

SAINT

VOL 28 No. 289 November / December 2015

A COPTIC CHRISTIAN BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE
COVINA, CA



JOHN



His Holiness
Pope Tawadros II
visit to St. John Church
October 2015



**A CHRISTIAN COPTIC ORTHODOX
BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE
PUBLISHED BY**



(ISSN # 1530-5600)

21329 Cienega Ave. Covina, California 91724,

a parish of the Christian Coptic Orthodox

Patriarchate of Egypt under the Papacy of

H.H. POPE TWADROS II

The 118 Patriarch of Alexandria and the Dio-
cese 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.

Editor in Chief:

Fr. Augustinos Hanna

Customer Service:

(909) 592-8847

Annual Subscription

\$50:00 in U.S.A

\$75:00 in foreign countries

(as a suggested donation).

"Periodicals Postage paid at Covina, Ca.

and additional mailing offices

*Postmaster:

Send address changes to St. John

P.O. Box 2144 Covina, CA 91722-8144



*Verse
of the Month*



"Prepare to meet your God"

(Amos 4:12)

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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. *** + Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:15 a.m.	+ Liturgy 8:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m... + <u>Thursday Morning</u> + Senior Citizen Club 11:00 - 4:00 a.m.	+ Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	+ Liturgy from 8-10 am + Vespers; Bible Study 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. + Beginners' Deacons- Meeting 5: 00-6:00 p.m. + Elementary Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Servants' Meeting 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. 2 nd & 4 th Sunday.	+ Thursday Evening Family Meeting 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.	+Arabic Youth Meeting 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.	College Youth Meeting 7:00- 8:00 p.m.
TUESDAY English- Bible Study 7:30 pm			High School & J. High Meetings 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Email your articles/comments/requests to Frhanna @mystjohn.org

Or visit us online @ www.mystjohn.org

Fax : (909) 592-5088 / Tel: (909) 592 - 0475 / Church Tel: (909) 592-8847

Church Book Store: (562) 900 -2694 & (909) 730 - 9976

1. The Nativity Fast & Thanksgiving Day:

The Nativity Fast and Thanksgiving Day come together this year on Thursday, Nov. 26. May the Lord grant us a blessed fast according to Isaiah 58 and Matt. 6.

We need to pray much during this fast for the salvation of America, Egypt, Iraq and Syria.



2. Kiahk's Vigil:

The four week-vigil of the Coptic month "Kiahk" starts on Saturday, December 12, 2015. In this month we celebrate the Virginal Birth of Christ and praise St. Mary. The prayers, praises and vigil start every Saturday right after the Vespers until midnight.



3. Celebrating New Year's Eve (2015/ 2016):

St. John Church celebrates New Year's Eve on Thursday, December 31, 2015 starting at 7:30 p.m. The program contains spiritual talks, praises and hymns (choir), candle-light prayers, Santa's gifts for children, and contests.



It ends on the first of January 2016 with the New Year's two Liturgies.

4. The Feast of St. Luke Martyrdom:

On November 2nd, the church commemorates the feast of St. Luke the Evangelist's martyrdom. His name means, "The Torch Bearer" and he actually enlightened the entire world with his two great works, the Gospel of St. Luke and the book of Acts of the Apostles that shed enormous lights on the life of our Lord Jesus Christ from the Annunciation to His Ascension to heaven as well as the life of the early church and how it started in Jerusalem and ended in Europe and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). St. Luke was a physician, artist, great author, and historian. May his blessing be with us, Amen.



5. H.H. Pope Tawadros:

+ On November 18, 2015, the Coptic Church celebrates the Third Anniversary of Pope Tawadros' Enthronement. May the Lord Jesus Christ grant His Holiness health, strength, long life and divine support.
+ On Saturday evening of October 17, 2015, His Holiness

blessed St. John Church in Covina, California, along with H.G. Bishop Serapion, H.G. Bishop Karass, H.G. Bishop Angelos, and H.G. Bishop Bavly. He prayed the Vespers and delivered a sermon about Song of Solomon 1: 5, "I am dark, but lovely...like the tents of Kidar, like the curtains of Solomon." 2,000 people attended the event occupying all 3 stories of the church. H.H. expressed his admiration for the beauty of the church in its building, design, congregation and good order and wrote that in the church autograph.

6. H.G. Bishop Serapion:



+ Bishop Serapion accompanied H.H. Pope Tawadros in his very busy schedule and welcomed him warmly in all churches and in an interview with the media on the Logos TV Channel.

7. Fr. Augustinos' 26th Anniversary:

By God's grace, on November 14, 2015 Fr. Augustinos Hanna completes 26 years in priesthood, serving St. John Church in Covina and St. John Magazine. Your prayers for him are greatly needed.



9. The 7th Anniversary of Fr. Daniel's Ordination:

St. John Church, the priests, Board of Deacons and congregation congratulate Fr. Daniel Habib on his 7th Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood and serving St. John church. May the Lord Jesus Christ grant him health, a fruitful ministry, and long life.



9. 5. St. John Annual Servants Retreat:

The church holds her 2015 servants retreat during the period from Friday, November 20 to Sunday, Nov. 22, 2015, at Residence Inn, by Marriott San Diego, north San Marcos.



By Pope Shenouda
(Many years with the questions of people)

Question:

Don't we say that man is free to choose? Then why are these verses mentioned by St. Paul in the Bible: "But indeed, O man who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, 'why have you made me like this?'" Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor" (Rom. 9:20-21). Was it my fault then, if the potter made me a vessel of dishonor?!

Answer:

Yes, the potter has power over the clay to make of it what he desires, a vessel for honor or a vessel of dishonor and the clay cannot say, "Why did you make me like this?"

