could but become a gathering society, a conserving people, a preserving force instead of a wasteful one, the miracle of there being enough left over for all might well occur again in our time.

4. In addition to sharing, fasting, and conserving, there is another way to help with world hunger. We just said that the greatest threat to the stability of the world is not nuclear weaponry but hunger. Yet the world continues to spend \$750,000 every minute for arms. A true response from us to God's love would show itself in our using the same ingenuity in feeding the starving that we now use in making deadly missiles or easy-open beer cans. For example, the estimated \$40 billion cost of the new MX missile would feed 50 million malnourished children. It would also build 65,000 health care centers and 300,000 primary schools.

Examples of What Can Be Done

Here are some simple examples of how we as Christians can respond to the command of Jesus: "You give them something to eat."

One person keeps track of what she spends for grain to feed the birds and she sends an equal amount to CARE. "It's not fair to feed birds," she says, "if you don't feed people." Think of this when you feed your dog next time. In St. Paul, Minnesota, guests coming to a wedding were asked to bring gifts for world hunger rather than wedding gifts for the bridal couple. A total of \$1,644.00 was raised for world hunger.

In Orlando, Florida, a couple celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary asked well-wishers to give for world hunger rather than gifts to them.

One person writes, "I believe giving up one main meal a week should be the minimum response. One Sunday a month could be designated for receiving the money which is set aside weekly. By giving up the meal, we would understand more personally the plight of the hungry and the scale of the crisis."

Another person carries around with him what he calls a "justice envelope." Whenever he buys a treat like a candy bar, he notes its cost and places the amount in his "justice envelop." Every so often he donates the contents of the envelope to his church for world hunger.

"Why do you call it a 'justice envelope?' someone asked him. "Why don't you call it a 'charity envelope?' He replied, "Because I don't believe there is such a thing as charity. What do I have that God didn't give me? If I give a little of my surplus to someone less fortunate, I'm not giving a gift, I'm paying a debt."

The Bible says that at the Last Judgment people will ask

Christ, "When did we see you hungry?" We are seeing one-fourth of the world's people hungry at this moment. Let us never say we did not know how much suffering there was. And there are so many little things we can do to help. The world's hunger for food must be relieved by our hunger for righteousness. "You give them something to eat."

A Parable

2,000 years ago the Lord of life encountered a tree along the side of a dusty road.

"Tree," said the Lord, "I have given you soil and water and sunlight all these many years. I have kept you safe from the storms. I have blessed your growth. Now I am tired and hungry. Have you anything for Me?"

The tree answered back, "I have nothing for you, Lord." From that day forward, the Lord withheld his blessing and the tree died.

Many years later, the Lord of life encounters one of His people along that same hot, dusty road. "Christian," says the Lord, "I am your creator, I have given you life, I have watched over you and given you food, I have blessed your days, I have enlarged your family and prospered your household, I have shown you mercy and grace, I have loved you and kept you in my love, Look around you, My world is hungry and broken, people in it are weary and in need, have you anything for them?"

How do we answer the Lord?

Service Opportunity - Arabic Translators Needed

There is a great need for many books, pamphlets, articles and spiritual resources to be translated from Arabic into the English language. It is of extreme importance for us to provide Orthodox spiritual resources in English from the Oriental Orthodox traditions. If you have the gift of language and writing and are interested in volunteering a service of translating, please contact us at

Frhanna@mystjohn.org

or frhanna7@gmail.com or by phone at:
(909)592-0475



By Fr. Augustinos R. Hanna

1. Relate the Object to the Story:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. Chariot of fire | 1. The battle of Jericho |
| B. A sling | 2. Present at Jesus baptism |
| C. Two mites | 3. The 7th plague in Egypt |
| D. An Ass jawbone | 4. A vision of Ezekiel |
| E. The bodily shape like a dove | 5. David's battle with Goliath |
| F. A nail or spike | 6. Elijah being translated |
| G. Hail | 7. The poor widow's contribution |
| H. A wheel in a wheel | 8. Samson fighting Philistines |

