



**THE COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE
ST. GEORGE AND ST. RUEISS CHURCH
SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM**

**Church Agape Sessions after the Divine
Liturgy
(Living the Gospel Gathering)**

Edition 2020

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Church Agape sessions after the Divine Liturgy (Living the Gospel Gathering)

✝ The Agape sessions have been known since ancient times and are mentioned in the Book of Acts. (Acts 6)

✝ In the midst of this concerns-filled generation, it became necessary for the congregation to sit together in an Agape session after the Divine Liturgy that encompasses food as well. This gives children the opportunity to enjoy the activities prepared for them by the church. As a result, everyone rejoices because of their presence in the House of the Lord.

✝ The success of these Agape sessions after the Liturgy attracts more people to attend and get the blessings of the Divine Liturgy.

✝ In a pure & holy church atmosphere that includes happy and relaxing church hymns along with a 5-minutes spiritual training that is fit for practice during the week, it proved a great success and the people loved it. We have called this period a "living the gospel gathering". This expression was introduced in the church by the late saintly Father Pishoy Kamel who has an aromatic and loving memory in the church.

✝ We offer to you, our beloved fathers and servants, 30 topics (as a start) suitable for the Agape sessions after the Divine Liturgy, which we called "The gathering of Living the Gospel" and loved by everyone.

✝ God Willing for it to become a successful choice to all churches and we would like to hear back any comments from my fathers that they might have.

✝ We ask our Lord Jesus to bless this work for the glory of His name and to make it beneficial for all churches.

Fr. Rueiss Awad
St. George & St. Rueiss Coptic Orthodox Church
Toronto, Canada
May 2020



Παπoστολoς

πιάγιoς

Царкос





THE THRICE-BLESSED POPE SHENOUDA III
OF BLESSED MEMORY



HIS HOLINESS POPE TAWADROS II

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

FROM H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III

Deir Anba Ruciss, Ramses Avenue, ABBASSIYA,

CAIRO, EGYPT.

CABLE : ELANBARUEISS, CAIRO.



بطريركية الأقباط الأرثوذكس

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الى الدبنيه المباركيه القوم مرقس الياسن عبد المسيح
والذين تادرس يدقوب ملحي

سلام رعيه وبعد ،
زارني ابننا د. محفوظ وسعه المنهج القترح لدارس
التربية الكنسية بالمهجر . وقد درست معه الخطوط الاساسية
للمنهج ، دوره الدخول في التفاصيل . وابدت له بعض ملاحظات
من جهة مناهج العقيدة والحقن : وفي الواقع انه الجهد المبذول
جهد كبير جداً يحق الشكر . ومع ذلك تحتاج دروس الكتاب
المقدس الى زيادة . وسأرسل لكم ملاحظات اخري بالتفصيل بمشيئة
الرب .

فليبارك الرب كل ما قام به ابننا محفوظ من جهود في اعداد
المنهج ، وفي جميع المادة ، وفي عمل الترجمة . وليبارك الرب
أيضاً كل ما اشتركوا في العمل ، وفي المراجعة
وليكنه صدقنا هو ما نتطلع اليه من كان على قدر
امكاننا بننا . ويمكنه تزويد المنهج أيضاً بالصورة المناسبة والتي
تقرها كنيستنا من النواحي العقيدية والطقسية والتاريخية
الرب معكم . كونوا بخير

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سيد القديس اغناطيوس

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

FROM H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III

Deir Anba Ruciss, Ramses Avenue, ABBASSIYA,

CAIRO, EGYPT.

CABLE : ELANBARUEISS, CAIRO.



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To my blessed two sons: Hegomain Fr. Marcous Elias Abdel Massih and Hegomain Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty.

Peace and love be with you.

Dr. Mahfouz has visited me and brought with him the suggested Sunday school curriculum for the land of immigration. I have studied with him the basic topics of the curriculum without getting into details. Although that I have pointed out some concerns on the doctrine and dogma curriculum, it is clear that the amount of work spent on preparing the curriculum is huge and worth thanking. Nonetheless, the Bible study part of the curriculum needs to be increased. God willing, I will also send you additional details on this curriculum.

May the Lord bless all the effort that our son Mahfouz has done in preparing the Sunday school curriculum, in collecting the relevant topics, and in performing the translation of subjects. May the Lord also bless all those who have joined him in preparing this project and those who revised the topics.

Let our goal be performing our best to try and arrive at perfection given what we have from abilities. Lastly, I would also suggest the addition of different recognized pictures according to our doctrine, dogma and history to the Sunday school curriculum.

May the Lord be with you. Be in peace.

Signed

Pope Shenouda III

22 August 1986

The feast of St. Mary

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(1) AVOIDING THE TONGUE'S SINS

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue...” Proverbs 18:21

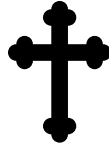
It is possible that man will carelessly allow the tongue to say what it wants despite having many blessings from our Lord. However, everything can be lost because of this negligence.

In James 3: 1-18, the whole chapter talks about the importance of the tongue and its danger. **“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.” James 3:6**

The sins of the tongue are many: pride and arrogance- self-pride - lying - cheating - deceit - fabrication - false testimony, falsehood and trickery - hatred or lack of love - insults - gossip - secrets disclosure - cruelty – hurtful words - fawning - blasphemy.

Exercise:

- (A) Beware and do not say any inappropriate words
- (B) Proverbs has 30 chapters. Read one chapter every day for a month and you would have read it all and benefit from it a lot.
- (C) You earn much when you train your tongue not to say any inappropriate word and when you treat people well in every word you say or mean.



(2) HOW TO REDUCE THE SINS OF THE TONGUE

Be slow to speak ... Do not rush your words, especially if you are in an emotional state. **“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” James 1:19**

- ❖ If someone angers you, do not rush to respond, but try to calm yourself first.
- Before uttering any word, try to review in your mind what reactions to this word would have from others. One of the saints said, "I have often spoken and regretted and I have never regretted silence."

Exercise: Reduce speech and speak only when it is necessary to speak.





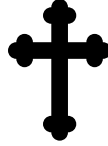
(3) ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYING WITH PSALMS

The Psalms are the Word of God ... By praying with Psalms we speak to God in the same way as He speaks and not in a weak human words.

- ❖ St. Paul "... **Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm...**" (1 Corinthians 26:14).
- ❖ St. Paul also said, **"speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord "** (Ephesians 5:19).
- ❖ As per the teaching of the Apostles "Let most of the prayers every day and night be from the Psalms because of what it has of thankfulness, praise, supplication and confession of sins."
- ❖ Saint Athanasius the Apostolic "Praising with psalms is a healing medicine for the soul".
- ❖ St. Isaac "psalms are the food to the spirit".
- ❖ Without psalms, prayer becomes for the materialistic things as well as it becomes short and shallow. However, with the prayer of psalms, a person prays what is in his/her heart and say it to our Lord.

Exercise: For a person who is not accustomed to praying with psalms, begin with:

- Two psalms from the Prime (Morning)prayer
- Two psalms from the Vesper (Eleventh Hour) prayer
- Two psalms from the Compline (Twelfth Hour) prayer
- Then increase with time and as the person feels and enjoys the blessing of the Psalms.



