



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

GRADE FIVE

Revised Edition 2005

PREPARATION AND WRITING

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Toronto, Canada*

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SAINT MARK



H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

FROM H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III

Deir Anba Rueiss, Ramses Avenue, ABBASSIYA,

CAIRO, EGYPT.

CABLE : ELANBARUEISS, CAIRO.



+

الى الدينيه المباركيه القوم مرقس الياس عبد المسيح
والذين تادرس يعقوب ملطي

سلام رحمة وبعد ،

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

فليبارك الرب كل ما قام به ابننا محفوظ من جهود في اعداد
المنهج ، وفي جميع المادة ، وفي عمل الترجمة . وليبارك الرب
أيضاً كل من اشتركوا في العمل ، وفي المراجعة
وليكنه هدفنا هو ما نلتحق الوصول اليه من كان على قدر
امكاناتنا . ويمكنه تزويد المنهج ايضاً بالصور المناسبة والتي
تقرها كنيتنا من النواحي العقيدية والطقسية والتاريخية
الرب معكم . كوفنا بخير

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سيد القديس اغناطيوس

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

FROM H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III

Deir Anba Rueiss, Ramses Avenue, ABBASSIYA,
CAIRO, EGYPT.

CABLE : ELANBARUEISS, CAIRO.



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

Peace and love be with you.

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

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

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

May the Lord be with you. Be in peace.

Signed

Pope Shenouda III

22 August 1986

The feast of St. Mary

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

Principal Goal of Christian Up-Bringing.

The child had and still has, first as a person and second as a child, a special importance to our Lord Jesus Christ. He called the children and considered them models of perfection, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:3-5).

Therefore, children are beloved ones to Christ and are His friends with their simplicity and purity of heart. Christ called them, blessed them and asked His Disciples and Apostles after Him to take care of bringing up children and prepare the suitable environment for their spiritual growth.

St. Paul advises parents saying, "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged", (Colossians 3:21). From a Christian point of view, the general principal goal of religious up - bringing is the formation of the perfect man of God who is following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Also, our Lord said, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

Hence, a Christian up-bringing is not merely an education to be given or a curriculum to be taught, but it is rather a life that is given through example and behavior through teaching and discipleship. The saintly Fathers of the church have emphasized this fact. St. John said about his practice of life with the Lord "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us - that which we have seen and heard we

declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:1-3).

The same fact was emphasized by St. Paul when he was talking to his disciple Timothy "But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium ... But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:10-15). Also in the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians 3:17, "Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern". Therefore, the principal goal of the Christian up-bringing is to change the life of our children to the life of Christ in them, i.e. to a life based on the work of Christ in them as true Christians and not just religious persons who fear God but deny Him.

The Starting Point in Achieving the Goal of Religious Upbringing.

The teacher should not start with the student from power Zero. The student comes equipped with many social and religious experiences. His religious experience, although it is limited, it has a strong basis that is ready for spiritual growth. In the Sacrament of Baptism, the student has already obtained the spiritual birth i.e. he became spiritually re-born. After his baptism he was anointed with the Holy Myroun (Chrism) and the Holy Spirit dwelt in him. St. John said "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you; and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him" (1 John 2:27).

Therefore, by obtaining these two Holy Sacraments and the Sacrament of Eucharist, the student becomes a member in the body of the Lord and a living part of the body of the Holy Church. This means that religious up-bringing is not something foreign with respect to the student. The student is a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in him. This means that it is not the teacher who makes the student live a life for Christ, but it is the inside

work of the Holy Spirit that makes the whole difference. The role of the teacher is to make the student aware of the effect and the work of the Spirit. In this sense the student becomes aware of the secret grace inside him and as a result the divine word inside him grows as the seed grows inside the earth.

The Difference Between Religious Education and Religious Upbringing.

We should not aim at providing lessons in the form of giving information, i.e. a mere religious education. In this case religious experience will never exceed the circle of the mind and will never affect the heart and practice of the student. If we consider religious education as an element in religious bringing-up, we are in this case following Christ's plan in the development and building of the Christian personality. Christ with His example and His perfection gave us a model which should be followed and achieved. As for His teachings, they are meant to clear the way for us in order to follow them as examples and models.

The Need of our Church for a Coptic Orthodox Sunday School Program.

There is one basic difference between Eastern and Western theology; the latter depends on study, analysis and using scientific means, whereas Eastern theology is based on experience and depth which is mainly lead to true Christian life. The Eastern Church respects the role of the mind but it works under the supervision of faith.

The majority of recent Western Sunday School programs follow a pure analytical way of explaining the Bible. For example, miracles are explained through psychological and scientific factors. The man of God must accept miracles and believe them as they are. St. Athanasius said, "Our knowledge must not control (or have authority over) the word, but the word itself must have the control and authority over the mind".

Another basic difference is that our traditional Church uses the rites in education as a key in the process of living what is being taught.

Over and above what was mentioned before in relation to the basic differences in religious education between Eastern and Western churches, there are also basic differences in the various beliefs and the way Christianity is lived by in actual life.

We, as parents, teachers and clergy, are responsible in front of God to bring up our children according to the same spiritual Orthodox principles that we received from our saintly Fathers who shed their blood to perpetuate the perfect Orthodox faith. Therefore, our children must learn from the same source from which we learned before them.

The Sunday School program in your hands is a fruit of love granted by our Lord Jesus Christ to our children and a gift from Him to them. This program is purely Coptic Orthodox. All its references without exception are Coptic Orthodox (please review the reference list at the end of the book. In this manner all the information that is in this book (as well as all the books in this series) can be used with total confidence as it is devised according to our glorified church. The spirit of the lessons is indeed the same spirit of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

About the Books in Your Hands.

These books in your hands are integrated series of books which were written for children from age 4 to 18. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, if the child at age 4 follows this series of lessons until age 18, he will obtain an all-rounded spiritual background. The books (covering the teachings from pre-schoolers to grade 12) cover a study of most of the major Biblical subjects of the Old and New Testaments, the celebrations of the church of our Master's feasts, the life of the Saints and their feasts, the divine liturgy with its rites and spirituality, the true Christian life and Christian behavior, church sacraments, fasting, prayers, the creed and its explanation, the Ecumenical Councils, the difference between the various major Christian sects, the Christian family, the history of our church, the major personalities in the Holy Bible, ... etc. The program is indeed comprehensive and it covers all the key areas of our Orthodox church. If these lessons were given in the spiritual way that was

emphasized before, great results will be expected with the work of the Holy Spirit.

General Rules and Principles to be Followed by the Sunday School Teachers.

- 1) The teacher must know the stage and the characteristics of growth of the children that he or she is teaching. A child who is 12 years old is different than a child who is 8 years old. The teacher must know the level of his/her students, their abilities to receive information that he/she is giving and the differences between the various abilities in the same class.
- 2) The positive participation of the students is very important during the lesson and the effectiveness of teaching. One of the key incentives for the student is to give importance to the lesson and have an effective communication with the teacher and, above all, to define clearly the purpose behind it and present the lesson in the form of problems that attract their attention.
- 3) The teacher must follow a psychological order of the facts he is presenting. Our Lord Jesus Christ used effectively the psychological method of teaching through His parables. The parables in their simplicity are drawn from the daily life of the people. We must emphasize here that the psychological method is not the only method of spiritual teaching. We should mention this method as one of the methods used. It is quite important to note that spiritual teaching must be imparted with certain goals in mind which are connected with the life of the children and related to the problems they face. We should provide guidance that is mostly needed for them.
- 4) The teacher must present the lesson and illustrate it with relevant information and present it as a coherent unity without ambiguity or contradiction. He may use illustrations to help him explain what he means.

- 5) Application of Christian principles to the actual social life must be emphasized in every lesson. The teacher should use stories (from the Old or New Testaments or from church history or church books) to attract the attention of the students and show the Christian principle in an applied manner. The teacher also may divide the subject into stages or small subjects. A good practice is to summarize the lesson or better still, ask the students themselves to summarize it.
- 6) The manner of expressing the lesson to the students is also very important. A teacher who is living by what he/she teaches will definitely be more effective in giving his/her message across. A teacher who is teaching under spiritual influence with compatible emotions to what he/she teaches will be definitely more effective than a teacher who is giving information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of the Coptic Orthodox children and youth, who are going to benefit a great deal from this revised Sunday School Program, I would like to express a word of appreciation and gratitude to:

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

This program leans quite heavily on the writings of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III. The majority of the contents of the lessons and their attachments are based on His Holiness' writings. This is a very bright and important aspect of this program. In 1986, during the time in which there was no Coptic Orthodox Sunday School program in the land of immigration, His Holiness reviewed the general contents of the program, commented and modified many key subjects, and then authorized the use of this program in all churches outside of Egypt, on a preliminary basis.

I can safely say that, if it was not for His Holiness Pope Shenouda III's support, wisdom, and writings, this book would not exist. The whole generation is in debt to His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, not only because of his great teachings and writings, but also because of his love and leadership.

His Grace Bishop Reweiss

His Grace Bishop Reweiss has been behind us all the way with his love and guidance. He wrote the forward for our previous version of the program in 1986.

His Grace Bishop Moussa

His Grace Bishop Moussa has provided constant support and encouragement in the completion of the previous program. Of course, His Grace's writings for the youth have been utilized in all the subjects directed towards the youth, in this book.

Fr. Tadros Malaty and Fr. Marcos Marcos

These Beloved Fathers reviewed thoroughly all of the contents of the first six books of the previous version of the program. Their dedication, experience, and wisdom have been an important factor in the quality of all the material. They contributed greatly towards setting up the lessons, in that sense. Father Tadros Malaty's deep writings, without any doubt, have been a key reference in the majority of the lessons. His latest advice to revise and enhance the previous version of the program has been held in the highest regards.

Dr. Fayek M. Ishak

Dr. Fayek Ishak (head of the English Department at Lakehead University) reviewed the first six books of the previous version of the program. He contributed, immensely, towards the setup of the lessons.

Fr. Gawargious Michael and Fr. Mikhael Armanios

These two beloved priests chose the proper songs to match the subjects of the lessons. They also arranged the proof-reading of all the books with a chosen group of youth.

Fr. Makary Silwanis

This beloved priest made all of the arrangements for revising the previous Sunday School Program. He single-handedly arranged to have the new program available online. His computer skills were a key factor in all areas.

Tassoni Ragaa

The continuous support and encouragement of Tassoni Ragaa played an essential role in the write-up of the previous version of the program, as well as in this revision. One of the aspects that kept this program centered and on track was her continuous reminder that this program is for generations to come and every effort is worthwhile for the sake of the upbringing of the children and youth.

The Youth of St. George and St. Rueiss Coptic Orthodox Church

There was a key participation from Heba Ghattas in this revised version. She in total love and joy contributed with great efforts in typing, checking, proof reading and commenting. All these things by her own initiative despite all the other responsibilities that she had to do towards her family, her work and her study.

There was a key contribution from Marian Awad in this revised version. She proposed that the lessons for Grades 11 and 12 be totally redone in order to prepare the youth to face the challenges at the university level. This idea resulted in a huge change in the curriculum for these two grades, as well as in the writing of the "Contemporary Issues" book.

Ninette Bishay sang over 100 songs in order to make sure that all the lessons were accompanied by beautiful songs in a great language and tone.

Caroline Yassa typed many lessons for the author, mostly dictated over the phone, at times when his eyes were very sore from reading. Her efforts are greatly appreciated.

Comments and proof-readings of many of the youth are greatly appreciated.

Maha Takla	Mark Botros	Patty Ibrahim
Nermin Tawadros	Peter Messiha	Hani Khattas
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Marian Barsoum	Helen Hanna	Maria Nasralla
Angela Salama	Margaret Massoud	Martha Tawadrous
Mina Gindi	Nancy Bishay	Samih Kalilian
Fady Dawood	Nagat Yassa	Emad Iskander
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Mariam Tawadrous	Donna Hanna	Dina Ayoub
Joseph Bishay	Dina George	Timothy Gindi
Sameh Barsoum	Marianna Nasralla	Samy Messiha
Sherin Ishak	Angy Hinis	Mariana Ramzy
Michael Malak	Monica Sourial	Nivin Bishay
Michael Kalilian	Mira Henis	Kamilia Beshara
Viola Iskander	Sarah Deif	Marina Mouharib
Hany Matta	Peter Gobran	Georgina Rizk
Marline Ayoub	Michael Abadir	John Hanna
Christina Salama	George Hanna	Irini Gad
Steven Messiha	Rasha Michael	Mohib Tawfik
Marilyn Yassa	Mina Elkatib	Nadir Deif
Sandra Eleigizy	Sherrine Fidal	Hidra Bastawrous

Fr. Rueiss Awad

TEACHER'S GUIDELINES:

HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM?

1. The teacher should realize that each lesson has been prepared to cover a specific point; starting from the title of the lesson to the end of it.
2. The teacher should read all the materials referred to in the lesson (i.e. the Holy Bible as well as any articles attached to the lesson), and then proceed by emphasizing all the points.
3. The teacher should enlarge the picture ahead of each lesson and use it as a visual aid as he or she is teaching the lesson.
4. The teacher should discuss the practical applications as he or she proceeds with the lesson.
5. The teacher should summarize the main points of the lesson with the students and give prizes.

FEATURES OF THIS SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

A COMPREHENSIVE SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

1. This Sunday School program was the very first program to be written in the lands of immigration. This work was initiated in 1974, and the first version was published in 1986. We thank our heavenly Father, Who has given us the opportunity to extensively revise and improve it, in 2005.
2. In this version of the program, any repetition that was in the previous program, has been removed, all lessons were upgraded in both coverage and depth. Moreover, a whole new book, on contemporary issues, has been added.
3. The contemporary issues book covers subjects that are important for children and youth in today's world. These lessons are optional. For churches with regular youth group meetings, these issues would best be discussed during those meetings. On the other hand, for churches that do not hold regular youth group meetings, those issues could be discussed as part of the Sunday School program.
4. This version of the program also includes lessons, which form a basis for a missionary service, a service that should in the ideal situation be practised by every member of our congregation. The objective is that each child, every youth, and in the long run each Coptic individual can behave and act in a way, which is an embodiment of the teaching and tradition of the Coptic Orthodox Church. In other words, our congregation would become role models in their communities, who attract people to our Lord Jesus Christ through their good practices: sincerity, commitment, hard work and dedication, tolerance, forgiveness, and all the other good qualities that differentiate a good practising Christian from those who merely have a Christian education.
5. In this Sunday School Program, we depended heavily on the writings of H.H. Pope Shenouda III as a reference for most of the presented material.
6. The lessons in this version of the program have already been tried in Sunday School classes, reviewed, improved and tried again. This ensures that the lessons are relevant and suit the level of the students.
7. In this version of the program, efforts were put forth to ensure that every aspect of the Christian life in the Coptic Orthodox Church is covered.

8. This Sunday School Program is not merely about giving specific education on Christianity to our children and youth but it is rather an attempt to deeply affect their feelings and spirituality. It is believed that such an approach will facilitate the practical application of the various aspects involved so that Christianity becomes a way of life for the individual, with deeply rooted Christian values, that are manifested as behaviour and attitude.
9. All copyrights of other Sunday School programs, and other writers, have been fully respected.
10. In this version, each lesson comes complete with pictures and songs that are suitable for the lesson.
11. This Sunday School program comes in various formats, for convenience. In addition to being available on this website for widespread use, it is also available, upon request, in hard copy format or on CD.
12. It is our strong belief that this Sunday School program will play a vital role in the spiritual upbringing of our children. May the Lord bless this Sunday School program and all other programs, for the growth of His Kingdom in us.

THE PREPARATION OF SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

A. What is a Sunday School Lesson?

1. It is not a record of events that we convey to the students with the hopes of appearing to satisfy the required preparation process in front of other people. Neither is it a lecture that we deliver to our audience or student regardless of their interest in the matter.
2. However, it is, on one hand, a fruit of the live reaction between the servant and the lesson and, on the other hand, between the servant and the students. The Holy Spirit matures this fruit and directs this service towards the salvation of the students and towards the glory of God.

For if the servant who teaches the people does not teach himself, the voice of the Lord rebukes him saying, " You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself ? " (Romans 2:21), and again in James 3: 1: "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."

Therefore, the servant should engage himself in the lesson through prayers, relevant spiritual readings, and practical application, so that when the servant speaks with his students from experience and true knowledge, he says, with St. John the Beloved, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-" (1 John 1:1)

If a servant is not aware of the spiritual level of his students, he may burden them with instructions and lessons which they cannot handle nor apply and this, in turn, may cause the students to go astray and lose their eternal life. Therefore, it is crucial for the servant to establish a healthy, trustworthy, and fruitful relationship with his students, as well as to share in their joys and cheers, and their sadness and fears, all towards Jesus Christ. This is what St. Paul refers to in his epistle to the Galatians when he says, "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you..." (Galatians 4:19). This close relationship with the students allows the servant to choose the most appropriate lesson that applies to their needs.

Hence a Sunday School lesson is:

A live mixture between the personal lives of the servants and the students through the lesson; the Holy Spirit creates this mixture and allows it to result in the bearing of fruit.

B. The Requirements for Sunday School Lessons

1. Humility in prayer before God.

God said, "...for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

My beloved brethren, sit down in peace and tranquility with the Lord and talk to Him about your personal need for Him in your service. Ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and pray saying, " Guide me dear God. What would you like my students and I to learn this week ? " Be obedient to His voice. It would be suitable to maintain a prayer time which equals that of the lesson.

2. Accurate knowledge of the meanings contained within the lesson.

This is achieved through:

a) Occupying yourself throughout the week with understanding the new lesson, beginning from the end of the previous lesson until the beginning of the new one. It is wise to use your free time, time before sleep, and time with fellow servants to increase and enhance your understanding of the lesson.

b) Resorting to spiritual and religious references and literature to help you develop the right understanding and concepts behind the lines.

c) Resorting to general educational references and literature to embody this understanding and these concepts, making them clear in the minds of your students.

3. Aids of presentation.

It is important that you transform your understanding of the lesson into a simple and clear presentation. It has been stated and proved that 85% of knowledge acquired is acquired through the sense of sight and visual learning as opposed to the 10% that is acquired through the sense of hearing. The rest of the knowledge acquired is done so through the other three senses.

In reality, the least effective way of transmitting knowledge to others is by merely talking; this has the weakest influence on the students. In contrast, the most effective way to teach is to use the "Learning by Doing" method, which requires enough time as well as sound experience.

What differentiate between the effectiveness of the two means of presentation are the tools used in the presentation. These tools aid the students in effectively understanding and retaining the purpose of the lesson by engaging both senses of sight and sound. These tools may include audio-visual devices such as pictures and movies, spiritual trips and outings, role playing during class, intellectually stimulating games, etc.

C. Recording the lesson.

It is recommended that the servant records the following during the preparation of the lesson:

- Date of the preparation of the lesson.
- Date of the delivery of the lesson.
- Title of the lesson.
- Purpose of the lesson.
- References.
- Preface.
- Lesson.
- Inference.
- Bible verse.
- Homework.
- Aids of presentation.
- Other points for memory.
- Songs.
- Personal reflections of the servant.

Purpose of the lesson:

It is necessary for the servant to clearly understand the purpose of the lesson at the beginning of his preparation. It is also necessary that the purpose of the lesson should agree with the maturity level of the students. For example, it is more appropriate for children to learn about God's love; on the other hand, learning about the power of God in their lives and in the lives of the saints is more appropriate subject matter for youth. As for young adults, learning about Christian virtues and spiritual practices is most appropriate.

Most importantly, the purpose of the lessons should agree with Coptic Orthodox Christian teachings, whether in specific occasions or in general.

References:

References could include:

- a. Stories, examples, verses, etc. from the Holy Bible.
- b. Spiritual books and literature.
- c. General educational books and literature.

Recording the references is very useful for the servant because it helps the servant to refer back to them, if forgotten.

Preface:

The preface is the background of the lesson. It cultivates the thoughts of the students and directs their thoughts towards the lesson. This allows the lesson to be implanted in their minds and to, eventually, bear fruit.

It is important that the preface remain simple, short, and concise. The introduction could be in the form of focused questions, but should not be in the form of stories. Several stories in one lesson may deteriorate its effectiveness.

The Lesson:

The lesson could be divided into the following sections:

1. Introduction - it should be quick and concise and related to the preface. It should introduce the lesson smoothly without interrupting the chain of thoughts.

2. Body of the lesson - it contains the principle subject of the lesson, and follows these guidelines:

- a. You must be accurate and careful when explaining theological concepts.
- b. You must be careful when relating events and examples to elucidate the subject of the lesson, in order to properly guide the students' imagination without restricting it.
- c. You must diligently expose the Coptic Orthodox doctrine in the lesson.
- d. You should not use more than one story during the lesson and the story used should be relevant to the subject matter.

3. Focal Point - the point during the lesson at which the purpose of the lesson is clearly defined. (Examples: The Lord responds to the prayers of a needy person, or the angels come to give the saints their heavenly crowns and take them to heaven after many trials and persecutions.)

4. Conclusion - it should be, like the introduction, short and concise. It can summarize the purpose of the lesson, without introducing any new concepts.

Inferences:

Inference is a method used to determine how much the students have absorbed and retained from the lesson. It should be in the form of questions with the following guidelines:

- a. They should clearly show the purpose of the lesson.
- b. They should suit the maturity of the students.
- c. They should be simple and direct.
- d. They should link to each other.
- e. They should not be 'Yes' or 'No' questions.
- f. They should each have one correct answer.

Bible Verse:

The memorization of a Bible verse is an excellent way to help the students remember the purpose of the lesson. The chosen Bible verse should meet the following guidelines:

- a. It should show the purpose of the lesson clearly.
- b. It should be short which allows it to be easily memorized.
- c. Children can easily memorize, as well as understand it.

Homework:

The height of your diligence in preparing the lesson is in choosing the proper and effective homework or application. The homework should have the following characteristics:

- a. It should contain practical applications that apply to everyday life.
- b. It should suit the maturity level of the students.
- c. It should help in mastering the comprehension and retention of the lesson.
- d. It should not include more than one instruction, in order to simplify the application of the lesson.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Grade 5 (Age 10 to 11)

- (1) Children at this age have molded into a certain shape, into certain patterns of behaviour that were superimposed on their natural character. They have been exposed for years to the influence of their family background, their parents, brothers and sisters and relatives. The cultural and ethical standards of the family have influenced their attitudes, made them different from each other. Whatever their special situation within the family did to affect their personality jealously, rejection, possessiveness, competitiveness, etc., these have left deep traces. They are less spontaneous and more self-conscious than at an earlier age.

Sunday school teachers will find children less open at this age than at earlier ages.

- (2) Sunday School teachers have another difficulty in trying to relate to the students' homes. As Sunday School instruction progresses, it often happens that the religious ideas conveyed there are not in agreement with the concepts of the parents. Thus the teacher has to show great understanding and tact when dealing in class with a child's statement, "Yes, but Daddy says that..." or "Mother says that the Church teaches..." The teacher must always try to see the element of truth in whatever beliefs are held at home: "Yes, this is very interesting. I think the reason for this is that..." He can then add and expand the ideas he wants to convey.
- (3) Relations between boys and girls are very self-conscious. They are definitely two different groups usually critical of each other and slightly inimical toward each other.
- (4) The search for meaning is now at the start of a new intensive phase, for the onset of clearer thought creates problems in the child's religious ideas. Childish concepts are clung to, but the doubts and confusions are already appearing. At previous stages the child happily kept together

unrelated and often contradictory ideas, but now he is becoming aware of the need to relate and reconcile these apparent contradictions.

We require an intensive effort in teaching religion at this stage to help them grow into a “one-world” view of life, rather than a dualistic system which separates religion from the rest of life.

- (5) The teacher has to have a real theological maturity to be able to put down things clearly, simply and briefly.
- (6) Another type of thinking that one frequently meets at this age is a conscious separation of knowledge into two different parts - one that is learned at school, read about in books, or heard about on TV, and the other that is taught in Church and in Sunday School. The task of the Sunday School teacher in this period is to help them in this process. It has to be relevant to their experience of life, to their interests and curiosity, to the secular knowledge they are acquiring at school, to the human relations they are developing. In other words, the Christian doctrine taught must become part of their own thinking and their knowledge of life as a total experience.
- (7) The children’s knowledge of the Bible, especially of the New Testament, is very uneven. There are a few stories that they have heard over and over again, and this gives them a false sense of “knowing” the Bible. On the other hand their very limited knowledge of the scriptures, both in facts and in meaning, is quite clear. Not even the Sermon on the Mount has reached their attention in full, and they have no idea of the meaning of the Old Testament, except for a few stories. This age is a good time to train the children in the use of the Bible and especially the New Testament as a resource book. Learning to know which parts of the Bible are used during the church services they attend, and how to find the appropriate readings, increases their familiarity with the scriptures.





SEPTEMBER FIRST SUNDAY

JESUS HEALS BLIND BARTIMAEUS

Please read Mark 10:46-52, and tell the story with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To show the Lord Jesus' power to heal our spiritual blindness and to be able to see the heavenly kingdom which is prepared for us.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me" Mark 10:47

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

✚ INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS:

Can you see? Everything? Can you see Heaven? Can you see God?

Many of us are actually blind and cannot see at all. We cannot see the things that are really important in life.....Christ, Heaven.

- ✚ Read the Gospel according to St. Mark Chapter 10:46-52, explain and discuss with the students its contents.
- ✚ This miracle of healing blind Bartimaeus was the last declared miracle that our Lord Jesus did before His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11) and all the events that led to His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension to heaven. Jesus performed this miracle of opening the eyes as His last one before crucifixion to

emphasize the need for all human beings to have spiritual sight and the ability to see and appreciate the heavenly kingdom. There are so many people who have eyes but they cannot see and have ears but cannot hear. We mean by this that they are spiritually blind and spiritually deaf; therefore, they cannot accept the word of God.

- ✝ Bartimaeus was miserable because he was blind; he could not see the sun, the sky, the trees, etc. and someone had to lead him to walk. He was also poor and someone had to give him some money.
- ✝ The people around Bartimaeus could not stop his shouting.
- ✝ When he heard that the Lord Jesus was around, he thought that this was his chance of a life-time. He shouted "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me" This shows that Bartimaeus had faith that Jesus is the Messiah for whom the Jews were waiting, to come from the descendants of King David. This is the reason why he called Jesus "Son of David". It was also known that when the Messiah comes, He will open the eyes of the blind "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped" (Isaiah 35:5). There were so many people around Jesus, but one of them had faith in Jesus' power and presented his needs to Jesus asking His mercy.
- ✝ Jesus is kind and powerful and we must ask Him for our needs.
- ✝ "Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord" PS 130:1. David who wrote this Psalm had an experience. King Saul wanted to kill him by any means. But David cried from the depths and God protected him. Let us cry from the depth of our hearts as David did and Bartimaeus did.
- ✝ When an individual is baptized he or she obtains spiritual understanding. "We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding" John 5:20. We have to maintain this pure understanding that we get when we are baptized. If we lost it because of sins we can get it back through repentance. This is why repentance is considered a "second baptism" because through repentance the Lord Christ will open up our spiritual eyes (i.e. understanding) to know the truth just as he gave sight to Bartimaeus.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ who opened the eyes of the blind man so that he can see Him and follow Him is also able to heal our spiritual blindness in order to see

Him in His loving kindness and follow Him.

2. We have to ask our Lord Jesus in our prayers to give us depth and understanding of His Word when we read the Holy Bible so that we can get a clear message from Him. Then we can truly live by His Word in our daily lives, love Him from the depth of our hearts and love all people as well.

Songs

AMAZING GRACE

“That having been justified by His grace we should become heirs..”(Tit 3:7)

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
I once was lost, but now am found

that saved a wretch like me!
Was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
This grace hath brought me safe thus far

I have already come
and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousands years
We've no less days to sing God's praise

Bright shining as the sun
Than when we first begun.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.





**SEPTEMBER
SECOND SUNDAY**

EI- NAYROUZ FEAST AND THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. PHILEMON

Please read the attached materials entitled “In the Memory of our Martyrs - El-Nayrouz Feast”, “The Martyrdom of Deacon Philemon”, “The glory of suffering” and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON

The martyrs gave up their lives for Christ. What did we give up for Him? How much suffering can we bear for Him? What do we get in return from him?

MEMORY VERSE:

*“We suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”
Romans 8:17*

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✝ What month are we in now? (September)
Has anyone ever heard of the Coptic Calendar?
Does anyone know what month we are in according to the Coptic Calendar? (We are about to or have started the Coptic month of Tout).
The same way we celebrate the normal New Year, the Church celebrates the Coptic New Year, on the 1st of Tout (or approximately on the 11th of September of the Gregorian Calendar).
Today, we are going to discuss where the Coptic Calendar comes from, how the Church follows it, and learn about the life and martyrdom of St. Philemon.
- ✝ Please review with the students their background information about the Coptic Year:

- The Coptic New Year (or El-Nayrouz Feast) is celebrated in our church on approximately September 11 of the Julian calendar (which is the 1st of Tout).
 - The Coptic Year has 13 months each of which is 30 days except the last month (5 or 6 days).
 - The Coptic (or Egyptian) year existed 5,000 years before the birth of Christ and was used by the ancient Egyptians. They named its months after their ancient Egyptian gods, Tout, Baba, Hatour, Kyahek, Toubra, Amsheer, Baramehat, Baramouda, Bashense, Baouna, Abiba, Messra and El-Nassey.
 - In the years of Diocletian, in which the numbers of martyrs increased greatly, the Egyptian year was named the "Martyrs' Year".
- ✝ Review the church system during the Coptic Year, i.e., the nine rounds as shown in the attached material. Ask the students to draw a chart showing the nine rounds of the church system. Promise prizes for the students who can produce the clearest chart, and present it to the class next Sunday.
- ✝ Tell the story of St. Philemon and his keen desire to attain the crown of martyrdom.
- ✝ Let us discuss: who is a martyr? He is a person who by his own free will is ready to witness the truth of his faith in front of anyone and at any time, even if it is going to cost him his life on earth. In return he gains eternal life. Besides, history tells us that many non-believers when they saw the courage and the unshakable faith of the martyrs became Christians. Hence, when a person is martyred, the number of Christians is not decreased by one, but is actually increased by many more, through his witness.
- ✝ Love, hope and faith are the main characteristics of a martyr's life. A martyr believes that "we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." (Romans 8:17).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. As the martyrs suffered with the Lord Jesus in order to be glorified with Him, let us also resist all temptations and sins in our daily life so that we can enjoy the inner peace and the glorified life; "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18)
2. As the martyrs were looking forward to their eternal life in heaven, let us also learn to concentrate on heavenly matters and not to get attached to materialistic things as toys, gifts, etc.

3. Life does not have to be perfect. We must train ourselves to accept some pains and discomfort in our lives without complaining. We must stay thankful even under difficult conditions knowing that God will help us and make us happy if we do not complain.

Songs

THE MARTYRS AND NAIROUZ

Come, Ye faithful people, come Where there is eternal life	to the heavenly Jerusalem and we'll live in peace with our Saviour
Nayrouz is the beginning of the year Who defended faith without fear	when we remember our martyrs and lived in peace with our Saviour
Our ancestors were brave Now in Heaven they are crowned	for their faith their lives they gave And they lived in peace with our Saviour
Our martyrs won their crowns And they opened Heaven's doors	when they laid their lives down now they live in peace with our Saviour
Never flinched they from the flame They shed their blood for His Name	nor from the tyrant's sharpest aim Now they live in peace with our Saviour
By their faith they saw the land They put their souls in His hand	where triumphant now they stand And lived in peace with our Saviour
If Satan comes to divide us And His peace will be with us	the voice of God will gather us And we'll live in peace with our Saviour
Lord, deliver us from all sin And lead us to Thy Kingdom	that eternal life we may win O our King, and our Saviour

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

IN THE MEMORY OF OUR MARTYRS EL-NAYROUZ FEAST

- ✝ El Nayrouz feast is the beginning of the Egyptian Year. The Egyptian Year is a very old one. The ancient Pharaohs created this system 5000 years before the birth of Jesus, naming its months after the names of their ancient Egyptian gods. The Egyptian year has 13 months; they are: Tout, Baba, Hatour, Kyahk, Touba, Amshier, Baramhat, Baramouda, Bashense, Baouna, Abiba, Messra and El-Nassey. Each month of these months is 30 days; except the last month, El-Nassey, which is only 5 or 6 days.
- ✝ Up until the present day, the Egyptian farmers are using the Coptic Year system in their timing for agriculture.
- ✝ Egypt had used the Egyptian Year system until the French came to Egypt in the era of Ismail Basha and introduced the Western Year system (January, February, etc.).
- ✝ In the years of Diocletian in which the numbers of martyrs increased very much, the Egyptian Year was named “Martyrs’ Year”.
- ✝ The church these days celebrates the “NAYROUZ FEAST” which is the “MARTYRS’ FEAST”. This celebration lasts for 17 days until the “CROSS FEAST”. During the Coptic Year (which is the Egyptian Year), the church system, i.e., feasts, fasting and readings in the church, are divided into the following rounds:

Round #1:

This is the Nayrouz round in which the church celebrates the memory of the martyrs who helped establish the church on the sound basis of their faith and their precious blood. (Tout)

Round #2:

The church celebrates the mystery of the Nativity (Kyahek) and this terminates at Christmas.

Round #3:

The Baptism of our Lord Jesus and the unity of the Holy Trinity (The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit). (Touba).

Round #4:

The Jonah's fast and the preparation for the Holy Forty day fast. (Touba)

Round #5:

The Holy fast. (Am sheer - Baramhat)

Round #6:

The Easter celebration. (Baramouda - Bashense).

