



# SAINT JOHN

COVINA, CA

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September / October 2015  
A COPTIC CHRISTIAN  
BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE



## ST. JOHN Coptic Orthodox Church

### 2015 The Annual Festival

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**H.H. POPE TWADROS II**

The 118 Patriarch of Alexandria and the Dio-  
cese of Southern California and Hawaii under  
**H.G. BISHOP SERAPION**

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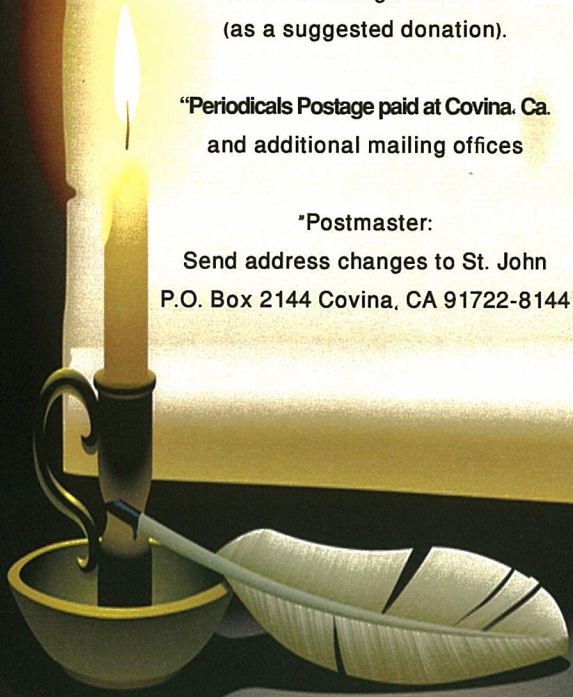
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*Verse*  
of the Month



**“If they persecuted Me, they will  
also persecute you”**

(John 15:20).

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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.	+ Liturgy 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	+ Liturgy 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.	+ Liturgy from 8-10 am
***	+ Thursday Morning		+ Vespers; Bible Study 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
+ Arabic Liturgy 8:00 - 11:00 a.m.	+ Senior Citizen Club 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.		+ Beginners' Deacons- Meeting 5: 00-6:00 p.m.
			+ Elementary Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Servants' Meeting 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday.	+ THURSDAY Family Meeting 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. (Fr. Augustinos)	+ Arabic Youth Meeting 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. (Fr. Gawargious)	+ College Youth Meeting 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. + Catechumens' meeting by Fr. Daniel 7- 8 p.m.
TUESDAY English- Bible Study 7:30 pm	Mahragan Keraza 6 pm		High School & J. High Meetings 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

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## 1. Feast of Nyrouz (Coptic New Year 1732):

On Saturday, September 12, 2015 the Church celebrates the Feast of Nyrouz, also known as the Feast of the Martyrs and the Coptic New Year 1732 of the Christian Martyrs of Egypt (hundreds of millions).



The Vespers (Raising of incense) of the Feast will be celebrated on Friday, September 11, at 6:30 p.m.

There will be a sermon, hymns and other activities.

The Liturgy will take place on Saturday morning from 8:00. All the tunes of prayers, from Nyrouz to the Feast of the Cross are joyful).

## 2. Feast of St. John the Baptist:

On Sunday, September 13, the Coptic Church starts her New Year Calendar with the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, whom the Lord Jesus described as An angel and more than a prophet who shed his blood to witness to the truth.



## 3. The Feast of the Cross:

On Monday, September 28, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Appearance of the Holy Cross. Vespers will take place on Sunday the 27th at 6:30 p.m. The Liturgy on Monday from 7:30 a.m



## 4. St. John's adults, college, Junior High and Elementary prizes in the Kiraza Competition:

- + Elementary: Excellent
- + College: Excellent
- + Adult: Very good
- + Junior High: Very good
- + High School: Very good



## 5. H.H. Pope Tawadros:

+ His Holiness Pope Tawadros II will visit U.S. during October 2015, God willing.

He will bless Los Angeles churches and bless St. John church in the Vespers, Saturday, October 17.

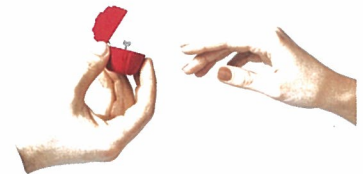


## 6. H.G. Bishop Serapion:

His Grace bishop Serapion attended the Kiraza Competition and distributed the prizes to the winners from all churches.

## 7. One Day Retreat for Engaged Couples:

On Saturday, August 15, St. John Church held one day retreat for engaged couples. The speakers were Fr. Gawargious, Fr. David, Dr. Nabil Soliman and Dr. Yousry Armanious.



## 8. Harvest Day (Children Halloween Festival):

On Saturday, October 31, St. John Church holds this children annual festival, right after the Vespers, from 7:00 – 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.



## 9. St. John's Annual Festival (September 25 -27):

St. John Church, Covina, will hold her 26th Annual Festival from Friday, September 25 until Sunday, 27.

The program contains daily vespers and morning Liturgies, Book Fair, Mediterranean food. Missionary tours for the guests and Fund-Raise to complete the Icons, pay off the debts and help the new comers (See English cover).

# Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria



## **Pope Tawadros II**

(Born November, 4 1952) is the 118th and current Pope of Alexandria & Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, succeeding the late Pope Shenouda III as a leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria. He took office on 18 November 2012, two weeks after being selected.

### **1- Early life**

Pope Tawadros was born Waḡīh Ṣubḥī Bāqī Sulaymān, on 4 November 1952 in the city of Mansoura, Egypt. He studied at the University of Alexandria, where he received a degree in

Pharmacy in 1975. After a few years of managing a state-owned pharmaceutical factory, he joined the Monastery of Saint Bishoy in Wadi-El-Natrun to study theology for two years. He became an ordained priest in 1989.

### **2- Bishop**

On 15 June 1997, he was consecrated as a general Bishop by his predecessor as Pope, Shenouda III, with the Greek name of Theodoros, which is known as Tawadros in Coptic or Theodore in English. He was assigned to serve in the Eparchy of Behira in the northwestern Delta.

### **3- Papal selection**

The papal selection process began several weeks before the 4 November selection. About 2,400 clergymen and others shortlisted three candidates: Bishop Tawadros, former aide to Metropolitan Pachomios; Bishop Raphael; and Father Raphael Ava Mina, a monk in a monastery near Alexandria and

disciple of 116th Pope Cyril VI.

The ceremony to choose the Pope from the three consensus candidates was held at Cairo's St. Mark's Cathedral at noon, with a marked police presence. Metropolitan Pachomios put slips bearing the candidates' names in a sealed chalice which was set upon the altar, then led the Divine Liturgy. He told the congregation to "pray that God will choose the good shepherd", and a blindfolded boy took a slip — Tawadros

— from the chalice.

Bishop Pachomius formally announced that the sixty year old Bishop Tawadros was to be the 118th Pope, and would be named "Pope Tawadros the second" after Pope Tawadros the first (730–742), who was consecrated 45th Coptic Patriarch and Pope during Egypt's Umayyad Period (658–750). Tawadros II said, from the monastery at Wadi Natrun, "[We] will start by organizing the house from within. It is a responsibility. Most important is ... that the church, as an institution, serves the community."

Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi congratulated Pope Tawadros and called for Egyptian "unity"



and “brotherly love” between Copts and Muslims.

Bishop Raphael, who came first in the election stage of papal selection, was appointed general secretary of the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

#### 4- Papacy

Pope Tawadros II started his papacy amid multiple changes in Egypt, saying that the Orthodox Church is committed to keeping Article 2 of Egypt’s draft constitution intact, as it was in the old constitution. He later supported the withdrawal of the Egyptian churches from Egypt’s Constituent Assembly despite efforts by the presidency to convince them to return.

#### 5 - Views and issues

Pope Tawadros II has stated that the 2011 Egyptian revolution was a turning point in the Coptic church relations with its youth. Amongst his first tasks is the issue of Egypt’s changing political landscape, given the new constitution and more independent-minded congregants who seek their demands outside the church in dealing with the state. In a short televised speech in July 2013, Pope Tawadros

II supported the removal of Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi and institution of a transitional government dominated by the president of the Supreme Constitutional Court of Egypt, Adly Mansour who acted as a temporary president at the time.