(4) HOW DO I CREATE A SPIRITUAL PROGRAM FOR MY LIFE?

I have to raise my eyes to pray and ask our Lord to choose the right spiritual program for me.

- ❖ I am not concerned with the literal implementation of the spiritual program. What worries me is that my heart is with our Lord. I work according to the grace of our Lord, to build up myself and the people that are around me. **"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh"** (Galatians 16: 5).
- ❖ Try to transform the spiritual program into good works such as visiting a patient, being with someone you love to share his/her grief, or giving food to someone in need.
- ❖ I have to balance my life: my body has a share and my spirit has a share ... Nothing dominates over the other so as not to have extremism/inequity in my life. Every need is within its limits.
- ❖ It is important that I do not push myself over its limits **"Stand on your feet and not on your toes in life."**



(5) WHERE DO I SEEK JOY IN ORDER TO FIND IT IN MY LIFE?

- ❖ All humans seek joy. No one wants sadness and grief.
- ❖ Where does a person find joy? St. Paul says of joy, "... **Rejoice in the Lord ...**" (Philippians 3:1). Then he says, "**Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!**" (Philippians 4: 4).
- ❖ God created man in a Garden of Eden after He created all the earth. So God wants man to be happy.
- ❖ The problem is that human search for joy away from our Lord through being independent from God.
- ❖ "... **do not rejoice in this...**" (Luke 10:20) Jesus said to disciples when the disciples were happy with the reputation and the casting out of the demons. "**... but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven**" (Luke 10:20). The spirit then rejoices in Christ, the kingdom, and heaven.
- ❖ St. Augustine "**You have created us in Your likeness; so we will not find rest except in You**"
- ❖ Then I seek joy through seeking God, the source of joy. The Divine Liturgy rejoices: "**I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the house of the Lord**" (Psalm 122). Communion makes me happy - in a prayer after Communion, we say "My heart is filled with joy and my tongue with gladness" - prayers of Midnight praise with its tunes make me happy. If I am not used to attending it, I begin by attending a small portion of it and increase it as times goes by.

Note: Cain wanted to find happiness for himself so he built a city and all people got busy in search of joy but away from God ... They did not find joy.

The word "Gospel" means a joyous word "**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**" (Matthew 11:28). Just reading some verses in the Bible makes me "rejoice". Try and experience it yourself.





(6) WHY WE PUT PAPER WITH PROBLEMS WRITTEN ON IT ON THE ALTAR?

- ❖ Every human being must pass through hardships in a part of his/her life and it is necessary that a person asks for his/her requests by faith ... and hope ... and trust **“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive”** (Matthew 21:22)
- ❖ The church is the house of our Lord dedicated to prayer: **“My house shall be called a house of prayer”** (Matthew 21:13).
- ❖ The church is a holy place, because it is the place of God's Spirit. **“Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”** (Genesis 28: 16-17).
- ❖ At church, we are guests at our Lord’s, the host, and He would like to give us our needs. He is a father among His children in the church and we are surrounded by angels.
- ❖ The priest puts the names of the confessors on a paper on the altar ... asking God to help them. He puts the names of those who have problems on the altar ... asking God's help to be with them. He puts the names of those who passed away on the altar asking for mercy to them.
- ❖ There is a fact in the Bible with Hezekiah the king in 2 Kings 19: 14-37 when King Sennacherib sent to him, with great pride, that he would destroy the city. Hezekiah prayed a long prayer and then took the letters and placed them before the Lord. And the LORD God of Israel said, **“I have heard”** (2 Kings 19:20).

- ❖ Sennacherib himself was attacked by his own sons and killed him. The LORD also sent His angel and killed 185,000 people from Sennacherib's army.
- ❖ Therefore, pray in the house ... Pray in the church ... Entreat to God in your request. Ask the priest to add you to his prayers ... Request the intercession of the saints ... and write a clear request and put it on the altar.





(7) WHAT ARE THE CONTENTS OF THE SPIRITUAL SOLITUDE?

- ❖ The spiritual solitude time with God is an essential element of the deep spiritual life with God as well as quietness "**that you also aspire to lead a quiet life**" (1 Thessalonians 4:11).
- ❖ It means to be alone with God. In Greek it is "Monos" and it means only me with our Lord and that means quietness.
- ❖ The feelings in the spiritual solitude are these feelings that Mary felt while when she sat at Jesus' feet hearing His words and not preoccupied with anything else.
- ❖ The effect of the spiritual solitude is self-reflection as well as internal assurance and internal renewal of oneself "**For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: (a) In returning and rest you shall be saved; (b) In quietness and confidence shall be your strength**" Isaiah 30:15
- ❖ Spiritual solitude is a period of spiritual freedom. Be alone with God with no phone. You start by crossing yourself. If you felt that you want to pray an hour from the Agpya, then that is good... and if you felt that you want to read a chapter of the Bible that is good. And if you felt that you want to hold yourself accountable "**In returning to God**" as mentioned in (Isaiah 30:15) - good. If you even feel that you want to relax your and take some minutes or sleep, that is good. What is meant to enjoy our fellowship with our Lord in complete freedom?
- ❖ The first solitude teacher was Jesus Christ himself:
 - He used to resign to the wilderness to pray

- And in the very early morning, He woke up and left to a vacant place and was praying

- He went to the mountain to pray and spent the whole night praying.

- ❖ What is the duration of the spiritual solitude? It can be gradual ... but must be daily if possible ... and the person grows gradually in it... and loves and adores the loneliness with God. Similar to the story of Bishop Arsenius, the teacher of the children of kings, who left the life in the palace to live in loneliness and solitude with God.





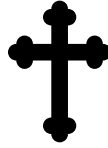
(8) A VERSE THAT SUMMARIES THE "ACCEPTABLE" HUMAN LIFE ON EARTH BY GOD

- ❖ It is said about David the prophet **"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep"** Acts 13:36. David served his own generation by the will of God in every place he served whether: as a Sheppard, before Goliath, as a conscious-awake king, as a person who repented from sin, and as psalm writer.
- ❖ Serving is the work of love in any area in where human exist. Serving does not have to be through a service as in being priest or a deacon or teacher in schools Sunday unless that person was called by God for this. Nevertheless, the broad meaning of service is that a person lives life loving others and helping them in any field. Mother in motherhood. Father in parenthood. Ordinary human being in serving his/her family as well as the society so that the person has affection and love for others for the last moment in his/her life according to his/her talents and circumstances.
- ❖ Jesus said of his ministry, **"I have finished the work which You have given Me to do"** (John 17:4).
- ❖ The most important thing that honors the servant is the promise of Christ to him: **"... and where I am, there My servant will be also."** (John 12:26).
- ❖ What is the amount of productivity and concentration of a servant of Christ in his/her life? **"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."** (2 Tim 2: 3-4).
- ❖ A sense of responsibility within the family, society and church **"as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"**



(9) HOW DO I ENJOY THE COMPASSION OF GOD IN MY LIFE?