Round #7:

The Mission month and the Disciples' fast. (Abib)

Round #8:

St. Mary's fast. (Messra)

Round #9:

The short month (Nassey); all the readings in the church in this month are about the end of the world.

I hope you would join the church in celebrating these nine rounds so that you keep in touch with all the events, and hence you partake in the system, remember it, learn from it and be blessed by it too.

THE MARTYRDOM OF DEACON PHILEMON

Ariana, a governor of a city near Melawy (in the Southern part of Egypt) was mainly concerned with torturing the Christians. Other governors from other cities used to send Christians for him to be killed and tortured.

One time, he stood to watch his people torturing Deacon Philemon. The way they were torturing Philemon was by directing swords towards his body. One of the swords hit Philemon and was re-directed and entered Ariana's eye. Then Ariana went to the young man Philemon and said to him: "If you heal my eye, I will let you go." Then Philemon answered him: "If I heal your eye, you will say that we are magicians and you will let me go. But kill me first, so that I win the crown of martyrdom and after they bury me in the tomb, take some of the dust and put it on your eye and it will be healed."

Ariana killed Philemon and after he was buried, he took some of the dust and put it on his own eye and it was healed.

Ariana and many people who saw what happened became Christians and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE GLORY OF SUFFERING

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

St Paul, the Apostle, says in his Epistle to the Romans, *"If indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."* (Rom 8:17)

And so, suffering for the Lord becomes a measure of the glory that awaits the faithful in the eternal Kingdom. **Therefore the Church places the martyrs above all the Saints.**

They are mentioned in the Church's prayers before the spirit-borne and the solitary fathers, who filled the wilderness with prayers and contemplation. They are also mentioned before our fathers the Patriarchs and Bishops, with all their services in spreading the Word. This is all because of the sufferings they endured for the sake of God.

Even in service, the measure of suffering is also obvious, as the Apostle says, *"... and each will receive his own reward according to his own labour."* (1Cor. 3:8).

Therefore, the Lord says in his letter to the Angel of the Church at Ephesus, *"I know your works, your labour, your patience... and you have persevered and have patience, and have laboured for my name's sake and have not become weary."* (Rev 2:2-3), putting labour at the beginning.

It is also said in the Bible that, *"God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love..."* (Heb 6:10)

Love expresses its existence by labouring for the beloved one, as the Apostle says, *"... Let us not love in word or in tongue."* (1 Jn. 3:18)

The depth of love also shows in suffering, when the level of love is raised up to sacrifice and redemption.

Therefore, God's love was shown to us in its deepest form when the Lord was on the Cross, sacrificing himself for our redemption, the just for the unjust. **Christ was at the peak of His glory when He was in His deepest passion.**

For this reason, He said about his crucifixion, *"Now the Son of Man is glorified"* (Jn 13:13). The picture of His crucifixion is the picture of His glory...

St. Paul, the Apostle, considers suffering as a gift from God. In this, he says, *"For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for his sake."* (Phil 1:29)

St. Peter, the Apostle, also talked about suffering saying, *"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps"* (1 Pet 2:21).





**SEPTEMBER
THIRD SUNDAY**

**THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS:
OUR TALENTS AND HOW TO USE THEM**

Please read Matthew 25:14-30, the attached material entitled “Serious Work”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that God gave us talents and we should use them effectively. We must use our talents to grow spiritually as well as in our daily lives.

MEMORY VERSE

“Enter into the joy of your Lord” Matthew 25:21

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ We have many talents, right? (Yes)
What are some of your talents? (Ask each child, if possible, to name one talent he/she has).
Who gave us these talents? (God)
Today, we are going to talk about a story the Lord Jesus once told about three servants who received talents from their Master, what they did with these talents, and what happened to them after.
- ✚ First read the Gospel according to St. Matthew 25:14-30 with the students and discuss its contents.
- ✚ In this parable, the Master gave his servants his endowments; to the first he gave five talents, to the second he gave two talents and to the third he gave one talent. He

gave “to each according to **his own** ability” (Matthew 25:15). This means that the Master was not biased toward any of them, but he gave the endowments according to His knowledge of their own abilities. This teaches us not to be proud when we encounter the less talented because all talents are given from one source, “God”. St. Paul said “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

- ✚ God does not look at the amount of the profit, but He looks at the honesty of his servants in using their talents. The problem of the man who had one talent was that he was lazy and lived his life inactively.
- ✚ Profit brings profit, loss brings loss and sin brings sin. The man who had five talents, as he made a profit (5 more talents), His Master told him, “I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21). Similarly there was also the man who received the two talents. The man who was endowed with the one talent, however, neglected his talent and lived his life in a lazy manner and lost the talent which he had from God. Not only that, but he fell in the sin of insulting his Master by saying, “Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed” (Matthew 25:24). The life of laziness led him to commit a sin against His Master.
- ✚ The reward for those who used their talents was “Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21) and the punishment for the lazy servant was to “cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 25:30).
- ✚ God gave us talents: knowledge, health, intelligence, time, mind and body. How are we using them? Are we wasting time watching TV? Are we wasting time on computer games or internet?
- ✚ Ask what everyone is most talented in.
- ✚ We have to try our best and God will help us to achieve high goals. We must use our talents to achieve spiritual depth and an actual friendly relationship with God. How?
- ✚ If we are lazy like the one who was endowed with the one talent, we will not only lose eternal life, but we will also be punished.

✝ We should give one tenth of all that we have to God. No matter how small it is, we must give back to the church (or to the poor) part of what God gave us.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. We must do our best at school. Let us learn from the present moment to use at least part of our energy or talents to serve our Lord Jesus. If we give to the poor and needy, we are actually giving Jesus Himself.
2. We must also do our best at home and participate in doing house work with the rest of the family members. We can help in cooking, cleaning, tidying things up and helping our younger sisters and brothers.
3. Most importantly we have to use our talents to grow spiritually and have a place in heaven. How? By “Serious Work.” Take praying (in concentration) seriously, read the bible (in respect and concentration) and come regularly to church. In all of these spiritual practices, one has to fully utilize his or her talent. Also in serving the church, one has to utilize his or her full ability.

Songs:

SPEEDILY

Jesus is standing and knocking on your door	open up or else He will be there no more
Let Him in to reign on your heart like before	open up your heart for Jesus, speedily

REFRAIN

Speedily, Speedily,
Use the only chance you may have been given
Open up your heart for Jesus, speedily

All the day He has been there waiting for you	open up and he will bring His Father too
And together They will make a home in you	open up your heart for Jesus, speedily

Open up your heart and you'll be forgiven	this may be the only time you are given
So waste not your chance to make it to heaven	open up your heart for Jesus, speedily

Open up your heart today and do not wait	wake up and repent before it is too late
Hell is full of those who did procrastinate	open up your heart for Jesus, speedily

He is knocking on your door, so open up	He's prepared to give Himself for you to sup
Come, receive Him in the paten and the cup	open up your heart for Jesus, speedily.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

SERIOUS WORK

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

The Bible says, "*Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully.*" (Jer. 48:10)...
The one who works for the Lord must, "*Be faithful until death.*" (Rev 2:10). Faithfulness is a principal condition for service...

With this seriousness, the Apostles witnessed for the name of Christ, and they were, "*Preaching the Kingdom of God... with all confidence, no one forbidding them.*" (Acts 28:31)
"*And with great power, the Apostles gave witness... and great grace was upon them all.*" (Acts 4:33)

As a result of this serious, honest and faithful work, the kingdom of God spread. Listen to what God said to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus. "*I know your works, your labour, your patience... and you have persevered and have patience, and have laboured for my name's sake and have not become weary.*" (Rev 2:2-3)

Serious work is built on faith...

The more your faith in the weight and importance of your work is true and complete, the more seriousness of your work will be. Leniency in work is an evidence of lack of faith and its importance...

Serious work indicates a sense of responsibility:

Just as what Joseph, the faithful did, stockpiling wheat, fully aware that the life of many depends on his honesty.

So it is with the spiritual service: the life of many depends on the honesty of the servant. If he neglects his service they are lost.

Serious work is controlled from one's inner self...

It is controlled by one's own conscience and the voice of God inside him.

This control is due to his live feelings and holy zeal...

He works seriously because "*Time is short*" and every minute counts, with any delay or negligence having its dangers...

Serious work is always successful...

It is a perfect work because seriousness brings work to perfection...

Perfect work is a successful work. It was said about the righteous man, "*And whatever he does shall prosper*" (Ps 1:3)

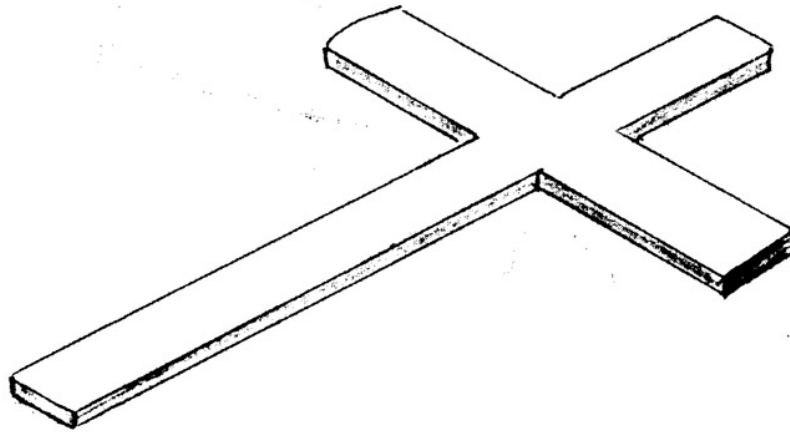
Serious work does not slow down till completed...

It does not believe in fatigue and does not seek rest...

Its performer does not rest until the work is finished and he tastes its fruits... Like Lazarus of Damascus who would not rest till he took Rachel as wife for his master's son. And when they asked him to rest, he answered "*Do not hinder me.* " (Gen 24:56)



NOTES





**SEPTEMBER
FOURTH SUNDAY**

**THE FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS
*THE CROSS IN OUR LIVES***

Please read the attached material entitled “The Appearance of the Cross in the Sky” and “The Feast of the Elevation of the Cross”, “The Cross in our Life”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF LESSON:

To show that beyond our sufferings there is glory. The Cross was followed by the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE:

“But we preach Christ was crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ What would you do, or how would you feel, if, one day, you went outside and saw a huge Cross in the sky? It would be amazing right?
Well, this miracle of the Cross appearing in the sky happened three times in the past.
In fact, the Church celebrates this event in the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross. Today, we are going to learn about the three times the Cross appeared and why the Cross is so important to us as Christians.
- ✚ Please review the students’ background on the apparition of the shining Cross in the sky three times. In the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross we celebrate the

appearance of the glorious Cross of Jesus Christ our Lord by Saint Helena.

- ✝ Crossing yourself is a source of strength that makes the devil flee and you do not fear anything. You must Cross yourself before you sleep and before entering any dark place. You should carry the Cross and have one in your room to remember all the time that we gained salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus which was shed on the Cross.
- ✝ When I Cross myself at first I put my fingers on my forehead saying in the name of the Father (thus remembering that my heavenly Father is up in Heaven). Secondly, I put my fingers on my stomach saying and the Son (thus remembering that our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God was born from St. Mary through the Holy Spirit). Thirdly, I move my fingers from the left shoulder to the right one saying and the Holy Spirit (thus remembering that the Holy Spirit Who is inside me since I was baptized guides me and leads me to move from the left side, i.e., the bad side, to the right side, i.e., the good side and become a good person as a child of God).
- ✝ The Cross was the central subject of preaching by the apostles. See the memory verse and explain it as follows: the Jews thought of the Messiah as a worldly king and could not believe that He was crucified. The Greeks had no idea about the coming of Christ, so they just do not know. For Christians the Cross means the power of Christ in granting us salvation.
- ✝ As the believers carry the Cross, as our Lord Jesus Christ did, they gain a lot of strength in their suffering as they remember the suffering of Christ on the Cross which was much more than theirs. Therefore, the outside appearance of the Cross is suffering, but the inside reality is strength, victory and joy. The church history reminds us that Emperor Diocletian issued a decree for the demolishing of all churches and made infringements on Christians' rights. Emperor Maximian issued a decree as well forcing Christians to worship idols and to offer sacrifices to them. But the Christians did not obey all these orders. They sacrificed themselves and died as martyrs without denying their faith. All these empires vanished but the Christians remained. The church, while carrying the Cross, has survived because Christ promised that "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Let us rejoice that we are Christians. We carry our Cross as our Lord did and have It as a sign of salvation and strength.
2. We even can see it in our daily lives. If we studied hard and suffered doing that, we get good results and rejoice. *When we* try harder in our spiritual life, *we* will be better, happier and gain a place in heaven. We get our reward. Glory is beyond suffering.

Songs

HYMN OF INTERCESSIONS

Hiten ni evki ente pashois
Epouro konstantinos nem
Elanee tefmav ti-ouro
Epchois...

Through the prayers of my
Master, king Constantine
And his mother Queen
Helen, O Lord...

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE CROSS IN THE SKY (8)

This happened three times:

1. The **FIRST** time it appeared in the sky to the Emperor Constantine the Great to encourage him before he was set to go to war. He and his officers saw it like a pillar of light in the sky surrounded by the following words: "With it (the Cross) you will conquer." Constantine was encouraged, became a Christian, went to war and was victorious.
2. The **SECOND** time the Cross appeared to Julius Caesar on the doors of the city of Antioch. It appeared in the East like a pillar of light which startled all those who saw it.
3. The Cross appeared again for the **THIRD** time to all the people of Jerusalem. This happened in the sacred days of the Pentecostal Feast, to be exact on the 8th of May, 351 A.D. at 3:00 pm (about 9:00am our time) a big Cross appeared in the sky on Golgotha stretching to Mount olive. It was very clear and was seen not only by one or two, but by all the people of the city also. It remained for many hours shining brighter than the rays of the sun. All the people of the city came out to see the apparition. People were astounded, scared, but with great joy they witnessed that heavenly scene. Old and young, men and women of all ages, Christians and non-Christians, from all places praised Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

THE FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS

In the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross we remember the appearance of the glorious Cross of Jesus Christ our Lord. When the Jews found out the very large number of miracles done in the name of Jesus' tomb, they became angry and asked everyone in the Jewish country to collect all the dirty things and their waste and put it at the top of the tomb. The Jews continued to do that for over 200 years until a very large pile of dirt was formed. Saint Helena, the mother of King Constantine, went to Jerusalem and asked about the location of the Cross. Nobody told her until she met an old man who told her that the Cross is underneath the pile of dirt. She then ordered that the pile of dirt should be removed. It was then easy to get out the Holy Cross of Jesus Christ. Afterwards she built a church on that site and the Christian people go to visit the Cross and the Church.

St. Helena did that because she loved the Cross as it appeared to her son, King Constantine before he went to war and he won that war.

THE CROSS IN OUR LIFE

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

On the occasion of the feast of the Cross, we mention the following points:

Our first relationship with the Cross starts by baptism, where our old Adam is crucified so that sin will never enslave us.

✝ The Church has carried the Cross during the martyrdom period and in all the persecutions that followed it during the lapse of time...

✝ The beauty of the Cross is that the Church carried it with joy and patience,... without any complaint or grumbling...

The Cross changed into a longing that the Church desires and proceeds towards.

The way in which the Christians received death puzzled the pagans. It was a reflection of the Christians' faith in eternal joy and disdain of the world, with all its pleasures and enjoyments...

The prisons turned into temples, where hymns and prayers echoed from the Christians who were joyful to receive death...

✝ The third field where we carry the Cross is narrow gate...

A person might constrain himself for the sake of God. He isolates himself from the world and all its desire. He disclaims everything for God's sake... by fasting devoutness, self control and enduring others' offences.

✝ The Cross of weariness could also be included this field...

One toils in one's services for God and labours (crucifying the flesh with its passions), as the Apostle says, *"He toils in struggling and crucifying the thought and overcoming oneself, "* knowing all the time that he *"will receive his own reward according to his own labour. "*
(I Cor 3:8)

Christianity could never be separated from the Cross....

The Lord Jesus told us plainly that *"... In the world you will have tribulation"* and he also said, *"and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. "* (Mt 10:22)

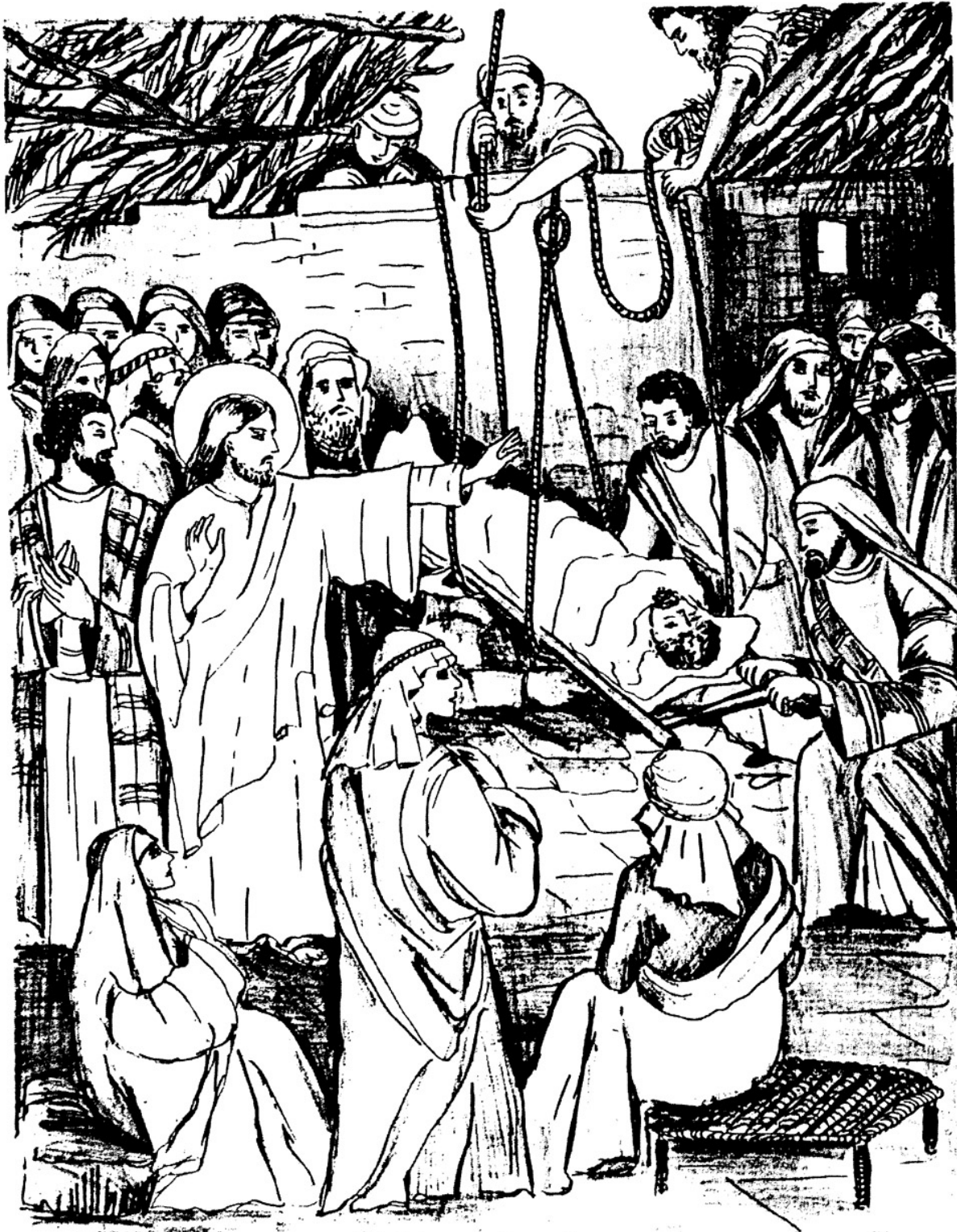
✝ We welcome and rejoice with the Cross, and see our strength in it. As the Apostle said, *"For the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God"* (1Cor. 1:18)



For the success
of this Sunday
School Program
the teacher should
refer to the

HOLY BIBLE

in his/her preparation
of the lessons and in
teaching the students
in the class





OCTOBER FIRST SUNDAY

THE STRENGTH OF FAITH

Please read Mark 2:3-12 “A Paralytic Carried by Four Men”, John 4:46-53 “Healing the Son of the Nobleman”, the attached article entitled, “Levels of Faith.”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that if we have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, nothing will stand in our way.

MEMORY VERSE

*“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”
Hebrew 11:1*

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

✚ Have you ever been in such a tough situation and you had no idea how you were going to get out of it?
Maybe you are having a difficult time at school, at home, or someone you love is very sick and there is no medicine to make this person better.
How would you feel? Lost? Confused? Worried?
Would you lose hope?
Today, we are going to explore how if we have faith in God, everything will work out to our advantage, no matter what happens.

✚ What is faith?

- Faith is the strong belief in the power of God.
- If we have faith in God, we can even move mountains, as our Lord Jesus said.

- In the Old Testament, Abraham had faith in God. So, when God ordered him to leave his home town and relatives and go to where God was going to tell him, he obeyed...he did not even hesitate. His faith told him that God will take care of him, no matter what, read this in class (Heb. 11:8): “**By faith Abraham obeyed** when he was called to go out to the place which he would **afterward** receive an inheritance. And he went, **not knowing** where he was going.”

✚ Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the **evidence of things not seen**. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. “**By faith we understand** that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:1-3). This shows us that by faith we understand things that are not seen through the evidences which are seen. For example, when we look at creation around us, the sun, the moon, the sky, etc., we can understand and have faith that there is a Creator who is God.

✚ Faith influences the behaviour of people towards God. People who have faith do things that show their belief in God. For example, Abraham had faith: “**By faith Abraham obeyed** when he was called to go out to the place which he would **afterward** receive an inheritance. And he went, **not knowing** where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8). Please read about the faith of the important personalities in the Old Testament as mentioned in Hebrews 11:4-end, and give some of these examples to the students.

✚ Tell the two stories from the Bible: “A Paralytic Carried by Four Men” and “Healing the Son of the Nobleman”.

✚ “**A Paralytic Carried by Four Men**”:

- After a few days, our Savior entered Capernaum and it became known that He is in one of the houses which may be Peter’s house. A large crowd came to the house to the extent “that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.”
- Four men came carrying a paralytic seeking the power of the Lord Jesus to heal him. The paralytic was heavy, they came a long way and when they arrived, they could not reach Jesus because of the crowd. It was easy to give up. But they did not. Their faith was strong. So, they insisted on having the sick man brought in front of Jesus somehow. “They uncovered the roof where He was. And when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When **Jesus saw their faith**, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are

forgiven."

- These four men represent the church. Having strong faith in her Lord, she feels responsible to go and bring the world which is paralyzed by sin before the healing power of Christ.

✝ "Healing the Son of the Nobleman":

Our Lord Jesus was in Cana of Galilee. The sick person was in a different city; he was in Capernaum. The nobleman came to Cana of Galilee seeking Jesus to come to Capernaum and heal his son. "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said, "Go your way, your son lives." So the man **believed** the word that Jesus spoke to him, **and he went** his way." The man believed in Jesus' power to heal even without touching the sick child or going to Capernaum. That was just by the word that He spoke.

- ✝ Judas Iscariot did not have faith although he saw all the miracles that Jesus did, but still he betrayed Jesus and loved money more than Him.
- ✝ St. Peter had gone a long way in his faith. At one point in time he denied that he knew Jesus in front of a servant. But after he gained the strength of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost, he was able to witness without any fear in front of the highest Jewish council that Jesus is the Messiah.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. A strong faith in God can even make miracles happen. Have that kind of faith and find out ...God will never let you down. Let us not question the word of God. Let us only obey, believe and act.
2. As the four men carrying the paralytic did not give up despite the several difficulties they faced, we must never give up. We must do our best and have faith that God will have everything work to our advantage no matter what happens.
3. One also has to ask himself or herself: What is the reality concerning the strength of my faith ? Let me make this a regular prayer: asking God to enhance my faith. Lord give me "...the hope of righteousness by faith." (Gal. 5:6).

Songs

YOU ARE MY HIDING PLACE

You are my hiding place
you always fill my heart with songs of deliverance
Whenever I am afraid
I will trust You
I will trust You
Let the weak say I am strong
In the strength of the Lord

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

LEVELS OF FAITH

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

There might be a person *"who is weak in the faith"* (Rom 14: 1) or, *"of little faith."* (Mt 14: 1)

Another person needs to *"perfect what is lacking in his faith"*. (1Thess 3: 12) A third is *"slow of heart to believe,"* like the two disciples of Emmaus. (Luke. 24: 25)

On the contrary to this, there are levels of faith...

A faithful person,

Another, *"not a novice,"* (I Tim 3: 6)

A third, *"... his faith grows exceedingly,"* (2Thess 1: 3) or he *"abounds in faith."* (2 Cor. 8:7)

A fourth, *"continues in the faith, grounded and steadfast"* (Col 1: 23)

A fifth, *"steadfast in the faith."* (1 Pet 5: 9)

A sixth, *"rich in faith."* (Jas 2:5).

Above all those, a seventh, *"full of faith."* (Acts 6: 5)

The Lord said about some, *"great is your faith"*. (Mt. 15: 28)

There is a strong faith in which *"signs will follow those who believe"* (Mk 16: 17) and faith that, *"could remove mountains"* (1Cor. 13: 2), and a greater faith which makes everything possible, *"all things are possible to him who believes."* (Mk 9:23)

Concerning all this, what is your position in faith? Are you a true believer? Do you have that... *"faith working through love"*? (Gal. 5: 6) Do you grow in faith? Or is your faith strong and great? Or you need prayers so *"that your faith should not fail"*? (Lk. 22: 32)

Brethren: *"examine yourselves as to whether you are in faith. Prove yourselves?"* (2Cor 13: 5)

Undoubtedly, the word faith bears deep meanings.







**OCTOBER
SECOND SUNDAY**

THANKSGIVING TO GOD WHO LOVES ME AND TAKES CARE OF ME

Please read the attached notes marked (I) to (III) and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that we should give thanks to the Lord **at all times** because He cares for us. Even if things look bad for us God can turn things around for us. So, let us thank Him at all times.

MEMORY VERSE

*“So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let her drive”
Acts 27:15*

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ If somebody gives you something that you need, or does you a favour, you say right away: “Thank you”. This is very good indeed. But, how about God? How much is God giving you? Think about it. Do you take His generosity and love for granted? It is time now to develop an attitude of thankfulness to God at all times.
- ✚ Tell the story of the ten lepers briefly. Only one of them came to thank the Lord Jesus, Please read Luke 17:11-19.
- ✚ Our church teaches us that the prayer of thanksgiving is very important to the extent that in all church services, we start with the prayer of thanksgiving. Please read to the students the prayer of thanksgiving from the attached material. Please ask the students to try to know this prayer by heart.

- ✝ Then mention in more detail “The Lord takes care of Paul in the ship and the island” (Acts 27:1-44 and Acts 28:1-6). From this event we can see that the Lord was keeping Paul safe.
- ✝ Let us first realize that Jesus takes care of us all day long. Even if something bad happened to us, it could have been much worse. But Jesus takes care of us. We must thank Him in all our prayers.
- ✝ The Lord gives us generously. He said, “ask and you will be given, seek and you will find.” Every time we ask the Lord, He grants us our needs and a lot more.
- ✝ God is merciful and treats us according to His mercy. “For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is the steadfast love towards those who fear Him.”

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Let us be thankful to God for all the love and care that He has given us.
2. Let us try to memorize the Thanksgiving prayer and Psalm 103 by heart and think of every verse in it.
3. It is easy to thank God when something good happens to us. But can we train ourselves to thank God under adverse conditions? This would require faith that God will turn everything at the end for our goodness' sake.

Songs

AMEN AMEN AMEN

Amen Amen Amen; Ton
Thanaton so kyrie
Katangelomen: Ke teen
Agiaan soo anastasin: Ke
Teen ana lee epsin so
Entees oo ranis se e molo
Goomen. Se e noo men
Se evlo goomen se ev
Kharis tomen kirie; ke theo
Meta soo o theos emon.

Amen Amen Amen:
Your death O Lord we proclaim.
Your holy resurrection and
Ascension we confess.
We praise You, we bless You
We thank You, O Lord, and we
Entreat You, O our God.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

PSALM 103 - (I)

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy towards those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. On those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children. To such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them. The Lord has established His throne in heaven. And His kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His words. Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, you ministers of His, who do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

PSALM 107

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING – (II)

Let us give thanks to the beneficent and merciful God, the Father of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, for He has covered us, supported us, preserved us, accepted us unto Him, had compassion on us, sustained us, and brought us to this hour.

Let us then ask Him, the Almighty Lord our God, to keep us in all peace this holy day and all the days of our life.

O Master, Lord, God Almighty, Father of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, we thank Thee upon every condition, for any condition, and in whatever condition, for Thou hast covered us, supported us, preserved us, accepted us unto Thee, had compassion on us, sustained us and brought us unto this hour.

Wherefore, we pray and entreat Thy goodness O lover-of-mankind. Grant us to complete this holy day and all the days of our life in all peace with Thy fear. All envy, all temptation, all the workings of Satan, the intrigue of wicked people, the rising up of enemies, hidden and manifest, dost Thou cast away from us and from Thy people, and from this, Thy holy place.

Whereas of things that are good and useful dost Thou grant us, for Thou art He who gave us the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and every power of the enemy. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Through the grace and mercies and love-of-man of Thine only Begotten Son, our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, through whom is due unto Thee glory and honor and power together with Him and the Holy Spirit, the Life-Giver, who is consubstantial with Thee now and ever, and to the age of all ages. Amen

THE LORD TAKES CARE OF PAUL IN THE SHIP AND THE ISLAND –(III)

✠ St. Paul, because of his love for the Lord Jesus suffered a lot in travel, in facing persecution and in jail. However, the Lord took care of him and protected him from all dangers.

✠ **In the ship:**

- While St. Paul and the people traveling with him by sea had lots of troubles for fourteen days, Paul was praying to God to save their lives.
- After fourteen days, he asked them to eat and feel good because the Lord showed him through an angel that He will save them.
- So the Lord saved everyone on the ship because of Paul.

✠ **In the Island:**

- After they arrived at the island, Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on fire when a viper came out and was fastened to his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another: no doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live, He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.





**OCTOBER
THIRD SUNDAY**

BY FATIH THE WALLS OF JERICHO FELL DOWN

Please read Joshua Chapters 5&6, the attached material entitled, “Faith”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that we must trust and do what God is telling us even if we do not understand now. The two stories in the lesson show that we win if we submit to God easily.

MEMORY VERSE:

*“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days”
Hebrews 11:30*

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✝ Two weeks ago, we spoke together about faith. What did we learn from that lesson? (We must do our best and have faith that God will have everything work to our advantage no matter what happens).
Today, we are going to continue to talk about the power of faith.
Imagine that there is a very tall, strong, brick wall.
Now imagine that someone told you that if you walk around this wall a few times, and then shout as loud as you can, this very strong, tall wall would just crumble and fall.
Would you believe this person? Would you do it?
Well, this is exactly what happened to Joshua.
Let us explore this story together.

- ✝ After the death of Moses, the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, “Now therefore, rise, go over this Jordan to the land which I am giving to them - the children of Israel. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you”.
- ✝ The Israelites laid siege around the city of Jericho. They camped around it, so that no one could go in or out. Then the Lord instructed Joshua how to capture the city. The priests carried the ark around the city walls, preceded by seven priests blowing rams’ horns. The armed soldiers went ahead of the trumpeters and the rearguard followed the ark. Joshua told the people to be silent as they marched. They marched around the city in this manner once a day for six days. Then on the seventh day, they marched around seven times. During the seventh march, the priests blew the trumpets and all the people shouted as loud as they could. The walls of the city collapsed, and the Israelites walked right into the city and they seized it and massacred the inhabitants. Those inhabitants were non-believers of God.
- ✝ We have to trust the word of God even if we do not understand it. Follow what has been said and you will fully understand later. The Israelites under the leadership of Joshua obeyed what God told them to do in order to capture Jericho. It did not make sense that encircling Jericho, walking around it and blowing horns would make the walls of the city fall. But they did. This is the power of faith.
- ✝ At the wedding in Cana of Galilee, St. Mary asked the Lord Jesus on behalf of the people to give them wine because they ran out of it. Jesus said to them, “Fill the water pots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.” And they took it. The people in the wedding had faith and obeyed Jesus by filling the water pots with water. It does not make sense that filling the water pots with water would help to get wine. But they did it anyway. With God everything is possible even if we cannot understand now or even if it does not make sense. But let us obey.
- ✝ Let us praise the Name of the Lord because He takes care of us as He did with the Israelites.
- ✝ Blessed are those who believe without seeing.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. As we grow up we will understand more about what God is telling us to do. All we have to do now is trust God and obey Him.
2. If we have faith, we must not worry about anything because we believe that our life is in God's hands. Hence, a true believer in God will always have peace.

Songs

A GOD LIKE YOU

I have never seen a God like you, my Lord
Who opens the gates, and unlocks the chains (2)
And created roads in the middle of the sea
Never prevented by mountains nor barriers.

REFRAIN:

I have never seen a God like you my God (2)

No one else but you appears in the den
And rescues the souls from the lion's hem (2)
Who can lighten the darkness but you O King
And fill my heart with joy that I may sing?

You have suffered lots on the wooden Cross
To give me back my life and restore my loss (2)
You have promised me You are coming back
To grant me the eternal life I lack

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

FAITH

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

Faith is not just a set of rigid beliefs that we learn by from theology and teachings of the church. But faith is rather a deep inner conviction and complete confidence in God, His attributes and His work. Our faith in God, His existence, care and protection gives us inner peace and comfort in the heart and in the mind. It gives us confidence that as far as God exists. He cares about us more than we do about ourselves. Therefore we have to live in this peace and continue in it.