#### 6. 2013 Vatican City visit

On 8 May 2013, Pope Tawadros II met with Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome and supreme pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, in Vatican City. This was the first meeting of the two recently elected church leaders and only the second gathering of popes in Italy in 1,500 years. The last visit of a Coptic pope to the Vatican occurred on 10 May

1973 when then-Pope Shenouda III met with then-Pope Paul VI where they signed an important Christological declaration

with the ambition to initiate ecumenical dialogue between the two ancient churches. On 10 May 2013, Pope Tawadros II and Pope Francis

held a shared prayer followed by a reception with

the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Pope Tawadros II also visited the tombs of the Apostle Peter, and the Apostle Paul. He also visited the Coptic community in Rome, Italy.

#### 7- Saints

On February 21, 2015, Pope Tawadros II announced that 21 Copts murdered by the Islamic State in Libya would be commemorated as martyr saints on the 8th of Amshir of the Coptic calendar (February 15 of the Gregorian calendar).

The commemoration falls on the feast day of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple.

# The Wheat & The Tares

By Pope Shenouda

Your job is not to pull up the tares, but to grow as wheat. When the wheat harvester comes, He will find the ears of your wheat full, and will gather thirty and sixty and hundred till his barns are filled with wheat. The Lord Jesus never wasted his time in resisting faults...

He did not spend the period of his incarnation on earth struggling with those at fault or with problems of society and church. He took care of building up, edifying, laying new principles and preparing people to believe in them and spread them everywhere.

It is a waste of energy to be absorbed in gathering up the tares.

The devil is ready to occupy you all the time by various problems and offers you endless mistakes. His main aim is to distract you from building yourself and building the kingdom of Heaven, by fighting these mistakes.

By uprooting the tares, you may lose your inner peace and probably your peace with people too; and live in a struggle. Therefore, you will lose your quietness and serenity and maybe your meekness as well. These problems may create an atmosphere of endless disturbances and differences that may agitate you and surround you by continual rage.

Likewise, as you lose your gentleness and quietness, you may also lose your cheerfulness. People will see you gloomy with no smile. Anger and sorrow might control you. This may lead you to hardness of heart...

You will always judge those who are wrong, revolting against their mistakes, taking the excuse of pulling up the tares from them. You will be always in clamor and you may rebuke and yell at people and become annoyed with everything...

During all that, you may lose your love to people and lose your gentleness. So while you are uprooting the tares from others, you will probably pull the wheat which is in you. People will look and see you like the tares in everything!

Few are those who could pick the tares and, at the same time, keep their wheat. Therefore, it is good that God prevented His children from pulling up the tares for fear of picking the wheat too.

*It is well said in the Bible "Do not resist evil" The best way of gathering up tares is by being positive and setting a good example. And as the wise-man said, "Instead of cursing the darkness, light a candle."*

# THE CROSS OF CHRIST

the Cross of the Martyrs



By Pope Shenouda

+ The Cross of Jesus Christ is unique; no one else can bear it because it was a real Cross of Redemption for mankind. The Lord Jesus was ***"The Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world"*** (John 1:29).

And the crucified Redeemer must be sinless, perfect and has everlasting life to pay off the debts of humanity, past, present and future. No one in heaven or on earth, except Jesus Christ can have these qualifications.

+ But the cross of the martyrs is a symbolic cross that depicts their faith in Christ, faithfulness, and love to Him to the end.

It is written, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2)

+ So, Jesus endured that terrible cross with joy out of His love to save us. He made a condition for discipleship to carry our own small cross to share with him the meanings of the cross which are, love holiness, faithfulness, sacrifice, service and patience.

+ The Lord invited us to bear the Cross and said: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me (Matt. 16:24; Mark \*:34). And He said,= to the rich young man: "Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor and come take up the cross and follow Me" (Mark 10:21). He made the bearing of the Cross a condition for discipleship to Him (Luke 14:27).



By H.G. Bishop Serapion



Our All-Holy, Immaculate,  
Most Blessed and Glorified Lady,  
the Theotokos and Ever

## Virgin Saint Mary

No woman in history is more misunderstood than the Holy Virgin Mary. The Reverend Billy Graham once said, “We evangelical Christians do not give Mary her proper due.” However, Saint Mary receives her “proper due” within the Orthodox faith. St. Mary is the greatest woman that ever lived. She was chosen by the Father to bear His Only-Begotten Son, gave birth to the Savior of the world, and was the first person in history to receive Christ as her Savior. Consequently, she is our model of obedience and submission; of purity and holiness; of humility and royalty.

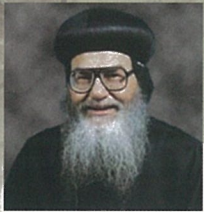
In the fourth century, when a heretic named Nestorios claimed that Jesus was a man but not God, the Church defended the divinity of Christ and insisted that Mary be referred to as the “Theotokos” (Greek for God-bearer) to safeguard the full deity of Christ.

We also believe that the Virgin Mary is the Ever-Virgin. The Church Fathers repeatedly refer to the prophecy of this: “The gate will be shut and it will not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.” (Ezekiel 44:1-2). The interpretation of the Church fathers generally that

Mary is the Temple, Christ is the Prince of Peace, and the gate is Mary’s womb through which Christ entered into the world. This interpretation is shared by the great majority of the Church fathers, as well as the Reformation Leaders such as Martin Luther. [quote style=”boxed”]“The gate will be shut and it will not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.” (Ezekiel 44:1-2).[/quote]

The Coptic Church venerates the Virgin Mary, though worship belongs to God alone. God, the angels, and mankind all venerated Saint Mary. God, through Archangel Gabriel; and St. Elizabeth, declared to her “Blessed are you among women.” (Luke 1:28, 42). St. Mary herself declared, “henceforth all generations will call me blessed.” (Luke 1:48). Thus, our church fulfills this commandment and example by offering the voice of sweet praises and hymns to our Lady, the Virgin Mary. When Christians depart this life, they remain a vital part of the Church, the body of Christ. They are alive in the Lord, are “registered in heaven.” (Revelation 4:10), and inhabit His heavenly dwelling places (John 14:2). They are the “great cloud of witnesses” which surrounds us; we seek to imitate them in running the “race set before us.” (Hebrews 12:1).

# The Work of Grace in the Personality



BY H.G. BISHOP MOUSSA

**ONE OF THE LOVELIEST TRUTHS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY** is that it does not try to erase man's individual traits of whatever type. On the contrary, the grace of God works in every type to produce many benefits, advantages, and blessings, whether for the one who possesses these traits, or for his family, his church, and his country.

The Holy Spirit, who descended on the disciples in the upper room and alighted upon each of them in the shape of divided tongues of fire to confirm their individuality, distinctiveness, and uniqueness. God certainly does not want to make carbon copies of men, but is happy to deal with each soul individually. As a wise artist and competent architect, he can make of every soul a beautiful icon that is an expression of the great skill of its creator. Therefore, regardless of personality type, the lord is able to sanctify it, and to bless this type in order to render it blessed and fruitful.

Just as the young minister must not try to impose his own type on those he ministers to, no individual has the right to hate his personality type or wish he had a different one. This doubtless is an indication of a lack of understanding of the abilities, potentials and advantages of each type. Society, whether it is the church or the country needs them all.

## **Personality types:**

There are many ways of classifying personality types; we give two methods by way of example:

**THE FIRST CLASSIFICATION:** (according to the dominant activity) is the human personality, which is classified into three types according to the individual's dominant activity: rational, sentimental, or striving.

### **The Rational Personality:**

This Type is characterized by dominance of reason, for it does not cease to study, examine, and analyze. This is a well-read cultured, educated personality. Its emotions are generally calm. It is carrying out analytic and profound studies, whether on individual human life, the life of groups, or the life of the whole nation.

### **The Sentimental Personality:**

This type is characterized by emotional activity; it is loving and affectionate, able to make good relations with many whether in the family circle, in church, or in society. It is loving personality and is loved by many, with overflowing affections, warm feelings, and numerous friendships.