- ❖ When Jesus approached the door of the city of Nain, and saw a woman weeping because she had lost her only son, He had compassion on her. **“When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep’”** (Luke 7:13). And He raised her son raised from death.
- ❖ God is almighty and of great-eminence. If He looks at me with compassion and mercy, then He will manage my life to the fullest.
- ❖ But how can I retrieve the mercy of our Lord to me?
 - I ask for the mercy of our Lord - most of the church’s hymns has **"O Lord, have mercy"**. Also in my own personal prayers I say **"O Lord, Have mercy on me"**
 - My feeling of weakness and lack of pride **“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”** (2 Cor 12:9). I will gladly boast of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may be descend on me.
 - When I am merciful to my brethren, God is merciful with me. **"Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy"** (Matthew 5:7) - (David's example with Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul the king). **“Blessed is he who considers the poor The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive, And he will be blessed on the earth; You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies. The LORD will strengthen him on his bed of illness; You will sustain him on his sickbed.”** (Psalm 41: 1-3).
 - When I respect the commandments of our Lord, I worship Him a true worship **"And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation"** (Luke 1:50).
 - When I offer the tears of repentance, God will have compassion on me **"Give me, Lord, many tears as You have been given to women in the old days"**. Read the Agpeya litanies – Midnight Hour – Second Watch



(10) WHY IS SUNDAY ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR CHRISTIANS?

- ❖ Sunday is of particular importance as Christ Himself gave it this special significance: through His resurrection on Sunday and the completion of His appearances all on Sunday to confirm this.
 - A) He first appeared on the first day of the week to Mary Magdalene and on the same day to the disciples in Emmaus and Peter (Luke 24:13).
 - B) He also appeared to the disciples gathered in the upper room, while Thomas was not present, during the noontime on the first day of the week. He later appeared again to them eight days later in the presence of Thomas. The Lord was therefore keen to appear to the disciples on Sunday to make it the primary day for Christians (Refer to Luke 24: 36-43, John 20: 19-20, 26-29).
- ❖ The significance of Sunday also appears in the Epistles of the Paul and in the book of Acts.

When Paul was in Troas about to head towards Jerusalem, he called on the congregation to meet "**the first day of the week to break the bread.**" When the Christians of Corinth were asked to gather support for the Christians of Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 16), he wrote that at the age of fifty-five. Meaning that the memory of Christ rising from the dead was still firm in his mind although by that time Sunday has become an apostolic tradition.
- ❖ Sunday has maintained its basic value. St. Ignatius of Antioch says that "Christians do not celebrate Saturday but Sunday. Therefore we celebrate it with joy because on that day Jesus rose from the dead before he ascended to heaven"

- ❖ We can see the utmost importance of Sunday through the many titles it has been given. Every title refers to a side of how rich that day is and of its important characteristic. It is referred to as: The first day of the week - the first day - the day of the Lord - the master of days - the day of the sun - the eighth day of the day - the day of the Lord - the day of the sun - the day of the sun – The eighth day of Resurrection. They are titles associated with Christ. As for the church, there are many titles for Sunday: the day of the meeting, the day of the Word of the Lord, the Eucharist, and the Day of Resurrection. These titles refer to the many functions of this day: meeting, education and participation with the community. The faithful also call Sunday several titles: Christian feast - the day of joy and liberation - the day of rest - the day of love - family day
- ❖ St. Jerome "Sunday is the Day of Judgment - the day of the Christians - it is our day, and for Christians it is the" most important holiday" and its purpose is not only to determine the passage of time but to reveal its deepest meaning
- ❖ So we continue to pray the Sunday Liturgy with all its meanings, blessings and feelings.
- ❖ In the Bible "**Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.**" (Deut 12 and Exodus 20:8)
- ❖ Sunday is the Christian's Sabbath because it Lord's rest was on Sunday and Sunday became the new Sabbath. The Lord's rest took place was when He rested the people from the condemnation of sin and its fruit, death, "**Remember Sunday, to keep it holy** "
- ❖ In the Coptic Orthodox Church Synaxarion - 4 Baramhat – the Holy Synod met and casted out a group that devalued Sunday as the Day of Resurrection and wanted to celebrate Easter on any day of the week (please read this story in detail in the Synaxarion).



(11) TO SERVICE WITHIN THE FAMILY IN SILENCE - A LESSON FROM THE LIFE OF VIRGIN MARY

Life would go a long way if everyone was to pledge to serve others in their family... the silence service.

- Do not wait for people to ask you to serve... but the initiation is very important.
- We ought to raise our children from childhood to serve the rest of the family members.
- In the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, she heard from the angel about the old human, Elizabeth. No one asked the Virgin Mary anything. Yet, she travelled to the mountains of Judah (which is a long journey) to serve Elizabeth in silence and in happiness. Therefore, she initiated the service and it was a silent service.
- The Virgin Mary was silent and busy with our Lord while praising and praying to Him in happiness.
- It is likely that the Virgin Mary attended until she carried John the Baptist the child on her hands and felt assured towards Elizabeth.
- Then the Virgin Mary returned immediately to serve Joseph the carpenter.
- Virgin Mary is the icon of the Christian life... Look at her... the closest person to us human and the closest to the two examples in practical life as being an icon of the Christian human being.
- And from within the service of the Virgin inside the house, the Virgin Mary served the salvation of all mankind by accepting to be the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ when the angel preached to her and said: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.” Then Mary

answered "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:30).

- The principle of service was in her heart, and it grew very until she became the servant of salvation. She served the child Jesus Christ and took a very great blessing. Therefore, the servant gradually becomes a great servant starting with his service to the family at home silently.
- In the wedding of Cana of Galilee when the wine ran out (an indication that the joy went absent), the Virgin Mary started the service and came to Christ without anyone asking her to do so and said "**they have no wine**" and hence, all the stone water pots were filled with wine and the joy returned back to everyone.
- During this week review what is your service to the family? Do you serve in silence?
- The result: the love of the family and not the competition ... Moreover, the man who initiates the service takes the virtue of humility "the silent man reaches humility" St. Ephrem the Syrian.





(12) **“PAY ATTENTION TO THE DEPTH OF THE PRAYER RATHER THAN THE LENGTH OF PRAYER” - POPE SHENOUDA III**

- In psalm 230 of the compline prayer, David the prophet says humbly “Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!” and in the big psalm 119 “With my whole heart I have sought You”

From **the depth** of the heart and passion ... **From the depth**..... **From the depth** of my exhaustion and my need ... **From the depth** of my weakness, helplessness and my inability.

- It is a deep prayer like the prayer of Jonah while he was in the belly of the whale ... Or perhaps a prayer like the one that was in the heart of Daniel as they threw him in the lions’ den ... Or a prayer in the hearts of the three young men as they were being thrown into the fiery furnace ... From the depth of the heart ... From the depth of the need. Or from the depth of the prayer of the people before the move of Mokattam Mountain... Or the prayer of the people roaming around the walls of Jericho. It is not the length of prayer or the selection of words that matters, but rather the depth of feelings in them.
- The prayer of the Pharisee was longer than the tax collector’s prayer, but " this man went down to his house justified rather than the other" (Luke 18:14) from the depth of humility, inaction, guilt, remorse and shame ... the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven. **His heart-filled words were enough.**
- The right hand thief's prayer was short but deep ... a man's prayer on the verge of death ... he asked the Lord to remember him ... really it is a fateful prayer so it was spoken deeply ... and the call was answered ... one sentence a man says deeply "O Lord Have mercy” for example, and one of the twenty-four priests will come forward and take this prayer in his golden bowl and bring it up to the

throne of God as an incense aroma with the prayers of the saints (Revelation 5:8).