The faithful never becomeS disturbed because anxiety contradicts faith... faith in God's love, care and protection...

If one believed in God's existence everywhere, one would have an inner feeling of the holiness of any place, since God is always there. As he feels secure in the presence of God, he also feels the necessity to be precise in all his actions, knowing that God sees, hears and observes all his deeds...

In every sin, one says with the righteous Joseph, *"How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? (Gen. 39:9).*

One's faith that God reads one's thoughts and knows the secrets of his heart, his intentions and feelings; such faith grants him modesty in his thoughts and feelings, making him bashful of God who examines all these emotions...

One's faith in the world to come and the day of judgment when he gives an account of all his deeds, thoughts, feelings and sayings, makes him sure that this world is perishing. One then sees the need to be prepared for that fearful day working for eternal life after death...

One keeps this thought in his heart saying with David, *"Lord make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. " (Ps 39:4)*

Faith is not just to be mentally convinced but is an action inside the heart, to lead one through his whole life...

It is not a specific moment where Man accepts God. It is a life-time job, where one lives in confidence that, *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. "* (Heb 11:1)

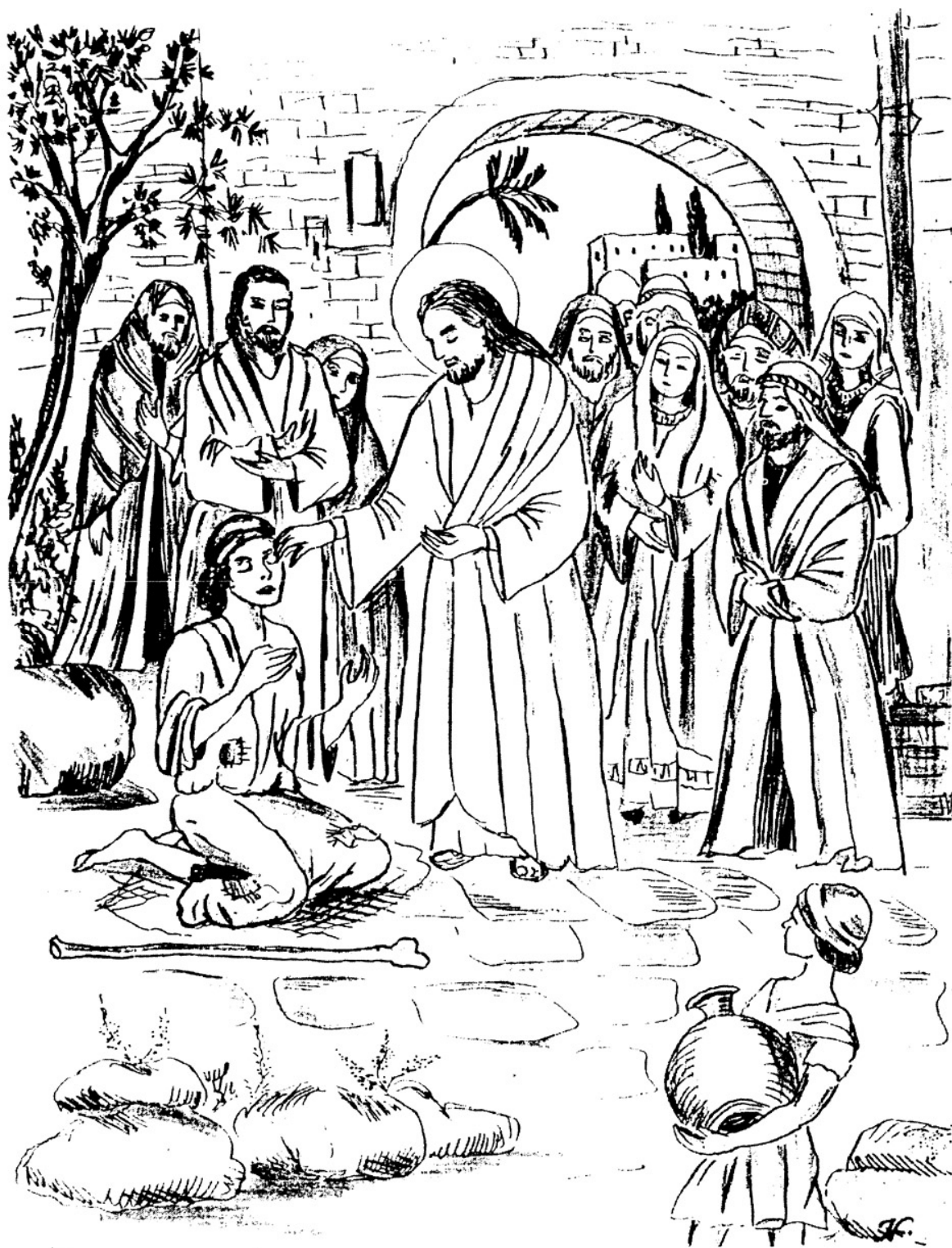
Therefore, the word faith in most cases means the whole Christian life with all its beliefs and deeds...



For the success
of this Sunday
School Program
the teacher should
refer to the

HOLY BIBLE

in his/her preparation
of the lessons and in
teaching the students
in the class





**OCTOBER
FOURTH SUNDAY**

HOW TO GROW IN YOUR FAITH? - (I)

Please read Mark 9:17-31, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that in order for us to grow in our faith, we have to ask the Lord in our prayers to strengthen our faith. This is part I of a series of two lessons on the steps of growing in our faith.

MEMORY VERSE:

“I believe, Master, help my unbelief.” (Mark 9:24)

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Last week we talked about the walls of Jericho and how they fell because of the faith of Joshua and the Israelites. We learned that even if we don't understand what God is telling us to do, all we have to do now is have faith by trusting God and obeying Him, because we will understand more as we grow up. Two weeks before that, we also spoke about faith, and learned that God will have everything work to our advantage. We now know that having faith is so important: The more faith you have, the more power from God that you will get. But, wait a minute! How do we even get this faith? Did you ever think of that? Today, and next week, we will learn how to grow in our faith.
- ✚ Tell the story of the father who brought his son to the disciples, then to Jesus, possessed by a dumb spirit. (Mark 9:17-31)

† Emphasize the following points:

1) Jesus said to the boy's father: "Bring him to Me."

In other words: No doubt that you came here knowing that, if anybody could do anything at all for your child, that somebody would be Jesus Christ. Then, what are you waiting for? "Bring him to Me", said the Lord Jesus.

We go through the same thing ... We have a problem or a need We try everything to have the problem solved or the need fulfilled ... All our efforts go down the drain, all our struggle is in vain ... We realize that we need a miracle from God to save the situation. And many times we stop at that.

Here, our Lord Jesus is telling you ... What are you waiting for? Bring this problem or this need to Me.

2) "If you can believe..."

Again Jesus said to the boy's father: "If you can believe ... all things are possible to him who believes."

In other words: Do you have faith? Things can happen only if you have faith. In fact Jesus is saying: "Mr. ... The problem is not whether I can heal your boy or not ... The problem is whether or not you have faith that I can heal him." The more faith you have, the more power you get.

Of course, the father had some faith, otherwise he wouldn't have brought his boy to our Lord. But again he had some doubts too. For many long years he had met one frustration after the other. He had taken his child from one doctor to the other ... none could help. He had tried all kinds of medicine ... none could cure him. He brought him even to Jesus' disciples, and even those could not cast away the dumb spirit.

The father was very honest when he spoke to the Master: "I believe, Master, help my unbelief."

That was one of the short prayers in the Bible, but it was very honest, very sincere and very strong.

He was saying: "I have faith ... but my faith is not strong enough ... Lord, strengthen my faith."

✝ Now ask the students: How do you grow in your faith? How do you strengthen your faith?

The answer is: By prayer

Be persistent in your prayer. Make it very honest, very sincere and very strong. But how?

✝ How do you make your prayer very honest, very sincere and very strong?

Or, putting the question in a different way: Why do you sometimes feel that your prayer is weak?

Invite answers. The answers could be something like this:

✝ Because we pray at the end of the day, when we are tired and very sleepy.

✝ Because when we pray in the morning, we are rushing to get ready to go to school.

✝ Sometimes we pray even without thinking ... etc.

It is good that you pray. But I don't think that you pray just because you want to pray or because you have to pray.

You want your prayer to be heard and answered. You want to have things moving. You want to feel that you are improving and growing in your faith, in your behaviour ...in your spiritual life.

How do you do that?

Very simple ...Take some time off before you pray. Jesus said: "When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." (Matt. 6:6). After you read your Bible and before you pray, prepare yourself for prayer.

✝ Count your blessings so that you can thank God for them one by one if possible Remember what we said about the life of thanksgiving the Sunday before last.

✝ Remember the sins that you committed that day ... the things that displeased God ... And when you pray, mention them before God and ask for His forgiveness ... Ask Him to help you overcome them.

✝ Remember the special things that you want to pray for

- a) For yourself ... (as an example) Ask Him to strengthen your faith ...etc.
- b) For others ...members of your family, your friends, your church, the Pope, your priest, your Sunday School teachers ... and those with special needs, somebody who is sick, or having an exam, or not coming to church, the poor and the hungry ...etc.

✝ Having prepared yourself ... then, pray.

I am sure your prayer will be very honest, very sincere and very strong.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Before you pray, prepare yourself for prayer.
2. Ask God to help you grow in your faith. A part of your prayer could be like this:

Please God, strengthen my faith so that I can take the sufferings and the pains without complaining to please You ... Strengthen my faith so that I can stand strong against all the temptations that face me ... so that I can feel secure being beside You, getting the protection I need, the help I need, the forgiveness I need, the peace I need and the wisdom and guidance I need.

Songs

DO NOT LEAVE ME ALONE

Do not leave me alone
Be always near to help me

O shepherd of my soul
and hear me when I call

REFRAIN

My lord, I'm nothing without Thee
So take my right hand
Forever in Thy way

I am nothing at all
O Lord, and lead me

Do not leave me alone
And hold me lest I fall

My guardian and my guide
whenever my footsteps slide

Do not leave me alone
When outward things are strong

if I'm tempted to sin
keep watch, O Lord, within

Do not leave me alone
Subdue Satan before me

whenever I feel frail
and let him not prevail

Do not leave me alone
But take my hand and lead me

when I have gone astray
again into Thy way

Do not leave me alone
But rather, Lord, forgive me

whenever sins abound
and turn my life around

Do not leave me alone
But rather reassure me

when hope has fled away
and teach me to watch and pray

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.





**OCTOBER
FIFTH SUNDAY**

HOW TO GROW IN YOUR FAITH? - (II)

Please read James 2:14-26, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn the importance of “good works” that should accompany our faith. One must make a move forward towards God. This is part II of a series of two lessons on the steps of growing in your faith.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26)

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

✝ Don't just stand there, do something.

The teacher may tie together the previous lessons on faith as follows:

- 1) We spoke last Sunday about the father who had a son possessed by a dumb spirit. He had some faith that Jesus could heal his little boy. But he didn't do anything about it. He didn't even bring the boy to Jesus.
- 2) We said that this, sometimes, happens to us. We have all the faith that God can do the miracle ...but that is the end of it, we stand there doing nothing. We have to take a step forward.
- 3) A few Sundays ago, we spoke about the faith of Abraham. He had the strongest faith that God would provide him with what he needed. But what if he had not obeyed God and had not left his home? How could he have shown that faith? God praised him because he showed his faith by his deeds, by his obedience to God's

command, by taking a step forward.

- 4) The four men who brought the paralytic to our Lord. They had a strong faith that Jesus could heal him ...a strong faith that made them persist and not give up in spite of all the obstacles they met What if they had that faith, but they didn't go through the trouble of bringing the paralytic to Jesus? They took a step and moved forward.
- 5) Even the nobleman who couldn't bring his sick boy to Jesus to heal him. He did something ...He came to bring Jesus to the sick boy. He took a step and moved forward.
- 6) Joshua had great faith in God especially after God told him: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you." His faith assured him that God would give him the city of Jericho. But he didn't let his faith stop there. He obeyed God and he led the Israelites and encircled the city for seven days as God ordered him.
 - a. What are these examples telling us? They are telling us the following:
 - b. Have faith ...Do your part ...Obey God ...Use your talents ... and leave the rest to God.

✚ The disciple St. James gives us examples:

- 1) If you see somebody who does not have clothes to wear or food to eat, and you tell him: "Go, put on some clothes and get something to eat so that you won't get sick.", but you don't give him clothes or food ...what is the use? Would your advice give him the warmth and the satisfaction he needs?
- 2) All through the Old and New Testaments, Abraham was known for his faith, why? Not because he said that he had faith ... but because, when he was asked to sacrifice his only beloved son Isaac, hard as it was on him, he obeyed.

Now, please read (James 2:14-26)

Again, what are these examples trying to tell us? They are telling us that faith has to be accompanied by good works. Or, that faith is not faith if it stands alone without good deeds. Or, to put it in another way: To grow in faith means to grow in good deeds. Someone said: "Without God, man **cannot** do ...and without man, God **will not** do."

✚ Who is the greatest?

Two of the most beloved disciples of our Lord, John and James, asked of Him, one day, Master, "Grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your

glory.: They believed that He was the Messiah, that is why they asked that.

The other Disciples, when they heard them request that, they began to be angry at them for their selfishness, and they were also angry with themselves for not thinking about these positions first.

So Jesus our Lord solved the problem by putting this principle very clear. He said that, in My Kingdom, “whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.” (Mark 10:43).

The thing that makes you great in the sight of God is faith which is shown through good works.

✝ How can I serve?

Here we go back to the lesson that we studied about our talents and how to use them. (3rd Sunday of September).

You can point out the following:

- 1) God is putting great importance on the little talent that you have or the service that you can do. The little service that a one-talent man can do equals, in God’s eyes, exactly the great service that a five-talent man can do. Christ our Lord praised the poor widow who put in the synagogue’s offering box two pennies.
- 2) God might have given us only a little human understanding or a little compassion, or a little kindness or even a little faith ... maybe our gift for prayer is small ... But, use these little talents and they will grow, or bury them and you will lose them. In other words, your talents, whether they are big or small, use them or lose them. There is no other way.
- 3) Remember the story about the fig tree. After 3 years without producing fruit, the owner gave order to cut it down. But, because of the plea (or the intercession) of the gardener, it was given a one-year grace ... it either bears fruit, or be cut down. Just to stay alive is not enough, we have to produce. This lesson is for every Christian, young or old.
- 4) You can use your talents by helping others, or pleasing your parents, or doing something for the church, or sacrificing a meal a week and giving its worth to the hungry, or giving up drinking pop for a month and sending the money to the poor ...etc. There are unlimited ideas and projects of service that one can think

of. Try to help the students to express out their thoughts concerning this subject.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. To grow in faith means to grow in good deeds too. Take a step forward towards God and let Him help you.
2. In your preparation for prayer, find out whether or not you are using the talents which God has given you ...how are you using them? ... What more can you do? Thank God and ask Him to help you to grow more and do more.

Songs

JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

“Now you are the body of Christ and members individually.” (1Cor 12:27)

REFRAIN

Jesus Christ our Lord	Saviour of my soul
Let my thoughts be Your thoughts	that is all in all
Let my senses be Your senses	that is all in all
Let my heart be Your heart	that is all in all
Let my will be Your will	that is all in all
Let my deeds be Your deeds	that is all in all
Let my way be Your way	that is all in all

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

NOTES





NOVEMBER FIRST SUNDAY

THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: LOVE - (I)

Please read Galatians 5:22, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, the attached article entitled, “Life of sacrifice”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

Introduction to the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Love is the first gift of the Holy Spirit. The life of love is the life of sacrifice.

MEMORY VERSE:

*"All will know that you are My Disciples, if you have love for one another."
John 13:35*

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Does anyone know what the fruits of the Holy Spirit are? (Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control).
Yes, but what are they, these fruits? (They are the qualities/characteristics each of us needs/must acquire so that we can be true Christians).
So, today, and for the next three weeks, we will be exploring what these virtues are that we want to acquire and how to get them.
Today, we will be speaking of the greatest one of these fruits: Love.
- ✚ If we are children of God, we must love one another because “God is love”.
- ✚ Love is the basis of all virtues. If we have all good qualities but we do not have love, we cannot have a relationship with God, or as St. Paul puts it, “We are nothing”.

But love must be translated into real deeds. These were mentioned by St. Paul “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; rejoices in the truth; bears all things. Love never fails.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

- ✝ As the Lord loved us and showed us that love on the Cross, therefore, we must love each other, “As I loved you, so you too love one another.”
- ✝ We must learn to love all people even our enemies. We can love those people more if we look at God and not at their actions, i.e., treat them through our relationship with God.
- ✝ Let us have examples of love from the Bible:
 - ✝ **The love of the four men carrying the paralytic:**
Mark 2:1-12. Please remind them of the miracle emphasizing the efforts that the four men did for the sick man.
 - ✝ **The love of St. Mary for Elizabeth:**
Luke 1:39-56. St. Mary knew from the Angel Gabriel that Elizabeth, who was a very old lady, was pregnant. St. Mary, because of her love, knew that Elizabeth would definitely need help. “She went into the Hill country with haste, to a city of Judah.” St. Mary stayed serving Elizabeth for 3 months.
 - ✝ **The love of St. Stephen to the people stoning him:**
Acts 7:54-60. While they were stoning him, he asked the Lord for their forgiveness. “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” (Acts 7:60)
- ✝ Love never fails. This is a summary statement to show that whatever happens, love will triumph at last. If we want to have an intimate relationship with God Who is love, we must have love for one another and translate that love into good deeds.
- ✝ The Lord Jesus Christ said to His Apostles (and through them to all of us): “Thus all will know that you are my Disciples if you will have love among you” (John 13:39). This is the Christian love. Our Lord Jesus explained this Christian love “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even the sinners love those who love them” (Luke 6:32). By these words, the Lord warns us against the egotistically selfish character of non-Christian, pagan love. In such egotistic love,

the main element is our personal “I”, our Self gratification which we receive from this feeling. The Lord commanded something else of us Christians: “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who offend and persecute you”. Thus, a Christian loves other people, not for their good or obliging disposition but for themselves; they are dear to him in themselves and the Christians’ love seeks their salvation, even if they treat him as an enemy.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Let us base all our deeds on love.
2. Love must be translated into actions to show it.
3. To grow in love for others we have to start by stopping to be selfish. We have to get rid of the ego.
4. The life of love is a life of sacrifice.

Songs

LOVE, LOVE, LOVE

*Love, love, love, love
Love your neighbour as yourself*

*Pantocrator
You created heaven and earth*

*Jesus Christ
You are our Sacrifice*

*Holy Spirit
You sanctify our souls*

*Coptic Church
Through Your Sacraments we are saved*

*Agios O Theo-os
Agios Athanatos
Eleison ymas*

*The Gospel in a word is love
Love, love, love*

*You are my Creator
I adore You.*

*You are our Redeemer
I love You*

*You are our Comforter
I need You*

*You are our blessing and pride.
I serve you*

*Agios Ees- shiros
Eleison ymas*

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

LIFE OF SACRIFICE

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

All that God asks from you is your heart, " *My son, give me your heart.* " (Prov. 23:26)... When He asks for your heart, He asks for your love. And the evidence of love is sacrifice.

Therefore a spiritual life is a life of sacrifice, offering everything even life itself. " *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* " (Act 20:35)

You have to give up something for the sake of God, to move your love for Him. And your love is as great as what you give up for God's sake.

Look at Abraham, the father of fathers, how did he start his relationship with God...? it started with God saying to him, "*Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land I will show you.*" (Gen 12:1)

For God's sake, Abraham left his family and his country. Was God satisfied with that? No! Even in the strange land, God said to him, "*Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and offer him as a burnt offering*" (Gen 22:2) Abraham obeyed and went to offer his son...

Moses also sacrificed his princely position, the royal palace and all the riches and authority "*...esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.*" (Heb 11:26)

The Apostles said to the Lord Jesus "*We have left all and followed you*", and St. Paul the Apostle said, "*... for when I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ*" (Phil 13:8).

Sacrifice reaches its peak when you offer everything: like the widow who paid the coins and the widow who gave the prophet Elijah all the food she had. "*Go sell whatever you have and give to the poor and come take your Cross and follow me.*" (Mk 10:21)

God himself gave us this love as an example of sacrifice, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only son.*" (Jn 3:16) "*Greater love has no one than this, to lay down his life for his friend.*" (Jn 15:13).

The martyrs gave themselves up to death and did not want their life because of their love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

What about you dear reader?... What have you sacrificed for the sake of Christ who gave Himself up and became man and died on the Cross?

We do not ask you to sacrifice your life like the martyrs, as it was a special time. But, the most important thing to give up for His sake is your favourite sins.

NOTES





**NOVEMBER
SECOND SUNDAY**

THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: JOY - (II)

Please read John 2:1-11, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To continue with the series on the Holy Spirit. Joy is the second gift of the Holy Spirit. Christianity is a religion of joy.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yes, let them rejoice exceedingly.” Psalm 68:3

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Last Sunday, we spoke about how we should base all our deeds on love. Love is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. What are the other eight fruits? (Joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control). Today, we will explore what it means for a Christian to have joy, the second fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- ✚ Christianity is a life of happiness. The meaning of the word “Gospel” is happy news or a happy message. Therefore St. Paul said, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4)
- ✚ **The Lord loves to see us happy:**
 - ✚ In Genesis: He created everything for man, then He created man to enjoy God’s creation.

✝ In the New Testament: The first miracle Jesus did was in Cana of Galilee at the wedding (tell the story in detail as in John 2:1-11).

✝ Jesus said to His disciples: “I will see you and your hearts will rejoice and no one can take your happiness away from you.”

✝ **The world gives temporary and false happiness but living with our Lord Jesus gives permanent and true happiness:**

Please tell in detail two stories to compare:

✝ King Herod had a party which ended by the killing of John the Baptist, Mark 6:14-29.

✝ Abraham was very happy to invite the Lord and two angels in his house (Genesis 18:1-15).

✝ Compare the two types of happiness.

✝ Christian happiness is in the heart no matter what happens outside. A good example of that is St. Peter and St. John when they were beaten by the Jews because of the miracles they did in the name of Jesus, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:41).

✝ If you want to have happiness, try to live with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit gives you joy.

✝ “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

We all know that Jesus came on earth to give us eternal life. The gift of life would not have been granted if He had not come and died on the Cross. But what is the meaning of this Bible verse, “that He came to give us a more abundant life”?

He came so we may enjoy a better life here on earth. Do not think that He came just to give us some rules to follow, and some commandments to obey. He came to make us happy, and to give us the peace that passes all understanding. He came not to deprive us from any happiness in this world; but rather to let us enjoy all the blessings of living with our beloved Savior Jesus Christ.

When you confess and start a new life with Jesus, this is the abundant life, the better life, the happier life.

- ✝ Do not think that if you become rich and famous you will have a happy and better life. Why do some popular, rich people commit suicide although they have abundant wealth and are in need of nothing? They may be famous and popular, but they lack the divine love of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is precisely why they are not happy. The emptiness and misery of certain categories of people may lead to suicidal acts. If you want to start a life of happiness and joy, change your old ways, repent and confess your sins, open the door of your heart and invite Jesus Christ to come in and reign over it, and submit your life totally to the Lord.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

We may hear at school that Christians, because they do not have (or attend) parties as the world does, are not as happy. The truth of the matter is that a true Christian does not need parties to be happy. A true Christian is happy because God is the source of happiness (not parties) and God is giving happiness to him or her.

Songs

I WILL ENTER HIS GATES

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart
I will enter His courts with praise
I will say this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice for He has made me glad

He has made me glad, He has made me glad
I will rejoice for He has made me glad

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.





**NOVEMBER
THIRD SUNDAY**

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit: Peace - (III)

Please read John 14:27, Ephesians 2:13-18, the attached notes entitled “God Turns our Troubles into Good”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To continue with the series on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Peace is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Only Christians can enjoy true peace.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you" John 14:27

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ For the last two weeks, we spoke about two of the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love and joy.
What are the other seven fruits? (Peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control).
Today, we are going to talk about the fruit that will take away any and all of the sorrows, pains, and troubles you and I may have.
Does anyone know what that fruit is? (Peace)
Today, we want to learn where peace comes from, how we can lose our peace, and the importance of being peacemakers.
- ✚ Since the beginning, God granted man peace. Therefore, there was:
 - 1) Peace between man and God ...Adam used to meet and talk with God. God, in

turn, cared for Adam and did not want him to be alone, therefore He created Eve for him (Genesis 2:18). Also, Adam used to obey God. Indeed there was peace between man and God.

- 2) Peace between Adam and his wife ...When God brought Eve to Adam, there could have been rivalry between them. Eve could have been jealous of Adam because he was stronger than her ... and Adam could have been jealous of Eve because she was more beautiful. But the peace which the Holy Spirit produced in them let Adam say: "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23).
- 3) Peace between man and his environment ...Therefore, there was peace between Adam and even the beasts of the earth. God said, "...and let them (man) have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26).

✚ However, as a result of his sin, man lost that peace.

- 1) Man lost the peace he had with God. Consequently, he became afraid of God and tried to flee from Him. God called on him and Adam hid from Him and said: "I heard the sound of Thee in the Garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10). As a result, "the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden." (Genesis 3:23).
- 2) Adam lost the peace he had with his wife. He started blaming her for his mistake and said to God: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree and I ate." (Genesis 3:12).
- 3) Man lost the peace he had with his environment. The Lord God said to the serpent, "...I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel." (Genesis 3:15).

✚ As a result of sin also, Cain became paranoid and was possessed with fear and terror ... "I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me." (Genesis 4:14). Man's sin caused him to lose peace completely.

✚ When evil and wickedness increased, spread and "was great in earth" again peace

was lost and God brought down the Flood and destroyed the whole earth except for eight persons. (Genesis 6:5&17). Indeed, "There is no peace" says my God, "for the wicked." (Isaiah 57:21).

- ✚ The Ark of Noah was a symbol of the burial of Christ in the tomb and of Baptism. (Read I Peter 3:18-21). In and through the Ark, peace was given back to man ...peace with God, peace with man and peace with the animals and the whole environment. (Read Genesis 9:11).
- ✚ Again peace was taken away from man because of his sin and we read about wars, plagues, famines and troubles, which continued until the coming of the Messiah, at which time heaven declared, " ... and on earth peace..."

Through His Incarnation, Christ our Lord reconciled man with God. Therefore:

- 1) Through the Cross we were delivered from the punishment of sin.
- 2) Through His death we were delivered from death, which is the wage of sin.
- 3) Through the receiving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and individually at each person's Baptism, we have a communion and a fellowship with the Holy Spirit which grants us:
 - a) The gifts of the Holy Spirit, and,
 - b) The fruit of the Holy Spirit, "...love, joy, peace ...etc." (Galatians 5:22).

- ✚ Therefore, peace was granted again to man as a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

- ✚ There are two kinds of peace:

- 1) There is the peace which the world gives. It is temporary, shallow and superficial. And,
- 2) There is the peace which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is what Jesus talked about when He said: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid ..." (John 14:27-28).

- ✚ The peace which the world gives, the troubles of the world can take away. But the peace which comes from God, which the world cannot give, the world with all its sorrows, pains and tribulations cannot take away.

✝ The peace which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit can be well illustrated by the following dialogue which took place in the early Christian era between a Pagan King and a Christian Bishop.

King: I am going to put you in jail ...I am going to deprive you from all your friends ...You will have not even one friend.

Christian: I have one very sincere friend from whom you can never deprive me.

King: I will confiscate all your money and treasures.

Christian: You can never do that because all my money and treasures I have transferred to heaven, far beyond your reach.

King: I am going to kill you and end your life.

Christian: You definitely cannot ...My life is eternal...It has no end ... Whether I am in the body or out of the body, I am alive.

What more peace can anyone ask for? ...Jesus Christ our Lord said: “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.”

✝ The Holy Spirit not only produces a lasting peace, but makes of you a peace maker also:

✝ You make peace between yourself and God.

✝ You make peace between yourself and other people.

✝ You make peace between man and man. And,

✝ You make peace between people and God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9).

✝ If you do not make peace then you are not filled with the Holy Spirit ...or, the Holy Spirit is not productive in you. What if, on the contrary, you make division and enmity? Think about this,

✝ Notice that:

- 1) The Holy Spirit dwells in you through the Sacrament of Chrismation which is your own personal Pentecost.
- 2) The Holy Spirit works in you in and through the Holy Sacraments.
- 3) The fruits of the Holy Spirit are produced in you through your fellowship with Him.

✝ If the Holy Spirit produces peace in you, then:

- 1) You are not worried about worldly matters.
- 2) You are not worried when you have a test or an exam.
- 3) You are not worried when you get sick or you have a friend who gets sick or even dies.
- 4) You are not worried when you fall into a great temptation etc.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. We have to pray for and to struggle hard to attain:

- ✝ Peace with God,
- ✝ Peace with other people. And,
- ✝ Peace with your own self (inner peace) which leaves no place for worry.

2. We are to develop, through the work of the Holy Spirit within us, the ability to become peacemakers.

Songs

O KING OF PEACE

O King of peace give us
Thy peace, accord to us
Thy peace and forgive us our sins.

Epouroo ente tihirini moi
Nan entek- hirini semni nan
Entek-hirini kanennovi nan evol

Disperse the enemies of
The church, fortify her
And establish her forever.

Gor evol ennigagi ente ti-
Ekeklicia aricoft eros enneskim
Sha eneh

Emmanuel our God is now
In our midst, in the glory of
His father and the Holy Spirit

Emmano-eel pennooti khi ten
Miti tinoo khi epo-oo ente pefiot
Nem piepnevma ethoo-wab

May He bless us all, purify our
Hearts and heal the sickness
Of our souls and bodies.

Entefesmo eron tiren entef tovo
Ennenhit, entef talsho enny shony
Ente nen epsishi nem nensoma

We worship Thee O Christ
With Thy Good Father and the
Holy Spirit, for Thou hast come
And saved us.

Tenoosht emok O pekhrastos nem
Pekiot enaghathos nem piepnevma
Ethoo-wab, je ak-i aksoti emmon.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

GOD TURNS OUR TROUBLES INTO GOOD

If God loves us and takes care of us, why do troubles come? God's children get sick sometimes. They have sorrows and pains. Even God's little lambs get sick sometimes, or get hurt. When troubles come, is God forgetting to take care of us?

Oh, no! Troubles come for our own **good**.

That seems strange, doesn't it? How can trouble be for our own good?

The Bible tells a wonderful story about a boy named Joseph. He had many troubles. But all his troubles turned out for his own good, and for the good of many more of God's people too.

Joseph had ten older brothers. They were not always good boys. Sometimes they did things that were wrong. Joseph was a good boy. Yes, there was sin in his heart, too, but he **tried** to do the right things. Joseph's father, Jacob, loved Joseph very much.

Sometimes Joseph told his father about the wrong things his big brothers did. That made his brothers angry. After a while they hated Joseph.

One day Jacob sent Joseph to see how his brothers were getting along. They were far from home. They had gone away to find a better pasture for their sheep. Joseph went to find them.

The brothers saw Joseph coming. They said to each other, "Let's get rid of Joseph!"

So, when Joseph came near, they grabbed him and threw him down into a deep dark well. Joseph cried, "Please let me out! Let me go home!" But the brothers would not listen. They got rid of him by selling him to the Ismadites who took him to Egypt where he became a slave.

The years went by and then there was a famine. There was hardly anything to eat. Jacob sent his sons to Egypt. Joseph was the second person in Egypt after Pharaoh because he pleased God and was honest in living with him. Joseph saved the life of his people.

All of Joseph's troubles turned out for his own good and for the good of God's people. We must believe that all our troubles are for our own good, because God loves us. He does not let anything happen to us that is not good for us.





**NOVEMBER
FOURTH SUNDAY**

**THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: KINDNESS – (IV)
AND REVIEW OF THE LIFE OF ST. MENA**

Please read John 4:5-26 “Kindness of Jesus”, the attached notes about St. Mena and review briefly, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To complete the series about the fruit of the Holy Spirit. (The rest of these fruits are covered in grades 7&8.) We have to remind ourselves to be extra kind to everyone we deal with.

MEMORY VERSE:

You have well said, “I have no husband” John 4:17

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ For the last three weeks, we have been talking about the fruits of the Holy Spirit. What are they? (Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control). We spoke about love, joy and peace. Today, we will explore what it means to be a Christian who bears the fruit of kindness. As well, because the feast of St. Mena is around this time of year, we will be reviewing his story and finding out how we can learn from his life.
- ✚ Kindness (or goodness) is the reverse of severity and this is what St. Paul illustrated when he said “Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off” (Romans 11: 22). St. Paul also emphasized that kindness is

one of the characteristics of the saints “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Colossians 3:12).

- ✝ The characteristics of the kind heart are: it does merciful deeds to all even the enemies; it is not just emotions in the heart but it translates emotions into deeds; it can win people; it covers and does not declare other people’s sins; it does not judge others and it does not doubt others’ actions.
- ✝ The Lord Jesus was very nice and kind with the Samaritan woman and did not hurt her feelings. Tell the story.
- ✝ Tell in detail the story of the Good Samaritan who helped the injured man while a Jewish priest did not. He brought him to an inn and paid for him and relieved his pains (Luke 10: 30-37).
- ✝ In the wedding at Cana of Galilee the Lord Jesus was very kind to the people and changed the water into wine. Tell the story.
- ✝ We have to pray to God to give us a kind heart. Please Lord take away our hard hearts and give us kind hearts.
- ✝ People who have the spirit of God in them are always kind to other people taking the Lord Jesus as their example.
- ✝ Tell the story of the woman who was caught sinning and the Jews were ready to stone her. The Lord Jesus was so kind with her and stopped them from doing so (John 8:1-11).
- ✝ We must not be tough with people “Be kind as your father in heaven is kind”. We have to think from other people’s point of view. How do we deal with our younger brothers and sisters? We must treat them kindly. How do we deal with our friends? We must treat them kindly.
- ✝ The Lord Jesus was kind to the little children and blessed them while His disciples were trying to push them away (Matthew 19:13-15).
- ✝ Review the life of St. Mena as attached.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Let us make it an attitude in our lives to be kind to others; use kind words, be patient with others and be helpful to others.