2. Locate the Scripture:

Circle the scripture which states:

- The disciples came together upon the first day of the week to break bread.
(A) Rev. 22:18 (B) Acts 20:7 (C) Matt. 26:22
- We are to sing and make melody in our hearts unto the Lord.
(A) Eph. 5:19 (B) Col. 3:16 (C) Matt. 26:30
- "Come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest"
(A) Luke 11:28 (B) John 11:28 (C) Matt. 11:28
- "I and the Father are one"
(A) Mark 17:40 (B) John 10:30 (C) Hebrews 5:3
- "My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe My ways"
(A) Gen. 19:20 (B) Psalm 80:5 (C) Proverbs 23:26
- "God is love"
(A) John 10:20 (B) 1 John 4:8 (C) Rev. 5:7
- "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"
(A) Titus 2:11 (B) John 3:16 (C) Mark 5:9
- "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will towards men"
(A) Matthew 12:9 (B) Mark 2:11 (C) Luke 2:14
- "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"
(A) Matthew 16:26 (B) John 4:9 (C) Acts 5:15
- "There will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt"
(A) Matt. 2:5 (B) Jeremiah 2:13 (C) Isaiah 19:19

3. True or False:

If the statement is true, circle "T", if it is false circle "F".

- Acceptable worship must be both in spirit and in truth.
T F
- God's word is truth, spirit and life.
T F
- God feels about things just as man does.
T F
- The Bible says that the early church used instrumental music.
T F
- In the days of the apostles Christians had Many denominations.
T F
- Early Christians took the Lord's supper each first day of the week.
T F
- Our offensive appearance has no impact on our spiritual life and salvation.
T F
- The kingdom of heaven is a treasure hidden in a field.
T F
- God spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend.
T F
- The Lord Jesus said, in the book of Acts, "Blessed is giving more than receiving"
T F

4. He is Able

On the basis of their astonishing experience, the early Christians knew the risen Christ was able to do all things in them and through them. What things? Supply the missing word(s) to find out, using the King James Version.

- "He is able to-----them that are tempted."
- "He is able also to-----them that come unto God by him"
- He is able "to-----you from falling."
- "No man in heaven...was able to open the-----"

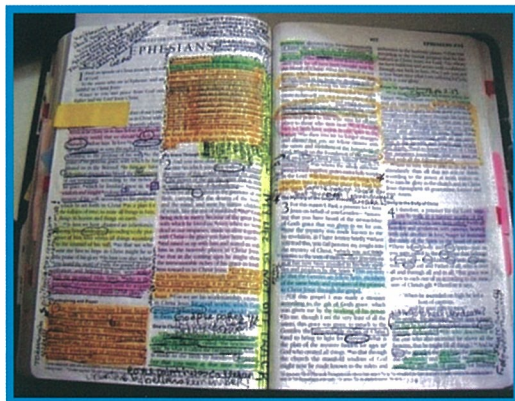
5. Under our Skin

The psalmist says, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). And we are remarkable creatures, inside and out. Can you identify the things that are "under our skin" by supplying the missing word(s) below?"

- God used-----from Adam in creating Eve.
- The "man" Jacob wrestled touched the-----of his thigh.
- Jesus was crucified at Golgotha, known also as "A place of a-----".