- **How to distinguish the prayer that is deeply prayed?**

It has a sense of connection to God. It is a praying with compassion, with understanding, with meditation and concentration... it is a warm prayer with a feeling of love ... a prayer in humility ... with pure humility... with faith, confidence and hope ... a prayer in a spirit, not just words, as the scribes and Pharisees did "**for a pretense make long prayers**" (Matthew 23:14) .

If the length meets depth in prayer, it will be much better!





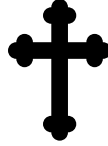
**(13) LET US PRACTICE SPIRITUAL VIGILANCE THIS WEEK AND
CONTINUE IN IT**

The importance of spiritual vigilance:

- 3.1. How to stay vigil
- 3.2. At the end of the Coptic year, the church reminds us that the end of the year is a symbol of the end of life on earth
- 3.3. What do we do ... be awake and vigil for the salvation of ourselves ... and think of our eternity ... and think whether we are acceptable to our Lord or not ... review our actions.
- 3.4. Being prepared and having spiritual alertness and spiritual vigilance for two reasons
 - A) Because we do not know when the time will come and when we will give an account, **“Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is”** (Mark 13:33).
 - B) We shall also be careful and vigilant against Satan’s wars, for he is vigilant in our fight with us through the use of the media, images, and in the evil thoughts and scenes **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”** 1 Peter 5:8

How to watch over the salvation of our souls?

- Staying up in prayer: St. Bishoy was used to tie up his hair in the roof of his cell to stay up
- **“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Romans 10:17).
- Paying attention to spiritual nourishment from the partaking in mystery of the Eucharist - the Body and Blood of the Lord.



(14) TRY TO FOCUS YOUR FEELINGS ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

In the midst of many thoughts in the world and intertwined feelings, every person would benefit tremendously when he concentrates his feelings in the person of Christ "... **nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You**" (2 Chronicles 20:12).

If we take half of this verse "**nor do we know what to do**" we will be troubled and will not calm down but if we take the other half of the verse "**but our eyes are upon You**" we rest because He is our Lord. He knows the future and everything is naked in front of Him. Everyone is exposed and in front of him. He can keep us safe ... this preservation and divine love obliges us not to be superficial in our relationship with God, but as the chanter says, "**Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!**" (Psalm 34:8)

Our eyes are not to know about our Lord superficially

- When we pray "O our Father who art in heavens" ... Do you think about these words ... the words of our Father.
- When we say "Immanuel," which God translated God with us, do we feel that our Lord is with us and so all the feelings of fear escape?
- Also, "**though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me**" (Psalm 23:4). The secret of this reassurance is that you are with me and keep me.
- You, O Lord, surround me with your protection, as You said to Jacob, who fled from Esau "**Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you**" (Genesis 28:15)



(15) **“THAT YOU ALSO ASPIRE TO LEAD A QUIET LIFE, TO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS” (1 THESSALONIANS 4:11)**

The spiritual man is a quiet person as the example of Christ.

Jesus Christ did not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the street even at the time of His crucifixion, “He did not open his mouth.

- When the Lord Jesus visited Mary and Marth, Mary sat at his feet to hear his words; while the Lord Jesus Christ said to Marth **“And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed”** (Luke 10:41)
- In the Book of Revelation, it is mentioned that the those who are anxious will not have a share in Paradise " But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).
- Our mother was very calm. **“But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.”** (Luke 2:19)
- A story from the Book of Paradise of Holy Fathers the Monks about saint Abba Agathon: Some tried to displace the saint of his dignity through many ways - mockery ... O arrogant ... O Joker ... O atheist ... O infidel ... He responded calmly saying "I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ."
- Quietness can be linked to "Mind your own business" and do not compare yourself to anyone ... Do not argue with anyone ... Live your own life and your own practices ... focus on yourself to remain calm ... Do not come in argument with anyone.



(16) **“SO THEN, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, LET EVERY MAN BE SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH” (JAMES 1:19)**

- "Every man" means a general rule for all people and applies in the family, work and service.

First “Be swift to hear”

- Swift to hear: listening to others is a sign of your love for them. That is why there exists an expression that goes “Listening is loving” which means listening is a form of love. It means accepting the other person and accepting his voice, and idea. It also has respect for that person and a spirit of affection.
- Swift to hear is a practical duty and our commitment as children of God.
- Swift to hear means not to interrupt the speaker. Hear the person in front of you to the so that you understand what he/she meant. Listen to the end and do not interrupt him, even if he stopped a little to gather his thoughts to speak and give him enough opportunity to complete his idea. Do you want someone to interrupt you while you speak? Of course not. So do not interrupt others.
- Remember Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who sat at Jesus' feet listening to His sweet voice that is full of love.

Second, “slow to speak”

Frequent and hasty talking indicates a weak disorderly soul concealing its weakness behind the appearance. That is why the wise man recommended saying, **“Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him”** (Proverbs 29:20).

- St. Arsanious, the teacher of the children of kings says: "I have often spoken and regretted it; yet for being silent, I have never regretted it"
- The Scripture also says, **“A time to keep silence, And a time to speak”** (Ecclesiastic 3:7).
- The Holy bible words are the talk that St. Basil the Great says about "it shows the smell of the incense of our inner measure that is filled with wisdom", that is, man speaks of what builds himself and builds others. Bishop Beamin says "Silence for God is good and speech for God is good"

Third, “slow to wrath”

- Because the wrath of man does not make the righteousness of God since in moments of anger, a man cannot stand to pray for this deprives him from the righteousness of God.
- God is patient and slow to anger, so it is worthwhile for the children to imitate their father.
- St. John Cassian says, "We must eradicate the poison of the deadly anger from the depths of our souls. As long as anger remains in our hearts and blinds the soul and hear with its abusive darkness, we will not achieve distinctiveness and good judgment. We will also not be able to obtain the true inner vision or the full advice.
- **“My eye wastes away because of grief”** (Psalm 6: 7).
- We cannot benefit the partners of wisdom because **“For anger rests in the bosom of fools”** (Ecclesiastic 7:9).
- **"An angry man stirs up strife, And a furious man abounds in transgression"** (Proverbs 29:22)



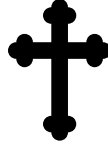
(17) IMMACULATE SLEEP AND SACRED BEDDING

- From the words of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III "**Before you sleep ... sanctify your bed with prayers through letting the heart speak with God. ... and spread/cover your bed with praises, psalms, hymns, spiritual songs and spiritual meditations so that you can sleep on a sacred bed**"
- Sleep is something that our Lord created in man and is mentioned in Genesis. "**And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept**" (Genesis 2:21)
- Make your sleep pure while you hug our Lord Jesus Christ Himself "**His left hand is under my head, And his right hand embraces me**" (Song of Songs 2:6). This makes a person feel that he is in the bosom of our Lord Jesus Christ and face to face with him.
- "**Watching for wealth will consume the flesh, and thinking about it takes away sleep**" (Sirach 31:1).
- Do not think about matters before going to bed so as not to get upset and not be able to sleep. St. Pope Cyril VI says "**Do not think about it too much - leave it to Whomever has the command**" - "**Let His will be done**"
- Psalm 127 says, "**It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep**" (Psalm 127:2)
- When you sleep in the bosom of Christ you cannot be afraid or disturbed, "**When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet**" (Proverbs 3:24).

