

Sunday School Program

Grade 10

Class of St. George



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PREFACE.

These are notes for the three periods from (September) to (August) of the 10th grade (Senior High or Secondary School) Program.

The beloved Servant will find the lessons well prepared. He is not advised to copy them to the young people as they are but only to make use of the ideas and the useful notes presented. There is no doubt that he will pray before and during the preparation of the lesson and even while dealing with the lesson and during his discussion with his children.

The power of the Holy Spirit of God makes the lesson effective and fruitful. Without the Spirit of the Lord, the topics would be mere intellectual thoughts and discussions devoid of life and without spiritual benefit for the life of the youth. Therefore, we insist that our beloved servants should pour themselves before the Throne of Grace and seek the guidance of the Spirit. The presence of the Lord while dealing with the topics, in prayers and singing praises to the Lord, in visiting the children or in activities is highly effective because any action that is void of the work of the Spirit and the presence of the Lord is of no value.

No doubt, the beloved servant has read (and we hope that he will read again and again) the introduction to this course and grasps the idea behind it, its goals and the nature of the Secondary Stage and its characteristics, its problems and the ways of cure as well as the religious feeling of the stage. All these items are stated in detail in the notes for the first period of the first year.

May the Lord bless this combined effort between the Diocese of Mallawy (His Grace Anba Bemin) and the Youth Service Committee at the Patriarchate through the prayers of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III. May he live long for the good of the church.

Bishop Moussa
Bishop at Youth

INTRODUCTION

Servants of the Secondary Stage need a curriculum to help them serve young men and women. Here we offer them this curriculum, which is characterized by the following characteristics:

1. The curriculum concentrates on the ecclesiastical side: it devotes several weeks for the young people to participate in the church liturgies and feasts and also when the church celebrates her saints, young people should take part in such celebrations and feasts; as the Coptic New year's day (El-Nayrouz), St. Mina's Day (Mar Mina's feast), Kihak's Hymns of praise, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, the Holy Week and the Easter, Ascension Day, Whitsunday and the Feast of the Apostles.
2. The curriculum also concentrates on the Biblical side: as young people in this stage have the mental and spiritual ability to make a regular speculative study of some of the books of the Bible as a practical training to study the other Biblical books during their own life. Of these studies, we have: Joshua, a study of the Gospel of our servant St. John, the Acts of the Apostles and the two Epistles of Paul to his disciple Timothy.
3. The curriculum also concentrates on the social and social sides: debates are to be held where social and psychological issues are discussed and investigated and young people should hold clear Christian concepts about these issues so that they may apply and practice them and in this case they will be living Gospel in their daily life. Some of these debates are; "The Christian and Freedom, Violence and Meekness, Christianity rejects fanaticism, The Repeated Fall, Love and the life of Purity, The Christian Family and its attributes, The Sound Jealousy is devoid of rashness and extremes, How to practice the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) and the attributes of true repentance, and The difference between the strong personality and pride and haughtiness. We do believe that these are the issues that adolescents are interested in and that the religion education should face using a spiritual objective style.
4. The curriculum also concentrates on the lessons of Christian Religion: according to the curriculum set by the ministry to fill the gap. In this way we teach different topics each month. A lesson to revise the religion lessons, another lesson to hold a debate, a third to celebrate a feast, a fourth lesson for academic study. We offer this course as a joined effect between youth service in the Patriarchate and the Bishopric of Mallawy, under the supervision of His grace Anba Bemin and His grace Anba Moussa. May the Lord make it a basis for the growth of the service in the important stage? May the grace of the Lord be with us all through the prayers of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III.

Essential Books That Serve The Curriculum

1. Issues that concerns young people (His grace Anba Bemin).
2. Christian Education (His grace Anba Bemin and Dr. Siliman Nesseem).
3. The Religious Feeling in Childhood and Adolescence (His grace Anba Bemin).
4. How to serve young people (Anba Moussa).

CHAPTER ONE

Essential Elements In Serving The Secondary Stage

In the secondary stage, young men and women reach a turning point that may lead them either to sanctified life in Christ or to a life devoid of grace and this may expose them to danger. This is the stage of adolescence, the beginning of self-structure and the formation of aspects of personality and personality components. Young men and women in this stage are in dire need of:

1. ***The Work Of The Holy Spirit:*** The Holy Spirit sanctifies the whole structure of the human being's mind, feeling and behavior.
2. ***The Work Of The Father of Confession:*** The father of confession relieves young people and helps them to have a clear conscience. He guides them to correct way of true repentance that is based on true understanding of the real facts of life not on romanticism. It is a life renewed by the grace of Christ and growing in true struggle.
3. ***The Work Of The Young People's Servant:*** The servant gives young people spiritual and effective love. He leads them in living conversational and holy friendships, spiritual and social benefits and growth in grace, knowledge and service.
4. ***The Appropriate Books:*** These books give them sound knowledge and answers all their questions about their mood in this stage, the signs of the spiritual road, how they belong to the church, and love for all with open heart and clear conscience.
5. ***Effective Meetings:*** These meetings offer them the personality of Christ the Redeemer, the Christian fellowship of love, the fellowship of the saints as a holy domain where they smell the pure breeze of the Spirit.
6. ***The Constructive Activities:*** Such as parties, journeys, work camp, the church choir, remedial work classes for children, service in villages and others. These make young people devote their energy to constructive activities such as building up their character, their brethren, their society and their motherland.
7. ***Service:*** There is no doubt that when young people join classes of servant's preparation and then go out for service whether by visiting their brothers or serving children in cities and villages, their personality traits become fixed and they become finally connected with Christ and church.

Hence an integrated curriculum is needed. The curriculum should include all the above-mentioned topics. This book is an attempt to cover all these topics by offering young people some suitable lessons that are useful to this stage.

The Curriculum Axes

We shall see that the curriculum goes around certain axes, which we have given special attention:

1. ***Christ:*** Christ is the young people's beloved friend and Savior. Young people submit themselves daily to Him in renewed repentance to rest from their labors and sins, to receive the power necessary for victory and spiritual freedom, and to have a firm belief that Christ is the friend who is able to accompany them all the way to the kingdom of Heaven.

2. **The Gospel:** The Gospel should be the essential food of their spiritual life and a behaviorism style of their daily life, and the light that guides them to heaven and to teach them how to behave correctly in all the domains of life.
3. **The Church:** This is the medium of the holy environment where young people should live, be brought up, feed on spiritual matters, be cured and enjoy spiritual rest. In this way they face the battles of life protected by grace, the sacraments and the prayers of the saints. The church is the domain where we unite with the others in Christian love whether those others are the children of Baptism or our brethren in humanity, as Christianity does not confine her children within the church frame, but she prepares them for social life as good citizens.
4. **The Society:** This is the domain where we bear witness to Christ who dwells in us and who gives us the power of unity and love for all people without exception. In this way, grace makes young people able to deal with older people in constructive way, to be generous and to behave in the right way. By so doing, love and fraternity will prevail, and hatred and sin will be avoided.
5. **The Family:** In it young people feel the gap among generations and by grace they can cross the gap as they know their weakness and needs, the experience of their parents and the elders and it is a domain for the sacrificing brotherly love as they are brought up in the spirit of giving, obedience, love and serving the society.
6. **The Stage:** The curriculum takes into consideration the nature of this stage and explains it to young people so that they may know themselves, their general and spiritual circumstances, their need for a guide and a light, their need for grace that saves them from their sins and deviations and their psychological troubles from which they suffer sometimes.
7. **The Service:** The curriculum aims at turning every young man and young woman into servants in the Vine Of Christ. Their service should reach the brothers everywhere whether Christians or non-Christians in sincere love that knows no selfishness or fanaticism. In this case they will enjoy the spirit of service, which is expressed in giving their motherland and citizens. This service will grow over days and will make of them a good citizen and faithful servants that can serve their church and their motherland with sincerity and faithfulness.

Dear Sister, I wish that this short introduction gives you the fullness of grace and the gift of the Spirit and I hope that each one of us will concentrate on the following:

1. Continuous Prayer: with and for the young people whom we serve. The main way of living the service is unity between the Servants and Christ.
2. Deep study of the Word of God: and daily satiating with it and its promise so that we may have a message for young people.
3. Daily involvement in the church life: in the hourly prayers, in reading the Synaxarium, to attend prayer regularly, to go to confession to receive the Holy Communion, to go to church on the religious occasions, to fasting, etc. so that we can become church servants who can convey the church spirit to young people in words and actions.
4. Regular reading and general culture: to help the coming generation have a deeper understanding, contemplation and study. We should acquire deeper knowledge, as this will enable us to direct the young people towards the good.

5. Careful study of the attitudes of this curriculum and preparing its lessons will with the spirit of prayer.
6. The lively individual visits: young people learn through love more than through lessons and sermons and they benefit from discussion more than from lectures.
7. The meeting: This must be delightful, lively and juvenile in its spirit, in its hymns and melodies, its prayers and words, and in its instructions and dates of meetings. The lively meetings turn the audience into servants and disciples.
8. Renewed Activities: These gather young people in a sacred holy atmosphere and they have an effective delightful spiritual goal in attracting those who stand afar and confirming those who are near.

We pray that the Lord will bring many workers to his harvest. We ask you to send us your suggestions and comments on this curriculum. May the Lord's grace be with us all.

CHAPTER TWO

Characteristics of the Adolescence Stage

I. Problems and methods of cure

This stage is considered a transition period between childhood and manhood. The first stage is related to its innocence and simplicity while the second stage is related to its responsibilities and difficulties. This stage witness radical changes in the life of youth in bodily and psychological domains. These changes drive others to make fun of young men sometimes and when this happens the young man/woman behaves in an unbalanced unreasonable way because these changes and their effects are very clear.

The adolescent likes to be treated as a man, and at the same time he likes the characteristics and sweetness of childhood to continue with him. This desire makes him in perpetual need of an elder friend and a guide with experience and this is a role of the servant who serves the youth. Here appears the importance of these stages, it shows the youth, his way into the future and defines the traits and limits of his personality in the future.

The Changes that come upon the Adolescent

1. Bodily Changes

+ These include: body, voice, organs, hair, secretion, ductless gland, etc.

2. Mental Changes

+ Growth in mental powers such as deduction, criticism, understanding, memory, and attention
 + Growth in the accuracy of senses such as touch, taste, and listening
 + Mental powers, motor power, and artistic ability
 + The Servant should develop and guide these powers towards self-criticism devoid of despair and conceit and in this way the adolescents thinking becomes balanced and mature.

3. Emotional Changes

+ The growth of self-consciousness as a member of the group

- + Inclination towards the other sex
- + Inclination towards forming groups of friends
- + Inclination towards glorifying heroism and heroes

A) Sexual Inclination

- The adolescent is confused because the society avoids him. This is a natural useful inclination for the survival of humanity, but using it wrongly as in homosexuality, masturbation, or adultery impedes the sound growth of the body.
- The servant should give true and correct information, sincere advice, sympathy and love, and form a sense of disgust at defiled matters from physical, social, inventive artistic attitudes.

B) Social Inclination

- To make friends he needs good guidance in a way that does not weaken his personality. He needs help in choosing his friends.

C) The qualities of a good friend

- Of a family that appreciates the spiritual values practically.
- Of nearly the same age.
- He studies hard and he is successful in society and in his studies.
- Not aggressive not introvert but psychologically balanced.
- His language is refined and he has no inclination to violence of pride.

D) His desire to be treated as a grown up adult

- He likes to bear responsibility and to have his mark in groups and organizations.
- He likes to be treated as a master not as a slave.
- He accepts to receive orders from his colleagues not from his boss and this is an important point.
- He is deeply affected if he is well treated by his Servant or his father (The Servant and his responsibility).

E) Curiosity and inclination to exploration

- He likes to discover everything by himself and to make practical experiments and likes to listen to stories of explorers, discoverers, scientist and adventurers and also news about politics and sports.
- So we should encourage him to be scientific researcher and practice reading different and various references.

F) Self-centeredness.

- The adolescent is sensitive for criticism and he criticizes himself severely and cruelly. If he is entirely absorbed in himself, he may become weak and fail. He may despair over the sins and mistakes he practiced. So he needs the encouragement from his guide, who leads him to positiveness and takes him gently away from the passive matters.
- We should not blame or reproach him before guests or the elders. We have to bear in mind that gentle friendly reproach is effective with him.

G) Inclination to be merry

- In spite of anxiety he likes fun and social participation. So evening parties that are soundly directed are useful for young people but young people should commit themselves to moral code and avoid inappropriate jesting.

H) Inclination to be rebellious and the desire to reform

- Self-assurance leads him to rebel against religion, society, the school and family, and drives him to criticize the mistakes of others.
- We can direct this inclination towards serving others with love.

I) Showing admiration for a hero and considering him ideal

- His love for society, comforts him. Giving him examples of holy men and their spiritual heroism.
- Our duty is to make him forget about physical championship and think spiritual heroism and to concentrate on the spiritual values.

Problems Of The Adolescent Stage

1. Inclination to rebel: Refusing the authority of parents, his elder brother or sister and alike. There is conflict between his inclination for self-esteem and submission to society.

Signs:

- Refusal of domination.
- Imposing his opinions on the family atmosphere in problems, clothing, etc.
- Refusing parental advice concerning choosing friends and studies.
- Refusing to accept any type of kindness from the family.
- Withdrawal from practicing activities and introversion of his family does not allow him to practice his freedom and assert his personality.

Causes:

- He feels that he has become a man and his desire to be treated as a man.
- Bad treatment at home -between pampering and cruelty.

Cure:

- Good treatment (Firm and balanced).
- The independent personality of the son. The son has the freedom to choose what appeals to him.
- Do not punish him if he is psychologically annoyed.
- Approach him gently and kindly.
- Parents should be good examples to be followed.
- A child should honor his parents out of love, not out of fear.

Rebellion against the school: To follow the bases of sound education.

Rebellion against Society: The adolescent's anger with society for personal or social reasons or because of various events. Watch the adolescent's conduct and set before him positive social sound ideals and make him feel that he is also responsible for this society. The real cure for this

problem is the change from concentrating on the self to Christ through repentance and fellowship.

2. Inner Anxiety: This is the result of the conflict between his inclination to childhood and his inclination to manhood, between his inclination to sex and the restrictions of the society, between his self-love and inability to achieve his desire and this makes him upset and perplexed, between rebellion and calmness between optimism and pessimism.

Cure:

- There is no peace,” says the Lord, “for the wicked”. There is no doubt that the only way to inner peace is the Lord Jesus Christ who is our peace and the Prince of Peace and who through His birth, peace came to the earth.
- So when a young man makes a covenant of repentance with Christ, and a fellowship of life with the Redeemer, in this case they can obtain the true peace which surpasses the mind Christ is then the only solution for the dangerous problems of the youth, because it is He that forgives us our sins and this is what we really need.
- It also purifies our hearts and this calms down our Inner rebellion. Christ also liberates us from the slavery and darkness. He takes us to His glorious kingdom where we find comfort, freedom and peace.
- There is no doubt that sin is the main reason for anxiety. This is the nature of things. No man can cure this matter. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can crucify with him our old selfish nature with its sin and he then gives us the new creation that is the new man created in the image of God in righteousness and the Holiness of truth.

3. Sex Troubles

Causes:

1. The individual's growth in the first stage abundance of cuddling or deprivation of love, can affect the growth of the young man later on.
2. The long time between adulthood and marriage because of civilization.
3. Wrong sex education at home and at school.
4. The exciting effect of the society on the adolescent: Cinema, press, broadcasting, books, loose scenes in the streets and wicked friends.

But the real prominent reason is the nature of sin in man, which made the man lose the balance and calmness of his instincts. Because this nature is inclined to sin, it responds to any external incentive. The problem then lies in the depths of man not outside him “Everything is pure for the pure, but to the defiled nothing is pure, as their minds have also been defiled together with their conscience”. The problem lies in the heart, which can be a treasure of evil deeds “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”.

The inner spring is the problem and needs to be purified. No one can purify it except Christ with His grace and Holy Spirit...and the role of man is only to show his sincere intention to accept salvation and to express his deep trust in the Lord. If the man asks for the gift and takes it and feels the work of grace in his life this work is kindled by young men's struggle in prayer, Biblical lessons and spiritual readings and by regular confession and receiving the Holy Communion. We say that if the young man gets the Divine work and feels the grace that changes

his life, he has to guard himself and not to expose himself to the evil currents or to hand himself over to the devil. He has to persist on prayer and worship. We say these words before we deal with the sex problem because we know for sure that there are various aspects of one thing that is enslavement to sin from which the Son will liberate us.

Examples of Sexual Deviations

1. Masturbation: The adolescent suffers from psychological tension and overcomes it in this way, which is very harmful and kindled by exciting outside incentives or family problems or deviant friends. The uncircumcised person finds that his organs are dirty and this may drive them to practice this habit. Also tight clothes or eating rich foods, if one lies on one's back or belly, all these lead to forming this bad habit.

Dangers:

- It activates the secretions of the glands and this helps confirming the habit.
- It arouses psychological conflict between delight and the sense of guilt.
- It forms a type of delight that differs from the sound type of delight, which may lead to failure in married life.
- It often brings the adolescent outside society and drives him to become an introvert.
- It has a bad effect on both body and health as through it the adolescent loses the energy he is badly in need of in the stage of growth and development.
- It is a sin as it is lust. It is an evidence of self-centeredness. It causes spiritual frigidity in overcoming.

Cure:

- We must study the case of the adolescent at home and his psychological, sex, health, social and mental states. There may be a source of excitement and the cure will never work unless we cure the causes at first.
- Sound sex education.
- Entering into the fellowship with God through a spiritual guide and a father of confession and practicing the spiritual life and in this way the young man shifts his concentration from negative sides to positive sides.
- The adolescent must accept his social responsibility as a husband later on.
- The adolescent must spend his time doing useful activities: The club, hobbies, the library, debates, lectures and trips.
- We must keep away from evil friends and deviant sources of sex education.
- Developing the sound physical, psychological and mental attitudes that drive him to settle the conflict and to make use of his energy in noble matters.

Many young men who are enslaved to this habit suffer from feelings that are in conflict:

- A) Some demand health only:** Such people must feel that the habit is a sin that needs repentance and that it is against God and that without the grace of God he cannot get rid of it.
- B) Some indulge themselves in it in humiliation and humility:** Such people should raise their eyes to heaven and in this case their concern will be turned from this bad habit to the blessed fellowship. Our criterion should not be always the habit and how to overcome it but the criterion should be the fellowship with God and its liveliness and effectiveness.

The horizons of godliness and continuous fellowship fills a heavenly delightful way of light for man and the adolescent breaks the ties of sin and the authority of the devil. Let us be positive and concentrate our talk on the fellowship with God not on the sin the more the adolescent directs his mind towards heaven, the more he keeps away from this bad habit. It is not fit to speak about such topics in detail in a public meeting. The individual work in this domain is much better and if we feel that it is important to discuss this matter in a public educational meeting, let it be done in a spiritual atmosphere. The talk should also be positive and constructive not negative. We must widen the concept of purity among young people. The wide concept of holiness should include all the dimensions of his life and the troubles of life. Concentrating on material things only is not good as the personality is one integrated wholly.

II. Homosexuality

Cause:

- Development may stop at the stage of adolescence when a young man is on friendly relations with the same sex and these friendly relations may deviate and become a means of forming a type of delight.
- Bad sexual education. Feeling that such relations are dirty may lead to feeling that the relationship between married people is also dirty.
- Separating the two sexes leads each sex to introvert (armies, schools).
- Strong relations between and among young people may lead to exciting sensations as they touch one another.
- Biological factors as the increase in the glands excretions.
- Finally, disputes drive a young man to refrain from showing any interest in the other sex in the domain.

Cure:

- We study the causes of the problem: psychological, physical or social.
- Sound sex education at home, in the school and in the club.
- Spiritual friendship between young people and the spiritual guide.
- Watching the gatherings of young men and discussing the matter with them frankly and calmly.
- Cruelty and indifference when we know that this habit is practiced, i.e. established the habit.
- The spiritual approach; Prayer, the Holy Bible and the social activities.

III. Religiousness among adolescents

- Religiousness among adolescents may be of three types:
- Doubt: This needs a man in whom a young man have trust to discuss everything with him in a friendly way.
- Sticking literally to the Law: i.e., carrying out the commandments literally without concern to the inner godliness and the inner work of grace just to comfort the conscience. The will establish a state of self-righteousness in the adolescent.
- Superficiality: The unsettled visionary emotion for monasticism and others. This needs spiritual guidance and sound planning.
- To be bound to the Lord Christ, the Gospel and the church, to go regularly to confession

and to perform the service are greatly important in acquiring the sound religiousness.

- The friendly relations among young people in the holy places and in the club give them a chance to assimilate and absorb useful important spiritual experience.

IV. Sexual dream (It has three types)

- Natural: So long as the mind is pure all the day.
- Sinful: It is a reflection of defiled thought.
- Psychological: It is a reflection of fear. So long as the mind is pure and man is in fellowship with God, he must not worry about such things as if one concentrates on this topic or thinks a lot of it, the dream will be repeated many times.

CHAPTER THREE

The Adolescent's Religious Feeling

The Responsibility Of Religion Education In This Stage

The Secondary Stage is the period of late adolescence and the beginning of physical maturity. By the end of this stage, physical growth becomes complete. The child of secondary stage has his own attitudes and problems and limited needs.

1. The Stage attitude and problems:

- Seeking self-discovery: Sensitivity towards the self increases, and the young man seeks to discover himself. He thinks: Who am I? What am I thinking? etc. He wants to know himself, but he does not like to be criticized especially before his friends or before the other sex. He likes encouragement and likes those who are aware of his talents and seeks their development.
- Inclination towards idealism and the absolute and dissatisfaction with the real world: The young man at this stage is idealistic in his thoughts. He criticizes everything on the criterion of perfection without taking into account the challenges of time, place and structure. He criticizes himself and his family and he sometimes rebels against authority. Because the environment and the psychological state differ from one young man to another, patience in treating young men and holding discussion with them are needed. This stage is the stage of discovery of values. It is the period of high free jumps towards the ideals. The responsibility of religion education towards this inclination should be introducing programs that satiate his inclination towards ideals and spiritual heroism and studying the issues of the agreement between religion and science from effective specialized books.
- Seeking the discovery of new patterns of life: The inclination towards the ideal and dissatisfaction with the real life are connected with the discovery of the new ways and patterns of life. The young man wants what is new and this is useful...as Christianity believes in perpetual renewal but she sees that the real renewal is the inner one "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind". He that renews his inner self seeks to develop his society but he does not neglect the heritage but benefits from the experience of the past so that the new is integrated.
- What he thinks about love and the other sex: The child of the secondary stage is occupied

in the contemplation of topics on sex. This instinct of sex occupies his mind and represents a lively concern in his life. One may differ from another in objectives yet all young men are deeply indulged in this thought. We would fight evil thoughts in this stage. The young men of this stage seek love because they feel the need to go out of the ego. In the body there are currents of the instinct and love for other sex. The self needs other's love. Romanticism is the attribute of friendly relationships. The young man imagines that these friendships will last forever. Sometimes the platonic ideals are confused in his mind. He dreams of relationship with the other sex but his relationships are not physical. All these relations indicate self-centeredness and emotionally void. In this way the responsibility of religious education is determined to face that inclination as follows:

- Offering the curriculum of sound sex education through Christianity and the Gospel.
- Introducing examples to be followed of those who lived the life of chastity and real love.
- Deepening the concept of love and establishing in them the correct attitude towards love.
- Chastity in the real preparation for love.
- Showing the difference between real and false chastity results from suppression and self-depreciation.
- Establishing chastity among young people is achieved through granting and giving him spiritual energy that supports the will and increases the effect of the Holy Spirit.
- Anxiety about the future: Many questions occur to the mind of every young man and woman in this stage. When anyone of them reads about the hardships of life, their anxiety increases and they become psychologically tired. The responsibility of Religion education towards this attribute is as follows:
 - A young man must be acquainted with a spiritually mature guide who can absorb the waves of anxiety and confirms and establishes hope.
 - The program of this stage should find a cure for these problems within the lessons themselves so that a young man may know himself, which is very important in this stage.
 - The features of education in this stage are positive and optimistic attitude with concentration on the fact that enslavement to sin deprives the believer from redemption.
 - Social spiritual activities play an important role so camping establishes the attitudes of love and sacrifice and encourages young men to go into retreat and pray.
- Violence, Roughness and Rebellion in various ways: A young man of this stage is usually violent and rough as a result of the strong sex motivation and the instinctive energy associated with it. Another psychological reason is fear of others so he attacks others because they attack him and the young man is affected by Christ's instructions about lowliness. So religion education in this stage should concentrate on the following:
 - Lowliness is a Christian trait, which is the outcome of the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - Violence leads to violence and leads man to perpetual tension and anxiety.
 - Lowliness does not mean slackness but it means wisdom and firmness.

- Grace delivers man from the sources of violence, which are weakness, fear and anxiety.
- The energy of violence is consecrated by the Holy Spirit and is used in the works of following love and the violent Moses the Black, becomes known for his great love and service for others.
- Violence sometimes takes the form of rebellion so the duty of religion education and dealing with this attribute is as follows:
 - To encourage the young man to discover his talents and his abilities.
 - Liberating him from every hatred to himself. If the Lord has accepted us, how don't we accept the people and ourselves.
 - Directing the energies of young men towards constructive works and fruitful services.
 - Getting rid of destructive books and encouraging him to read constructive books such as books about the heroes of faith, science, and creative thinking.
- Love for service: Young people of this stage like to sacrifice and serve. They offer their service to those whom they trust and love. The duty of religion education is as follows:
 - To be sure that the young man has submitted his life completely to the Lord.
 - To entrust the service to him after he begins to struggle against his desires.
 - The domains of service entrusted to him should aim at glorifying God no at achieving personal interests. Hence the importance of preparing and serving on sound bases to develop the energy of young men and direct it to constructive spiritual work, not more activity practiced to occupy the leisure time.
- The most important attitudes that should be developed at this stage:
 - Spiritual inner peace and balance and to enjoy peace.
 - Lowliness and to win victory over the desires of the flesh.
 - Firmness and bearing responsibility, resisting indifference and laziness in work.
 - Violence and godliness of the heart through the Gospel and the Lord Jesus.
 - Sticking to and standing firm in faith based on inner motives not on external effects.
 - Hatred for sin and for evil works and love of sacrificing.
- Types of activities needed:
 - Dealing with non-believers with toleration and without fanaticism.
 - Practicing Exercises of repentance.
 - Borrowing books from the library.
 - Studying the Bible and practicing works of mercy and service.

(1) The Divine plane in the Old Testament

References

- + Genesis Chapters 1,2
- + “An introduction to the Christian Creed” by Costo Bintly
- + The annual hymn of praise (the third Hoas)
- + The Reconciliation Prayer of the Liturgy according to St. Basil

The Lesson

Aim

Why and how did the Lord create man?

Verse

God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis).

Introduction

Why did God create man?

- The life of the Lord is everlasting joy and love and because of His love He created living beings and He established with them relationship of love and He made them share the joy of heaven (Paradise refers to joy).
- Man’s real source of joy was in his unity with the Lord. That unity is expressed in the bible by the great love of God for Adam. The Lord brought all the animals to Adam to give each a name and He brought him the woman to be his helper.

How did God create man?

- God created him out of dust, the natural material, this is what we call flesh. It is not evil as Adam lived with it when he was with God before he (Adam) sinned. God does not create evil. There is a difference between instincts and their deviations, which came after the sin.
- God created Adam with an everlasting soul and flesh liable to die so man longs for eternity, i.e. unity with God. This is the secret of his perpetual thirst for the better.
- God created man as the last ring in the chain of material creation. This agrees with the scientific attitude.
- Man is the only being God created in His image after his likeness. This means that he is in the image of God in the following:
 - Mind: To perceive himself and what is around him.
 - Will: His ability to direct his behaviors.
 - Freedom: He gave man various talents and abilities and freedom of conduct that gives him prestige and privilege over the whole creation.
 - Creativity: An extension of the work of God the Creator as He put him in the paradise to work and guard it.
 - Love: Turning one’s face towards the other. He gave him the commandments to prove, through it, his love for God.
 - Dominion over nature: Man is the priest of this universe as he gathers in himself the spiritual world and the material world. He is the intercessor of this universe

and it is he that raises a hymn of praise to God and receives from God an authority to manage this universe in His name.

Exercises and Activities

- Refer to Adam and the animals living together in love and familiarity and how Christ lived with wild animals in the wilderness and also some saints lived with wild animals (Anba Paula, Anba Barsum, etc.). These people lived the paradise life on earth.
- Refer to the Reconciliation Prayer and some division prayers in dealing with the topic of creation. The Servant and the children contemplate the words mentioned in them.
- Refer to the unlimited potentialities of man when grace works in them.
- Refer also to the Spiritual supremacy (Fasting as a return to the relationship between Adam and God in Paradise). The servant, when speaking to his children, concentrates on the necessity of directing our potentialities to the service of truth and good.
- Train the children to quote verses about a call for perfection (be holy, perfect) and pray that God may grant them grace to carry out their work.

(2) The Victory of Martyrs

References

- + “Martyrdom in Christianity” Anba Youannis
- + “They did not love their life” Anba Bemin
- + “The Spiritual values of the New Coptic Year’s Day” Fr. Tadros Malaty
- + “The story of the Coptic church” Part 1, Iris Al Masry

The Lesson

Aim

Standing firm in faith, and gaining victory through the work of grace.

Verse

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Revelations 12:11).

Introduction

Who are the group of Conquerors?

- They are the group of martyrs who sold their life for faith.
- They are the group of confessors who, through standing firm in the apostolic faith, kept their faith.
- They are the group of monks, hermits and the carriers of the cross. These are the martyrs without shedding the blood.
- They are the group of believers who perform their work, but they daily suffer because they bear witness to truth and reject the spirit of the world.
- They are those who conquered the world and all its desires, the devil and all temptations.
- They conquered it in their flesh (Chastity, fasting, struggle).
- They conquered it in its temptations and threats.

- They conquered it in its enmity.

How did they conquer?

- With the blood of the Lamb: The blood that Jesus Christ shed gave the martyrs the power to shed their blood. It also gave the power and wonderful boldness to their testimony.
- By the word of their testimony: The life of martyrs and their conduct was a life of truth, love and lowliness. Their life was the most powerful testimony to Christ. They proved that Christ's gospel is practical and is practiced in their daily life. It is not mere theories, principles and manners.
- They did not love life till death: Our fathers the saints and martyrs were not happy with their life or hated it but in fact they were at the top of happiness, peace and joy. In their life they died to all the desires of the world before they offered themselves willingly in the arena of martyrdom.