2. We must be very kind to the handicapped and the sick people of any kind.

Songs

SAINT MENA

"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." (Mat 10:28)

St. Mina the martyr	beloved of Jesus
Always among us	we truly love you
Oh hero you were not afraid	in front of the crowds
You called with courage	"Oh my Lord Jesus"
Through the sufferings	you kept our strong faith
You stood unyielding	Jesus gave you strength
Your happiness was great	when they killed you
Angels carried you	to the eternal joy
The martyrdom's crown	you received from God
Intercede for us	before our Lord

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

ST. MENA, THE MIRACLE-MAKER

St. Mena is considered the most well known in the East and West, due to the many miracles that are performed by his prayers for us. That is evident in the numerous little clay bottles on which his name and picture are engraved. These were discovered by the archeologists in diverse countries around the world. For example, Heidleburg in Germany, Milan in Italy, Dalmata in Yugoslavia, Marseille in France, Dongola in Sudan, and Jerusalem. Visitors from these cities and others would buy these bottles which usually contain oil or water for blessing, and take them back to their relatives.

The Saint was born in the year 285A.D, in the city of Niceous which lies in the vicinity of Memphis. His parents were really ascetic Christians, the father Audexios, and the mother Aufimia. On the feast of St. Mary, the mother who did not have any children prayed in front of the Icon of the Virgin with tears that God may give her a blessed son. A sound came to her ears saying “Amen”, and thus she called her son Mena.

His father, a ruler of one of the administrative divisions of Egypt died when Mena was fourteen years old. At fifteen he joined the army, and was given a high rank because of his father’s reputation, and was appointed in Algeria. Three years later he left the army longing to devote his whole life for Christ. He headed towards the desert to live a different kind of life.

After he had spent five years as a hermit, he saw the angels coronating the martyrs with glamorous crowns in a revelation and longed to join them. While he was thinking of it, he heard a voice saying: “blessed be you Abba Mena because you have been called for the pious life since your childhood. You will be granted three immortal crowns; one because of your celibacy, the second because of your asceticism and the third because of your martyrdom.

Immediately he felt as if the earth under him was vanishing, and he was overwhelmed with great eagerness to be carried to heaven. In a mood of velour he hurried to the ruler declaring his Christian faith. His endless sufferings and the tortures that went through have attracted many of the pagans not only to Christianity, but also to martyrdom.

THE SAINT’S BODY

The Saint’s assassins tried to burn his relics but they failed as the believers loaded his body on a camel and headed towards the western desert. At a certain spot, the camel stopped and the people could not force it to continue, its trip by any means. Right there, they buried him near a water well (that place is his present monastery, at the end of Marriute Lake).

DISCOVERY OF HIS BODY

It so happened that a shepherd was attending his sheep in that area and a sick lamb fell to the ground. As it struggled to get on its feet again, its scab was cured. The story was spread quickly and the sick who came to this spot recovered from whatever illness they have, just by laying on the ground.

During that time, the daughter of King Zinon, the lover of Christ, caught the itch. His advisors suggested that she should try that place, and she did. At night the Saint appeared to the girl and told her that his body is buried in that place. The following morning, she bathed in the well and was healed. She related her vision about St. Mena to her servants, and that he cured her.

ST. MENA IN MARRIUTE

Immediately, King Zinon ordered that the Saint's body be dug out and a church to be founded there, Not only that, but he also ordered to build a large city to be named after the Saint's name. Sick people from all over the world used to visit that city and were healed by the intercession of St. Mena, the miracle-maker.

Mrs. Bucher recorded that destruction started to take place in the city and its inhabitants were degraded after the Arab Conquest. During the period after Haroun El-Rasheed, the Barbarians attacked it and burned a large portion of it. At the time of El-Mamoun he ordered to pull the entire city down, and then he used its marble pillars which are numerous to build his palace and the mosques. It was not until the twentieth century that international missions began to search for the city and the church. The remainder of it, no doubt, demonstrates the glory of the Coptic past.

THE NEW CHURCH OF ST. MENA

As soon as Pope Cyril the Sixth was coronated on St. Mark's throne he began to put the foundations of a very great monastery close to the remains of the old city. Thus in his blessed days, God's will had permitted the old monastery of St. Mena to be resurrected and, the Copts to visit it and to be blessed by the Saint. What is even more interesting is that the Pope had stated in his will that his body should not to be buried in the new famous Cathedral in Cairo, but in the monastery of his personal friend and intercessor, St. Mena the miracle-maker!





DECEMBER FIRST SUNDAY

THE PROMISE OF THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH AS MENTIONED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To illustrate the promise of God for the coming of His only Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation. For many generations the whole world had been waiting for the Saviour to come until He actually came.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh” 1 Timothy 3:16

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ For the last four weeks, we have been speaking together about the fruits of the Holy Spirit. These fruits are virtues we all want to try hard, as Christians, to achieve. However, how did we become Christians in the 1st place? Wasn't it because Christ came to save us, His children? Let us then, talk about how God saved us.

✚ God's plan for the salvation of man:

Adam fell in sin and deserved to die. His sin was inherited by his offspring, all the people. God, because of His mercy, prepared a plan for salvation. Because the sin was against God who is unlimited, it was necessary for someone unlimited to die for that sin. An angel or a prophet could not do that to satisfy God's justice. There is no unlimited entity except God who does not die. So, due to the mercy of God and

His love, He found that He must take flesh and die with this flesh to save man and hence satisfy both the justice of God and His mercy.

“Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Psalm 85:10).

✝ **Christ is God incarnate:**

Thousands of years before His coming, the prophets of the Old Testament foretold many things about Jesus Christ. Isaiah prophesied saying: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6).

✝ **Meaning of the Incarnation and Redemption:**

“The Word became flesh” (John 1:14): in this lies the ultimate joy of the Christian faith. The same Incarnate Lord is both perfect God and perfect man. He came down from Heaven to redeem the earth, to unite man with God for ever. St. Irenaeus wrote “the Son of God became the Son of Man, that man also might become the Son of God”. In that lifting up of human nature into an everlasting communion with the Divine Life, the Fathers of the early Church unanimously saw the very essence of salvation, the basis of the whole redeeming work of Christ.

✝ **The Incarnation is the best proof of God’s love for us.**

“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).

✝ With the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, He came down to our world to raise us to heaven.

“At that day you will know that I am in My Father and you in Me, and I in you” (John 14:20).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. God proved His great love for us by coming to us for our salvation. Can we go to Him as He came for us? Let us live our life with Jesus.
2. When the Lord Jesus came to our world, He did not mean just to give us commandments. He meant to unite with us and give us heavenly power.

Songs

He Did not Come

He did not come to judge the world
He only came to save the world
And when we call Him Saviour (3)

He did not come to blame
And Jesus was His Name
We call Him by His Name

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.





**DECEMBER
SECOND SUNDAY**

**THE BIRTH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST AND
THE BIRTH OF THE LORD JESUS ARE ANNOUNCED**

Please read Luke 1:5-38, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To show that these two announcements of the birth of St. John the Baptist and the birth of our Lord Jesus mark the beginning of many more happy events.

MEMORY VERSE:

“For with God nothing will be impossible” Luke 1:37

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✝ As we discussed last week, God came to us to save us. But who told us that the special baby born years ago was our Saviour?
Why, it was announced, of course!
Now, let us learn how this wonderful news was announced and to whom.
- ✝ Start with the birth of the Virgin Mary from Hannah and Jehoiakim. Test the memory of the students. St. Mary was from the tribe of Judas from the house of David the king. Hannah was barren and she and her husband prayed diligently and repeatedly to God to give them a child. The angel of the Lord gave the good news to Hannah and Jehoiakim that their prayers were accepted. Hannah conceived and gave birth to a baby girl and they named her Mary. When Mary was three years old, her parents gave her to the Temple. There she grew up and continued to pray and serve God. Mary’s father Jehoiakim passed away when she was six years old and her mother passed away when she was eight years old. St. Mary lived in the Temple

until she was twelve years old. Then God chose Joseph to be engaged to Mary and look after her as she had to leave the Temple at the age twelve and she had no living parents at the time.

- ✝ In the fullness of time for God to be Incarnated, God saw it necessary for Him to send someone before Him to prepare the way. This is similar to sending an ambassador of a certain country (A) to another country (B) to prepare the way for the king of country (A) before he visits country (B). The person whom God chose to send before the Lord Jesus was described by the Lord Jesus Himself as follows: “For I say to you, among these born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist” (Luke 7:28). His parents “were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:6). In the house of Zacharias and Elizabeth, John the Baptist was brought up and as anticipated he also became righteous and saintly.
- ✝ “But how was the birth of John the Baptist announced? The Gospel of St. Luke tells us, “Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him (Zacharias), standing on the right side of the altar of incense” (Luke 1:11). Actually the angel of the Lord is always standing in this place and never departs from the right side of the altar. The angel raises up the offerings, and the prayers along with the incense to heaven. This is the reason Abouna at the end of the service in the Divine Liturgy says ‘O’ angel of this day flying up to heaven with these prayers, make mention of us in front of the Lord so that He may forgive our sins.”
- ✝ Compare the announcement of the angel to Zacharias and to the Virgin Mary.
- ✝ Zacharias did not believe the message from God whereas the Virgin **believed and obeyed**. She said “I am the handmaid of God”. “For with God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37). Therefore:
 - For Elizabeth who was barren, God made her to conceive and give birth to a great prophet, John the Baptist. “But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe **my words which will be fulfilled in their own time**” (Luke 1:20).
 - For the Virgin Mary who had no husband, God made her to conceive and give birth by the power of the Holy Spirit. “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Jesus. ...The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you ...”(Luke 1:31-35).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

For with God nothing will be impossible. We just have to allow our requests to be delivered to God and He will answer and give us what is best for us at the right time. Let us pray regularly from our hearts. Let us not get distracted by any thoughts away from our prayers to our Heavenly Father.

Christmas Songs

TO MARY CAME GABRIEL

“Blessed are you among women” (Luke 1:28)

To Mary Came Gabriel And told her God is with you	to a village in Galilee O Mary, peace be with you
Hail O favorite one on earth And His name Emmanuel	you will bear Jesus the Christ means the Lord is with us
In the manger the Lord was born On the hay was His bed	the heaven is His throne Christ the King He laid His head
The angels of the heavenly host Glory to God in the highest	praised the Lord for His birth and peace be on earth.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.





DECEMBER

THIRD SUNDAY

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH

MARY'S SONG OF PRAISE AND THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Please read Luke 1:39-58, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To review the 3 happy events in the above title. The emphasis here will be on some of the meanings of St. Mary's song of praise.

MEMORY VERSE:

"My soul magnifies the Lord" Luke 1:46

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Last week, we learned about how the birth of St. John the Baptist and the birth of Christ were announced.
After Zacharias and Elizabeth, and the Virgin Mary were told all these things, three very important events took place.
Does anyone know what they are? (St. Mary visited Elizabeth, where she said some very meaningful words (what we now call St. Mary's Song of Praise), and St. John the Baptist was born).
Today, we want to learn about what happened, but also focus on those meaningful words St. Mary said, and to try to learn from them.
- ✚ Describe the 3 parts in the title. Let the students read and discuss.

1) The fullness of grace and love of others:

The fullness of grace prompts the person to love others and live to serve and do good to others. The soul that is full of grace thinks about others and their interests not its own interest. On the other hand, a person who does not have grace looks only after his own interests.

St. Mary, while she was in the first days of her pregnancy, she did not think about herself but she went “with haste” to help Elizabeth. As described by the angel, St. Mary was full of grace.

St. Mary visited Elizabeth for three reasons: i) to help her as she was old and in her sixth month of pregnancy; ii) to celebrate with her the expectancy of baby John; and iii) to congratulate her and tell her about the great message that she received from the angel about the birth of Jesus.

As soon as St. Mary arrived Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit; the babe leapt with joy and Elizabeth prophesied and told of the good news about St. Mary before it was said to her. Elizabeth said “blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord” (Luke 1:45).

2) The fullness of grace in speaking:

- ✚ St. Mary did not speak much. But what she said was of grace and spirit. A spiritual message, like that of St. Mary, penetrates deep and touches the heart of the person who hears it. St. Luke in his Gospel tells us that, “when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit” (Luke 1:41). Remember that a word can be good enough to change to the better the life of others and a word can be bad enough to change to the worse the life of others.
- ✚ St. Mary also was touched by Elizabeth’s greetings to her and sang her song of praise to God as mentioned in (Luke 1:46-53). The human race has never known words of prayer and praises as those of St. Mary. This song of praise is full of spiritual depth. It expresses St. Mary’s joy, simplicity and modesty. Here are some of the lessons which St. Mary’s song teaches us:
- ✚ The spirit of thankfulness filled St. Mary's heart. She started her praise by glorifying the Holy Name of God. This teaches us that we have to develop an attitude of thankfulness. Let us start all our prayers by giving thanks to God

for all His bountiful mercies on each and every one of us.

✚ Surely, St. Mary was very pleased for God's choice of her to be the "Theotokos", the Mother of God. But she never boasted about it. On the contrary, she was always exceedingly humble and modest. To the angel she said: "I am the handmaid of the Lord", and to Elizabeth in this song she said that God "has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant." Let us learn this lesson, to be humble always.

✚ Through the modesty of St. Mary, and because of it, the Holy Spirit spoke on her tongue and gave a message to all the coming generations, "...henceforth, all generations will call me blessed." (Luke 1:48).

✚ Again, the Holy Spirit spoke on St. Mary's tongue and stated the role or the task which our Lord Jesus Christ would be doing. He would oppose the mighty people, who depend on or misuse their might; He would be on the side of the meek and the humble; He would be on the side of the poor and He would grant His people happiness and strength.

3) **The birth of St. John the Baptist** (Luke 1:57-58)

John the Baptist is called in our church "the forerunner" (i.e., the one who came before). His task was to prepare the way for Christ and His Kingdom. Isaiah said about him, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of Lord, make His paths straight." (Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3).

Many Old Testament prophets foretold about the coming of the Messiah, but John the Baptist was the only one who was privileged to point to Him and say: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29).

To prepare the way for the coming of Christ and His Kingdom, John the Baptist called the people to repent. It is the same message given to us today. Before we can receive Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we have to repent and confess our sins.

Christ our Lord Himself testified that, "...among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist..." (Matthew 11:11). His greatness lies in the fact that he was a faithful witness to Christ even until death. Are we faithful witnesses to Christ? Do we witness to Him in our schools and among our friends:

Do our actions, our behaviour and our language show that we are Christians?

Lastly, because of the greatness of John the Baptist, our Church puts his icon next to that of Christ on the icon-screen.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

Let us learn to be accountable for what we say whether it is constructive or destructive. Remember St. Mary's song and its effect on whoever hears it.

Christmas Songs

I AM GLAD

“Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people” (Lk 2:10)

I am glad, I am glad
With Your peace and Your love

that You came to our land
we will go hand in hand

REFRAIN

He came for us
Our God, our God

with His tender love
came to save us our God

Saint Mary was pleased
He told her you will bear

when she heard Gabriel
our Lord Emmanuel

The angels in the sky
Glory to God in the highest

praised the Lord for His birth
and peace be on earth

A bright star far in the east
It led them to the manger

appeared to the three wise men
in the city of Bethlehem

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

NOTES





**DECEMBER
FOURTH SUNDAY**

THE NEW YEAR, HOW DO I START?

Please read attached article entitled, “The New Year Prayer”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

How can I make a good start in the New Year?

MEMORY VERSE:

“And the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” John 6:37

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Have you ever done something wrong, and wished you could go back and erase it? Have you ever written a test and wished you had more time to study for it to do better than you did?
Time is something that when it passes, you cannot ever get it back. But every new minute, hour, day, month or year you get is a chance to do better and be better than you were before. It is time God gives us to grow.
Many people make New Year’s resolution. What are some of your resolutions? (Ask children to tell you).
Let us explore what resolutions we can make so that we grow spiritually this year.
- ✚ No doubt everyone asks himself the following important questions:
 - ✚ How can I start on the spiritual road in the new year?
 - ✚ Who takes the first step? My Lord Jesus or I?

✝ Are there some wrong starts and right ones?

These are the questions that we are going to answer.

✝ **Who makes the start?**

The start is made by God. Christ came for us and gave us new life “as we were dead in our sins; Christ died for us”. Therefore, Jesus made the start and He is still working. He said: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me”. (Revelation 3:20). When we were baptized we gained the new birth in the new life with the Lord Jesus. Hence, this gift was given to us. We only have to open the door now for our Lord Jesus to enter and stay in our life. We have to answer our Lord Jesus who is knocking on our door. We have to listen to His voice in the Bible and comply with what He tells us. We have to regularly attend the Divine Liturgy.

✝ **Let us rise and go back to Jesus:**

If we have left the Lord and His commandments, we should do as the prodigal son did. Let us rise and go back to the father. Let us be determined to leave our sins, repent and confess. When we walk towards Jesus, He will welcome us back and will take away the old cloth (the sin) and give us the cloth of righteousness. **“Today, If you will hear His voice do not harden your hearts.”** (Hebrews 3:7). Let us pray and repent whole-heartedly, let us have a frank and merciless honesty with ourselves, let us admit all the wrong in ourselves, let us confess our sins in our private prayers to God and openly to the priest to receive the “absolution” and let us start a new chapter in our life with the start of the new year.

✝ **What might hinder us from starting now?**

- We are probably delaying our repentance because we don’t want to give up a “favorable sin”. Let us hold on to Jesus as our personal Savior and ask Him to help us.
- We may be afraid of what other people will say about us if we changed our ways and followed Christ. Moses preferred to even suffer affliction and follow the Lord rather than to enjoy himself in the palace of the king. (Please tell the story.).

✝ **A good way to start:**

Sit alone. Think of God's bountiful mercies and blessings to you. Meditate on Jesus' love to you personally, shown continuously in multiple ways. Then you will find yourself saying: I love Jesus and I whole-heartedly submit myself completely to Him and take Him as my Lord, my Savior and my king. I give Him my heart and my life. This is a good way to start the new year.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. As we say good-bye to a year that is gone without return, let us consider the factors that made us stumble at times. Let us put these factors in the hands of God and pray to Him to help us overcome any deficiencies in our life.
2. Let us commit ourselves to God. Let us pray a lot and ask God to work with us in everything.

Christmas Songs

AGIOS O THEOS

“Holy , Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isa 6:3)

Agios O theos	Agios Ees-shiros
Agios Athanatos	Amen. Alleluia
Holy, God, Holy	Holy, Mighty, Holy
Holy, Immortal, Holy	Amen. Alleluia
Alleluia is a word	that means praise ye the Lord
Everywhere it is heard	Amen. Alleluia
In all the universe	in heaven and on earth
They praise Him with this verse	Amen. Alleluia
Michael and Gabriel	Raphael and Souriel
They all praise Him as well	Amen. Alleluia
The heavenly Cherubim	and the mighty Seraphim
They too glorify Him	Amen. Alleluia
And the twenty four priests	seated on golden seats
And the four incorporeal Beasts	Amen. Alleluia
And all of God's	from every race and nation
Animals and vegetation	Amen. Alleluia

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE NEW YEAR PRAYER

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

**Lord, make it a blessed year... A pure year to please You...
A year in which Your Spirit prevails... And joins in working with us...
Hold our hands and guide our thoughts from the beginning of the year till its end...
Let this year be Yours, to please You...**

**It is a New Year, spotless; let us not tarnish it with our sins or impurities...
Lord, be with us in every work we intend to do this year...
Silent we will be and you will do everything...
Let us rejoice in all Your deeds, and say with John the Evangelist:
"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." (Jn 1:3)**

**Let this year, O Lord, be a happy year...
Put a' smile on each face and gladden every heart...
Let Your grace emerge in our trials and help those who are tempted...
Grant us peace and quietness of mind...
Give those who are in need, cure the sick and console the grieved...**

**We do not ask You, God, only for ourselves...
But we ask for the whole, because they are Yours...
You created them to rejoice in You. Then make them happy with You...
We ask You for the Church, for Your mission, that your word may reach every heart...
We ask you for our Country, for the world's peace that Your Kingdom may come everywhere.**

**Let it be a fruitful year, full of goodness...
Everyday and every hour has its own work...
Do not allow a futile moment...
Fill our life with activity, work, and production...**

**Grant us the blessing of a productive and holy toil.
Let the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with us in all our deeds...
We thank you, God, for you have kept us till this hour and granted us this year, that we may
bless you...**



For the success
of this Sunday
School Program
the teacher should
refer to the

HOLY BIBLE

in his/her preparation
of the lessons and in
teaching the students
in the class



**JANUARY
FIRST SUNDAY**

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Christmas Songs, preparation for a Christmas party and slide presentation.





**JANUARY
SECOND SUNDAY**

THEY OFFERED HIM GIFTS “GOLD, FRANKINCESE AND MYRRH”

Please read Matthew 2:1-12, the attached material entitled “Who are the Wise Men?”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To understand the meaning of these gifts.

MEMORY VERSE:

“When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy” Matthew 2:10

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Gold, frankincense and myrrh: what are these? (Gifts that the wise men gave to Baby Jesus).
Why did the wise men give Jesus these gifts?
Today, we are going to learn about these wise men, and will explore why these gifts were given, and what they represent.
- ✚ Start by reviewing who the wise men are. Emphasize that they came from far away and they arrived when Jesus was about 2 years old. We call them the wise men because they knew a lot about history and the stars.
- ✚ Indeed, the Incarnation of the Word of God had the prophets talking about it in different ways for a long time before it happened. Despite that, the majority of the Jews ignored that completely. Therefore, God put them to shame when the foreigners (or the gentiles) came and accepted the Messiah as the Son of God. The wise men, by worshipping Jesus as a baby, were, in a way, themselves the beginning of the Gentiles’ church. The shepherds were Jews and the wise men were Gentiles. The shepherds came to Him from a short distance but the wise men came from a far

away country. The shepherds were almost illiterate and poor, but the Wise men were sophisticated and rich. What is this simple fact telling us? It tells us that our Lord Jesus, by His coming, He broke all the barriers between people; the barriers of race, color or faith.

✝ St. John Chrysostom said that the star which appeared to the wise men was not a real star like all other stars but it was an angel that appeared in the form of a star. The angel was sent from God to guide the wise men.

✝ With the guidance of the Holy Spirit they carried these meaningful gifts to the Lord Jesus to indicate something. It indicates that the new born baby was not just one more baby coming into the world but He is different. Then the gifts presented to Him should be different also than what was usually presented to a newborn. The gifts were gold, frankincense and myrrh.

✝ **Gold:**

Gold is a symbol that the new born is a great King. This is despite the fact that, by His own free will He had a very modest place of birth, i.e., a manger. He is a spiritual King whose Kingdom is not of this materialistic world. As He is a spiritual King, the people who believe in Him and in His Kingdom must be spiritual people and not of this world. And as the Cross was His way to achieve for us His Kingdom, then the people who follow Him have to go through the Cross. As St. Paul said "...if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together". (Romans 8:17). The suffering is only external but the hearts of the believers are in continuous joy and peace. Let us pray that God will show us His kingdom so that He will become the king of our hearts.

✝ **Frankincense:**

They offered Him frankincense as a symbol of His priesthood. David prophesied about Jesus Christ and said: "The Lord has sworn and will not relent, you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). As Melchizedek was a priest who did not inherit the priesthood so also was Jesus. **The meaning of priest is a "middleman"**. Therefore we have an Advocate the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Son of God. The Son of God returned Adam to paradise by satisfying the justice of the Father for Adam's sin.

✝ **Myrrh:**

The Myrrh here is a symbol of the suffering that He was going to accept as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". (John 1:29).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

What is our gift to Jesus Christ our Lord while we celebrate Christmas? He only wants our hearts. After we give Jesus our hearts, then we can give everything to Him easily: we can give money, time, talent and service for the Church and for others; we can witness to Him everywhere we go by our word and deeds; and we can win people for His Kingdom.

Songs

WE THREE KINGS

“And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh” (Mat 2:11)

We three kings of Orient are
Field and fountain moor and mountain

bearing gifts, we traverse afar
following yonder star

REFRAIN

O, star of wonder, star of night
Westward leading, still proceeding

star with royal beauty bright
guide us to thy perfect light

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain
King forever, ceasing never

gold I bring to Crown Him again
over us all to reign

Frankincense to offer have I
Prayer and praising, all men raising

incense own a deity nigh
worship Him God most high

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying

breathes a life of gathering gloom
sealed in the stone-cold tomb

Glorious now, behold Him arise
Alleluia! Alleluia !

King and God and Sacrifice!
Earth to heaven replies

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

WHO ARE THE WISE MEN?

- ✚ All the historical sources indicate that the wise men are some of the very famous people of Persia. They are experts in Astrology (the Science of the Stars).
- ✚ History and tradition indicate that the wise men were three: Kasbar, Milikour and Balshaser. Accompanying them were a great number of people to the extent that king Herod was very troubled when they came to Bethlehem. They had one question, “Where is the Christ born, the king of the Jews?”
- ✚ The wise men came to Jerusalem when Jesus was about 2 years old. As indicated in Matthew 2:11 “and going into the house they saw the **child** with Mary His mother”. Therefore, they did not go to the manger. In the same night, the angel appeared to Joseph and told him to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt. Therefore, Herod killed all children up to 2 years old after he knew from the wise men the time in which they saw the star. The wise men saw the star on the same night Jesus was born, but it took them a lot of time to prepare and travel this very long distance using camels.

NOTES





**JANUARY
THIRD SUNDAY**

Epiphany

THE LORD JESUS ESTABLISHED THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Please read Matthew 3:13-17, John 1:18-34, John 3:1-13, the attached material entitled “The Baptism of Jesus Christ”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that our Lord Jesus established the Sacrament of Baptism by water and Holy Spirit through His own baptism.

MEMORY VERSE:

“The Heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove” Matthew 3:16

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ How many times were you born? Once? Or Twice?
In fact, all Christians are born twice!
The first time, we were born of our parents. The second time, we were born of God.
So, we all have two birthdays!
When were we born this second time? (When we were baptized).
Today, we are going to learn about the very first time the sacrament of baptism was performed, and for whom.
- ✚ Describe in detail the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ by John the Baptist. Our Lord Jesus Christ stayed in Galilee after He came back from Egypt and when He was about thirty years old, He came from Galilee to John at the Jordan River to be

baptized by him. “And John tried to prevent Him, saying ‘I have need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’ But Jesus answered and said to him ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:14-15). When Jesus had been baptized the **Heavens Opened** and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and the Father’s voice was heard saying “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”. Therefore the Holy Trinity was revealed (or manifested).

- ✝ The word Epiphany is a Greek word and it means Manifestation.
- ✝ *In many instances in the Holy Bible, we find the Lord Jesus teaches about something, practices it Himself to bless it and then He delivers it to His Disciples and the church to do it and gain all the heavenly powers in it. This was what happened to Baptism. He taught about it, practiced it Himself (although He did not need that) and then He gave it to us as a very important Sacrament.*
- ✝ When Jesus Christ was baptized by John He established the sacrament of Baptism in the church. John proclaimed about Jesus’ baptism that “He (i.e., Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11).
- ✝ The baptism of John was for repentance only. But the baptism of Jesus Christ is a new birth by the Holy Spirit. **(Now please mention the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus, John 3:1-13).** Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).
- ✝ The Lord Jesus explained to Nicodemus that baptism could not be understood by the human mind but only by seeing the effects on the new born, i.e., the Christians and their lives. Jesus used the example of the wind which we do not know exactly from where it is coming or where it is going but we only see the effects.
- ✝ Before Jesus ascended to heaven He said to His Disciples “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19-20).
- ✝ St. Augustine said that we have two births: a physical one, i.e. being born for this world, and a spiritual one, i.e. being born for the Kingdom of God.
- ✝ In our Orthodox Creed we say “we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins”. This teaches us that a Christian is baptized only once. When a person is baptized he becomes purified from the original sin of Adam and from any other sin committed in his life until his Baptism. Whatever sins committed after his Baptism,

they are forgiven through the Sacrament of confession. Once he is purified of his sins through Baptism, he is actually born anew, born in a new life, born in a life of blessedness and of son ship to God. When a person is baptized, he or his parents or godparents, on his behalf, declare his rejection of Satan and all his wicked deeds, and declare also his acceptance of Jesus Christ as his personal Lord, King and Saviour committing himself to be His faithful follower. Then he is dressed in white clothes as a symbol of his newly attained purity. Then a Cross is put around his neck to remind him of what Jesus said “whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his Cross, and follow Me.” (Mark 8:34)

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. When we were baptized, each one of us became a child of God. God declared then that He accepted you as His son or daughter. Now comes the time when you should declare to God that you also accept Him as your God to Whom you, in complete obedience, submit your life.
2. Besides, since Baptism is being born of God, then why don't we celebrate our Baptismal Day as we do with our birthday. This practice would keep reminding us of our identity as the children of God.

Songs

THE EPIPHANY

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Mat 3:17)

On Epiphany every year We celebrate once a year	we are happy with one accord the baptism of our Lord
On the Jordan shores there stood Preaching, teaching, all good	John the Baptist baptizing the people repent, sin despising
Jesus came to John the saintly He said “No, I am not worthy	asking him to be baptized I am in need to be baptized”
Jesus stood in the Jordan John saw the Holy Spirit	to be baptized by John instead as a dove above Christ’s head
There opened were the heavens This is My Beloved Son	the voice of the Father heeded in whom I am well pleased
We are immersed in baptism Our sins are forgiven	three times in holy water new birth we have with our Father
Alleluia, Alleluia Jesus Christ the Son of God	Alleluia, Alleluia was baptized in the Jordan

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

EPIPHANY
THE BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST

January 19

(According to the Julian calendar)

At the very end of the Jordan River and just before it pours its waters into the Dead Sea, there is a shallow area in the river that could be crossed by wading called now the ford of 'Bethabara' (the Crossing way). There, for many years merchants and travelers from Arabia, Persia and India have Crossed the river on their way to Jerusalem, Egypt and Africa. It is a very rugged spot. During the summer, the heat is terrible, the air is heavy and the surface of the Dead Sea is in the color of lead. There too was located the lost cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (read Gen.13-19). The smell of sulphur still hangs in the air as if to remind man forever that "...the wages of sin is death" (Rom.6:23).

Winter is a bit better because a cooling breeze blows down the Jordan Valley in the evening to replace the heat of summer.

INTRODUCTION

In this unfriendly spot of land, one day, a prophet or a messenger of God appeared around the year A.D, 30. He was a strange, rough looking man. His only garment was a camel skin caught at the waist by a strip of leather. His food was locusts and wild honey.

The message of that man was not more attractive than his appearance. He cried to everyone who passed by and, out of curiosity, stopped a moment to listen: "The reign of God is about to begin. Right now, God has His axe set ready at the base of the tree of your life. Unless you repent of your wicked ways, and submit your life to His rule, He will chop you down and throw you into the fire."

However, there was a happy side to his preaching. Everyone, who truly repented would be forgiven. ...But, how would the repentant be forgiven? ...The messenger did not explain. Instead, he lead his hearers to the river's edge and dipped their sweaty, dust-covered bodies into the refreshing water. Just as the water of the Jordan River cleansed their bodies, so God would clean their filthy, sin-stained souls. The Prophet called this 'baptism'. That is why we call that messenger of God 'John the Baptist'.

The word 'baptism' is derived from the Greek word 'baptismos' which means 'emersion'.

CROWDS COME TO JOHN THE BAPTIST

In the early Jewish tradition, and until the coming of the Messiah, God used to send every hundred years or so a prophet to preach to the Jews to return back to their God and to foretell about the coming of the Messiah, the Saviour who would release them from their bondage. When John the Baptist appeared at the Jordan River, it was more than 300 years since the Jews had a prophet to tell them, "Thus saith the Lord ..." The Jews were waiting for either another prophet or the Messiah Himself. Therefore, the word spread like fire through the land, "There is a new prophet preaching at the Jordan ford. There is a message that has come from God."

THE BAPTISM OF THE MESSIAH:

People crowded to see and listen to the new prophet. Among the crowds were the rich and the poor, the officials of the church and those of the government, the sophisticated and the plain ordinary people. As they listened, their consciences awoke and they remembered their past sins. They streamed into the water to be baptized by John ...to be cleansed from their sins.

One day, someone asked another, "Can this be the promised Saviour, the Messiah?" In few minutes, everyone was asking the same question. Right away John answered: "I am only a voice crying in the wilderness, a voice preparing you for the coming of the Saviour. Soon, someone will come after me, someone greater than I am that I am not fit to untie His shoes. He will baptize you with the fire of the Holy Spirit."

Among the crowds, there was a stranger from a far away city called Galilee. He also stepped into the water to be baptized. But this particular man was different from all other men. This man alone has no sins. He is the only man who does not need to be baptized. Why then does he join the wicked and the sinners at the water's edge? This thought came to John himself, and the Baptist said to Jesus Christ: "It is I who needs baptism from you, and yet You come to me?" But Jesus insisted.., Do you know why? Because Jesus is carrying on His back a heavy burden-all the sins of all those people who ever lived or will ever live who trust in God's salvation. That is why He is called The Saviour.