- The Compline prayer is beautiful and soothing, reassuring and pure as it has the Absolution of compline prayer:

“Lord, all our sins which we committed against You in this day, whether in deeds or in words or in thoughts or through all senses, please remit and forgive us, for the sake of Your holy name, as You are Good and Lover of mankind. God, grant us a peaceful night and a sleep free from all anxiety. And send us an angel of peace to protect us from every evil, and every affliction, and every temptation of the enemy; through the Grace, compassion and love of mankind of Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom is due, with You and with the Holy Spirit, the Life-Giver Who is of one essence with You, all glory, honor and dominion, now and forever and unto the ages of all ages. Amen.”





(18) **HOW CAN I BE REASSURED ABOUT GOD'S LEADERSHIP IN MY LIFE?**

- It is very important in person's life not to live life depending only on his ideas because he will fall into Satan's traps and many commit many mistakes. We read from Deuteronomy (9:3-4) **"Therefore understand today that the Lord your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the Lord has said to you. Do not think in your heart, after the Lord your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land'; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out from before you."**
- The book of Deuteronomy recites for us the history of the journey of exodus and crossing that Moses lived with his people for the salvation from Pharaoh and evil forces.
- The Lord says at the mouth of Moses:
 - A) The Lord crosses before you ... the Lord is in command
 - The Lord crosses before you is very important. Unfortunately, every one of us would like to live by his own ideas and only his. David the prophet says, **"I have set the Lord always before me"** Psalm 16: 8
 - The Lord crosses before you means I am hiding behind our Lord
 - In your work ... you say, Lord, come before me and help me
 - In service ... you say, Lord, you tell me what and how I serve
 - In your house ... Lord, you are the leader of my family

B) As a consuming fire, He will destroy them and bring them down... So He protects and destroys the evil forces in front of me.

- Like a As a consuming fire means He will destroy all bad things in front of you, “The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.” Exodus 14:14
- As He did with David defeating Goliath, who was derogating and insulting the children of God, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts” (1 Samuel 17:45)

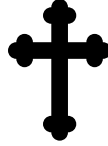
C) Do not say in your heart when the Lord drives them out that He did so for my righteousness.

Do not say in your heart after the Lord gives you each victory "because of my righteousness." Do not say "I have done" but you can say "Glory to You, Lord ... You, O Lord, have worked." You can say with St. Paul the Apostle, "**I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.**" (1 Corinthians 10:15).

Therefore, I always ask our Lord to lead my life to glorify His name in me and His grace is what works in me.

I am young but our Lord is Mighty. Put our Lord in front of you and live life based on this principle and you will find that the battle in life is over. When you find that sin is troubling you, say I am very young, but in Christ you are great.





(19) THE NECESSITY OF BEING ORGANIZED IN MY LIFE

- Man needs to be organized in his life in order to be successful.
- God created the creation and God exists where orderliness is and not chaos. In the miracle of feeding the multitudes from the five loafs and two fishes, the first step was that the disciples sat people down in groups of fifty. In other words, In other words, obtaining the blessing is associated with being organized. It took a few hours for the disciples to sit people in groups of fifty, but this was necessary for get the blessing. There is no conflict between the getting the blessing and being organized. Some people say "let it be blessed by itself" and they may mean being unorganized is acceptable, but our Lord does not work in chaos and lack of order.

The order is a biblical commandment

- **"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints"** (1 Corinthians 14:33).
- **"Let all things be done decently and in order."** (1 Corinthians 14:40).
- Therefore, being organized and orderly is a written biblical commandment and disobeying the commandment is a sin.
- Being organized is a human need and the human body works in order. Man must be organized in all matters of his daily life. **"Warn those who are not unruly"** (1 Thessalonians 5:14). In essence, advise with firmness, power and strength those who are not organized and lovers of chaos.

Church Ritual

The Church was formed in a very high degree of order in its priestly ranks and in its service. The word ritual/right is used in the church continuously and means order. And the word ritual means a way of life, and this makes the Church alive and in existence till now.

Applying the Order in place

On different levels: individual, family, the church and society

- At the individual level... A person sets a system in order in his life in which he ensures that there is enough time for prayer, a enough time for rest, a sufficient time for reading the Bible, and even personally, a person is organized in his work.
- In the church system: **“warn those who are unruly”** (1 Thessalonians 5:14)
- **“But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you”** (2 Thessalonians 3:6-7)
- **“Therefore, submit yourselves to every [a]ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme,”** (1 Peter 2:13)
- And This makes God and the Church happy **“For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ”** (Colossians 2:5)



(20) THE LETTER THAT KILLS SHOULD BE AVOIDED

Everything that the Church does must have a written origin and it is not acceptable for a person to invent for the church prayers and rituals from his own. However, this should not be to the letter that kills but rather with awareness, understanding and study under the leadership of our Lord and the Church.

I would like to give an example:

In the year 1991, His Late Holiness Pope Shenouda III attended our Lord (may the Lord sanctify his soul and benefit us with his prayers) to lay the foundation stone for the Church of St. George and St. Rueiss as a new church in Toronto – Canada. At that time, we had placed a deposit to buy the land of the church, but we did not obtain a permit to build the church from the city of Toronto. Is it correct to disobey the city law? Absolutely not! When His Holiness the Pope attended, I had the chance to describe the situation to him. He said, we will pray all the prayers on the foundation stone at any rented church that accommodates the whole congregation (at this time there was no Coptic Church that can accommodate the whole congregation), then take this foundation stone and place it in the place where the new church will be built after taking all governmental approvals. Indeed, we rented the St. Paul's Cathedral from the Catholic Church and a huge number of Coptic members gathered to get the blessings not only from Toronto, but also from most cities of Canada. The prayer on the foundation stone was performed completely with the presence of His Grace Bishop Rueiss and a respected group of bishops and priests.

As for the prayer on the foundation stone, it was completed and had a written origin, as follows:

“Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.

Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also, your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”

Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously.

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”” (Genesis 28:10-22)

This is an essential part in the blessing readings of the foundation stone of the new churches, in which we note the characteristics of the church ... the house of God.

- The Lord is in this place ... How respectful this place is!
- The angels are ascending and descending upon it ... Hail to the Church, the house of Angels
- This is Bethel ... The house of God ... This is the door of heaven
- Whatever you give me, will surely give a tenth to You... The first time that tithing is mentioned in the Bible as it is a very old command.



(21) THE BLESSED FOOD AND THE NEED OF ASCETICISM IN FOOD

+ God's children live by His blessing "knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing." [1 Peter: 3:9].

"A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked." [Ps: 37:16]

+ Jesus Christ blessed the five loaves and two fish, and it feed five thousand people. Moreover, twelve baskets of fragments remained to teach us that we always need God's blessing in our food, it will be filling and sufficient and we may have remaining abundance.