Examples of those who conquered: St. George, Perpetora the Chaste, St. Ignatius the Bishop of Antioch, St. Barbara, St. Doulagi.

Our opinion of martyrdom: Someone may say that this is not the time of martyrdom, so what shall I do? Struggle against sin, honesty in keeping the commandment, crucifying the self, the flesh and the desires bearing the sufferings with thanks. All these are domains for martyrdom.

Activities and Spiritual Exercises

- + Train yourself to be like the martyrs in their inner life to be ready to give a live, true testimony.
- + Children can perform a research about the state of the church in the age of martyrs. They can specialize in a limited period to be studied. They can study the life of a martyr such as St. George or St. Mina or St. Mercurius and offer a book or a wall magazine about the martyr.
- + To perform glorification on the occasion of the feast of one of the martyrs
- + To read the Synaxarium and practicing the glorification of the day's saint

(3) Sin and its Consequences

References

- + Genesis 3
- + "An introduction to the Christian Creed" Costo Bentley
- + "The Divine love" St. George Church Sporting

The Lesson

Aim

- + What is the meaning of the commandment?
- + Why was it broken (disobeyed)?
- + What are the consequences?

Verse

"But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said: You shall not eat it,

nor shall you touch it, lest you die" (Genesis 3:3).

Introduction

In this way the Lord showed man His love and waited for his answer and man had to answer willingly to show love for love or to refuse the Divine love.

First: Man was created and was associated with the Lord

When man walked with the Lord he was associated with the life and enjoyed the joy of heaven. If he confined himself to his ego, he would separate it from the mystery of life and enclosed himself in the prison of nothingness and death.

Second: The meaning of commandment

The commandment was given to Adam as (i) a covenant between God and man. If he walks with Him, he will keep the source of his origin, (ii) a domain of showing man's love for God and (iii) a proof and evidence of the freedom of man and his freedom in choosing the direction.

Third: How did man sin?

- Adam wanted to exalt himself and to live with a power of his own independent of God and depending on the material world and that caused his fall (Man's sin at every time is exalting himself and his independence of God).
- The tree of knowledge of good and evil, knowledge here means testing and not the mental knowledge alone, as Adam was able by his mind to distinguish between evil and good.
- The serpent, it is a creature that stands for evil. This means that evil is not everlasting as it has a beginning and it will have an end and the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent.
- The devil had a role in the temptation as he envied man after the devil separated from the life of heaven.
- The sin entered by arousing suspicion in the heart of man towards God and His love for man.

Fourth: The consequences of sin

- Fear of God: as he separated himself from the Divine love.
- He left the Lord and depended on other creatures. He hid himself among the trees.
- The destruction of man:
 - His unity with himself collapsed (His mind became dark...the instincts ruled over the will...the desire of the flesh).
 - His unity with others collapsed (selfishness...spite...envy...hatred).
 - His unity with the universe collapsed (earthquakes...disasters...wild animals...microbes).

Exercises and Activities

- Refer to the fact that every sin in its essence is disobedience to the will of God. It means that he refuses to be associated with him as a son.
- Refer to the fact that the image of God has not been completely lost from man, as he has kept in himself a mind and a will and tendency to do good with the existence of contrast

with evil things.

- Refer to the fact that the return of man to God is the beginning of his loneliness and his reconciliation with himself, with people and with the universe.
- The servant discusses with his children the importance of the work of grace and the spirit in bringing man back to his first image.

(4) The Father's Plan in the Book of Genesis

References

- + Genesis Chapters 3,50
- + "An introduction to the Christian Creed"
- + The Divine Purpose

The Lesson

Aim

How does the Lord solve the problem of the fall of man (His plan for Salvation).

Verse

"We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Introduction

First: Destruction by the great flood

- The punishment of Adam and Eve contained the seed of salvation and indicated the mercy of God as the Lord did not deprive him of the enjoyment of work and children, but with the existence of pain and suffering, i.e. the price of sin and a means of salvation at the same time.
- Man knew evil and so became under the control of conscience because there were no rules or laws. In spite of the rule of conscience and the warnings of the Lord, Cain killed his brother.
- Cain's sin divided the world into the children of God and the children of people...but sin spread more and more among all and God ruled that all people would be destroyed after waiting 120 years in vain.
- In this way people were aware that death was not merely the end of life but it is the original outcome and the punishment for the fall in sin. The Ark stood for the rest of the people who would be delivered (i.e. the church).

Second: Sodom and Gomorrah

- Sin bore fruit, although the Lord promised Noah that He would not destroy the world once more after Noah had offered his sacrifice.
- Sin appeared this time in two cities in the land of Palestine (Sodom and Gomorrah) in the time of Abraham.
- In this way the Lord purified the world of the focus of sin by burning the two cities after He brought out Lot and his daughters, after all the attempts of Abraham's intercessions for the people of the two cities came to nothing because all the people were sinful.

Third: The Call of Abraham (Separation)

- Genesis 6:5 tell us that the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
- Genesis 6:13 tell that the earth is filled with violence...and the Lord chose a man and separated him from the effects of evil people to save the way for the coming of salvation to the whole world.
- Thus He chose Abraham who walked with the Lord through faith. He went out to an unknown place. He believed in a promise that was achieved after 25 years (the birth of Isaac) and offered the promised son (Isaac) as a sacrifice to God without hesitation when the Lord told him to do so. He proved that submission to the Lord with love is the beginning of going back to Him.
- The call of Abraham was an introduction to the salvation of the whole world, and not for choosing the people of the promised son. The birth of Isaac was with special grace and not ordinary sonship according to the flesh. This indicates that the salvation is grace.

Fourth: The Tribes (choice)

Thus the processes of choice or choosing are repeated. He left Esau and chose Jacob then He chose the tribe of Judah because of faith.

Activities and Exercises

- The Servant directs his children to study the book of Genesis. It should be a spiritual study of how the Lord dealt with His people in the Old Testament.
- There are references such as “The Life of Adam”, “The Life of Abraham”, “The Life of Isaac”, and “The Life of Jacob”. The children can make a summary of these books, make lectures to be delivered and wall magazines.
- Bind the Lord’s choosing Abraham and the tribes with choosing the Father of the church (Ephesians 1).
- Discuss the role of faith and elucidate that it is not against the human mind but it surpasses it.

(5) The Christian man and freedom

References

- + Galatians 5:13-14
- + 1 Corinthians 10:23-27
- + “From a Christian point of view” Anba Bemini
- + “The problem of freedom” Dr. Zakarya Ibrahim
- + “The god of modern apostasy” Costo Bentley
- + “An essay: Freedom according to Christianity” St. Mark Magazine (March 1967)

The Lesson

Aim

Emphasizing the true concept of freedom from a Christian point of view, and rejecting the wrong

prevailing concepts, which call for satisfying the desires of the flesh.

Verse

“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36)

Introduction

1. The concept of freedom according to the people of the world

The concept of freedom according to the people of the world is confined to the political and social freedoms, which concentrate on democracy and equality and standing against injustice, deprivation and racialism. This concept is not contradictory to the Christian concept of freedom as Christianity blesses these freedoms, but the Christian concept of freedom is superior to the types of freedom that organize the temporary life.

2. The Christian concept of freedom

Christianity believes that man was created free in the image of God and after His likeness. This freedom has two sides: the freedom of choice and the freedom of action. The Christian freedom is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believers and it is a life granted through grace in Christ where they becomes children of God and it is an inner freedom in which the Christians are sure of their victory over all that hampers their enjoyment of their sonship to God. It is freedom from enslavement to sin, death, duties, law and fear.

3. The most important ties that hampers that inner liberation

- Enslavement to sin: “But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered” (Romans 6:17). “And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness” (Romans 6:18).
- Self-enslavement: The real freedom is man’s freedom from his self-narcissism and selfishness. It is living with the Lord Jesus, His commandments and the love for others.
- Enslavement to fear: “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out: Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8: 16), “and if children, then heirs--heirs of God, and joint, heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together”(Romans 8:17).
- Enslavement to the law and ordinances: “Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered, from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter” (Romans 7:4-6). “Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16,17).
- How to practice our real freedom unhindered:
 - Though our unity with Christ in the fellowship of the Divine Sacraments.
 - Through our status as sons to the Father, as also through Christ we are sons.
 - To be led by the Holy Spirit as freedom is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.
 - To not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh (Galatians 5:13). We must not

use this freedom in satisfying the desires of the flesh but for serving the Spirit.

- Does Religion limit the freedom of man? The Lord respects the freedom of man because He loves man. The real love takes the freedom of the beloved into consideration. Love is not imposed by force otherwise it is not love but it turns into slavery and the Lord considers us sons not slaves. He wants us to be free to enjoy the fellowship with Him. This is what He did by the cross, through the cross and through Resurrection. He liberated us from slavery and granted us victory and the ability to conquer by His resurrection.

Activities and Exercises

1. Young people benefit from this debate in their confession and together with their spiritual father, the points of weakness can be discuss with a means of cure.
2. They should quote verses about freedom and contemplate them.
3. They should make a summary of the references that were written about the Christian concept of freedom.
4. They can make a wall magazine about the issue of the Christian Freedom so that young people may benefit from the essays during their meetings.

(6) The Divine Plan In The Old Testament: The Hymn Of Victory

References

- + Exodus 15
- + Revelation 15:3
- + The Annual Psalmody
- + The book of daily Songs of praise and the Hourly psalms
- + “The Spirituality of the Song of Praise”
- + The rituals of the prayers of Apocalypse

The Lesson

Aim

Songs of praise are deeply rooted in the structure of man and in the church.

Introduction

- When Pharaoh got his war chariots and his army ready, he set out with his chariots and pursued the Israelites. The Egyptian army, with all the horses, chariots and drivers pursued them and caught up with them as they were camped by the Red Sea (Exodus Ch: 14).
- The Lord of Glory made the Israelites cross the Red Sea. Before that powerful Divine work, the people of Israel expressed their feelings by this lovely song of praise. They praised the Lord by these wonderful inspired words.
- They expressed their delight with victory and happiness at Salvation and the feeling of the work of God, His power and His victory. They thanked the Lord and glorified Him.
- That is why the church ranks this song as the first song to be sung during the Eve of the Holy Saturday (The Apocalypse). In this she ensures and declares that the victory has

been achieved and Salvation has been completed and humanity has crossed from the life of slavery to the freedom of the children of God. It is not crossing the sea but crossing with Christ, Glory be to Him, with His death, His cross, resurrection and Ascension. So this song of victory is sung although Christ is still in the tomb and the church has not celebrated the resurrection yet.

To feel the work of God and His power and sing to praise them

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord and said: "I will sing to the Lord, for He Has triumphed Gloriously". This song is composed of stanzas and verses which all speak about the work of God. By this song they remember the power and salvation of the Lord granted them and the defeat of Pharaoh and all his soldiers. The one who has sung this song feels the delight of the people of Israel. Blessed is the soul that always feels the work of God and feels his great favor and sings to Him remembering His power day and night in thanksgiving, in praise, in joy of the heart when we face the problems and troubles of life.

Singing songs of praise and the Spirit of the Congregation

Then Moses and the Israelites sang...all the congregation sang...the work of God was not declared to one person but the Lord was glorified in the whole congregation. One cannot be aware of the work of God or perceive His power or attain His Salvation except through the whole congregation. So public songs of praise are clear response to the will of God and they indicate the achievement of His Holy will in humanity and the completion of God's purpose in man. In this spirit man enters into a state of pure worship to God. In the worship the Lord gives His glory, power and salvation and man receives the gift of the Lord with the spirit of thanksgiving, singing songs of praise, and with joy. So the Lord begins the initiative of love and giving. This Divine love demands that we should enjoy it and enter into a fellowship of love and response with Him.

Between the Congregation of Israel and the Lord's congregation in the New Testament

All the events and rituals of the Old Testament were symbols of life so the holy congregation or the congregation of the New Testament (the church) assimilated these events and offered them as a life of Divine fellowship that have been enlightened by the right of the Lord declared in the New Testament, and filled by the Holy Spirit so that it may affect the soul. The Israelite congregation offered this song to the Lord and at the head of that choir was prophet Moses himself. Hence we realize the mystery of the songs of praise sung in the church. These are not mere words or tunes offered to the Lord. They are a life of fellowship, where Christ is the head of the church and the Holy Spirit unite the hearts of individuals with the deep unity of love with the head. The tune comes out in harmony and expresses the mystical unity of work represented in this song of praise (the sacrifice of hymns).

The Shout of victory, the song of victory and salvation

The people of Israel were able to increase the victory they won by this joyful song. It was like the shout of victory that shook all parts of the wilderness and it was a symbol of the salvation that the Lord made for His people. In the spiritual reality we find that the shout of victory leads the soul joyfully in the way of God as much contemplation in the weakness of man and his perpetual failure and the lack in his potentialities and his inability hamper the spiritual way. But the sound spiritual position lies in perpetual contemplation in the power of the Lord and His

victory and his salvation and sticking to them as a Divine right granted to man by God “Your right hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces” (Exodus 15:6). “And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You; You sent forth Your wrath which consumed them like stubble. How wonderful if we stick to the power of God, we move calmly and with simplicity from power to power, we change from glory to glory, from human inability to the great power of God” (Exodus 15:7). “The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise Him; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him” (Exodus 15:2).

Sing joyfully to God who saves the soul from self-righteousness

One of the most dangerous things that afflict man is self-righteousness or to feel that what you have got of victories or achieved of progress or virtues is the outcome of its innate powers. Here man steals the glory of God and falsifies facts (Read Revelation 3:17). Here we see the necessity of singing songs of praise to the Lord as a Divine ritual that secures the soul against the most dangerous enemy that deprives her of all the blessings of salvation and the everlasting life. The man who is used to singing songs of praise in the church with congregation of the Lord feels that his faith in the work of the Lord, his victory and salvation increases every day. The feeling of self-weakness and inability also increases. This is the continuity of spiritual development (Read Luke 9:23-24).

Human harmony in the worship of God

Then Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing and Miriam sang to them, “Sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously”. This is the soul’s most beautiful expression when she goes out in harmony to sing to the Lord. Singing to the Lord expresses the extent of harmony, which was the outcome of the spirit of praising the Lord in both the congregation and the individual. This is God’s purpose for humanity to be harmonious and to unite in one body, i.e. the body of the Lord Himself then all the people goes out to sing to the Lord Perpetual joy. At that moment man perceives his real existence in the Lord and the dimensions of real life in Jesus Christ and the great work he is called for which is praising the Lord, perceiving the beauty of the Lord (The fairest of the sons of men), and enjoying the Lord’s love, power and perpetual peace. The most dangerous thing that afflicts the soul is her inner division in the worship of the Lord and the inner structure being torn, hence it is important to praise the Lord with joy to unite the inner and outer of man to glorify God “Unite my heart to fear Your Name”.

Activities and Instructions

1. The children of the class should form a choir for praise and they should practice this worship with the spirit of joy, and harmony among the group.
2. The children express all these experiences using all means of expression (prayer -drawing -magazines, etc.)
3. The Servant and his children read part of the Book “The Daily Songs of Praise” and the hourly prayers and contemplate together the spiritual subjects on singing to the Lord.

(7) The Holy Bible

References

- + “An Introduction to the Gospel” Anba Moussa
- + “An Introduction to the Gospel” Fr. Marcos Daoud
- + “How to the read the Bible” the Marcos Magazine

Why do we study the Holy Bible

1. We Listen into The Voice of God: It contains the instruction of God (Through it we listen to the Voice of God “Speak Lord, for Your servant hears”).
2. We learn His Commandments: So that we may know our duty towards God. If I love God, then I must obey His commandments and His commandments are announced in the Bible “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37).
3. We learn the Christian Conduct: So that we may know our duty towards the people and ourselves. In it we find the Ten Commandments, the sermon on the mountain and the parables that the Lord gave for Christian conduct. Through the Bible we know that all the people are our brethren as we He taught us to call the heavenly Father “Our Father”.
4. It gives us redemption and salvation: The Father loves us and gave His Son for our salvation. The Son incarnated and became man to redeem us... All these things are revealed to us in the Bible “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).
5. We learn How to love all the member of Christ’s Body: It explains to us the Christian man’s obligations towards the family, fathers, sons, and sisters and towards one another. We find this in the words of the Lord and in the epistles of Paul the apostle.
6. We learn How to live In the Holiness: It refines humanity, refines instincts and honors the dignity of man wherever the Bible is, there exists the enlightened humanity that respects and considers the truth, freedom, constitution and virtue.
7. Our Heavenly Spiritual food: It is our spiritual food in our daily life (Psalm 119:105) “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path...Your words were found and I ate them”. The Commandment is a lamp and the law is a light and the water that the Lord Jesus gives us, i.e. His word...each one who drinks of it never thirsts as the Lord said to the Samaritan woman.

How to read the Holy Bible?

1. With the spirit of need: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied, but those who are proud are sent away without being given anything.
2. With the spirit of respect and awe: It is the voice of God and God speaks to us through it so we have to give it awe (Study how awe was expressed when the Lord spoke to Moses in the Old Testament).
3. With the spirit prayer: It is a spiritual book and only spiritual people understand the demands of the Spirit of God but those concerned with the flesh do not understand.
4. With the Spirit of patience: Because we want to understand what the Lord says to us. If we are patient with the science lessons we understand them so the same is true with understanding what concerns our salvation.
5. With the spirit of persistence: It is not enough to read the text once then to neglect

reading for some days. We have to be persistent in studying and contemplating.

6. With the spirit 01 being ready to carry out: As of what use is reading and the words turn to judge us. (An example of obedience and practical carrying out is the great saint Anba Anthony).

Evidence of the unity of the Bible

Although it contains 73 books, 46 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament and more than forty writers from all parts of the world over nearly two thousand years, yet we feel that it is one book as it is inspired by God. It contains a variety of writings, stories, tales, biographies, poems and proverbs, but as a whole it concentrates on one message from the beginning till the end and it is the message of salvation, carried out by our Lord Jesus Christ. We find the crimson line clear in all its books and we notice clearly how the wonderful Divine plan in the Old Testament prepared humanity for salvation and how the events and topics were symbols of the Lord and His work of expiation.

The main divisions of Books:

1. The five books of Moses: Torah.
2. Historical Books: 12 Books and these are: Joshua -Judges -Ruth -I Samuel -II Samuel -I Kings -II Kings -I Chronicles -II Chronicles -Ezra -Nehemiah -Esther -Tobias -Judith -the Maccabees.
3. The Poetic Books: Job -Psalms -Ecclesiasts -Songs of Solomon -Joshua -the Son of Serach.
4. The great prophets: Isaiah -Jeremiah -Lamentations -Ezekiel -Daniel.
5. The small prophet books: Hosea -Joel- Amos -Obadiah -Jonah -Micah -Nahum -Zephaniah- Haggai -Zechariah -Malachi -Paroch.

The New Testament can be divided into the following main parts:

1. The four Gospels: Matthew- Mark- Luke- John.
2. Acts of the Apostles.
3. Pauline Epistles (14 epistles): Romans -I Corinthians -II Corinthians -Galatians -Ephesians -Philippians -Colossians -I Thessalonians -II Thessalonians -I Timothy -II Timothy -Titus -Philemon -Hebrews.
4. Catholic Epistles (7 epistles written to the whole church, not to certain churches or to individuals): James -I Peter -II Peter -I John -II John -III John -Jude.
5. The Revelation: written by John the apostle.

Evidence of the unity of these Books:

Refer to the testimony of the Bible -history -archaeology and science and you will find proofs of the truth and correct information of the Holy Bible. There is no misconstruction or contradiction.

The Importance of the Holy Bible in our Private life:

The Servant should carry out this topic in real situations. He must be sure that each young man and each young woman reads and studies the Bible at home whether through visits or all means of individual work. Discussion should be about their desires. The Lord says: "Apart from Me you can do nothing". St. Paul says, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts

of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). Also in his epistle to the Ephesians he said "Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all... to stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness... Take the sword of the spirit, which means the word of God" (Ephesians 6:13-14). The Bible protects the youth from temptations, sanctifies their thoughts and tender feelings. The words have spoken to you are spirit and life. They are the lamp that lights the road and a guide of life "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say: I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12: 1).

Example of the effectiveness of the Holy Bible in the life of people especially the leaders

- Prophet David: He meditated on the commandments day and night. He advised his son Solomon to keep the commandments of the Lord and walk in his way. When Solomon kept away from the commandments of God and married foreign women he deviated and lost his way.
- Daniel and the three young men: They refused to betray the commandment so the Lord sent His angel to Daniel to shut the mouths of the lions and He protected the three young men in furnace of fire.
- Joseph who lived in chastity, "How then could I do such an immoral thing and sin against God".
- The Kings of Judea: While the kings of Judea walked in the way of evil when they kept away from the commandment.

Exercises and Activities

1. The Servant tells the children that religion does not mean lessons and exams but it is essentially life, spirit and practical practice.
2. The Servant follows up the process of studying the Holy Bible and its effect on the daily life of the children. He should encourage them and find out the verses that give them comfort. He should then pray for applying them and using them as exercises for the day.
3. One of the important matters is fixing a suitable period of time to be devoted for daily reading and prayer before and after reading. Emphasize the importance of regular study with open mindedness and submission of the will and being prepared to obey the commandment. Let us encourage our children to study some verses to give them comfort during their study of the Word of God. This is a precious treasure that will benefit them, all their long life. Let reading the Bible be a criterion through which man examines himself and confesses his sins to his father of confession.

(8) Delivery from Slavery

References

- + Exodus
- + The annual Song of Praise -Third Stanza
- + The Divine purpose

The Lesson

Aim

Moses and the Exodus as a model of the work of Salvation.

Introduction

- God does not speak to man for tens of years but he works: The Israelites increase in number, Pharaoh humiliates them so that they may not settle, the midwives, Moses whom he prepares to be the leader of the Passover.
- The Lord prepares Moses in Pharaoh's house: When Moses killed the Egyptian man he refused the private service. The Lord supported Moses the hesitant before Pharaoh and the children of Israel. The Lord works through Moses as the first and the greatest prophet among the prophets of the Old Testament.
- The Lord begins his public work: He announces His name (Yahwah = Jehovah) and speaks directly to the people (Exodus 20).
- The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart to be glorified in him and cause disasters to fall upon the gods of the Egyptians to glorify Himself in them too.
- He abolished the evil power that the magicians used to confuse the work of the Lord.
- God refuses the semi solutions offered by Pharaoh when he tried to keep the Israelites as his slaves (contemplate the verse "not a hoof shall be left behind". Try to apply this verse in your spiritual life).
- The Lord gave salvation to the people of the Passover lamb. He elucidates that sprinkling blood is not enough but the Passover lamb itself must be eaten (Faith in God means that we should enter into a constructive fellowship with him).
- The first Passover is the Passover of the angel indicating the grace of salvation, which our Savior achieved by the cross. The second Passover was achieved by crossing the Red Sea indicating to what we must achieve by accepting the sacrament of Baptism. May we have the grace the potentialities of which were granted to us by the first Passover.
- The Israelites sang to the Lord (Exodus 15). The church remembers this song of praise in the first stanza allover ages till the coming age (the age to come). In Revelation 15, the song of those who conquered the beast refers to Pharaoh in the final resurrection.
- Note that God's silence does not mean that He does not work in the world.
- Note that the Lord works through weak people to turn them into saints.
- Note that the words of God heard on the mountain did not prevent the Israelites from making the Gold bull-calf so the fact that God reveals Himself to people does not prevent them from deviation from the truth. Neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.

Activities and Instructions

1. The Children express topics by artistic methods such as drawing, making models and writing essays.
2. The children should study the stanza about the Passover in the song of praise from the Psalmody Book. The servant and his children contemplate the spiritual meanings and they try to apply them in practice.
3. The servant and the children write the number of symbols achieved in this lesson and which were through Christ and His wonderful Salvation.

4. Copy some of the names that the Lord used for the salvation of the church of the New Testament. Copy them from the Bible or the books about the church history (Not a hoof shall be left behind for Salvation to work).

(9) The Christian Man and Violence

References

- + “The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ”
- + “The Life of St. Paul the apostle”
- + “The Life of Elijah and the Baptist”
- + Some verses from the Index of the Holy Bible that indicate that there is no contradiction between lowliness and firmness.

The Lesson

Aim

To train the children to lead the life of lowliness, i.e. the Christian lowliness which is devoid of cowardice, weakness and humiliation.

Introduction

Most young people like violence especially males, but Christians have their opinion concerning violence and this opinion is derived from the attitudes of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The teachings of the Lord Christ about violence:

1. The Lord Christ refused violence and the verses that shows this are: Matthew 4:5, Matthew 5:9, Matthew 9:3, Matthew 10:16.
2. John Chrysostom said: you can be a fierce wolf and you do not accept to be a lowly lamb, but you cannot be one of the subjects of Christ as He is the shepherd of lambs not a shepherd of wolves.
3. St. Paul the apostle wrote about this in Romans 12:17 and Romans 12:18.

Jesus refused violence in His life

Jesus refused violence in His teachings and He refused violence in His life (Matthew 12:18-20, Luke 9:54-56, Matthew 21:4, Matthew 26:51-53). When He was questioned before the High Priest, the high priest asked Him about His disciples and teachings and Jesus answered bravely that He was teaching in public. John explained all what happened in John 18:22. Let us contemplate upon the Lord’s answer: Many people protest against the Lord’s teaching “If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” and they see in this a call for cowardice and servility and they forget the great spiritual power of it, but Jesus’ conduct on that occasion sheds light on the commandment and explains how to carry it out. Jesus here did not turn to the soldier the other cheek and there was no trace of humiliation or servility in his behavior but He caused the man to stand still in awe and fear. His manner was a mixture of lowliness and manliness, awe and greatness.

So Christ, who turned His cheek to the smiters, is He who protested against this soldier’s conduct. This emphasizes that the lowliness of Christian man does not mean cowardice but it means to forgive when you are able to punish. In so doing man surpasses his weakness and

overcome the nature of the flesh and sublimates his innate instincts. They were filled with spitefulness against Jesus so they nailed him to the cross and He faced their great spite with His great love and their violence with lowliness and when He was on the cross He prayed for His murderers (Luke 23:34).

The Church of the Apostles is a model of lowliness

The early Christians behaved in lowliness and in this they obeyed the commandment (Matthew 11:29). They did not rebel against their persecutors but they achieved a spiritual revolution by offering the testimony of blood without any spite of envy (recall St. Stephen when he was stoned and how he prayed for those men who stoned him (Acts 7:6)). The church raised earnest prayers for the rulers who persecuted her till like Saul who threatened them was converted and became Paul the preacher and the chosen vessel. St. Barbara prayed for the governor and her father who gave orders that she would be put to extreme pain and that her body should be naked. Philemon and Apoldenus prayed for Arianus the governor of Inssanna and when they were martyred, he took some dust from their tomb and put the dust on his eyes, which were sick and they were healed. He turned from a severe cruel persecutor into a great martyr “Because of the great amount of blood the wolves drank, they turned into lambs”.

Why does Christianity reject violence

Violence refuses love as it looks to the other person as something that should be destroyed, and not J as a person who can serve. Violence indicates weakness as it fears others and this fear drives it to attack others to avoid their attacks. Meekness is strength, love is strength and perfection that is why Jesus is called the Commander of the law of perfection and it is He that planned the best law. Violence does not consider the humanity of man and Christianity confirms man and resists degenerating others.

The society rejects violence

Christianity rejects violence and urges people to be meek and to have a strong personality. Civilized Societies do not permit or allow violent actions as such actions are considered savage actions and the law was set to resist aggressions and to punish anyone who commits such irresponsible actions wherever he is.

Christian meekness implies real strength

The Christian meekness does not mean indifference, it is not against firmness as firmness is needed in situations of defending truth and what is right. Firmness is necessary sometimes to waken the stony conscience. Jesus was firm and strict without showing any grudge or hatred, in many situations (Matthew 2:14, Matthew 17:7, Matthew 23:3, John 3:16). The true meekness does not mean servility. It implies insisting on bearing witness to truth whatever the difficulties may be. The meek would not destroy others but he offers himself, as a sacrifice to save others is necessary. O young men and young women: If you have energy, enthusiasm, zeal and ambition let them all be raced by the Holy Spirit. Let the violence you have be violence of love and bearing witness to truth.

Activities and Exercises

1. Training the children to practice meekness in their style of life in the family and in the school.

2. Training the children to prefer meekness in our Lord's commandment: "Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart".
3. The father of confession encourages the children to hold brotherly relations and relations of love with Christian and non-Christian and to face any roughness in speech with gentleness and meekness not out of weakness but out of love.

(10) Biography of St. Mina

References

- + "The Life of Mar Mina" Issued by Sunday school Mar Mina church, Alexandria
- + "The Biography of Mar Mina" Shubra
- + Synaxarium, 15 Hatur
- + "Martyrdom in Christianity" Anba Youannis

The Lesson

Aim

To train the children to lead the life of holiness through saintly examples

Introduction

St. Mina was born of Christian parents. His father was Odexis and his mother was Ofomeya. He lived in the town of Nipheus Minuf in the Minufya Governorate. Odexis was a governor of one of the Roman states in one of the regions of Egypt. Ofomeya was praying before the virgin's Icon requesting the Lord to give her a son and she heard a voice coming from the Icon saying; Amen. She gave birth to a baby boy in 283 and named him Mina.

A Blessed Atmosphere

Mina lived in a spiritual and pure atmosphere. His father and mother departed to heaven (died) and his wealth, health and social status did not spoil him. He joined the army and progressed quickly. He was promised and became an officer loved by all.

In the Wilderness School

When the saint was 18 years old, he went to the wilderness. He lived an angelic life and loved the gospel.

Three Crowns

The saint was blessed by attaining Three Crowns; Virginity, Monasticism and Martyrdom and he deserved these crowns (as he deserted the family life and the life of authority and luxury). They offered him temptations and he refused and they tortured him and he stood firm in faith. He was glad to offer his life willingly to Christ. They cut his head off in the name of the Lord Jesus and he deserved the crown of Martyrdom.

The Saint's Body

The soldiers made an attempt to burn the body and they failed to do so. The Christian leader Athanasius kept the body and took it to Mariot, as there was a battle. Horrible animals came out

of water and tried to devour the ship but fiery arrows came out of the body of the saint and dashed towards the animals and made them sink in the water. After the military battle the camel that was carrying the body of the saint refused to move so they built him a tomb and made two pictures of the saint and two beasts under his feet.

Building up a church over his body

A crippled man passed by the tomb and was healed. A scabby sheep rolled itself in the dust of the tomb and it was healed. So the believers built a church in that place in the age of St. Athanasius (328-373 A.D.). Then Anba Theophilis built up a bigger church (385-412 A.D.).