But the potter also is wise and just...One of the wonderful explanations that I read about this subject is: **That the potter, with all his freedom and authority, wisely looked at the piece of clay. If he found it good, soft and smooth, he would make of it a vessel for honor; for its quality qualifies it for that.**

It is illogical that a wise potter with a piece of high quality clay will make of it a vessel of dishonor, that would be carelessness, far be it from God to do so! If the clay was rough and of poor quality and not fit to be a vessel for honor, the potter, because of the clay condition, would make of it a vessel of dishonor.

With all possibilities, he will try to make of the clay, all the clay in front of him, vessels of honor as far as the quality of the clay allows it.

Then, after all, it depends on the quality of the clay and how good it is, recognizing the authority of the potter and his freedom adding to that this wisdom and justice.

Therefore, God said, "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hands, O house of Israel! The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said, I would benefit it." (Jeremiah 18:6-10). Then the clay has the chance to improve or change its fate (see also 2 Tim. 2:20, 21).

This reminds us of the parable of the sower that went out to sow (Matt. 13:3-8).

The sower is the same as the seeds are the same and the sower wishes all to grow, but according to the nature of the earth on which the seeds fell, was the result, growing or spoiling. The sower did not prepare the seeds to be devoured by birds, or wither away or be choked by the thorns but the nature of the earth controlled that.

Do not say then, "was it my fault that I became a vessel of dishonor?!"

Be a good and soft clay in the hand of God, the great potter and be assured that He will make of you a vessel of honor and the matter is still in your hand.



Count your blessings:

More than 100 Benefits for

Fr. Augustinos Hanna

thanks giving

SPIRITUAL

1. God the Father (Our Father)
2. Lord Jesus Christ (Our all in all)
3. The Holy Spirit
4. The Church
5. The Cross & Redemption
6. Salvation
7. Justification & Sanctification
8. The Bible
9. The 7 Sacraments
10. The Holy Communion
11. Love
12. Mercy
13. Grace
14. Truth & Justice
- +14. Faith
15. Hope
16. Peace
17. Joy
18. Angels (our heavenly friends)
19. The Saints
20. Prayer, Fast and giving alms
21. Fellowship
22. Forgiveness
23. Adoption
24. Freedom
25. Providence
26. Guidance
27. Healing
28. Restoration
29. Free will
30. Talents
31. Comfort
32. Fruits of the Spirit
33. Spiritual Knowledge
34. Spiritual gifts
35. Virtues
36. Discipline
38. Ministry
39. Help & aid
40. Deliverance
41. Conscience
42. Resurrection
43. Eternal Life
44. Heavenly Citizenship (Phil.3:20)
45. Wisdom & insight
46. Existence

PHYSICAL/Mental

47. Life
48. Health
49. The Brain (The Maestro)
50. Mind
51. Sight & vision
52. Hearing
53. Tas
54. Touch
55. Smelling
56. Family Parents & Siblings
57. Virtuous spouse.
58. Children
59. Friends
60. Safety
61. Sleep, Rest
62. Air
63. Water
64. Food
65. The sun
66. The moon & stars
67. Memory
68. Forgetfulness
69. Laughter
70. Weeping & tears
71. Clothes
72. Speaking
73. Shelter
74. Motion
75. Emotions
76. Medicine
77. The light
78. Wisdom & insight
79. Feeling
80. The beautiful nature
81. Oceans and seas
82. Rivers & lakes
83. Trees, plants, flowers
84. Animals, birds, fish
85. Instincts
86. Sex
87. Good circumstances
88. Books & Literature
89. Creativity & imagination

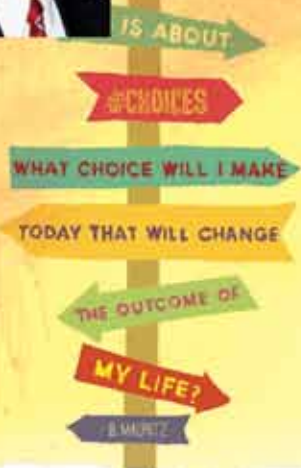
MATERIAL

90. Education
 91. Work
 92. Profession
 93. Money
 94. House & Possessions
 95. Land
 96. Live stock
 97. Cars
 98. Trains
 99. Eye glasses
 100. Artificial teeth
 101. Artificial limbs
 102. Law & Order
 103. All modern inventions
 104. Paved streets
 105. Hospitals & Healthcare
 106. High Technology Surgery
 107. Anesthesia
 108. Orphanages
 109. Banks
 110. Courts
 111. Music & singing
 112. Color
 113. Fine arts
 114. Elevator
 115. Printing
 116. Industry
 117. Agriculture
 118. Construction
 119. Giant ships
 120. Hotels
 121. United Nations & Human Rights Org.
 122. Home Country
- + Ps. I am sure I forgot tens of benefits that deserve to thank God for, but these are just SAMPLES. Praise God (SEE Psalm 103).





By Dr. Emil Goubran



**And you shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free** John 8:32 (KJV)

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.

ANDREW . . .

the patron saint of all personal workers

(JOHN 1: 40- 42)

Typed & Edited by Sandy Ishak



Andrew was a go-getter; and if some readers are unfamiliar with the questionable terminology, an explanation will be welcome. A go-getter is a man who stops at nothing. In order to attain his ends he will remove mountains, cross oceans, turn the world inside out, laugh at impossibilities, and finally set a city on fire while other people are looking for a match. A go-getter is a person who goes and gets what he desires, and woe betide anybody who stands in the way. Failure is never admitted, for the untiring man continues until his purpose is fully achieved. Andrew was a man of this calibre. He knew what he wanted, and always took the short cut to reach it. Other men became the great generals in the holy war; but Andrew planned the campaigns, removed the difficulties, and prepared the way for every fresh advance. He was a great go-getter; the patron saint of all who seek souls for Christ.

