

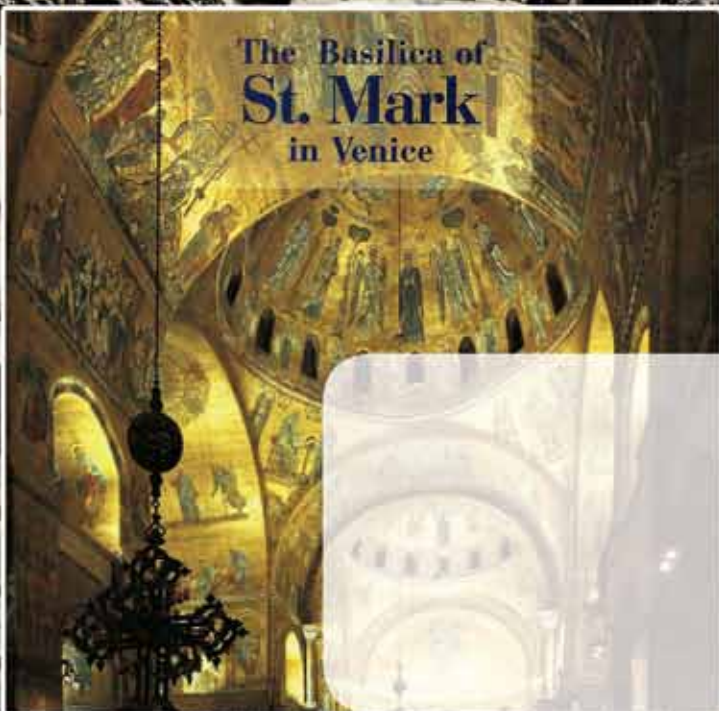


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*Verse
of the Month*



**"Then the Sign of the Son of Man will
appear in heaven"
(Matt. 24:30).**

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**SCHEDULE of MEETINGS and EVENTS
for the MONTH of September & October 2015**

| SUNDAY | WEDNESDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|--|--|
| + English Liturgy 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. (In the New Church) | + Liturgy 8:00-10:00 a.m. | + Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. | + Liturgy from 8-10 am |
| * * * | + Thursday Morning + Senior Citizen Club 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. | + Women's Meeting 5:00 - 6:30 p.m. at the new church | + Vespers; Bible Study 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. + Beginners' Deacons- Meeting 6:00 p.m. + Elementary Meeting 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. |
| + Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:15 a.m. (In the Old Church) | | | |
| Servants' Meeting + 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. 2 nd & 4 th Sunday. + Boy Scouts 12 pm | + THURSDAY Family Meeting 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. Fr. Augustinos | +Arabic Youth Meeting 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. Fr. Gawargious | + College Youth Meeting 8:00- 9:00 p.m. |
| | | | High School & J. High Meetings 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. |

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1. Feast of Nyrouz (Coptic New Year 1735):

On Tuesday, September 11, 2018 the church celebrates the Feast of Nyrouz, which is known as the Feast of the Coptic New Year 1735, and the Feast of the Coptic Christian Martyrs of Egypt-which are numbered by millions, through the Roman & the Islamic persecutions until present.



Vespers will be celebrated on Monday, September 10, at 7:30 p.m. There will be a sermon, hymns and other activities. All the tunes of prayers, from Nyrouz to the Feast of the Cross are joyful.

2. The Feast of the Cross:

On Thursday, September 27, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Appearance of the Holy Cross. Vespers will take place on Wednesday the 26th at 7:30 p.m. The Liturgy is on Thursday from 7:30 am.



3. The Visit of H.G. Bishop Moussa:

On Friday, August 3rd, St. John Church enjoyed the blessings of the visit and sermon of H.G. Bishop Moussa for Los Angeles Youth, with H.E. Metropolitan Serapion and H.G. Bishop Abraham.

4. St. John's adults and Elementary prizes in the Kiraza Competition

+ Pre & Kindergarten - Excellent + 1st & 2nd - Excellent
+ 3rd & 4th - Excellent + 5th & 6th - Excellent
+ Junior High - Excellent + High School - Excellent

5. Three recent unforgettable dates of God's deliverance for our church in Egypt:



June 30th 2013 January 25th 2011 October 6th 1981

6. The Memorial of Bishop Samuel Martyrdom:

On October 6, every year we commemorate the martyrdom of Bishop Samuel who was killed with Sadat in the same event October 6, 1981. May the Lord repose his soul and make his memory eternal.



7. H.H. Pope Tawadros II:

His Holiness attended the funeral of H. G. Bishop Apiphanius who was martyred inside the Monastery of St. Makarius in Egypt. He talked about his virtues and achievements and asked the Copts to keep calm and do not believe the false rumors and wait for the final investigations of the tragic crime.



8. H.E. Metropolitan Serapion:

+ H. E. Metropolitan Serapion attended the Kiraza Competition at Pasadena on Saturday, August 4, with H. G. Bishop Moussa and H.G. Bishop Abraham and H.G. Bishop Kirellos and distributed prizes to the winners.



+ On July 29 and August 5, H.E., ordained two new priests, Fr. David to serve the Church of St. John the Baptist in Oxnard, and Fr. Samuel Ayad to serve Pope Kirellos church at West Minister. Congratulations to the new priests and their churches.

9. St. John Coptic Clinic:

On Saturday, August 25, 2018, St. John Church started a "Medical Caravan" in the Church Hall from to serve the needy, new comers and those who have no medical insurance. The Caravan is well equipped with all specialties. The event was attended by the Egyptian General Council and the Mayor of Covina City.

10. Harvest Day (Children Halloween Festival):

On Monday, October 31, St. John Church holds her 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. St. John's 30th Anniversary and Annual Festival & Fair:

St. John Church in Covina holds her 30h Anniversary and her Annual Festival and Fair, for three days from Friday, September 28 until Sunday 30. 2018, under the Auspices and blessings of H.E. Mertopolitan Serapion. The program contains daily vespers and morning Liturgies, Book Fair, Mediterranean food. Missionary tours for the guests and Fund-Raise to pay off the church debts and complete her Icons.



The Glorious Feast of THE CROSS

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

The Church celebrates the feast of the Cross twice every year, on March 19, and September 27th. On the feast of the cross we remember many vital matters:

Spiritual, theological, doctrinal and symbolic.