Finding out the body

The saint appeared to the church priest on 7/9/1873 (St. Mina Church, Fom El Khalig, Old Cairo, Egypt) and told him about the place of the hidden body. The Priest found the body. A part of it was taken to his church in Old Cairo in 1959, and another part was taken to Mariot Monastery in 1962 after Pope Kyrillous VI reconstructed it.

The saint's miracles

The saint is called the “Al Agaybi” i.e. the performer of miraculous wonderful deeds and the following are just few samples:

1. He defended his servant: who was accused of doing wrong but he was innocent. The servant of St. Mina church was wrongly accused of doing an evil deed. When he was tired a voice came out of the picture of Mar Mina saying: “My servant did not do that evil deed with the prince’s daughter”.
2. He sympathized with the needy: One of the workers who worked in building the church of St. Mina was a poor man. A horseman appeared to him and gave him a brick. He thought it was a brick of mud, but it was a brick of gold.
3. He saved our Patriarch from Death: Some robbers beat Pope Kyrillous VI in his mill. St. Mina healed him and one of the robbers became mad, the second died and the third came to our father and repented.

The church celebrates the feast of the Saint and his Saint’s name has become a song on the mouth of the believers. The church celebrates his feast twice a year:

- On the 15th of Hatur (24th of November) the feast of his Martyrdom.
- On the 15th of Paona (21st of June) the memory the dedication of his church. May the blessing of his prayers and intercessions be with us. Amen.

(11) Yourself: Know It -Accept It -Sacrifice It

The Lesson

Aim

To show the value of the self in the light of Christ

Introduction

1. Give some questions about how children define the self.
2. Discuss the subject after you explain it.
3. Introduce the subject in a modern practical way.

Know yourself

Seeing ourselves as they are in reality and truth is a matter of great importance. This is difficult as the world falsifies the self in the eyes of man. The family, the school, friends and effective social and mental powers make man in alienation from himself. That is why the Greek philosopher said “Know Yourself” but it is impossible for a man to know himself by self-examination, self-knowledge, self-perception and self-awareness for it is a divine work. It is impossible for a man to have true practical real honest perception without perceiving God, as the Lord created the self (soul) in His image and after His likeness calmness, solitude and eternity. Man may go deep into his innate life to find out the beauty of his soul and the beauty of his talents. He can also perceive the ugliness of sin and how it deforms the godliness and purity of the soul.

When man has a true knowledge of himself, the virtue of true lowliness became easy to apply as the natural man is liable to fall in the temptation of the right or the left, the temptation of pride and boasting of the temptation of inferiority and despising the self. Man’s self-knowledge is a psychological demand. It is also a spiritual demand, it is not knowledge that comes through the mind and the mental model only but it is a test that is characterized by the spirit, the mind, enlightenment and also inspiration.

Accept yourself

The most difficult matter in the spiritual and psychological life is for man to accept himself after he knows it very well as the image we have of ourselves gives us an unreal idea about ourselves so if we face ourselves with their reality we become upset and confused. That is why a man of the world keeps away from the prayer room and the confession seat from the calm constructive criticism. He finds comfort in the friends who praise him and means of amusement and luxury that keep him away from his roots and depths. Some people may argue saying that if we accept ourselves as they are, all the struggles will collapse as when we accept ourselves we feel comfort and there arise in us a powerful incentive to make progress beginning from the real and progressing to the wider horizon- if man does not accept himself, he cannot accept others as they are. He lives in his self-Enslavement. He is annoyed with those who oppose him and keeps him away from those who do not agree with him. This is the reason behind the absence of unity among many people and this is why many cases of marriage fail.

If the Lord accepts us as we are, why don’t we accept people as they are? If the Lord alone is able to change others, why do we rebel against the people around us and demand that they should be like us? In this, Paul the Apostle says: “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God” (Romans 15:7).

This acceptance does not mean refraining from guidance, education, advice and instructing these spiritual and educational process cannot be achieved and their goal cannot be attained unless man welcomes those who direct and guide him for Christ our Lord adopted our issue and bore our sin

till death and grant us instruction and a way of life.

Sacrifice yourself

- Self-sacrifice means submitting our life to God and forgetting about our fear, our longings and the schemes for the future.
- Self-sacrifice is a perpetual submission to the will of God in the events that occur around him and also yielding completely to the Divine Plan.
- Self-sacrifice means offering the whole being to God and throwing oneself in the paternal bosom and forgetting about anxiety or fear or confusion. Psychologist found that there is complete development, integration and achievement of the aims of life in self-sacrifice. The Lord called every soul that wants to offer earnest worship to desert everything to possess the real existence and the original being.
- Self-sacrifice is not practiced by words but by living and suffering the real situations of life.
- When he prays, man shows contribution before the Lord and attains the power of sacrifice and the mystery of love.
- When he works, man forgives others their weakness, he does not envy or grudge, he does not ask for what is his.
- In times of afflictions and pain, man offers thanks and shows forbearance as an evidence of absolute submission.
- The three tests are three successive rings or three layers through which the believer enters into his own depths to know himself and accepts it as it is with its powers and weaknesses, and then he offers himself to the Lord to purify him so that he may deserve sacrifice, love and giving. Thus the Divine words became true: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me”.

Spiritual Exercises

- Examine yourself to discover your weaknesses and talents.
- Offer true repentance before your father of confession and be sure of forgiveness and Divine acceptance after confessing and receiving the Holy Communion.
- Practice the works of sacrifice, giving and service with the spirit of meekness and lowliness and as an echo of God’s love for us, so that God’s purpose is achieved in our life.

(12) The Acceptable worship

References

- + The life of Orthodox prayer
- + “The Paradise of the Spirit” Part One
- + “The Paradise of the Monks”
- + Examples of David’s Psalms and the prayers of the saints from the Holy Bible

The Lesson

Aim

Training the children to practice the true worship with spirit and truth.

Introduction

- The acceptable worship is the worship of the person acceptable before the Lord.
- Before we offer our worship to the Lord we have to examine ourselves and our actions. The Holy Spirit helps us to know ourselves.
- The welcome worship is the work of the Holy Spirit in us.
- The Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. We have to submit to the Spirit so that He may teach us how to pray.
- The acceptable worship is the worship we offer to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit leads us to Christ and Christ leads us to the Father and Christ puts our prayers and services in the sacrifice of Himself that has been welcomed by our heavenly Father. For the prayer to be in the name of Christ it must be according to His will. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well, i.e. the aim is the Glory of Christ, not self-interests.

For our prayer in Jesus Christ to be acceptable:

The Holy Bible teaches us that the prayer should be:

1. With faith: Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full.
2. With importance: and having trust in the gifts of God (e.g. The widow and the unrighteous Judge).
3. With thanks: each prayer in the church begins with: "We thank the beneficent..."
4. With submission and humility: Submission to the will of God "Yours will be done O Father, not our will". In this way man comes out from his prayer room ad he is sure that in everything God works for good with those who love Him.
5. In secret without showing off: the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.
6. With a pure heart: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Let us worship the Lord by all our heart and He will welcome us in the prayers of our fathers the saints. Amen.

Activities and Exercises

- Hold a weekly prayer meeting to practice praying in Spirit.
- Read some texts from the church prayer books and make a wall magazine.
- Study parts of the psalms and hourly prayers (Agnus) so that you may repeat them in all the situations of life.

(13) St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians

The Lesson

Aim

To train the children to study the Holy Bible and to benefit from the word of God in their everyday life

Introduction

1. The servant gives children a copy of the New Testament and they should study the epistle with them, chapter by chapter and concentrate on the spiritual contemplations and practical application.
2. The servant can make use of the questions of this lesson and make them topics for discussion and contemplation and attempts to apply them practically.

The location of the town of Philippi

How Christianity came to the city as Paul had a vision in which he saw a man of Macedonia standing and begging him “Come over to Macedonia and help us” (Acts 16:9-12). Lydia who was a dealer of purple goods was one of the first believers in Europe. There, Paul met many people and faced many situations including: the salve girl who had the evil spirit in her that made her guesses the future. He was also sent to prison where the jailer was about to commit suicide but Paul prevented him from killing himself. The jailer asked him: What must I do to be saved? Paul answered: Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your family. The Philippians also showed love for Paul. They sent him presents and gifts when he was in prison. The epistle was written in Rome when he was in prison in 64 A.D.

Why the epistle was written

- To tell them about his personal circumstances.
- To thank God for their love for him and to show his joy with them.
- To tell them that he would send them Epaphroditus who was very sick and who almost died. He wanted to send him to them so that they would be glad again when they saw him. He promised to send them his disciple Timothy.

The attributes (Characteristics) of the epistle

Love and great joy although he was in prison, his love for Christ filled his heart and the joy of the spirit surpassed his pains.

The main items of the epistle

1. Christian greeting and cordial longing to see them: His imprisonment was for the benefit of the preaching the word of God as the brothers doubled their efforts in preaching the Gospel and others thought that their activity would annoy Paul when he was in prison but he declared that he is interested in the Service not in himself.
2. The issue of life and death, Chapter 1: For to me to live in Christ, and to die is gain. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that you stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel and not frightened in anything by your opponents. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for his sake.
3. Unity of spirit and mind: This can be achieved as explained by the epistle:
 - a. Christ should be the goal of each Christian.
 - b. The members of the church should be Christians, not only in name but also in action.
 - c. The Holy Spirit should work in them.

- d. They have to live in the spirit of fellowship and impartiality.
- e. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

The meekness of Christ should be a model to be followed and His obedience to His Father till He was hung on the cross should be a practical example for all believers. So the most important challenges of the unity of the Spirit are:

- Pride -selfishness -love for praise -self-glorification and the love of appearance.
- Desire for leadership.
- Selfishness and self -centeredness in self -love.
- Personal goals and personal interests other than the glory of Christ.

The apostle showed in his epistle that the most important ties of the life of the unity and fellowship are (Chapter 2):

- Preaching Christ and salvation.
- Giving comfort and sympathy through love, tenderness and gentleness.
- The fellowship of the Spirit.
- Showing mercy to the weak, those who failed, and those who keep away from the church, the sinners and the needy.
- One mind and one goal (Refer to what Paul said about the unity of the church and how he likened it to the unity of the members of the body and also refer to what the Lord said about the believers as branches in one vine).

4. The Christian Joy: Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I will say, Rejoice

- a. Christianity is the religion of spiritual joy- She knows no case- no anxiety- no fear- no pain.
- b. Christianity is the religion of salvation and salvation is joy. She is the religion of Heavenly beings. She soars with the soul to the Cherubim and Seraphim and shares the heavenly hosts their encouragement.
- c. The church of the Apostles was a church of joy in spite of severe persecution. The Acts of the Apostles says: And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.
- d. The following develop the spirit of joy in our life:
 - Liberation from sin (The joy of Salvation).
 - Trust in the promises of God and faith and complete Submission.
 - The unity of fellowship with the believers.
 - Singing hymns of praise; rejoice, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you” (2 Corinthians 13:11).
- e. The following weaken the life of joy:
 - Enslavement to sin (David wet his bed by his tears after his fall).
 - Being upset because the cases of life.
 - Selfishness and self-Centeredness.
 - Testing and indifference that are the signs of separation and invert suffering and repentance.
- f. Characteristics of the Christian Joy:

- Spiritual.
- Innate, it fills the heart with peace.
- Firm and fixed, well established (Your joy no man take it from you).
- Calm- reverent like the Virgin's joy with the good news.
- It overcomes afflictions and cases. When the cases of my Heart are many, their consolations cheer my soul.

Activities and Exercises

1. Devote some weeks to study the epistle with the children. It is an epistle full of consolations and joy and it suits the needs of young people.
2. The chosen verses as main points of the epistle should be written in the children exercise books and discussed with the father of confession.
3. The servant gives the children a chance to discuss the unity, difficulties, and how to achieve unity of spirit in a falling world in which each individual seeks his own interest. Discuss the difference between joy and amusement and jesting, which is a prevailing phenomenon in this age.
4. The servant gives some questions of the Epistle such as:
 - What do you know about the city of Phillip, the church of Phillip and the coming of Christianity to that city?
 - Which Christian attitudes did Paul explain about the Problem of Life and Death and in this he was defying the opinions of materialists and non-believers?
 - Of what importance is the unity of mind in the church and how can it be achieved?
 - What is the meaning of the lived gospel and what differentiates it from Christianity by name?
 - What are the Characteristics of the Christian joy and what distinguishes it from the people's jesting?
 - How can we live in the perpetual spiritual test?
 - What was the Apostle Paul's attitude towards the following subjects: pain in the life of a believer, the model of obedience and meekness set before the believers, the ties of unity and fellowship among believers.
 - Choose the verse that have affected you and write spiritual contemplations about them.

(14) Kiahk's Hymns of Praise

References

- + "The Spirituality of the hymn of praise" Part 7, Anba Matthias
- + The Kiahk Psalmody
- + "Reading of the Month of Kiahk" Fr. Samuel Thabit

The Lesson

Aim

To train young men and young women to practice singing hymns of praise as a preparation for living with God and perpetual meeting with Him.

Introduction

Singing to God is the language of heavenly beings. Kiahk hymn of praise is composed of seven Theotokeyas and four hoases with their Psalmodies, hymns and interpretations.

The First Hoas

This is Prophets Moses' song after crossing the Red Sea that was a symbol of Baptism (Exodus 15 and Revelations 15:1-4). Thus we see the strong ties between the Church of the Old Testament in her symbols of the New Testament.

The Second Hoas (Psalm 135)

This is the hymn of thanksgiving offered by the church to the Lord for His love for us. He saved us when we crossed the sea of death. He supported us and supports us today in the wilderness. He feeds us with His Body and Blood and with His love and mercy. He guides us with His Holy Spirit who abides in us. In this Hoas, we see many of symbols of the New Covenant:

1. The Ark covered with Gold: It is made of wood that does not rot (a symbol of the purity of the Virgin) and covered with Gold (a symbol of Godhead).
2. The ark Cover with the Cherubim overshadowing it: This expression is the same as the gospel's declaration "The power of the Highest shall overshadow you".
3. The Manna golden urn and the manna (Christ) hidden inside it.
4. The lamp stand of pure gold carrying light: We praise you O Mother of True Light.
5. The fire pan (censer) made of gold: is a symbol of the virgin as she carried the fire of the Godhead and was not burnt.
6. Aaron's rod that budded: She conceived without human seed.
7. The flower of incense is a symbol of the Virgin whose perfume spread allover the world.
8. The bush with flames of fire and the bush was not burnt.
9. The ladder that Jacob saw: This is a symbol of the Virgin. The Lord used her flesh to descend from heaven through it then He raised our nature to heaven.
10. The mount of Sinai on which the word of the Lord descended.
11. The mountain, which Daniel saw: One of the stones was cut off without the help of any hand: that was a symbol of the Virgin. Christ took flesh from her body without touching any other body.
12. The gate that Ezekiel saw (Ezekiel 44:2): "And the LORD said to me: This gate shall be shut; it shall 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". This stood for the virgin whose virginity is everlasting.
13. She is the symbol of the cloud, the mental paradise and the second heaven. The woman wearing the sun and the Lord's Throne set on the Cherubim and the covenant tables.

The Psalmodies

The Psalmodies are seven in number. The word "Psalmody" means "a hymn". Singing hymns in the Coptic Church is characterized by the fact that each refrain ends with the name of Jesus. Examples:

Monday Psalmody: My Lord Jesus.

Tuesday Psalmody: Your Holy Name O my Lord Jesus is... This is the hymn sung by the three

young men (It is written in the Holy Bible and the Protestants deleted it from the Beirut Edition).

The Third Hoas

This Hoas is sung by the church in a merry tune to declare to us that the fire of the world is necessary to test the church and that the inner peace does not mean the end to temptation and pains as it has the meaning of conquering by the power of the Cross. Thus this hymn of praise achieves the Lord's promise: "and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

The Congregation of Saints:

It begins with interceding with the Virgin Mary the Theotokos, then the Archangels and the orders of Heavenly beings John the Baptist and all the apostles and prophets and Patriarchs and martyrs who are praying for us and the 144000 virgins who did not defile themselves with women.

The Fourth Hoas

The fourth Hoas begins with Eleison-emas. The fourth Hoas is composed of Psalms 148, 149, 150 and they are all about singing to the Lord, which is the work of angels and the work of the church in heaven. The Lord is wonderfully glorified in His saints (Praise the Lord. Praise God in His Sanctuary...).

Theotokeyas

These are glorification of the Virgin Mary the Theotokos. This is sung to carry out the demand of the Divine Inspiration: From henceforth all generations done to me great things; and holy is His name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation. The virgin is not a vessel holding a gem and we took the gem and threw the vessel as the Son took flesh from her blood. One of the most wonderful symbols recorded to us by Theotokeyas is "The Holy of Holies". It is the part devoted for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Wednesday Psalmody: The sweet name full of glory is that of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thursday Psalmody: O my Lord Jesus Christ who...

Friday Psalmody: Our Lord Jesus Christ gave the sign of the cross.

Saturday Psalmody: My Lord Jesus Christ, my Good Savior.

Sunday Psalmody: My Lord Jesus Christ help me.

This is a brief summary of the daily church hymn of praise. There is a big number of hymns arranged according to each Tazakeya. It is known that they are divided into two main divisions: they are Psalmodies Adam and Wats (the bush) named after the opening the two famous hymns.

The first is: Adam the first of the Creation. You brought him back O mother of Jesus from the mean land of misery "Maria ti parthenos".

The second is: The bush that Moses saw in the wilderness. The flames burnt inside it but did not burn it.

The first type has a certain tune. It is sung on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. The second has a longer tune and is sung during the other days with the tunes. There are other hymns said in the

same tune of the four hoases, to interpret their meaning they repeat the same ideas. Some of them are said in evening and morning prayers.

Hoas Erof (Praise Him)

In the month of Kiahk we enjoy an unlimited number of hymns such as “Raise Him high” and another hymn beginning with “Tenen”. The fourth Hoas (hymn of praise) is characterized by a piece or stanza, to it after each period of Psalm 150. This addition is: Glory and praise befit our Lord. Praise the Lord our God as Praise is good. In the Divine Mass some “Heteneyat” are added. The refrain to the lesson from the Acts of the Apostles is said with certain words from the Gospels. We listen to a distinguished tune from the Psalm of the gospel and also the last Psalm of the distribution and it is known by “Kiahk Alleluia”. Let us live the life of singing to the Lord and say: Holy-Holy is your Glory that fills all the earth.

Instructions

- Let us be cautious: singing to the Lord is not mere ritual in which all compete to show the tunes they study and how sweet their voices are.
- Let us stay up the night singing to the Lord: to glorify Him with submission with the saints. Let us raise our heart and lift up our hands to prepare ourselves to meet the bridegroom. Watch and pray.
- The Servant and the children sing the hymn of praise in the church: It is useful if they refer to the sources of the hymn of Praise in the Old Testament, the Book of Exodus, Psalms, the Apocrypha, the Annual Psalmody, and Kiahk hymns. Hymns of praise are not the outcome of human though but it was composed by the early fathers in the spirit of the Gospel and the fathers.
- The Servant concentrates on the position of the Virgin in Christian Creed you protect the children from the western strange current of thought.

(15) The New Life

Introduction

The Servant explains to his children the purpose of the creation of man. He did not create him to enslave him as the atheists say. In the Christian Creed, the Holy Trinity is the Trinity of love and this is a flowing love. So the purpose of the creation of man is for man to live and enjoy the Divine love through a fellowship with the Holy Trinity and the obedience to the commandment. Man was created in God’s image and after His likeness in freedom, will, speaking and creativity. Adam lived in the Garden of Eden with Eve and they enjoyed the life of the spiritual, psychological, mental and physical harmony.

What is Adam’s sin?

He said to the Divine love, no. He refused to live in obedience and preferred to be independent. He preferred the false independence and preferred the ego and enslavement of himself to the sin of conceit and pride and rebellion against love.

What did the original sin do?

1. It tore the unity between man and God, between man and himself, between man and

others.

2. Evil deeds, smite, envy, hatred and murder and all works of darkness bore fruit as man knew the evil works, i.e. tested them. If man is in unity with God, he will be protected from this test.

Why did Christ come?

He came to bring man back to his first order. He took what is ours (our humanity) and gave us what is His (the fellowship with him and His good father and the Holy Spirit). Repentance was not sufficient as St. Athanasius said as wickedness got the nature of man and spoiled it. To renew it, it was necessary for us to unite with the Son, the Word, so that He might give us the new nature. No one can do this except the Lord Himself as man is sinful and the angel has no flesh. God alone is the Holy One who can give the potentiality of life.

- The Father loved us and gave His Son for us.
- The Son Incarnated and became man. He became like us except for the sin alone.
- The Holy Spirit sanctified the Virgin's womb and took flesh from her and the Word united with that flesh.

How does the new life come to us?

By Baptism we are born the second birth from water and spirit. We are washed then of Adam's sin. Through repentance and receiving the Holy Communion we attain renewal of thought and life. In this way the power of Incarnation, Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension supports each believer in Christ through the Sacraments.

What is the meaning of "We complete our Salvation with fear awe and trembling"?

Christ gave us everything by His Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection but we have to keep this grace in our life by continuous struggle, the examination of the heart, repentance, confession, crucifixion of whims and desires of the flesh, by fasting and praying and by tears and continuous purification of the heart "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

(16) The Nativity of Christ and My Birth

References

- + "Contemplations on Nativity" H. H. Pope Shenouda III
- + "Quotations from the Feasts" Anba Bemin
- + "The Blessings of the divine Incarnation" Anba Gregory
- + "With the babe of the Manger" Anba Moussa
- + "The Treasures of Grace" Arch Deacon Banoub Abdu
- + "Incarnated and became Man" Dr. Ragheb Abdel Nor

The Lesson

Aim

Nativity has General and Special aims. The General aim is the Nativity of the Lord Christ while the Special aim is the afflictions of Nativity in our life.

Introduction

In the beginning God created the heaven and the Earth and all what is in them and He saw that all what He did was very good. Then He created Adam in His image and after His likeness. Adam lived in peace with God till he fell with the temptation of the Serpent and all human beings were sent to exile. Adam was driven out of Paradise.

I am descended from Adam

The wage of sin is death, because we are all descendants of Adam, as sin came into the world through the man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned (Romans 5:12). The nature of man became wicked and signs of wickedness appeared:

- a. Pride: Adam wanted to be equal to God in recognizing evil and good by himself and his descendants bore the same thoughts.
- b. Disobedience: Adam disobeyed the commandment of God. He ate of the forbidden tree. All Adam's children did the same; the people of God disobeyed God in times immemorial in the wilderness.
- c. Weakness and Degradation: Adam began the fall from the time he accepted to negotiate with the devil. David is an example.
- d. Hatred: It is natural that if my relation with God (The All Love) becomes corrupt and separates from him, how can I love my brothers. Look and contemplate how Cain killed his brother.
- e. The Bad Model: The fall of the first Adam was a bad example to all his children so the whole world corrupted. There was only one family that was the family of Noah the Righteous.

The Nativity of Christ and the New Nature

The word took flesh and became man to renew my birth and to reform what the devil corrupted to reconcile the heavenly with those on earth. He granted us all these blessings and grace:

- a. Meekness: The Lord emptied Himself and took the form of a servant. He was born in a manger to give us back what we lost through the pride pushed into our hearts by the devil.
- b. Obedience: "I delight to do thy will, O my God; the law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8). In the Biography of St. John the short we hear of the tree of Obedience.
- c. Power: The Power of the Lord Christ in the days of His Incarnation appeared when He faced the devil on the mount of Temptation.
- d. Rising Up: The Lord descended from heaven and took flesh so it was necessary that He would ascend to heaven again after His resurrection so that He might raise the hearts of His children to heaven where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God (Matthew 8:46).
- e. Love: Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13) With Love and through Love our fathers the martyrs offered their life to that who loved them.
- f. The Good Model: With the Incarnation of the Word we have the example of the good model: "Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29).

Exercises and Activities

To develop the talents of my new nature by singing to the Lord, music, drawing, struggle through meek behavior, obedience, love, good model, etc.

Sayings of the fathers

- God is not information to be studied or history to be recorded but He is the One to meet and the life to be lived and a companion to live with (Yacoub Al Sirougi).
- Today the seal of Godhead stamps the nature of humanity so that men may decorate themselves with the nature of Godhead (Mar Ephraim the Syrian).

(17) The Christian Young Man and the Repeated Fall

Introduction

God created a free man, as He wanted sons not slaves. He gave him the commandment together with freedom. Sin is failure in the examination of the creature's love for God. The diagnosis of the issue of the repeated fall is lack of faith.

Reasons for the repeated fall

- 1. Little confidence in the promise and power of God:** If we look into the life of our fathers the saints, we find that through faith they conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, shut the mouths of the lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of the weakness, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to fight (Hebrews 11). By faith Noah constructed an ark and challenged all his people. By faith Abraham obeyed, when he was called to go out to a place, which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land. He looked forward to the city, which has foundations. By faith Abraham offered up Isaac when he was tested, he forgot everything except obeying the commandment. Thus he became the father of fathers. By faith Joseph challenged the sexual desire and the temptation of the wife of Potiphar. By faith, Moses, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's daughter when he had grown up choosing rather to share the ill treatment with the people of God. By faith our fathers the holy apostles conquered the desires of the flesh and challenges of the world. They were not defeated before the great power of paganism because they had confidence that He who called them was able to complete their work. By faith our fathers the hermits, the worshippers and the monks won victory. Those who lived in the wilderness conquered the flesh and its desires, they conquered the emotions and feelings they conquered monotony and boredom.
- 2. Self-dependence:** The cause of our fall is often our dependence on ourselves and on our human arm. The Bible says: "God is at work in you". Only the Grace of Christ makes us accepted before our Heavenly Father, without this Divine gift, all our works are refused and all our struggle is not according to the law. It is necessary for us not to depend on ourselves so that our struggle can be healthy, sound and correct and legal and acceptable before the Lord (Isaiah 5:21). Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight (Romans 12:16). Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own

opinion. The spiritual youth who earnest in his struggle, hurries up and rises when he falls and prays for the help of the Lord, goes to confession and repents and sanctifies himself by receiving the Holy Communion.

3. ***Indifference, slackness and anxiety:*** He who fights to satisfy himself and satiates himself is afflicted by anxiety and sometimes boredom and rebellion if he does not achieve what he wants. He is also afflicted by indifference, slackness and indifference at other times...but the true believer fights for the glory of God only. The heart that is filled with Christ's love cannot grieve Christ whom he loved...the fire of the Divine love alone can quench the flame of our desires. St. Shufan the hermit talks about the importance of struggling against the hidden inner whims, he says: If you conquer and deaden your defiled desires and your bad whims, the Lord will be pleased with you...as you work with Him in a much better way than if you bleed your body with whips...this will not deliver you...if you remained enslaved to your evil desires. "You have to struggle with grace against the small desires so that they may not corrupt the vine of our life". Mar Isaac the Syrian explained how there are pains and sins that may be hidden in the depths of our hearts. He says: "Herbs and flowers disappear from the face of the land in winter, but their roots remain hidden in the depth. When the spring comes, they begin to sprout and cover the face of the land. This is the truth for everything. The spiritual youth who persists in prayers and obedience of the gospel, we find that his weaknesses fall like the leaves of autumn and the Holy Spirit works powerfully in this inner man and renews all that inside and burns up all the hidden sins and in this way he realizes and perceives the love that surpasses the human mind.
4. ***Stubbornness and disobedience:*** Obedience, not in the sense of blind obedience of man, but the obedience of the Truth. We must obey God rather than men. It's conscious enlightened obedience like the Virgin's obedience to the angel's call. It is joyful obedience in spite of the suffering of man it is living for bearing witness to the Truth. The Scripture says: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Samuel 15:22-23). If rebellion is the means of fall, obedience is the way of the Christian perfection. The Christian youth who obeys the Truth will find that truth will liberate him of everything: of himself, of enslavement to the flesh, of the dominion of the people's talk and hence he lives for the obedience of the commandments. He hears the Holy Spirit that speaks within him. He flourishes from the Holy Bible in his daily food. He grows from the spiritual sermons in the church, the meetings, confession and the voice of the Lord everywhere. Jeremiah warns us to reform our ways and to correct our wrong deeds and not to act according to the stubbornness of our evil hearts (Jeremiah 18:12).
5. ***Keeping some sins in secret:*** "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). A young man conceal some sins which are loved or because they are ugly or because he still sticks to them and does not want to reveal them or to leave them. Our fathers the saints teach us that the devil keeps shyness away from man when he commits a sin and give it back to him when he sits with his father the priest to confess and to repent. We must not be ashamed of our condition when we fall but we must go to confession, which means showing up the devil and all his evil tricks. Let us sing with prophet David "My flesh trembles for fear of You, and I am afraid of Your judgment" and with Solomon "By loyalty and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for and by the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil".

6. Weak watch over the senses: Senses are the windows of man through which he overlooks the outside world. Let us pray and say: “Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips”. The more a young man advances in his spiritual life, the more he is trained to control his senses. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14). St. Matthew says: “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness” (Matthew 6:22-23). The spiritual struggle and the spiritual wake turn defilement into holiness and man tastes and sees that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8). St. Theophan the hermit says, “Be sensitive and be always watchful as to your relationship with your senses. Do not allow the impressions that come to you through them to excite your pains or feed them”. These are the most important means of curing the phenomenon of the repeated fall. Perfect love from the heart of God in worship and prayer, true complete repentance, unlimited trust in the promises of God and complete trust in Him not on ourselves. Cordial obedience to the commandment and earnestness in watching the senses.

Exercises

Repeat the following and study them:

- + “O Lord make haste to help me”.
- + “Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise”.
- + “Never be conceited”.
- + “Clear me from hidden faults”.
- + “My flesh trembles for fear of You, and I am afraid of Your judgment”.
- + “Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips”.

(18) The Titles of Newborn

References

- + “Contemplation on the Nativity of Our Lord” H. H. Shenouda III
- + “With the Baby of the Manger” Bishop Moussa
- + “The Names of the Baby of the Manger” Bishop Moussa

The Lesson

Aim

Studying all that concerns the Newborn, His name, and revealing Himself.

Introduction

The name of a person and his attribute are often inseparable. When we say “the Baptist”, we mean John, and when we say “the Apostle of the Gentiles”, we mean Paul. Let’s now contemplate the Divine Titles, which were given to the Baby of Bethlehem.

His Name Will Be Called Jesus

The Savior: Joseph was called the savior of the world because he filled the hungry people with corn. Joshua was given that name because he brought them into the Land of Canaan. There was a sign that God would save His people. The names of some prophets refer to the meaning of salvation. Isaiah, Elisha, and Joshua all mean “God saves”. The verb “save” is mentioned 2500 times in the Holy Bible, and no wonder! Salvation is the central theme of the Bible. Now the only Savior of whom prophets prophesied has come. His salvation is comprehensive and certain because He saves His people from their sins.