Andrew First Found Peter

Jesus of Nazareth had been entertaining guests, and one of the privileged visitors was Andrew. He had been standing with John Baptist when the Stranger passed, and hearing John say, "Behold the Lamb of God," Andrew and another disciple had followed Christ. When they received the invitation to accompany the Savior, they accepted gladly the hospitality of the new Friend, and stayed with Him the whole day. "And one of them which heard John speak . . . was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and said to him, We have found the Messiah . . . And he brought him Jesus." There was no fuss about this quiet man. He had been with Jesus, and was fully assured that his findings were correct. "We have found the Messiah" echoed the certainty of his soul; and that was that! Until this time Andrew took pride of place from his brother Simon. It is interesting to notice that the sacred record says of Bethsaida, "It was the city of Andrew and Peter" (John 1: 44). Perhaps he was the elder brother.

Andrew First Found the Lad with the Loaves

When the Lord had gathered together His band of disciples, He separated them into couples in order that their ministry might become more effective. And in the new arrangement,

it would appear that Andrew's partner was Phillip, for their names are not only coupled together in the official list (Mark 3 : 18), but these men are seen together also on later occasions, "When Jesus saw a great company come unto him, he said to Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? . . . Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" (John 6: 5-9). Were his eyes alight with expectation as he uttered those words? The provisions were so inadequate that to mention them on such an occasion was an act of stupidity - unless Andrew had very strong reasons for so doing. While the other disciples were regretting their inability to feed the crowd, Andrew was investigating the position. He discovered a boy's lunch. The big man and the small boy pooled the resources, and through them the Master fed a multitude.

Andrew First Brought the Gentiles to Jesus

"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus" (John 12 : 20-22). Philip was puzzled. Let us not blame him, for this marked a new departure in the affairs of discipleship. These Greeks were proselytes, but they were still Gentiles. Had they any part in Messianic privileges? Would their inclusion result in troublesome repercussions? "Andrew, what do you think about it?" And when Andrew had shrewdly considered the matter, he replied, "Philip, we'll tell the Master: He'll know what to do." "And Andrew and Philip tell Jesus." And Jesus answered, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. . . . And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Andrew reminded the Lord of the great world of seeking Gentiles: The Lord gave to Andrew the great privilege of bringing those Gentiles to Him. And perhaps that is the reason why he is now the patron saint of all personal workers for Christ.



MARRIAGE QUESTIONS

by Fr. Gawargious Kolta



I received some questions from one of the youth who is planning for marriage. I found that those questions may be asked by others also, from both genders. Most of the answers can be found in the articles in St. John magazine in the topic **“How to achieve lasting and successful marriage”**. I am going to submit all the questions one by one and I will answer them:

Q 1- What are the wrong reasons to get married?

- + Considering marriage a safety net into which everyone falls gladly.
- + Desiring **just** to have children, as one wants to see himself/herself in them, as an extension of one's life.
- + Getting married **just** for sexual satisfaction and fulfillment of emotional needs in a lawful way, as a protection from sexual immorality.
- + Getting married **just** to escape loneliness.
- + Getting married for economic security.
- + Getting married **just** to escape the control of the parents, or an unhappy home life.
- + Getting married **just** to escape social pressure and gain a respectable status.
- + Getting married because the materialistic state of the other person satisfies me.
- + Getting married because he found a girl similar to his mother, or she found a man similar to her father.

Q 2- What are the right reasons to get married?

- + Getting married because **I am convinced** that he/she is a special gift from God, which I appreciate, and for whom I am going to sacrifice happily for the rest of my life.
- + Getting married because I found the person with whom I will happily, and together we will build a **Christian home**, and **give birth to saints**.
- + Getting married because I found the person whom I can communicate with well, and understand. I have also **explored all the differences between us**, and I am convinced that we are completely suitable partners in everything that concerns our future life together.

+ Getting married after I knew the responsibilities of marriage and I am gladly willing to **bear and share whatever challenges I may face in our life journey**.

Q 3- How do I know that I am marrying the right person?

All the following points should be considered:

- + I should choose a good Christian person, whose heart is **full of the love and fear of God**.
- + I must choose a person who is compatible socially, intellectually and culture-wise.
- + I must **pray earnestly** to know the will of God about the person I have already chosen. I have to pray and fast for a certain period. I may ask my family and my sincere friends to pray for me.
- + I must **seek the guidance** of my father of confession, and ask him to remember my request in his prayers, especially in the liturgies.
- + I must **not ignore any discomfort** which I feel during my prayers for God's guidance. I must not disregard any defect or any wrong attitude in the other person. I should discuss that with my father of confession.

Q 4- How do I know that my choice is wrong?

Please go back and review the answers to the previous question, and in addition:

- + If the person whom you want to marry has bad behavior, bad habits and characteristics, such as drinking, gambling, lying. Also if he/she is uncivilized short-tempered, selfish, or still has premarital affairs.
- + If the person whom you chose **has serious health problems**, a genital disease, or a mental problem.

In such cases you must consider these defects and take the advice of your father of confession. It is better to withdraw earlier, especially if you are not completely convinced.

Q 5- What are the common/repeated mistakes that couples make in choosing their partners, which lead to the failure of their marriage?

+ If one chooses a person who is **unreligious** and does not have the love and fear of God in his/her heart.

+ If one chooses a person, only because he/she is well off and financially stable.

+ If one chooses a person who has **bad habits** or bad behavior, and he/she ignores this condition, thinking that he/she will be able to change him/her after marriage.

+ If the dating or the engagement period is **too short**, the couple will not be able to discover the nature and characteristics of each other, or know each other well.

+ When, after marriage, one discovers that his/her partner is not compatible, he/she **should consult** a Christian therapist or counselor as soon as possible. The earlier the better, delaying that would make the problem much complicated.

Q 6- How long should the couple take to get to know each other well before marriage?

+ The time you spend to know your fiancé should not be less than six months, 6 hours/week, you spend together and it must not include shopping and wedding preparation time.

+ It is very important to **attend a premarital course** that can help you in discovering the different points of disagreement in your partner. Take the advice of your father of confession or a Christian counselor regularly.

Q 7- There is no one perfect. Is it ok to marry if my fiancé is a good person, but any or more than one of the following is missing?