1. We remember the love with which Christ loved us- to the point that He died for our sake. We remember His words, 'Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.' (Jn.15:13). Sacrifice is the greatest sign of love, and self-sacrifice is the summit of sacrifice.

2. In the Cross we remember Redemption:

A soul that dies for another soul, this is the principle of atonement. We were under the judgment of death, and then came He who would die for us that we live. His death on the cross can be described as follows, ***"All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned, every one, to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all"*** (Isaiah 53:6).

3. In the Cross we remember endurance:

The great sufferings that our Master endured, whether the suffering of the flesh of which He said, "They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones". Or the sufferings of dishonor, which He endured happily for our sake; that is, while He was happy with our salvation. Hence, the Apostle said about Him, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame..." (Heb. 12:2). How great then is this endurance if it is with joy? This is a lesson for us.

4. In the Cross we remember forgiveness:

How our sins were forgiven on the cross and how the Master spoke to the Heavenly Father while on the Cross saying, ***"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do?"*** (Lk.23:34).

5. In making the sign of the Cross we remember the Holy Trinity, the One God:

This is because we make the sign of the cross whilst saying, "in the name of the Father, the Son and the

Holy Spirit, One God. Amen'. Hence, the Cross carries a theological meaning.

6. In the Cross we remember the Incarnation and its aim:

When we make the sign of the cross, we remember how the Lord came down from heaven to earth to transfer us from the left to the right, from darkness to light and from death to life.

7. In the Cross we remember our sins:

Our sins that he carried on the Cross and for which He was incarnated and crucified. With this remembrance we are humbled and our souls contrited, and we are thankful for the price which He paid for our sakes, ***"For you were bought at a price"*** (1 Cor. 6:20).

8. In the Cross we remember Divine justice:

That forgiveness was not on account of justice, but Divine Justice fulfilled its right on the cross. Therefore, we must not underestimate sin, which has such a price.

9. The Cross reminds us of the great power that defeated the devil:

All of the devil's effort to destroy mankind was completely lost on the Cross with the redemption which the lord offered. Hence, the devil is extremely terrified of the Cross. On the other hand, we find in it safety and protection, that is why we remember the Apostle's words, "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" (Gal. 6:14).

10. In remembrance of the Cross, we remember how we should be crucified with Christ:

As the Apostle Paul says, ***"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"*** (Gal. 2:20). We also remember the Lord Jesus Christ saying, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Mark 8:34).

"Among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist"



By H.G. Bishop Makarius

(Lk. 7:28)

St. John the Baptist occupies the second greatest place or size in the New Testament after the Lord Jesus Christ. The church celebrates the birth of John the Baptist alone, among all the saints, due to the link between his birth and the birth of Christ. The Lord testified that "Among those born of women there is not a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11:11).

But what are the reasons that make John the Baptist the greatest of those born of women?

Many titles were given to him that explain that:

1. The forerunner, "Prodromos":

He was the one who had prepared the way before the Lord Jesus Christ. He paved the way to the procession of the King and before the bridegroom. It was said of him, "A voice of one crying in the wilderness; prepare the way of the LORD, Make His paths straight" (Matt. 3:3).

2. The Baptist:

That is the one who had the honor to baptize the Lord Jesus. This is the greatest title and work John had in his entire life. And this is the formal icon of him on the iconostasis in the Coptic Church. He was one among millions of martyrs, but the only unique one who baptized the Lord.

3. The Martyr:

His honesty, courage and testimony for the truth cost him his life. He witnessed to the truth and rebuked King Herod and told him, "**It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife**" (Mk. 6:18). He was representing the conscience of the nation and the witness to God's commandment.

4. Immanuel's half brother:

His mother Elizabeth was a cousin of St. Anna the mother of St. Mary the Virgin.

5. The Friend of the Bridegroom: (John 3:29) He was the best-man who serves the bridegroom..He never felt jealous of Jesus, but said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn.3:30).

6. The Angel of the Lord (His Messenger) Mark 1:2):

The Meaning of the word "Angel" is "messenger" and St. John the Baptist was the Angel/Messenger sent before the Lord Jesus Christ to prepare the way before Him" (Mal. 3:1 & Mk.1:2). Therefore, some icons paint him with two wings.

7. The Prophet of the two Testaments:

Although John belongs to the men of the Old Testament, yet he co-existed the birth of Christ and worshipped Him while in his mother's womb and baptized Him. That is why the Lord said that "he was better than a prophet" (Matt. 11:9). Also, John appeared as a prophet after the absence of prophets for 500 years (Lk. 3:2).

8. The New Elijah:

9. The Priest and the son of a priest:





THE CROSS IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVERS

by Fr. Gawargious Kolta



+ The cross was a curse in the Old Testament, as it was written: "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Duet. 27:15). Christ became a curse for our sakes in order to redeem us from the curse of the law. After His sufferings on the cross, His death, and His resurrection, the cross became the glory of the believers; and the offense of the cross has ceased. St. Paul clarified this fact, saying: **"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). St. Paul preached Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness, but to us the cross is the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:23,24).

+ Christ reconciled the Jews and the Gentiles to God in one body through the cross. He has made peace by His redemption, through the blood of His cross. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame. In like manner, all the believers should follow Him taking up the cross. Our Lord mentioned this fact to the rich man, saying: **"Sell whatever you have and give to the poor and you will have a treasure in heaven and come, take up the cross and follow Me"** (Mk. 10:21). Our Lord Jesus has instructed us, saying: **"He who does not take his cross daily, and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me"** (Mat. 10:38). He also said: **"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me"** (Lk. 9:23).

+ There are many Christians who despise carrying the cross. They think that living with Christ should lead to a life free of the burdens and hardships, as they desire to enjoy this world without sufferings or tribulations. However, our Lord Jesus Christ said: **"In this world you will have tribulations, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"** (Jn. 16: 33). He also declared an important statement, saying: **"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you"** (Jn. 15:18). St.

John said: **"Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you"** (1 Jn. 3:13). On the other hand, the believers must not love the world or the things in the world (Jn. 2:15).