Something else happened at His baptism. After His emersion into the water, as Jesus stood up, suddenly above His head, as if a crack happened in the sky, and the Holy Spirit descended in the shape of a dove and rested on Him; and God the Father Himself said: "This is my Son, the Beloved, my favour rests on Him." (Read Mat. 3 and Luke 3).

EPIPHANY IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH:

We in the Orthodox Church, consider this event, the Baptism of Jesus Christ, one of the major Feasts of the Church. It is called the 'Epiphany' which is a Greek word that means 'showing forth' or 'manifestation'. In this event, Jesus Christ was not only declared by God the Father to be His only begotten Son; but also it shows forth the three Persons of the Holy Trinity; the Father speaks from heaven, the Son in the Jordan River being baptized, and the Holy Spirit descends from heaven taking the shape of a dove.

On Epiphany Eve, and just before the Divine Liturgy, a special service is held in the Orthodox Church. It is called the 'Lakan' which means 'the blessing of the water'. This is to commemorate the blessing of the water of the Jordan by having Christ baptized in it and by having the Holy Spirit descending on our Lord. In this service, the priest asks God's blessing of this water. He says: "Bless this water that is set before thee and give it the blessing that you gave to the Jordan by the descent of the Holy Spirit...Let it be a fountain of blessing, a holy gift, a healer of the sickness of the body and the soul ...and a blessing to the homes..." At the end of the service, the priest blesses the people with that water by Crossing their foreheads three times.





**JANUARY
FOURTH SUNDAY**

THE LIFE OF PRAYER - (I)

Please read the attached notes entitled “The Life of Prayer - (I)”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the start of 3 lessons on the life of prayer. In this lesson we learn about the definition of prayers and the power and source of it.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Lord, teach us to pray" Luke 11:1

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ What are some of the things you do everyday? (Eat, sleep, brush your teeth, read the Holy Bible, pray, etc.)
As Christians, we should pray everyday.
Today, we want to learn, in depth, about this thing we call “prayer”, which we are supposed to do everyday.
- ✚ Lesson #1 has 3 parts: A) what is prayer, B) the power of prayer and C) the source of prayer
- ✚ **Introduction: The Lord asks us to pray:**
 - ✚ "... men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1)
 - ✚ “Pray without ceasing” (Thessalonians 5:17)
 - ✚ “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16)

A) What is prayer?

- ✝ Prayer is the spontaneous perseverance of a man to stand in the presence of God, and it is also the Divine desire from God to invite man to be seen in front of Him. When a man prays he should never allow his mind to stray from the thought of Christ. So when we pray we must dedicate this time for our Lord only.

B) The Power of Prayer:

- ✝ Mention the story of Moses who held up his hands that Israel may prevail over Am-a-lek” (see attachment).

- ✝ **Prayers can do miracles:**

The church was praying for St. Peter in the prison (please read Acts 12:1-12).

C) Sources of Prayer:

- ✝ **The Bible:**

The first source of the life of prayer is the Bible. Our prayer will be sweet, acceptable and effective if it is scriptural or Biblical. In the Bible we find various model prayers uttered by many spiritually gigantic personalities. Some of these prayers we can and should use because they speak most eloquently to our needs, and some we can learn a lot from. For example: the Psalms of David form a collection of excellent prayers, the Lord’s prayer which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us, and other prayers such as the prayer of Jonah to the Lord his God from the fish’s belly.

- ✝ **Meditation as a source of prayer:**

Meditate upon the life of our Lord on earth, His humility in His birth and pray to be humble, His forgiveness to others even those who crucified Him and pray to learn to forgive, His meekness, His love, His compassion. His service, His prayer ...etc. Meditate also upon the Biblical events, the two men who went up to the Temple to pray, the one who asked for God’s mercy was accepted but not the boastful prayer of the Pharisee; the ten lepers who were healed, only one came back to give thanks to the Lord and thank Him. Is praising God a part of our prayers? Our Church puts a great emphasis on the prayers of praise...Indeed; meditation is an excellent source of prayer.

† **The Psalms as a source of prayer:**

These are the daily prayers offered by the Fathers of the Church and they are seven as David said “Seven times a day I praise you, because of your righteous judgment” (Psalm 119:164).

Every hour has the following:

- † Prayer of thanksgiving
- † Psalm 51, “Have mercy on me, O God...”
- † Psalms
- † A selection from the Gospel
- † Litanies
- † The Gloria
- † The Trisagon
- † The intercession of the Holy Mother
- † The Creed
- † Also kyrie Elyson (Lord have mercy) is said 41 times (The symbolism of the number represents what Christ my Saviour suffered for me on the Cross, namely, 39 lashes, a crown of thorns on His head, and the spear and nails).
- † The kyrie Elyson is followed by “Holy, Holy, Holy...”
- † Last is a Prayer for our Absolution.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. When we pray we must stand before God the Almighty with great awe, honor and respect, and, in discipline of mind and thought, we must concentrate on what we pray for and what we meditate upon.
2. We need three kinds of prayers: (1) Personal prayers, (2) Family prayers and (3) Prayers in the church.

Songs

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

Our Father Who art in heaven:
At times of grief we implore and pray

Who by all hosts is glorified
Our Father Who art in heaven.

Hallowed be Thine Holy Name
Save us, Your servants, from sin and shame

Whom everyone does praise and proclaim
Our Father Who art in heaven.

May Your Kingdom come O Lord
This is our wish and hope profound

By the Holy Spirit let our hearts be owned
Our Father Who art in heaven.

Thy will be done now and at all times
Abiding by Your laws in awe and fear

Make us submit in joy and cheer
Our Father Who art in heaven.

As it is in Heaven, so let it be
Guard Your servants, lest they fall

On earth, for You are Master of all
Our Father Who art in heaven.

The bread of tomorrow, give us this day
Your mercy is immense, don't take it away

O , our Lord of glory, to whom we pray
Our Father Who art in heaven.

Forgive our sins, O Lord and Master
According to Your mercy, not our sin and blunder

Forget us not , but everyone remember
Our Father Who art in heaven.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE LIFE OF PRAYER (I)*
THE LIFE OF PRAYER ACCORDING
TO THE COPTIC ORTHODOX TRADITION

(A) What is Prayer?

Prayer is the spontaneous perseverance of a man to stand in the presence of God, and it is also the divine desire from God to invite man to be seen in front of Him.

Prayer is similar to the umbilical cord in connecting man and God just as a baby is connected to and nourished by the umbilical cord in his mother's womb.

A king has numerous armies, soldiers, and officers, but only a few of them stand in the king's presence for his honor. Just as the king "reflects" on his soldiers who are so honored, so God "reflects" upon those who stand in the state of prayer for His Glory.

Exactly as Moses came down from Mt. Sinai after having neither eaten nor drunk anything for forty days and nights, his face shone to the extent that the people were not able to look at his haloed face and asked him to put on a veil.

During Jesus' visit with Mary and Martha, Martha was complimented for she toiled to serve the Lord; but Mary, who sat down at Jesus' feet, was quite fortunate for she chose to remain in a state of attention in front of Jesus.

The seductive devil never stops fighting us to put out the fire of prayer, lest we should defeat him, because he knows that prayer is our victorious weapon.

When we cease to pray, covetousness, concupiscence, and lust will easily overwhelm our hearts, and we will be taken by surfeiting, laziness, and worldliness. When we pray, there is another result: the treasures of heaven and its mysteries and all the kingdom's keys are made available. Prayer touches the secret springs of deity as the last pick of the miner may break open a hidden treasure or a deep cavern set with dazzling jewels.

Sometimes it is difficult to pray and the lack of prayer sometimes makes it harder, and a call for strength and power is needed.

Prayer is the Fortification of the Soul

“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” (Song 4:12).

The soul in the state of prayer looks like a “garden enclosed”, neither robbers nor strangers can pass through it. Therefore, when a man prays he should never allow his mind to stray from the thought of Christ. A man who prays will never accept any false religion or teaching that is not according to the Bible.

The soul in the state of prayer is a well spring shut up, its depth or its waters are not made turbid by the boisterous frolic of horses or by the tread of the farmer, the spring only mirrors the image of its viewer, her lover, who is the spouse of the soul. It does not reflect or accept any strangers. This is what prayer is; when we dedicate ourselves to our Lord only. His image is deeply engraved in our hearts and should cleanse.

The soul in the state of prayer is a fountain sealed. This simply means that the riches of the life of prayer are not measured by externalities of the life of saints, but by its depth. For example, the huge tree with its sweet fruits does not belong to the **visible** huge trunk above the earth but to the **invisible** roots inside the earth, and as the tree’s roots are long and deep inside the earth so also should man have a long and deep inner life of prayer.

(B) The Power of Prayer

In the war between Israel and Am-a-lek it came to pass when Moses held up his hand that Israel prevailed, and when Moses let down his hand, Am-a-lek prevailed. Man can never prevail in his spiritual war against the world and over its lusts without prayer.

In launching a submarine, the pressure of a baby’s finger is sufficient to put into operation the ponderous machinery by which the submarine majestically slides on to the ocean waves. So if we dare to pray, we can put into operation all the providential machinery and all the purposes of God, which are to be executed and which are in suspense until we pray!

We have to pray no matter how faint we feel. The unloaded gun is horrifying to the enemy.

The Three States of Prayer

a) Love:

At first, love is the beginning of prayer, for our Lord was' incarnated and became man, sharing our lowly nature according to his love for mankind, and by love we can transcend to the heavenly life.

b) Sanctification by Prayer:

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8).

c) Fullness by Prayer:

Our Lord Jesus showed Himself alive (to His Disciples) after His passion by many infallible proofs. He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which He said, “you have heard from Me” (Acts 1:4).

(C) The Source of Prayer

I. The Bible:

The first source of the life of prayer is the Bible. Our prayer will be sweet and acceptable if it is scriptural and according to the Bible.

If the sources of prayer are dried up, then irrigate the heart by meditation. By meditation we can hear our Lord speaking to us inside our hearts. My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother, bind them continually upon your heart, tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you, and when you awake, they will speak with you (Prov.6:20-22).

II. Meditation as a Source of Prayer:

Meditation is sharing the Lord in His journey of life, especially during His Incarnation.

The spiritual elder, Fr. John Saba, said that in meditating on His incarnation “we fly with the birds in the purity of His sky, and swim with the fish in the seas of His splendid Glory, and delight in His Holy Name as with a sweet in our mouth.

“Carry the infant Jesus in your embrace as His mother, St. Mary had done before.”

“Offer Him your best gifts as the Magi, and worship Him with the shepherds, praise Him with the angels, and carry Him in your arms as did Simeon, the Elder.”

“Flee with Him to the land of Egypt, and follow all the stages of His childhood; for if we love Him, we should be one with Him and the savoring of His immortal body will give life to our mortal body.”

“Follow the Baptist to the Jordan River to fill your eyes with His dazzling Glory during the Epiphany Theophany.”

“Go with Him to the wilderness and cast away your lusts, for the Lord was fasting for you, and be quiet as the beasts were quiet under His feet, who enjoyed their creator and served Him.”

“Follow Him to the Cross and share His suffering.”

“Awake early and go when it is dark to the sepulcher with the Marys to see His empty grave.”

“Wait with the Disciples in the Upper Room to see His appearance which is the light of light.”

“Hear Him calling you, come nearer to me.”

“Let your hand touch His wounds and be not of little faith, but be believing.”

“At last, incline your ear to hear Him saying, “peace be with you, and be fulfilled of the Holy Spirit.”

Let me conclude by saying, “if the sources of prayer are dried up, irrigate the heart by meditation on the Incarnation of the Word made flesh.”

In the Old Testament, the Lord accepted only ruminant animals to be His sacrifice and did not accept any other animals.

The reason for this is that the ruminants store food in their stomachs and from time to time regurgitate it for entertainment and to enjoy the delicious food. This is similar to the mediator, who delights in the word of the Bible, and he recalls it from

time to time as he meditates on the word day and night, as the ruMenant does to get his utmost satisfaction. “Blessed be the man who delights in the law of the Lord; and in His word meditates day and night.” (Psalms 1:3).

III. The Psalms as a source of Prayer:

The daily prayers offered by the Fathers of the church for all faithful Christians are seven, as was said by King David: “Seven times a day do I praise Thee of your righteous judgment.” (Psalms 119:64).

These seven prayers correspond to certain times of the day and night as arranged by the Apostolic Fathers in the books of the Apostolic Tradition, i.e., the Didache. The same is mentioned in the texts of Ibn El Assal and in Chapter 16 of the Book of Mesbah El Zolma, “The Lamp of Darkness”.

The following is a schedule of the canonical house and the reasons for their specification.

Every hour begins with a prayer of Thanksgiving and Psalm 51, “Have mercy on me, O God ...”

Then follow the Psalms corresponding to the canonical meaning of the Hours.

Following the Psalms is a chapter from the Gospel and the Gloria, then the Trisagon.

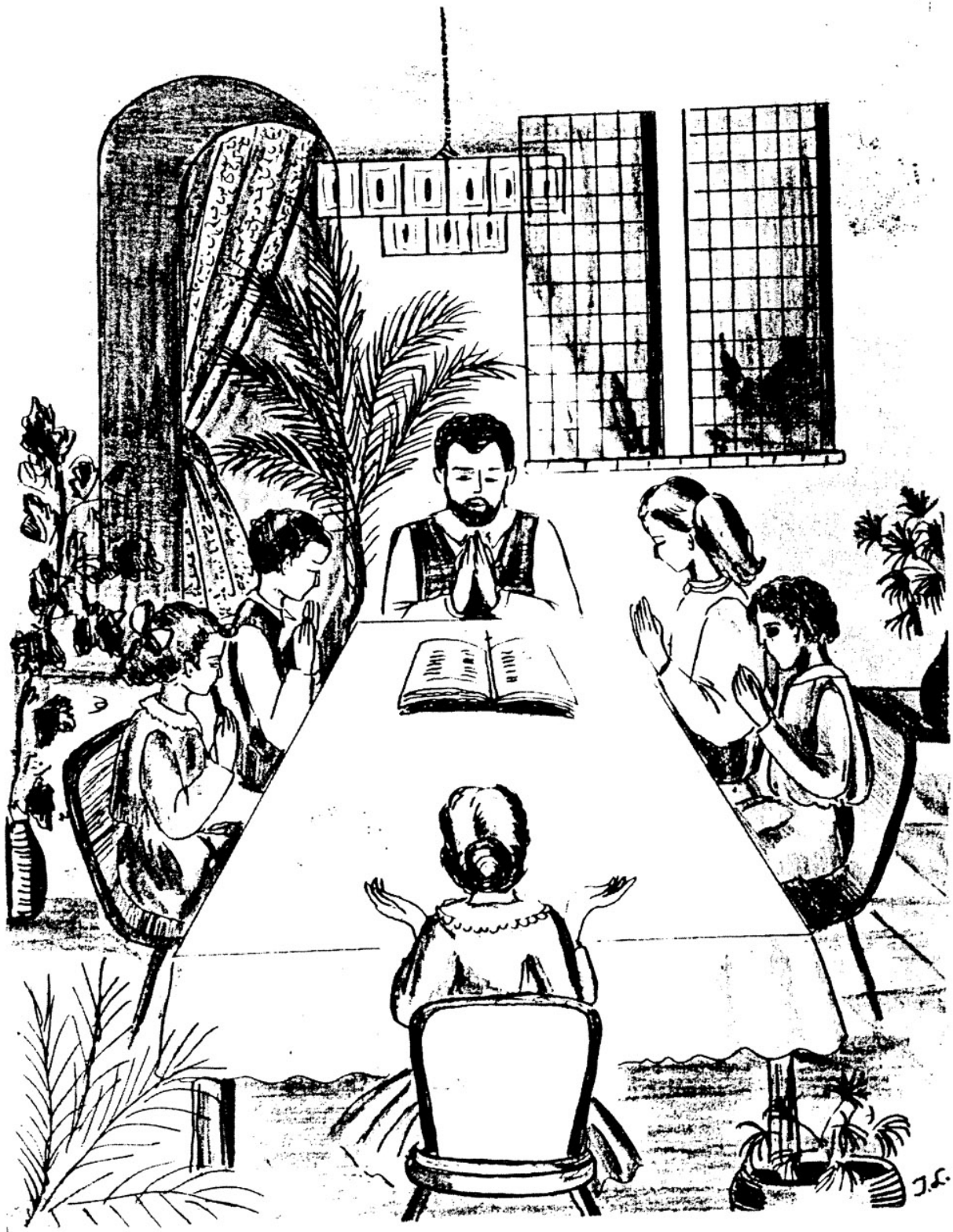
The Intercession of the Holy Mother.

The Creed.

Also **Kyrie Elyson** (Lord have mercy) is said forty-one times. After the **Kyrie Elyson** follows the “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabbath”.

Last is the Prayer for our Absolution.

* **Note:** This article is taken from Fr. Marcus Bishay’s book, “The Life of Prayer”, St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, Chicago 1978.





**JANUARY
FIFTH SUNDAY**

THE LIFE OF PRAYER- (II) (ALSO REVIEW THE LIFE OF ST. ANTHONY)

Please read the attached article entitled “The Life of Prayer – (II)”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the second lesson of a series of 3 lessons on the life of prayer. In this lesson we learn that it is very important to pray using the Agbeya.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Seven times a day do I praise You” Psalm 119:164

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- † How many times do you pray everyday? Once? Twice?
When do you pray? In the morning, before you eat your meals? What about before you sleep?
Well, if you were to follow the Agbeya, we would pray seven times everyday as the Psalm says “Seven times a day I praise You”.
Last week, we learned that we must stand before God, with honour and respect and pray with concentration.
Today, we are going to learn about the significance of each of the hourly Agbeya prayers, so that we learn how to pray everyday, all day long.
- † Please use the Agbeya (Canonical Hours) to illustrate the seven daily prayers. Urge each of the students to have his or her own Agbeya.

✝ **The Morning Prayer (Matins):**

Let us get up early and say this prayer: we thank God for shedding His light upon us and ask Him to protect us all day long. Let us give special importance to the Morning Prayer and put our whole day in the hands of God.

✝ **The prayer of the 3rd hour (9:00 a.m.):**

We ask that God may fill us with the Holy Spirit like what happened at this same time on the Day of Pentecost. If we are busy at this time, we can pray a part of it even in silence.

✝ **The prayer of the 6th hour (Noon):**

We remember that our Savior Jesus Christ was crucified for us at this hour.

✝ **The prayer of the 9th hour (3:00 p.m.):**

Jesus gave His soul into the hands of the Father. We remind ourselves that at any time our life could be taken away from earth. Therefore, we pray God to help us be prepared all the time for that hour.

✝ **The prayer of the 11th hour (5:00 p.m.):**

We thank God for all His blessings to us during the day.

✝ **The prayer of the 12th hour (6:00 p.m.):**

This is the prayer before we go to sleep.

✝ **The prayer of midnight:**

This is a long prayer consisting of three services. In this prayer we praise the Lord.

✝ It is a good idea for the family to pray together at least the prayer of the 12th hour from the Agbeya before going to sleep.

✝ If it is impossible for us in the regular days to pray all these prayers during the day because of school, can we say these prayers completely on Sundays or Saturdays or during vacation? During the regular week days at least we can say portions of each hour.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Let us practice to live with God in prayers all day long. Our day should consist of studying, eating, playing, exercising, helping our parents at home and, most importantly, praying.
2. We must pray using the Agbeya because it makes your prayers much deeper and meaningful.

Songs

SEVEN TIMES EVERY DAY

Seven times every day
With all my heart

I remembered Thy Name
O King of the ages

Jesus Christ our Lord
Who was incarnate

He was incarnate
And of the Virgin Mary

And changed our sorrow
To joy for our hearts

Let us worship Him
The Virgin Mary

Let us all proclaim
Saying, "Hail to you, O Mary

I praise Thine Holy Name
O God of every one

and I was comforted
and God of all gods

The True God
for our salvation

of the Holy Spirit
the holy pride

and all our afflictions
and rejoicing for all

and sing about His Mother
the fair dove

with the voice of joy
the Mother of Emmanuel"

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE LIFE OF PRAYER - (II)*
SCHEDULE OF THE CANONICAL HOURS
AND THEIR SYMBOLISM

THE FIRST HOUR — MORNING PRAYER
(6:00 A.M.)

This is also called the “Matins” Prayer. It is arranged to be prayed at dawn, when the first light appears. At this hour we praise the Lord for shedding His light upon us and bringing us to this day. We ask Him to keep us during the day free from sin and help us pass through the day in peace. The Gospel of this hour is from John 1, “In the Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God,.. That was the true light which gives light to every man who comes into the world...but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

THE PRAYER OF THE THIRD HOUR—TERCE
(9:00 A.M.)

This hour corresponds to the time in which the Holy Spirit came over the Disciples at the Feast of Pentecost. During our prayer we beseech the Lord for our fulfillment of the Holy Spirit.

THE PRAYER OF THE SIXTH HOUR—SEXT
(NOON)

At this hour our Lord was crucified on the Cross, and our prayer is to share His suffering. “O Thou who on the sixth day and at the Sixth Hour was nailed on the Cross, because of the sin which Adam committed in paradise.”

THE PRAYER OF THE NINTH HOUR—NONE
(3:00 P.M.)

At this time our Lord gave up His soul. “O Thou, who commended Thy Spirit into the hands of the Father when Thou hung on the Cross at the Ninth Hour...and when the thief saw the Chief of life hanging on the Cross, he said, “Had not the crucified one been God incarnate, then would the sun have not hidden its light, nor the earth shaken. Therefore, O Thou my Lord, remember me when Thou I You come into Thy Kingdom.”

THE PRAYER OF THE ELEVENTH HOUR—VESPERS
(6:00 P.M.)

This hour is arranged so that we thank God Almighty for all His blessings during the day and implore Him to guard us against the contingencies of the night and from the evils of Satan.

THE PRAYER OF THE TWELFTH HOUR—COMPLINE (EVENING)

This is arranged to be prayed before we go to sleep in thankfulness of God, who helped us pass through the day in peace. We ask Him to keep us from any evil during the night and we remember God in our hearts. As the prophet says, “When I remember you on my bed, I meditate on you in the night watches, because you have been my help, therefore, in the shadow of your wings will I rejoice” (Psalms 63: 6-7).

THE PRAYER OF MIDNIGHT

This is a long prayer consisting of three services. It begins with the prayer, “Rise up, O children of the light, to praise the Lord of Hosts, that He grant us the salvation of our souls. When we stand before you bodily, remove from our minds the sleep of inadvertence. Give us, O Lord, alertness so that we realize how to stand before you in prayer. Bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, who, by night stand in the house of the Lord...” This service also contains one of the Psalms, No. 119, and a reading from St. Matthew 25:1-13, “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be linked to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom...”

THE MEANING OF THE PSALMS

Because the words of the Bible are the breath of the Holy Spirit, the Psalms are the agreeable language of love, and have been accepted as inspired by the Holy Spirit to be the delicacy of language between two lovers, the Holy Spirit and man.

The Psalms are an inspiration to have a journey with our Lord, to acknowledge the whole creation, visible and invisible.

Through the Psalms, the Holy Spirit elevates us above our limited perspective to participate with the angels in their praises, to shout with the Cherubim and the Seraphim, “Holy, Holy, Holy”, and to transcend through the Holy Spirit the mists, which are the shadow of the Lord’s feet and the clouds, which are the Lord’s chariot. The spiritual journey enables us to walk beside the Lord upon the wings of the angels. The Holy Spirit is a wise and gentle companion, who has undertaken to guide us to our destination.

By means of the Psalms, the Holy Spirit carries us across many darksome woods and forests, where the sun has seldom penetrated and where wild beasts have their lair. Lying under the Lord’s care, we pass over paths paved with flint so sharp and slabs of rock so slippery, that when we feel tired the Holy Spirit will leave us to contemplate

alone in the long stretches of dreary desert where the glare blinds and the sunbeams cut like swords.

From the Gloria, the reading is “Realize, O my soul, the awfulness of that day and wake up. Light your lamp with the oil of joy, for you know not when the voice will proclaim unto you: “Behold the bridegroom cometh”.

After the midnight prayer, we awake to praise and glorify the Lord and to greet the light of the morning. The Midnight Prayer is to adorn the church with praises and ourselves in order to welcome the advent of Emmanuel and to participate in His Holy Communion.

* **Note:** This article is taken from Fr. Marcus Bishay’s book, “The Life of Prayer”, St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, Chicago 1978.



For the success
of this Sunday
School Program
the teacher should
refer to the
HOLY BIBLE
in his/her preparation
of the lessons and in
teaching the students
in the class





**FEBRUARY
FIRST SUNDAY**

THE LIFE OF PRAYER - (III)

Please read the attached article entitled “The Life of Prayer – (III)”.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the final lesson of the three-lesson series on the life of prayer. In this lesson we learn about specific useful prayers like: Kyrie-eleison, the Lord Jesus’ prayer, tears in prayers and the flash prayers.

MEMORY VERSE:

“For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” Acts 4:12

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✝ For the last two weeks, we have been talking about prayer: how we need to pray with honour, and respect, and with concentration, and how we should try to pray all day long using the Agbeya. Today, we want to learn about the different kinds of prayers. We want to end this series of lessons by discussion on how to have effective prayers.

This lesson has two parts:

Part I: Kinds of Prayer:

- ✝ **The “kyrie-eleison” - “God have mercy upon me” prayer:** (Please see attachment). Mention here the prayer of the Pharisee and that of the tax collector. The tax collector stood far and said “God be merciful to me, a sinner” (Luke 18:13). Jesus said that the tax collector went home purified from his sins but not the Pharisee. His prayer did not benefit him. Please read Luke 18:9-14.

† **The “Lord Jesus” Prayer:** (Please see attached material about the rule of Jesus’ prayer). To know the strength of this prayer, you have to try it. The prayer is one word, “JESUS”.

† **Tears in prayer:** (Please see attached material.)
This comes as an expression of repentance and love to God.

Part II: Obstacles to deep prayers:

1) The person is lukewarm:

- “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So, then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.” (Rev.3:15-16).
- A person is lukewarm, not hot, when he does not have a deep spiritual relationship with God but, like many so called Christians today, he gives part of his life and devotion to God and the other part to the world. Also, he is lukewarm when he prays to God without being aware of his sins and without repenting from them.

2) Formality of the prayers:

With some people, prayer becomes a habit that is done without even thinking. This should not be the case with us. We have to pray with understanding and spirit. When we sing in the church or at home let us put our hearts and minds into that hymn or that song.

3) God is only on the surface of our life:

If we are living all day long away from God, forgetting Him, falling into sins, being immersed completely in worldly matters ...etc., it becomes very hard for us, at the end of the day, to come back to God and have a real deep intimate prayer. We must practice remembering God often during our day and having even “flash” prayers and short communications with Him.

4) Too much involvement in the world:

Don’t be too involved in the world. Leave room for God in your life. Make sure that this room is becoming larger and not smaller.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Let us try our best to have effective prayers. In order to do that we have to remove the four obstacles mentioned above.
2. To benefit from prayers we have to pray many times during the day. The flash prayers, the prayer of the name of Jesus and the prayers of Kyrrie-eleison.

Songs

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

Our Father Who art in heaven:
At times of grief we implore and pray

Who by all hosts is glorified
Our Father Who art in heaven.

Hallowed be Thine Holy Name
Save us, Your servants, from sin and shame

Whom everyone does praise and proclaim
Our Father Who art in heaven.

May Your Kingdom come O Lord
This is our wish and hope profound

By the Holy Spirit let our hearts be owned
Our Father Who art in heaven.

Thy will be done now and at all times
Abiding by Your laws in awe and fear

Make us submit in joy and cheer
Our Father Who art in heaven.

As it is in Heaven, so let it be
Guard Your servants, lest they fall

On earth, for You are Master of all
Our Father Who art in heaven.

The bread of tomorrow, give us this day
Your mercy is immense, don't take it away

O , our Lord of glory, to whom we pray
Our Father Who art in heaven.

Forgive our sins, O Lord and Master
According to Your mercy, not our sin and blunder

Forget us not , but everyone remember
Our Father Who art in heaven.

SEVEN TIMES EVERY DAY

Seven times every day With all my heart	I praise Thine Holy Name O God of everyone
I remembered Thy Name O King of the ages	and I was comforted and God of all gods
Jesus Christ our Lord Who was incarnate	The True God for our salvation
He was incarnate And of the Virgin Mary	of the Holy Spirit the holy pride
And changed our sorrow To joy for our hearts	and all our afflictions and rejoicing for all
Let us worship Him The Virgin Mary	and sing about His Mother the fair dove
Let us all proclaim Saying, Hail to you, O Mary	with the voice of joy the Mother of Emmanuel”

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

LIFE OF PRAYER – (III)*

“Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me, a sinner” prayer.

This is a short prayer as a swift arrow split off into the sky to attend in front of the Lord. It is an acceptable prayer, because it calls upon the good name of our good Saviour, Jesus Christ. “For there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

When we are aware that we are always in the presence of God, we worship Him, honor Him, and speak with Him.

THE RULE OF THE JESUS PRAYER

Repeat the Name of our Savior Jesus Christ, hundreds of times every day, whether you are walking, resting, eating, or at work, for the continuous repetition creates a habit of prayer and the habit creates a permanent life of prayer. “Men always ought to pray and not lose heart.” (Luke 18:1).

At the beginning of your encounter with the Jesus Prayer, your mouth and tongue may not be used the repetition of the prayer. Also, you may feel despair and become unable to complete it, but the continuity of this prayer bursts forth as a spring of sweetness which would never dry up.

After much practice with this prayer, the tongue stops talking and the heart absorbs the prayer and repeats the invocation easily without resistance and without audible utterance.

This prayer shall speak to you when you are awake or asleep. “I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved! He knocks.” (Songs 5:2).

Upon completion of this prayer, the Holy Spirit abides in the heart through the name of Jesus Christ and transfers this good name into the image of our Saviour. By Him, we shall be transformed into the image of His Glory.

TEARS IN PRAYER

From the continuity of the invocation of the Name of Jesus Christ come forth tears. They come not by force, but easily as a response to real prayer.

Tears are the secret fountain flowing out of the eyes as rivers of living water which had been sealed.

It is difficult to write about the life of tears. Who can interpret or have the knowledge of the language of tears, because tears are our own feelings melted in a spot of tears.

Tears are the only tongue which has been understood by the whole world. Tears, as a tongue, speak all languages. When the tongue becomes perplexed and is unable to make one speak, then the heart will talk fluently by the tongue of tears.

A true expression of true feelings comes by tears. Tears wash the heart by the water of repentance, and revive the weak souls, as dew refreshes the tree's leaves.

Sometimes, uninformed people account tears as an example of mockery. They ignore the power of tears. Whereas our Lord can never be defeated by anything of his creation, our tears can overcome Him. "Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me." (Song 6:5)

Finally, the Holy Spirit carries the explosive springs of pure tears to represent us in front of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Our Lord keeps these tears nearer and dearer to Him. He lets not one drop of our tears fall down. Instead, He will gather our tears and preserve them to intercede before Him. (Psalms 57:8).

APPENDIX A

THE SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS

When the sun rises the beasts hurry to their dens and hide. So is the effect of prayer. It is the ray that falls, enlightens our thoughts, and every beastly ignorance which are our sins and lusts dissipate and vanish.

We only have to pray in courage and in concentration, because prayer expels the power of Satan and the evil spirits will disappear.

St. John Chrysostom

The prayer of the righteous is a key to the heavens. Its power is omnipotent. It is a shield for our souls, the assign of every virtue, the ladder on which we ascend up to the heavens and to the fullness of God. It is the work of angels and the foundation of faith.

St. Augustine

Man enters to pray, kneels, and his heart is filled with divine power. His soul rejoices with God as a bride rejoices with her bridegroom.

It is not difficult for a human who is busy all day with worldly affairs to spare an hour for prayer, when the subconscious dives to the depths of worship and contemplation in the other world of eternal life in deep pleasure, soothing his thoughts and elevating himself above worldly desires, when he sublimates and rises up then.

At these moments a cloud of fascination spellbinds his thoughts and veils them from the earthly thoughts. And he meditates into heavenly matters and indiscernible realities until he distills his thoughts into prayer, and all he can say then is, "I wish my soul goes out with my prayer."

Abba Macarius the Great

APPENDIX B

THE SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS

Upon the advent of monasticism among the Egyptian monks, the concept of meditative life was at its apex. The early Fathers adopted this principal aspect and practiced meditation to guard themselves against the pitfalls of the flesh.

They lived in solitude in their separate cells mostly in isolation. But when they congregated in groups inside the walls, they started to lose the magnificence of meditation. It is a known fact that any activity that forces a monk to relinquish his solitude to perform any duty — particularly with others — dissipates his mental concentration and blunts the power of visions he is exercising.

St. John Chrysostom

Whenever your tears run down your eyes during prayer do not be vain. Behold it was prayer that granted you these tears, and led the way to sincere confession to soften God's heart toward you. Beware not to make tears your goal because they are there to ventralise lusts. Do not desire tears for their own, lest you should enrage Him who gave it.

Nibs, the Sinaite

***Note:** This article is taken from Fr. Marcus Bishay's book, "The Life of Prayer", St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, Chicago, 1978.



For the success
of this Sunday
School Program
the teacher should
refer to the

HOLY BIBLE

in his/her preparation
of the lessons and in
teaching the students
in the class





**FEBRUARY
SECOND SUNDAY**

THE DIVINE LITURGY- (I)*

Please read the attached sheet entitled “The Divine Liturgy - (I)”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the first lesson of a three-lesson series on the Divine Liturgy. The purpose of this series is to familiarize the students with the Divine Liturgy, so that they can participate more in it, enjoy it and gain spiritually from it.