- Emotional attachment.
- Physical attraction.
- Unregularly church goer.
- Uncomfortable with her/his family.

What is the meaning of being good and one or more of these important points are missing? Think that it is better to **break the engagement** for the following reasons:

+ There should be emotional attachment and physical attraction towards your fiancé; otherwise you will not **feel satisfied and attracted to your future spouse after you get married**, and this will affect your sexual life. This will surely **lead to a miserable marriage**. It is not right to get engaged while you have these wrong feelings.

+ If you marry a person who **does not like to go to church regularly**, you cannot force him/her to practice any spiritual activity, such as fasting and praying, and he/she **would not raise your children properly**.

+ Being uncomfortable with his/her family indicates that it is **a wrong choice**, because his/her family will be yours after

you get married. Marriage will be surely unsuccessful if you keep your in-laws completely away from your life. Marriage is not just a relation between two persons, but it is also **a strong relationship between two families**.

+ **Do not cover the above-mentioned defects**; once you have doubts, break the engagement. Do not say that I will not get anyone better. It is important to feel completely convinced about the other person. You have to pray, asking God to give you a gift from His hands and direct you to the proper person. Remember that **marriage is a life time journey**.

Q 8- Should each person voluntarily discuss his/her health history?

It is important for both fiancée to **inform each other about the diseases** they had in their childhood, and that which they still suffer from, besides the medicines they took for a long time, especially the tranquilizers or the stimulating medicines. **It is a fraud to cover** this defect, and in some cases it may lead to annulment of marriage.

Q 9- Should each person voluntarily discuss his/her premarital affairs with his/her partner?

It is not important to discuss voluntarily your premarital affairs with your partner, as you have been living a life of repentance before the engagement. Repentance makes adulterers virgins. However, **if your partner asks you about that behavior**, you should tell her/him briefly without mentioning names, time, or the circumstances of that behavior. You have to tell her/him to **forget the past** and to look forward to the future, as you received absolution from your father of confession.

Q 10- What is the impact of the below factors on the success/failure of marriage?

+ **Big-age difference**: Big-age difference is not preferable, and usually the difference should not exceed 7 years. Large differences usually cause many disagreements in opinion, miscommunication, disputes and differences in interests.

+ **Education level**: The couple must have close education level in order to communicate well during marital conflicts and challenges. Those who have close level of knowledge can speak the same language.

+ **Working wife vs. housewife**: This depends on the financial need of the family and the age of the children. It is a great burden for a working wife to keep her house well and in the same time raise her children well.

+ **Living in different states**: This is not preferable because you will have short time to know your partner, his/her characteristics and habits. Phone calls will not get anyone to know the personality of the other.



An American Viewpoint of an Egyptian Mother

By Thilo Young



As an American Protestant entering an Orthodox church for the first time, I caught Abouna Fr. Daniel out front of St. John's and told him about my study of how we got our Bible, and how my studies had introduced me to the early church. I explained that I was here to learn more.

(Alexandria played a prominent role in the assembly of our Bible, and I had learned of the almost unparalleled role Athanasius played in the Faith. I had seen "Alexandria" on the building and thought this was a good place to start.)

Abouna said "Stay around a while and see how you like it." I replied "How I like it is irrelevant. If it's not true and I love it, I'm leaving. If it's true and I hate it, I must conform to it." And so began my encounter with the Copts.

At first, only a few people welcomed and came to help me, but that was enough. After all, I didn't come for a social club, I came seeking God.

I hear much talk about people leaving the church — mostly young ones. I read and participated in an exchange recently where a priest was asking why others believed this was happening. What was making them leave? It is to this question that I'd like to offer some thoughts.

It has been said, rightly, that the Church is our mother and God is our Father. Well, the part of mother Copts get to see, happens to be Egyptian — which means she is always in our business; telling us what path to take, unwilling to change the things that brought her through troubles and suffering that we, in our young lives, have not experienced. She is bossy and controlling.

Well, that is how she is often seen by her children, who grew up in her house, anyway. But I'd like to tell you about mom from the perspective of my wife and me. I'm sure we are considered "the Americans" and seem to be somewhat unique in this: neither of us married into this family. We were adopted, so to speak. No Egyptian friends, family, spouse, nothing — total strangers.

We came from the American Evangelical background, where my wife says "Churches are like girlfriends. No need to commit. When things don't go well, you leave and go down the street to another one and start again there."

For us, as adopted kids entering into an Egyptian home, with an Egyptian mother, things look quite different. We are in awe. Mother is nosey, yes. But it is only because she loves us. She is old and wise, and knows the suffering we can bring on ourselves by wrong choices. And she tries to protect us and steer us to the path of peace and safety. She bears not only her wisdom, but the wisdom of the entire family through the centuries. She suffers when we suffer. She cleans and bandages our wounds. She feeds us. She clothes us in humility.

All this can seem like a controlling "old mom" to many who have never been an orphan, who have always lived this way, but to us she is a treasure unlike any we have known.

And yes, the deep scars she bears after keeping the faith through persecution and mistreatment, a suffering which would have stopped the moment she was willing to abandon her family, but never even considered it as she is a faithful mother, can show sometimes. She's not perfect, but she is beautiful. Her dress is soaked with the tears of seeing her children abused and killed for belonging to her family — the stains of those tears make her dress more beautiful than the finest silk in all the world.

It took several years for the community at St. John to truly welcome us as their own, though from the beginning Abouna Daniel was a trusted friend and spiritual adviser. A few younger Copts welcomed and helped us through the liturgy. Other than that, we were outsiders. But it didn't matter.

I was a tattooed biker American wearing a tee-shirt to church. I knew I didn't fit in. I quickly learned of the suffering and deep faith of the Copts, and figured such persecution knits a people together closely, and

probably makes them cautious of outsiders. I was partaking of a treasure paid for and preserved by the blood of their parents, and I was grateful.