+ Christians should know that our old man was crucified with Christ; that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin (Rom. 6:6). Christians must live and walk in the Spirit; thus they must crucify the flesh with its passions and desires. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and those who do not crucify the flesh with Christ cannot please God (Rom. 8:5-8).

+ Christians have to recognize that everyone who lives in godliness is subjected to hardships and persecution. Our Lord commanded us to enter by the narrow gate, which leads to eternal life. Those who enter by the broad gate, despise to carry the cross. This broad way leads to destruction and—there are many who go in by it (Mat. 7:13, 14). The people of the world do not accept to enter by the narrow gate and they revile and persecute us and say all kinds of evil against us falsely. We must rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is our reward in heaven (Mat. 5:11,12). The narrow gate means that we live in the world in holiness, by presenting our bodies living sacrifices and not being conformed to this world (Rom. 12:1,2).

How can we endure the bitterness of life?

+ When the Israelites left Egypt and went to the wilderness of Sinai, they did not find water except the waters of Marah. They could not drink the water because it was bitter. When the people murmured against Moses, he cried out to the Lord. The Lord showed him a tree and when he casted it into the waters, the waters were made sweet (Exod. 15:22-25).

+ This tree is a symbol of the cross of Christ which changes all the bitterness of life in this world to sweetness; sadness to joy, despair to hope, darkness to light, and death into life. This means that

the cross absorbs the bitterness of pain and sufferings in our life and God gives us grace to endure all things happily throughout our journey in this world.

+ The mystery of carrying the cross joyfully, lies in that we can convey the bitterness of life (the pain and the sufferings) to Christ, who will carry the cross not with us, but on our behalf. On the other hand, He will convey His joy to us, that we will not feel the bitterness of carrying the cross. For this reason, St. James said: **“Count it all joy when you fall into various trials”** (Jam. 1:2), because as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation abounds through Christ (2 Cor. 1:5).

+ Christians must carry the cross in their life without murmuring as the pains and sufferings in our lives, as believers, produce endurance. Thus, St. Paul said: **“We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance”** (Rom. 5:3). There were many people in the Bible who carried the cross with endurance and finally they were rewarded. Joseph endured the cross of his brother’s hatred and the false accusation of the wife of Potiphar, and he became the governor of Egypt and prominent over his brothers. Mordecai endured Haman’s plot and the king honored him (Est. 6:3). Zacharias and Elizabeth, Abraham and Sarah, and Ana the mother of the prophet Samuel endured being barren for a long time and the Lord granted them children afterwards. We must accept the various trials without murmuring, as blessed is the man who endures temptation for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life.

Some tips to help us endure trials:

1- It is difficult to carry the cross, by our own wisdom and power. Prayers give us spiritual energy to endure tribulations. St. James said: **“Is anyone among you suffering, let him pray”** (Jam. 5:13). We must remember the garden of Gethsemane, where our Lord overcame His SOWTOW by prayers (Mat. 26:36).

2- Let us remember that everything that happens to us happens according to God’s will and permission. We have to accept all the trials from God’s hand. He knows exactly what is beneficial to our spiritual life. He is faithful and He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able (1 Cor. 10:13).

3- Let us lift our eyes toward God, who allowed this trial to happen to us. This will direct our souls

towards Him, more than being enclosed in the pain of the trial. As He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted (Heb. 2:18). He will change darkness to light and sorrow to joy (Jn. 16:20).

4- Let us think deeply and meditate on the passions, the sufferings, and the unbearable agony of our Lord on the cross. This will give us actual comfort and consolation, that we can carry our cross, remembering that as we are partakers of His sufferings, so also we will partake of the consolation (2 Cor. 1:7).

5- The word of God is an actual consolation in our tribulations. The light of the word will overcome the darkness of hardships. Let us remember the words of David: **“in the multitude of my anxieties within me, your comforts delight my soul”** (Ps. 94:19). Isaiah also said: **“He gives power to the weak and to those who have no might, He increases strength”, “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them”** (Isa. 40:29, 63:9).

6- Let us remember the problems, the opposition of people and the hardships, which we faced in the past years of our life, and how our Lord delivered us safely. He was our strength, hastened to help us and His name was glorified (Ps. 22:19, 119:134). He is still there for us. Let us remember that our God is the Almighty God, who judges the earth, and we should have faith and hope that He will reward the righteous

7- Let us think deeply about the cause of the hardships we face, and ask the Lord to clarify the mystery of these hardships. It might have happened to increase our faith, endurance, and patience, to rebuke us for our mistakes, to direct our hearts to Him, asking Him to deliver us, or to chasten His children. Chastening is a sign of God’s love (Deut. 8:5) and our sonship to Him (Prov. 3:11,12). We should accept chastening as it leads to our penitence and submission to Him (2 Cor. 12:7-10). We should not despise His chastisement nor detest His correction. Blessed is the man whom the Lord instructs and teaches (Ps. 94:12). Job said: **“Happy is the man whom God corrects. Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty for He bruises, but He binds up, He wounds but His hands make whole, He shall deliver you in six troubles, yes in the seven no evil touch you”** (Job 5:17-19).

Nayrouz... Feast of Martyrs & Coptic New Year 1735



Fr. Augustinos R. Hanna

On Tuesday, September 11, the Coptic Orthodox Church celebrates its New Year, 1735, known as the Nayrouz Feast or Feast of the Martyrs.

The word **Nayrouz**, thought to be of Persian origin, but 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 ancient 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 Diocletian. 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, 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 their cross and following their Savior proudly. Therefore, it was said that:

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

I would rather speak now, not about history, but about the spiritual lessons and values of this occasion...

It shows:

1. Great Love:

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (Jn.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. We watched recently by our own eyes on TV, with the entire world, a great example of the young Coptic martyrs of Libya who were beheaded by the vicious gangs of Isis and how they did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives with pleasure for their Lord Jesus Christ who loved them and gave them eternal life.

Do we really love our Lord? Are we ready, at least give up our sins and bad habits, our selfish and lustful life for His sake? If we do not feel ashamed of ourselves, repent and keep their first and the greatest commandment, we do not deserve to be called the children of the martyrs or even Christians.

2. Great Faith and Courage:

The 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. We read, "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. 11:35-38).

3. Great Hope:

Their army of martyrs is a huge evidence of the great Christian hope in eternal life in Christ. 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?!