Parables of Jesus

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Light under a bushel	5:15 - 16	4:21, 22	8:16, 17
New cloth, old clothes	9:16	2:21	5:36
New wine, old wineskins	9:17	2:22	5:37, 38
Sower of seeds	13:3 - 23	4:2 - 20	8:4 - 15
Mustard seed	13:31, 32	4:30 - 32	13:18, 19
Wicked tenants	21:33 - 45	12:1 - 12	20:9 - 19
Leaves on a fig tree	24:32, 33	13:28, 29	21:29 - 31
House on rock, sand	7:24 - 27		6:47 - 49
Leaven (Yeast)	13:33		13:20, 21
Lost sheep	18:12 - 14		15:3 - 7
Talents for 3 servants	25:14 - 30		19:11 - 27
Weeds in the wheat	13:24 - 30		
Hidden treasure	13:44		
Valuable pearl	13:45, 46		
Fishing net	13:47 - 50		
Unmerciful servant	18:23 - 35		
Workers in vineyard	20:1 - 16		
Father & two sons	21:28 - 32		
Wedding feast	22:1 - 14		
Ten virgins	25:1 - 13		
Sheep and goats	25:31 - 46		
A growing seed		4:26 - 29	
Doorkeeper on watch		13:34, 37 -	
Two debtors			7:41 - 43
Good Samaritan			10:25 - 37
Friend at Midnight			11:5 - 10
Rich fool			12:16 - 21
Ready servants			12:37, 38
Wise manager			12:42 - 48
Fruitless fig tree			13:6 - 9
Place of honor			14:7 - 14
Reluctant guests			14:16 - 24
Lost coin			15:8 - 10
Prodigal son			15:11 - 32
Dishonest manager			16:1 - 13
Rich man & Lazarus			16:19 - 31
Servant's duty			17:7 - 10
Persistent widow			18:1 - 8
Pharisee and tax collector			18:9 - 14
Total =	21	9	27



There are 21 parables in the Gospel of St. Matthew, 9 in the Gospel of St. Mark, 27 in the Gospel of St. Luke and; No parables in the Gospel of St. John.

“All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled

which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

“I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

(Matt. 13:34, 35; Ps.78:2)

Mahragan El-Kiraza



Kinder garden:
1 & 2 Grade:
3 & 4 Grade:
5 & 6. Grade:
7 & 8. Grade:
Collage:
Adult:

Good
Excellent
Very good
Excellent
Very good
Very good
Excellent.



Congratulations

Class of 2014

Mina Habib

We thank God for your graduation from Cal Poly, Pomona with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. May the Lord continue to guide you in His path—Dad, Mon & Michael



Abanoub Mikhail Congratulations for graduating with a Bachelor of Science with an Emphasis in Human Biology from California University. May God bless your future. We love you. -Dad, Michael, Mom, Nagat, Monica and Andrew.



Meena Halaka

Congratulations for all your achievements in obtaining your M.S. in Bio-molecular Science. We are proud of you. May the Lord continue to bless your future -Love mom Meryam, dad Adel and Aresaneus



Monica & John Barsoum Congratulations Monica for your graduation from High School and going to University of Riverside; and John for going to High School. May the Lord continue to bless both of you- Love, Dad Sameh Barsoum, Mom Mariam.



Yoliana and Youanna Halaka

Congratulations on your High school graduation. May the Lord Jesus continue to bless your futures and keep you always in His faith. -Love Mom and Dad



Sara Guirgis

Congratulations Sara for your graduation from Elementary and going to Junior High School. May God bless you and give you continuous success- Your family

Congratulations to **Mahraiel Matta & Anastasia Lamey** for graduating from Elementary to Junior High. May God bless the two of you always -Family and Church.

Congratulations for Weddings & Baptisms St. John Church congratulates

Larry Chen and Candy

For their blessed marriage. May the Lord Jesus Christ grant them health, harmony, happiness, fruitful service in China.



Mark Messiha & Kathrin

For their blessed marriage praying God to bless them and grant them a Christian happy home built on the Rock of His word and church. Congratulations also to their two families.



Michael Bishay and Horry

For their marriage, wishing them every blessing, happiness and long life in Christ.



Magdy Mossa and Nagwa

For the baptism of their child Steven (John) May the Lord grant him grace and growth.



Congratulations to **Tamer and Marian Abuelsaad** for the baptism of their baby girl Mariam Anastasia May the Lord grant her health, growth in spirit & stature.



News in Pictures