Emmanuel “God with us”

The Incarnation is going back to paradise where the Lord walked in the garden and Adam heard His voice. Adam’s heart was pure, so he saw God “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”. Incarnation is the beginning of the church in Christ where the Lord dwelt in man, in one flesh and became the head of the church. Truly, He is Emmanuel “God is with us” and in us.

The King of the Jews

He received the kingdom from God His Father “The Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom shall have no end”. “The government will be upon is shoulder” and the royal scepter will be in His right hand. He reigns with all humility. He will capture the souls not through subdue but in His humiliation, God will exalt Him and will give Him a great name. He will be born in a manger, crowned with thorns, He will sit on the throne of the cross but He is the Lord of glory and the King of Kings. The magi gave Him gold, as He was the greatest King, but they also gave him myrrh as a sign for His sufferings. His Kingship is not of this world but He reigns over the hearts of the chosen; the saints.

Isaiah’s Prophecy

“For to us a child is born. He is truly the Son of man”. “The Son of man” was the title that Christ loved when He was on earth. The Lord used it many times (He is the Son of God and He is the Son of man at the same time (The unity between the Divine nature and the nature of Manhood). “And His name will be called Wonderful” The Lord Jesus is wonderful in the way He was conceived and the way He was born. He was wonderful in His humiliation and when He accepted to take flesh, become man and dwell among men. He was wonderful when He was born in a manger although He is the Holy Lord of hosts whom the angels and the heavenly powers worship. He was wonderful in His teachings, in His love, in His crucifixion, in His resurrection, in His Ascension and sitting at the right hand of His Father.

Counselor

+ He is Lord Jesus the Savior whose advice is life-giving and whose teaching gives you light. He advises you to live a new life, if you accept His words and believe in Him, you will have a share and heritage with the saints.

Mighty God

+ He was born in Bethlehem. The angels sang hymns to Him and all the creatures worshipped Him; the poor shepherds and the rich magi. Nature submitted itself to Him; His word silenced the wind, raised the dead and healed diseases (study the phenomena of the true Divinity in His

life on earth). He is the Sacrifice of Golgotha. His power was revealed in His glory that appeared on Mount Tabor, in His wonderful miracles and in His voluntary weakness when “He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant”. He obeyed the will of the Father till death, the death on the cross. He is mighty. He has the authority to take and give.

Father: He is Father and His fatherhood is not like that of human beings, which is limited and confined to emotions and human abilities. His fatherhood is everlasting...without end...kind and sacrificing...accepts every prodigal son who left the bosom then came back from the fields of swine. The Lord disciplines the prodigal son by using trials and afflictions to purify and test him to assure his path of salvation.

Everlasting: He is everlasting, i.e. without end. His sonship to the Father is an everlasting sonship; it has no beginning, no end, and no date. Indeed, He took flesh and accepted to have age, time and history but His Godhead is above time. He died physically but the living Lord and the Life Giver who has no beginning and no end.

Prince of Peace: He is the Prince of Peace because when peace came into the world of men, and the host of angels announced this good news through their beautiful songs, and hymns of praise, before the shepherds who were awake at the night of the Nativity and when He spoke to His disciples, He explained that He was the giver of peace and that His peace was not like that of men but that it is the true peace, and anyone who lives in that peace shall not fall under the condemnation of sin and its severe punishment “Since we are justified by faith we have peace with God”.

Jesus the Baby of Bethlehem offers Himself to you so that you may glorify Him for His wonderful works and so that you may accept His Divine advice and that you may worship His Godhead and His glorified divine person, and that you may speak about His divine ability and power and that you may accept His fatherhood and in this case, you will have and enjoy the new life that is full of love. You will live in his peace forever, enthroned Him on your heart, and give Him the gold of your life and the frankincense of your worship and the myrrh of your service.

Exercises and Activities

- + Collect the Biblical verses that emphasize that the titles of Christ as the Baby of Bethlehem.
- + Try to examine yourself with each title so that you may live with Him in your life.
- + What will you do to celebrate the Baby of Bethlehem and make a true spiritual celebration for Him?

(19) God Reveals Himself

References

- + “The Spiritual values in the Mystery of Baptism” Bishop Gregory
- + “The second birth of water and spirit” St. George Church, Sporting
- + “Quotations from the feasts” Kamal Habib
- + “The Feasts of Epiphany” Fr. Marta AL Meskin
- + “The Treasures of Grace” Archdeacon Banoub Abdu

The Lesson

Aim

Getting acquainted with the new birth and spiritual illumination.

Introduction

While preaching the word, the Lord Christ met a man who was blind since his birth. This man could not enjoy the grace of sight except after the Lord met him and rubbed his eyes with mud. He ordered him to wash his face in the pool of Siloam as well as all the people who lost their spiritual sight and their heavenly illumination “God did not leave Himself without a witness” (Acts 14:17).

In olden times

1. Melchizedek (Genesis 14): King of Salem...who gave light in the middle of the Old Testament. He gave a glimpse of the light of Christ. The Levitical Priesthood appeared later than Christ came; a priest in the priestly order of Melchizedek (Psalms 11:4).
2. Jacob's Ladder (Genesis 28): That he saw when he ran away from the face of his brother. It was a symbol of Christ (John 1:51).
3. The Appearance of Light: This light appeared on the lid of the Arc of Covenant between the Cherubim to announce the Presence of God and His will.
4. Finally, John the Baptist came: He came as an angel to get the Lord's road ready for Him (Matthew 3:1). In the fullness of time, the Lord revealed Himself in a wonderful way. The heaven was opened and the Father revealed Himself and spoke to the Son and the Holy Spirit appeared like a dove.

The Complete Revelation

Finally, the Lord made His appearance known. The glimpses of the Old Testament paved the way for this divine appearance. The brightness of this appearance increased during the Lord's preaching (John 17:3) and in the event of the Transfiguration on the mountain.

The Opened Heaven

- ❑ Heaven was opened on the day of the Epiphany declaring the end of the age of shadows, symbols and darkness and the beginning of the new age of true light.
- ❑ Since heaven was opened, it has never been closed but it remained open for the believers (Acts 7:26, Acts 10:11, 2 Corinth 12, the two revelations of Peter and Paul).
- ❑ When heaven was opened, the Holy Spirit came down from to dwell among men and to be the source of life and a basis of comfort and to accompany the believer all the days of his expatriation.

The Heavenly Testimony

- ❑ “This is my beloved Son” with this, the Father declared His fatherhood to His Son; the Son through whom we have obtained sonship and covenants.
- ❑ “With whom I am well pleased” Thus the Father declares that His perfect delight is in His Son, this means that the Lord finds His delight in the life of His children the believers. He says: “My delight is with the sons of men” (Proverbs 8:31). Here we ask, my brethren,

have you been enlightened in your life? Have the lamps of your own heart been lit with the oil of delight?

The Illumination of Baptism

Without baptism, the heart of a believer cannot see light. Paul the apostle says: “For it is impossible to restore again to repentance?” (Hebrews 4:2). Every believer has the right to be enlightened.

The Extension of Enlightenment (Illumination)

+ As soon as the believer receives the power of baptism, he starts practicing all the Holy Sacraments of the church such as Chrism, Confession and Communion. He keeps practicing means of grace regularly to increase the extension of enlightenment.

Notes for the Servant: The Servant can discuss some other topics with his children, such as:

- The work of the Holy Trinity in our salvation.
- Christ humbled Himself and obeyed the law whether in circumcision or in baptism to fulfill all righteousness.
- The importance of baptism and the spiritual values that we receive when we practice this sacrament. The servant can read some quotations from the book of “Church Service” about baptism.
- The servant should draw the children’s attention to the fact that the second birth through baptism is not repentance and change of thoughts as some denominations claim; but repentance is the extension of the work of baptism in us; the second birth is by water and spirit.

Exercises and Activities

- The quiet spiritual contemplation on the blessings of baptism that each one of us has received.
- Collecting situations and verses from the Holy Bible where the Lord revealed Himself from both the Old and New Testaments.
- The children study some rituals of baptism and their relationship with light such as the white clothes, the lit candles surrounding the baptized in the procession that takes place after baptism.

The Sayings of the Holy Fathers:

- St Cyril the Great: “The Souls of the baptized are enlightened by receiving the knowledge of God”.
- Ustenus (St Justine) the Martyr: “This washing is called enlightenment because those who learn these matters are enlightened in their minds”.

(20) Baptism and Chrism

References

- + “Contemplations on: From Nativity to Baptism” H. H. Pope Shenouda III
- + “Nativity Impressions” Dr. Ragheb Abdel Nor

- + “Baptism and Chrism” Youth Bookshop
- + Luke 3:21-22
- + Matthew 3:13-17

The Lesson

Aim

The church is the place where man receives sacraments. Man should understand the work of baptism and its relationship with the mystery of repentance.

Introduction

- The church sacraments are holy works and divine gifts by which we can receive invisible grace.
- The seven church sacraments are: Baptism, Chrism, Communion (Eucharist), Repentance and Confession, Unction of the Sick, Marriage and Holy Orders.
- The sacrament is fulfilled under three conditions:
 - A suitable substance for the sacrament such as water for baptism.
 - A legal priest.
 - Invocation of the Holy Spirit.

First: What happens in the sacrament of baptism?

1. Through baptism we put off the old nature and put on the new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 3:9-10).
2. It is a sacrament of the first order as it is like entering the kingdom of grace (John 3:5).
3. It is a sacrament necessary for salvation (Matthew 3:11, Ephesians 5:25).
4. Baptism must be performed by immersion (1 Peter 3:21, Colossians 1:10).

What is the relationship between repentance and baptism?

Repentance is a continuous trial to keep that image of Christ, which we have put on (Ephesians 3:9).

Second: What are the blessings?

1. Entering the kingdom of God and obtaining salvation (John 3:5).
2. By our baptism we are buried with Him and share His death (Romans 6:3-5).
3. Repentance and forgiveness (Romans 6: 6- 7).
4. Baptism is being born again (John 3:6).

Direction and Instruction

The servant can recite with the children, the prayer of rejecting the devil, to renew the covenant of baptism.

The servant tells the children that the tears of repentance are the second font of baptism. All the children should go to confession and receive communion once a week.

The Sacrament Of Confirmation (Chrism)

References

- + “The church sacraments” Habib Girgis
- + Acts 8:14, 1 John 2:20, John 14:16-17

The Lesson

Aim

To explain the work of Chrism in us. It is the sacrament by which we obtain the seal of the gift of the Spirit.

Introduction

The Sacrament of Confirmation (Chrism) is performed immediately after baptism and by it we have the seal of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22).

The Confluence of the Sacrament of Chirm

1. It gives us the enlightenment of mind and knowledge (1 John 2:20-27).
2. It gives us the strong will to worship God (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).
3. It put the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit upon us (2 Corinthians 1:22, 2 Corinthians 11:21).

What evidence is there to prove that it is in the church?

1. The early church practiced it when all the apostles laid their hands on the baptized.
2. The Biblical evidence is the event of Peter (Acts 8:14-17). Another evidence is Paul and his meeting with the believers in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6).
3. Theophilus of Antioch says: That is why we are called Christians, because we are anointed with the oil of God.

History of making the Myron and the way of preparing it

1. The apostles themselves made it of the spices, which were on the body of our savior.
2. St. Mark brought it with him to Egypt and before it ran out, Pope Athansius mixed it with new spices.
3. This happened 25 times and it is composed of 30 kinds of spices.

The system of anointing

The priest makes the sign of the cross with the Chrism (Myron) on the body of the baptized 36 times to sanctify all parts of the body starting with the mouth, the ears, the eyes, and all the joints with a certain prayer that suits that part of the body, for the confirmation of the baptism is the Holy Spirit.

Instructions and Exercises

- + At 6 o’ clock, pray to the Holy Spirit using the passages of the Third Hour Prayer: O Heavenly King...

(21) How to Control My Emotions

References

+ 1 Corinthians 6:12, 9:24-27, 10:23

The Lesson

Aim

Self-Control and the correct behavior

Powers of the human self

There are three powers that conflict with each other within the human self. These are:

Desires: These include all instinctive inclinations and all the tendencies that arise in the heart of man, whether these tendencies are good or bad.

Will (ego): This is the power that controls desires as it allows some desires to see light while it prevents others from being released according to the power of the stimulus.

Conscience (superego): This is the voice that God put in man. It grows through the work of the Holy Spirit although it is affected by many educational and social factors. It reproaches man when he sins.

These powers that conflict with each other within the human self have different results. For example, when the desire is strong and the will is weak, this desire sees light so conscience complains and rejects it. The opposite is true when the desires are good and the will let them appear. In this case conscience is satisfied. In general, there are three different types of outcomes:

First

Immorality: It means the release of all desires but we have to bear in mind that immorality is socially, medically and biologically impossible.

Socially: If this principle suits the sexual instincts, why does it not suit the other instinct? If this is true, then a soldier may escape from a battlefield responding to life (Eros) instinct and any man may kill anyone who may annoy him responding to curiosity of hunger.

Medically: Immorality is dangerous to health and has a bad effect on mental hygiene as satisfying the instinct does not mean that the problem has been solved. On the contrary, it causes hunger as instincts are never satisfied and this destroys the physical and mental health of man.

Biologically: Immorality contradicts the natural law for example immorality contradicts marital loyalty as one spouse may deviate and be unfaithful saying that it is necessary for the desires to be released.

Second

Repression: This is the outcome of so many desires being rejected by the will, therefore man lives as a prey to his suppressed desires and he tries to prevent them from seeing light so he

becomes at a loss and suffers from tensions as there is a distance between what he wants to do and what he really does and if the case becomes more serious, the repressed vapor explodes the container of life and destroys it and makes for immorality with all its disadvantages or for psychiatric disorders.

Third

Control: Control, as a Christian concept is another thing, as grace causes radical changes in the power of the human self.

Desires: “The Holy Spirit weakens such desires and fills the heart with other holy desires such as prayer, service and love for others.

Will: The Holy Spirit supports the will “God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). The will does not feel the heaviness of the evil desires (because the Holy Spirit has weakened them) so there is no more repression, but there is easy control with the help of grace.

Conscience: The Holy Spirit increases its sensitivity, but conscience becomes perfectly clear as life goes on in the right way and the blood of Christ fulfills the forgiveness of sins. Thus Christianity gives us the chance to build up the good and sound personality. This is not the case with immorality and repression, which are destructive factors.

Domains of Inner Control

The young man must control himself in many domains, such as:

1. He must not look for his own interest, but for the interest of others. He must not be selfish (In brotherly love has tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another, take the lead. Diotrephes, who likes to have the first place among them, does not receive anything from us with respect).
2. He sublimates his instincts with the help of grace so he directs the powers of his emotions into spiritual sacrificing love, and the combat instinct into struggle against sin and the energy of the Instinct into looking forward to eternity.
3. He struggles against sin, in all its forms whether in his private life or in his relations with others. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood (Hebrews 12.4).
4. He keeps the commandment: prays constantly (Thessalonica 5:17), love one another (John 13:34), Keep yourself pure (1 Timothy 5:22), love your enemies (Matthew 5:44)...
5. He labors in preaching and teaching service. To present the kingdom of God among men he should sacrifice his time, effort and money as much as he can.
6. He practices the works of Christian asceticism, such as prayer, keeping awake, psalms and worship.

Means Of Inner Control

1. Going into retreat and examining oneself. Let a man examine himself (1 Corinthians 11:28).
2. Take head to yourself and to your teaching (1 Timothy 4:16).
3. Regular continuous and accurate confession controls the way of man.

4. Reading the word of God and the Spiritual books enlightens the sides of inner life and the way of man.

Exercises

You should go into retreat to examine yourself then go to confession and confess your sins in a vital and effective way to save yourself.

(22) The Life of Joshua: A Life of Practical Faith

References

- + Exodus 17,24
- + Numbers 11-28
- + Deuteronomy 31,34
- + Hebrews 4:8
- + “The life of Joshua” Translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud

The Lesson

Aim

A study of the life practical faith and giving a model for the spiritual leadership that lives on faith.

The Life Of Discipleship and The Call

Joshua was Moses' disciple and he received the life of faith from him. In Exodus 17:8-11, Joshua picked out some men to go and fight the Amalekites. Moses held up their hands as a symbol of a prayer, work and struggle. In Exodus 24:13-17, Joshua went up with Moses on the Holy Mountain. The elders waited in the camp at the bottom of Mount Sinai. Moses went up on the Mountain and the cloud covered the mountains. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. When Moses entered the tent of meeting, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the door of the tent. And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the door of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, every man at his tent door. Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his servant Joshua, son of Nun, a young man did not depart from the tent.

Joshua Spies Out The Land Of Canaan (Joshua Is A Model Of The Life Of Faith)

Moses sent one man from each tribe to spy the land. Moses called Caleb the Son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun and sent them to spy out the land of Canaan. He said to them, “Go up into the Negeb yonder, and go up into the hill country, and see what the land is”. The men returned from spying out the land that flowed with milk and honey. They brought some of the fruit of the land. Caleb said, “Let us go up at once and occupy the land, for we are well able to overcome it”. Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people for they are stronger than we are”. So they brought to the people of Israel an evil report of the land, which they had spied out (Numbers 13). Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb tore

their clothes and said to the people: "Do not rebel against the Lord, and do not fear the people of the land. If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey". Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people of Israel. The Lord said to Moses; "Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and of all you number, numbered from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me, not one shall come into the land which I swore that I will make you dwell, except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun" (Numbers 14).

Zeal Not Based On True Knowledge

Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp, and Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, asked Moses to forbid them. But Moses said to him; "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them" (Numbers 11:28). The zeal that is not based on knowledge is found in the sons of Zebedee when they asked Jesus to allow them to call fire down from Heaven to destroy the people of a village that refused to receive the Lord. It is the same zeal that drove Saul of Tarsus to persecute the meek Christians in the age of the apostles. It is the same zeal that makes fanatic people blind so that they do not like truth in spite of the enlightenments of the spirit inside them.

Joshua is Chosen as Successor to Moses

+ And the Lord said to Moses:

"Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the Lord for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him, all the congregation. So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses" (Numbers 27:18-23). Then Moses summoned Joshua, and said to him; "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall go with these people into the land which the Lord has sworn for their fathers to give them; and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the Lord who goes before you; He will be with you; He will not forsake you or fail you; do not fear or be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31). (We notice the greatness of submission and discipleship. It is also the style of the monastic life). And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; so the people of Israel obeyed him, and did as the Lord has commanded Moses. And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face (Notice the importance of laying the hand -that was the way of blessing and sanctification in the Old Testament, and it is now the way of ordination of priests in the church, since the days of the apostles and till now) (Deuteronomy 34).

Rahab The Harlot

- The Lord's promise to Joshua: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you, I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and of good courage" (How lovely this promise is!). The support comes from the Lord, not from the self or the people. The Scriptures say about the apostles, and Jesus called "Make sure your call as a believer is a true call for you to bear witness".

- The Lord commanded him: “This book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall mediate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it, for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success (If you are called then you shall obey the commandment).
- Orders for departure: Preparations for departure and spying out Jericho. The two spies came into the house of Rahab the Harlot, the woman believed; “I know that the Lord has given you the land. The Lord your God is he who is God in heaven above and on earth beneath”. She asked them to promise her that they would deliver her and her family from death when they took the town. The two spies promised to do so on the condition that she would not betray them. She hid them on the roof. Then she let them down by a rope through the window. They asked her to bind the scarlet cord in the window (This is a symbol of the Redeemer's blood that delivers from death).

Exercises and Activities

- Nowadays, young people need to study the dimensions of spiritual discipleship. So this topic should be discussed in the light of the word of God and the words of the Holy Fathers. What is the concept? Of what importance is it and what are its benefits? What are the dangers that may arise in case it is not there? (Those are without a servant fall like the leaves in autumn). Discussion should also include the limits of the teaching process in the domain of discipleship, dangers of emotional sticking to the servant and the spiritual father and the danger of the fathers' effect on and influence over his spiritual children. Is there any contrast between discipleship and the enlightenment we gain through the Holy unction that teaches us everything as the apostle says.
- The topic, ritual of laying hands in the Old and New Testaments and its importance in the church and pastoral life can be studied.
- The topic, zeal that is not based on true knowledge, its dimensions, how the spirit sanctifies it and changes it into a holy zeal, can also be studied.
- The issue of faith whether in the life Joshua, the servant of Moses, of Rahab the Harlot, can be studied in the next lesson where the importance of faith in crossing the Jordan is clearly focused.
- In the audio visual aids centers, there are films about the life of Joshua. These could be shown and explained. We can contemplate the important aspects of this personality .We can show a map of the places mentioned in the Book of Joshua.

(23) The Life of Joshua: A Life of Practical Faith

References

- + Exodus 17,24
- + Numbers 11-28
- + Deuteronomy 31,34
- + Hebrews 4:8
- + “The life of Joshua” Translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud

The Lesson

Aim

To show the effectiveness of faith in the life of the children of God

Crossing the Jordan (Joshua chapter 3 is to be studied)

- Notice the importance of sanctification before performing a task (Verse 5).
- Notice that the priests only took up the Ark of the Covenant and passed on before the people (Importance of priesthood since the Old Testament).
- The encouraging words of the Lord to Joshua: And the Lord said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you” (Verse 7).
- Notice also how a man was chosen from every tribe to cross the Jordan with the priests. This is a good contemplation that indicates the unity of the community of the people and the clergymen, as all are one family and the children of the house God.
- Contemplate the wonderful sight -the water flowing in the Jordan to the Dead Sea - stopped growing and piled up -The flow down stream to the dead sea was completely cut off. The water was like a fence and the people were able to cross over near Jericho.
- While the people walked across on dry land, the priests carrying the Lord’s Covenant Box stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan until all the people had crossed over.
- Notice a very important thing here. The place where the people of Israel crossed the Jordan is called Bethany, it is the same place where the Lord Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan. The real crossing is crossing from darkness to light and from enslavement of the flesh to the freedom of the glory of the children of God. This is achieved through baptism and the second birth and entering the Kingdom of God.
- One man from each tribe carries a stone...they put twelve stones in the house where they spent the night...each man carried a stone on his shoulder. The Lord said; “This may be a sign among you, when your children ask in times to come, what do those stones mean to you? Then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off (Joshua 4:7). Study the meaning of the memorial and its importance. Connect this with the Manna and with the Holy of Holies, then remember the everlasting living memorial who is the True Manna laid on the altar, i.e. the Holy Body and the Holy Blood of the Son of God (Do this in remembrance of Me).
- The people crossed the Jordan and the Ark of the Covenant also crossed the Jordan. The Lord honored Joshua in the eyes of his people the Israelites, so they feared him, as they had feared Moses all the days of his life (I honor those who honor Me). How great the spiritual men of God are!

Circumcision in Gilgal (Joshua Chapter 5)

- The Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the people of Israel”.
- All the men who came out of Egypt were circumcised. These men died in the wilderness. But those who were born in the wilderness were not circumcised.
- When the circumcision of all the nation was finished, the Lord said to Joshua, “This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you. And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day”. Study the issue of the circumcision and the Covenant between the Lord and Abraham (Genesis 7:9-14). Study also this issue in the epistle to the Romans and the attitude of Christianity to circumcision (Romans 2,3,4) and the epistle to the

Galatians (6:11-17).

They kept the Passover and the Manna ceased

- They kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, in the plains of Jericho.
- On the morning after the Passover, they ate of the Produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. And the manna ceased on the morning, when they ate of the produce of the land.

Exercises and Activities

The three important issues that should be thoroughly studied in this lesson are:

1. The issue of faith.
2. The issue of circumcision.
3. The issue of the wonderful Divine plan and how the symbol is achieved by the appearance of the symbolized.

The Issue at faith deals with: the following dimensions, whatever the circumstances are:

1. What is faith? (Refer to Hebrews 11)? Faith means to believe in the Lord God and to apply it.
2. What are the obstacles of faith? (Fear, Stress, Dependence on humans, material, mental and temporal measures).
3. The relationship between faith and works (Integration between the epistle to the Romans and the epistle of James).
4. Practical exercise that a young man needs, in this age of ours, where worldly materialistic needs are the focus. Young people need to practice the life of faith, without it we cannot please God.

The Circumcision

1. It was the sign of a covenant between the Lord and his people.
2. It was a sign in the flesh, standing for, faith in the heart.
3. As time went by, people left the essence and concentrated on appearance. They neglected the content and concentrated on what appears in the flesh.
4. Study what Paul the apostle said in his epistle to the Romans: Of what use is circumcision then?
5. Also study the movement of going back to the Jewish traditions “Judaism” i.e. going back to the Jewish practices of the law of Moses, circumcision, etc. See Romans and Galatians.
6. Nowadays males are only circumcised. The law forbids the circumcision of females. The purpose is not religious. Circumcision is practiced for sanitary purposes. By cutting off the loose skin covering the end of the male sex organ, the organ is kept clean.
7. Notice that there are Christians only by name. They pride themselves in being Copts, children of martyrs but they are not their children by spirit. This is exactly what happened among the Jews in the days of Christ. Abraham is our father, we are circumcised on the 8th day.

How was Joshua a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Young people can easily make this comparison. The following points are to be considered:

Joshua

1. He was respected by all. The Lord was with him.
2. He led the people to the Promise land.
3. He gives the memorial of crossing the Jordan to generations to come.
4. He circumcised the people to the promise land.
5. He made the Passover.
6. The Lord performed miraculous deeds by Joshua's hands such as the fall of Jericho.
7. He saved Rahab the Harlot.

Jesus

1. He is the Lord Himself who is in the bosom of the Father.
2. He led the church from the valley of the shadow of death to the everlasting life.
3. He gave the memorial of His Holy Body and Blood.
4. He fulfilled circumcision through baptism and for our sake he was baptized in the Jordan.
5. He was the true Passover through whom we find salvation from sin.
6. He is the Lord who performs the miracles such as raising the dead, healing the sick, casting demons out and destroying their hidden fences and dark powers.
7. He is Jesus who came to save sinners and would find in him the everlasting salvation (Isaiah 61:1).

(24) The Life of Joshua: Between Triumph and Defeat

References

- + Exodus 17,24
- + Numbers 11-28
- + Deuteronomy 31,34
- + Hebrews 4:8
- + "The life of Joshua" Translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud

The Lesson

Aim

Triumph through faith...death is the wage of sin...sin causes man's destruction.

The Fall of Jericho

- ❑ Joshua met the commanders of the army of the Lord (Notice the ways of the Lord and how He prepares a man when He chooses him to go a great deed).
- ❑ Everything works in wisdom and insight as Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 1.
- ❑ Marching around the city (Study Joshua Chapter 6). Notice the number 7 that refers to the seven Sacraments, the seven seals, the seven Spirits of God that have been sent throughout the whole earth.
- ❑ On the seventh day they marched around the city seven times and the walls of the city

collapsed. They blew the trumpets and the people shouted (A miraculous deed).

- Rahab the harlot was saved. The whole city was destroyed and no one was saved except Rahab the harlot and her family.
- The city was burnt with fire but gold, silver, bronze and iron were taken and put in the Lord's treasury.

The sin of Achan the son of Carmi

- Joshua sent some men from Jericho to Ai, which was a small and weak city. But the Israelites were defeated. Joshua tore his clothes in grief and threw himself to the ground.
- There are devoted things in the midst of you, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you.
- Achan the son of Carmi confessed his sin (Joshua chapter 7). All Israel stoned him with stones. They burned him and his family with fire. Then the Lord turned from his burning anger.

Victory over Ai

- Joshua laid an ambush of five thousand men. He deceived the King of Ai by pretending to flee so king of Ai went out after the Israelites. The Israelites rose up from the ambush and set the city on fire. There was not a man left in Ai on a tree. Then they raised over the king's body a great heap of stones.
- An altar was built...Joshua read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua did not read before the assembly of Israel.

Exercises and Activities

1. Contemplate the faith that surpasses the mind, logic and all the materialistic measures. How can all the walls of a stony city collapse by simply marching around it and by shouting! The mystery of the power lies in the word of God.
2. But as man must do his best, here lies the importance of working with faith. We lift up the stone and Jesus raises Lazarus. We obey the commandment and God manages everything well for the good of those who love Him. We study hard and God will help us because we believe that our whole life is in the hands of God Who lead us in His victory procession.
3. The fact that the harlot was saved is a fact that comforts young people who have sinned. Out of a whole city no one was saved except Rahab. Thus, our merciful God accepts us when we repent and have a lively faith like that of Rahab, who believed the spies and hid them, although all circumstances were not in her favor and were against her concept of faith.
4. Achan the son of Carmi is an important subject suitable for young people as when we hide sin in our hearts, God's anger is kindled. God does not hate us, but He hates sin, because it is hateful. Every one of us must search his heart till triumph occurs. The reason of the repeated fall is hiding sin, sticking to it, loving it and not taking a decisive attitude against the desires of the flesh.
5. The victory that took place after defeat in Ai gives us comfort and encouragement, so long as we offer true repentance and build up an altar for the Lord in our hearts.

(25) The Life of Joshua: His battles and his farewell address

References

- + Exodus 17,24
- + Numbers 11-28
- + Deuteronomy 31,34
- + Hebrews 4:8
- + “The life of Joshua” Translated by Fr. Marcos Daoud
- + Joshua chapters 9-12,23,24

The Lesson

Aim

The same previous aims of the lessons about Joshua

The Gibeonites Deceives Joshua (Chapter 9)

- This is an example of the wisdom of the people of the world.
- Joshua made a treaty of friendship with the people of Gibeon and the leaders gave their solemn promise to keep the treaty then they learned that those people lived nearby.
- Notice that Joshua kept his promise but he condemned them and made them slaves, to cut wood and carry water for the people of Israel.

Joshua gains victory over the five kings (Chapter 10)

- The five kings, joined forces, surrounded Gibeon and attacked it because the people of Gibeon made a treaty of friendship with Israel.
- The Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands”.
- The Lord threw them into a panic. The Israelites slaughtered them at Gibeon. The Lord made large hailstones fall down on them. More were killed by the hailstones than by the Israelites. Joshua said, “Sun stand still at Gibeon, and you moon in the valley of Aijalon”. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. There has been no day like it before or since, when the Lord listened to the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.
- The five kings hid themselves in a cave. They rolled a great stone against the mouth of the cave. Then the five kings were brought out from the cave and were hung on five trees and died. Great stones were put against the mouth of the cave where they were thrown in.
- The rest of Joshua’s victories are mentioned in chapters 11,12 of the Book of Joshua.