God Keeps His Promises

By Former President Jimmy Carter

"I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered" (Psalm 89:34)

Even the most powerful people on earth don't always keep their promises. United States presidents are no exception. Woodrow Wilson, for example, promised that he would not go to war and was elected because of that promise. But later on, several changes prompted Wilson to violate his promise and enter World War I. President Eisenhower made a public statement to Soviet leaders in 1960 that we did not have surveillance planes flying over Russian missile sites. Shortly after this, one of our U-2 spy planes had been shot down and the pilot, Francis Gary Powers, was captured. The Soviets provided form proof that Eisenhower had lied, which deeply embarrassed our nation.

High government officials told many lies to the American people during the Vietnam War. More recently, President George H.W. Bush made a public promise that he would not introduce any new taxes. He boldly stated, "Read my lips: No new taxes." But he ended up approving new taxes, and so lost his re-election bid.

Good and honest people sometimes have to break promises because of changing circumstances or after acquiring new information.

I made every effort to keep the pledge I had made to the American people that I would not lie or make a mis-leading statement. I also promised that I would try to stay at peace, and even though we had a lot of serious challenges while I was president, we never dropped a bomb, fired a missile, or shot a bullet in combat. Still, I was not able to keep 100 % of my campaign promises. God Almighty, our Creator, always keeps His promises. God never lies and always remains in control. The Scripture says, "I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered." Those lips, we can believe. Always. Dear God, it gives me a deep sense of assurance to know that you always stand by your Word, never recant anything you say, and never forget promises you have made. Help me be a person of my word, so that others can depend on me because I belong to You. Make me a blessing to those around me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

But for the Grace of God

A caller on A Radio Talk Show, after the September 11th terrorist attacks, called that show to tell the hostess about how she was affected by the attacks. The caller's husband had just escaped from one of the towers of the World Trade Center, so she said something like this: but for the grace of God my husband just managed to get out before the building came down. The hostess interrupted and had this response to that specific comment, "I don't agree with that comment you just made. In fact, I don't like that statement, 'but for the grace of God,' because does that mean that everyone else that died in that building did not deserve the grace of God?" "But for the grace of God," is a Christian expression that came into use due to Christians awareness of their indebtedness to the grace/gift of God that sent His Son into the world to save fallen humanity. The caller more probably than not was a Christian, although, the phrase or expression has become so common that it is said by people of all faiths—obviously without the above understanding. The caller after the rebuke from the hostess retracted that comment and apologized for so saying. I thought to myself, "poor woman whose faith was so immediately shaken." "For the grace of God" is a Biblical expression to emphasize our unworthiness of God's great love. But for the Grace of God we would have all perished. St. Paul writes to his followers in Rome: "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life" (Rom. 6:23).



To the Ephesians he wrote, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). This emphasis on grace by the Apostle St. Paul, and he emphasized it in his writings more than any other, is not to exclude the need for good works for our salvation. That is why he added after the previous verses, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph.2:10).

Furthermore, grace does not always refer to God's gift to humanity or "saving-grace," but it also refers to the power of God that He endows a certain individual with. For example, St. Paul described grace working in him as such: "by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain" but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).



By Dr. Emile Goubran

***"You shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free"***

(John 8:32)

God created us with free will to make free choices. However, our choices have consequences, some positive and some negative. The consequences may vary in its degree and impact on our lives.

Any person, who wants to reduce the risk of any possible negative impact and maximize the positive outcome, would have to consider all possible factors that may influence the outcome of his choice.

This requires as much information as possible about the issue under consideration before making the final choice, i.e., make an informed choice.

Regarding the information leading to the choice, it should be true information and not a false one. Therefore, the source of information has to be credible; otherwise the information could lead us in the wrong direction, which was not intended by the person making the choice.

For example, in the political arena, some politicians may deliberately provide false information to influence the choice of the voters and steering them to the direction they want them to go rather than the direction the voters are targeting. If this happens, then it is the will of the person who provided the false information that has been achieved and not the will of the person who made the choice.

In the spiritual realm, the story of Adam and Eve is a good example. They definitely wanted to choose life, however, they trusted and believed information from the serpent (the devil), when he said "You shall not surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as

God, knowing good and evil". (Gen 3:4). This false information led them to unintended outcome, while achieving the devil's goal to make them fall into sin and die.

Therefore, freedom of choice means nothing if it does not lead us to the intended target or goal we are trying to achieve. This in turn is dependent on the truth of the information we are using to make our best choice.

In conclusion, we do not really have free choice without the true knowledge that guides us toward the intended outcome. Only the truth will make us truly free. The Lord said "Therefore if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." (John 8:36). He also said "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6). This means that the Lord (the son of God) is the truth, and He is the one that makes us free indeed.

The application of this truth is very important in human life, since there is one very important choice everyone has to make; either we accept the invitation extended to us, by grace from God, to accept Jesus Christ (the truth) as Lord, God and Savior and have eternal life in His heavenly kingdom or reject his invitation and be subject to eternal damnation.

Every one of us makes so many choices and decisions during his/her life on earth, but there is only one decision that has very grave and eternal consequences. The true knowledge which enables us to make an informed decision about this important choice is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. The question is; do we trust and believe in Him or not? The choice again is ours to make.

Bible & Church Contest



Fr. Augustinos Hanna



1. The price of a dance in a Royal birthday party was:

- A) Great joy B) Great disaster
- C) Beheading of the greatest prophet ever born of women.
- D) Dancing parties are offensive and not Christian.
- E) All the above

2. The first birthday party ever mentioned in the Bible:

- A) It was a Pharaohnic feast.
- B) In that party the king honored his chief butler and restored him to his job again, and hanged the chief baker as Joseph interpreted their dreams.
- C) It was an introduction to Joseph's glory.
- D) David explained this story in Psalm 105:17-22.
- E) All of the above F) All except B

3. Another Royal party in the Old Testament ended with:

- A) Drunkenness B) Divorce C) Plot
- D) None of the above

4. Among the titles of St. John the Baptist are the following except:

- A) The forerunner B) The bridegroom's friend
- C) The angel and messenger of the Lord.
- D) The greatest prophet ever born of women.
- E) The priest and the son of a priest F) The locusts' eater.