### **The Striving Personality: (Active)**

This type is characterized by great energy, never ceasing its activity and movement. It cannot bear to be still. It is the right type for trips, parties, organizations, and exhibitions. It is capable of implementing and supervising various field projects.

**THE SECOND CLASSIFICATION:** (according to the dominant traits) this classification is based on the individual's dominant characteristics:

### **The Leadership Personality:**

This type has a strong will and self-confidence and is able to lead others. Clear vision is one of its assets and it possesses energy, determination, independence, and its emotions are under control. This type is inclined to work on its own.

### **The Sociable Personality:**

This personality is characterized by vitality, energy, and the ability to soon make warm and friendly relations with people. It has many friends, is enthusiastic, cheerful, and affectionate. It has tendency to react quickly and emotionally.

### **The Perfectionist Personality:**

This is gentle and sensitive, thoughtful and creative. It constantly seeks perfection and what is better. It is self-critical, organized, and analyzes matters carefully and in detail. It is conscientious and responsible, but is often self-centered, overcritical, and moody.

### **The Serene Personality:**

It is Calm for it controls its feelings and its reactions. It is capable and disciplined, organized, practical, conscientious, and cheerful. It listens attentively to others and is generally objective. However, it can be slow, hesitant, sometimes obstinate and ironic.



## **The Work of Grace in Human Personality:**

God's Holy Spirit is able to "baptize" any personality whatever its type, for there is no such thing as a "spiritual personality" but there is a "garden full of different types of personalities", some examples of which are:

### **1. The Rational Personality:**

It is capable, with God's grace, to undertake spiritual, ecclesiastical, and Biblical Studies and research. It constantly studies the Bible and Church writings, as well as the various church subjects such as the many different branches of Theology: theoretical, literary, comparative, doctrinal, historical, and ritual.

There is no doubt that the Church needs these researches so that it can learn about its heritage and face the age it is living in on a solid foundation of serious studies. The Church also needs them to study the innovations of the era, whether in philosophy, education, psychology, sociology, medicine, engineering, or astronomy. It needs their research so that it can determine its stance on contemporary issues such as space exploration, genetic engineering, drugs, AIDS, and test-tube babies. These issues need studies and scholars, and the best ones for the job are the rational studious personalities.

### **2. The Sentimental Personality:**

It has a significant and effective role to play in ministering to individuals, in mobilizing groups, and in leading meetings so that they follow holy and constructive directions because of its characteristically good relations with those it ministers to.

The sentimental personalities can build bridges of love and cooperation between the church and society so that the church is not isolated from its environment, but on the contrary, participates in the life of the country.

The personal touches of love are essential keys to the heart of man, "for love is stronger than death" (songs 8:6) and "love never fails" (1 Cor. 13:8).

### **3. The striving Personality:**

Its role cannot be ignored, for it organizes conferences, celebrations, exhibitions, and other church activities at the level of the class, the local church, the whole church, at both the ecumenical and national levels. It is an active sociable personality, capable of managing, organizing, mobilizing and directing the various activities effectively and efficiently, since it is attentive to all the different aspects of an undertaking.

### **4. The Leadership Personality:**

When the Holy Spirit fills it and His grace works in it, it is used by Him to lead inside the church and to wit-

ness outside it. Leadership is an essential component of work and service, for without a wise leadership and a sound vision, the people have a hard time, and some might be lost. God has granted leadership qualities to certain people from whom He has chosen church leaders at the different levels of the church hierarchy: the pope, the bishops, the clergy, and those responsible for service. Their role will certainly be effective in service and in encouraging many to work in the Lord's vineyard and in building the country.

### **5. The Sociable Personality:**

It can be used by God to bring a great many into the fold of salvation and to persuade them to lead a sanctified life. It can be instrumental in discovering the talents, gifts, and capabilities God has given others. They can become essential building block in the Kingdom, useful in attracting souls, in promoting the unity of the Christian family, in bringing about reconciliation, and in establishing relations of love and goodwill among all neighbors. All these are important matters that need a certain type of effective sociable personality.

### **6. The Perfectionist Personality:**

At the hands of the Holy Spirit, it can be effective in bringing others to Christian perfection. It can be effective in revising the programs, methods, and the curricula used in service until they are perfect. It can, with the grace of God, present a good image of real Christianity, whether in the family, the church, or society. It is a personality type that is never complacent, constantly striving for perfection in morals, in service, and in academic studies.

### **7. The Serene Personality:**

At the hands of the Lord, it is lovely in a world that is confused and clamorous, full of noise and upheavals and problems. It is this type that is filled with faith and trust in God's promises. It is able to transmit calm and serenity to others, thus becoming a cause of peace of mind to many because it gives them, from the Lord's storehouse, a measure of faith that dispels their worries and lulls their fears. These results in the ability to look ahead and to take positive steps in order to calmly find solutions to existing problems. No matter what type of personality we have, the important thing is that it be anointed by the Holy Spirit to be used by God for the spreading of the kingdom.

Let us all rejoice in the gifts of the Lord and the infinite power of God's Spirit to sanctify and consecrate man regardless of personality type and to make his energy, his talents and gifts fruitful to the glory of His Holy Name.



# TO THE ENGAGED COUPLES

## Mistakes and Faults Committed during the engagement period

by Fr. Gawargious Kolta



**There are many mistakes and abuses committed by some couples during the engagement period. We are going to mention the most important ones:**

### **1- Pretending to be different from Reality:**

**During this important period, each fiancé should not cover his/her habits, style of life and the characteristics of him/her from the other fiancé. For example:**

- 1- Having premarital affairs, and you pretend to be virgin.
- 2- Not religious and you pretend to be religious and practice spiritual activities only to please your fiancé.
- 3- Living in debt or bankruptcy and you cover this financial problem.
- 4- Having bad habits, such as smoking, drinking, or gambling, and you cover them.
- 5- Having certain disease or health problem (such as diabetes or depression), and taking special medicine regularly, and you cover this defect. **It is a fraud and can lead to annulment after marriage.**
- 6- Pretend to be very happy with the other fiancé, but in the same time you **have doubts** to continue this relation.
- 7- Showing romantic affection while you have cold feelings to your fiancé.
- 8- Pretending to be cooperative and planning to take positive role after marriage, while you are nonflexible.
- 9- Considering that social activities are unethical or indecent, and you pretend to be very social and friendly with people of both genders.
- 10- Short-tempered and easily stirred up, and you pretend to be calm, patient and long-suffering.
- 11- Self-centered and selfish, and you pretend to be a sacrificing person and good giver.
- 13- Pretending to be good listener, while you disrespect and disgrace others in conversations..
- 14- Having civil marriage or married before in other denomination church, and you cover this matter from your fiancé. It is a **fraud and can lead to annulment after marriage.**
- 15- Not civilized and you pretend to be very cultured.
- 16- Hiding the truth of your exact title in your work, and magnifying your position, such as saying that you are a manager in a bank, while you are a teller, or working as a cashier in a Shell gas

station and saying that you are a manager in Shell Company.

**All those bad habits must be mentioned, discussed frankly before marriage.**

### **2- Uncontrolled emotions and desires:**

Each fiancé should control his/her emotions towards the other during engagement. Usually Satan tempts the engaged couples to have physical relations, and if any or both have weak will, they may commit immoral relations.

It is normal to be attracted to your fiancé, but both must control themselves, till they get the sacrament of Holy Matrimony. **Both must avoid any type of physical relation.** The body of your fiancé is not yet yours, till both get married.

Both fiancé must **avoid fornication**, because it is a sinful deed, and the engagement period will not be controlled by God but by Satan.

Such emotions make the **couples blind to discover and see mistakes, the bad habits**, and characters of your fiancé.

You must honor your body and the body of your fiancé. Our bodies are temples for the Holy Spirit, **and we should not blemish the temple of the Holy Spirit.**

On the other hand, sometimes a big problem may occur, if one of the fiancé has no interest to continue the relation and breaks the engagement for any reason. His/her fiancé will be greatly **hurt emotionally**, physiologically and psychologically, because he/she offered the other his/her body, before marriage.