MEMORY VERSE:

“I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the House of the Lord” Psalm 122:1

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ When does the Divine Liturgy begin? (Sunday Morning)
No, in fact, the Divine Liturgy begins on Saturday night with the Vespers prayers. Unfortunately, many of us do not attend this portion of the Divine Liturgy. The reason is, most likely, that we do not understand what these prayers are all about. Today, we are going to learn about the beginning prayers of the Divine Liturgy, the Evening and the Morning Raising of incense.
- ✚ **Definition of the Divine Liturgy:**
It is a journey towards Heaven. We enjoy it through our fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ, as we are united with Him.
- ✚ **Outline of the Liturgy:**
It has two parts:

Part I: Vesper (Evening Raising of Incense) and Matins (Morning Raising of Incense)

Part II: The Eucharist and it consists of 3 parts:

- ✠ The Offering of Oblation
- ✠ The Liturgy of the Catechumens
- ✠ The Liturgy of the Faithful “Anaphora”

✠ In this lesson (I) we will concentrate on the Vespers and Matins. In lesson (II) we will concentrate on the Offering of Oblation and the Liturgy of the Catechumens. In lesson (III) we will concentrate on the “Anaphora”.

✠ **The prayers of the raising of incense:**

This practice goes back to the early church and is mentioned in the teaching of the Apostles (the Didache). It is a continuation of the Old Testament practice of Incense Offering which God commanded Moses and the children of Israel to follow (Exodus 30:34-38). An example of this is mentioned by St. Luke in his Gospel “According to the custom of the priesthood, his lot (Zacharias) fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the LordThen an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar **of incense**”(Luke 1:9-11).

When we look at the incense while the smoke is going up, we can almost see our prayers going up to God, accepting them as the sweet aroma of incense, David had the same thought when he prayed: “Let my prayer be set before you as incense” (Psalm 141:2).

✠ **In the Vespers:**

- ✠ First we pray from the Agbeya “three hours of prayers: None, Vespers and Compline”.
- ✠ Then we pray and sing hymns from the “Psalmody”. The Psalmody contains scriptural hymns, Doxologies (i.e. praises and songs of glorification to God) and Theotokions (i.e., hymns in honour of the Theotokos, the Mother of God). Every day of the week has its own special hymns and Theotokions. In the Psalmody as well, there are calls addressed to the whole world: visible and invisible, rational and irrational to praise the Lord the Creator. Thus before starting the Liturgy the whole congregation participates with all the creation in singing hymns of praise to the Savior.

- ✝ Then Abouna starts the service of raising of Incense with the Thanksgiving Prayer. **(Please bring with you your Divine Liturgy book and Psalmody)**. Then we use the Psalmody again for some Hymns for St. Mary, the Arch-Angels and some selected Saints.
- ✝ Then the Gospel Intercession by Abouna and then the Gospel reading.
- ✝ After the Gospel reading, Abouna prays the Intercessions: for the peace of the church, for the Pope of our church and for our meetings and our homes.
- ✝ Then the closing of the Vespers prayers by Abouna, the benediction and dismissal.

✝ **In the Matins:**

The Matins is very similar to the Vesper, but is carried on Sunday morning while the Vesper is carried on Saturday evening. So, for the Matins we pray the “Prime” from the Agbeya and the part from the Psalmody is much longer than that of Vesper, with a larger number of long and beautiful hymns.

✝ **Benefits of Vespers and Matins:**

It is a preparation for us to be able to enjoy the Eucharist and spiritually benefit most from it. It is also a call for the saints and the heavenly powers to participate with us in it.

- ✝ Our Coptic Church is indeed the church of praise to God. It is the richest church in its songs of praise and hymns of glorification. These can capture both the soul and the mind because of their depth. They can also raise the spirit to the highest level of spirituality. David said “Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise” (Psalm 84:4).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

We do make lots of preparations when we are about to undertake an important function such as exams, parties whether they are birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, or the like, going on a trip or even vacationing. In the same manner, but most important, we should prepare ourselves, spiritually, for participating in the Divine Liturgy which is in fact the meal of the Last Supper with the Disciples and a multitude of saints having Christ Himself at the head of the table (Altar) as our Host. Let us attend the Vespers and Matins regularly as an important preparation for that great spiritual event.

Songs

ALLELUIA THIS IS THE DAY

Alleluia, this is the day
Which the Lord has made
Let us rejoice and be glad
In it. O Lord , save us,
O Lord straighten our ways
Blessed is he Who comes in
The name of the Lord.
Alleluia.

Alleluia: Fai pepi eho-oo
Eta Epchois thamiof: maren
Thelil enten oonof emmon
Enkhith: O epchpois ek-e
Nahmen: O epchois ek-e sooten
Nen moit: Ef-esmaro-oot
Enje fi ethnioo khien ef raan
Em Ephois.
Alleluia.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE DIVINE LITURGY - (I)*
The Evening and Morning Prayers of the Raising of Incense

1. This practice goes back to the early church and is mentioned in the teaching of the Apostles (the Didache). Every day the priest and lay men congregate in the church morning and evening for prayer. In this way they begin the day with prayer and end it with the Lord's blessing and the prayer of the priest on their behalf.

2. It is a continuation of the Old Testament practice of Incense Offering which God commanded Moses and the Children of Israel to follow (Exodus 30:34-38). An example of this is mentioned by St. Luke in his Gospel (Luke 1:8-11) when he wrote about the annunciation of John the Baptist. There is mentioned that when the Lord's angel appeared to Zacharias, the priest, he was burning incense inside the temple and the people were praying outside. The place of the altar of incense where incense is raised (burned) was in the Holy in front of the veil that stands before the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. There God dwelt between the two Cherubim so that when the priest prayed and offered incense his prayer rose up to God who received it as sweet smelling offering from His people.

3. People may object and ask: Why should the Old Testament practices be adopted in the church of the New Testament? This objection may be answered by the following points:

i) The practices were ordained by God Himself and cannot therefore be altered or dismissed.

ii) Christ clearly stated that He did not come to change the law but to fulfill it.

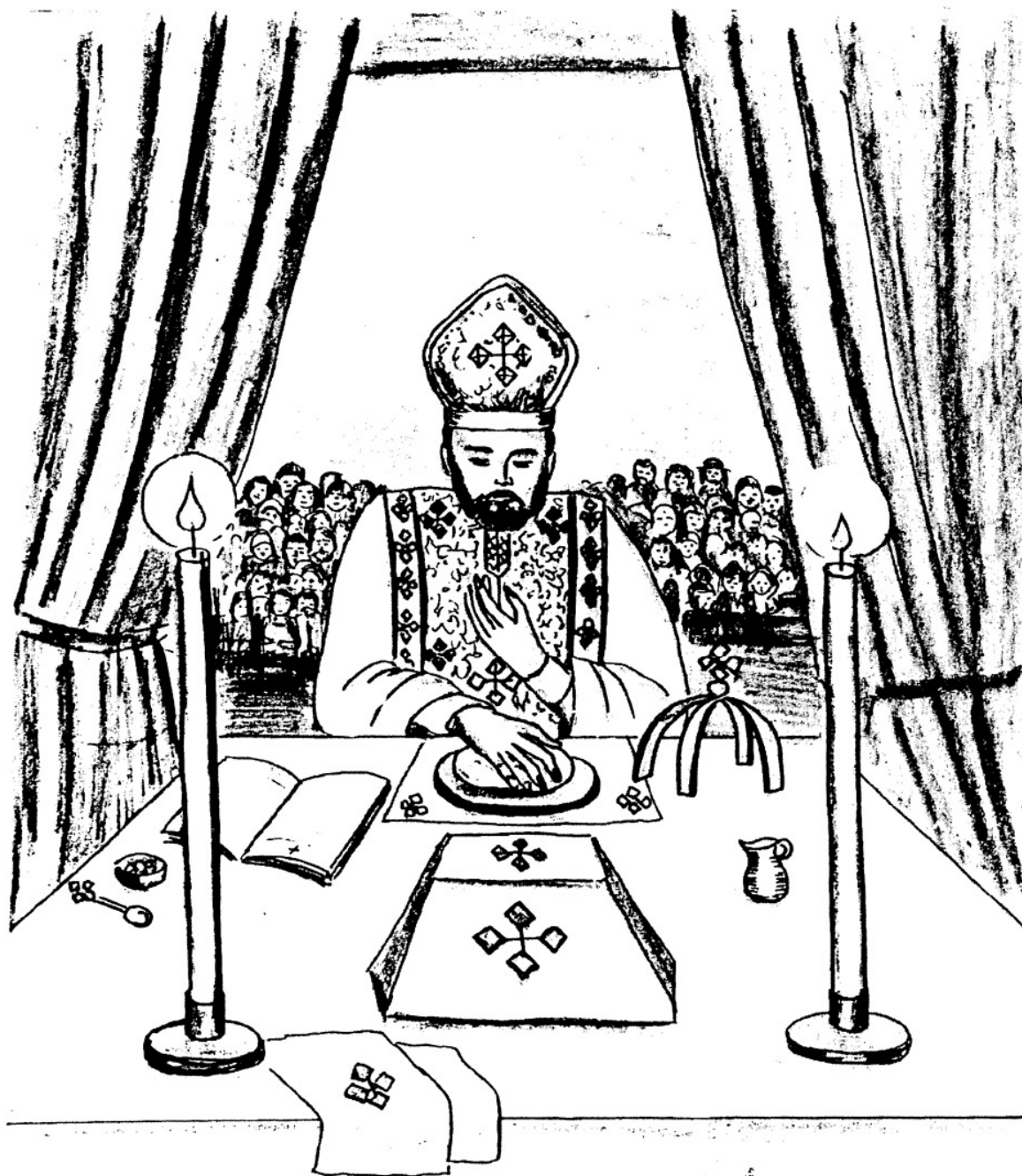
iii) It is true that some Old Testament practices were discontinued in the New. When this happened, however, the practice was replaced by a greater sacrament for which the earlier practice was only a symbol. For example circumcision was replaced by Baptism. Blood sacrifices were replaced by the bloodless sacrifice of the Eucharist, etc.

4. Raising of Incense is alluded to in the practice of the Heavenly New Testament Church, as seen in the Book of Revelation. There St. John saw a lamb standing, as if slain, (symbol of the Eucharist Sacrament) before whom the twenty four elders (priests) fell down having each a golden bowl full of incense which are the prayers of the saints. (Rev. 5:6-14, 8:3-4).

5. It is also worth noting that the place for burning incense, as practiced in the Old Testament is called “altar of incense” despite the fact that only incense is offered on it and no blood sacrifices. This is so because praise and prayers are also called sacrifices to God. “Let my prayer be set before you as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2).

***Note:** This article is taken from “Athanasius” magazine, The Church of the Virgin Mary and St. Athanasius, Mississauga, Canada, June 1983

NOTES



18.



**FEBRUARY
THIRD SUNDAY**

THE DIVINE LITURGY- (II)

Please read the attached sheet entitled “The Divine Liturgy - (II)”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the second lesson of a three-lesson series on the Divine Liturgy. The purpose of this series on the Divine Liturgy is to familiarize the students with the Divine Liturgy, so that they can participate more in it, enjoy it and gain spiritually from it.

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✝ Last week we learned that we should prepare ourselves spiritually for participating in the Divine Liturgy, and that attending the Vespers and Matins is an important part of preparing to attend the mass.
Today, we want to learn more about the next part of the Divine Liturgy: the Offering of the Oblations and the Liturgy of the Catechumens.
- ✝ In this lesson we will concentrate on the Offering of the Oblation and the Liturgy of the Catechumens.

✝ The Offering of the Oblation:

It is the starting point of a journey to heaven. It guides the church throughout this journey. It also indicates that the church must offer her whole life as a sacrifice to and through the Lord, who has sacrificed Himself for her sake. **Please describe the details using the attached sheets.**

✝ The Thanksgiving:

- ✝ Whenever we have a service we start with this prayer. Please describe what Abouna does during the Thanksgiving Prayer using the attached sheets.

✝ **The Liturgy of the Catechumens** (or “the liturgy of the word”):

It consists of a selected reading from:

✝ **The Pauline Epistles:**

A reading from one of St. Paul’s letters.

✝ **The Catholic Epistles:**

Catholic here means “universal”. We read a selection from the letters of the Apostles written to the whole world (James I & II, Peter I, II and III, John and Jude).

✝ **The Acts of the Apostles:**

It tells us about all the wonderful things the Apostles did through the actions of the Holy Spirit in them. We call this reading PRAXIS.

✝ **The Synaxarium:**

The Chronicles of the saints and martyrs. This is followed by the Trisagion. Let us sing it together.

✝ **The Gospel:**

This is the most important reading. We read a selection from one of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

✝ **The Sermon:**

* **Note:** This is the end of the Liturgy of the Catechumens.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

When we attend this part of the service let us concentrate on:

1. During the offering of the bread and the wine, we are actually doing as the Disciples did during the meal of the Last Supper. We present to Christ bread and wine, He consecrates and transforms them and gives them back to us as His Holy Body and Blood.
2. During the Liturgy of the word, let us listen attentively to the readings and the sermon. The word of God purifies our heart, as Jesus said to His Disciples “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.” (John 15:3).
3. Let us all participate in singing hymns. This way we can be more affected and grow spiritually deeper and deeper. We have to think about what we are singing as well.

Songs

THE CHERUBIM WORSHIP THEE

The Cherubim worship Thee,
And the Seraphim glorify Thee,
Proclaiming and saying :

Ni Sheroobim se oo-osht emok,
Nemm ni Serafim seti o-oo-nak
Evosh evol evgo emmos: Je

Holy, Holy, Holy , Lord of
Hosts, heaven and earth are
Full of Thine holy glory.

Agios, Agios, Agios, Kirios
Saba-oth, epliris ooranos
Ke see gee agias soo doxis.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE DIVINE LITURGY –II*
I was glad when they said to me:
LET US GO INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD
(Psalm: 122:1)

THE PROCESSION OF THE LAMB

Do you remember what we discussed in the previous lesson? ...

about Abouna choosing one of the loaves of the OBLATION BREAD, which is now called the LAMB. We also learned that the LAMB will become the BODY OF CHRIST through the prayers of the church.

Now do you remember the story about the Old Testament people, and how they used to bring an animal SACRIFICE if they wanted to confess their sins? The priest used to receive the people's confession while they put their hands on the head of the SACRIFICE. The sins of the people are then carried by the SACRIFICE and it actually dies instead of the sinners. When Christ came He became our SACRIFICE. We call Christ the LAMB of God that carries the sin of the world. Christ took all our sins and died instead of us, becoming our SACRIFICE.

After Abouna chooses the LAMB, he puts his hand on it confessing both his sins and the sins of all God's people. Abouna takes all the sins that we confess in front of him and puts them all on the LAMB of God that carries away the sins of the world. Abouna says in a low voice: "Grant O Lord that this SACRIFICE be acceptable unto Thee for my sins and for the ignorance (sins) of Thy people."

Then Abouna prays for all the people that ask him to pray for them; he prays for the sick, for those who have problems, for those looking for work, for the whole church, and particularly for those who asked him to pray for them. Now if you want Abouna to pray for you or for any member of your family, or one of your friends; what would you do?.. You guessed the right answer! You have to be in church before the PROCESSION OF THE LAMB, and you have to tell Abouna that you want him to pray for you or for anyone else.

While Abouna is praying, the whole church is also praying one of the prayers of the AGPEYA: Holy Holy Holy! Lord of Hosts! Heaven and Earth are full of Thine Holy Glory!

At the end of the prayer, Abouna wraps the LAMB in a VEIL and carrying it above his head, he stands at the door of the Sanctuary saying: "Glory and Honour, Honour and

Glory unto the Holy Trinity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

In doing so, Abouna is imitating Simeon the Elder who went to the temple, took the baby Jesus in his hands, and blessed God (Luke 2:25-32). Abouna then goes around the altar, the deacon also follows Abouna, carrying the WINE CRUET with a VEIL.

This PROCESSION (going around the altar) is a symbol of the coming of the LAMB, God’s Only Begotten Son into the world. All the people should bow during the procession. If you want to know the reason for this you should read Hebrews 1:6.

We greet the coming of Christ into our world by singing the beautiful hymn: This is the day which the Lord hath made, ... blessed be He that Cometh in the name of the Lord.

THE DIVINE LITURGY -II*
I was glad when they said to me:
LET US GO INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD
(Psalm 122:1)

Last time we spoke about the PROCESSION OF THE LAMB and we said that it is a symbol of the coming of the LAMB OF GOD into the world. After the PROCESSION we sing the Hymn: Alleluia, this is the day which the Lord hath made. Then Abouna holds the Lamb in his left hand, and the Deacon holds the wine cruet on a VEIL, in his right hand. The deacon brings the wine cruet close to the LAMB.

Abouna then blesses the LAMB and the wine by Crossing them three times; in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The deacon responds: Amen, following each blessing.

The word “Amen” is a Hebrew word that means “so be it” or “so shall it be”. It is said after each prayer to show that we sincerely meant what we said.

Now the people respond by singing the Hymn Zuxa Patrie, Ke Eiu, Ke Agio Pnevmati ... This is a Greek hymn that gives Glory to the Holy Trinity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; now, at all times and forever and ever. Amen!

Meanwhile, Abouna will put the Lamb in the PATEN under the ASTERISK, and later, he will put the wine in the CHALICE and mingle it with some water. Then he starts praying the THANKSGIVING PRAYER: Let us give thanks unto the beneficent and merciful God.

This is a very important prayer in our church. Whenever we have a service we start with this prayer. We say it at the beginning of the Offering of Incense, at the beginning of Baptism, Marriage service, Funeral service, and even when we pray the prayers of the Hours from the AGPEYA, we start by praying the THANKSGIVING PRAYER.

When this is over, Abouna says a short prayer in a low voice, asking God to accept the offering of bread and wine, bless them, and sanctify them, so that they become the Body and Blood of Christ. Then he covers the LAMB in the PATEN by placing a VEIL on the ASTERISK. He covers the CHALICE with another VEIL, then he spreads a large VEIL on top of both the PATEN and the CHALICE. This large VEIL is called the PROSPHERINE.

He also places another small VEIL folded in the shape of a triangle on top of the PROSPHERINE.

The most senior deacon in the SANCTUARY helps Abouna in spreading the

PROSPHERINE. If there is another priest in the SANCTUARY, he does this instead of the deacon. This is the RUBRIC for spreading the PROSPHERINE. Do you still remember the meaning of the word RUBRIC? If you have forgotten, turn back to the previous lessons!

While spreading the PROSPHERINE Abouna prays in a low voice. He prays for the church, for our POPE, and last of all for himself, asking God to forgive him his own sins. He then bows and kisses the ALTAR, then stands up and goes to the north side of the ALTAR, the deacon also goes before him. When they both reach the north side of the ALTAR the deacon bows then raises his head before Abouna who blesses him by touching his forehead. Then everybody leaves the SANCTUARY. Now everybody in the church will bow to receive the ABSOLUTION. Abouna says the ABSOLUTION while he is standing and holding the Cross. The ABSOLUTION is our permission to participate in the DIVINE LITURGY. Although we receive the ABSOLUTION through Abouna's mouth, it comes to us from God. God gave Abouna the authority to deliver the absolution to us.

THE DIVINE LITURGY

Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105)

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The part of the service that follows the ABSOLUTION, is called THE LITURGY OF THE WORD. Liturgy means a common prayer, a prayer in which many people participate. We call this part of the service THE LITURGY OF THE WORD, because here we hear the word of God, readings from the various books of the Bible. In-between these readings, we sing Hymns.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD starts with a beautiful Hymn: This is the Censer of pure gold ...because while we sing, Abouna offers Incense on the altar, while one of the deacons is standing across from him holding a Cross. They both go around the altar while saying prayers in a low voice.

After this Abouna offers Incense in front of the Sanctuary door, saying more prayers, while the people sing another hymn: the Intercessions. When we pray this hymn, we ask the Mother of God, the angels, and the saints to pray for us that God may forgive us our sins.

Incense is a symbol of the prayers of the saints, that is why Abouna offers Incense around the church while we sing this hymn.

The readings from the Bible start by the PAULINE EPISTLE, a reading from one of Saint Paul's letters (Epistles). Saint Paul wrote letters to some churches where he preached in the name of our Lord. He also wrote letters to one or the other of his disciples.

Then comes a reading from the CATHOLIC EPISTLES. The word Catholic means universal or belonging to the whole world. We call these letters Catholic because they were written by the Apostles to the whole world and not to a particular church or a disciple.

The next reading is from the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. This is one of the books of the Bible which tells us about all the wonderful things the Apostles did after Christ ascended to heaven. Sometimes we call this reading THE PRAXIS, a Coptic word which means ACTS.

The reading which follows the PRAXIS is from the SYNAXARIUM, or the book of THE CHRONICLES OF THE MARTYRS AND SAINTS. It is not a part of the Bible, but it is very important! It tells us about the wonderful things that the Saints which followed the Apostles did. Some of those saints gave their lives for Christ's sake. We call these saints MARTYRS. Some of the saints were not killed, but they suffered a lot for Christ's sake. These are the CONFESSORS. The hymn that follows the SYNAXARIUM is called the TRISAGION. This is a Greek word (TRIS = three, AGION = Holy). The TRISAGION is a Greek hymn that starts with the words: Agios O Theos, Agios Es Sheros, Agios Es Thanatos ...Holy God, Holy the Almighty, Holy the Immortal. That is why we call it the TRISAGION: 3 times Agios (3 times Holy).

The final and most important reading of all is the reading from the GOSPEL. We should always stand when we hear the GOSPEL reading. A few verses from the PSALMS are read before the GOSPEL.

***Note:** This article is taken from "Athanasius", magazine, the Church of the Virgin Mary and St. Athanasius, Mississauga, Canada, July, 1983





**FEBRUARY
FOURTH SUNDAY**

THE DIVINE LITURGY- (III)

Please read the attached sheet entitled “The Divine Liturgy - III”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the last lesson of a three-lesson series about the Divine Liturgy. The purpose of this series on the Divine Liturgy is to familiarize the students with the Divine Liturgy; so that they can participate more in it, enjoy it and gain spiritually from it.

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✝ For the last two weeks, we learned about the Vespers and Matins prayers (that attending them was important part of our preparation for attending the liturgy on Sunday). We also spoke about the Offering, when Christ consecrates and transforms the bread and wine into His Holy Body and Blood, and the Liturgy of the Catechumens, when we listen attentively to the readings and the sermon. Today is the final lesson about the Divine Liturgy when we will learn about Anaphora, the final part of Liturgy.
- ✝ The last part of the service mentioned in the previous lesson has the following parts:
 - 1) **The Intercessions** (the three intercessory prayers):
The church lifts up her heart to the Divine throne asking God to bestow peace upon the church “Intercession for Peace”, to strengthen her ministers in all the ranks of the priesthood “Intercession for the fathers” and to bless her meetings “Intercession for the congregations”.
 - 2) **The Orthodox Creed:** also known as the Nicene creed in reference to the council of Nicea (A.D. 325) or as the Athanasian creed in reference to St. Athanasius the apostolic (A.D. 296-373), the 20th Patriarch of the Coptic

Orthodox Church of Egypt.

- 3) **Pre-Anaphora:** the word Anaphora (or Eucharist) means “lift up” which means **actually the church is entering into a heavenly and Divine experience.**

The pre-Anaphora is the prayer of reconciliation. “Reconciliation” here refers to:

- a) Reconciliation with God through the death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ: “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life:’ (Romans 5:10).
- b) Reconciliation with one another before taking the Holy Communion:’
‘Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift’ (Matthew 5:23-24).

4) **Anaphora (or the Eucharist):** (please use the Divine Liturgy book)

- ✠ It starts with praising the name of the Lord who created heaven, earth, sea, and before Whom stand the angels and all the heavenly powers.
- ✠ Then Abouna prays saying Holy, Holy, Holy our God Who created man and put him in Paradise. After this, Abouna, on behalf of the congregation, remembers before God the history of man’s fall through his disobedience and God’s plan for his salvation through the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, His birth, His death for us, His resurrection, His ascension into heaven and His promise to come back to judge everyone according to his deeds.
- ✠ Then the Crossing of the bread and the wine three times each so they become by the action of the Holy Spirit in them Jesus’ Body and Blood.
- ✠ Then the seven prayers (or Intercessions) for the peace of the church, for the fathers, for the priests, deacons and congregation, for God’s mercy upon us, for the safety and salvation of the whole world and our city, for the plants, the weather and the waters, and for those who offered the oblations.

- ✠ Then the commemoration of the Fathers and Saints of the Church.
- ✠ Then the introduction to the partaking of the Holy Communion. We bow for the Holy Body of Jesus and His precious Blood.
- ✠ Then the Fraction Prayer (breaking of the Holy Body).
- ✠ The Lord's Prayer

✠ **The Confession:**

That **this is** the Body of Jesus Christ, born from our Lady St. Mary, crucified in this Body and resurrected with it on the third day. This Body is given for the remission of our sins and eternal life for whomsoever partakes of it.

✠ The Holy Communion

✠ Psalm 150 "Praise the Lord for ..."

✠ Final blessings with sprinkling of water, the Benediction and dismissal. Then we go home nourished by the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord and becoming partakers of the Divine nature, therefore we are able to say with Saint Paul that "Christ lives in me".

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

When we attend the Divine Liturgy we must be in full respect and attention because Jesus Christ Himself is with us on the altar. In one of the Fraction prayers, Abouna says "Today on this table is present with us Emmanuel our Lord, the Lamb of God who carries the sins of the entire world."

Songs

NIGHT OF THE LAST SUPPER

“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger...” (Jn 6:35)

Night of the Last Supper
Jesus took bread and broke

night of the Last Supper
and said: “Eat my body.”

REFRAIN:

Our Master, our Saviour
He is the Bread of life

gave us the vine of love
coming from heaven above.

Night when my Lord suffered
He took Wine and gave thanks

night when my Lord suffered
and said: “This is my Blood”.

This the Groom’s supper
Promising eternal life

is given to His bride
up in the paradise.

This is the food of souls
And the Blood is given

is offered to us all
to help me lest I fall

Jesus, you are my hope
Wash me and clean my soul

forgive my sins O Lord
put on me a new robe.

My heart I give to you
Your love for me I knew

Your will I want to do
when You paid all my dues

Jesus fills all my heart
And through this sacrament

the devil has no part
He gave me a new start.

Jesus to You I pray
Bless me and help me obey

to lead me in Your way
all what the Bible says.

Christ suffered for my sake
My sins Jesus forgave

His mercy is so great
and a new life He gave.

My heart is filled with joy
With God I have union

and my soul does rejoice
when I take communion.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE DIVINE LITURGY - (III)*

Now all things are of God, Who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. (2Cor. 5:18)

THE PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

“O Great and Eternal God Who formed man in incorruption, and death which came into the world by the envy of the Devil, Thou hast abolished through the life-giving appearance of Thine Only Begotten Son, our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

These are the opening words of THE PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION. This is the prayer that reminds us that once we were enemies with God, but now, we are the friends of God.

You see, when God created Adam and Eve, He told them not to eat of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God warned them: if you eat of that tree, you shall surely die.

And guess what Adam and Eve did! They disobeyed God

Now, God had to be true to His word and Adam and Eve were condemned to die because they disobeyed God. Not only Adam and Eve but also all their children had to die because of the sin Adam and Eve committed in Paradise. A very sad situation. Isn't it? Well, God thought so too! So, in order to save Adam, Eve and all their children, God sent Jesus Christ, His Only Begotten Son into the world. Christ came and took the punishment instead of all of us. Christ died on the Cross so that we can have Eternal Life and become Eternal like Him! That is why Christ is called God's Lamb that carries away the sin of the world.

When Adam disobeyed, God became Cross with all human beings. When Christ came and took the punishment, God was no more Cross with human beings.

Now, when two persons who were Cross with each other make up and become friends again, we call this **RECONCILIATION**.

That is why Saint Paul tells us that God reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, His Only Begotten Son.

When God reconciled us to Himself, He also gave us an example to follow. God teaches us to be reconciled to each other. This means that if one of our friends is Cross with us, we should always try to make peace with him or her.

This becomes very important before participating in the Liturgy, and partaking of the communion.

In order to make sure that no one in the church is bearing a grudge against another, we greet one another with a Holy **ASPASMOS** (a holy kiss). This is a symbol that we are all reconciled to each other. Only people who are reconciled to each other are allowed to take part in the service of the Liturgy, and receive without falling into damnation, God's heavenly and immortal gifts, the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ.

***Note:** This article is taken from "Athanasius" magazine, the Church of the Virgin Mary and St. Athanasius, Mississauga, Canada, August, 1983.



For the success
of this Sunday
School Program
the teacher should
refer to the

HOLY BIBLE

in his/her preparation
of the lessons and in
teaching the students
in the class





**MARCH
FIRST SUNDAY**

**CHRIST AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM- (I).
THE LORD JESUS FACED SATAN AND DEFEATED HIM**

Please read Luke 4:1-14, the attached material entitled: “Temptations”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the first lesson of a four-lesson series on “Christ and the establishment of His kingdom”. The purpose of this series is to learn from our Lord Jesus’ life and follow His example in our daily lives. In this lesson we learn how our Lord Jesus faced Satan and defeated him as one key element in the establishment of His Kingdom.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Then Jesus...was led by the spirit into the wilderness” Luke 4:1

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Does anyone know how to defeat Satan?
For the last three weeks, we have been learning about the Divine Liturgy and how we should behave during it.
But what about the rest of the week? How do we learn how to behave in our lives outside of Church? Jesus Christ teaches us how to behave, and today, we will learn how to defeat Satan.
- ✚ **Jesus’ life up to 30 years of age:**
Jesus lived on earth as a man and experienced all aspects in man’s life except for sin. During His childhood with the Virgin Mary, He helped St. Joseph the carpenter, to whom His mother was betrothed. In doing this, Jesus blessed the work with its different types. In fact a true Christian should do his best in studying and doing his

homework. He went to the Synagogue to be among the teachers and was discussed things with them. He worked in Nazareth until the age of 30. He helped His family and obeyed His parents.

✝ **Preparation of Jesus' Ministry:**

Before He started His ministry, our Lord Jesus did the following:

- 1) He was baptized by John the Baptist. He did not need to repent and be baptized, but He wanted to teach us to be humble and to fulfill all righteousness. After He was baptized He came from the Jordan River and was filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 2) He spent 40 days in the wilderness, praying and fasting **to teach us how to prepare to do things**: by prayers and fasting.

✝ **Satan Tempts Jesus:**

- ✝ Satan was puzzled when he saw the great power which our Lord Jesus Christ enjoyed. Satan thought that he is in front of a person who is not normal who can do things the normal person cannot do. Therefore, Satan came with all his weapons to tempt Jesus and Jesus defeated him.

✝ **“Man shall not live by bread alone”**

After our Lord Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights, He became hungry (as any person may become hungry) and Satan wanted to make use of our Lord's need for food.

Satan: “Command this stone to become bread” (Luke 4:3)

Jesus: “Man shall not live by bread alone” (Luke 4:4)

✝ **“You shall worship the Lord your God”**

Satan wanted to tempt Jesus for the second time. He took Him up the mountain and showed Him the world that was known at that time. Satan explained to Jesus that the entire world with its glory can be His and under His authority.

Satan: “Therefore, if you will worship before me” (Luke 4:7)

Jesus: “You shall worship the Lord your God” (Luke 4:8)

✝ **“You shall not tempt the Lord your God”:**

Satan did not give up after the Lord Jesus defeated him in the previous two

temptations. Satan found that our Lord Jesus defeated him using the word of God, and Satan wanted to use the same weapon that Jesus used. Satan took Jesus to the side of the altar of Solomon and asked Him to let Himself fall to prove that He is the Son of God.

Satan: “He shall give His angels charge over You to keep You” (Luke 4:10)

Jesus: “You shall not tempt the Lord your God” (Luke 4:12)

Jesus wanted to teach the people how to judge things correctly. A person should not ask God for things that are incorrect or with no purpose and then blame God. For it is incorrect to blame God by throwing yourself from a high place defying God and saying: Lord you can save and protect me. Here the person is to be blamed and not God.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

Jesus showed us the way to defeat Satan. We must be careful about the partial meanings of what Satan says which can appear to be correct but they are actually wrong.

Songs

TO WHOM SHALL I GO?

“Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” (Ps 50:14)

When I feel worried
You comfort me, O Lord

to whom shall I go?
I kneel and pray to Thee

When I feel sad
You make me glad, O Lord

to whom shall I go?
I kneel and pray to Thee

When I feel hungry
You feed me, O Lord

to whom shall I go?
I kneel and pray to Thee

When I feel sick
You cure me, O Lord

to whom shall I go ?
I kneel and pray to Thee

When I feel lost
You guide me, O Lord

to whom shall I go?
I kneel and pray to Thee

When I feel oppressed
You defend me, O Lord

to whom shall I go?
I kneel and pray to Thee

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

TEMPTATIONS

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

Many temptations happen because of the envy of the devil...

If the devil finds a highly spiritual person, he becomes furious and envious. He attacks him with temptations to see how firm he is in the life of the spirit...

That is what happened with the Lord Jesus Christ...

The devil was not happy about the great glory that the Lord Jesus received at the Jordan River, where the Father witnessed for Him saying, *"This is my beloved Son, in who I am well pleased."* (Mt. 3:17). Then the Holy Spirit descended on Him as a dove. Also, John the Baptist witnessed for Jesus saying, *"... whose sandal-strap I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose."* (Mk 1:7)... Therefore, the devil followed the Lord with temptations on the mountain.

The devil's combat sometimes proves the success of the spiritual work, which makes one confident in his work.

The devil's temptations are divided into two types:

Tribulations and enticement...

Tribulations do not hurt, but one can benefit from them and learn patience. They enable us to experience God's help. St. James, the Apostle said, *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials"* (Jas 1:2).

But the trouble is in the trial by sin...

A sin could tempt the faithful to do or think in a harsh way. In spite of his refusal, it continues fighting him till he cries to God saying, "lead us not into temptation."...