Cities of Refuge (Chapter 20)

- Appoint the cities of refuge that the man slayer, who kills any person without intent or unwittingly may flee there, they shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood.
- He shall explain his case to the elders of that city; then they shall take him into the city, and give him a place, and he shall remain with them. And if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not give up the slayer into his hand; because he killed his neighbor unwittingly, having had no enmity against him in times past.
- And he shall remain in that city until he has stood before the congregation for judgment, until the death of him who is high priest at that time; then the slayer may go again to his

own town and his own home, to the town from which he fled.

- The names of the cities of refuge are mentioned in Joshua 20:7-9. Notice that the cities of refuge stand for Christ. What are the similarities? Some people say that the cities of refuge refer to the church in the world. What are the similarities?

Joshua's farewell address (Chapter 23,24)

- The servant should read these two chapters, as they are full of instructions and wonderful spiritual pieces of advice.
- Be very steadfast to keep and do all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right-hand nor to the left.
- He warned them not to mix with the pagans and not to marry foreign women (Chapters 23:12,13 and 24).
- And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God promised concerning you, not one of them has failed (Connect this with what Paul the apostle said to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:17-27) and what he said to his disciple Timothy in his second epistle when the time of his death came.
- But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. A wonderful decision to live for the Lord: he and his house, even if all the people left him and served other gods.
- Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us, all the peoples... therefore we also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.
- The people promised and made a covenant to serve the Lord after Joshua's death. Joshua set up a big stone to be a witness against them.
- Joshua died at the age of a hundred and ten. He was buried in the hill country of Ephraim. As long as Joshua lived, the people of Israel served the Lord. The body of Joseph was buried at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob had bought.

Exercises and Activities

- In this study of Joshua's character, we can study all the aspects in which Joshua was a symbol of the Lord Jesus and how the Lord achieved all these symbols in his life.
- Young people can study aspects of championship in the personality of a faithful leader and the work of grace in this personality with concentration on the effectiveness of faith in this personality and the possibility that each one of us can lead such a life. We have more opportunities because of the gifts of the Spirit and the grace of the Eucharist.
- The servant reads the book that deals with the relationship between science and religion. These books show there is no contradiction between science and religion. Then they will understand how the sun apparently stood still in Gibeon according to Joshua's command (And how the earth ceased to move to give the Israelites a chance to defeat their enemies). There are many references that offer valuable ideas about the congruence between science and the Holy Bible.
- Joshua's farewell address needs contemplations and practical application in our daily life. The most important benefits young people get from this address are:

- The life of faithfulness.
- To obey the commandment and to consult the Lord in everything.
- Beware of idols and foreign woman, (What are the idols of modern times to which young people are exposed to?)
- He and his house insisted on serving the Lord, whether the others did so or not (The spiritual man desires his power from grace and the firm principles, not from people).
- The more the individuals believe in their message and the more they become jealous for it, the more powerful their personality become. They lead, not being led. In this way, Joshua's personality gives young people a good model for practical application in their daily life.

(26) The Holy Fasting

References

- + Joel 2:15, 1 Corinthians 9:25, Psalm 109:24, Matthew 9:14, Psalm 9:9, Acts 13:3, Acts 27:9
- + 2 Corinthians 6:4, 2 Corinthians 11:27, Isaiah 28, Matthew 6:16-18, Daniel 9:3-19
- + “The Paradise of the Soul” Anba Youannis
- + “Spiritual Fasting” Anba Bemin
- + “The Holy Lent” Fr. Matta Al Miskin
- + “The Treasures of Grace” Part 2, Archdeacon Banoub Abdu

The Lesson

Aim

Renewing the covenant with Christ through our fellowship with Him in His fasting on the mountain.

Verse

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly” (Joel 2:15).

“For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength” (Isaiah 30:15).

Introduction

In the beginning, when God created the world, God’s commandment to man was to fast; not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then the devil convinced man to eat of the tree because if he ate he would know...! When man fell in that temptation, he falsely believed that he would not live unless he ate. “We eat to live” till bread became the goal of man’s life he works hard to get bread.

This deceit continued to work in the heart of man till Christ came, and when He came, He fasted forty days on the mountain and showed up the lies of the devil. He summarized His experience in fasting in a short statement: “Man shall not live by bread alone”. Here the Devil’s lies were revealed and we knew that the Word of God is the source of life, but bread is not. Bread only helps flesh by giving it what it needs such as energy to work and to be active.

Why do we fast?

When we fast we become like the first man before his fall. The first man used to take his food from God and to live in fellowship with Him. Through fasting we win victory with Christ over the Devil in his deceit concerning bread and through work we announce the truth of the Scriptures: "Man shall not live by bread alone". Christian fasting does not mean that passive side of refraining from having food for surpasses that point to the positive side of a greater release from this passive activity to spiritual activity. This means that fasting is a holy domain for practicing and possessing Christian virtues. The Church, especially during the Lent gives this atmosphere through her rituals, hymns and readings. So, fasting is a good opportunity for us to grow in love for Christ and to be established in Him.

How to fast?

With thanksgiving and Joy

Fasting is not a period of deprivation...but it is an opportunity to live with Christ, free from the needs and desires of the flesh. It is the basis of Christ's call for us to come to Him, to sit with Him and to enjoy His fellowship and He will feed us as He fed the people before. He wants us to worry about food, body and materialistic things. He wants us to live with Him as if we were in Heaven. It is the moments and days that we assign for living as if we were in the everlasting life where we can enjoy and taste the beauty of the angelic life without care. For the Kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This is a generous call of Christ so we live it with thanksgiving because in fact we do not deserve that life. We live it with full joy because through fasting we surpass the limits of the flesh and the senses and we become like angels, so we rejoice. Thanksgiving, joy and love, fill the heart with insight and enlightenment...and give the word of God a chance to work in the deep depth of our life till commandment unites with the self and becomes confined to the fear of God.

With Reverence

This is the feeling of that who is not worthy. Lord, I do not deserve to fast with you or to receive the blessing of the life of the heavenly creatures because I am a sinner, I am weak. So when we fast, we do that out of mere obedience to the Commandment of God and the Church system not because we are holy people who practice the Christian virtues. We fast because we need the blessing of fasting not because we deserve these blessings, which God gives those who fast. Fasting with reverence trains us to be humble and modest, not to be haughty, and to practice spiritual worship.

With Devoutness

Christian's monasticism means to get rid of all things that are not useful. So we eat what the body needs and refrain from satisfying the body with unnecessary things. We avoid visits and meetings that are not fruitful or necessary. We devote our life to prayer, work and reading the Holy Bible. When we fast we do not go on journeys. We do not watch TV. We do not listen to worldly songs. The aim of our life is concentrated on serious fruitful work and we avoid what is not serious or fruitful. This simple devoutness or simple monastic life trains us to lead the life of chastity, to control the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eye and the love for possessing things.

True Repentance

We repent the time we spent away from the fellowship of Christ, that beloved and satiating fellowship...repentance through which we change our way of living. We direct our hearts to Christ, His love and our cordial connection with Him. Daily repentance based on examining the self and firm treatment of her wrong deeds, and taking clear decisive decisions against the deviation of the self along with confession before the priest and crucifying the desires in the light of Christ.

Fasting together with deep long sincere Prayers

Fasting and partaking of the Holy Communion fills us with awareness and understanding of the Holy Body and Blood of the Lord. Fasting should be accompanied by selected readings of the Holy Bible and the spiritual books with understanding, concentration and defiant spiritual goal. Fasting should also be accompanied with struggle against the temptation of the devil, lest the devil should temp us to deviate from our goal, fasting and road. These practices and the struggle, which need hard work, can give release to the soul and depth to the inner spiritual life for deeper connection with Christ.

Conclusion

The Holy fast in our church is a golden opportunity for seeking Christ and sticking to Him. The Church with all her beautiful spiritual climate, wonderful rituals, wonderful monastic hymns, and readings about repentance is always ready to receive us. It is the time of repentance for everyone who loves Christ and wants to live with Him. Let us struggle so that this chance may not pass without meeting Christ.

Exercises

Train yourself to fast and refer to your father of confession.

(27) Repentance

References

- + “The seven sacrament of the church” Habib Girgis (The mystery of repentance)
- + “The paradise of the spirit part” Anba Youannis
- + “The paradise of the monks”
- + “Repentance” A monk of Syrian monastery

The Lesson

Aim

Going back to the divine image that we obtain by baptism.

Biblical Quotations

Ezekiel 36:26, Psalms 51:10, Matthew 3:7-10, Acts 17:30, Romans 6:4,12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:22-24, Revelation 2:4,5, Matthew 9:12,13

Introduction

A discussion about the effects of sin on man and how the sin is very bad, as it causes misery, pain, murmuring, anxiety, fear, conflict and separation from God. Through sin man loses his peace with God, with himself and with others. The wage of sin is death (Romans 6:3, James 1:15). However, we must notice the following:

1. Man is a clean being: He was created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (An idea about Adam's state before the fall and how he is a divine creature created after the likeness of God). He did not know sin. He had the authority on the creation.
2. The fall of man mares the divine image in man and obliterates its marks. (Like the coin the signs of which are hardly seen).
3. Christ pays the price of sin and gives the divine attributes back to man through baptism where the believer is born anew after the likeness of the Holy Trinity (Matthew 28:29).
4. The messages of all prophets concentrate on repentance. But man could not raise himself up without divine deed to renew conscience and this what Jesus did.
5. When the man is baptized and born in the font of baptism (The womb of the church), he is born of the spirit as a Son of God who has put on Christ (Galatians 3:26,27).
6. Questions and discussion about the rituals of baptism to elucidate what the apostle means by saying "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). This could be explained as follows:
 - a. Immersion as burial and crucifixion of ancient man and his rising with Christ (Romans 6:4).
 - b. Taking off the old clothing and putting on white new clothing.
 - c. The ritual of the rejection of the devil then the covenant of faithfulness.
 - d. The special ritual prayers about the cutting off of the individual from the wild olive tree (the world) and fixing him in the tasty olive tree (the church).

See the book of ritual prayers in the Sacraments of baptism and Chrism (Myron).

Discussion

- Do we live now in a state of purity and cleanliness, which we obtained through baptism?
- Do we live according to the covenant, which we committed ourselves to that we would not care about the world and live to Christ?
- Can we say that we are without sin? (1 John 1:8-10) Sin of doing, of thinking, of saying and senses...
- The world is full of obstacles: The flesh and its desires the devil and his tricks. In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
- Repentance is to renew the covenant of baptism: To state that we hate sin a firm decision to leave it firm belief that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

True Repentance

Regret the wrongdoing and promise to change behavior. Remember that baptism by immersion is burial and crucifixion of ancient man and his rising with Christ (Romans 6:4).

Stages of repentance

The Servant reads the chapter about the Prodigal Son and analyzes it with the children (Luke 15:1-22):

- a) The stage of hunger, thirst and need.
- b) The stage of going back to the self and examining it.
- c) The stage of regret after testing the bitterness and cruelty of sin (Romans 12:2).
- d) Decision to go back to the bosom of God and the house of the father.
- e) Confessing the sin before the priest and declaring repentance.
- f) Practicing the exercises and instructions that the father of confession recommends.
- g) To receive the Holy Communion to abide in the Lord.
- h) Testing the beauty of purity and the sweetness of triumph.

God is willing to receive sinners

The Servant concentrates on the Heavenly Father's love. The Lord does not wish that a sinner should perish. He wishes sinners to come back and live. He casts our sins in the deep sea (Isaiah 38:17, Isaiah 44:22, Psalms 103:12, Isaiah 1:18, John 6:37, Luke 15:7).

Enemies of repentance and obstacles

- a) Contempt
- b) Postponement
- c) Despair
- d) Looking back
- e) The division of the heart
- f) Love for the world
- g) Self-conceit

It is useful to refer to a pamphlet with the title John Chrysostom's message to a desperate sinner, issued by St. George Church Sporting.

Examples of repentant sinners

From the Holy Bible

- a) The Samaritan woman.
- b) The women who lived a sinful life (Luke 7:36-50).
- c) Zacchaeus the chief tax collector.

From church history

- 1) St. Augustine
- 2) Anba Moussa the black
- 3) St. Mary the Coptic "St. Mary of Egypt"

The servant can give examples of modern repentant sinners and speak about their experience without mentioning their names.

Fathers' sayings about repentance

- Anba Bemin was asked, "What is repentance?" He said "Refraining from sin, those who refrained from sin became righteous men".

- St. Macarius the great said: When falls on fire, it extinguishes it and washes all that it has burnt, the same thing happens with repentance as it washes and cleanses all sins, pains and lusts.
- St. Moussa the black said: As long as you have a chance, go back to Christ with sincere repentance. Hurry up before he shuts the door and then you will weep bitterly. Christ our lord wants all people to be saved. He wants them to know the truth. He waits for you and he will accept you.
- St. Isaac said, “Baptism is the first birth from God and repentance is the second birth”.
- The spiritual old man (John Saba) said: “Repentance is the mother of life. Blessed is he who is born of it. He will not die. Repentance is the cure of the pains of the deadly sin. Repentance makes the adulterers virgins”.

O repentance, who does not love you and have all blessings. He who sticks to your hope does not go down to hell. No one can go up to heaven without you. Who can see God without you? You are the blessed mother of forgiveness. The merciful Lord has given you to us.

Spiritual exercises and activities

1. Spend a whole night praying in the church.
2. Visit one of the monasteries.
3. Visit the tombs.
4. Examine yourself every night.
5. Write articles about repentant persons.

“O Lord give me many springs of tears as you gave in olden times to that sinful women. Make me worthy of wetting your feet, which gave me freedom and saved me from the way of sin. Allow me to offer You precious perfume and make my life pure through repentance so that I may deserve to listen to that voice that is full of joy. Your faith has saved you” (a passage from the second service midnight prayer).

(28) Confession

References

- + “The Seven Sacraments of the Church” Habib Girgis
- + “The Paradise of the soul” Part 1, Anba Youannis
- + “The Paradise of the Monks”
- + “How to practice the sacrament of Confession” The Bishopric of Mallawy
- + “The Mystery of Confession” St. Mary Church, Rod el Farag

The Lesson

Aim

To elucidate the role of the mystery of Confession as a complete cure for the pains of man and its connection with the mystery of repentance

Confessing the sin is an ancient Divine Plan

- God asked Adam our father: “Where are you? Have you eaten of the tree?” That was the Divine Plan to bring man to confession and through confession he could have been forgiven.
- The Law of Moses states that the Unfaithful should confess his sin (Deuteronomy 5:1-6, Numbers 5:6).
- Even David the Prophet and King, when he sinned he had to confess his sin before Nathan the priest (2 Samuel 12:13).
- In the days of John the Baptist, many people came to him to be baptized in the Jordan and they confessed their sins (Matthew 3:5).

Confession in the New Testament

- The Lord Christ designed the mystery of confession and gave it to His disciples (Matthew 3:6, Matthew 18:17,18, John 20:22-24).
- Jesus made a symbol of this by washing the feet (Acts 19:18).

To whom do you confess

Is it enough for a sinner to confess his sins directly to the Lord? Why did the Lord Command us to confess before the priests? Here we count the blessings of confession and its good effects on the self, body and the soul:

1. Confession before the priest cures the problems of repression (Job 22:18-20).
2. The human nature drives man to complain to others.
3. The psychiatrists, the psychological clinic and modern psychiatry.
4. Self-peace resulting from confession is reflected upon the health of the body.
5. Forgiveness of sin by the priestly authority (Absolution) and he effects of this on both body and soul.
6. The person who confesses acquires the habit of accuracy and the examination of himself (1 Corinthians 11:31).
7. The person who confesses feels that his father of confession is a wise and kind father who shares with him his feelings and pains (2 Corinthians 11:29).
8. One benefits from the blessed instructions given by the experienced father of confession. The elders' advice is good.
9. To tell the priest what we think of shows up the tricks and snares of the devil, and brings to light the weakness and defects of the self that may not be easily noticed by the person as he may be afflicted by the sin of pride, he may be in a state of despair or self-degradation.

How to practice confession well?

1. Examine yourself before you go to confession. This should be according to the commandments which call us to be Holy and without blemish before the Lord and the People.
2. Casting the self before the Lord with contrition and feeling of remissness as Isaiah did when he saw the Glory of the Lord.
3. To confess to our father the priest with reverence and tears. Confess your sin in detail, the time taken in doing it, how often you did it, and your feelings while doing it.
4. The person who confesses must listen carefully to his father of confession and carry out

his advice with great obedience and persistence.

Shyness

When we offer true confession with a spirit of shyness, we taste the bitterness of sin and we do not go back to it. If shyness turns to stubbornness and refraining from confession before the priest, then it is a hidden pride (Sirach 4:26).

Fear that the secret may become known

We all should have trust in the priest who has been accustomed to listening to hundreds of confessions and who cannot reveal any secret.

Some do not benefit from the father of confession's guidance

When people choose their father of confession, they must be sure that he is an experienced wise man who is patient and spiritually advanced.

Practical Exercise

1. Children must be aware of the blessing and beauty of confession as through it man can wipe out all the dust of sin and remove its effects and then the Divine icon appears.
2. Experienced fathers should come at certain times to receive the confessions and to guide the children.
3. The booklets: How to practice the mystery of confession among the children before they go to confession. Prayer meetings should be held for those who have repented and those who have not repented yet.

(29) Unction of the Sick

References

- + “The Spiritual values in the mystery of the Unction of the Sick” Anba Gregory
- + “Walk by the spirit” Fr. Abdel Messih el Nekhili
- + James 5:14,15, Matthew 10:1,8, Mark 3:13-15, I Mark 6:7,13, Luke 9:21, Luke 10:9.

The Lesson

Aim

To be acquainted with the value and the spiritual benefits of the mystery of the Unction of the Sick.

Verse

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up” (James 14,15)

Introduction

1. How many church sacraments are there?
2. Why are they arranged according to our need for them: Holy orders, Baptism,

Confirmation (Myron), Penance (Repentance and Confession), Holy Eucharist, Matrimony, and Unction of the Sick.

3. The first five are sacraments necessary for salvation, i.e. we cannot be saved without them. The last two sacraments are not necessary for our salvation but they are useful for the church and the believers. This means that man does not marry to be saved, but he who wants to marry is offered marriage in the form of the holy sacrament by the church. The same goes for he who is sick. It is not necessary for anyone to fall ill, so that we may pray over him to save him, but those who fall ill should go to church and the church will offer them the sacrament of the Unction of the Sick to cure his body and soul.
4. All sacraments are a means for the growth and the building of the church. The church is composed of the group of believers who together form the mystical body of Christ. The organs of the Body are connected and bound together by the holy fellowship with the one head. That is why the church is concerned with the spirituality of her members and she is also interested in the health of their bodies as they are also holy bodies because the Holy Spirit abides in them and because they all receive Holy Communion (The Holy Body and the Holy Blood of the Lord). The church cares for us. What the Scriptures say about this one body: "And if one member suffers all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26). Hence, the church cares about her sick children. She comforts them and raises prayers for them, and asks them to repent and pray the Lord to give them recovery.
5. The Scriptures say: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church" (James 5:14). Then the priest comes and persuades the patient to repent; he comforts him with words of grace, receives his confession, gives him absolution from his sins and prays the Unction of the Sick prayer known in Arabic as "Kandeel".
6. The ritual of this sacrament is composed of seven prayers. They are all similar in order. In each prayer, the priest lights a wick. By the seventh prayer we have seven lit wicks, giving light. This reminds us of a bright scene in heaven. St. John describes this scene: "I saw seven golden lamp stands, and in the midst of the seven lamp stands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet...the seven lamp stands which you saw are the seven churches" (Revelation 1:12).
7. By this, the church reminds us of Christ who walks along the seven golden lamp stands, (Revelation 2:1) so that we may be comforted in our affliction and pain and illness as Christ dwells among us. When the priest's hand lights a wick, we feel that the seven wicks are about to be lit and that the church whispers to us: "The Lord is coming". In fact, when all the seven wicks are lit, the prayers are complete. Through prayers and Hymns, the Lord dwells among the seven lamp stands and gives us comfort.
8. The oil used in performing the sacrament refers to the work of grace in the self. In this, the church reminds us of the parable of the wise girls who filled up their with oil so they were worthy of meeting the bride groom.
9. The rituals begin with the prayer of thanksgiving because the thankful nature is that of the sons and the angels that slaves always grumble because they do not understand or know their masters will.
10. That is why the church raises the prayer of thanksgiving at first in all her liturgies even "in raising incense and the unction of the sick. In this way, the patient is led to the life of thanksgiving and submission with satisfaction and trust in God's love.
11. Then we pray the psalm of repentance (Psalm 50) in which the church tells us that disease

and death came into the world because of sin and Adam's disobedience and that man cannot be saved except through repentance. This is the same fact, which our teacher James the apostle declared, "And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another" (James 5:15,16). Here the apostle establishes a relationship between the sacrament of the unction of the sick and that of repentance and confession and binds them together.

12. Then he reads some passages from the Bible, prayers and Psalms and chapters from the Gospel that speak about repentance, miracles of healing and granting the disciples the authority of healing.
13. When prayers are completed, the priest anoints the patient with oil and through the grace of the Holy Spirit the sick man is healed of his spiritual or physical diseases. This sacrament has a wonderful effectiveness of healing both soul and body according to the worthiness and faith of the sick man, as "The prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up".
14. According to this sacrament, recovery from sins is the basis of the recovery of the body from diseases. This fact is confirmed by the psychological researches, as both soul and body are bound in man, and the sins committed by the self are reflected on the body so the body suffers from diseases. In the same way, the diseases of the body irritate the self. This does not mean that all diseases result from sins or psychological problems as there are organic disease, disease that spread by (contagion) touch, or the spread of microbes, etc. The sacrament is effective in curing all these diseases especially the diseases of the body that are caused by psychological or spiritual illness.
15. This sacrament is not against medical science and resorting to medical treatment. The Savior, Glory be to Him, said: "Those who are well have no need for a physician, but those who are sick". This means that those who are sick need a physician. So the Sickness of the soul need the sacrament of repentance and confession and the diseases of the body need a physician (e.g. fracture of a bone, inflammation, wounds and fevers, and so on). Only physical diseases, which are the results of spiritual or psychological sickness are the domain of the work of the Unction of the sick.

Exercise

Tell your Priest about any patient you know so that he may practice and perform the Sacrament for him. Take part in the prayers of the sacrament so that the patient may restore his health.

(30) New Christianity affects Personality

The meaning of Personality

The servant discusses with his children the meaning of personality (that unique component in each one of us that bears the interaction between the physical, psychological, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual aspects). It shows the uniqueness of each one, that distinguishes one from the other through the interaction of genetically and environmental factors together.

Christianity and Love

Christian love is characterized by the pouring of God's love in us through the Holy Spirit. Christian love is superior to that of the Jews, as it demands that we should love our enemies. It

demands that we should love God and man as Christ loved us and gave himself for us and that we should forgive as he forgave those who crucified him.

Christian love (1 Corinthians 13) is practical

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

Also read St. John's epistle about love to learn the following:

- He who does not love his brother abides in death.
- Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer.
- By this we know love, "that he laid down his life for us"; and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.
- Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth.
- Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is Love. If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
- God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him.
- And this commandment we have from Him that he who loves God should love his brother also.

Christianity and Fanaticism

This subject has been dealt with in debates and discussions and you can discuss the following: What is the meaning of fanaticism? What is the difference between fanaticism and adherence to belief? Why does Christianity reject fanaticism, especially when it deals with religion? Show that Christianity does not know Jewish fanaticism? Why do we reject the Crusaders and consider them imperialists? How can we practically resist fanaticism in our lives?

Christianity and Service

Christ, Glory be to Him, established the methods of service and sacrifice by His teachings, instructions and His life as a model (Study this). By His life through preaching, serving humanity on the cross and by His teaching about love: "Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will rest for your souls". The church of the apostles was the extension of the Lord's approach and execution of His instructions (Give examples of the services performed by the apostles for humanity). Give examples of apostles, martyrs and Holy men who died as martyrs for the sake of Service and Preaching.

The type of service accepted by the Lord:

- With the spirit of practical sacrifice and giving.
- With the spirit of humiliation and secrecy.
- With confidence that it is the Lord who works not us.
- By satisfying the needs of all the needy, sick people, poor people and those who mourn without any differentiation between persons because of their religion, race or any type of fanaticism.

Examples of services performed outside the church to help society:

- The Lord considers any service done to anyone in need as a service done to Him: “I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink...” (Matthew 25:31-46).
- The service performed by scientists offering tithes for the needy, not only tithes of their money but time, rest and so many other things. The alms given by the Christian should be much more than the tithes given by the Jews, according to the Lord’s Commandment.
- Service of the sick, orphanages, schools, family service centers, cultural and sanitary center, and obliteration of illiteracy among adults. Different national services that Christianity encourages people to join and practice positively.

Status of women in Christianity

- In the beginning man and woman were equal (Read Genesis chapters 1 and 2), “made and female, He created them” (Genesis 1:27) and “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they became one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).
- In the Old Testament we find wonderful models of the good wife praised by Solomon such as: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Ester, Ruth and Naomi but Judaism, in general, despised women (See the Lord’s meeting with the Samaritan woman). According to the Jewish tradition, a man used to pray thus: I thank You because You created me a Jew not a Gentile, male not a female.
- Christianity came and raised the status of women. Through incarnation St. Mary became the Mother of the Lord. The Maries served Christ. Bethany where Lazarus, Mary and Martha lived, Tabitha (Dorcas) whom Peter the apostle raised, Lydia the first that believed in all Europe, and Phoebe who served the church and many other holy women in the history of the church.
- How Christianity honors women? She is equal to man in obtaining salvation. She is allowed to receive Holy Communion.

(31) The Holy Week

References

- + “The Holy Week” Al Mahaba Bookshop
- + Isaiah 53, Exodus 12, Zechariah 11:12, II Peter 2:24,25, Mathew 27:39-42

The Lesson

Aim

How to live the church ritual with depth and simplicity to share Christ’s pains

Verse

“Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach” (Hebrew 13:13).

Aids

Distribute the book of “The Pasch Prayer”, so that the children may follow up the subject in the pages of the book. This subject should be introduced before the Holy Week begins.

Introduction

The Holy Week is the most important week of all the year. In it we celebrate Christ's passion that led to our salvation. That is why the church has joined it to the Holy Lent since the time of Pope Demetrius 12th. The church concentrates its ritual effort and also its dogmatic and spiritual effort during this week to make it a spiritual source of blessing for the whole year. So we have to share the church, earnestly and most of the time, her celebrations, so that we may taste the fellowship of the Savior's passions.

The word "Pasch" is a Coptic word, which means "The Passover". So it is the week of the Passover from the authority of the devil to the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Lazarus Saturday

On that day the church celebrates the miracle of the raising Lazarus from death as an introduction to Christ's resurrection and our resurrection with him. The church indicates that the death has no authority over Christ whom we shall celebrate and whose death we shall celebrate. It is He that raised Lazarus after four days.

Palm Sunday

It is a great feast. The prayers of the church are performed in merry and bright tone. The procession of the cross is performed around the church on that day. During the procession, twelve Chapters of the Bible are read before the icons of the saints. It stands for the Jews receiving Christ as king when He entered Jerusalem. It is the day of enthroning the King and receiving Him with the hymn, "Evlogemenos".

The Public funeral prayer

During the Holy Week the church is busy with the passions and death of our Savior, so if one of the believers dies during this week the church does not pray over them as the church has no time to raise the ordinary funeral prayer or to raise incense for this reason, and so that departed may not be deprived of the blessing of the church, the person attends an hour of the Pasch. This is why the church raises the prayers of a public funeral prayer after the Palm Sunday Mass, where prayers are said over the water and it is then sprinkled on the believers.

The Pasch Prayers

- Prayers are raised in the second choir of the church as Christ suffered outside Jerusalem...the church also teaches us, through her rituals, that before the crucifixion of death of Christ for us, we had no right to enter heaven (the church sanctuary). The Paradise was closed and the Cherubim was placed to guard the way and to prevent anyone from entering the Paradise.
- The church is dressed in black as a sign of protesting against the people's sin, which caused pains and shame to her kind and merciful Redeemer. We do not mourn for the passions and death of the Savior as they gave us salvation but we mourn for our sins that caused these passions.
- Holy Mass is not performed on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday and then it is performed on Thursday. In the Old Testament, people used to buy the Passover lamb on the 10th of Nissan and then it remains with them. They keep it till the eve the 14th day. On that day

they slaughter it. Christ entered Jerusalem on Sunday (10th of Nissan) and was kept there for three days and then He offered Himself as a sacrifice on Thursday in the Mystical Supper (14th of Nissan) because Christ is our Passover.

- The week is rich in Biblical readings, the fathers preaching and the interpretations. Each prayer has its prophecies, psalm, gospel and interpretation. There are books, which are wholly read during this week. On Tuesday St. Matthew's Gospel is read. On Wednesday, St. Mark's Gospel is read. On Thursday St. Luke's Gospel is read and St. John's Gospel is read on the Holy Saturday. The Book of the Lamentations is read at 12 o'clock on Good Friday, and the whole Book of Psalms after the prayers of Good Friday and the whole Book of Revelations is read on the eve of Holy Saturday. Some Christians read the book of Job on Wednesday.
- The day is divided into five-day prayers and five night prayers. These are the first hour, the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour, and the eleventh hour prayers. The day begins at sunset and ends at sunset.
- Each prayer is set in the following order: Prophecies, Passover Hymn (12 Times), the Psalm in Coptic with a sad tune, the Gospel in Coptic then in Arabic or English, then the interpretation of the Gospel, a summary of it and contemplation, and the Intercession, the end and blessing.
- These steps are followed from the beginning of 9 o'clock on Palm Sunday till 11 o'clock on the eve of Maundy Thursday: (i.e. 9th hour prayer and 11th hour prayer).

Maundy Thursday

- Maundy Thursday is the day Christ's mystical death as on that day He offered Himself as a sacrifice and established the sacrament of Eucharist, which is the foundation and pillar of the church and it is a great feast.
- The Sanctuary is opened because we, through receiving Communion from the Tree of Life, i.e. the Lord's Holy Body and Blood, obtain the everlasting life and the right to inherit the kingdom of heaven.
- In the early morning, the procession of reproaching Judas is performed and in it the church declares that she deposes Judas and those who are like him, because he spurned her bridegroom's love.
- A Mass for sanctifying water (Laaqan) is prayed and the priest washes the people's feet in memory of Jesus washing the disciples feet.
- Before offering the Lamb, the hourly prayers are not used as usual, but we pray the Pasch prayers instead: "The Third, the sixth and the ninth".
- Some hymns and passages are selected from the mass. These are the ones that refer to salvation and reconciliation, as salvation is achieved through the cross, and reconciliation is achieved through the Resurrection. That is why the Hymn "Soytis Amen" and reconciliation prayers are not recited.
- Both the commemoration and departed prayers are deleted, i.e. they are not recited because before the cross, the righteous were taken to Hades...and there is no fellowship between the church and those who dwell in Hades, so the church does not pray for them in this mass.