I suppose it may be because word got back to them that I wasn't there to change them, or that I was zealous with love for this church, or that I sought to humble myself under them, or that I became a servant at times — I don't know. But after a few years I began to be embraced. Not just by the American born, but by the Egyptians who didn't even speak English. The ones who never smiled began smiling at me. And it meant more to me than all the warm welcomes I received at all the American churches I've ever attended. It was something not given lightly or cheaply.

I'd like to challenge all the young, American born Copts.

I'd like to challenge you all to first seek God. He is here. And if nobody else ever was kind to you, or ever treated you like you think you should be treated, that should be enough.

I'd like to challenge you to see the good, as we did. Of course there are hypocrites, those who don't live this faith as it should be, but you don't know why, and it doesn't matter anyway. I heard it said that a hummingbird seeks life and a buzzard seeks death. And they both find what they seek. In every parish there are those to whom you can point and say "that's what it should look like!" Fix your eyes on them.

And your Abouna. We quickly learned that probably because of 2,000 years of tending to persecuted sheep the Coptic priests are among the best in the world. Seek them out. Ask them for guidance. Listen to them and do as they say. Even if they make a mistake, the blessing from God will be yours simply because of the humility of obedience.

Our Abouna taught us, baptized us, chrismated us, married us in the church, gave us our first communion on Easter, taught my son, baptized, chrismated and communed him, did the same for our dear friend, engaged he and she to one another, and God willing will marry them. He is our friend, adviser, mentor, guide and beloved father. And to see his gentle smile when he prays over us the absolute is to see Christ. Nothing in the world (and I've taken more of what the world has to offer than I care to admit) can equal his role in our lives and salvation. Your Abouna can be the same for you if you only seek it with sincerity and diligence.

Have compassion for your elders. You'll never

know the things they went through. But this you do know: they are among the 10% of all Egypt who kept the faith — who carried it on — who suffered for it. And if they err, or if there is something you see that should be changed, ask yourself "What am I doing with what I have? They did this under suffering, but what shall I do with my freedom? I have access to knowledge they never dreamed possible. I have nobody persecuting me. How can I do as much with this as they did with their circumstance?"

What excuse will we have before the Judgment Seat of Christ? Shall we stand next to the woman with the issue of blood who fought through the crowds, being unclean, to touch the hem of His garment and say "Well, I abandoned the faith because someone was mean to me."? Shall we stand next to Blind Bartimaeus whom they could not silence, but shouted even louder "Have mercy on me!" and say "I let you pass by because someone didn't treat me as I thought they should."? Shall we stand among the countless martyrs whose lives were demanded because of their faithfulness to the church and say "I left the church, but I still kept my faith."? Shall we stand before our King who was crucified and say "It was too hard."?

If we see something lacking, it is for us to add it, not to abandon the very place we believe needs it. It is for you, the young, to add what this new land needs to be able to experience the unique beauty of the Coptic Church — not to criticize the elders who have run their race, and kept the faith. It is for you to keep and preserve the spirit of humility, deep and quiet faith, silent suffering, and simple hope that has been at the heart of the Coptic Church for millennia.

You have been handed a baton in a race. It is covered with the blood of Christ, the Apostles, the martyrs, and your ancestors. God forbid you should throw it in the dirt and leave the race! Carry it, preserve the good, change in yourselves the things that may not be perfect, and add to it what is needed in this place. And in time, you too will pass it on.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1-2



READER'S CORNER

Dear FR AUGUSTINE,

Overcoming the lure of worldly things

“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things”. (Colossians 3:2)

One day a mother was trying to teach her daughter a lesson about giving. So she gave the little girl a quarter and a dollar bill before going to church and told her, “Put whichever one you want in the collection plate and keep the other for yourself.”

After church, she asked the little girl what she had given during the offering time. The little girl responded, “Well, I was going to give a dollar, but then the preacher said God loves a cheerful giver. I knew I’d be more cheerful if I gave the quarter, so I did”!

What is it about us that love to hang onto our stuff? We know we can’t keep it forever. And most people realize material things can’t make them happy. But for some reason, we have a strong urge to hang onto our things as if they’ll give us lasting joy.

The truth is that no amount of material wealth can ever fulfill us. That’s exactly why God wants to liberate us from our dependence on such things by inviting us to invest them in His purposes. It’s not that these things are bad. It’s that they make terrible gods, but great Kingdom servants.

Keep free from the love of worldly things by using them for God’s glory. When we think of our stuff as really His, we’ll experience much more joy as we give it all back to Him!

Prayer Challenge: Pray and confess that everything you have belongs to God. Ask Him to give you an attitude of generosity when it comes to giving it back.



A Prayer of Political Repentance!

Thought you might enjoy this interesting

prayer given in Kansas at the opening session of their Senate. It seems a prayer still upsets some people... When Minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, ‘Woe to those who call evil good,’ but that is exactly what we have done.

+ We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.

+ We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery.

+ We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare.

+ We have killed our unborn and called it choice.

+ We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable

+ We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem.

+ We have abused power and called it politics.

+ We have coveted our neighbor’s possessions and called it ambition.

+ We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression.

+ We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

+ Search us, Oh, God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free.

Amen!

The response was immediate. A number of legislators walked out during the prayer in protest. In 6 short weeks, Central Christian Church, where Rev. Wright is pastor, logged more than 5,000 phone calls with only 47 of those calls responding negatively. The church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer

from India, Africa and Korea. [We may add to this list now the latest Supreme Court ruling on same sex marriage]!

3 Important Lessons for Beginners

in Christian Geography, Math and Language!



Fr. Augustinos Hanna

“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

THIS IS ONE OF THE GOLDEN VERSES IN THE SERMON ON the Mount, which should be memorized by heart with its reference. The verse gives us three lessons, one in **Geography**, the second in **Math** and the third in **Language**.