Temptations indicate that the devil does not give up...

He does not give up, no matter how long it takes. He kept on tempting the Lord Jesus for forty days. And in spite of his failure, and God dismissing him, he left for a while then returned to tempt Him, even when the Lord was on the Cross.

We do not fear the devils' combats.

The grace within us is much stronger than all the tricks of the devil. And the Holy Spirit that works within us is able to defeat the devil. Besides, God gave us authority over all the devils... As the Lord Jesus Christ has triumphed over all trials of the devil, He gave our human nature the spirit of victory and became our leader in His procession of triumph.

May the Lord be blessed in our trials as in our worship...





**MARCH
SECOND SUNDAY**

**CHRIST AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM - (II)
AND HE APPOINTED TWELVE TO BE WITH
HIM AND TO BE SENT OUT TO PREACH**

Please read Mark 3:13-19, and the attached material entitled, “The Sense of Responsibility”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the second lesson of a four- lesson series on “Christ and the Establishment of His Kingdom”. The purpose of this series is to learn from our Lord Jesus’ life and follow His example in our daily lives. In this lesson we learn about the Lord’s choice of His Disciples, as one key element in the establishment of His Kingdom.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach” Mark 3:14

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✝ Does anyone here know how we should behave as Christians?
Last week, we learned how to defeat Satan the way our Lord defeated him when Satan tried to tempt Him to sin.
Today, we will explore how we should behave as Christians, by learning about how Christ interacted with his disciples.

✝ **Why did the Lord Jesus select His Disciples?**

- ✝ Jesus chose His Disciples as an expression of His love to mankind and His fatherhood.
- ✝ Jesus chose His Disciples to teach them so that they could become witnesses.
- ✝ The Disciples would become Apostles to preach to the whole world.

✝ **From which type of people did the Lord Jesus choose His Disciples?**

- ✝ The Lord Jesus chose His Disciples from the average class of people. None of them held a great position in the society or had great knowledge. The society at that time had a lot of knowledgeable people who were affected by the philosophies of the Greeks and the Romans. Jesus chose His Disciples from the “simple” and “poor” type of people.
- ✝ Some of them were **fishermen**: for example Peter, Andrew, James and John. He said to them, “Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). They did not hesitate. They left the ship, the nets and the fish and followed Him.
- ✝ Some of them were tax collectors. Tax collectors were hated by the society because they took too much money from the people. Jesus called Levi and named him Matthew. Matthew left all the money and followed Jesus.

✝ **Relationship between the Lord Jesus and His Disciples:**

- ✝ The Disciples recognized **that Jesus is the Messiah**, whom they (and the Jews) were waiting for. Philip said to one of his friends about Jesus “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote Jesus of Nazareth” (John 1:45).
- ✝ The Disciples were with Jesus all the time during His ministry and He was devoted to instructing them, explaining the parables and teaching them to pray, fast and love other people even their enemies. Therefore the life of our Lord Jesus Christ gave strength to His Disciples and made from them new personalities and they were ready to preach the kingdom of heaven after they were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- ✝ Our Lord Jesus Christ sent His Disciples under His supervision. He invited the twelve Disciples and sent them two by two to preach His message and urged

them not to carry anything for the road. They preached the people to repent and they healed a lot of people. Please read in the class Mark 6:7-13. When the Disciples had problems or temptations, Jesus showed them how to solve them. For example, when they asked Him, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (they probably thought that Jesus' kingdom was earthly), Jesus invited a young boy and set him in the midst of them and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3-4).

✝ After Jesus' resurrection from the dead Jesus asked His Disciples to go and preach to the whole world and baptize people in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. They were responsible and gave their mission 100% of their efforts.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Jesus was a superb example for His Disciples. Let us make sure that our behavior as Christians is a good example for others especially the younger ones.
2. Let us ask ourselves in every word we say or every action we do, whether our Master and Lord Jesus Christ would say or do the same or not? If not, we must not say it or do it.
3. Our churches today have an important duty to preach all those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour. We must pray to God to support us in this service.
4. We have to be responsible and accountable for all our actions as the Disciples of the Lord were.

Songs

THEY WILL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS

“If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.” (1 Jn 4:12)

We are one in the spirit
And we pray that our unity

we are one in the Lord
will one day be restored.

REFRAIN

And they'll know we are Christians
Yes they'll know we are Christians

by our love, by our love
by our love.

We will walk with each other
And together we'll spread the news

we will walk hand in hand
that God is in our land

We will work with each other
And we'll guard each man's dignity

we will work side by side
and save each man's pride

Our praise to the Father
And our praise to Christ Jesus
And our praise to the Spirit

from whom all things come
His only Son
who makes us one

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

The Sense of Responsibility

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

The spiritual person realizes that his life on the earth is a responsibility.

His life is a message. God will ask him how his life was fruitful, productive and beneficial to all those who were in contact with him... God will ask him about what he has done and what he could have done, but he did not do...

Formally speaking, this responsibility might be limited. But with regard to love, this responsibility is boundless. Love has room for everyone, and is always ready to serve and help.

The spiritual person questions himself before he is questioned by God: What has he done for all his acquaintances? Is there anyone among them whom he knew not, who needs his help; he ought to know them to be able to serve them.

Philip was walking on the road when he saw an Ethiopian eunuch reading in the Book of Isaiah. He felt a sense of responsibility towards him. He did not leave him till he felt the service has been completed and he led him to God.

St. Mark was sitting in the shop of a cobbler called Anianus, who was fixing the saint's sandal. St. Mark had a sense of responsibility towards this cobbler. He took advantage of this opportunity and started talking to him till he believed in the Lord and so did his household..

Both of them learned from Christ when He sat at the well near Samaria. A Samaritan woman, who was a sinner, came to draw water from the well. The Lord felt responsibility towards her. He led her and all her townspeople to salvation.

These three meetings seemed, at the beginning, as just passing by incidents, but the sense of responsibility turned each into a chance for salvation.

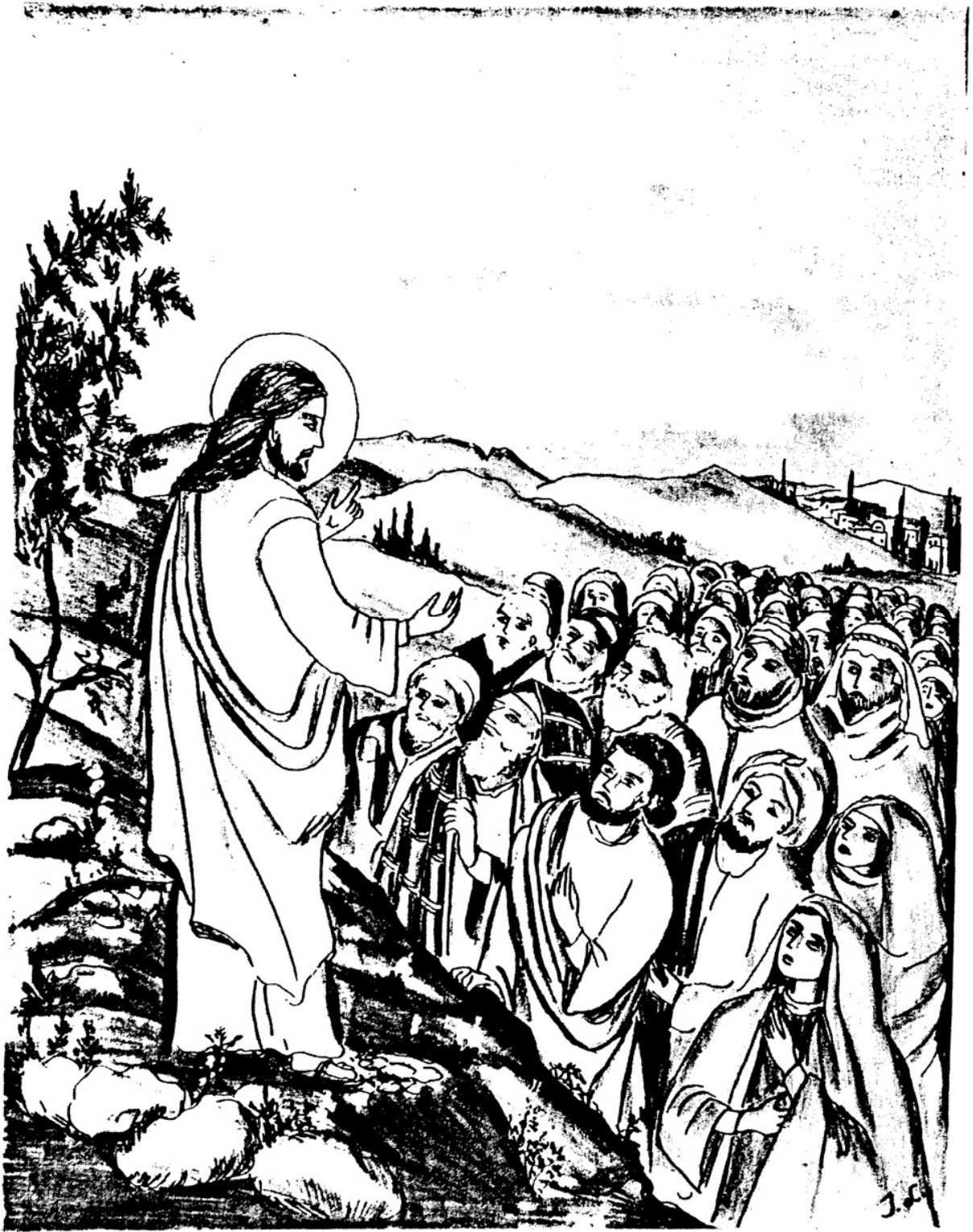
If that is the case with those one meets accidentally, how ought it be with the formal responsibilities of a person in life?

Fatherhood is a responsibility, motherhood is a responsibility, marriage is a responsibility and serving is a responsibility. Even friendship is a type of responsibility.

Do not try to apologize by passing the responsibility to others. God is going to ask you about what you have done according to your abilities...

The more one's sense of responsibility grows, the more the circle of his service widens. It all happens through love, not through formalities. One even volunteers to do many acts of love.

His heart makes him keen to do this as the Bible says, "...To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." (Jas. 4.17)





**MARCH
THIRD SUNDAY**

**CHRIST AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM -- (III)
THE LORD JESUS ANNOUNCED GOD'S GLORY BY HIS TEACHING**

Please read Matthew 5:1-48, the attached article entitled, "Wisdom", and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the third lesson in a four-lesson series on "Christ and the Establishment of His Kingdom". In this lesson we learn that the life of Jesus Christ the Lord is a declaration of God's glory.

MEMORY VERSE:

"So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" Luke 4:22

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ What if you know of someone who knows everything about everything? Wouldn't You want this person to teach you everything as well?
Who is a person like that? (Christ)
The last two weeks, we learned how to defeat Satan and how to behave as Christians, through examining the life of Christ as our example.
Today, we want to explore the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ so that we can apply them in our daily lives.
- ✚ The message of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary was a declaration of God's glory who was going to be incarnated for the salvation of the human race. Also the birth of the baby Jesus showed the glory of God when the Angels appeared to the

shepherds and sang saying “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). In addition, when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, the glory of God was also declared “Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16-17). And Jesus’ preaching continued for around three years. He went around doing good deeds, miracles and teaching the people. Then He suffered on the Cross on behalf of the human race, died and resurrected in glory. Therefore, all the life of Jesus Christ was a declaration of the glory of the God incarnate.

We are going to illustrate in this lesson and the next the glory of God through:

- ✠ The teaching of our Lord Jesus.
- ✠ The miracles of our Lord Jesus.
- ✠ The transfiguration of our Lord Jesus.

✠ **Jesus was called “The Good Teacher”**

He was both teaching His Disciples privately and with other people as well. They were surprised at His words. “So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke 4:22)

- ✠ Our Lord Jesus Christ was teaching in a new way to which the people were not used. He was speaking to them in a simple language that was understood by the general public, yet it stemmed from His Divine wisdom. He was speaking to them with authority. He was speaking to them using parables that were realistic and easy for them to understand. Sometimes He was discussing these parables with them.

- **Teaching by Parables:**

For example:

- ✠ The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) to illustrate who is the true relative.
- ✠ The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) to illustrate that God accepts repentance.

A parable is said to simplify certain spiritual meanings.

- **Teaching by individual discussion:**

For example:

- ✚ The Samaritan woman (John 4:5-42). Jesus indicated to the Samaritan woman that He was the Christ that the World was waiting for.
- ✚ Nicodemus (John 3:1-3). Jesus illustrated to Nicodemus the basics of faith and the new birth from the water and the Spirit.

- **The Sermon on the Mountain, Matthew 5:1-48 (Basis for Christianity)**

Explain portions of it. Let the students read portions of it in the class and explain.

Who are the sons of the kingdom?

- ✚ The poor in spirit, i.e. humble.
- ✚ The people who mourn, i.e. because of their sin.
- ✚ The meek, i.e. low voice and humble.
- ✚ The hungry for righteousness.
- ✚ The merciful.
- ✚ The pure in heart.
- ✚ The people who work for peace.

All these groups will have places in the Kingdom of God. Let everyone ask himself, to which group do I belong? Do I belong to the pure in heart or the poor in spirit or the merciful, etc.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. The teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ are different from any other teachings. They are the teachings of God Himself. We must give them our utmost attention.
2. We must listen to the Lord's teachings and apply them in our daily life, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).
3. The Lord's teaching was filled with gracious words and heavenly wisdom. We must ask in our prayers for God to give us heavenly wisdom and blessings. We need these for our benefits and for serving the church.

Songs

JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

“Now you are the body of Christ and members individually.” (1 Cor 12:27)

REFRAIN

Jesus Christ our Lord	Saviour of my soul
Let my thoughts be Your thoughts	that is all in all
Let my senses be Your senses	that is all in all
Let my heart be Your heart	that is all in all
Let my will be Your will	that is all in all
Let my deeds be Your deeds	that is all in all
Let my way be Your way	that is all in all

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

WISDOM

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

Any virtue void of wisdom, is not a virtue.

For example, love must be with wisdom, otherwise it will turn to pampering or to a harmful affection.

Also wisdom must be incorporated into talking and preaching in order to know what to say, when and how...

Wisdom is a virtue to be fulfilled in all servants, not only in the superiors like the bishops, but even in the deacons. The Apostles said, *"... seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. "* (Acts 6:3)

Wisdom gives its possessors a spiritual perception, an enlightened understanding, which leads to selection and distinction.

When St Anthony was asked about the best of virtues he answered, *"Discretion..."*. as virtue without discretion might destroy its possessors.

There is *"wisdom that is from above"* (Jas 3:17) and as one of the *"spiritual gifts"* (1 Cor 12), and he who lacks wisdom, let him ask of the Father of Light, from the elders, and the spiritual instructors who are gifted with wisdom and understanding.

A person could acquire wisdom through experience, and benefit from his own and others' mistakes. He could attain such wisdom by the continued useful reading, or associating with the wise, learning their ways of talk and action.

Solomon did not ask God to give him wealth or authority, but sought wisdom to manage his people. God blessed him and granted him wisdom. One of his best sayings is, *"The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. "* (Ecc 2:14)

Wisdom necessitates meditation and thinking, looking at the matter from all angles, reviewing all its consequences before doing it. Do not act in excitement or rage.

Wisdom needs intelligence and broad-mindedness...

It does not agree with stubbornness, conceit and stiffness of opinion.







**MARCH
FOURTH SUNDAY**

**CHRIST AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM - (IV)
THE LORD JESUS SHOWED HIS DIVINE GLORY BY
HIS MIRACLES AND HIS TRANSFIGURATION**

Please read the attached article entitled, “Christianity, a religion of strength” and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the fourth lesson of a four-lesson series on “Christ and the Establishment of His Kingdom”. The purpose of this series is to learn from our Lord Jesus’ life and follow His example in our daily lives. In this lesson we learn that the Lord Jesus’ performance of great miracles as well as His transfiguration were key elements in the establishment of His Kingdom.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Lazarus, come forth" John 11:43

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ What would you do if you knew someone who could control the weather and make it sunny on the day you wanted to go to the park?
What would you do if you knew someone who could heal any kind of disease or sickness?
What about if this person could raise people from death?
Today, we want to discuss how God can give us all we need and more.
- ✚ The people were astonished at Jesus’ teachings and they realized that He differed in His teachings from the scribes “for he taught them as one having authority, and not as

the scribes” (Matthew 7:29). As the multitude found out His authority in teaching, they also found out about His authority in performing several miracles. Jesus our Lord was wandering around in all cities doing good deeds: healing the sick, forgiving sins of those possessed by devils, raising people from the dead and controlling nature.

(I) The Lord Jesus’ Miracles

✚ Jesus’ authority and power over sickness:

There are several miracles mentioned in the four Gospels:

✚ The healing of the leper: Matthew 8:2-4

✚ The healing of the man born blind: John 9:1-41

Note: ask the students to add more.

✚ Jesus’ authority on death:

There are several persons whom the Lord Jesus raised from the dead.

Lazarus’ resurrection from the dead (John 11: 1-44). Lazarus and his two sisters were friends of our Lord Jesus Christ. They enjoyed His care and love. When Lazarus was sick, the two sisters sent to Jesus telling Him about their brother’s sickness. They believed in Jesus Christ and His power of healing. Lazarus was in Bethany in the vicinity of Jerusalem. But Jesus did not go fast enough to Lazarus’ house; Jesus knew with His Divine ability that Lazarus died. Then Jesus said to His disciples “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up” (John 11:11). Jesus meant that Lazarus is dead and that He was going to raise him up. As Jesus became near Bethany, Martha came to meet Him and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You” (John 11:21-22). With this faith, Jesus went to the tomb where Lazarus was buried for four days. Jesus asked the people to remove the stone from the front of the tomb. Jesus looked up to heaven, prayed and cried loudly “Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:43). The dead came out with his hands and legs tied up. So, Jesus asked the people to loosen Him and let him go.

In this miracle Jesus emphasized that He is the Son of the Living God and that He is the Resurrection and Life. This miracle also shows that faith does miracles and even if God allowed a problem to happen, He shows us a way through His Divine power to overcome any problem.

Note: ask the students to add more.

✚ Jesus’ authority over nature:

✚ **Jesus rebuked the wind:** Matthew 8:23-27

"Even winds and sea obey Him".

✚ **Jesus walks on the water:** Matthew 14:22-36

"It is I, have no fear".

✠ **Jesus' authority on forgiveness:**

Jesus' forgiveness for the paralytic carried by four men (Mark 2:1-12).

"Your sins are forgiven".

✠ In summary: the teaching and the miracles of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ were expressions of His Divine authority. Hence Jesus formed His kingdom by defeating Satan, by selecting His Disciples and by His glorious teaching and miracles.

✠ **Note:** St. John the Evangelist at the end of His Gospel wrote, "This is the disciple who testified of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. **"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself 'could not contain the books that would be written. Amen'"** (John 21:24-25).

(II) The Lord Jesus' Transfiguration on the Mountain

Please read Mark 9:1-10.

The Lord Jesus took Peter, James and John up the mountain, and Jesus was praying. All of a sudden His garment became intensely white. Moses and Elijah came and started to talk to Him. The three Disciples were very afraid. They were also very happy to see the very white garment and the radiant Body of Christ. They wanted to stay on the mountain so St. Peter said, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here". St. Peter asked for a cover. Then a cloud overshadowed them. A voice came from heaven saying "This is my Beloved Son. Hear Him". This shows that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God by the declaration of heaven.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Let us make all our requests known to God in our prayers. He is our Heavenly Father. With faith and prayers, God gives us all what we need and a lot more.
2. Neither an Angel or a prophet or a father were entrusted with our Salvation. But God Himself came for us with tremendous power and authority to save us. Glory be to Him. Let us praise His Holy Name.
3. As the Lord Christ showed the power and glory of God, He also gave His Disciples, Apostles and the Church today to be very powerful (i.e. heavenly power).

Songs

A GOD LIKE YOU

I have never seen a God like you, my Lord
Who opens the gates, and unlocks the chains (2)
And created roads in the middle of the sea
Never prevented by mountains nor barriers.

REFRAIN:

I have never seen a God like you my God (2)

No one else but you appears in the den
And rescues the souls from the lion's hem (2)
Who can lighten the darkness but you O King
And fill my heart with joy that I may sing?

You have suffered lots on the wooden Cross
To give me back my life and restore my loss (2)
You have promised me You are coming back
To grant me the eternal life I lack

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

CHRISTIANITY, A RELIGION OF STRENGTH

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

The gentleness and humility, that Christianity calls for, are no indication whatsoever that it is a religion of weakness, but it is a religion of strength. The Bible describes the faithful as, "*sharp arrows of the warrior.*" (Ps 120:4). And about the Church, the Bible says that it is, "*Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners.*" (Song 6:10).

This power is what the Holy Spirit gives to the faithful.

Therefore, God said to them, "*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me.*" (Act 1:8)

The Bible also says, "*And with great power the Apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all,*" (Act 4:23) as if "*...the Kingdom of God present with power.*" (Mk 9:1)

The summit of power, in Christianity is shown in the Apostle's saying, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*" (Phil 4:13)

He also says about the strength in serving "*...I also labour, striving according to his working in me mightily.*" (Col. 1:29) It is power, in spite of obstacles, as the Lord said to Paul, "*Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you and no one will attack you to hurt you.*" (Act 18:9,10).

It is power with authority over all devils...When the Lord Jesus sent His Disciples, He "*...gave them power and authority over all demons.*" (Lk 9:11). We also thank Him in our prayers as He has, "*...given us the authority to trample on serpents, scorpions and over all the power of the enemy.*" (Lk 10:19).

The Christians are strong because they are an image of God and God is powerful...

The Lord Jesus, despite His gentleness and humility, was powerful. It was said about Him, "*Gird your sword upon your thigh, O Mighty One.*" (Ps 45:3). He was powerful, "*...for power went out from Him.*" (Lk 6:9).

"The Lord is clothed, He has girded himself with strength." (Ps 93:1). "*He has shown strength with his arm.*" (Lk 1:51). He showed His power through signs and wonders, "*God's arm has made strength.*"

Power in Christianity has a spiritual nature... It is the power to overcome sin, the world and the devils; the power of endurance, the power of working and serving; the power of personality and how it affects and leads others; the power to defend faith. This power is far from faults, violence, attacking or defeating others.





**APRIL
FIRST SUNDAY**

**PALM SUNDAY
JESUS THE HEAVENLY KING ENTERED JERUSALEM
WITH GREAT HUMILITY**

Please read Mark 11:14, Luke 19:29-44, and give the lesson with the emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that the Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem as a victorious king. However, He always maintained His humility. *The Lord is our example in everything. We also must be humble.*

MEMORY VERSE:

“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” Mark 11:9

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Does anyone know what the seven great major feasts of the Church are? (Annunciation, Christmas, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost).
What happened on Palm Sunday? (Christ entered Jerusalem as a King).
How would you feel if you were Christ the King?
Would you feel proud of yourself, with everyone singing for you while you centered a big city in a procession?
Today, we are going to learn about how Christ entered Jerusalem in humility, even though He is God.
- ✚ Palm Sunday is a great feast. It is one of the seven great major feasts pertaining to

our Master Jesus Christ. They are: the Annunciation Feast (the angel announced the birth of Jesus Christ the Son of God to the Virgin Mary), the birthday of Jesus (Christmas), Epiphany (Manifestation of the Holy Trinity), Palm Sunday, the Resurrection, the Ascension and Pentecost. On Palm Sunday our hearts rejoice, and we hold Palm branches in our hands to celebrate this occasion. We remember that the Master Christ entered Jerusalem victoriously at the end of His declared ministry, after He served the people with spiritual words and miracles.

- ✚ Please read Mark 11:1-11 with the students and explain the various parts.
- ✚ Jesus knew that His enemies in Jerusalem would kill Him after five days, in spite of that, He still entered the city. He entered the city not in a hidden way, and not in a defeated way, but in a victorious way. This was to prove that He gave Himself up by His own will. So He entered the city in a procession having His Disciples and the multitude singing and praising Him. He entered as the King of peace.
- ✚ Hosanna means “save us”. The Disciples and the great multitude were singing Hosanna, acknowledging Jesus as the Savior and giving Him glory and honor. “Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”
- ✚ **Although Jesus entered the city as a victorious king, He did it in a very humble way:**
 - ✚ He did not own a colt to ride to the city, so He sent two of His Disciples to borrow one from the village saying: “The Lord needs it”. He is God the creator and He showed Himself in need.
 - ✚ He entered riding a colt not a horse. Kings used to ride horses when entering the cities for war. So, Jesus chose to enter the city to declare His victory in a humble way by riding the least thing that the people used for transportation: a colt, “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, **lowly**, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey’” (Matthew 21:5).
 - ✚ In spite of this humility, Jesus knew by His Divine power that there was a colt at the entrance to the village, and that its owner would willingly give it to the two Disciples.
 - ✚ When Jesus arrived at Jerusalem, there was no palace prepared for Him. So, Jesus went directly to the Temple. When He arrived, He found people buying and selling goods in the Temple. He drove them out saying: “My house is a house of prayer... (Luke 19:46). This shows us that when we have Jesus in our lives, He drives away all sins just as He did in the Temple.

- ✝ Everything that our Lord Jesus did or was done for Him was in a humble way but it had great effect, power and strength that could not be matched by any worldly power: His birth from a virgin in a manger and what the shepherds and the wise men did, how He lived, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Matthew 8:20), etc. He did not have even a tomb of His own when He was crucified, but was buried in a borrowed tomb.
- ✝ On Palm Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem declaring that He was the heavenly king. He entered in a humble way. His strength was shown by knowing where the colt was, the singing that the people sang “Hosanna” and His prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem which happened 35 years later by the Roman army.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Jesus is the heavenly King. All the worldly ways of greatness did not match His humble greatness. For this reason Jesus rests only in the humble hearts as in St. Mary’s heart. We have to be humble.
2. We must avoid showing off. When we do well in something, we must give glory to God who helps us.
3. Every time we pray, we must humble ourselves in front of God, pray in full respect and concentrate in our prayers.

Songs

THE LORD ABOVE THE CHERUBIM

The Lord above the Cherubim Taking the human flesh to redeem	today enters Jerusalem Hosanna in the highest
Jesus to Jerusalem , planned to go A big crowd followed Him saying	for Passover according to the law Hosanna in the highest
Our Saviour and our God Coming along Jerusalem road	humbly on a donkey He rode Hosanna in the highest
Passing through the Mount of Olive To Your kingdom as long as we live	the crowd cried our hearts we give Hosanna in the highest
Olive branches raised up high With thundering voice of shout and cry	people joined in as He passed by Hosanna in the highest
They put their garments in the street The future King they wished to meet	and put their shirts under His feet Hosanna in the highest
The multitude entered the town With mighty voice seeking Him to crown	it's walls seemed to tumble down Hosanna in the highest
King of Zion on a colt will lead Hosanna to the Son of David	Zachariah prophesied indeed Hosanna in the highest

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.



For the success
of this Sunday
School Program
the teacher should
refer to the

HOLY BIBLE

in his/her preparation
of the lessons and in
teaching the students
in the class





**APRIL
SECOND SUNDAY**

THE HOLY WEEK (THE PASCHA)

Please read the attached sheet entitled “The Holy Week”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To follow day-by-day the events of the Holy Week which are filled with spiritual feelings and memories.

MEMORY VERSE:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another” John 13:34

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

✚ There is one very special, important week to Christians everywhere. Does anyone know which week that is? (Holy Week)
Holy Week is the holiest week of the year.
Everyday of that week, different events took place.
Today, we will learn the daily events of the Holy Week, as well as how we should behave during the week.

✚ **Importance of the Pascha Week:** Christ is our Passover. The word Pascha is a Hebrew word which means “Passover”. The Holy Pascha Week is the most important week of the year because it is filled with deep spiritual feelings and memories that touch the heart of every Christian and drive him to a lasting fruitful spiritual depth. This week carries the memories of the immediate events which led to the most important event in the history of man since creation, namely, the salvation of the world. Our church selected for this week readings from both the Old and the New Testaments. Those

particular readings are full of emotions, feelings and meditations about the relationship between God and man. The Hymns are well selected to be quite moving, up-lifting and full of spiritual meanings.

Our saintly Fathers from the early centuries of the church until now used to live this week in full devotion and dedication to prayers, fasting and reading the Bible.

✝ **Saturday:**

The love of Mary (Lazarus' sister) for our Lord Jesus was expressed clearly. She was poor but she bought very expensive ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus. Jesus explained that she anointed His feet because there will be no chance to anoint Him after He dies on the Cross and before His burial. "She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial" (Mark14:8).

✝ **Palm Sunday:**

On the next day (after the supper and the anointment at Bethany) Jesus came to Jerusalem and entered the city as a victorious King of Peace. Then He entered the Temple and drove out the buyers and sellers. At the end of Sunday, Jesus went back to Bethany and slept there.

Submit yourself to the Lord Jesus and make Him the King of your life.

✝ **Monday:**

On His way from Bethany to the Temple on Monday morning, Jesus cursed the fig tree which had no fruits but was full of leaves. He cursed this tree because usually the fruits appear with the leaves. This tree represents the Jewish nation which God chose to be His own but they refused the Messiah (Jesus Christ) and lost their salvation; because of lack of faith, love, holiness and humility.

If we pretend to be good and holy but we are indeed leading a concealed fruitless and sinful life, this lesson speaks to us. It will surely drive us to cleanse our inner selves lest we should be punished by God Himself like what the Lord Jesus did with the fig tree.

✝ **Tuesday:**

On Tuesday morning Jesus came back to the Temple from Bethany with His Disciples and found the fig tree that He had cursed had dried out. When His Disciples saw the dried tree, they were astonished, so He talked to them about faith.

On Tuesday evening, Jesus left the Temple and went back to Bethany. He did not intend to enter this Temple again after He said to the Jews "See, your house is left to you desolate; till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (Matthew 23:38-39).

✝ **Wednesday:**

Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests to betray Jesus. They promised to give him thirty pieces of silver.

We have to be honest and faithful to God and the people. Do not betray anyone. Judas Iscariot sold his Master for money. The love of money is the cause of so many evils.

✝ **Thursday:**

In the Last Supper two things happened: (a) the washing of the feet and (b) the establishment of the Sacrament of Communion. The Last Supper took place at St. Mark's home.

Jesus washed His Disciples' feet to teach us to be modest and also to teach us that we have to prepare ourselves before taking Communion both inwardly and outwardly, spiritually and physically.

✝ **Good Friday:**

This is the subject of the next lesson.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

We have to be extremely quiet during the Holy Week. Let us concentrate our home-Bible readings on the parts about Jesus' life in His last days on earth in the flesh. We must fast and dedicate a lot of time for prayer.

Songs

THE PASCHA HYMN

Thok te ti goun, nem pi oou, nem pi
Ezmou, nem pi amahi sha eneh Amen.
Emmanuel pennoti pen oro.

Thine is the power, the glory, the blessings
And the majesty forever. Amen.
O Emmanuel our God and our King.

Thok te ti goun, nem pi oou, nem pi
Ezmou, nem pi amahi sha eneh Amen.
Pachois Isos Pekhrestos. Pa Soteer en
Aghathos.*

Thine is the power, the glory, the blessings
And the majesty forever. Amen.
O my Lord Jesus Christ My good
Saviour.*

Thok te ti goun, nem pi oou, nem pi
Ezmou, nem pi amahi sha eneh Amen.
Amen.

Thine is the power, the glory, the blessings
And the majesty forever. Amen.
Amen.

*Tagom nem pa esmou pe –epchois af
Shopi neya sotiriya ethowab.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE HOLY WEEK (THE PASCHA)

This week is called the Holy (Pascha) Week. The word “Pascha” is a Hebrew word which means the “Passover”. That refers to the smiting angel’s passage over the Hebrew houses that had the blood sign on them. **Christ is our Passover.**

The sequence of this week (which is the last week before our Lord’s Resurrection as our church celebrates it is as follows:

✝ **Saturday**

- Jesus arrived at Bethany six days before the Passover (John 11:55-57).
- Jesus took supper in Bethany at Mary and Martha’s house. Then Mary bought a pound of ointment of spikenard which is very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment (Matthew 26:2-13, Mark 14:3-9, John 12:2-11).

✝ **Sunday:**

“Palm Sunday”

The victorious entry of the Savior Jesus Christ to Jerusalem as King of Peace.

✝ **Monday:**

Jesus curses the fig tree:

“On His way back to the city early next morning, Jesus was hungry. He saw a fig tree by the side of the road and went to it, but found nothing on it except leaves, so He said to the tree ‘you will never again bear fruit’ at once the fig tree dried up.” (Matthew 21:12-19, Mark 11:12-19, Luke 20:1-8)

✝ **Tuesday:**

- Seeing that the fig tree had dried up, Jesus spoke to His Disciples about the faith that can move mountains. (Matthew 21:20-22, Mark 11:20-26).
- The Synagogue authorities question Jesus’ actions, miracles and authority and His answer to them. (Matthew 21:23-32, Mark 11: 27-33, Luke 20:1-8).

✝ **Wednesday:**

- Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve went to the chief priests and betrayed Jesus. (Mark 14:10-16).
- The preparation for the Last Supper (Mark 14:10-16).

✝ **Thursday: "The Last Supper"**

- "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me."
(Matthew 26:20-25, Luke 23:41-45). Jesus washes the Disciples' feet. (John 13:3-8)

Memory Text:

"A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another."