### **3- Disrespect of the parents' in-law:**

Each fiancé should respect his/her parents' in-law, if they commit some mistakes. They must consider that there are some discrepancies between the old generation and the new one. Sometimes they are bias or ridiculous in discussing any type of marriage preparations. The fiancé must respect the views of the parents' in-law, and try to compromise.

It is not right to disrespect the parents' in-law or dishonor them, when they do not speak your language. All the problems of preparation for the wedding and the reception must be solved wisely, and in a spirit of love. If there is discrepancy in views with the in-laws and the fiancé could not compensate, the matter should be discussed with their priest, who would try wisely to solve the disputes, and any other discrepancies.

Every spouse must love his/her parents' in-law as their own parents, and should make peace not only with them but also with their household.

#### **4- Conveying the private news and secrets of your family to your fiancé:**

Every fiancé should cover the secrets and the news of his/her family and not discuss it with his/her partner, without the approval of his/her family. Every home has its own secrets and has the right to keep it for them.

Sometimes the fiancé considers that the other fiancé becomes a member of the family, and convey the secrets and the plans of his/her family to the other. For example, it is not right to uncover the financial situation of the family, the relation of the members of the family with each other, or with relatives, hassles and the hot arguments between the members of the family, or the history of the family.

#### **5- Ignoring the mistakes, the bad habits and characteristics of their fiancé:**

There are some persons who try to cover or ignore the bad habits, and characteristics of their partners, thinking that they would be able to change them after getting married. This is completely wrong and usually it does not work at all. On the contrary, sometimes they get worse after marriage, because most fiancé pretend and try to please the other, and behave politely during the engagement period. For example:

1- The miser fiancé will never change after getting married, and usually gets worse.

2- The short tempered person will get worse after marriage because he usually pretends to be polite during engagement.

3- The person who gets jealous and doubtful during engagement will get worse after marriage.

4- The unsocial person will not be social after marriage, and it is hard to change him/her thereafter.

5- It is merely impossible to change a person who is an addict to any kind of addiction; like smoking, gambling, drinking, or prone.

6- The person who is not religious and dislikes any religious activity, such as fasting, praying, Bible readings, regular attendance of the church liturgies, confession and Holy Communion, will not change after getting married. Also, he/she will most probably have bad effect on the other spouse and the children in the future.

7- The person who is firm and not flexible cannot be changed after getting married; he/she will not submit easily to other spouse.

8- A person who shows selfish attitudes during the engagement period, he/she will not be easily changed after marriage. He/she would love to take and not to give, and if they give, they ask for reward.

9- The person who has bad relations with his/her own parents, and has lived independently before marriage, will not be friendly with the relatives of the other spouse after getting married. His/her spouse will feel as if she/he is living in a jail and the other spouse is the jail keeper.

If any fiancé ignores the mistakes and the bad habits of the

other fiancé, he/she will suffer greatly after getting married and both will have a miserable and unsuccessful marriage. In addition, the children will also suffer. It is important to discuss these mistakes and the bad habits with a priest or Christian marriage counselor, before getting married.

#### **6- Putting a heavily financial burden on the fiancé:**

Many persons put heavy financial burden on their partners, concerning the preparation of their homes, and the reception parties. This situation will lead to high debts and make them live in a very tight budget in order to pay the debts. The fiancé must be wise in spending their savings for marriage, and try to minimize spending by buying less expensive furniture and house equipment, considering that they can change everything afterwards. Sometimes they spend great amounts of money to show off or to look like some other person's wedding. The couple must have one way of thinking on these financial matters.

#### **7- Forgetting the important occasions of your fiancé and the in-laws:**

Each fiancé must remember the important occasions of his/her fiancé and his/her family. Forgetting these occasions can cause problems, especially for women. These occasions are: birthday, mother's day, valentine day, Christmas, Easter and anniversaries. It is not important to buy expensive gifts in every occasion, but the value of the gift is in the care and love behind it.



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# CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITIES: Will They Obey God or Man?



BY MATT BARBER

It's by design. As I, and others, have repeatedly warned, the establishment of so-called "gay marriage" as a new-fangled federal "right," and the free exercise of religion as guaranteed by the First Amendment simply cannot coexist in harmony. Things diametrically at odds cannot possibly occupy, with any coherence, the same time and space.

The secular left is tripping over itself right now to prove my point. In the wake of last month's *Obergefell v. Hodges* opinion – an opinion that somehow divined a top secret "constitutional right" for Patrick Henry to "marry" Henry Patrick – liberals are now demanding, as both Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito predicted, that Christian university's immediately abandon recognition of, and obedience to, God's unequivocal natural sexual order, and adopt, instead, the new pagan orthodoxy.

In a July 14 article in *The Atlantic* headlined, "Gay Marriage and the Future of Evangelical Colleges," University of Tampa professor David R. Wheeler asks,

"Now that same-sex couples have the right to wed, will higher-ed institutions that condemn LGBT students still be eligible for federal funding?"

Wheeler is not alone in asking. "As cultural evolution on the issue of LGBT rights continues to accelerate, it's inevitable that some Americans will start asking hard questions about whether it makes sense to allocate scarce public resources to institutions that are not only anti-gay, but proud of it," opines anti-Christian bigot Barry Lynn, of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. "For starters, can federally supported educational institutions bar married same-sex couples from living together in student housing? I doubt it," he adds. In other words, Christian universities must together embrace and facilitate homosexual sin, or lose, at once, both tax-exempt status and access to all students who choose to fund their education via federal loans and grants (which is most of them).

This presents quite a conundrum. It's also a test. Christian universities must obey God, disobey man and suffer unsavory temporal consequences, or obey man, sell their souls for mammon and suffer a-little-more-than-unsavory eternal consequence.

This is where faith comes in.

It's really not that complicated. The Christian university that chooses the path of least resistance and conforms to the world – that is, disobeys God and adopts the world's morally relative (read: unbiblical) standards (or lack thereof) on sex and sexuality – immediately becomes at enmity with God. The Christian university that intentionally turns a blind eye to sexual immorality of any kind, or otherwise allows and recognizes sin-based "same-sex marriage," ceases to be a Christian university and, instead, becomes an apostate university – a university better identified as "Christian in name only."

As Jesus admonished, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Indeed, on the question of whether Christian universities will capitulate on sodomy-based "marriage," the path of least resistance is the broad road that stems from the wide gate and leads to destruction.

**Read full article @: <http://townhall.com/columnists/matt-barber/2015/07/20/christian-universities-will-they-obey-god-or-man-n2027261/page/full>**

# The Scarlet Cord of Blood through the Scriptures



## From Genesis to Revelation:

Fr. Augustinos Hanna

Through the rivers of blood of the sacrifices which started right after the fall of man in the garden of Eden, we find the plan of God for our redemption and salvation. They were types of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which shall be shed on the cross in the fullness of time.

These are some examples of that scarlet cord of which Rahab put in her window as a token of her salvation and security (Joshua 2:18,21): The skin coats (Gen.3:21), Able's offering (Gen.4:4), Noah's burnt offerings (8:20), Abraham's ram and Isaac's sacrifice, the blood of the lamb of the Passover (Exod. 12), the four bloody sacrifices of Leviticus). This scarlet cord of blood is penetrating almost every book of the Scriptures till Revelation 1:5 & 5:6 & 7:9-14 & 12:11 & 13:8).

**The key verse** that explains all these sacrifices in **Leviticus 17:11** says: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the alter to make atonement for the soul."

That is why St. Paul says: "And according to the law almost all things are purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). The idea of the blood sacrifices in the Old Testament as a type or a shadow of the blood of Christ is explained in detail in the letter to the Hebrews chapters 9 & 10.

When the Lord Jesus instituted the **Sacrament of Eucharist**, He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: "Drink from it all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. 26:26-28).

St. Peter assures the same fact by saying: "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver of gold... **but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in**

**these last times for you.**" (1 Pet. 1: 18-20).

### 10 Essential Works of Christ's Blood

**1. Redemption:** "In Him we have redemption through His blood" (Eph. 1:7 & Col. 1:14)

**2. Forgiveness:** "This is My blood which is shed for the remission of sins" (Matt 26:28)

**3. Cleaning:** "The blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation and washed their robes and make them white in the blood of the lamb." (Rev. 7:14).