1. The Geography Lesson: Where to find the kingdom of God?

Some people say, “It is in heaven. Others reply, “It is in the Bible” and a third group answers, “It is in the church”. These three answers may be correct but yet not accurate. Heaven is the Capital of the Kingdom of God, the Bible is the guide to the kingdom of God and the Church is the way to that kingdom and the meeting place of the inhabitants of the kingdom, it is also the manufacturer of the citizens of the kingdom of God.

But the Lord Jesus answered this question differently and said, *“The kingdom of God is within you”* (Luke 17:21). Yes, the kingdom of God starts inside the hearts of the believers when they love it, submit to its King, obey its rules and live according to its Constitution. They put it as a goal and target before their eyes. It is their first priority. They long for it and pray daily, “Thy Kingdom Come”, while they work and serve building God’s kingdom allover the earth.

Every kingdom has its products. In the letter to the Romans, St. Paul talks about the characteristics of the king of God saying, *“The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit”* (Rom. 17:14).

Righteousness is purity and justice. Joy is not meant to be carnal but spiritual as Virgin Mary said, “My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior” (Luke 1: 47). “Rejoice in the Lord always again I say rejoice” (Phil. 4:4).

The Lord Jesus also described the kingdom of God twice with joy when He rewarded the faithful servant saying, *“Enter into the joy of your Lord”* (Matt. 25:21, 23).

Peace is Christ’s gift to His followers (Jn.14:27), it is the fruit of justification, reconciliation and salvation from condemnation

(Rom.5:1).

So, beware, if you lacked righteousness, joy and peace, then you are not a citizen of that kingdom.

2. The Math Lesson - Priority and Addition:

The verse mentions two mathematical words “first” i.e., number 1, and “added” plus or addition.

Is there anything more important than the eternal life in the kingdom of God? Also, there is no lack or subtract in the kingdom of God, but always addition to your account in blessings, joy, peace and real riches here and thereafter.

3. The lesson of language- what is the verb here?

It is “Seek”, an imperative verb. Christ does not request but command and we have to obey the order of our heavenly king.

We start seeking the Kingdom of God by another Biblical order mentioned by St. Paul, *“Now God commands all men everywhere to repent, overlooking the times of ignorance”* (Acts 17:30).

Repentance was the main call of John the Baptist and the first sermon of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand” (Matt. 4:17).

In repentance, we make a U-turn, we divorce all the garbage of the devil and chose the only right and clean WAY, which is Jesus Christ who said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

After repentance, comes another order, Jesus said, “Abide in Me” Jn. 15:4). This is very reasonable and logic, because if we did not abide in Him, we would be drifted back to the sins and lusts of the world and of the flesh and be an easy prey to Satan. Simply, we backslide. In order to abide in Christ, we have to live by the means of grace which are, reading the Bible on daily basis, praying, having Communion, attending church and spiritual meetings, and serving the Lord.

We need to get filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and “grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Pet.3:18).



Wedding Celebrations

By St. John Chrysostom

Edited by Fr. Augustinos Hanna

(The golden mouthed Patriarch on Marriage & Family Life. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. 1986 Pages 81-84)

{This article was published twice before, but due to the repetition of the same sins (dancing, drinking and other offenses) we reprint it again to remind the faithful of the true Christian methods of celebrating our weddings}.

* * *

St. John Chrysostom is one of the greatest Orthodox saints who lived in the 4th century. He was a famous lawyer before he became a monk. He served as a reader, deacon then was ordained a priest. In 398 he was consecrated Bishop and Patriarch on Constantinople. He died in 407. His name is mentioned in the commemoration of the saints and in the servant's absolution in the Coptic Orthodox Liturgies.

* * *

Marriage is not an evil thing. It is adultery that is evil. Marriage is a remedy to eliminate fornication. Let us not, therefore, dishonor marriage by the pomp of the devil. Instead, let those who take wives now do as they did at Cana of Galilee.

1. Let them have Christ in their midst:

"How can they do this?" someone asks. The answer is by inviting the clergy. The Lord Jesus said, "He who receives you receives Me" (Matt. 10:40).

2. Drive away the devil:

Throw out the lewd songs, the corrupt melodies, the disorderly dances, the shameful words, the diabolical display, the uproar, the unrestrained laughter, and the rest of the impropriety. Bring in instead the holy servants of Christ, and through them Christ will certainly be present along with His mother and brothers. For He says, "Whoever does the will of My Father is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt. 12:50).

3. Uproot wrong customs:

I know that some people think I am burdensome and difficult, giving advice like this and uprooting ancient custom.

But I do not care at all about their objections. I do not seek your favor but your benefit. I do not ask

for the applause of praise, but the profit of wisdom. Let no one tell me that this is the custom. Where sin is boldly committed, forget about custom. If evil things are done, even if the custom is ancient, abolish them. If they are not evil, even if they are not customary, introduce them and establish them. Actually it was not an ancient custom to celebrate weddings in a disgraceful way, but some kind of innovation.

Consider how Isaac married Rebecca, how Jacob married Rachel. Scripture tells us of these weddings, and how these brides entered the households of their bridegrooms. Nothing is said about such customs. They gave banquets and dinners more lavish than usual, and invited their relatives to the weddings...

4. Do not defile the wedding day:

Nowadays on the day of a wedding people dance and sing songs full of adultery, corruption of marriages, illicit loves, unlawful unions, and many other impious and shameful themes. They accompany the bride in public with unseemly drunkenness and shameful speeches. How can you expect chastity of her tell me, if you accustom her to such shamelessness from the first day, if you present in her sight such actions and words as even the more serious slaves should not hear? For such a long time her father has striven along with her mother to protect the virgin, to keep her from speaking or hearing any of these words...Have you overthrown all these precautions in one day, teaching her shamelessness by that disgraceful retinue, and introducing corrupt thoughts into the soul of the bride? Do not the subsequent evils begin here? Is not this the beginning of childlessness and widowhood and untimely orphan-hood?