5. The Feast of Nayrouz is all the following except:

- A) Known as the Feast of the Martyrs.
- B) It is well known and celebrated by so many countries.
- C) Nayrouz is an ancient Egyptian word means Coptic New Year's Day.
- D) It was an ancient National day celebrated by all Egyptians.
- E) The Copts used to celebrate it by eating red dates symbolizing the blood of the martyrs.

6. Who was the tyrant that said, he would not stop killing the Copts until their blood reach the bits of his horse?

- A) Nero B) Anwar Sadat
- C) Diocletian D) Amr Ben Ass

7. Who is the author of the famous saying, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church"?

- A) St. Augustine B) St. George
- C) Tertullian D) Pope Shenouda III

8. St. Mark the Evangelist preached in three continents, Africa, Asia and Europe, then was martyred in:

- A) Jerusalem B) Libya
- C) Rome D) Alexandria, Egypt

9. The Archangel Gabriel greeted St. Mary calling her:

- A) Favored one B) Highly favored one
- C) Full of grace (according to the Greek, Latin & Coptic lang.
- D) "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You."

10. The Holy Family fled to Egypt and stayed there for:

- A) 3 months B) About three years and a half
- C) 42 months D) 1260 days E) All except (A)

11. Where in the Bible it is written that the Lord was crucified in Egypt?

- A) In the book of Genesis B) Isaiah
- C) Psalms D) Revelation

12. One of our Coptic Orthodox Bishops wrote a famous book about "Martyrdom in Christianity", who is/was he?

- A) Bishop Moussa B) Bishop Rafael
- C) Late Bishop Yoannis of Tanta D) Bishop Abraham

13. What is the reality of this saying, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew"?

- A) It is a wise saying B) A historical proverb
- C) A Coptic riddle D) Biblical verse in Exodus 1:12

14. It is written in the book of Acts of the Apostles 8:4, "Therefore those who were scattered (as a result of Stephen's martyrdom), went everywhere preaching the word". So, who were "those" who preached?

- A) The Apostles B) The entire church, clergy and people
- C) The deacons D) The regular congregation & believers

15. Who was the Patriarch that is said that he used to read every day, the four gospels and Acts of the Apostles and the Letter to the Romans and the seven Catholicon Letters of James, Peter, John and Jude?

- A) Pope Cyril the Pillar of Faith B) Pope Cyril the first.
- C) Pope Cyril the 24th D) All the above

16. Who are the Confessors?

- A) Who were tortured and confessed their faith in Christ.
- B) Who were tortured and denied their faith
- C) Who were tortured and killed for their faith
- D) Who were tortured but not killed and died later normally.

17. Did St. Mark read the Gospel of St. John? And vice versa, i.e., did St. John read the gospel of St. Mark?

18. Were all Christian martyrs killed for their faith only?

- A) Yes B) Some for their chastity
- C) Some just for their Christian names.
- D) Some for refusing to offer incense to the idols.
- E) All

Biblical Types Through Individuals

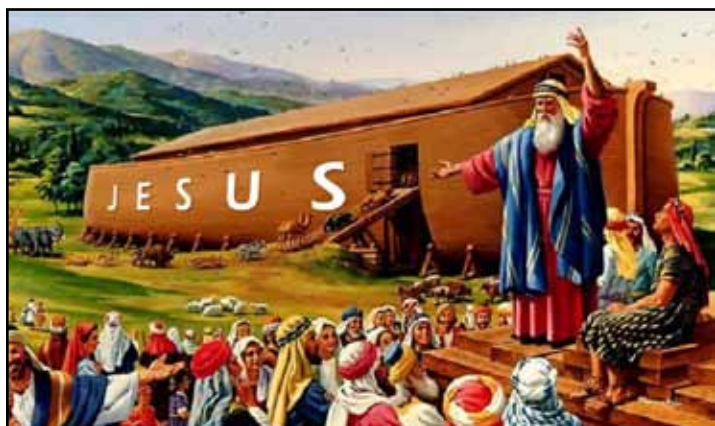
3. Noah and Christ

Fr. Augustinos R. Hanna



| Noah | Christ |
|--|--|
| (1) The name Noah means <u>comfort</u> . He was the son of Lamech and the tenth grandson of Adam. His father called him Noah, saying, "This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed." (Genesis 5: 29) | (1) The name Jesus means "God saves". He is the comforter of those who labor, who said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11 :28) He is the "God of all comfort, " (2 Corinthians 1 : 3- 5, Jn. 14: 16) |
| (2) Noah was a second Adam after the wickedness of man increased in the earth. God washed the earth with the flood and started afresh with Noah. | (2) Christ was called "The second Adam" and "The last Adam" as the father of the new creation. (1 Cor. 15, Rom. 5) |
| (3) Noah was a symbol of Christ in salvation through the ark. Noah's ark was God's only way for man's salvation. (Gen. 6) | (3) The Lord Jesus Christ is the savior ark and the only way for salvation, "Nor is there salvation in any other," (Acts 4: 12), "No one comes to the Father except through Me." (Jn. 14: 6) The ark of wood was a symbol of the wooden cross through which salvation was completed. |
| (4) The flood and Noah's ark were a symbol of baptism, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned, drowned, and destroyed." (Mark 16: 16) | (4) Apostle Peter explained this point saying the Holy Spirit, which Noah preached, worked with the floodwater and they were the cause of salvation of those who believed and got into the ark. They were also the cause of condemnation and destruction of those who refused, in addition to being a symbol of baptism, |

| | |
|---|--|
| (5) Noah was described as the man of faith, a just man, perfect in his generations (i.e. for his generation) (Gen. 6) | (5) Christ is the author and finisher of our faith, just and utterly perfect in all His divine attributes. |
| (6) Noah was very patient when he was met with rejection, ridicule and lack of faith as he preached during the one hundred and twenty years he took to build the ark. | (6) Christ is the God of all comfort and consolation. Apostle Paul says, " may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. " (2 Thessalonians 3) |
| (7) Noah's ark was made of wood, and was a symbol of the Cross and the Church, and covered with pitch to protect wood from the overflowing floodwaters. (Gen. 6: 14) | (7) This black pitch refers to hardships and trials that befall the Church but protect it from danger and protect believers from being flooded and condemned with the world. (1 Cor. 11 : 32) |
| (8) The rainbow was the sign of the covenant that God would not destroy the earth again with the flood (Gen. 9:11-71) | (8) The rainbow was a symbol of the Cross and the blood of Christ which protect believers from destruction, as God says, " when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you . " (Exodus 12 : 13, Matt. 26: 28, Rom. 3:24 , Isaiah 54: 9,10) |
| (9) Wickedness, corruption, injustice, tyranny and apostasy reached a peak at the time of the flood (Gen. 6) | (9) The Lord Jesus Christ described the latter days preceding His coming saying, "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matthew. 24: 37, 39) |



Did Elisha Really Kill "42 Children"?!