**4. Reconciliation:** "By Him- Jesus- to reconcile all things to Himself... having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. 1:20).

**5. Victory over Satan:** "And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb." (Rev 12:11).

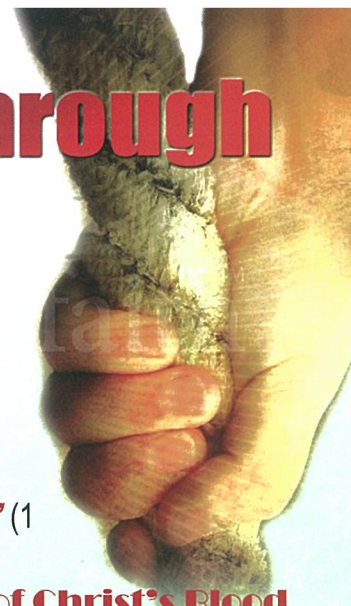
**6. Justification:** "Being justified freely by His grace through redemption that is in Christ Jesus by His blood" (Rom. 3:24).

**7. Overcoming the world:** "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).

**8. Sanctification:** "For by one offering, He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." (Heb. 10:14)

**9. Rescue from judgment:** "Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you." (Exo. 12:13).

**10. The Right of entering into Heaven:** "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.." (Heb. 10:19) & "These are the ones who...washed their robes in the blood of the lamb" (Rev. 7:14).





## Glory Heavyweights of the Middle East

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 speaks of how the momentary afflictions of this life have the capacity to bestow believers with the most coveted honor that can be earned. It is the eternal weight of glory that exceeds the highest honors and accomplishments available on earth. However, earning this reward has an inescapable qualification.

While experiencing any form of affliction, particularly that which is faith related; we must focus our attention on the eternal realm rather than the temporal realm that generates suffering. This means that inclinations to murmur to the Lord about the unfairness of situations are overridden by decisions to count it all joy when we encounter diverse trials of life.

To put our minds on victimization is to fail. To focus on the heavenly rewards of Christ's victory on our behalf works to position us to be crowned with glory. If fiery trials take all of our earthly possessions; we rejoice that better ones await us in heaven. Should loved ones forsake us; the Holy Spirit has saints in reserve that will come into our lives as more dependable replacements. If the tents of our earthly bodies are tortured and shredded at death; the glorious tabernacles of our redeemed spirits will wisp us into the matchless grandeur of holy immortality.

At this writing, there are brave believers in the Middle East who are experiencing temporal horrors. Yet, they purposely put themselves at risks because their hearts are set on the eternal dimension.

**I am speaking of the Coptic Christians of Egypt.**

**The Copts are descendants of the original non-Arab Egyptians.** Orthodox Coptic Christians comprise the earliest roots of Christianity still in existence. They have a unique approach to evangelizing dangerous Muslims. Coptic students excel in their

studies of technology, science, and business with expectation of being hired by Muslim firms of the Middle East.

Islamic businesses have found that Coptic employees have qualities that are not universal among Muslims. Among these are honesty and dedication to the company's advancement. The evangelistic hope of Coptic workers is that Muslim employers and coworkers will take note of the different level of integrity that they exhibit. This has proved to attract new converts to the Christian faith.

This is a form of evangelism does not require interjection of religious words every other breath. It gently convinces observers to initiate questions. Perhaps, there are some who would think robust-in-your-face-I-got-Jesus witnessing style braver.

There is a day coming when you will recognize the impressive bravery that Coptic witness represents. It will be when you meet one of the 21 Coptic believers in heaven who were recently beheaded by ISIS on a Libyan beach. It was the purposes of the Kingdom of God that inspired their seeking employment in Libya. They were among the best contenders for titles of champion heavyweights of the glory of God in the Middle East.

When you enter the aura of the presence of one of them, do not be surprised if you experience something humbling, yet exhilarating. Your head might bow slightly and your shoulders too might tend to slump from an electrical-honey-like pressure. What is at work? It is the eternal weight of glory that the Coptic believer earned on earth overshadowing you.

Within my spirit, I have conviction that every Christian can possess his own distinctive weight of glory. If that is the case, one of the infinite joys of eternity will be the mutual overshadowing of one another's weight of glory as we embrace.



# Doing Nothing Is Not an Option



By Dr. James Dobson

I expressed in a letter to our constituents last month that I continue to grieve over the U.S. Supreme Court decision handed down on June 26, 2015. This ruling, called *Obergefell*, redefined natural marriage and expanded the legal definition of this 5,000 year-old institution to include same-sex unions.

We are convinced that this unconstitutional decision, issued by five unelected, unaccountable and imperious Justices, will ultimately prove to be as catastrophic. This Court decision is not about same-sex marriage, except only tangentially. Many gay and lesbian groups have admitted that marriage has never been their primary objective. Instead, it is about everything else. What's at stake is the entire culture war.

To begin, it is an expression of hostility toward people who take their Christianity seriously. As you probably know, certain groups and organizations hate us. It is about weakening the Church of Jesus Christ and limiting what pastors and ministers can say and do publically. It is about undermining the religious liberties of Christians that are guaranteed by the Constitution. It is about attacking Christian schools, Christian non-profit organizations such as Family Talk, and Christian businesses, hospitals, charities, and seminaries. It is about Christian colleges and universities, and about whom their leaders choose as professors and what their students will be taught. It's about government funding and accreditation. It is all at risk. You'll see.

This law will also result in God-fearing laymen being dragged into court for trumped-up charges, such as those thrown at Aaron and Melissa Klein, who refused to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex ceremony.

There is almost no limit to what will be imposed on the American public as a result of *Obergefell*. There is every indication that a barrage of court cases has been pre-planned and will be implemented against those who dare to disagree with the government's view of marriage. Some will lose their jobs for failing to knuckle under.

Some will lose their professional licenses. Some will be persecuted, ridiculed and fined. Some will go to prison. After all, the Supreme Court has ruled that same-sex

marriage is an inviolable Constitutional right that will trump other liberties considered untouchable for more than 200 years.

Already there is speculation about other permutations of the same-sex decision being added to the law, including polygamy and what are called polyamorous relationships, meaning "many loves." The decree represents a sharp turning point in the moral character of our nation, which is changing day by day.

But let's talk now about what concerns me most. *Obergefell* will give broad access to our children and future generations. I grieve over what will happen to kids in public schools. They will be taught that right is wrong and wrong is right, and that the teachings of Scripture are unreliable and inaccurate. How unthinkable it is that in some states kindergartners, barely out of babyhood, are being taught adult perverse behavior that should never be discussed in the classroom. Soon, publishers of public school textbooks throughout the country will have to rewrite and re-illustrate materials to make them conform to the demands of *Obergefell*.

It matters not that these revisions will contradict the beliefs and convictions of Christian parents. It has already become the law of the land in some states.

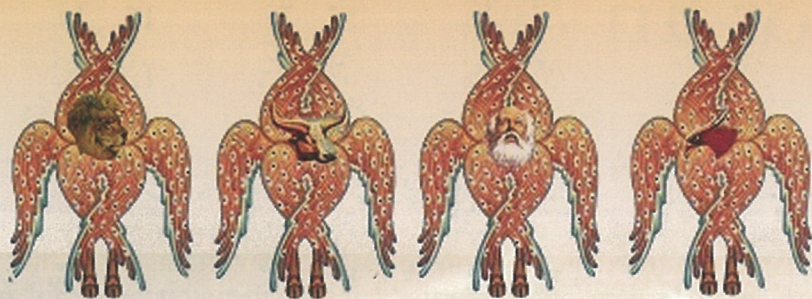
Anything activists can dream up could be imposed on our children by liberal judges. LGBT propaganda will be blatantly taught to wide-eyed kids who are too young to understand how they are being manipulated. There is no consideration that the messages given will contradict the beliefs and convictions of millions of parents. The wishes of moms and dads will have been overridden and superseded by five Justices who have a better plan for their kids. Anything activists can dream up could be imposed on our children by liberal judges. LGBT propaganda will be blatantly taught to wide-eyed kids who are too young to understand how they are being manipulated. There is no consideration that the messages given will contradict the beliefs and convictions of millions of parents. The wishes of moms and dads will have been overridden and superseded by five Justices who have a better plan for their kids.