When you invoke demons by your songs, when you fulfill their desires by your shameful speeches, when you bring mimes and effeminate actors and the whole theater into your house, when you fill your house with harlots and arrange for the whole chorus of demons to make merry there, what good

can you expect, tell me?

Why do you even invite the clergy, if you are planning to celebrate these rites on the next or the same day?

5. Do you wish to demonstrate a beneficial generosity?

Invite the choirs of the poor. Are you ashamed at this idea? Do you blush? What could be more unreasonable than this? When you drag the devil into your house, you do not think that you are doing anything shameful, but when you plan to bring Christ in, you blush? Just as Christ is present when the poor enter, **so when effeminate dancers dance there, the devil is carousing in their midst.** From this extravagance there is no benefit, but rather great harm. From the other expenditure you might quickly receive a great reward.

6. Start a good model and reap God's blessings:

You may say, "No one in the city has done this." Why don't you hurry to be the founder of this good custom, so that posterity may attribute it to you? This will bring both honor and benefit to you. When others tend this, it will bring the reward of its fruits to you who first planted it. This will help your children prosper, this will aid the bridegroom to grow old together with his bride.

7. Avoid God's wrath and curse:

God continually threatens the sinners, saying, **"Your children shall be orphans and your wives widows"** (Exodus 22:24). We can also hear St. Paul saying this, that a multitude of sins often causes untimely deaths. **"That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died"** (1 Cor. 11: 30).

From the story of the girl in Joppa we can learn that the poor who have been fed do not allow anything like this to happen. If any misfortune occurs, they bring a quick restoration. When she was lying dead, the poor who she had fed and the naked that she covered, stood around weeping. They raise her up and restored her to life.

So much more beneficial is the prayer of the widows and poor than any amount of laughter and dancing. The latter may give pleasure for one day; the former brings lasting benefit. Think how good it is for a bride to enter the house of her bridegroom with such blessings on her head. **Are not these more noble than any crowns? Are not these more useful than any wealth? Whereas the present customs represent the greatest madness and insanity.....**

Religion Today

Ex-Muslims Explain

'Why I Chose Jesus'

A NEW STUDY REVEALS WHY SOME 600 EX-MUSLIMS decided to leave Islam to follow Jesus Christ, even in the face of heavy persecution, sacrifice and death threats.

According to Professor Dudley Woodberry, from Fuller Institute, who conducted the study, the most important reasons were as follows:

"Many were attracted by the certainty of salvation in Jesus Christ. He does not retaliate, is humble, loves the poor and outcasts; the power of His love is unique, and one can enter a relationship with Him, completely different to Islam.

Christians are the only people who really work for justice for the poor and repressed; Christians' unconditional love, and their peaceful and contented aura are very noticeable. Also, a number of ex-Muslims had supernatural experiences which were decisive in their finding Christ.



If God Had Voice Mail!

Most of us now have learned to live with, “voice mail” as a necessity, but have you ever wondered what it would be like if God had voice mail? Imagine praying and hearing the following:

Thank you for calling heaven

For English, Press 1

For Spanish, press 2

For other languages, press 0

Please select one of the following options:

Press 1 for Requests.

Press 2 for Thanksgiving.

Press 3 for Complaints.

Press 4 for all other inquiries.

I am sorry; all of our angels and saints are busy helping other sinners. However, your prayer is important to us, and we will answer shortly. Please stay on the line.

If you would like to speak to:

God, press 1.

Jesus, press 2

Holy Spirit, Press 3.

If you would like to hear King David sing a Psalm while are holding, press 4.

To find a loved one that has been assigned to Heaven, press 5, then enter his or her social security number followed by the pound sign. If you receive a negative response, please hang up and try area code (666).

For reservations at Heaven, please enter J-O-H-N

Followed by the numbers 3-1 6

For answers to nagging questions about dinosaurs, the age of the earth, life on other planets, and where Noah’s Ark is, please wait until you arrive.

Our computers show that you have already prayed today. Please hang up. The office is now closed for the weekend so please pray again on Monday after 9:30 a.m.

If you are calling after hours and need emergency assistance, please contact your local priest.

Thank you and have a heavenly day.

THE TRISAGION

Trisagion, is a Greek for “thrice-holy”, a hymn used in Coptic worship. The Byzantine form of the Trisagion is as follows: “Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us,” to be reiterated three times, followed but the lesser doxology. But the Coptic form of the Trisagion is as follows (verses 1-5 are in Greek; verses 6 -10 are in Coptic).

(1) Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, Who was born of a virgin, have mercy upon us.

(2) Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal Who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us.

(3) Holy God, etc., Who rose from the dead and ascended into the heavens, have mercy upon us.

(4) Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and always and unto the ages of the ages. Amen.

(5) Holy Trinity, have mercy upon us.

(6) All-Holy Trinity, have mercy upon us; Holy Trinity have mercy upon us.

(7) Lord, forgive us our sins, Lord, forgive us our iniquities; Lord, forgive us our transgressions.

(8) Visit, Lord, the sick of Your people, heal them for Your Holy Name’s sake. Our fathers and our brethren who have fallen asleep, Lord give rest to their souls.

(9) Sinless Lord, have mercy upon us: Sinless Lord, aid us, receive our prayer.

(10) For to You belongs glory and power and the Trisagion: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, bless us. Amen.

The whole hymn is understood as being addressed to Christ. The choice of verses varies according to the service and the holiday. For example, verses 1-10 are recited during the canonical hours, whereas verses 1-5 are sung in the Divine Liturgy before the prayer of the Gospel.

According to the Byzantine tradition, it was in the time of Saint Proclus, bishop of Constantinople (434-446), that the Trisagion came into use (Salmon, 1974).

St. Peter the Fuller (d. 488), patriarch of Antioch, is chiefly remembered for his addition (“Who was crucified for us”).