(2 KINGS 2:23, 24)

Fr. Augustinos R. Hanna



"And Elisha went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said to him, 'Go up, you bald head! Go up you bald head!' So he turned around and looked on them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the Lord. And two female bears came out of the woods, and mauled forty- two children of them" (2 Kings 2:23, 24).

At first, this account seems foreign to the nature of God and his prophet Elisha. How come that God who once said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven"; should ever fulfill a curse in allowing wild animals to slaughter innocent boys and girls, which seems completely inconceivable. Such a thing never happened.

1-The Determined Mob

The word used in the Hebrew text is not exclusively used to describe adolescents, and there is reason to believe that a more correct translation would be "youths." The idea that the prophet was being followed by a crowd of children who had just left school—a crowd of mischievous boys and girls who playfully teased the stranger—is very far from the truth. This rabble was composed of unruly young men who had banded themselves together and had followed the new prophet along the road. They hated righteousness, and resented interference from any spiritual leader. They recognized that the teaching of Elisha were completely the same as Elijah, his master, and would be opposed to all their sensual delights. It is important to remember that their city was a center of idolatry. Bethel, which was once, the house

of God, had degenerated into a center of heathenism, where men worshipped idols and had become a law unto themselves. When they heard that the strict and dreadful prophet Elijah— who ordered the long famine, and asked of a fire from heaven to consume the two groups of fifty soldiers and their captains; they did not believe that and thought that Elijah should have died and his successor Elisha had buried him secretly and claimed falsely that he had ascended to heaven! So, when the new prophet of the Highest appeared, the young fellows sneered at his approach, and went on a riot to express their hatred against God and His new prophet, the disciple of Elijah.

2-The shameful Remarks

"They mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, you bald head, go up you bald head." It is well to consider that unless misfortune had robbed the young prophet of his hair, it was most unlikely that at this stage of his life he was bald. Yet the crowd repeated the cry, and found in their mocking a certain amount of pleasure! To the casual reader, it would appear that the man of God was somewhat irritable that morning, and to be teased by the young boys was more than he could endure. But the young men were not referring to the feeble efforts of an old "bald head" trying to climb a hill, but rather to the homecall of Elijah, who just ascended into heaven. Students will probably know that the worst blasphemy may be found in their cries. It has been said that a fair translation of the text would be, "Go up, go up to heaven with your master you bald prophet of Jehovah. They were cursing him (in other words, go to hell with your master and leave us alone)! However unpleasant it may be even to read such words, it is necessary to do so in order to understand the disaster which suddenly overwhelmed

the crowd of sinners. The despicable mob resented Elisha's presence in the vicinity; they cursed him and scorned his authority, and probably contemplated violence. Then suddenly the prophet turned and looked at them.



3-The Devastating Response

"And he cursed them in the name of the Lord." He knew that these great sinners would become the fathers of the next generation, and realized also that the whole of his ministry was in jeopardy. Elisha had only recently succeeded to his master's office, and the nation had yet to be taught that he was the Lord's anointed. Such blatant sin demanded rebuke. Yet apart of any curse announced by Elisha, the young people were personally responsible for the disaster which overwhelmed them. The two bears had been frightened. Probably thinking that their young were in danger, they followed their natural instincts and went forth to attack the enemy. Panic spread among the screeching crowd and, utterly confused, the youths rushed in all directions. "And the bears tare forty and two of them," It is hard to decide whether the victims were actually killed or merely wounded. The man of God watched the scene and, when the survivors fled to the nearby city, when the bears ambled back to the woods, he probably bowed his head in holy reverence. The God of Elijah was with him; there was no need to fear. And wrapping his mantle around him, he proceeded calmly on his way.

4-More Notes:

1.Kings 2:23, in modern translations about the 42 victims, it says, "**some youth**" and not children (see New King James).

2) **The number 42 was not literal but symbolic, and it was an ominous number to the Jews.** It referred to a tragic accident in which many would be killed or injured (see 2 kings 10:14 "Jehu killed 42 sons of Ahab"; & Judges 12:6, the men of Gilead killed from Ephraim 42,000; see Rev. 12:6; 13:5).

3) **See 2 Chronicles 36:16** that described those people and their time saying, "**Moreover all the leaders and the people transgressed more and more, according to the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the LORD....And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy...**"

4)**It was a Biblical punishment** (See Leviticus 26: 21 & 22).



Trust Him!

"THIS IS GOOD!"

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

I came across this story from a friend and thought it significantly appropriate for us today. Maybe it is for you too?

An African king had a long time friend who always looked at everything positively, always saying "This is good!" even in the face of the most difficult situations. Hunting one day, he was preparing the king's guns. When the king took his first shot, his thumb was blown off. Though the friend realized that it was his grave mistake for not properly setting the gun, and even in the face of this furious, bleeding king, he looked at him and said, "This is good!" The king was furious, and ordered that his friend be thrown in jail immediately.

A year later the king was hunting in an area where he should have stayed clear and was suddenly captured by Cannibals. They tied him up and were preparing to cook him when they realized he had no thumb. They didn't eat anyone who was less than whole so they released him. On his way home, the king pondered the event that had taken his thumb in the first place. He went straight to the jail, told his friend what happened and apologized in tears for sending him to jail like he did. His enthusiastic friend looked at the King and replied: "This is good!"

The king, taken aback once again said "What do you mean 'this is good!' I sent you mercilessly to jail and you've been suffering for here for an entire year - how is that good?" His friend responded unwaveringly, "Well if I had not been in jail, I would have been with you!"