The Rites of the Good Friday

Prayers are recited in the same order from Friday eve till the end of the third hour on Friday.

Each prayer includes four chapters from the Gospels.

The Savior was crucified at the sixth hour. The church knows that the cross is the royal throne and that this hour is decisive moment for the church to overcome the devil. So the church receives the Holy Christ as a victorious King crowned on His throne so she lights the candles and censers, the priest put on their priestly garments and raise incense and the hymn “Evlogemos” is recited, lights are put out while the Gospel is being read as a sign of the darkness that took place when the Savior was crucified. Then the passage about the faithfulness of the robber is recited and in it we take part in acknowledging the Godhead of the dead living.

At 12 O'clock, the Crucifixion Icon is brought down in memory of bringing down the Savior's Body to wrap him in linen. Then the Sanctuary door is opened as a sign of opening the Paradise gate when Christ died for us (Today you will be with Me in Paradise). Genuflexions are performed in all directions as practical acknowledgement of the Godhead and the everlasting life of the dead. And that He exists everywhere in the whole universe and He cannot be confined in a grave. A procession is done by the Crucifixion Icon in all parts of the church with a merry tune, saying Lord have Mercy (Kiryelayson) as if we were declaring the happy news of salvation to the whole world. Then the Crucifixion Icon is buried in spices and aloes on the altar between two candles sticks, one at the east and the other at the west, as this was the way our Savior was buried in the tomb.

Holy Saturday

It is a night of Vigil and wakefulness in the church with our Savior in His tomb. The night is full of hymns, prayers, and readings and in it we read the Book of Revelation. The prayer rite is a mixture of the Pasch and annual prayers in a pleasant order as Christ's passions came to an end when he died for us. The Holy Mass is performed and prayers that denote salvation, are recited but the prayers of reconciliation are not said. But the commemoration prayer and the departed prayers are recited as after His death, Christ went down to Hades, led the host of captives and he gave gifts to men, liberated the holy men and sent them to Paradise so there is a fellowship between us and them. We pray for them and they pray for us. Holy Saturday is the only Saturday on which we fast all the day without having any food. Genuflexions are allowed on that day as a memory of the burial of Christ in the tomb. May God give us the feeling to appreciate the rituals of that day.

Exercise

Attend the Pasch Prayers especially on Thursday and Friday and some of the prayers of the other days.

(32) Resurrection (Easter Sunday)

References

- + “An introduction to the Christian Creed” Costo Bentley
- + “The Resurrection and the problem of young people” Anba Bemin
- + “How to live in Resurrection” St. George Church, Sporting

The Lesson

Aim

Young men and women should know that Resurrection is the key to the life-giving power of redemption and the sign that shows that the Father has accepted the Sacrifice of the Cross.

Introduction

- Resurrection is the flow of the Divine life in the humanity of Jesus that is open to God with perfect giving.
- It is the end of the kingdom of death as the Master of life has entered it (He descended to Hades...) Through the Cross Christ reached the top of evacuating His self-will and offered His entire self to the father.
- The glory of the Godhead was in Christ when He was in the flesh, but to the people He appeared to be thirsty, hungry, and needs to sleep. The glory of Godhead appeared in the resurrection.
- Resurrection partly appeared in the Transfiguration (Mathew 17:1-9, Luke 9:28).
- The cross bore the power of the resurrection and the instrument of sharing became the instrument of glory and victory (I Corinthians 2:14,15). Through the cross, the devil was shown up crushed by death.

The blessing of Resurrection

It is the liberation of humanity from sin. Jesus destroyed the devil, saved humanity and raised us with Him (Ephesians 2:6). He set the power of resurrection and life, which cannot be conquered by the death of sin, in man.

Resurrection and young people

1. Resurrection liberates us from the fear of sin as Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He abolished death and its power by His resurrection. He gave us, through faith, the fellowship of His life by His body and Blood, so that we may enjoy the power of His resurrection and enjoy renewed energy.
2. Resurrection gives us hope, as we are reborn through Baptism. We have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We have confidence that the light of the resurrection must follow the darkness of the crucifixion. This is because He Himself has suffered and has been tempted. He is able to help those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).
3. Resurrection guarantees the victorious life for us. This does not mean there is no weakness but it means that we shall not go back to sin so long as Christ, the life giver, abides the heart "If I became weak I say; rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise" (Micah 7:8). Triumph does not mean infallibility but it means that one should not submit to his weakness. It means confidence in the power of Christ who defeated and conquered death, gave us resurrection and raised us with Him.
4. Experiencing the resurrection of Christ in our life gives us the life of peace and joy instead of the anxiety. The Disciples were glad when they saw the Lord (John 20:20). Sorrow is taken away from our hearts because we trust in the Lord Jesus who gave Himself for us. He sustains us.
5. Resurrection teaches us not to be anxious about tomorrow. We as young people are busy

thinking of the past with all its sins and pains; we are anxious about the future but resurrection makes us (through baptism) a new creation: “The old has passed away”. I should be sure that when I confess my sins Christ will forgive me, as He loves me. In this way I live in complete submission so I do not feel anxious about tomorrow, but I cast my life in the bosom of the Lord Jesus Christ with confidence.

6. Resurrection liberates us from doubt and suspicion. When Christ showed His side to Thomas, he believed. We should have a strong fellowship with Christ in:
 - a. Receiving the grace of forgiveness in confession and absolution.
 - b. Christ’s dwelling in the heart with His body and Blood in the sacrament of the Eucharist.
 - c. The fellowship of the word of the Gospel that liberates the soul.
 - d. Obtaining power from prayer through faith.
 - e. Behaving well and examining the self in the light of the Gospel’s light.
 - f. If we follow all these steps our whole life will be God’s and He will use it for the Glory of His name and will arrange everything with His wisdom.

Instruction and Exercises

- Always pray the Morning Prayer in which you remember the power and effectiveness of resurrections.
- Let Sunday have its special taste and take part in the Holy Mass. Go to Church before you go to school to raise a short prayer. Attend the Mass that suits your circumstances.
- When you fell into sin, hurry up to pray. This will be a new resurrection.

(33) With Christ During Examination

References

+ “With Christ during examinations” a pamphlet issued by the Patriarchate Youth Service

The Lesson

Aim

This time each year young men and women face the most important period of the year so we introduce to them the Lord Christ as a powerful supporter to support them as He supported Joseph and gave him success in his life. Young people also may experience the work of God in their spiritual life and in their study at the same time.

Introduction

In these days each year young people need:

1. The divine peace that can keep the self and mind in peace and quiet without which the mental production decreases in quantity and quality.
2. Divine help, that opens the mind, strengthens the will, supports the intention towards a fruitful work and successful struggle with the grace of Christ.
3. Good planning of time, ideas and spiritual practice so that everything should be in order without allowing examinations to make us forget or neglect the greatest examination, i.e., our eternal life and our salvation through Christ.

In this period that is full of anxiety in the life of the young person, I call them to study the principles and to apply them practically. These principles are:

Daily Return To Christ's Bosom

- This is the only way that guarantees your psychological peace, mental clearness and superior help. In the past St. Moses the Black said, "Depend on God and you will have rest". This is the daily experience as anxiety, fear, perplexity and despair afflict young people in these days of examinations but this does not happen to the children of God who have the covenant of the Lord "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).
- Young people must resort to the Father's bosom at regular meetings in the morning, in the evening before they go to bed casting all their troubles on the Lord and casting all their sins under His feet showing a true repentance and the Lord accepts the repentant and loves the sinners who return to Him with all their hearts. He likes the young person to speak to Him all the day about their problems and have confidence that the Lord will listen to them, show kindness and answer them. Young people should read the Bible before they study their lessons. The Holy words calm, satiate and comfort and make the heart glad "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16).

Sticking to a Definite Timetable

If young people leave themselves to circumstances, they will fumble the subjects and they will not be able to organize their work or have satisfactory production but if they organize their study according to a timetable and sticks to seriously in his study and revision he will achieve all that is required without any anxiety, perplexity or doubt. When young people organize their timetable, they should choose the amount to be studied according to the time that they have without any exaggeration or indifference, i.e. the schedule must be applicable, and practical. There is no doubt that choosing more than one subject everyday and connecting what was studied yesterday with what is studied today gives a favorable variety. The most important thing is that they should have a clear view as a basis for dividing the subjects according to the time left and we suggest a long time for studying and a shorter time for review and a shorter period between exams for each subject. They must divide time for these stages and may the Lord be with them.

Positiveness and Connecting Parts Together

These are two important principles in studying: They must be positive, recite what they have studied to themselves or discusses it with others without wasting time or answering questions or sample examinations. This expression of what they have achieved is very important for understanding and for inculcating information. The second principle is connection, they should build up bridges between points that are similar or alike in two or more lessons. Connection of two points establishes the two points (e.g. Diagrams and tables of comparison between points that are similar or not).

Meditation in Exams and Having Trust In God

- The young person must not read a book quickly or at random speed.
- They must not also hold many discussions before the examination.

- They must read the examination paper calmly but first pray and ask for the Lord's help.
- They should think deeply and compare then decide on the questions to be answered.
- They must accurately decide what each question requires and divide the time allowed for answering the questions.
- They must review what they have written and not to go out before the end of the time allowed.
- They must behave honestly and without cheating so that the Lord's powerful arm may not leave them. The Lord says, "Do not fear, only believe" (Mark 5:36) and "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18).
- They must have trust in God's love and kindness, we are His children, and He loves us and gives us all good things.

May the Lord bless our life and grant us success for a sacred life and fruitful summer in Christ's Vineyard. May the Lord be with you.

(34) The Lord Meets the Two Disciples of Emmaus

References

- + Luke 24:13-33
- + "The Meeting at Emmaus" Fr. Bishoy Sedky

The Lesson

Aim

Elucidating one of the meetings of Jesus after His resurrection to contemplate it and to benefit from it to understand the work of the Shepherd when He cares for His sheep.

Introduction

- Read Luke Chapter 24. Each child should read two verses.
- Concentrate on the most important clear items in the meeting between Jesus and the two disciples.
- Contemplate to benefit from the lessons and contemplations on the chapter.

To a village far away from Jerusalem

- The meeting of the two disciples from Emmaus with the Savior is one of the meetings that show Jesus the Shepherd who searches for the sheep that keep away from His sheep to bring them back to His bosom, to confirm His existence through His word and sacraments.
- The two disciples from Emmaus were leaving Jerusalem the Holy City and they were on their way far away from it, which means that they were deviating from the way of truth. This is confirmed by the fact that they were sad and they were talking about the crucified Messiah, but the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ were watching them. He calmly drew near them to accompany them all the way and to share with them, their talk.
- "This man was a prophet and He was powerful in everything He said and did". This is the witness borne by the two disciples to Him and all the people bore witness about His

power but they could not bear witness to His Divinity because such concepts are associated with understanding the power of the cross.

- Jesus explained to them what was said about Himself. These two disciples needed correction of their concepts from the Holy Bible to renew their old thoughts.
- They constrained Him saying: "Stay with us". Many times Christ meets us while we neglect our love for Him although He runs after us and searches for us. These are cold souls, although the Lord appeared to them. The two disciples from Emmaus did not know that He was Christ, but their hearts burnt within them while He talked to them on the road, drove a hot current in their bodies and so they could not bear to see Him leave them, so they constrained Him to stay with them.
- There might be another motive which made constrain the Lord to stay with them and that was the brotherly love that filled their hearts and this appeared in serving the needy and showing hospitality to strangers.
- Their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. Christ reveals Himself to anyone who seeks Him earnestly. He gives His gifts to all the people even those who go astray, He runs after them to save them. It is appropriate that their eyes should open and we recognize Him when we eat His Holy Body on the altar and we live.
- They got up at once and went back to Jerusalem. This is the immediate reaction which man must do as soon as he sees Christ again. He gets up quickly to go back to church (The Lord's House).

In this way we end the story of those two disciples whom the Lord's hand saved and brought back to the Congregation of believers who bear witness to His resurrection.

Exercises and Activities

1. Practice the sacraments of repentance and confession.
2. Practice the life of prayer and reading the word of God which burns the heart.
3. Encourage the children to receive the Holy Divine Communion.

(35) The Miraculous Deeds of the Lord Jesus Christ

References

- + St. John's Gospel
- + "Interpretation of St. John's Gospel" Anba Athanasius, Bishop of Beni Sweif
- + "Interpretation of St. John's Gospel" by Dr. Maurice Tawadrus

The Lesson

Aim

Christ's miraculous deeds show evidence for Christ's Divinity.

Verse

'Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book (John 20:30)

Aids

The Bibles are to be distributed and the children are asked to read the quotations on condition that all the children participate in reading and discussion. The Servant introduces the Miracles and makes a brief comment.

Introduction

God created the world and organized it according to natural laws that control the world in a very accurate way. There are laws such as the law of gravity, law of flotation, the laws of cold, heat, light and so on. It is known that not following these laws leads to the destruction of man or at least leads to troubles as severe cold or great heat, etc. God made these laws to control nature and allowed man to make use of them for their own benefit but He did not allow man to challenge them or to disobey them. Man can, for instance, make use of the law of flotation in inventing big ships to be able to cross seas. But man cannot challenge this law and walk on water as he will be drowned.

The Miracles

A miracle is an act, which does not follow the known laws of nature. Of course the only one who can perform miracles is that who has authority over nature because it is He that created it, and set rules and laws to control it, or at least a person who receives power to perform miracles from the Lord, the Creator of nature and its Master.

The Savior performed all miracles by His own authority not by authority given to Him by an external source and this is true evidence that He is the Lord of all creatures and the master of nature. God controls the world through the laws of nature but when the Lord performs a miracle, this means that He interferes directly.

His Authority over nature

- In John 6:16-21, we see the Savior walk on the water as if He were walking on the dry land with supernatural authority without praying before performing the miracle without receiving power from a source outside (Himself...He is truly the creator and organizer of nature. Nature has no authority over Him).
- In John 21:5-14, we see a group of fishermen spending the whole night making full use of their experience and cleverness in catching fish, but they fail catching even one single fish. Then Christ ordered fish to gather in the net and the fish gathered in the net that challenged the human experience and cleverness.
- In John 2:1-11, the Savior was able to turn water into good wine in Cana by one word of His mouth ...because He is the Almighty God who created the whole universe from water.
- In John 6:5-13, Christ fed five thousand men by five loaves and two fish in an unusual and supernatural way.

Authority over illness

- According to the known laws of nature, a sick man needs medicine to recover and a period of time for convalescence to get well and restore his health and activity. This is the natural way that all people, including saints, restore to. But the Lord interferes sometimes and performs a miracle so the sick man is healed with a word or a touch and the sick man

is healed and does not need a period of convalescence.

- In John 4:46-54, we read that the Savior healed the government official's son with a word "Go, Your son will live". Jesus was in Cana in Galilee and the sick boy was in Capernaum. The boy was healed the moment the Savior pronounced the word.
- In John 5:1-9, we see the Savior heal a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years. The man was healed with one word Jesus the Savior uttered "Rise, take up your bed and walk". And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.
- In John 9:1-38, we see a man blind from birth. Jesus made some mud and rubbed the mud on the man's eyes. His eyes opened and he could see. This is too difficult for professors of medicine to perform now. But the Lord is the Creator of man. He made him of mud and water.

His authority over death

- According to the laws of nature the body dies and decomposes when the soul leaves it. No person no matter how powerful he is can bring the soul back to the body to bring it back to life. But Christ can do this, as He is the father of souls and their creator. He has absolute authority and power over them because He is the Lord.
- In John 11:1-45, we see that Jesus brought Lazarus back to life after he had been buried four days and the body sent off a bad smell. But Lazarus rose from death with the word of Christ and that Divine word was said with power and authority "Lazarus come forward" and the dead man came out.
- The resurrection of Christ is the miracle of miracles 20:1-18. No prophet or saint stood over his tomb praying so that Christ might rise...but Christ rose with the power of His Divinity. His tomb was closed and guarded by guards and the tomb was made secure by a seal being put on the stone.
- His resurrection is proved by the fact that He appeared many times 20:19-23 to the disciples, then to the disciples and Thomas was with them 20:24-29... He appeared once more when the disciples were catching fish 21:5-14.

Conclusion

It is clear that Christ has authority over nature, illness and death. This authority stems from Him. He did not derive it from an external power. This shows that it is He that created nature. He rules and organizes nature. He is its Master. He is the Lord God.

Exercise

Make a list of the miracles of Christ mentioned in St. John's Gospel. Categorize them according to the subject.

(36) The Titles and Attributes of the Lord Jesus Christ

References

- + "Interpretation of St. John's Gospel" Anba Athanasius, Bishop of Beni Sweif
- + "Interpretation of St. John's Gospel" Dr. Maurice Tawadros

The Lesson

Aim

To prove the Divinity of Christ by examining the titles that were given to Him or those He Himself gave, and also by studying His attributes.

Introduction

The Divinity of Christ is a fact in which we believe and we need no mental or logical evidence to prove it...but the Scripture commands us saying “Always be prepared to make a defense to any one calls you to account for the hope that is in you with gentleness and reverence”. We have already known some evidence about the miraculous power of Christ that proves His Divinity. Now we shall study the titles and attributes of Christ, these titles and attributes belong only to God:

The Word

The Word is the second Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity and He is the Mind of God or His word and thinking. He is consubstantial with the Father.

Eternal

“In the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1).

The Second Hypostasis

And the Word was with God (the Father) (John 1:1).

He is God

“And the Word was God” (John 1:1).

The Only Creator

“All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3).

“And the world was made through Him” (John 1:9).

The Origin of Life (The Source of Life)

“In Him was life” (John 1:4)

The Most High

“The life was the light of men, the light shines in the darkness (sin)” (John 1:4,5).

“The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world” (John 1:9).

God of the Old Testament

“He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not” (John 1:11).

The Redeemer

“But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God” (John 1:12).

The Only Son

“We have beheld His glory, Glory as of the only Son from the Father” (John 1:14).

Full of glory and truth (John 1:14)

“And from His fullness have we all received grace upon grace” (John 1:16).

“Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

Thus, it is clear that the Word is the second Hypostasis. He is everlasting, eternal, creator, life giver, the Most Holy; the Redeemer who gives grace to anyone receives Him...

“In fullness of time, the word became flesh and dwelt among us, Jesus Christ dwelt among us (John 1:14). But He is still the True God after incarnation.

He has no beginning (eternal)

Each one begins his life on earth, the movement he/she is born...but Christ was there before He was born of the virgin, as He is God who was manifested in the flesh in the fullness of time He Himself said that He was there before He was born.

1. “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).
2. “Even what I have told you from the beginning, I have much to say about you and much to judge” (John 8:25).
3. “You are from blow, I am from above” (John 8:23).
4. “In the beginning was the word... and the word became flesh” (John 1:1,14).
5. “No one has ascended into the heaven but He who descended from heaven, the son of man” (John 3:13)

Exercises

Ask the children to make a list of the verses that indicate the existence of Christ before He was born of the Virgin According to St. John’s Gospel.

He knows the secrets of heart

Nathaniel under the fig tree

“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you” (John 1:48)

When Herod gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood who were two years old and younger. Nathaniel’s mother hid her son Nathaniel under a fig tree. No one other than Nathaniel and his mother know the story when the Savior revealed it; Nathaniel was surprised and at once confessed and declared his belief in Christ’s Divinity.

The Woman of Samaria

“You are right in saying: I have no husband for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband” (John 4:17-18). The woman of Samaria said: “He told me all that I ever did” (John 4:39).

About Lazarus’ Sickness

“Jesus said: This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God” (John 11:4).

In the Last Supper

“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands...” (John 13:34)

The Righteous Judge

“The Father judges No one but has given all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22).

“And has given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man” (John 5:27).

I Am He

I Am He = I Am Who I Am

This is the expression the Lord used when He spoke about Himself when He appeared to Moses and told him that His name is “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14). Christ used the expression to clear to the Jews that He is their God who brought them out of the land of bondage in the olden times.

- + “I who speak to you AM HE” (John 4:26) (to the woman of Samaria)
- + “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).
- + “I am the bread of the Life” (John 6:35).
- + “You will die in your sins unless you believe that I AM HE” (John 8:24).
- + “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I AM HE” (John 8:28).
- + “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58).
- + “I AM the door of the sheep” (John 10:7).
- + “I AM the good shepherd” (John 10:10).
- + “I AM the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).
- + “I AM the true Vine” (John 15:2).
- + “You call Me teacher and Lord; and you are right for so I AM” (John 13:13).
- + “I AM the way, and the truth and the life” (John 14:6).
- + “I AM Jesus of Nazareth” (John 18:5)

(37) The Titles and Attributes of Christ

References

- + John, Chapter 3
- + “Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel” Anba Athanasius Bishop of Beni Sweif
- + “Faith in Christ” Fr. Matta Al Meskin
- + Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalms 8:8-11, Luke 20:9-19, Matthew 21:33-46, John 15:1-9

Verse

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit” (John 15:5).

The Lesson

Aim

Christ is light and the source of light and life.

I am the true Vine

The Vine is one of the sacred plants, which has its value in the Church and the Bible. God had planned before all ages to prepare this plant so that out of its juice a sacred matter is taken to be offered continuously before Him as a sacrifice of thanksgiving (Eucharist). He accepts it with love and joy and sends over it the Divine fire, i.e. the Holy Spirit as a sign of acceptance and sanctification. He accepts it and instead of it He gives us honorable Sacred Blood for the forgiveness of sins.

The Lord likened His people Israel to a sacred Vineyard (Psalm 8:8-11, Isaiah 5:1-7). The Lord appointed Vinedressers who are the priests and the prophets of the Old Testament. The Vineyard is the Kingdom of God, heritage and authority. It was the only chance for any gentiles to have salvation and to enter into fellowship with God through being fed by this Vineyard. This grafting was the work of the Old Testament Vinedressers but the Vineyard lost its taste and the Vinedressers neglected it so the Lord was angry at it. He neglected it and left it for sheep to tread. The Vinedressers failed to bring new organs to the Vineyard (Matthew 23:15). The Lord came to collect the fruit of the Vineyard and He found bad fruit and severe treatment, ingratitude and rejection from the Vinedressers and this is what our Savior described in the parable of the Vineyard and Vinedresser.

Notes

- God visited His Vineyard in the Fullness of time and it grieved Him to see its deteriorating condition. The Scripture says: “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots” (Isaiah 53:2).
- This branch is Jesus Christ who came out of the corrupt humanity and He is the most Holy. Here we notice that Christ is a branch of the Vine and at the same time He is the Son of the owner of the Vineyard “I am the true Vine and My Father is the Vine dresser” (John 15:1).
- Christ is the new branch planted by the Father’s Hand. He has come out of the corrupt Vine with a good nature “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). Yes out of the corrupt Vine came a righteous branch but “separated from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26).
- He began a new start full of righteousness, good and sacred fruit. Christ alone instead of all the children of Israel. He was separated from them and was planted a new in the Virgin’s womb.
- The branch became the Origin and opened the domain of grafting all the gentiles as well as the Jews in the origin (root). He cut the gentiles from a wild olive and grafted them in Himself (Romans 11:15-24). The new branches feed on the Holy juice of the original vine (Christ) and they’ became one with Him out of His flesh and bones. They take his nature and taste. And because the New Vine Root is the Son of the Owner of the Vineyard. We the branches have become related to the owner of the Vineyard and He is no longer stranger to us. As branches, we have to struggle to be fixed in the Vine so that we may not fade and in this case we will be cut off and thrown in fire. Receiving the Holy Communion, the Vine juice, i.e. the Holy Body and Blood of the Lord makes us

strong.

I am the light of the world

There is an expression in the Christian Creed that describes the nature of Christ as “Light of light”. Light in the Holy Bible stands for righteousness, truth and holiness while the word Darkness is bound with sin, corruption and deception. It is known that all sins are committed in the dark far away from the sight of all people. Darkness also stands for ignorance but science is Light. Darkness also means death and Light is life.

God is the source of righteousness and the source of all holiness. The Scripture says “God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5) and if we have some righteousness and holiness, we know that these come to us from God. That is why the Psalm says, “In Your Light do we see Light”. This means that we get virtue and holiness from the righteousness and holiness of God “the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see” (I Timothy 6:16).

Anyone of us who enters the domain of the work of God would definitely live in light; “If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light we have fellowship with one another”(1 John 11:6,7). Any sin we commit means that we resist light and accept to walk in darkness “He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still”. When we discover that we live in darkness and suffering, the easy and speedy cure is to call for Christ to abide in the heart as He will drive away the darkness of sin then we walk in the Light (John 12:25) and see Christ when we walk with Him “Look to Him and be radiant” (Psalm 34:5).

God is the light of the world

As everything takes its reality and existence of all these creatures without understanding that God is the Origin and the source of life. Life itself has taken its shape and reality in the light of God as God is the source of life and it is He who gives life to the World.

“Light” and “Life” are synonyms

Even before the appearance of the early life in the universe the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. When the Lord brings life out of death, He first created light then He created Life. So there is a strong relationship between Life and light “For with You is the foundation of life. In Your light we see light”(Psalm 36:9). “The Lord is my light and my salvation. The Lord is the strength of my Life” (Psalm 27:1). “That I may walk before God in the light of the living” (Psalm 56:13). When Christ said, “I am the light of the world” He meant that He is the source of the life to the world. And without Him the whole universe will be destroyed, as it is the Lord who keeps the whole universe in order.

(38) Lord Christ’s Talks

References

- + John, Chapter 3
- + “Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel” Anba Athanasius Bishop of Beni Sweif

+ “Faith in Christ” Fr. Matta Al Meskin

+ Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalms 8:8-11, Luke 20:9-19, Matthew 21:33-46, John 15:1-9

The Lesson

Aim

Christ’s talks are full of deep Divine expressions that we can benefit from when we deal with the fact of the Savior’s Divinity.

Introduction

There are philosophers of superior mental theories, leaders who call for superior principles, scientists who think out scientific theories and applied researches, and reformers who call for change and who stick to the moral principles. These notions spread and many people believed in them and are affected by them and the names of these scientists and philosophers are well known to the whole world. But there was a simple servant who was calm and lowly. He walked among people and spoke to them in their ears and in their rooms “He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets”. His teaching spread very quickly. People believed in His principles and committed themselves to them and many died for them. Is not that simple lowly teacher greater than all the philosophers and thinkers? As He invaded the world with His thoughts calmly and in a simple way, isn’t this an evidence of His miraculous deeds and the power of His Divinity? Let us listen to the Savior’s talks, which are full of sweetness and beauty.

The talk with Nicodemus (John 1:1-21)

Nicodemus was a Jewish leader. This man came to Jesus by night to ask Him about the Kingdom of God. The Savior, in His wonderful Divine talk, revealed several secrets of the Kingdom of God and He also revealed the truth of His Divinity:

1. The mystery of the new birth from above: He who is born of the flesh belongs to the world of the flesh, material and senses only and he cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, which has a spiritual angelic nature so the Savior planned a new birth for man: a birth of water and the spirit. Anyone who is born in this way belongs to the spiritual kingdom and can inherit the kingdom of heaven if he keeps his call and choice confirmed by good works.
2. Christ is not limited: “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven” (John 3:13). While He is on earth, He is still in heaven also... This also means that Christ was in heaven before He was born in the flesh. We speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen.
3. Christ is the Savior, the Redeemer, the life giver and the light of the world: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God...And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God” (John 3:16-21).

The talk with the Samaritan woman

- This talk is full of tender-heartedness and sweetness and it satiates any repentant soul that loves Christ and seeks Him.
- Give Me a drink of water: Here the Savior seems thirsty for the salvation of everyone. His thirst will never be satisfied unless we repent and go back to Him. As He was thirsty for the salvation of humanity when He was on the cross. And when they gave Him vinegar mingled with gall, He would not drink because He does not accept the wrong human works that are full of bitterness and injustice.
- Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst: Who is that Almighty. Who is that who has authority over Eternity? The water that Christ gives quenches, satisfies and fills us with a spring of water that leads to the eternal life and with this water we can satiate others and give them life by the water of the Holy Spirit that abides in us.
- Contemplate the witness of the Savior when he said: “Call your husband”. You are light saying, “I have no husband; for you have had five husbands...this you said truly. He knows that the woman was a sinner living in sin but He respects her feelings and speaks to her gently without offending her or reproaching her.
- Christ can turn the Samaritan woman’s speech from foolish discussions and dogmatic disputes between the Jews and the Samaritans into the talk about God, the Spirit and the truth. He revealed to her His Divinity “I Who speak to you Am He”.
- After His talk with the Samaritans, they believed in Him and confessed His Divinity “This is indeed the Savior of the world”.

His talk with the Jews (John 5:19-47)

- In this talk Christ reveals His Hypostatic relationships, as a beloved Son performing His Father’s will with the Father. He also reveals the fact that He is consubstantial with the Father. Our God is One: The Father, the Son (Logos) and the Holy Spirit.
- The relationship between the Son and the Father: The Father is rational by the Son and the Son exists by the Father and both are living by the Holy Spirit.
- He is a righteous Judge: “For the Father Judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22)... “And has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man” (John 5:27).
- The Honor and Glory of the Father’s and the Son: “that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him (John 5:23).
- He gives the eternal life: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into Judgment, but has passed from death into life (John 5:24). “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26). “But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life” (John 5:40).

The Bread of Life (John 6:10-81)

- You may remember the story of the manna that came down in the wilderness in the Old Testament. The manna was like coriander seed and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. The children of Israel used to gather it at dawn, grind it, knead and make it

into bread. That was in the age of Moses the prophet when they lost their way in the wilderness. The Jews inherited a tradition from their fathers and this tradition states that when the Messiah comes, bread will come down from heaven to feed the people.

- That is why some people consider the miracle of feeding the multitude a sign for the prophecy of Christ. Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world” (John 6:14). Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to a mountain by Himself alone (John 6:15).
- Others considered the miracle insufficient and they said to Him “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat” (John 6:30,31).
- Our Savior began to explain to them in detail that He was the bread that came down from heaven “If anyone ate of that bread he would live forever...and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world” (John 6:51). He showed them that their tradition did not mean the coming of new manna from heaven as their fathers ate the Manna in the wilderness and they died, this means that it had no Divine value to give them life. But the bread coming down from Heaven is the Lord’s Body and Blood with which we obtain the eternal life, abide in God, and obtain forgiveness of our sins. Of course the only one who has the ability is God Himself “What is impossible with men is possible with God”.