In the 13th century, however, Ibn Siba in his book Kitab al-jawharah *noted a tradition that saints Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, while giving burial to the body of Christ, heard the angels saying, “Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One,” and at eh words “Holy Immortal One,” Christ opened His eyes in their face. Then Joseph and Nicodemus said, “Who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us.”*

Ibn Siba’ also said that the Trisagion is repeated thrice to accord with the number of the Holy Trinity.



Holy and Wholly for Christ

By Fr. Augustinos Hanna

"As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy' (1 Peter 1:15, 16).

"If One died for all, then all died, and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again"
(2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

HOLINESS IS ONE OF GOD'S MOST IMPORTANT characteristics, that the Seraphim praised Him saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:2, 3). Although, "God is love", yet the Bible did not tell us that the angels praised Him saying, "Love, love, love is the Lord of hosts", but "Holy, holy, holy..."

When the Lord Jesus taught us the Lord's Prayer, He mentioned the first request in it, **"Hallowed be Your name"** (Matt. 6:9).

St. Peter quoted the above verse from the book of Leviticus 11:44 and 19:2 that says, **"For I am the Lord your God, you shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy."**

Despite the book of Leviticus is hard to understand for many Christians, yet the Jews used to make their children read it in their early age, just to teach them the first lesson of holiness, purity and cleanliness and to implant the fear of God in their hearts.

St. Paul also says, **"Pursue...holiness without which no one will see the Lord"** (Heb. 12:14). David explains this fact by saying, **"As wax melts before the fire, so the wicked perish at the presence of God"** (Psa. 68:2).

The book of Revelation puts more emphasis on holiness as a MUST when it talks about the heavenly Jerusalem, **"But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie" (21:27) and also says, "But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie" (Rev. 22:15).**

God doesn't only want us to be holy, to deal with Him, but also to live wholly for Him. In the letter to the Romans, St. Paul likens the life of the believer with the "living sacrifice" when he says, **"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."** (Rom. 12:1).

In the second verse above, we have a threefold life described. First is the life of the Christian who lives according to his old nature: he lives for himself alone. The second is the life of a true Christian: he lives wholly for Christ. Third is the life of Christ in heaven: He lives wholly for us.

Many Christians need to be convinced of the foolishness of living only for themselves. At repentance and conversion, they tend to think more of their own salvation and less of the glory of God and the claim that Christ, who has redeemed us with His precious blood, has upon them. Many Christians live for themselves, content with doing a little for the Master. The believer who realizes his high calling and the privilege and blessedness of consecrating His life entirely to God's service will find true happiness.

The great hindrance to such a life is unbelief, which says that complete submission to God is impossible. But when the truth takes hold of us, "Christ is heaven lives wholly for me; He will impart His life to me and will enable me to live wholly for Him"- then we will be able to say joyfully, "Dear Lord Jesus Christ, from this moment on, let my prayer each day be, **"Holy in Christ and wholly for Christ"**.

My dear brothers and sisters let nothing less than this be your earnest desire, your prayer, and your firm expectation. Say, "Christ has not only died for me, but He also lives in heaven to keep and sanctify me and make intercession for me." (Heb. 7:25).

Contemplate in this wonderful thought, that **Christ will keep you as a member of His body, to work and live for Him, holy and wholly.** Pray to be filled with God's love and His Holy Spirit, because it is written, "the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5). When you get filled with the Holy Spirit, you will be both, holy and wholly for God, in seeking souls and in serving His people.

Take time from day to day to be so united to Christ in the inner man, and in abiding in Him through communion that you can say with all your heart, "I live holy and wholly for Him who sanctified Himself for me and gave Himself wholly for me and who now lives in heaven wholly for me."



TEARS

By Fr. Augustinos

Tears are the interpretation of the feelings and emotions of the heart, especially at times of suffering and tribulation.

They express the disability of man and his weakness towards accidents and death.

Tears may be divided into three categories:

1. Common Tears:

All humanity share in this kind of tears. No one is exempted. No man or woman did not cry or weep. All kings, prophets, evil persons or saints, even the Lord Jesus Christ wept.

We cry in sickness and pain, at birth and death, upon farewell and when we lose loved ones. Sometimes, we cry and shed tears in fear, anxiety and even in laughter! That's why David called this world, "The Valley of Tears". On the contrary, the Bible tells us that heaven is the place in which grief, sorrow and groaning have fled away and tears will be wiped away by the merciful God Himself.

2. Wicked Tears:

These tears are rejected and called "The crocodile's tears". They come from:

(1) **Stubbornness and rebellion against God (Lamentation 3:39).**

(2) **Despair and losing hope (1 Thess. 4:13)**

(3) **Hatred & wrath (See Haman/ Esther 6:12)**

(4) **Greed & selfishness (Ahab/ 1 Kings 21:4, 5).**

3. Holy Tears:

These are the blessed acceptable tears:

(1) **Tears of Remorse and Repentance (Lk7:38, 44).**

(2) **Tears of Prayer (Song of Solomon 6:5).**

(3) **Tears of Sympathy**, "Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep" (Rom.12:12;), "Jesus wept" (John 11:35).

(4) **Tears of Service and Ministry**: "O that my head were water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of my people" (Jer .9:1), "Serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears....Remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:19, 31).

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving Day

«I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth». (Psalms 34:1)

We got this email from a friend and laughed so hard we had to share it with you.

There once was a woman who woke up one morning, looked in the mirror, and saw that she had only three hairs on her head. «Great,» she said, «I think I'll braid my hair today.»

So she did, and had a wonderful day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and saw that she had only two hairs on her head. «Hmm,» she said, «I guess I'll part my hair down the middle.»

So she did, and had a wonderful day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and saw that she had only one hair left on her head.

«Wow,» she said, «today I get to wear my hair in a pony tail.» She did, and had a wonderful, wonderful day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and saw that there wasn't a single hair on her head.

«Thank God!» she exclaimed. «I was running out of things to do with my hair!»

Friend, ATTITUDE is everything! Let's be grateful for the things God has given us and have a wonderful Thanksgiving day!