Reason why we start any meal by giving thanks to the Lord, asking Him to bless the food and to be present among us while we eat.

+ As we feel the presence of the Lord with us on the dining table, our behavior during meal must be characterized by quietness, and peaceful without argument or raised voice - "Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife." [Proverbs: 17:1].

+ Also, while eating at the dining table, we should only eat what is necessary to fight gluttony and only satisfy our basic need of food.

+ "And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content." [1 Timothy: 6:8].

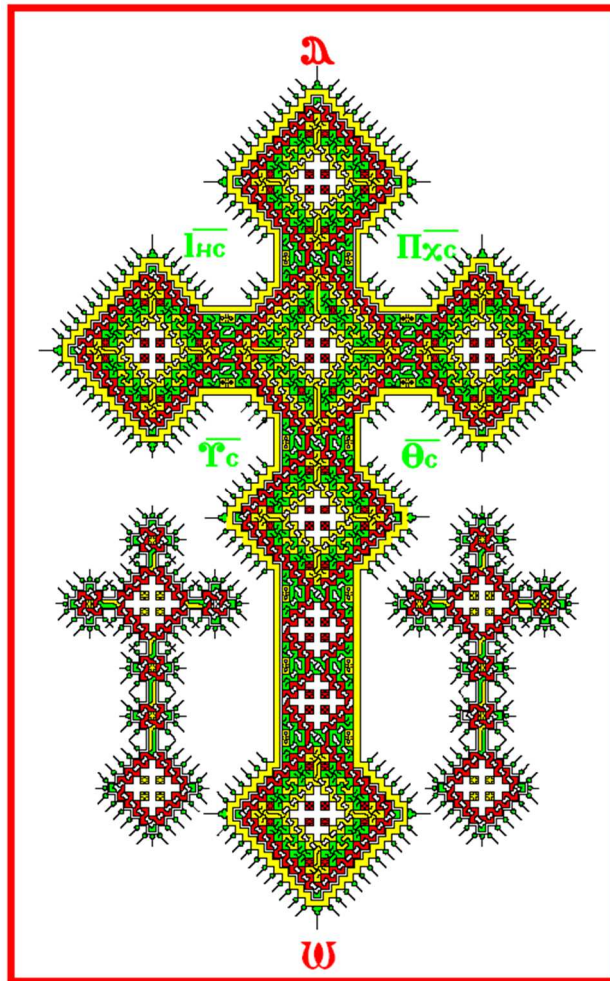
+ Leaving some of the food and not overeating is important for two reasons.

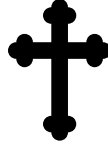
1. Self-control and overcoming gluttony.
2. Feeling and considering the needy, so we leave something for God's sake.

+ Trust that your health and life are in the hands of God. You will not be unhealthy or get sick for not overeating, on the contrary, some of the ascetic fathers and saints lived

an exceptionally long life. For example, Saint Paula lived 115 years and Saint Anthony lived 105 years.

+ There should not be an argument at home because one party is looking for a diversified table full of all kinds of food. Moreover, the lust for food extends and become lust to the whole body. For example: Esau who lusted for a meal of lentils and sold his blessing to his brother Jacob; and Herod who got drunk on his birthday and asked a girl to dance for him, saying to her: “I would give you half of my kingdom” and she told him: “give me the head of John the Baptist on a plate.” This is because John the Baptist used to tell Herod you are not allowed to get married to your brother Philip’s wife. So, John the Baptist was killed because of the drink and lust. “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” [Gal: 5: 16].





(22) NOVEMBER IS THE MONTH OF SAINTS: SAINT ROUIS, SAINT GEORGE, SAINT MARK, SAINT MINA AND ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

Everyone must benefit from the three types of intercession

The definition of Intercession

It is the mediation between two parties. Like when a noble person intercedes before the king to pardon a guilty person.

Atonement intercession

It is only done through the Blood of Christ.

“we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” [1 John: 2: 1-2].

“It is given for us for salvation, forgiveness of sins and Eternal life for those who partake of him” [The Divine Liturgy].

Entreating Intercession

It is an intercession that helps me get closer to Christ the Redeemer. Repeating the sin causes me to lose boldness before the Lord. It is like when a child does many mistakes and his mother is supposed to ask his father to give him a chance. This is the intercession of the mother.

“Since we have no favor, nor excuse, nor justification because of our many sins, we, through you, implore to Him”. Go to the Virgin Mary and ask for her intercession because it is strong and acceptable since our Lord Jesus accepted her intercession in the wedding of Cana of Galilee and turned water into wine. It is like the intercession of Saint George and his many miracles. We call him the quick responder.

+ Intercession exists in the Holy Bible such as the intercession of Abraham for Sodom and Gamora [Genesis: 18], and the intercession of Ilesha for Ghazi [2: Kings: 6: 17-20]

+ In the Epistle of James, he says: “pray for one another” [James: 5: 16].

1- The Intercession of the poor

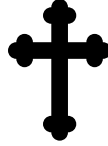
+ “inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” [Matthew: 25:40]

+ “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:” [Matthew: 25: 34]

+ “For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” [Matthew: 25:35-36]

Intercession includes the elements of humility, friendship and faith.





**(23) IN THE REPOSE OF THE DEAR MOTHER MRS. [TASSONI] ANGEL,
THE WIFE OF THE REPOSED CONTEMPORARY SAINT FATHER
BISHOY THE VIRGIN**

+ On November 24, 2019, Tassoni Angel, the wife of the contemporary saint father Bishoy the virgin, was reposed at the age of 88. She became the bride to heaven on the same day she was made the bride of Father Bishoy on November 24, 1959. This virgin, who did not have biological children, but served the church honestly, has many spiritual children in Egypt and abroad. She was a good example for the characteristics of Christ and His fragrant odor. She was a contemporary saint who served her husband father Bishoy Kamel before and after his sickness with a deep service full of love.

+ The praise service was so deep in her life. She used to memorize the praise and, now, she is praising with the Heavenly Hosts and she was received by father Bishoy Kamel.

+ She served the Sunday school children. She used to visit them, teach them, and pray with them and for them.

+ She served the sick, cared for them and used to answer all who request her prayers. She was the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

+ She traveled abroad with Father Bishoy Kamel and helped him laying the foundation of the deep spiritual service in the churches of the land of immigration.

+ She dedicated her whole life to Christ whom she loved. How much the church is in need for such mothers, nuns and dedicated servants that God may use to strength the service in the church!

Examples from the Holy Bible

A. "He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors

of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.” [Exodus: 38: 8]. This means they left all forms of fashion to stand in the tabernacle of God.

- B. Phoebe is an example of the virgin woman serving the church [Romans: 16: 1-2].
- C. Priscilla is an example of a married woman who used to serve the church with her husband. [Acts: 18:2; 2 Timothy: 4:19].
- D. Saint Tekla the martyr who was a disciple of Saint Paul the Apostle. She was an example for chastity and purity. [Acts: 13: 51].

They sacrificed all precious and valuable things for the service of the Lord.





(24) SELF-CONTROL AND ITS IMPORTANCE

“And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.” [1 Cor: 9: 25].