This is not the first time in recent history that children

*Continued on P.17*

# THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

the Books of Ezekiel & Revelation



Fr. Augustinos Hanna

## WHO ARE THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES?

There are many interpretations and contemplations about the four living creatures, who are mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel (especially chapters 1, 10 and in the Book of Revelation 4:6-10).

First of all they are not beasts, as it seems from some poor translations, but they are angelic creatures or high rank archangels.

In the book of Ezekiel 10, it is mentioned expressly 21 times that they are the “Cherubim”. Everyone had four faces and four wings, which refer to unity and oneness. They are stretching their wings to show readiness in service. “And the Cherubim were lifted up. This is the living creature I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chebar, I knew they were cherubim. Each one had four faces and each one four wings...etc.” (Ezek. 10:15-21).

The first time we met with the Cherubim was in the Book of Genesis chapter 3, “So the Lord drove out the man; and He replaced the Cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life” (Gen. 3:24).

The second time was in the book of Exodus 25; they were mentioned in Paris in the Tabernacle, on the cover of the mercy seat, protecting the sacred articles in the Ark of Covenant (Exod. 25:18-20). Also they were embroidered on the veil of the Tabernacle as well as the Temple (2 Chronicles 3:14).

Psalm 18:10 speaks figuratively of the Yahweh’s riding upon a cherub.

In Ezekiel 28, we read, not only about the lamentation for the king of Tyre, but about the fall

of Satan who was described as “cherub” before his fall:

“you were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty...You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you, you were on the holy mountain of God...You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you...” (Ezek. 28:12, 14-19, compare with Isaiah 14:14).

St. Clement of Alexandria and St. Jerome, as well as Philo the Jewish historian and philosopher, see that the word “cherub” means “knowledge”, and therefore, the cherubim-plural of cherub, are the angels of knowledge, while the Seraphim are the angels of praising full of flaming love (Isaiah 6:1-7).

## THE BEST INTERPRETATIONS:

Among the best interpretations about the four living creatures, are the following:

**1. \* The face of a man:** shows wisdom and knowledge.

\* The face of a lion: shows power and courage.

\* The face of an ox: shows sacrifice, patience and carrying heavy loads.

\* The face of an eagle: shows vision, power in flight, swift and high.

## 2. They refer to the attributes of God:

\* The face of the man: to His wisdom and knowledge.

\* The lion: refers to God’s power and majesty.

\* The ox: to His patience and justice.

\* The eagle: to His glory, height and sight.



### 3. They represent the earthly creatures:

- \* **The face of man:** *for the human race*
- \* **The lion:** *for the wild beasts*
- \* **The ox:** *for the tame animals.*
- \* **The eagle:** *for the birds.*

### 4. They refer to the four Gospels:

\* **the face of the man:** *refers to the gospel of St. Matthew who started his genealogy of Christ as the Son of Man.*

\* **The face of the lion:** *refers to the gospel of St. Mark who started his gospel with the roaring voice crying in the wilderness.*

\* **The face of ox:** *to the gospel of St. Luke, who started his gospel with the sacrifices which Zachariah was offering in the temple.*

\* **The face of eagle:** *refers to St. John who started his gospel with the Divinity of Christ and His everlasting presence.*

### 5. They refer to the Person of Christ:

- \* **The man:** *to His incarnation and humanity*
- \* **The lion:** *to His power, courage, and victory.*
- \* **The ox:** *to His priesthood and redemption.*
- \* **The eagle:** *to His Divinity and ascension to heaven.*

### They refer to the stages of Christ's salvation:

*St. Jerome saw in them the mystery of our salvation through the four essential stages which are:*

**The face of a man:** *The incarnation.*

**The ox:** *The crucifixion and redemption.*

**The face of lion:** *The resurrection.*

**The face of the eagle:** *The ascension.*

**They may refer to the church of Christ that carries the diving life:**

*The bishops - The priests - The deacons- The people (congregation).*

**They refer to the sanctification of our new nature:**

**Man:** *(mental)*

**Eagle:** *(spiritual)*

**OX:** *(physical)*

**Lion:** *(authority)*

have been used as pawns in the hands of tyrants. I'm reminded of the words of German dictator, Adolf Hitler, spoken as war in Europe approached. He said, "Your child belongs to us already . . . what are you? You will pass on. Your descendants, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing but this new community."

Abraham Lincoln said something similar but more benevolently. He wrote, "The philosophy of the classroom today will soon be the philosophy of the government tomorrow."

Rod Dreher is a senior editor and blogger at The American Conservative. If his words don't disturb you, read them again. He said:

### **Orthodox Christians Must Now Learn To Live as Exiles in Our Own Country**

Here is one last chilling remark made by Justice Samuel Alito. He wrote, "I assume that those who cling to old beliefs will be able to whisper their thoughts in the recesses of their homes, but if they repeat those views in public, they will risk being labeled as bigots and treated as such by governments, employers, and schools."]

Our responsibility is summarized in the final words of the Manhattan Declaration, written by Professor Robby George, Dr. Timothy George, and the late Charles Colson, as follows:

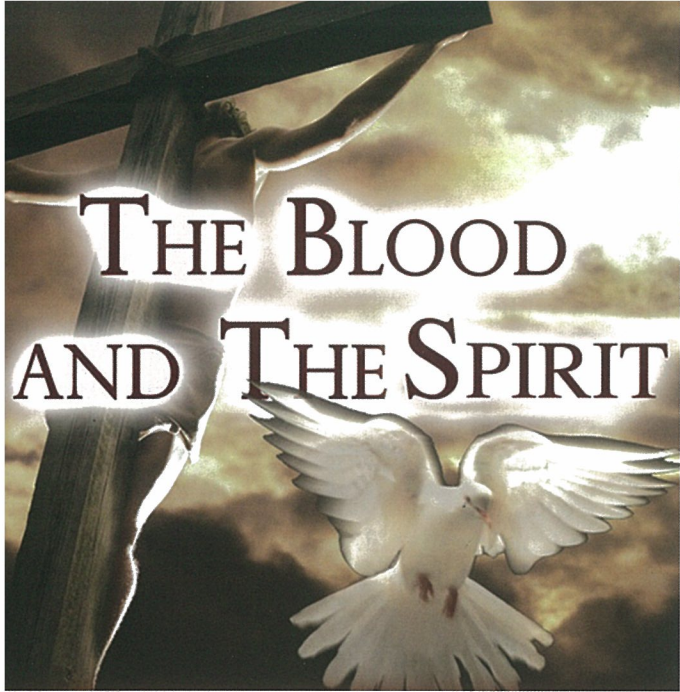
" . . . Because we honor justice and the common good, we will not comply with any edict that purports to compel our institutions to participate in abortions, embryo-destructive research, assisted suicide and euthanasia, or any other anti-life act; nor will we bend to any rule purporting to force us to bless immoral sexual partnerships, treat them as marriages or the equivalent, or refrain from proclaiming the truth, as we know it, about morality and immorality and marriage and the family. We will fully and ungrudgingly render to Caesar what is Caesar's. But under no circumstances will we render to Caesar what is God's."

It is time for us as Christians to awaken and allow our collective voices to be heard. We must pray fervently for our nation and for a national revival. We must defend our beliefs in a spirit of Christian love, but with deep conviction that the religious liberties handed down to us by the Founding Fathers must not be relegated to the ash heap of history.

**God bless America.**

**Note: The above is an excerpt of the original letter of Dr. Dobson**

**Read the full letter of Dr. Dobson**



# THE BLOOD AND THE SPIRIT

**“There are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these agree in one” (1 John 5:8)**

We do not always enjoy the blessings and power of Christ’s blood because we do not clearly understand what those benefits are or how the blood accomplishes them.

This is the thought expressed in the above Scripture verse used for the text of this chapter. The Apostle had in the previous verses spoken about faith in Jesus, and then he directs attention to the testimony on which that faith rests. He mentions three witnesses:

- **The Water:** This refers to an outward and human act commanded by God by those who, turning from their sins, presented themselves to Him in baptism.
- **The Blood:** In this we see what God has done to bring about a real and living cleansing.
- **The Spirit:** It is by the Spirit that we witness of both the others is confirmed.