We hope this has encouraged you to trust in your difficult situation.

Let's leave it in the Lord's hands today, and all say it together in faith.... "This is good!" Yes, all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28).

With love & prayers

Mona & Bhupinder Singh



Great Copts from the Coptic Encyclopedia



1. Professor Dr. Mourad Kamil (1907–1975)

Egyptian scholar and educator in ancient and modern languages. He studied under Enno Littman and had a brilliant academic career in Egypt and Germany.

He specialized in Semitic languages, ancient and modern, those of the Middle East as well as those of Ethiopia. A master of Greek, Latin, and classical Arabic, he was also well acquainted with many Western languages, including German, French, English, Spanish and Italian.

He taught at Cairo University, the Coptic Clerical College, in the Institute of Coptic Studies, the University of Freiburg, and the Institute of Arabic Studies at the League of Arab States.

Dr. Mourad headed the education mission delegated to Ethiopia by the Egyptian government and was for two years (1943–1945) undersecretary of state at the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. He founded and directed the Higher School of Languages in Cairo. He was a member of the Academy of Arabic Language and many other scholarly institutions. Always deeply concerned with the problems of the Coptic Church, Dr. Mourad took part in several of the protracted negotiations between the Coptic and the Ethiopian churches. He bequeathed his library, comprising about 20,000 volumes, to the Coptic Patriarchate.



2. Professor Dr. Naguib Mahfouz (1882–1972):

Pioneer of gynecology and obstetrics. He was born at Al-Mansurah, Egypt, the youngest son of a family of eight. At the age of 16 he entered the Egyptian School of Medicine at Qasr al-Ayni from which he graduated four years later in 1902. Appointed anesthetists in his early career, he later decided to specialize in obstetrics. An exchange of visits between him and surgeons in Europe brought him to the limelight. He headed several departments of gynecology in Cairo's major hospitals. In 1914 he was appointed head surgeon in the Qasr al'Ayni (Cairo School of Medicine) hospital. Later he was entrusted with the establishment of the first outpatient gynecological clinic in that hospital as well as a child welfare section. To him is also attributed the establishment of the school of nursing. During his long years of teaching and research he collected a vast number of disease specimens that he presented to his school in 1929 on the occasion of its centenary. They became the Mahfouz obstetric and Gynecological Museum. He received many honorary degrees from Europe and America. In 1942 the honorary fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons was awarded to him along with Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin.

His principal works are "The life of an Egyptian Doctor" (Edinburgh and London, 1966); The History of Medical Education in Egypt (Cairo, 1935), Atlas of Mahfouz's Obstetric and Gynecological Museum (3 volumes London 1949); Art of Midwifery (in Arabic, Cairo, 1927); and Practical Gynecology (in Arabic, Cairo, 1927).

Holy Anger and Indecent Anger

By Fr. Agustinous Hanna

Anger is a normal reaction of a human being since the beginning of creation. It is not an evil thing by itself since God himself gets angry, Jesus got angry, angels and saints get angry too.

Unfortunately, the majority of anger is the evil, indecent anger. Therefore, our mission is not to stop anger completely, as this is almost impossible in an evil world.

Our mission is disciplining and refining this reaction, putting it in its right place, and also training ourselves to stop indecent anger.

Jesus Christ did not say whoever is angry shall be in danger of the judgement, but He said "Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement." (Mathew 5:22)

THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF ANGER: FIRST: HOLY ANGER

Anger is holy when its motive is godly or for God's glory. It is also holy when it is defending a doctrine, or a principal and without any personal intentions.

For example, Christ got angry at the clergy of His time for the hardness of their hearts. "And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts" (Mark 3:5). Another example is Jesus's feelings when He was cleansing the temple and how His disciples remembered that it was written: "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up." (John 2:14-16)

Moses got angry and broke the two tablets when he found the people of

Israel worshipping the golden calf (Exodus 32:19-20). Nehemiah also got angry when the Jews married pagan women from other nations. (Nehemiah

13:23-27)

SECOND: INDECENT ANGER

Usually motivated by personal intents, financial loss, pride, insult, dispute...etc.

Examples and Reasons For Indecent Anger:

1- Anger motivated by jealousy and envy; Cain was angry when God accepted Abel's offering and didn't accept his.

(Genesis 4). Another example is the anger of the older son in the parable of the prodigal son when his younger brother came back and his dad celebrated his return. (Luke 15:28).

2- Anger motivated by competition; Like the anger of Esau when Jacob got his dad's blessing instead of him (Genesis 27:41), and the anger of Saul when David killed Goliath and the women sang for him "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands." (1 Samuel 18:7). Saul got so angry as this big victory belonged to David.

3- Anger motivated by financial loss;

Like the anger of the workers of the first hour when the landowner gave the workers who came at the eleventh hour a denarius like them (Mathew 20). Also the anger of Demetrius the silversmith when Paul criticized the gods and idols he used to make. (Acts 19:24-29) Also, the anger of the fortune tellers when Paul commanded the demon to come out of the slave girl, as she brought her masters much profit by fortunetelling. (Acts 16)

4- Anger motivated by not accepting scolding or correction;

Like the anger of the pharisees when Jesus rebuked them (Mathew 15:7-14), and the anger of the people of Nazareth for the same reason.

(Luke 4:28-29)

5- Anger motivated by not being able to commit an evil deed; Like the anger of Poti-

phar's woman when Joseph refused her sinful request. (Genesis 39)

6- Anger motivated by revenge; Like the anger of Simeon and Levi who revenged not only from the person who violated and disgraced their sister Dinah, but from all his people as well. (Genesis 34)

7- Anger for no clear reason; Like Jonah's anger when the people of Nineveh repented, that even God questioned him saying: "Is it right for you to be angry?" (Jonah 4:1-9)

Defects and Disadvantages of Indecent Anger:

1-LACK OF LOVE:

The gospel says "love is not provoked, thinks no evil...does not behave rudely...bears all things". (1 Corinthians 13)

2-LOSING THE ABILITY TO HAVE CLEAR THINKING AND JUDGEMENT:

There is a saying that anger is like wind that blows the candle or the light in our minds.