The blessings of self-control

+ “I cannot stop smoking”, “calling names”, “talking about people”, “bad relations”, “bad photos”, Then, you need self-control.

If there is self-control, no means no, and “I shall stop”. All who strive should have self-control in everything. Saint Augustine said: “at the end of your age, if god does not find you to be righteous or perfect, He must, at least, find you striving.”

+ Who strives will go to heaven. Who wants to enter into the depth with the Lord must have self-control.

Purity, Chastity and sanctity are among the blessings of self-control. Whoever cannot control his eyes shall not possess the purity of heart. It is like a room with an open window; Everyday dust will enter that room. You have to shut the window. That way, you can have a pure heart.

+ When you have self-control, you will talk like Christ and think like Christ as we have the thoughts of Christ. We are Christians but are not like Christ because we do not have self-control.

+ Self-control

Controlling the body. The body desires against the spirit and the spirit against the body We must control our bodies. The fasting period is a period for self-control.

Controlling the mood depends on prayers and service.

We have to control our bodies for the sake of our spirits.

+ Controlling the tongue

+ “If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.” [James: 3: 2].

+ Someone may not say something wrong with his tongue but says bad things on Facebook.

+ Say constructive and helpful things as you will be justified by what you say.

+ You should not utter a word by your mouth that is not constructive.

+ Controlling the eyes

This includes the lusts (for men).

And greed and love of possession (for women)

+ “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” [1 John: 2: 16].

+ “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.” [Matthew: 6:22]. If we control the eyes, the light will shine more through our bodies.

+ “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.” [Matthew: 6:22].

+ Beware of eyes of condemnation.

+ The greedy eyes as you have a lot. Train your eyes to learn from people’s virtues.

+ The eyes of contemplation are [Trees] [Clouds] [flowers] Look at the harvest of the field.

+ Read lots of spiritual words. Then, your eyes will collect good things.

+ **Controlling thoughts**. I should not accept any thought. The prayer calling for Jesus Christ helps. Say enlighten our thoughts and minds. Occupy your thoughts with the Lord. You think right if you can control your senses and your eyes.

+ Things that can help you have self-control.

+ “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,” [Eph: 5:15] The wise person must be circumspection.

+ Repentance and Confession

+ The fear of God reflects on self-control. I shall not go to that place. He would not stand in the way of sinners out of fear of sin and perishing.

+ Fervent prayers. The Holy Spirit encourage you to have self-control.

+ Reading saints’ biographies. You shall not find any saint entering Heaven without strive. “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” [Heb: 13:7].



Self-Control

The Fruit of The Spirit



(25) THE MONTH OF KIAHK. IT IS THE MONTH OF THE JOY OF THE HEAVENLY HOSTS

The month of Kiahk has a special Holy place in the church. It is the month of continuous praises accompanied by the Holy nativity fast.

+ During Kiahk praises and joyful hymns, we express our love to Christ and exchange love with Him. “We love Him because He first loved us.” [1 John: 4: 19]. However, we realize that our love for Him is just a drop in the sea compared to His love for us.

+ Praise is the work of the angels in Heaven. In partnering with the praise of heaven during Kiahk, we become part of Heaven and obtain great internal joy.

+ During Kiahk praises, we do not ask anything from God, but we just tell him “we love You; we glorify Your Name, we thank You because You came for our sake and we spend time with You and at Your presence”.

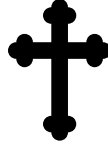
+ During Kiahk praises, we glorify and honor the Virgin Saint Mary. Saint Augustine says that saint Mary is the most ideal member of the Church because she surpassed the Cherubim and Seraphim and all Heavenly hosts since she deserved to carry the Lord in her womb. This is why this month is called the month of Saint Mary.

+ Since the Virgin surpassed all and enjoyed a unique thing that would never happen or be repeated again, which is the Incarnation of God the Word in her womb, she has opened the door for us to enjoy, in the Spirit, the dwelling of Christ inside us

+ It is also the month of the New Church who is happy with Her Groom. Each soul realizes her membership in the Church.

+ Do not ever miss on enjoying this Heavenly joy, recharging by attending and participating in Kiahk praises with your children.

During that period, there is fasting, prayer, repentance and praise: four very beautiful and useful things.



(26) HOW CAN I OBTAIN A BOOST OF JOY DURING THE SEASON OF THE NATIVITY FEAST [CHRISTMAS]?

It is not the lights, the lit trees or the celebrations that would bring forth internal joy to man. On the contrary, it was said about the effect of external appearance:

"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings." [Gen: 3: 6-7].

The result of such appearances and transgressing God's Command was being dismissed out of Paradise of Eden and serving away from God "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." [1 Timothy 6: 10].

+ However, the Nativity fast, with all its praise, gives man real deep joy. Praise is the language of the Heavenly Hosts and the job of the Angels. So, "let us praise with the angels saying". Man would find himself in a state of Joy and becomes "part of Heaven".

+ Moreover, I cannot give joy to myself but joy is one the fruits of the Holy Spirit in me. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" [Gal: 5:22].

+ Through His birth, Christ gave light to the world. Through your light O' Lord, we see light. His name is Jesus because He save His people from their sins because sin is the source of all sorrow. His name is also Emanuel which means God is with us This means if the Lord is with me, I shall not fear anything and I remain happy.

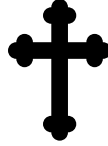
+ The examples are many. It is the Lord who gives joy to the heart.

+ The Lord gave joy to Elijah who escaped from Isabel.

+ The Lord gives joy to the Virgin Saint Mary and she says let my soul magnify the lord and my spirit rejoice with God my Savior.

+ The Lord gives joy to St Paul the apostle in the prison, so he was praising and the prisoners heard him. “So, they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” [Acts: 5:41].





(27) MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD: ARE WE THE FRAGRANT ODOR OF CHRIST AND THE MAGNIFICENCE OF CHRIST IS REFLECTED ON US?

+ “My soul magnifies the Lord” [Luke: 1: 46]. Our lord’s magnificence would not increase or decrease. Scholar Origin interprets this verse about how the soul can magnify God the Lord. God does not increase or decrease.

It is that I am supposed to be the fragrant odor of Christ. God and His name are glorified through my life in Christ. If my mind is with the Lord, having the thoughts of Christ, then all my thoughts would be pure then the Christ-like would reflect on me; that way, my soul magnifies the Lord.

+ In Every prayer that I say from my heart, whether praying the psalms or any other prayer, my soul magnifies the Lord.

+ Every time I take consider my words and am cautious, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” [Eph: 4: 29], “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” [Matthew: 12: 37], “But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire. [Matthew: 5: 22], then, my soul magnifies the Lord.

+ Through one’s success in his practical life, “the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand.” [Genesis: 39: 3], then, my soul magnifies the Lord.