In this chapter we shall confine our attention to the truth that the united witness of the Spirit and the blood is the foundation of our faith.

## **I. The Union of the Spirit and the Blood in the Work of Redemption.**

What first demands our attention here is that it is through the Spirit alone that the blood has its power. We read on the Epistle of Hebrews (9:14). “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” The blood possesses its power to cleanse and to make us fit to serve the Living God by the Eternal Spirit who was in our Lord when He shed His blood. This does not mean merely that the Holy Spirit was in the Lord Jesus and bestowed on His

person and His blood a divine worth. It is much more than that—it indicates that the shedding of His blood was brought about by the Eternal Spirit, and that the Spirit lived and worked in that blood. As a result, when the blood was shed it could not decay as a dead thing, but as a living reality it could be taken up to heaven, to exercise its divine power from thence.

It is expressly for this reason that the Spirit is here called “the Eternal Spirit.” “Eternal” is one of the words of Scripture which everyone thinks he understands, but there are few who realize what a deep and glorious meaning it has. It is supposed that “eternal” is something that always continues, something that has no end. This explanation is a merely negative one and tells us only what “eternal” is not, but it teaches us nothing about its nature and being. Everything that exists in time and has a beginning and is subject to the law of increase and decrease, of becoming and decaying. What is eternal has no beginning and knows no beginning and knows no change or weakening because it has in itself a life that is independent of time. In what is eternal there is no past which has already disappeared and is lost, and there is no future not yet possessed. It is always a glorious and endless present.

Now, when Scripture speaks of “eternal” life, “eternal” redemption, “eternal” joy, it means much more than to say merely they will have no end. By that word we are taught that he who has a share in eternal blessedness possess something in which the power of an endless life is at work. It is something in which there can be no change, nor can it suffer any diminution. And, therefore we may always enjoy it in the fullness of its life—bestowing blessings.

The object of Scripture in using that word is to teach us that if our faith lays hold of what is eternal, it will manifest itself in us as a power superior to all the fluctuations of our mind or feelings, with a youth which never grows old, and with a freshness which does not for a moment wither.

From this scripture we are taught something also about the blood of Jesus, **“Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God.”** Not only had the act of shedding His blood an eternally availing worth, the blood itself has Spirit and life in it. The worth, the blood itself has Spirit and life in it. The blood is made effectively by the power of an eternal life. This is why the Epistle to the Hebrews lays much emphasis on the work of Christ as being once for all and eternal. Notice the expression in Hebrews 7:17—**He is “a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”** “After the power of an eternal life” (verse 16), He has an “unchanging priesthood.” Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever live to make intercession for them” (verses 24, 25). He is “the Son who is consecrated for evermore” (verse 28). Further on we read (chapter 9:12): “By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, **having obtained an eternal redemption for us**”; and in 10:14: **“By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” It speaks also of “the blood of the everlasting covenant.”** By the Eternal Spirit the blood has obtained an eternal, ever-availing, ever-fresh, independent, imperishable power of life.

But the correlative is also true. As the blood possesses its power through the Spirit, so the Spirit manifests His full power and works effectively among men only through the blood.

We know that the outpouring of the blood was followed by the outpouring of the Spirit. And we know the reason for this. By sin, a middle wall of partition separated God and man. "The flesh" was the veil that made true union impossible. As long as sin was not atoned for, God, by his Spirit, could not take up a settle abode in the heart of man. Until the power of the flesh was broken and subdued, the Spirit could not manifest His authority. For this reason, there is no mention in the days of the Old Testament of an outpouring of the Spirit of God except as a prediction of what should be in the last days. Also our Lord Jesus was not in a position to bestow upon His disciples the Spirit with whom He had been baptized, even though He took them into the closest fellowship with Himself. Though He greatly loved them and longed to bless them.

***Our Lord has to die before He would baptize with the Holy Spirit. The blood is the life of man; the Spirit is the life of God.*** Man must sacrifice his sinful life, bear the penalty of his sin, and surrender himself entirely to God before God could dwell in him with His life. What man himself could not do, that the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, did for him. He shed His blood; He gave His life in entire surrender to the will of God as a satisfaction of the penalty of sin. When that was accomplished, it was possible for Him to receive the Spirit from the Father that He might pour Him out. ***The outpouring of the blood rendered possible the outpouring of the Spirit.***

This is declared in the Scriptures in such word as these: ***"The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified"*** (John 7:39). And again: ***"He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb"*** (Revelation 22:1). It was when the Lamb took possession of the throne with the Father that the Spirit could flow out as a river. In the preaching of John the Baptist these were, also, the two statements he made about Jesus: ***"Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world,"*** and ***"This is He who baptized with the Holy Spirit."***

It was necessary for our High Priest to enter into "the Holiest" with His blood and, having come out again, to appear before the throne with that blood. Only then could He bestow the Spirit from the throne as the seal that His work in the Holiest has wrought out a perfect recollection. The blood and the Spirit are inseparable, for only through the blood can the Spirit dwell in man.

In the execution of the work of Redemption, also, the activities of the blood and the Spirit are inseparably connected.

This is why we find in Scripture that what in one place is ascribed to the Spirit is in another place ascribed to the blood, and the work of sanctification is ascribed to both. Our Lord

said ***"Who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life,"*** adding afterwards, ***"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profits nothing"*** (John 6:54, 63). We find similar expressions in the Epistle to the Ephesians. After having said ***"You... are made nigh by the blood of Christ"*** (Ephesians 2:13), a little later Paul declares (verse 18) that ***"We... have access by one Spirit unto the Father."*** So also in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the scorning of the blood and of the Spirit is treated as one act. We read of those "who counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and have done despite upon the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29).

We have noticed that the "blood" is a word chosen by God as a short way of expressing certain thoughts, powers, and characteristics which are, as it were, included in it. It is not always easy, either in preaching or in personal exercise of faith, to find a perfect expression of these thoughts, powers, and characteristics. But this is what the Holy Spirit undertakes as His work, especially where faith is exercised about the blood. He will explain, and make living, the full glorious meaning of the word. By enlightening our understanding, He will make clear to us the great thoughts of God which are contained in the words "the blood." Even before the understanding can lay hold of them, He will make their power active in the soul. And He will not only send the power of the blood to the heart, but will so reveal it in the heart that the same inner nature which inspired Jesus in the shedding of His blood will be awakened in us, as it is written: ***"They overcome by the blood of the Lamb..., and they loved not their lives unto death"*** (Revelation 12:11).

It is great work of the Holy Spirit to glorify Jesus, to make Him glorious in human hearts, by bestowing the blessed experience of His redemption. And because the blood is the central point of redemption, the Holy Spirit will make the blood appear especially glorious to us and will glorify it in us. We can form some idea of the blood that was shed on earth in connection with the sin offering, but we have little conception of the blood that in "the Holiest" on high speaks and works power of eternal life. The Holy Spirit, however, comes with His heavenly, life-giving power to enable us to appropriate that which is eternal and to make it a real, living, inward experience in us.

Faith in the atoning power of the blood and in the personality of the Holy Spirit are two truths which are both denied when the church turns aside to error, while both of them are held fast by the true Church of God. Where the blood is honored, preached, and believed in as the power of full redemption, there the way is opened for the fullness of the Spirit's blessing. And, in proportion, as the Holy Spirit truly works in the hearts of man, He always leads them to glory in the blood of the Lamb. "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne... stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having... seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God" (Revelation 5:6). The blood and the Spirit proceed together from the Lamb, and together they bear witness to Him alone.

# Our Dear Graduates



## 1) God Wants You to Grow

When it comes to progress, there are no shortcuts. If you want to improve in any area of your life, you have to pay attention to the small stuff. You have to take one step at a time.

Say you want to get into shape physically or lose some weight (or both). Contrary to the promises made by miracle programs, machines, and drugs, there is no such thing as instant success. You have to pay attention to the details by eating and exercising correctly every day in order to realize long-term results. The same principle applies to improving your mind. There's no quick way to get a college degree. And even if a diploma isn't your goal, the only way to accumulate useful knowledge is disciplined, consistent study. You can't even train a dog overnight! It takes repetition, consistency, reinforcement, and practice. Otherwise, Fido will look at you as if to say, "You've got to be kidding!"