3-LEADS TO IRRESPONSIBLE RECKLESS ACTIONS:

It is known that man sins in his anger; by words and by actions. He can even act recklessly or commit a crime like Cain, Simeon, Levi, and Saul. It is written that "Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent" (Proverbs 27:4) and "A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, But a fool's wrath is heavier than both of them." (Proverbs 27:3)

4-MESSING UP SPIRITUAL LIFE AND PRAYERS:

Spiritual life in general is a life full of virtues like love, meekness, pure heart, patience, serenity and peace. These virtues do not agree with indecent anger and that is why saints said that even if an angry person is capable of raising people from the dead, it is not accepted by God.

The Bible says "that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Timothy 2:8). Wrath quiets down the Holy

Spirit and messes up prayers.

5-LOSS OF RELATIONSHIPS:

The angry person can lose his relationships with others and make them avoid him. We are required to win people to God's kingdom "And he who wins souls is wise." (Proverbs 11:30)

Ways to Remedy Anger:

1-HAVING A PURE HEART:

Jesus and the Holy Spirit, the spirit of meekness and serenity, live in a pure heart. The person who have a pure heart does not lose his temper or fight. Therefore, we have to pray consciously, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Psalms 51:10)

2-SLOWING DOWN TO ANGER:

James the apostle says, "let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19) and Solomon says in Proverbs "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city." (Proverbs 16:32). Also, in Ecclesiastes "If the spirit of the ruler rises against you, Do not leave your post; For conciliation pacifies great offenses" (Ecclesiastes 10:4)

3-INCREASING PRAYER AND BIBLE TIME:

Through gospel we can discover the sin of anger and through prayer we can fight it and grow more in grace. We can get filled with God's spirit and its fruits like love, kindness, gentleness, long-suffering and peace. (Galatians 5:22)

4-CASTING OUT ANGER FAST:

The bible demands us not to sin even when we get angry, and to cast out anger fast "do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27)

5-IF YOU SUFFER FROM FALLING in the sin of anger over and over, read a book about anger and study it so that you are able to resist it with understanding.

(I advise you to read the book about anger written by Pope Shenouda.)

6-If you know the reason of your anger try to treat it even if it is medically related.

7-SELF REVISION AND DISCIPLINE:

Always revise, blame and discipline yourself under the supervision of your father of confession. Exercise being calm, patient, slow to anger, and having a low voice. Do not react to anger by more anger, as you can not put out a fire by using gas, or adding more fuel to it. You can only put it out by water. "A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1)

Christ in Psalms 22, 23 & 24

By Fr. Agustinous Hanna

22

The Good Shepherd

In Death

John 10:11

My Savior

The Cross

Past-Grace

23

The Great Shepherd

in Resurrection

Hebrews 13:20

My Shepherd

The Offender

Present-Guidance

24

The Chief Shepherd

in Glory

1 Peter 5:4

My King

The Crown

Future-Glory



CALVARY: Psalm 22 brings us to “the place called Calvary”. In its light we stand at the foot of the Cross. Here and in Isaiah 53, the crucifixion is portrayed more clearly than in any other part of the Old Testament. Isaiah 53 dwells mainly on the atoning aspect of Christ’s death, Psalm 22, dwells more on His sufferings. It begins with the cry uttered by our Lord in the hour of darkness, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” It closes with the words “He has done it”, or “It is finished”, as it stands in the original Hebrew, identical with almost the last cry of our Savior. It is a “Psalm of sobs.” The Hebrew shows not one completed sentence in the opening verses, but a series of brief ejaculations, like the gasps of a dying man whose breath and strength are failing and who can only utter a word or two at a time.

Taken together with Psalm 69, which also pictures the crucifixion, we find the whole story of the Cross given here, and the Evangelists have specially and repeatedly called our attention to it.

“I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” Here is the offence of the Cross. “All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn; they shoot out the lip” (Psalm 22: 6, 7). “The rulers derided Him”. The soldiers also mocked Him” (Luke 23:35, 36). “They shake the head saying He trusted on the lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver him, seeing he delighted in Him”. “They that passed by re-

viled Him, wagging their heads. Likewise also the chief priest mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said....He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him...” The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth” (Matt. 27:36, 44). “They pierced My hands and My feet”. “All My bones are out of joint”.

The Roman method of death by crucifixion – unknown to the Jewish law- is prophesied here. The nailing to the Cross, the straining of bone and sinew. The very action of the soldiers is given in the words, “They part My garment among them, and cast lots upon My vestures”, “My tongue cleaves to My Jaws”...” Jesus...that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst”. And they filled a sponge with vinegar and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth (Jn. 19:28, 29).

Psalm 23 was in connection with the life of David. It is the first Psalm we learned to love as children, the last to comfort us in our passage through the dark valley. It contains three secrets: The secret of a happy life, a happy death, and a happy eternity. The setting of the 23 Psalm should not be overlooked; it does not stand by itself, but in a group of three 22, 23 & 24. In the last Psalm, 24, we see Christ as the King of Glory and our future with Him. We use it in the Resurrection Feast Celebration, because it declares the final victory of Christ and His Church.

Congratulations **Wedding**



St. John Church congratulates

Dr. Benjamin Kamel and Monica Nasralla

who were joined in marriage on July 15, 2018. May the Lord Jesus bless their life and new family with happiness, harmony, prosperity and a Christian home built on the Rock (Matthew 7: 26). Congratulations to their two families.



Mark Michael and his bride Diala Michael

Were united in Holy Matrimony on Sunday, April 29, 2018. St. John Church congratulates the newlyweds and prays that the Lord may grant them many happy, prosperous and blessed years. Congratulations to their families.



Michael Soliman & his bride Yous- tine Bishara

on their marriage, wishing them happiness and harmony and a blessed Christian home built on Christ, the Rock of ages.



Theodore and his family

for his blessed baptism and prays that the Lord Jesus Christ may grant him health and growth in the grace, faith, stature and long life.



Congratulations to,

Monica Barsoum

for earning BA in Psychology with Pre-med., from University of California Riverside. We ask the Lord Jesus Christ to bless your life, talents, services, activities and grant you continuous success- *Love, Mariam, Samih and John.*



St. John Church congratulates her children who got excellent in the Kira-za Competition from Kindergarten to High School, wishing them continuous success in spiritual life and in their regular education.

زيارة الانبا موسى اسقف الشباب