With the Jews in the Temple (John 8:12-59)

This talk was full of clear revelations about the Divinity of the Savior. It seems that the Jews could not bear the power of the words so they took up stones to stone Him. These Divine revelations are:

- Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12).
- And He said to them, “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world” (John 8:23).
- “Therefore I say to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24).
- “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).
- “Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe?” (John 8:46).
- “Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death” (John 8:51).
- “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56).
- Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

There are other talks that our Lord Jesus gave and these are mentioned in St. John’s Gospel. We shall contemplate these talks next time with the Grace of Christ.

(39) Between Ascension and Pentecost

References

- + Acts 1,2
- + “The Holy Spirit” a sermon by H. H. Pope Shenouda III
- + “The Holy Spirit between the new birth and the continuous Renewal” Fr. Tadros Malaty
- + “The Father’s covenant” Virgin Mary Church, Fagala

The Lesson

Aim

To celebrate these two great feasts and to pray the Holy Spirit to fill our life and the life of those in the church

The Ascension Day

1. He was taken up into Heaven

- Our teacher St. Mark the evangelist says: “So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven” (Mark 16:19). We confess this fact in the Christian Creed and say: “He suffered and was buried, arose from the dead on the third day. He ascended into the Heavens and sits at the right hand of His Father”.
- “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven” (John 3:13).
- In olden times Enoch was taken up to Heaven alive, and Elijah was taken up to Heaven by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire. Both were kept in upper places...but the Lord’s ascension was not in this way. The Lord ascended to Heaven by His own power and He rose from the dead by His power also.
- The ascension of the Lord Christ with His Glorified Body is the perfection of the Divine Plan. After He redeemed Adam by the cross, He took the Body that carried the pains of the cross with the signs of wounds and nails, up to heaven to intercede with the Father for all human beings.
- Angels descended from heaven to announce the birth of the Son of God as a newborn babe in the manger of Bethlehem. Hosts of angels and archangels came also to worship the Lord who is enthroned upon the cherubim, the Lord Who rode on a cherub, and flew; He came swiftly upon the wings of the wind. The Lord Who is in Heaven sitting at the right hand of God forever conquering and glorified forever.

2. He sat down at the right hand at God

- The right hand of God means that after the Son carried out the Divine plan and completed the redemption. He took what He has of power, authority, glory and greatness, which are the attributes of His Holy Hypostasis that is equal to the Heavenly Father’s Hypostasis. This is what Paul the apostle meant by saying: “who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the Lord of His power, when He had by Himself purged our Sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3).
- With the ascension of the Lord and His sitting at the right hand of the Father, David’s prophecy was achieved: “The LORD said to my Lord: Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool” (Psalm 110:1).
- The servant and the children study the relationship between Christ’s sacrifice on the

Cross and the Sacrifice of the Revelation and the Eucharist that is practiced on the alter of the One Apostolic Church. In this way the children will widen their Theological and Spiritual understanding.

The Pentecost Day

1. The meaning of the word “Pentecost”

This is a Hebrew word that means a meeting. It means the Harvest feast or the “Khamaseen Feast” (Fifty Days’ Feast). The church used the word for the feast of the Coming of the Holy Spirit because it comes after the Lord’s Resurrection.

2. How was the Holy Spirit poured out?

- a) Like a strong wind: Notice the likeness between the wind and the spirit. The wind fills in all places and the work of the Spirit is a miraculous one that works in everyone. His results can be seen and felt by the mind and the heart (Acts 2:1-3, Psalm 50:3, Exodus 37,7).
- b) Like tongues of fire spreading out: Our God is a consuming fire. The fire purifies and burns and the fiery spirit purified the disciples and burned all the impurities and made the disciples inflamed with the love for the Service. He also enlightened their insight and guided them to the truth (Hebrews 2:29, John 16:13). The tongues on Pentecost Day were gathered together, but in the Tower of Babylon, they were separated. The tongues on Pentecost Day are the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

The work of the Spirit in the church

- The day of Pentecost is when the church was born, as a united group, the family of people of the House of God, the members united in the Body of Christ whose Head is Christ.
- The day of Pentecost is the day when Christ united with the church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
- The Spirit gave the church the spiritual talents and granted the disciples the ability to practice the sacraments because He abides with us forever and He bears witness for Christ.
- The Holy Spirit works in the worshipping church, so that it may bear witness for Christ through the behavior of her members and their pure life and their acceptable services in the four offices (services) of the church (Liturgy etc.).

The work of the Holy Spirit in the believers

- It is He Who gives us the new birth and establishes us in the Vine, renews our life and gives us acceptable repentance.
- It is He that inflames the new man with the Divine fire to make Him always worthy of deeper union with God the consuming fire.
- The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought to, but the spirit Himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words (Romans 8:26).
- The Spirit teaches the mind how to heal the wounds of the self and how to remove pains, which mingled with the flesh and regrettably the other pains that mingled with the will.
- The Spirit sets a rule for the eyes to look forward in a pure and straightforward way and a rule for the ears to listen peacefully. He gives purity to the tongue and cleanses the hands

when they are raised in prayer.

- He has put His seal upon us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.
- The Holy Spirit abides in the believer and helps and supports him in his spiritual struggle and in his fight against sin and in his walk in the way of perfection.

Instructions and Activities

1. The Servant and his children study the work of the Holy Spirit in the Seven Sacraments of the Church and His effectiveness in each sacrament.
2. Each one should examine himself in the light of what has been mentioned and ask himself whether the spirit works in him with richness and ease or there are obstacles that hinder his work (Do not quench the Spirit. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God).
3. Everyone should repent to renew the mind.
4. All children should take part in the worship prayer (Sagda) practicing prostrations and intercede for the departed in faith because they are members with us in the same body.

(40) Priesthood

References

- + “Didascalia” Fr. Saleeb Suryal
- + “The Precious Gems in explaining the rites and beliefs of the church” Fr. Youhanna Salama
- + “The Seven Sacraments in lines and verses” Anba Moussa
- + “The rites of ordination from the Reader to Priest” Youssif Habib
- + “Interpretation of the Exodus” St. George Church, Sporting

The Lesson

Aim

To know how to honor the clergymen in general and the priests in particular. It is also a call to benefit from the experience of the spiritual fathers, their fatherhood and guidance and to learn the means of Grace and the fellowship of the church.

God created man to inherit the glories of His Kingdom

God also made man the center of His care. He chose some men to be in charge of him and to convey to him the commands of the Lord and the secrets of His love, kingdom and worship. Those are the priests. In Hebrew a priest is called “Kohein” which means “Adopt and Teach” the will of God, his commandments about worship, virtue and faith “For every priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God” (Hebrews 5:1).

In the Old Testament, God appointed men for this service

Examples of those men are the great Fathers Adam, Job, Noah and Abraham Then He confined Priesthood to the Tribe of Levi. When Korah and a number of the people of Israel sinned and transgressed Priesthood, they became a deterrent example for all ages. In the Book Leviticus, the tasks of the priests are listed as follows: bearing the iniquities (sins), offering the sacrifices, the offerings in fulfillment of a vow to God, guiding people as to how to worship and also to judge the people.

In the church of the New Testament the Lord chose His apostles and disciples

“He gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit saying to them: And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them” (John 20:22), “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:23), “The Lord made judges over people” (Mathew 18: 15 -18) and gave them the authority to bind and to loose man from all the ties of injustice and darkness (As the priest says in the Absolution).

Priesthood is composed of three orders

- a) Deaconry: Deacon (Sham'mass) is a Coptic and old Egyptian word. It is also Syrian word and it means “Servant”. Deaconry has five orders: Psalmist, Reader, Sub-deacon, Deacon and Archdeacon. All these orders aim at organizing the worship and the service of the believers (Acts 6).
- b) Priesthood includes three orders: Priest (Prosveteros, i.e. Intercessor) and Protopriest (Kommos or Heghomenos, i.e. Spiritual guide).
- c) Episcopacy includes the following orders: (i) The Bishop who looks from above (who manages the church's affairs). He has the right to ordain Deacons, Priests and Archpriests. (ii) The Metropolitan (Motran, i.e. The Bishop of a big City or Governorate). (iii) The Patriarch (Patri = Fathers. Arch = Chief or Head). So he is the father of the fathers the bishops. He may be called the Pope as in Egypt and Rome. The Patriarch was first given the name of “Pope of Egypt” since Pope Yaroclass (13th Pope of Alexandria) because of his deep fatherly feelings and the people's love for him and then the Romans used the title.

Those who receive the orders of deacon and priest receive them after the prayer of reconciliation between God and the people (2 Corinthians 5:18) but those who receive the orders of Episcopacy receive them after reading the Acts of the Apostles because they always continue their works as their successors (Acts 20:28). St. Paul recommended the ordination of the clergymen (Acts 14: 13, Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 2:2, Titus 1:5-9).

The clergymen are ordained to serve the believers and in doing this they are like our great high priest who offered himself for us, a sacrifice of love for us. The clergymen then are servants and agents of the mysteries of the Lord (I Corinthians 4:1). He offered us the grace and joys of redemption through the Holy Sacraments and they pray for us (I Timothy 1:2, Ephesians 1:16) especially in the time of sickness (James 5:14) and they encourage us to repent with tears (Acts 20: 1).

The priests are dignified for their labor and service and giving their life for us, for our happiness, success and our delight with salvation. The Lord honors them as He honored all those who honored Him “If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor” (John 12:26). The Lord honored Moses, Elijah and Abraham and showed them his glory on the mountain. He honored Abraham and Jacob and appeared to them and honored Stephen and showed him his heavenly glory. St. John saw the apostles and priest around the Throne (Revelation 4:14).

The priests are dignified for the holiness of their life as the bishop must be above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2). It is our duty; we the believers, to honor the priest for the sake of Christ. We must

not despise them or defame them for their wrong deeds as they are humans who exposed to weakness and sin, so we must cover these weakness as Shem and Japheth covered the nakedness of their father Noah, so he blessed them and cursed Ham who made fun of him. The believers should behave this way “Judge not, that you be not judged”.

Instructions and Activates

1. Follow up on young people concerning confession. Tell them the difference between the father of confession and the spiritual guide.
2. Accompany young people to church and receive the Holy Communion together. This will deeply affect young people, as they will take their servants as a model.

(41) A Study of the Acts of the Apostles

References

- + The Holy Bible: The book of Acts
- + “The Acts of the Apostles” Fr. Anastassi Saheek
- + “The church in the age of the Apostles” Anba Youannis
- + “Studies in the Acts of the Apostles” Anba Athanasius

The Lesson

Aim

Learning the life and role of our apostles in the early church.

Introduction

The New Testament includes historical books and these are the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The Gospels give the events of the Lord’s life in the flesh till He ascended to Heaven. The Acts of the Apostles give the events of the early church after the Lord’s ascension and after the Holy Spirit fell on the believers. There the Lord is in the flesh and here the Lord is in the people. There is Christ and here is Christianity. That is why it is called the Acts of the Holy Spirit or the Gospel of the Holy Spirit.

The book and the writer

This book gives us the image of the early church from all its different aspects. We see how Jerusalem was, and the circumstances it faced then, and the spread of the church in different countries and the types of success and obstacles she faced. The life of the father the Apostles and how they preached, served and bore pains. It is the model and the history, the measure and the image of the life flowing from the spring of the Holy Spirit, who poured on the apostles, on the day of Pentecost. By His power they toured the world and preached the Gospel, and how the world severely resisted them and how they in the end won victory over the world with the help of the Spirit that abode in them.

The writer of the book is St. Luke after he wrote his Gospel. His purpose is to complete the story he started in his gospel as he said when he began his gospel: “In as much as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which are most surely believed among us (Luke

1:1-4) and he began the Acts of the apostles by saying, “In the first book... I have dealt with all that...” (And here he refers to his gospel).

Act 1:1 “The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach”.
Act 1:2 “until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen”

- a) The two books then were written by one person, St. Luke to a man named Theophilus and the second book completes the story that began in the first book.
- b) The early church stated that the writer of the book was St. Luke.
- c) The characteristics of the style of writing in the two books, the gospel and the Acts, are identical as the two books address the Jews and the gentiles.

The Characteristics of the Book

1. Before the Lord’s ascension, He said to His disciples: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Act 1:8). This book deals really with the story of the spread of Christianity by the apostles bearing witness starting from Jerusalem then spreading through Judea, Samaria, Syria, and Asia Minor, Greece and at last Rome, which was the capital of the world at that time.
2. The Lord said to His disciples: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father” (John 14:12). This book tells us how they spoke in tongues, cured the sick people, healed the paralyzed and raised the dead (Acts 8:7).
3. The Lord Christ had warned His disciples by saying: “But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues” (Matthew 10:17). “And you will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles” (Matthew 10:18).
4. John Chrysostom says: This book shows the apostles’ great wisdom and spiritual lowliness that made their service fruitful among those heard them. The book also shows the high spiritual state of the apostles that was the result of the effectiveness of the Holy Spirit. They were filled with virtues. They did not show any envy or mean desire and they lived a lowly life full of love and tolerance.
5. It is the only book, which is not complete in the Holy Bible. The story ends with the arrival of St. Paul to Rome and the Spirit does not end the story with the word “Amen” as usual, and we find ourselves before and incomplete book. The book began on Pentecost day and it is still open as the word and the church exists, so that all the people everywhere can bear witness to the Lord Christ.

The Church before the coming of the Holy Spirit

1. The apostles struggled and gathered to pray and the Holy Spirit flowed upon them. We also have to struggle to receive the talents through prayer, vigil and fasting.
2. During that time the apostles chose the twelfth disciple to replace Judas.
3. The Holy Spirit poured on the Disciples.
4. The church in Jerusalem (the life of the early church Acts 2:2-47).

People were persistent in doing four things

1. The teachings of the apostles: i.e. meetings were held so that the people might listen to the words of the apostles.
2. Communion: The sacrament of the Holy Communion. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the Body of Christ?
3. The breaking of bread: i.e. they eat food together and show a spirit of love.
4. They were persistent in prayers.

Christianity spread

1. Through preaching as the case was on the day of Pentecost and other occasions.
2. Through the good treatment and the good example; “Having favor with all the people”.

The life of voluntary Poverty

Many believers fulfilled the law of perfection. They sold their property and possessions and gave the money to the apostles to spend it on the needy.

The choice of the seven deacons

Then were known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom and they were put in charge of the various domains of social and spiritual service. One of them was Stephen the first deacon and martyr.

The church in Judea and Samaria

1. Persecution began by arresting the two apostles Peter and John, and then they were set free after receiving orders not to speak in the name of Christ. When the miracles spread in number and the power of the church spread, the pagan priests became annoyed and arrested some of them (Acts 5:17-18) but the Lord’s angel opened the prison gates and let them out and they stood in the temple and started teaching the pagan priests.
2. The stoning of Stephen: when the people increased in number, the heads bribed some men to say that they heard them speaking against Moses and against God (Acts 6:11). So Stephen was arrested and judged before the council and stoned (Acts 7:58).
3. Saul’s Persecution: Saul used to attack the church and houses, bind men and take women to prison -so all the believers scattered in Jerusalem. Saul carried letters to Damascus to bring all who went there, back to Jerusalem so that the Jews might judge them.
4. Preaching to the Jews outside Jerusalem: All believers, except the apostles, were scattered throughout the provinces of Judea. The apostles supported and encouraged the new believers. The remaining apostles were out of Jerusalem at that time. The Gospel is preached to the Samaritans. The Samaritans were originally the Jews of the ten tribes that formed the kingdom of Israel, but in the 8th Century B.C. Sargon came from Assyria and captured many of them and settled other peoples in their place (2 Kings 17:24). In this way the Jews mingled with the Babylonians and the beliefs were mingled and confused, so the Jews despised the Samaritans and considered them strangers. They refused to let them take part in any activity such as the building up of the temple. They asked Ezra to allow them to take part in their work, but he refused (Ezra 4:1,2). They refused to speak with them and it was dangerous for the Jews to travel from a Jewish province in the South to the Province of Galilee because they had to pass through Samaria but Christ

visited their country and preached them (John 4) and healed their sick people. Preaching the Samaritans is considered a middle stage between the Preaching of the Jews and the Gentiles (the nations).

5. Saul's faith: The Lord appeared to him, called him, and asked him why he persecuted him. Then the Lord told him to go to Ananias, and Saul went silently. He could not see and when Ananias placed his hands on him, something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes and he was able to see again. Then he preached in the Synagogues in Damascus and continued preaching the Gentiles.

After the Samaritans received the faith, the apostles hesitated in preaching the Gentiles, but the Lord revealed His desire to accept the Gentiles through two unique events.

1. The vision of the large sheet

When Cornelius wanted to see the Lord, the Lord sent an angel to him and the angel said: "Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter" Acts 10:5 (Acts 10:5-7).

The large sheet was lowered by its four corners to the earth. In it were all kinds of animals, reptiles, and wild birds and a voice said: "And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15).

When St. Peter met Cornelius and told him the story, the apostle taught them about the Lord of glory. It seems that in spite of the vision, Peter suspected for the second time so the Lord gave him a sign which was very clear: the Holy Spirit came down on all those listening to him without being baptized or placement of hands. We have never heard, in the New Testament that the Holy Spirit has fallen down upon anyone except in this event alone. This was to drive Peter to baptize the Gentiles. The other apostles criticized Peter for what he did and said to him, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" (Acts 11:2,3).

(42) A Study Of The Acts of the Apostles: Preaching The Gentiles

Paul the Apostle sent to the Gentiles

- He submitted to the will of the Lord in everything. This attribute accompanied the apostle from the First moment the Lord revealed himself to him.
- We have to bear in mind that Saul, even before he was converted to Christianity; he walked in the fear of God "I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day" (2 Timothy 1:3).
- St. Paul was wise in his service. In Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:15-53) he began his words by reading the Old Testament and when the Jews refused to receive faith and they said evil things about him, he directed his words to the Gentiles and won them at once (Acts 13:46-49).
- In Lystra people believed in Christ so they stopped offering sacrifices to him in Barnabas.
- On his first missionary journey he bore the following: 1) He ran away from Damascus by being lowered in a basket. 2) The people of Jerusalem were stirred up against him and he ran away from them. 3) He traveled everywhere and faced the troubles of the roads. 4) He was driven out to Antioch in Pisidia. 5) He ran away from Iconium. 6) He was stoned at Lystra. He was sick during this period and said: "It was because of a bodily ailment that

preached the gospel to you at first".

The first missionary journey of Paul among the Gentiles: (Acts 13&14) describes the first journey to Cyprus and in Asia Minor.

In Cyprus:

1. When they arrived at Salamis, they preached the word of God the Synagogues.
2. They went to Paphos the capital and preached there. Bar-jesus (Elymas the magician resisted them and Paul made him blind).

In Asia Minor:

1. In Perga, a city in Pamphylia, John and Mark left them when he wanted to go to Galatia.
2. In Antioch in Syria, they preached in the Synagogue two Saturdays because the officials of the Synagogue sent them a message: "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it". When the Jews left the Synagogue, the Gentiles asked them to preach them the following Sabbath so the Jews were filled with jealousy and severely disputed what Paul said.
3. In Iconium they preached in the Synagogue and the Jews and the fanatic Gentiles were stirred up against them and these people tried to stone them but they could escape.
4. In Lystra they met Timothy who believed in Christ and received faith. They healed the man who had been lame from birth. The crowds thought they were gods and they gave Barnabas the name Zeus and Paul the name Hermes. Paul taught the crowds about Christ so they stopped offering sacrifices to them.
5. In Derbe many received faith and the two apostles were not persecuted there.

The Return to Antioch in Syria:

They went back passing through all the countries where they had preached the word of God. They appointed priests in each city and they returned via Antioch in Pisidia then they sailed to Antioch in Syria without going through Cyprus "And when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (Act 14:27).

To Europe:

Paul visited four churches of Galatia: Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. He took Timothy with him from Lystra, so the three apostles, Paul, Silas and Timothy, walked together. They tried to preach the word in Ephesus and the other cities of Asia, but the Spirit did not allow them. They wanted to go to the North to Bithynia but the Spirit did not allow them. At night, Paul had a vision in which he saw a Macedonian standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us". So they got ready to leave for Europe and the first city they preached in, was:

1. Philippi in Macedonia: Great deeds were fulfilled in Philippi the capital of Macedonia and the birthplace of Luke: The conversion of Lydia, the casting out of the evil spirit, they were thrown into jail, the conversion of the jailer (Acts 16: 12-40).
2. In Thessalonica: Paul held discussions with the people during the Sabbaths then the governor compelled them to leave the city. Although Paul stayed in the city about twenty days, yet the church grew quickly (Acts 17:1-8).
3. In Berea: The service was successful in Berea. Some Jews from Thessalonica came to stir

people up. Paul fled to Athens and Timothy and Silas left him.

In Athens:

Paul did not intend to preach in Athens but he was waiting for Timothy and Silas to tell him that the Jews of Thessalonica did not object to his going back to the city. Paul was greatly upset when he noticed how full of idols the city was. So he held discussions in the Synagogues and the Public Squares and the philosophers took Paul and brought him before the city council the Areopagus.

In Corinth:

He had two principles in his service in Corinth:

- a) After the failure, he met in Athens, where he preached the word starting by a philosophical point. He decided to preach the word of God and to forget everything except Jesus Christ and especially His death on the cross. Although some people found it hard to believe, yet he insisted on following this method of preaching.
- b) He decided to work to gain a living lest anyone should think that he had an aim of benefiting from preaching. He spent one and a half years in Corinth with Priscilla and Aquila who were makers of the tents like him.

In Cenchrea:

He had his head shaved.

In Ephesus:

He preached to a few Jews and left Priscilla and Aquila. He sailed from Ephesus to Caesarea and left Priscilla and Aquila.

The Third Missionary Journey

Paul left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus and he preached very few people in Ephesus. On his way back he visited the churches of Galatia and Phrygia and strengthened the believers and the disciples.

In Ephesus:

Apollos the Jew had been in Ephesus and Priscilla and Aquila preached him. Apollos went to Corinth but St. Paul served the Jewish believers who received the baptism of John, then he served all the Jews in the Synagogue. The word of the Lord kept spreading and growing stronger. Faith drove the believers to burn their pagan books the price of which was 50,000 pieces of silver.

Paul the apostle spent three years there but Demetrius who made silver models of temples and idols stirred the people against him.

During his stay in Ephesus he faced many troubles. At that time he was gathering some money from the churches of the gentiles to sent it to the poor people of Jerusalem. But sad news came to him. The churches of Galatia and Corinth deviated from the right way. He was greatly sad. It is possible that he had written his letters to the people of Galatia and Corinth at that time.

In Macedonia:

He visited the church.

In Achaia:

He went to Achaia, South of Greece and he had compelled to go back to Macedonia because the Jews were plotting against him.

In Troas:

He preached by night. The young man fell down from the third story and Paul threw himself on him and hugged him and healed him.

The return to Jerusalem:

- The whole group sailed from Troas to Jerusalem. On their way to Jerusalem they visited many churches. He greeted them all and advised them to stick to the word of God. He knew that they would never see him again (Acts 20:25).
- Try, my dear Servant, to read this farewell letter as it has a deep spiritual pastoral effect and convey it to your children.
- In Jerusalem: The apostle gave the money he had to the church. The Jews arrested him and wanted to kill him but the Lord delivered him.
- Contemplate how the Lord made use of Lysias to save Paul.
- Paul was judged by Felix the governor and king Agrippa.

The Journey to Rome:

Paul was about to be declared innocent but he appeared to Caesar. Paul longed to visit Rome (Acts 19:21). The Lord had appeared to him and told him that he would Visit Rome (Acts 23:11).

The last Journey

The Acts of the Apostles does not describe the life that the apostle lived in prison or after the prison, but we know about his life from the epistles that he wrote in those days. We know that after he was set free from the prison of Rome, he went on preaching and he had two places to go to visit Spain and the churches he had preached. In Necropolis, he was arrested and brought back to Rome where he received the crown of martyrdom by cutting his head off. The blessing of the prayers of our fathers the apostles be with us. Amen.

Instruction and Activities

- The servant can use the map of the Mediterranean Sea to study Paul's journey and to concentrate on the spiritual aspects of his service.
- The children can make a model for the route of each journey to be displayed in the church museum and to be made use if in explaining lessons.
- The children should study the verses and the situations that prove that the church of the apostles was a church of Truth, Straightforward, Spiritual Joy, Persecution, Growth, Worship and prayer, a church that is lit by the Holy Spirit, a church of fellowship and fraternal love.
- The servant displays the film of the Acts of the Apostles from the Audio-visual Center and explains the struggle of our father the apostles for the service of the See.
- This study should stimulate the Spirit of the apostolic Jealousy in the young people for serving the souls that need preaching and spiritual work. We can compose a class for the

preparation of servants as a practical basis for studying the Holy Book.

(43) How Can I Benefit from the Summer Holiday

References

+ “How to serve young people” Anba Moussa

The Lesson

Aim

To clarify the importance of activities in solving the problem of leisure during summer.

Introduction

Summer and Leisure: Before the summer holiday begins, people think of the problem of leisure and young men have many suggestions in mind as to how to make use of leisure time? How to solve problems according to the different circumstances and the environment surrounding each young man or young women? First, there is no problem so long as the heart is in a state of satisfaction and satiation and contains no emptiness, indifference, laziness or deviation.

Summer is a double-edged sword. It either drives young men forward in the way of spiritual growth and personality integration or drives them backwards and casts them in the dilemma of leisure or deviant business.

Before the beginning of the summer holiday: The Servant should ask each young man about:

- What extent is he satisfied with Christ? To what extent are his prayers and worship regular? This should be one of the summer activities: Growth in the love of Christ.
- To what extent does a young man understand the Old Testament? To what extent does he study the Books of the New Testament and persist on reading the Holy Bible? This should be one of the summer activities: To read and study the books of the Holy Bible.
- To what extent is he regular in practicing the church sacraments? This should be his task in summer: To practice the church sacraments with Satiation and love.
- The level of his education and recognition of the modern currents of thinking and the different shapes and types of culture and the church concept in the light of Christ. This should be his task during summer. In this way and through being calmly convinced of the need enthusiasm is established in the heart, and the mind becomes enlightened and time becomes fruitful.

Summer and Activities

Activity is an important means aiming at leading souls to Christ and concentrating the need for God. So activity removes and puts an end to boredom, sadness and the feeling of separation from the hearts of young men, and unites in a holy, spiritual pattern far away from evil friendships.

Glimpses about some activities and their importance:

1. Prayer: Satiates and fills the soul with delight.
2. Individual service: leads to prayer, service and visiting others.

3. Committees for making research and reading in libraries: These give new horizons in knowledge.
4. The Spiritual Retreat: This is a chance for up building, spiritual clarity and fraternal love.
5. The summer club: This is a chance for common comfort and Spiritual amusement.
6. The Party: This is a chance for taking part in celebrating feasts and the church occasions.
7. The journey: This is a chance for being acquainted with the children and a way of finding out their psychological state.

Liveliness of Summer Activates

The liveliness of the summer activity helps it to continue and achieve its goals. Some have to study the spirit of the age and its needs and offer suitable activities for children according to their position, as a living satiating food. This does not mean that the church encourages the spirit of the age, but it means that the activity should be lively. One of the fathers said: "We have to satisfy the needs of the body according to the circumstances of the present world but by the spirit and struggle even to the shedding of blood, so that we may surpass its weaknesses and falls.

The role of the Servant in being acquainted with the spirit of the age:

1. The young man's social status and the number of his family members.
2. The level of his bodily health and his need for games and the obstacles if any.
3. His emotional growth and its effect on his life.
4. His emotional growth and his ability to think and the obstacles if any.

The Servant then makes the young man take part in one of the church activities according to his abilities and needs (Club, Spiritual meeting, etc.). The Servant must offer the activity without fear or anxiety aiming at achieving one goal, that is the Salvation of the soul from corruption of the world and the dominion of sin, and the devil's temptation and the soul's entering into the regions of happiness, eternity through Christ Jesus, Glory be to Him forever. Amen.

(44) The First Epistle To Timothy

Timothy

This name means the one who worships God. He was a son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. He was brought up in a religious atmosphere by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois.

Place and time of the Epistle

Paul the apostle wrote it after he was set free from his first imprisonment about 60 A.D. The letter was written in Macedonia and sent to Timothy in Ephesus to warn him against heresies and false teaching.

The topics dealt with in the Epistle

First: Teachers and false teachings: (I Timothy 1:3-11)

The apostle distinguished between the correct teaching and the false one. False teachings spread divisions, weaken the structure and drive believers away from the spiritual love and drive them into false talk. False teachers want to be teachers of law and they do not understand what they

say and they do not carry out what they say but the correct teachings agree with the Lord's Gospel.

Secondly: The System of worship and Christian behavior (I Timothy 2:1-11)

- Prayer: It is a form of worship with which we begin and end anything we do. It should be raised for all people; it should be raised in all places, from pure hearts devoid of envy or hatred.
- The Christian woman and worship: She has the right to take part in all public prayers. She must be modest, sensible in her clothes and dress properly not with fancy hairstyle, or with gold ornaments or pearls or expensive dresses, but with good deeds. Motherhood is her task. She must bring her children properly and in the fear of God.

Thirdly: Bishops and Deacons (I Timothy 3:1-11)

Episcopacy is a high office and important position in the church.

The Bishop's attributes

1. ***In teaching:*** He must be an apt servant, mature in the faith, and self-controlled. He must not be recently converted.
2. As a model: He must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, not lover of money, not quarrelsome temperate and dignified.
3. His behavior: He must be well thought of by outsiders.
4. How he deals with others: He must be hospitable.

The deacons attribute

1. They help the bishop and the priest in worship and managing the affairs of the church.
2. Collect alms and distribute them to the needy.
3. They should visit families as they are like alert serving eyes and hands.
4. They should be serious, not double tongued, and not greedy for gain.
5. They must hold the mystery of the faith and their wives must be serious and faithful in all things.

Fourthly: Heresies and false teachings (I Timothy 4:1-5)

The apostle speaks about the dangers of the difficult times when heresies and evil teachings appear and these are deviations that may appear at anytime and in later times a great number of these heresies will appear. The attributes of false teachers are deceitful liars for they follow the teachings of demons. The attributes of false teaching are wrong teachings with wrong goals as marrying or eating certain foods. But God created these foods to be eaten after a prayer of thanks.

Fifthly: The Christian as a model (I Timothy 4:12-15)

The verses show instructions that can be explained as follows:

- + Principles of behavior: Be an example for the believers in your speech, your conduct and your love.
- + Principles of Piety: Be an example in your faith and purity.
- + Principles of preaching: Give your time and effort to public reading of the scriptures and to the preaching and teaching. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope

you have in you.