Well we're not kidding. It's a fact of life. To grow in any area, you've got to do the little things over and over again. The principle of growth through detail is especially true in your spiritual life, yet people think that by praying once in a while (when they get in trouble), by going to church twice a year (on Christmas and Easter, of course), and by cracking open a Bible once in a blue moon, God will smile on them and give them blessing upon blessing.

Make no mistake about it. God won't love you any more just because you do certain things. His love for you is always the highest love. But you will experience certain spiritual benefits if you pay attention to spiritual details. Like reading the Bible consistently. Or talking to God on a regular basis. Or helping others in need when the need is clear. We're not talking about spiritual legalism. Paying attention to the details of your spiritual life is all about discipline.

God wants you to grow spiritually because when you do, your life becomes more meaningful and more satisfying just like you feel when you make the consistent effort to improve physically, you will feel great about yourself when you make the effort to improve spiritually. And even better than that, the people around you will experience the benefits of your growth.

## 2) You Can Know God's Will

God's will is a paradox. It's both easy to find and difficult to discern. God's will can be immediate, or it may take years to figure out. God's will can frustrate you and give you tremendous peace.

One thing is for sure. You can know God's will. Although

it may seem mysterious, there's really no mystery to it. If you know where to look, God's will is there. And if you listen carefully, God will speak to you in amazing ways.

**First of all, God speaks through His word, the Bible.** Everything we need for living a life that pleases God- and what could be more in His will than that- is in the Bible. As you get to know God's Word, you will get to know God's will. **Second, God speaks through your own judgment and common senses.** But beware. Your decisions will line up with God's will only if you know God personally in the first place, and then only if our relationship with God is right. When you're in this condition, you will operate with "the mind of Christ." **The Holy Spirit will guide you from the inside.**

**Finally, and most commonly, God speaks through the details of your life.** One of the experienced servants put it in this way: "God speaks in the language you know best—not through your ears but through your circumstances." You think your life is an accident? Not a chance. You're here for a reason. And what you do matters to God. Everything; not just the stuff you do in church or Bible study (although that is very important), but in the everyday small stuff. That's where you'll find God's will most often.

Take a look at your life. Think about the moments and events—the details—and see how far you've come. Those "good things" weren't coincidences. You weren't just "lucky." If your heart has followed after God, then God has been leading you, and you have been doing His will, perhaps without even knowing it.

On the other hand, if you feel like life

is dealing you one bad hand after another and you feel sorry for yourself—and you're mad at God—maybe it's time to get back to the basics. Take the focus of yourself and get to know God better by reading His word, praying and associating with people who are in God's will. God wants to direct you through the details of your life. Give Him a chance.

### **3) Discipline Yourself (No One Else Will)**

Humans are funny beings. It used to be that many of us wanted every material thing we could get our hands on, and we wanted whatever it was to be bigger, better, or faster. Then we discovered that outward material things don't make us happy. So over the last few years we've turned inward. We've decided that it's what's inside that counts. Consequently, many of us have embarked on an inward journey, seeking to simplify our lifestyles while increasing our joy. The idea of simplifying your life is a good one. The problem is that we are attacking the goal with the same unbridled zest we used to collect all that stuff in the first place. Like a crazy pendulum, we swing from one extreme to the other with pleasure, somehow feeling empty at both places.

So how do you find the satisfaction you've been looking for? The key is balance, consistency, and perseverance, all of which come from one thing and one thing only: discipline.

Here's our dilemma. We want it all, and we want it now, whether it's an abundance of possessions or an abundance of simplicity. But nothing worthwhile comes quickly, and nothing worthwhile comes without discipline. Over life's long haul, discipline works in every dimension of your life: financial, physical, mental, and spiritual. If you've ever tried to get rich quick, tried to lose weight by taking a pill, tried to get knowledge by cramming at the last minute, or attempted to get close to God by asking for a miracle, you know what we're talking about.

It's easy to get caught in the trap of quick results when you focus on the results rather than the journey. The truth is, the joy in the journey, in the daily discipline of growing in the details of your mind, body, and spirit. The only way to bring abundance to your life—the kind of abundance that gives you joy—is to bring discipline into your life.

- + ***Discipline begins with small things done daily.***
- + ***You can plan to succeed or you can plan to fail. The choice is yours.***
- + ***Motivation increases when we assume large responsibilities with a short deadline.***
- + ***Don't be good at making excuses.***
- + ***Acquire good habits; abandon bad habits.***
- + ***Use your free time productively.***
- + ***Your dreams won't come true if you're sleeping.***
- + ***People will be more impressed by what you finish than by what you start.***

# Miscellaneous

## **1. From the readers:**

*Dear St. John Magazine,*

First I would like to offer a great spiritual greeting and thanks. You have no idea how much your magazine meant to me. God bless you and your service. How can I get the hard copy of it and recent version?

*-Deacon Abel Kassahun*

from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

## **2. The Spiritual Competition:**

St. John Church congratulates her children for the good results they got and their blessed and successful efforts. May the Lord Jesus Christ bless them to grow more and more in the grace and His knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

- + Elementary: Excellent
- + College: Excellent
- + Adults: Very good
- + Junior High: Very good
- + High School: Very good

## **3. St. John Magazine needs:**

- 1) Columnists
- 2) Translators from Arabic to English and vice versa.
- 3) Photographers, for all activities and events.
- 4) Typists, English and Arabic.
- 5) Reporters.
- 6) Readers are required to pay the \$50.00 annual subscription to cover the expenses and mail.
- 7) The magazine is the best and cheapest gift to offer to a relative or a friend, to preach and win souls to Christ.

## St. John Kids Camp



## High school spiritual competition 2015



## High school seniors' retreat 2015



## H.G. Bishop Tadros



# Congratulations

## Baptisms

### Weddings



St. John Church congratulates Akram Rashad, Gehan Kalil, Dr. Moheb and Mira Youssef, for the baptism

of their blessed son **Youssef**

Praying for his spiritual and physical growth in stature, wisdom and grace. May the Lord Jesus Christ grant him a blessed long life.

\* \* \*



St. John Church congratulates Ehab and Sally Attia for the baptism of their child, **Joseph**

May the Lord Jesus bless his life with health, strength and grace.

+ Congratulations Ehab and Sally. May God bless baby Joseph"

-Claire, Mina, Geddo Onsy and Teta Suzan.



St. John Church congratulates,

**LARA & GEORGE**

On their blessed marriage; wishing them a happy, fruitful life and a Strong Christian house built on the Rock of Christ, his word and church, in love, harmony and peace.

\* \* \*



ST. John Church congratulates,

**Nathan Kolta & Marianne**

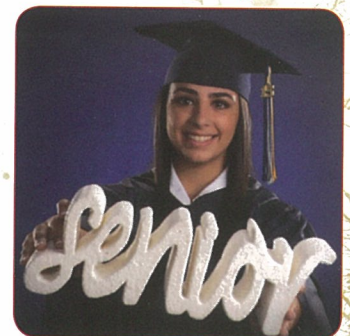
On their marriage, praying the Lord to grant them a happy blessed and fruitful long life. Congratulations to their two families.

### Monica Mikhail

### Dr. Irene M. Hanna

### Maryann Armanious

### Miriam Girgis



"Congratulations, Monica Mikhail, for graduating from UC Berkeley with a Bachelor's Degree in Biology and English Literature. We pray that God be with you in all what you do. *Love, Michael & Nagat, Abanoub, and Andrew.*"

Congratulations our beloved daughter Irene, on accomplishing your Doctor Degree in Pharmacy from New England University. We are proud of you and praying that the Lord whom you loved, may shine upon your future and make your way prosperous- *Love, Dad, Mom and Michael.*

Congratulations our beloved daughter Maryann for your graduation from High School. May the Lord Jesus continue to bless your future in college and always- Your proud family, *Ashraf, Seham and Marc.*

Congratulations on your graduation from High School. We are so proud of you. May the Lord guide you path and bless you with more success and happiness- *Love, Mom, Dad and Mark.*