+ Through your success and care for your children, “my soul magnifies the Lord”.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” [Matthew: 5: 16]

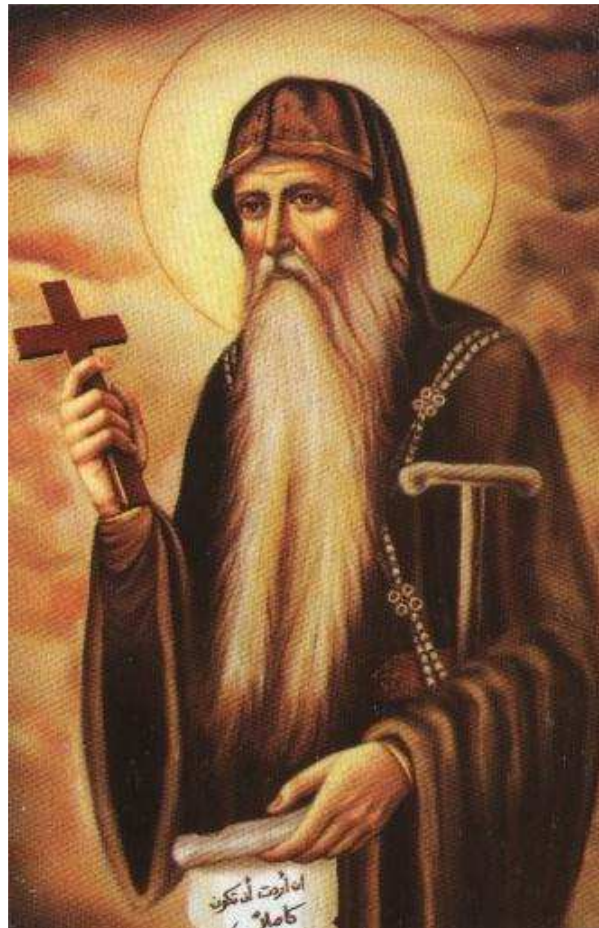
+ Through your service, you give from your time to the Lord and whoever gives a cup of cold water shall not miss the reward, then my soul magnifies the Lord.

+ On the contrary,

There are behaviors through which my soul does not magnify the Lord because many may stumble because of me since I am no longer the fragrant odor of Christ but I rather become a cause for stumbling “For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” as it is written.” [Romans: 2: 24].

“Dimas left me as he loved the present world.” Judas Simon the Iscariot, Arena, Macedonia’s and Nostor the heretics, may not be able to say my soul magnifies the Lord. The same with king Saul in the Old Testament

+ without regularly going to confession and having communion, how can my soul magnify the lord? It is not possible.





**(28) A PRAYER ON THE NEW YEAR EVE BY HIS HOLINESS LATE POPE
SHENOUDA III, THE BELOVED OF CHRIST**

+ “Lord, make it a blessed year, a pure year during which we may please You; a year where you would dwell with Your Holy Spirit; and take part in the work with us. Hold our hands and lead our thoughts from the beginning to the end of the year so that this year may be for You and You would have comfort. It is a new pure year. Do not allow that we defile it with any sins or evils.

+ Take part, Lord, in every work we do this year. Rather, let us be silent and You do everything so that we become delighted with all that You do and say with Saint John the evangelist “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

+ Let this year O’ Lord be a happy one. Put a smile on every face, give joy to every heart, and pour Your Grace on temptations and give help to those who are tempted. Grant all peace and comfort. Give income to the needy, healing to the sick and comfort to the sad.

+ We do not only ask for ourselves, but we ask for all as they are Yours. You created them to enjoy you, so make them happy through You. We ask you for the Church and for preaching your name and your word to reach every heart.

We ask you for our country and for the peace of the world so that Your Kingdom may come everywhere.

+ Lord, make it a fruitful year full of good things.

Give work for every day and work for every hour. Do not allow any unfruitful moment in that year; but rather fill our life with action, energy and production. Giving the blessing of the Holy productive labor.

Give us the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in all our actions.

We thank you Lord because You have loved us till this moment and have given us this year to bless You. “

+ I hope we give special attention to praying this year.

+ “men always ought to pray and not lose heart,” [Luke: 18:1].

+ Saint Makarios the great says: “If you only pray during the time prayers, you have not started praying yet.”

+ Praying is to feel the presence of God. It is a fellowship with the Holy Spirit and being attached to God.

+ Praying is not an imposed must, or just a commandment or just piety and worship. It is a desire and craving unless it is heavy and we practice it forcefully for the sake of obedience. It is a group of feelings expressed by words. It is the Key to Heaven.

Bless the crown of the
year with Your goodness
O Lord

بارك إكليل السنة بصلاحك
يارب

Σου ἐπιχλοῦ ἡτε τροῦπι :
Ζιτεν τεκμετχρηστος Πος





**(29) THE VIRTUES OF OUR MOTHER THE VIRGIN SAINT MARY
DURING THE WEDDING OF CANA OF GALILEE**

- a. The Virgin's consideration to the far distance

The distance between Nazareth and Cana of Galilee is 6 miles. They were poor and this is why they finished the wine. The wine was cheap and this is why the head of the wedding described it as bad. The Virgin is complacent to the poor and never ignores them. If someone works for you, you have to visit him and be complacent.

- b. She was smart, full of observance. She noticed by herself. The bishop or servant must be awake [1 Timothy: 3: 2].

“The wise man's eyes are in his head, But the fool walks in darkness.” [Eccl: 2: 14]

Watch your son or daughter.

- c. The deep feeling towards others and taking positive steps

- d. A very nice and decent way of talking “They do not have wine”. She did not say that they were needy. “Therefore, let your words be few.” [Eccl: 5: 2].

- e. “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come. “It is a clear apology. She told the servants confidently: trusting that He loves her because she is His mother and He would do anything for her, “Whatever He says to you, do it.”, knowing the deep love between Him and her.

- f. Although my hour has not come yet, but My mother has told me; so yes. Her intercession is great. She is our mother and she feel us. She is our faithful advocate. The miracle is a great miracle quantitatively and qualitatively. After that great miracle was performed, the Virgin Saint Mary disappeared the mother of Light does not want any show off. Also, after she served Elizabeth, she returned to her home and escaped praise and vain glory.



(30) HOW CAN I KNOW GOD'S VOICE?

- + God wants to make us hear His voice so He works in us.
- + This is to give us joy, or to guide us, or to comfort us, or save us, or rebuke us or to send us a warning.
- “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,” [Heb: 1: 1].
- + “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” [John: 10: 27]
- + Before reading the bible, there is the litany of the Bible that says “make us worthy to hear and act according to your Holy Gospel.
- + Direct talking, or talking through an angel, or through incidents,
- + He talked to Jonna mouth to ear, and Spoke to Moses mouth to ear.
- + He talked to Cornelio’s through an Angel and spoke to Peter to go to him.
- + He spoke to the sailors through the high waves that shook the boat.
- + He spoke to Saint Anthony through seeing the departure of his father. He spoke to Saint Paula when he saw the richest man in city has departed while Saint Paula was heading to court against his brother.
- + The sweet voice of Christ to Levy at the place of tax collection saying “come, follow me”; he left everything and followed Him.
- + The Lord’s voice can be frightening to man while he lives in sin such as what happened with Adam: “So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.”” [Genesis: 3: 10].

How can I hear God’s voice in my life?

Decrease the noise of social media/internet and the noise of the world.

+ God's voice may come to you in the crowd like what happened with the Tax-collector Zacchaeus when He told him hasten and come down as I have to be at your home tonight.

+ Be keen to walk a life under the guidance of God's voice, "Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house;" [Ps: 45:10].