Sixth: Love of money (I Timothy 6:6-11)

- + There is great gain in godliness with contentment.
- + If we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

Consequences of the love of money:

- + Fall into temptation and hurtful desires.
- + The love of money is the root of all evils.
- + Wandering away from the faith.

Questions

1. Write short notes on: Timothy, time and place of the first Epistle, Key to the Epistle, and the topic of the epistle.
2. Explain briefly the most important items of the epistle.
3. Explain the conditions that the apostle mentioned about the bishop and the deacon.
4. Show what is mentioned in the first epistle of Paul to Timothy about money and how Christianity views it.

(45) The Second Epistle To Timothy

Place and time of writing the epistle

This was about 68 A.D. in the prison of Rome.

Items of the Epistle

- + An introduction that includes greetings and thanks
- + Timothy and his spiritual needs as a Christian
- + Timothy and his spiritual needs as a servant of Christ
- + Warning about heresies
- + The effect of Paul and the Holy Books on Timothy's life

Explaining the important texts of the epistle

1. The Christian and Struggle in Spiritual Life (II Timothy 1:7-18).

- a) The Spirit given to the Christian: God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control. A Spirit of power that is the work of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of love which overcomes pains and the spirit of self-control for edification.
- b) Testify to Christ: The sign that characterizes the children of God is bearing testimony which the world hates and severely resists, but the children of God stand firm with power, love and lowliness.
- c) Sticking to the correct teaching: He must keep what he received as a dear deposit. This deposit must be kept as it is without any change.
- d) The Christian's attitude towards those who depart from the faith: A sword pierced through Paul's soul because of the believers who departed from the faith but if this happens, Timothy should not be discouraged but he must endure to be crowned.

- e) The Christian's attitude towards the faithful: Onesiphorus is a model of the man of principles and ideals, so Paul bore witness to him, prayed for him and prayed the Lord to grant him his mercy on that Day.

2. The Nature of the Christian Struggle and its Characteristics (II Timothy 2:2-2)

- c) The servant and the sound teaching: Faithfulness in sticking to sound teaching - competence in teaching through being filled with the Holy Spirit, not through depending on the natural human abilities.
- d) The good soldier: This is characterized by the trials of the real military being attributed to him, the goals clear, he is well prepared, well armed. He must not get mixed up in the affairs of civilian life to please his master who honored him by enlisting him in the army of salvation. His conduct should be according to the spirit of Christ's gospel.
- e) Endurance of hardships: Hardships are numerous and come from within and from the outside. These may lead to prison or martyrdom, but the word of God is not chained as it remains free and will be effective to those who hear it.
- f) Patience: He advised his disciples to endure all troubles patiently. If we continue to endure, we shall also rule with him.

3. The Traits of Christ's enemies (II Timothy 3:1-8)

- a) Selfishness.
- b) Holding the form of religion.
- c) They give false teaching: They do not follow the ordinary system of addressing men in the Synagogue but they go into people's houses and gain control over weak women who are swayed by various impulses, who would listen to anybody and can never arrive to knowledgeable truth.
- d) They imitate the form of teaching: As Jannes and Jambres were opposed to Moses, so also these people are opposed to the truth. They imitated all his works but they used evil ways to falsify the truth.

4. Final pieces of advices (II Timothy 3:4- 4:5)

- a) What are the conditions that Paul the apostle set for the legal struggle?
- b) How can you be good soldier in the army of Salvation? What are the weapons of struggle?
- c) To manage the affairs of the church to practice his work with all the people, each one according to his spiritual ability. He must not care for the attitudes of the people who stick to false teachers. He must endure troubles and do the work of the preacher. Complete your services...

Questions

1. What are the traits of the enemies of Christ as mentioned by the apostle in his second epistle to his disciple Timothy?
2. "Holding the form of religion but denying the power of it". What does this statement

mean and what did the Lord Christ say in Mathew 23 about such people?

(46) The Great Holy Man: Anba Shenouda The Archimandrite

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His Holy Biography

When Pope Athanasius the apostolic near the city of Akhmim was running away from the Arians (followers of Arius), Angel Michael appeared to him and took him to the wilderness and said to him; “Stretch your hands in the form of a cross and at that moment the Archangel stretched a sword of fire and burned all the heretics, false teachers and those who departed from faith and the church. He told the pope that a child would be born after a short time and he would be called Shenouda (the son of God) and he would be a pillar in the church and he would overcome the heretics and conquer them.

There was a hermit who lived a solitary life whose name was Hersasius. One day that hermit was walking on the road with some monks. Suddenly he went to a woman that was getting some water. He kissed her head and said: “The Lord will bless the fruit of your womb and He will give you a son who will be well known all over the world. One of those monks saw the Lord’s angel guard that woman, and the saint said to the monks: “She will give birth to a son who will be a blessing to the church”. That woman was the mother of St. Shenouda. St. Mary the Virgin appeared to his mother in a dream and told her that she would give birth to a son and his name will be Shenouda. His father saw a dream, a star glittering in his house and he was very happy to see it.

His birth and his early life

In the village of Shendawee and on the 2nd of May 333 A.D. the babe Shenouda was born and all were happy and pleased when he was born. His parents taught him the Christian teachings, and the secrets of spiritual life so he grew in chastity and piety before the Lord and the people. He loved prayer and fasting and practiced the Christian virtues. The shepherd who cared for his father’s ‘sheep and whom the child Shenouda helped in his work tells this story: Shenouda used to fast all day. He used to give his food to others. After the hard work of the day he used to pray near a small pool and contemplate and cry to the Lord, saying: “O Lord, shape my life as You like and according to your will”. His fingers were like candles giving out light and the smell of incense surrounded him. This story shows the deep spiritual life he led.

His monastic Life

Shenouda’s father took him to his maternal uncle St. Bigoul the Abbot of a monastery in Upper Egypt, to bless him, but Anba Bigoul took the hand of the young child and put it on his head and said: “Bless me my son because you will be the father of many monks”. St. Shenouda stayed

with his maternal uncle and began the life of monasticism and struggle as a monk. The Lord's angel appeared to Anba Bigoul in a dream and told him to dress the child Shenouda in the monk's vestment (Iskim) which the Lord Christ himself blessed and this happened among all the fathers of the monastery who expressed their joy.

In this way the monk Shenouda lived the life of monasticism and struggled through fasting, prayers, asceticism and spiritual vigil. He also struggled against demons that fought him severely but he conquered them with the power of God and the Divine grace that was working in him. He also loved the solitary life and staying alone in caves far away from the monastery and one day he heard a voice from heaven saying: "Shenouda has become an Archimandrite".

After the death of his uncle, the monks appointed him an abbot because of his godliness, holiness and spiritual look. He cared for monasticism and founded his strict system and the White monastery became famous in the world of monasticism.

His virtues and miracles

St. Shenouda enjoyed the spiritual transparency. He was taken up to heaven to see the church of the heavenly. Angel Michael used to visit him. John the Baptist, Elijah and Elisha also visited him. The most important event in his life was when the Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ visited him and spoke to him about the Kingdom of God and about managing the monastery and monasticism. The Lord also made Nature serve him. The clouds carried him to Constantinople (in Turkey) as he longed to see Emperor Throdosious and also when the clouds carried him back to his monastery from Ephesus after he had attended the Ecumenical Conference of Ephesus. The saint was able to know the hidden secrets and the Lord performed many miraculous deeds through him.

1. The story of the virgin priest who sinned.
2. The story of the man who went to saint to ask for alms to test him.
3. The story of the man and the tray and his love for money.
4. The story of the evil messenger who sinned.
5. The story of feeding the visitors of the monastery and the seed of wheat.
6. The stray of Eulogion given to him by Paul the apostle.

His most important deed

1. He fought Paganism and the Pagans. He destroyed their temples and their idols and burned their books.
2. He resisted heretics and accompanied Pope Cyril the Great (24th) to the third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus in A.D. 431 where Nostorius was tried for his heresy. It was decided to excommunicate Nostorius and to send him into exile. Anba Shenouda played his role in teachings and resisting heresies.
3. He was a Coptic man of letters as he wrote many sermons and articles in Akhmimi Coptic, which is considered a great heritage.
4. He was a national leader that led his people in fighting the Byzantine imperialism. He did not allow foreigners to be ordained monks in his monasteries.

His Death

While visiting one of the saints called Thomas who told him that he would depart to Heaven

after a few days and St. Shenouda would depart after his departure, Thomas gave him a sign, which was that the stone in front of his cavern would split into two. Three months later Anba Shenouda was sick. He gathered all his son and advised them to struggle to the last breath. His face lit like the sun and he prayed continuously then the Lord Jesus Himself came to strengthen and comfort him in his sickness. St. Anthony and St. Pachomius and St. Bishoy also visited him. At last he knelt down to worship the Lord and crossed himself with the sign of the cross and he breathed his last on the 7th of Abib 451 A.D. and he was about 120 years old. May the blessings of his prayers be with us. Amen.

(47) The Holy Zeal an Enthusiasm

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The Lesson

Aim

Clarifying the meaning of some concepts concerning the subject.

Are enthusiasm and zeal the necessary signs of the stage of youth?

Enthusiasm is a sign of psychological hygiene in young people because of their abundant liveliness and energy. This enthusiasm is felt in their great concern and deep desire to achieve the goals and the enthusiasm they show in defending ideals and principles. Of course the domain of this enthusiasm differ according to the different patterns, moods, aims and education of young people.

The Difference between enthusiasm and rashness

Each instinct has its own primary motives that stimulate the emotion. The emotion is the response of the stimulation. So rashness is moving according to emotions and in this it is a primitive feeling indicating the weak level and the uncivilized behavior. But enthusiasm is objective and results from deep thinking and self-control.

The difference between enthusiasm and fanaticism

Fanaticism makes men unable to see the truth in others and the good side of other people. So fanaticism is Narcissism, self-love and self-worship. But Christianity means freedom in truth without fanaticism or narrow mindedness. It deeply respects the humanity of man “He who has ears to hear, let him hear”. The Christian, in sticking to the faith he has, and the creed he believes in, does not oppose those who differ with him, but he calmly and modestly explains the truth with the Spirit of God dwelling in him “for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you”.

Signs of true spiritual zeal among young believers

- Human enthusiasm, which is not spiritual, has several signs that characterize it and makes

the young man anxious and drives him to seek praise from other people to achieve self-aggrandizement.

- The effects of the circumstances around him and on him show his relationship with the self.
- The life of the fathers and martyrs by the Holy Zeal and deep faith among difficult circumstances is an evidence of the power and type of the holy zeal (James 3:13-17).
- The source of the holy zeal then is the Divine love without partiality or fanaticism. It lies in the fire about which the Lord said: I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!
- So the chaste body, the sublime instincts, chastity and abstinence drive man to be jealous for the Glory of God and the Salvation of others.
- The Holy Zeal accompanies him: To obey the commandment and wait for the Lord, to be Positive regardless of how difficult the circumstances are as the Spirit of the Lord is love and giving and to care for that who falls or stumbles.

Models of the holy zeal

From the Old Testament: Nehemiah

Nehemiah did not enjoy the life of prosperity in the king's palace. Luxury destroys zeal, as the jealous person is ready to sacrifice his comfort for his zeal. When he stood before the king he was not a coward. He was not afraid but he declared why he was sad in a brave and powerful way before the king because the holy zeal does not know fear but it lives in the boldness of faith. According to the king's orders Nehemiah was in charge of building the holy city. But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. They derided him and despised him and said: "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you building against the King?" Then the jealous Nehemiah replied with courage and power: "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem" (Nehemiah 2:20). In this way the enemies united against Nehemiah but he did not fall into despair or become sad. The bad circumstance increased his courage and zeal and many men stood by him for the good of the city. Nehemiah is a model of the sacred zeal that does not favor faces or fear people (when he reproached the rich who seized the chance to exact interest each from his bother). He did not fall into despair. He did not feel tired of work or service but he depended on the Divine Arms in his plans to rebuild Jerusalem.

From the New Testament:

Paul the apostle is wonderful model for young people to follow and a good example for anyone who lives the life of sacred zeal (II Corinthians 6:4-8, Acts 20:17-34).

Instructions and Activities

- The servant holds a discussion with the children about the fact that Christianity accepts zeal and rejects fanaticism.
- The servant explains how the life of the Lord Jesus was devoid of cruelty, extremism of fanaticism so that this Divine life can be an example for young people to follow in their conduct and in orienting their motives.
- There should be clear boundaries between the acceptable pure jealousy and the jealousy that is not based on knowledge (James 3:15-18).

- The teacher holds a discussion with the children about practical models of bodily and spiritual jealousy so that the thoughts can be applied to practical models and examples.
- The teacher holds a discussion with the children about the causes of extremism in the life of young people and the effect of grace on softening jealousy and directing it and assessing the factors and powers that affect the people's conduct and in this way our judgment will be just and fair.

(48) The Eucharist

References

- + "Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist" St. George church Sporting
- + "The Eucharist and the mass"

The Lesson

Aim

To go into the depths of the Eucharist Sacrament to meet the Lord Jesus and understand his work of Salvation through sacrifice of his love

What is the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

- It is the mystery of being united with God through the enlightenment of knowledge and reaching eternity.
- It is the mystery of worship and consecration and through it the soul knows the Holy Trinity and loves him, accepts him and responds to his work.
- It is the mystery of thanksgiving and through it we obtain the graces of Christ's life.

The Eucharist and its relationship with the church

- The Sacrament of the Eucharist is the continuation of Christ work of sacrifice as He is present in the Sacrifice of the Eucharist. So the Eucharist is an extension to the cross' work of salvation.
- The Eucharist Sacrament is the Sacrament of the New Testament and in it the conditions of the covenant between God and man are achieved as the Sacrifice of Christ is the faithful witness (Revelation 1:5) and through it He grants us heavenly relationship, which is the heavenly meal that grants us eternal life.
- The Eucharist is a symbol of real Pasch (Christ, the lamb of God, Corinthians 5:7). The mystery of the Pasch has been achieved in the body of the Lord that He gave us in His broken body and His Blood so that we may enjoy Eternity. So the sacrament of the Eucharist allows us to enter the kingdom of God to meet Him face to face forever.
- The Eucharist is the church sacrifice, which Christ offers with all love and obedience to God. The church goes into the altar (the Golgotha) and soars up to the highest heaven and does not know what to offer except Christ.
- Through the Eucharist we all become members of Christ's Body, filled in Christ and known to the Father on the altar through his beloved Son.

The Eucharist and the Word of God

- The Sacrament of the Eucharist is the flesh of the Word of God that fulfills the voice of God.
- The sanctification of the sacrament of the Eucharist and receiving the Holy Communion bring us into the depths of the Holy Bible to realize that the Word of God is the Presence of the Living God with all His power as a Creator, Judge and Savior.
- The Holy Bible is the main source of sanctifying the Sacrament of Eucharist as we read (The Pauline Epistle, The Catholic Epistle, The Acts of the Apostles, Psalms, and The Holy Gospel). The Liturgical Eucharistic text is taken from the Holy Bible (1 Corinthians 2:9).

The Eucharist Symbols in the Old Testament

- The Passover (Pasch).
- The heavenly Manna.
- The offering of Melchizedek (Genesis 14:17-19).
- The Wisdom meal (proverbs 9:1).
- The Messiah's Meal (Isaiah 55: 1-3).
- The wedding meal (Songs of Songs).
- The Prophecy of Malachi (Malachi 1:11).

The Divinity of the Eucharist Liturgy

The Eucharist Liturgy is a journey to heaven, during it we enjoy the company of our Lord Jesus through our unity with Him by:

- a) The Hymn: This is a preparation for this journey and through it we enter the life of praising God the Creator.
- b) The bread and Wine Prayer (The Lamb): This is the beginning of the journey and in it we offer all our life to Christ.
- c) Readings: These are the guides of the journey. Without them we cannot reach the road or achieve the goal. They give the be livers a chance to listen to the voice of God through:
 - i. His apostles (The Pauline epistle and the Catholic epistle).
 - ii. The works of his apostles (Acts of the apostles Praxis).
 - iii. The Acts of the church (Synaxarium).
 - iv. The Acts of His Son (The Gospel).
 - v. Through the Ministers (The Sermon).
- d) The Intercession: Throughout this journey the church prays for her safety and peace (The Intercession for peace) and the safety of her ministers (The Intercession for the fathers). For the Lord to bless the Congregations (Intercession for the Congregations) so that she may completely achieve and fulfill her message without fear.
- e) Before the Invocation of the Holy Spirit: The church Announces reconciliation between God and the people in Christ (Reconciliation Prayer, the apostolic embrace of Peace).
- f) The coming of the Holy Spirit (Anaphora). It is the moment of going into heaven and being united with God through receiving His Holy Body and Blood.

Exercise and Activities

- Elucidating the concepts and meaning of the Sacrament of the Eucharist to the children so that the spiritual benefit of the sacrament may be achieved.
- A special Mass is to be said for the children and the servants explains the divisions of the Liturgy. All the children are to receive the Holy Communion in this Mass as one fellowship to renew the spirit of membership and understanding the basic relationship with the Lord.

(49) The Life of the Lady Virgin

References

- + “There with the Virgin” St. John Chrysostom Translated by Fr. Matthias Fareed
- + “Virgin Mary” Fr. Zachary Khalil
- + ‘The Virgin looks like the church’ Monk Max Thorian

Introduction

When we speak about the Virgin Mary we have the feeling of fear that we feel when we are before the Lord’s Sanctuary and His Holy of Holies. She, with her silence and calmness, her strong worship, her faith, submission and modesty, and the sword of pain that pierced her heart, compels all people to fear her, respect her and love her.

Mary; the fruit of prayer

Joachim was a rich Israelite and his wife Anna, Aaron’s daughter from the tribe of (Aaron) Israel and she was barren and had no children. Joachim and Anna always prayed and asked the Lord to grant them a child and the Lord answered their prayer.

A babe in the Temple

When Mary was three years old, her parents left her in the temple, lived there as a virgin and to serve in the temple. All loved her. When she was twelve years old, the priests exchanged views as to what to do with her and who would be in charge of her and Joseph the old man was chosen to be in charge of her.

News for the Generations

Gabriel came to the Virgin to bring her the happy news that she would be the Savior’s mother. This happy news is a supreme sublime one for getting rid of the human shame.

The meeting between the two saints

Mary visited Elizabeth to congratulate her on her miraculous conception. We wish we had been there to witness the meeting of the saints and the visits between the righteous. How lowly the visitor was! The Virgin sat on the throne of dignity where no girl had ever sat. How great Elizabeth was as a saint! She forgot her own happy news and remembered one thing only; that she was in the presence of the Holy Spirit that was in the Virgin’s womb.

The Lady Virgin accompanies her Son and Lord in His service and in His walk to the cross.

In His service

Jesus was well known in Galilee. That is why they invited Him to the wedding and He accepted the invitation of His own free will and shared the salves in their wedding (John 2:1,2). Here we ask, how did the Virgin realize the greatness of her Son and His ability and power although He had not performed miracles yet (John 2:11).

He and His mother

Christ's respect for His mother is clearly shown in accepting to do the miracle and the Scripture says: He was obedient to His parents (Luke 2:51). He was thinking of His mother and where she would live, when He was on the cross (John 19:25-27).

On His way to the Cross

He cared for His mother because she followed Him to the Cross, to the Golgotha and a sword pierced her heart...but with courage that fits the Lord's mother. But on another occasion: Christ said, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" Christ did not mean to degrade that who bore Him. He said it for her benefit and to draw her attention to perceive His mission because He cared for others and guided them to understand His mission as well.

Before Her Departure

She used to spend most of the day worshipping in the temple and therefore it was a difficult period for her after His ascension. If Mary did not love anyone but Jesus and this beloved Son ascended to heaven, all her emotions then were directed towards heaven. No wonder then if we know that she inhabited heaven while she was still on earth.

Her death and the ascension of her body to heaven

After she breathed her last breath, the Lord sent His angels to carry her body to heaven and the apostles witnessed this miracle except Thomas who was not present at that time.

The Status of the Virgin and her intercession for us

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the Virgin prepared her for bearing the Son of God but he did not grant her the privilege of sharing the nature of God. This she lacked and waited for by prayer, till she attained it with the apostles on Pentecost through baptism (The Holy Spirit and fire) (Acts 1:14) according to the Lord's promise, then by taking part in the fellowship and sharing in the fellowship meals and prayers, at that time the building up of Virgin Mary's body was complete to the fullness of the building up of the body of Christ.

The Motherhoods: She became a mother through grace. She was chosen and sanctified. She also became a mother through struggle, faith and obeying the commandment "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister and mother".

To what extent does the virgin intercede for us?

She asks her Son with great love and confidence. She adds her request to His mercy and raises her request with confidence till He answers her...because the prayers of humanity cannot reach the extent that makes Christ answer them except through faith.

Exercises and Activities

- A study of the situations mentioned in the Gospel where the virgin stood by her Son the Savior.
- Celebrating the day of her body's ascension and appearance.
- The children should be accustomed to interceding with the Virgin in their practical every day life.

(50) Trinitarianism and Monarchianism

References

- + “Trinitarianism and Monarchianism” Yassa Mansour
- + A sermon by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III
- + 1 John 5:1-12, Genesis 1:26, Genesis 3:22, Genesis 11:7, Mathew 3:13-17

Testifying Trinitarianism

Unity of Essence

1. In the Orthodox Creed we say everyday “Truly we believe in One God”.
2. And we say in the Name of the Father (not the names) and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
3. The Holy Bible is full of the verses of Monarchianism; “Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is One Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:4, Mark 12:29). It is written in the Testaments.
4. Even the demons believe in One God: “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe and tremble” (James 2:19).

Verses to testify Trinitarianism

1. “Then God said: Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). Plural made of magnification is not found in Hebrew.
2. “Then the LORD God said: Behold, the man has become like one of us” (Genesis 3:22).
3. “Come, let us go down and there confuse their language” (Genesis 11:7).
4. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).
5. The Trinity that appeared when Christ was baptized. The Incarnate Son was in the water, the Spirit was in the form of a dove and the Father said: “And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:13-17).

Of course there are thousands of verses in the New Testament that ensures the oneness of Essence believe in other gods. We do not believe in polytheism. We do not believe in the Trinity that the Islamic religion denies. What we do is we contemplate the Divine Essence who through Inspiration and Incarnation granted us to know the Divine mystery that is the mystery of the three Hypostasis in this One Essence.

What is the meaning of the word “Hypostasis”?

Hypo =under, Stasis =stand. So the Hypostasis is the inner characteristic without which the Divine Essence cannot be perceived:

1. The characteristic of Existence: His existence is a must and without Him there is no existence at all and it is impossible for our Great God to be without this characteristic.
2. The Characteristic of Wisdom: God must be wise, in fact He is all wisdom. It is impossible to imagine God without this characteristic even for a moment.
3. The Characteristic of life: He is the Life Giver and it is impossible to imagine Him without this characteristic. The Lord God then is: Self-existing. Speaking with His Word. Living by His Spirit. Three Characteristics without which the Divine Essence cannot be perceived.

The problem lies in the names

1. The characteristic of existence is called the Father Hypostasis. This is a Syrian word that means “Origin”.
2. The Characteristic of wisdom is called “The Son”. This does not mean that the Son is born in the human way “For be it”. We say: The son of Egypt, the son of the Nile, etc. The word is the son of the mind. The word means equality in Hypostasis and unity in Essence. When the Son equals His Father, He inherits His traits, His name and His property. In the same way wisdom equals Existence, as they are one essence. It is impossible for one to exist without the other.
3. It is called a characteristic “life-spirit” as it is a daily expression (the man’s soul is his life).

Important Similes

a) The Sun:

- + The disk of the sun represents the origin: The Father.
- + The rays of the sun represents the Son generated from the disk.
- + The heat stands for the Holy Spirit coming forth from the disk.

As the rays of the sun send us the heat within their folds but they do not generate it, the same is with the Son born of the Father before all ages in the same way light is born out of light. He sends us the Comforter who comes forth or proceeds from the Father sending them, is not the same as Procession.

b) The Mental life:

- + This composed of perception, intuition and inclination. These three are distinguishable, but they do not separate. Perception is for understanding, intuition is for the feeling and inclination is for movement but the three work together.
- + When we solve an arithmetic problem, we concentrate on perception but the intuition and the inclination work with it.
- + When we paint a natural scene, we concentrate on intuition, but perception and inclination work with it.
- + When we take part in a race competition, we concentrate on inclination, but perception and intuition work with it. The three are distinguishable but they are not separated.

The work of the Hypostasis and their unity

- + The Father creates, the Son redeems and the Holy Spirit consecrates. But no one works alone without the other Hypostasis.

- + The Father creates through the Son and breathes the Holy Spirit in human beings.
- + The Son redeems, the Father sacrifices His Son and the Spirit conveys the blessings of redemption.
- + The Spirit consecrates us with the will of God and the redemption of the Son. The three are distinguishable in their work without separation because they are one Essence.

The characteristic of existence is in charge of the existence but is not separable from wisdom and life. This is impossible. The characteristic of wisdom is responsible for the Divine Wisdom but is not separable from the existence of God and His life. The characteristic of life is responsible for the Divine Wisdom but is not separable from His wisdom or existence.

(51) The Strong Personality

References

- + “Youth and social issues” Anba Bemin

Introduction

The human personality is the result of many powers in the life of man. Some of them is inherited in man and he is born with it this is what is called innate motives such as instincts and general motives, others are acquired and is called emotions, habits, tendencies, values and concepts...this is the result of interaction between man and his environment ...families, school, church, and external society. Man is the image of God.

The scripture teaches us that man was created in the image of God and after his likeness in freedom, will, speech, inclination to holiness, perfection and creativity to be a blessed model of the Divine work. Man is distinguished by his mental power, will, and ability to face, develop and revolutionize. So the only civilization on the earth is man’s civilization, heritage, the fruit of his struggle and his various achievements.

If this is the natural life of man which is characterized by the ability to control instincts and to build up good habits, emotions and tendencies under the effect of the environment and sound education, the imitation of high morale and practical examples, whether in the family or the external society how much more do we find on the Christian level? We see the believer who is characterized by another ability above these ordinary natural abilities granted to every creature having flesh. This is called the new nature. Christianity believes that through baptism and receiving the Divine Communion man can obtain a new life according to the Scripture (2 Corinthians 5:17).

This new life does not end with the following nature or the ancient corrupt man in us but it cancels its effect so long as the will of man is united with and responding to the will of God (Galatians 2:20). The new nature goes through the soul, the self, thought and body, and supplies the Christian youth with miraculous potentialities, it gives him:

1. The ability to love to overcome the self to love even the enemies.
2. Overcome desires.
3. The ability to be modest, lowly and to endure to the extent of being like Christ in this

respect.

4. Supplies him with power to overcome time and its challenges.
5. It gives him the ability to serve others and to surpass fanaticism and narrow mindedness.
6. It facilitates to him the ability to accept himself as he is with all his weakness and talents.

The personality with all the abilities it has is the strong personality from a Christian perspective. Let us discuss the issues in brief:

1. The ability to sublime the motives find instincts

Grace gives a Christian youth the ability to surpass themselves, i.e. to crucify the desires of the flesh. They deal with their body as a temple for the Holy Spirit and looks at the bodily motives as if they were domains and means to carry out the will of God in their life (Romans 14:6,8). This process needs a continuous struggle and spiritual vigil...if they found that their will was weak towards the needs of the instinct, they would pray so that the Lord might grant them the ability to attain victory and triumph (2 Corinthians 12:9). The life of purity and chastity is a sign of the strong personality. Being enslaved to the desires of the flesh and the motives of the flesh is sure evidence of its collapse.

2. The flexibility to show modest thinking and to seek wisdom

The first sin in the life of man is the desire to be treated as a god and his wish to have knowledge independent of God. Those who built the tower of Babylon thought highly of themselves (Genesis 1:4). The stubborn man does not accept any discussion and wants to impose his opinion on others, he is man of weak personality, but the lowly and modest man accepts to bend his head before truth and enjoys having a strong personality. This is the case with our fathers the holy apostles (1 Corinthians 2:16, 3:18 and 2 Corinthians 10:5) and Solomon sayings in (Proverbs 24:5 and Ecclesiastes 9:16,17). Solomon praises wisdom as the greatest source of the strong personality but it is not the wisdom of the weak. It is the wisdom of those who stand firm in the truth who are confident of convincing proof of the power of God's Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4).

3. Ability to persist find surpass failure (2 Timothy 1:7)

The Christian young man who enjoys the power of the new life does not fall into despair (Philippians 4:13) he becomes strong with the grace of Jesus Christ and takes part in enduring troubles as a good soldier serving Jesus Christ. He is not destroyed by his weaknesses but he prides himself in the grace of God which reforms his defects and then the power of Christ will strengthen him (2 Corinthians 12:1).

As the great men of the world overcome the challenges they face such as Beethoven the deaf who offered wonderful pieces of music and Helen Keller who lost all her senses but she overcame all this and became the miracle of the 20th century .The children of God persist in their spiritual, scientific and social struggle and even if they stumble on the road, they rise quickly (Psalm 7:8). Positiveness in the life of the children of God is a response to a Divine call (Ephesians 2:10). Positiveness is the fullness of the building up of humanity and a proof of practicing its freedom and indicator of a strong personality. He who loves Christ resists laziness, indifference, sympathizing with the self and fear of shouldering responsibility.

4. Ability and enduring others

The strong personality accepts what is within her without murmuring. It is a very difficult

process because the image we have of ourselves is different from what we really are so when we face the self as what it really is we become upset and anxious. Man cannot make a real progress except when he accepts himself as he really is. When we accept ourselves as what we really are with our weak and strong aspects, we feel comforted and we have a strong incentive to proceed. We begin from the real and make for a wider horizon. If man cannot accept himself, he cannot accept others (Romans 15:7).

Enduring others cannot be practiced by words but through life and suffering in the real situations of life. It is giving though love in its practical image “love’s faith; hope and patience never fail” (I Corinthians 13:7, Songs 8:67). The powerful Christian personality is the fruit of the work of grace and the believer’s struggle...it is characterized by lowliness without weakness or cowardness, chastity without doubt, simplicity without ignorance or stubbornness, liveliness without anxiety. It is a miracle and one of the Christian mysteries The mystery of resurrection drives our fear...the mystery of hope removes anxiety...the mystery of love overcomes fear...the mystery of faith gives victory over the world and time.

Exercises and Activities

- The servant and the children hold a discussion about the effect of sin on man.
- A discussion about how sin, when man is enslaved to it, makes man live with a weak personality and how the Lord Jesus restored man’s first image to us and renewed our potentialities to live with a strong personality in family, the church and the society.