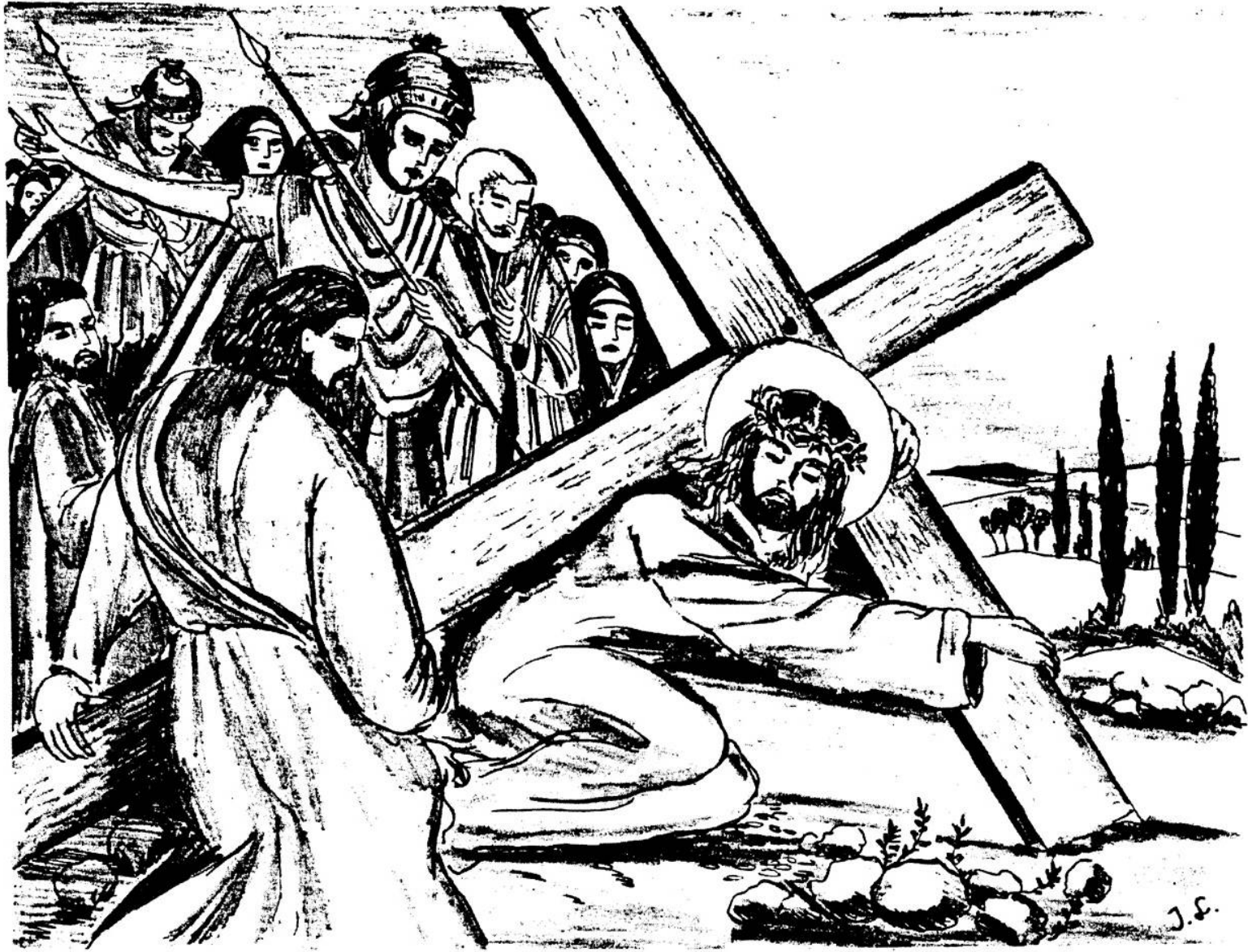
✝ **Friday: "Good Friday"**

Please see the attached material on Good Friday's details and events.

Notes on the Holy Week:

- 1) The whole week is dedicated to the suffering of our Lord Jesus and it is not permitted to pray the common funeral services on the dead in the church (only water blessed on Palm Sunday for that purpose is sprinkled on the casket of the deceased). Also, no baptism is performed during this week.
- 2) The church is dressed in black, remembering our sin that killed our Beloved Son of God. We are in grief not because our Lord Jesus died, but because of our sins.

NOTES





**APRIL
THIRD SUNDAY**

GOOD FRIDAY

Please read the attached sheet entitled “Good Friday”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To show a general description of the hourly events of Good Friday and what spiritual lessons do they teach us.

MEMORY VERSE:

“They came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, him they compelled to bear His Cross” Matthew 27:32

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

✚ Every year, only once a year, there is a very long service we all come to attend at church.

Does anyone know what that day is? (Good Friday).

The prayers on that day may seem very long, but once we understand the events of that day, they become very meaningful to us.

So, today, we are going to learn about the four major events that led to Christ suffering to save us.

✚ **The trial (6-9 a.m.):**

It was an unfair trial. Pilate and Herod declared that they did not find anything worth crucifying Jesus for. Pilate's first trial: Luke 23:1-7. Herod's trial: Luke 23:8-11. Pilate's second trial and declaration: Luke 23:13-25. Pilate declared to the Jews

“I have found no fault in this man concerning those things of which you accuse Him”; Luke 23:14. However, Pilate gave Jesus to the Jews and did not pursue what he believed in.

Indeed Jesus is the King of Peace. In His birth He brought peace to the world and restored peace between man and God the Father. In His trial, He also brought about peace between Herod and Pilate who were enemies before.

✝ **To the Golgotha carrying the Cross:**
(9 a.m.-12 p.m.)

- ✝ The priests and the heads of the Jews when they took Jesus, they did two things. First, they whipped Him 39 times and second, they crucified Him.
- ✝ After they whipped our Beloved Jesus they took Him outside the city to be crucified in the place that was called Golgotha.
- ✝ The Lord Jesus asked for water to drink, but the bad people “gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink” (Matthew 27:34). When Jesus tasted it, He declined drinking it.
- ✝ Jesus the Son of God who gives water and life to the whole world became thirsty. He suffered a lot on our behalf. He died on the Cross so that we may live.
- ✝ Crucifixion was a practiced method of death for slaves and murderers. When a person is crucified, he suffers a lot. Any move causes a lot of pain in the whole of the body because of the nails in the hands and the feet. Also, the blood which accumulates in the lungs presses on the heart and causes tremendous pain that is unbearable.
- ✝ “And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Matthew 27:37). They wrote this statement in the three languages that were popular at that time: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Pilate intended by writing this to insult the Jews because they crucified their king. The heads of the Jews objected to this, but he did not care and said to them “Whatever I wrote, I wrote”. It is interesting to note that the title which the Wise men gave Jesus “king” at His birth, was the same given to Him by Pilate at His death.
- ✝ He is the true King of kings.

✝ Can we be like Simon of Cyrene who carried the Cross with Jesus?

Lord help us to become like Simon of Cyrene to carry the Cross with you to be glorified also with you.

✝ **The seven words of Jesus on the Cross:**
(12-3 p.m.)

✝ **First word:** “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do”, Luke 23:44.

✝ **Second word:** “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in the Paradise”, Luke 23:43.

✝ **Third word:** “Woman, behold your son!.. Behold, your mother”, John 19:26-27.

✝ **Fourth word:** “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”, Matthew 27:46.

✝ **Fifth word:** “I thirst”, John 19:28

✝ **Sixth word:** “It is finished”, John 19:30

✝ **Seventh word:** Father into Your hands I commend my Spirit”, Luke 23:46

✝ **The events from 3 to 6 p.m.:**

Elaborate on the powers and miracles that happened during these hours: The earth shook and the rocks cracked, the tombs opened and from Jesus’ side water and blood flowed out (Matthew 27:51-53).

✝ We pray Lord have mercy 41 times:

39 for the whips + 1 for the crown of thorns + 1 for the spear

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

Our Beloved Jesus suffered for us. He suffered to save us. He suffered to show His love. He died so that we may live. Let us love Jesus for He loved us first.

Songs

REMEMBER ME O LORD

Remember me O Lord,	When You come into Your kingdom.
Remember me O Holy,	When You come into Your kingdom.
Remember me O Master,	When You come into Your kingdom.
Remember me O God,	When You come into Your kingdom.
Remember me O Saviour,	When You come into Your kingdom.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

GOOD FRIDAY (8)

Note: The clock that is inside the Cross (as shown in the attached figure of the Cross) starts from 6 a.m. up to 6 p.m. on the Friday of the Crucifixion.

Trials from 6-9 a.m.:

- (1) The second trial of Jesus in front of the chief priests.
- (2) The third trial in front of Pilate.
- (3) The fourth trial in front of Herod.
- (4) The fifth trial in front of Pilate for the second time.

To the Golgotha carrying the Cross 9 a.m.-12p.m:

- (5) The 39 whips
- (6) The crown of thorns, the insults and mockery
- (7) The falling of Jesus under the Cross.
- (8) Simon of Cyrene carries the Cross with Jesus.
- (9) Jesus eye-to-eye with His mother.
- (10) The Crucifixion and the nails.

The words of Jesus on the Cross 12-3p.m:

From location 11 to location 17 (as shown in the attached figure for the Cross).

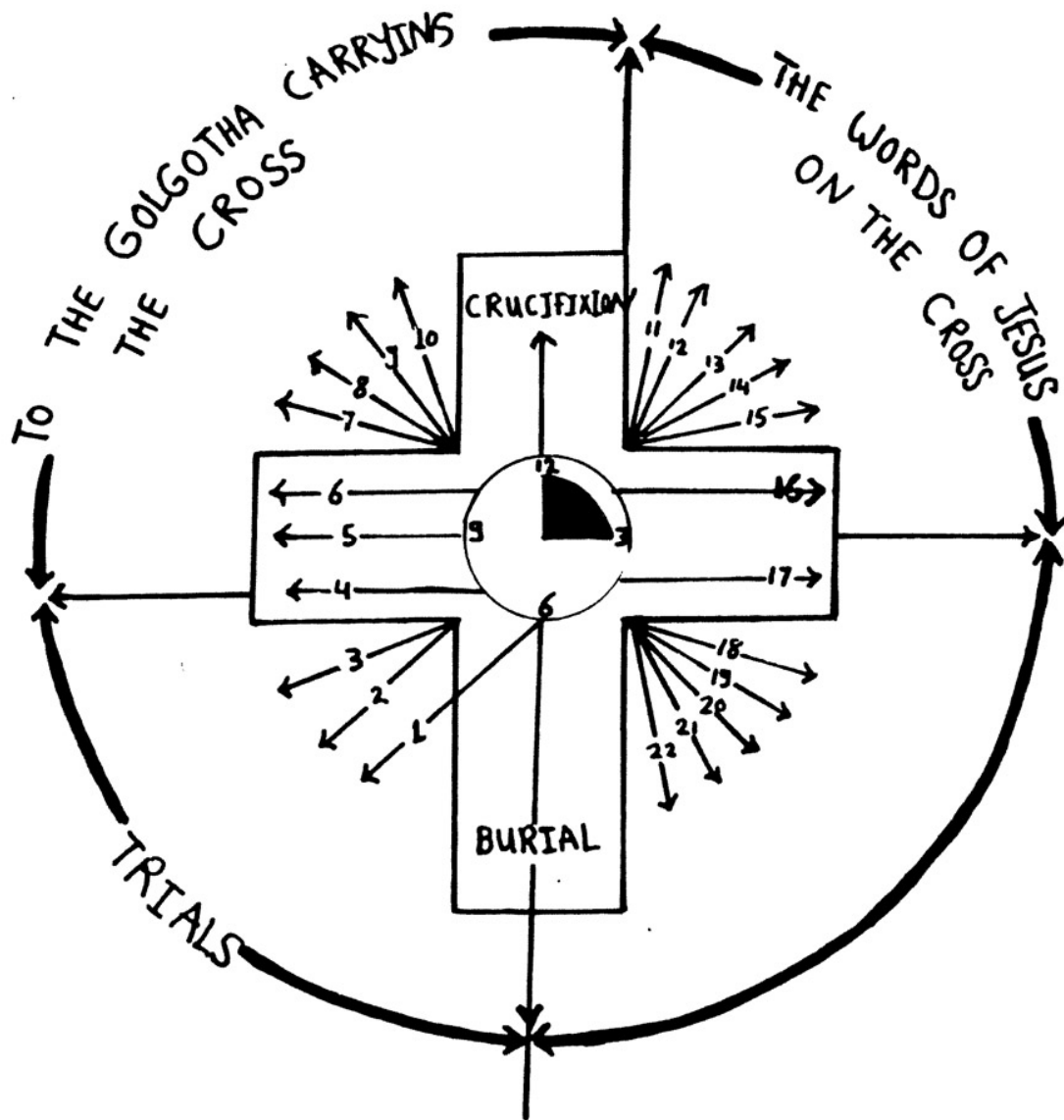
The events from 3-6p.m:

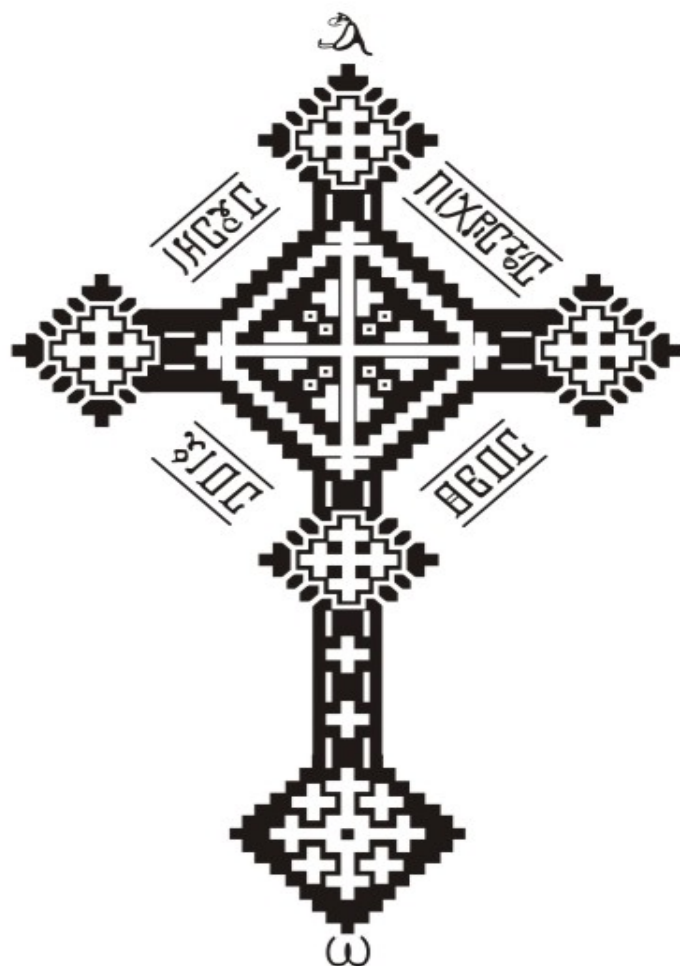
- (18) A soldier plunged his spear into Jesus' side.
- (19) The tombs opened and the curtain hanging in the temple was torn into two from top to bottom.
- (20) The rocks cracked and the land shook.
- (21) The leader of one hundred soldiers gained faith.
- (22) The burial of the Son of God.

Note:

We pray "Lord have Mercy" 41 times remembering:
The 39 whips + 1 the crown of thorns +1 the spear

***Note:** This article is taken from "Sout El-Rahi" magazine, St. George Coptic Church, Alexandria, Egypt, April, 1975









APRIL
FOURTH SUNDAY

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, ITS EFFECT ON US

Please read the attached material entitled “The Resurrection of Christ”, Luke 24 and Matthew 28, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To rejoice for the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus. We also like to know the effects of His Resurrection on us now.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life” John 11:25

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ What are some of the symbols of Easter? (Easter bunny, coloured eggs, etc.)
Is that all that Easter is about?
What *is* Easter all about? (Christ resurrecting from the dead).
More than that, today, we want to discover how Christ’s resurrection from the dead affects our lives, personally.
- ✚ First, **describe** the events of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ very early on Sunday morning. This is why during our Easter-Evening in our church, the Divine Liturgy finishes after midnight.
- ✚ Jesus arose from the dead while the big stone was still at the gate of the tomb.
- ✚ Resurrection gives us the proof that there is life after death. This lets man, while living on earth, prepare himself for this new life. This life is eternal and cannot be won except through the grace and the saving power of the Resurrected Christ.

Resurrection also gives value to man. Man does not vanish, but has eternal life in the world to come.
- ✚ As Jesus arose from the dead, He helps us to live a life of resurrection, a life of

victory over fear, over despair, over sin and even over death itself, He said “I am the resurrection and the life.”

- ✝ Also, after we die, Jesus will accept us in Paradise. In His Second Coming the righteous and the faithful will rise and take on celestial bodies and be with Him in the Kingdom of heaven. Therefore, death is only a **transfer** (as our church believes) from this life to a better life in Paradise. “He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces” (Isaiah 25:8).
- ✝ With Jesus’ Resurrection, He opened the gates of Hades and saved the saints of the Old Testament, like Abraham and David, and transferred them to Paradise. Before that, all those spirits were kept by the devil in Hades, but Jesus descended into Hades and delivered them from the powers of the devil and gave them freedom in Paradise.

✝ **If we live the life of resurrection, various signs must appear in our lives:**

- ✝ The first sign is that we love Jesus very strongly.
- ✝ The second sign is that we love our brethren.
- ✝ The third sign is that we see “all things work together for good”, because we see every event from a heavenly viewpoint.
- ✝ The sources of the life of resurrection are:
 - ✝ Faith in the words of Christ.
 - ✝ Participation in the death and resurrection of Christ which take place during Baptism where in we are buried and risen with Him in a mystery beyond the grasp of reason.
 - ✝ Bearing the Cross and participating in suffering and death with Christ, so that we become partakers in His resurrection and glory.
- ✝ Easter is the greatest celebration in our church. Our church which has been in existence for *more than* twenty centuries, bases its life and worship on the resurrection. The martyrs and the saints of the church were always ready to die for their faith. The resurrection gave them the courage to the extent that they never feared death.
- ✝ Tell the story of the egg and the chick as Mary Magdalene used to preach about the resurrection (see attached notes).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

The Resurrection of our Lord gave a new life to man. We have to live a life of resurrection and victory by defeating the devil and declaring Jesus the King of our life.

Songs

VERY EARLY SUNDAY MORNING

“Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb.”(Mk 16:2)

Very early Sunday morning
Our Lord arose declaring

while the guards were still asleep
His promise He did keep

REFRAIN

Resurrection is my song
Resurrection made me strong

resurrection gave me life
Jesus my Lord is alive

Jesus is risen in glory
And the angel told the story

heaven and earth sang and praised
He is risen as He said

Mary Magdalene was looking
Jesus Himself was telling

in the garden for her Lord
her to go and spread the word

All the disciples were praying
When Mary came to them saying

they were truly in great fear
He is risen, He is not here

While they were in the room
My peace I give to you
But Thomas did not believe
So Jesus again appeared

Jesus Christ Himself appeared
and My peace with you I leave
what the disciples had seen
showed him the place of the spear

Tell the Marys to cease mourning
For Jesus our Lord is living

among the dead do not seek
giving power to the weak

Jesus my victorious Lord
And the thorn of death he broke

conquered the powers of Hades
my salvation He proclaimed

The heavenly hosts were singing
Heavens joy was overwhelming

welcoming our glorious Lord
Jesus opened its doors.

Alleluia , Alleluia
Alleluia , Alleluia

risen is the King of peace
truly He is risen indeed

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST*

- ✝ “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen: remember how he spoke unto you when He was yet in Galilee saying: ‘the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified and the third day rise again.’” (Luke 24:5-12)

References: Matthew 28:1-10
Mark 16:1-8
Luke 24:1-12
John 20:1-6

Memory Text

- ✝ Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life John 11:25.
✝ Khiristos Anesty (Christ is Risen).
Alithous Anesty (He is indeed Risen).

✝ The Egg and the Chick

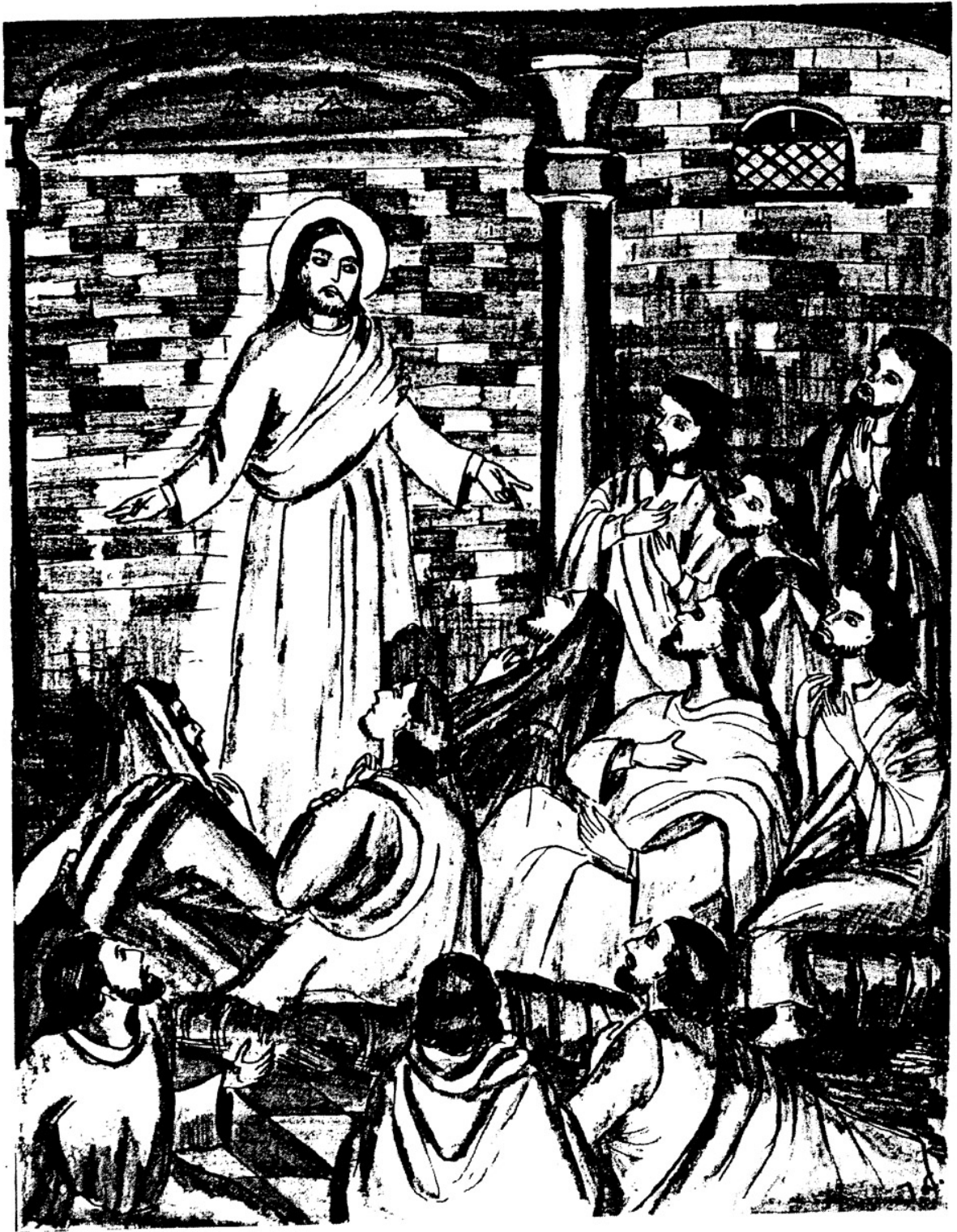
The Christians all over the world used to eat eggs on Easter. This goes back to the era of the Apostles. The Christians related the coming out of the baby chick from an egg with the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is known that Mary Magdalene during her preaching went to the king of Rome and talked to him about the resurrection of Christ. He did not believe and insulted her. Then she brought an egg to him and said “How can you believe that the chick comes out from the egg and do not believe that the Creator of the world was able to conquer death and rise from the dead? Then he believed.

Sham El-Nessim:

Sham El-Nessim is an old Egyptian feast. It is the Spring feast that the ancient Egyptians celebrated. The Coptic Christians are accustomed to celebrate Sham El-Nessim as an Egyptian feast on the day following Easter.

***Note:** This article is taken from “Sout El-Rahi” magazine, St. George Coptic Church, Alexandria, Egypt, May, 1975.

NOTES





**MAY
FIRST SUNDAY**

**THE LORD JESUS GRANTED HIS DISCIPLES PEACE
IN THE UPPER ROOM**

Please read John 20:19-23, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To show that the Resurrection of our Beloved Jesus changes the fear into peace in our life.

MEMORY VERSE:

Jesus said to them "Peace be with you" John 20:19

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Can you think of situations or things that make you afraid?
What about the disciples? Can you think of anything that could make the disciples afraid after the crucifixion of Christ?
Christ knew His disciples were afraid, but He wouldn't just leave them to be that way.
Today, we will learn how Christ replaced the fear the disciples had, with His peace.
- ✚ Please read with the students John 20:19-23.
- ✚ The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and His appearance after the Resurrection carry with them several spiritual meanings that are essential for the development of our relationship with God. The Resurrection fills the hearts of the believers with (a) **hope** in the Lord's work with us, (b) **courage** in the face of death which has become the means for the true Christian to acquire that eternal joy in God's Kingdom, and, (c) **peace** because the Lord is with us, "I am with you always, even to the end of the

age” (Matthew 28:20). Also the appearance of our Lord Jesus after His Resurrection is a declaration of His glory, an emphasis of His divinity and a clear confirmation of the truth of His teachings that He is One with the Father and that He is the Messiah Who saves His people from their sins.

- ✝ It was evening time and Jesus’ Disciples were together in the upper room except Thomas, They were afraid of the Jews because of the news that was spreading that Jesus had risen from the dead. With the darkness of the evening, their fears were enormous. They were afraid that the Jews might attack them.
- ✝ The Lord in His love did not blame the Disciples for their fears which were an evidence of their human weakness and lack of faith. This teaches us not to blame others.
- ✝ “The Disciples were glad when they saw the Lord” (John 20:20). Indeed they needed Him. When they saw Him after His Resurrection their faith was restored and strengthened because of the evidence that Jesus was truly the Son of God. With this newly acquired faith, their fears of the Jews completely disappeared. This teaches us that our meeting with Jesus Christ always produces abundant joy and divine peace.
- ✝ We can see the work of God through our reading of what He did with and for the Disciples. In the midst of all the fears in the world, Christians must have peace of mind and heart.
- ✝ Jesus Christ our Lord bestowed the Holy Spirit upon His Disciples and commissioned them to preach the good news of His salvation to the whole world, proclaiming the fact of His Resurrection which they have experienced themselves, and inviting all to the worship of the Incarnated living God Who conquered even death to grant us eternal life. He also gave His Disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit to have authority of forgiving or retaining the sins of people saying “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:23). Our church priests still maintain this authority to forgive sins.
- ✝ Only then, after the Disciples had talked to Jesus in the upper room, they could accept the Cross. After the suffering of the Cross, there is always the resurrection and the life. As St. Paul said “Provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him”. (Romans 8:17).
- ✝ As the Lord Jesus entered the upper room with the doors closed, He also left the

room with the doors closed in front of His Disciples. In the same way he appeared to them at various occasions for forty days.

- ✠ The appearance of Jesus after the resurrection was not only to enhance the faith of His followers (and ours) that He is the Son of God, but also to comfort and abolish human's worries and sufferings as: the fears of the Disciples, the sadness of Mary Magdalene and the doubt of Thomas.
- ✠ In our liturgy we pray for the peace of the world. Also Abouna prays several times saying "Peace be with you"

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

Peace was the best gift that our Beloved Jesus on His resurrection gave to His Disciples and to us. We must attain peace at all times because our living God is with us. He protects us, takes care of us and gives us victory over fear, worry, despair, sin and even death.

Songs

THE GOSPEL RESPONSE IN EASTER

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia
Alleluia, Jesus Christ The
King of Glory, rose from
Dead on the third day

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia
Alleluia, Isos Pikhristos eporo
ente epo-oo: aftonf evol khi ni
ethmo-oot

This is He to whom the glory
Is due, with His Good Father
And the Holy Spirit , now and
Forever

Fai ere pio-oo ereprepi naf
nem pefyot enaghathos: nem
piepnevma ethoo-wab : yesgen
tinoo nem sha – eneh

Blessed be the Father, the
Son and the Holy Spirit , the
Perfect Trinity, we worship
Him and glorify Him

Je ezezmaroot enje efyot nem
epshiri: nem piepnevma ethoo-
wab tietrias et jeek evol : ten
oo-ost emmos ten tio-onac

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.



John the Evangelist.

J.F.



**MAY
SECOND SUNDAY**

THE LIFE OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Sixteenth of Bashans (around May 24th) is the feast of the departure of St. John the Evangelist.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To study the life of Saint John the Evangelist and learn from it.

MEMORY VERSE:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" John 1:1

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ How many gospels are there? (Four)
Who wrote them? (Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John)
Since the 24th of May is the Feast of St. John, we want to study his life and learn from it.
- ✚ He is John the son of Zebedee and his father was rich. "And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him" (Mark 1:20). He was living in Galilee but he also had a house in Jerusalem. He was working as a fisherman.
- ✚ His mother's name was Salome and she was one of the ladies who were serving Jesus with their money. "And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, **and the mother of Zebedee's Sons**" (Matthew 27:55-56).
- ✚ John had a brother who was a Disciple of Jesus. His name is James. James was the first of the twelve Disciples to be martyred. "Now about that time Herod the king

stretched his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword” (Acts 12:1-2). James gained the crown of martyrdom and eternal life where there is joy with Jesus. Herod, on the other hand, had to face his horrible future. Herod was killed; his sinful actions followed him to Hades where he faced everlasting suffering.

- ✝ The Lord Jesus called John and his brother James “Sons of thunder” because of their great courage.
- ✝ John the Evangelist was first a disciple of John the Baptist. When he heard from John the Baptist about Jesus, he followed Jesus and became one of His Disciples. He was the beloved Disciple who put his head on his Master’s shoulder in the last supper.
- ✝ John attended the questioning of Jesus by the Jews. He also went with St. Mary to the Cross and he took her to live with him at his house. “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the Disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the Disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that Disciple took her to his own home” (John 19:26-27). St. Mary then became the spiritual Mother for all the believers of Jesus Christ.
- ✝ **The Lord Jesus corrected the thinking of John three times:**
 - a) “Then John answered and said, “Master we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.” But Jesus said to him, “do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is for us”. This teaches us that Jesus does not approve of sectarianism especially in the church (Luke 9:49-50). He wants all to be one in Him. Please read John 17:20-21.
 - b) “And when His Disciples James and John saw this (A Samaritan village rejecting Jesus), they said, “Lord do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” This teaches us that the kindness of Jesus is well beyond the kindness of man (for example Elijah who commanded the execution of the prophets of Baal who were opposing God. I Kings 18:20-40).
 - c) When John and James asked Jesus “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your Glory” (Mark 10:37), He answered them “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all” (Mark 10:43-44). This teaches us to be humble and serve others.

We must not be selfish.

- ✝ After Pentecost, John remained in Jerusalem with St. Mary until she passed away, then he went to Asia Minor and established seven churches (Revelation 1 & 2). He was persecuted and was exiled in an island called Batmos. There he wrote the book of Revelation in the year 95. He wrote his Gospel in the year 98. He wrote the 3 letters in his last days before he rested in the Lord. He reposed in peace when he was more than 90 years old.
- ✝ The main goal in his Gospel is to prove that Jesus is the Son of God Who was with the Father and the Holy Spirit before all ages.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Love God and love all people too: St. John the Evangelist wrote about love more than anyone else. “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us” (1 John 3:1). “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).
2. Follow Jesus to the Cross! ... Suffer with Him and for Him.
3. Honour the Virgin St. Mary ... Like St. John, take her for your own spiritual mother ... Let her be your intercessor before God.

Songs

HAIL TO ST. JOHN

In the Name of the Father and the Son
Hail to the Church

Hail to St. John
Who became known as

When Christ first found him
with Zebedee his father

St. John was a fisherman
He left all behind

John and James were zealous
Christ called them Boa-nerges

A true disciple
And taught us that

That was a mystery
O you reflector

The heartbeat of Christ
When you laid your head

And The Holy Spirit
The house of the angels.

Our Intercessor
the Beloved Disciple.

He was mending the nets
and his brother James

Until he met the Lord
when Jesus said, "Follow Me."

for the Lord's service
the "Sons of Thunder"

you learned from your Master
God is Love.

that you explained to us
Of Christ's great love

you were worthy to hear
On the Lord's chest

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

NOTES





**MAY
THIRD SUNDAY**

ST. AUGUSTINE "THE SON OF TEARS"

Please read attached article entitled, “The Love of Profit”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To study the life of St. Augustine and learn from it. When we read about the life of the saints we get encouraged to follow their examples. We must benefit from everything around us; the good and the bad.

MEMORY STATEMENT:

*“I am at the top of the world when I do not desire or seek any glory in the world.”
St. Augustine.*

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- † Who is your patron saint?
Why? What do you like about this saint?
The lives of the saints are the best practical example of how to live according to the Holy Bible. After all, were they not human beings, just like us?
Today, we will learn about St. Augustine and how it is never too late to lead a life with God.
- † Augustine’s mother (her name is Monica) was crying with tears day and night because her son, Augustine, was living a sinful life away from God and His Holy word. In fact he immersed himself in the sins and pleasures of the carnal world. One night while St. Monica was praying to God (in tears) to save her son, an angel came to comfort her and give her peace. He told her that her son would become a believer and eventually a saint.
- † When the mother woke up, she went to the church and met the bishop and told him,

“My son is a great philosopher and always sits with the elite and rich people to teach them philosophy but he himself does not know God and he is leading a sinful life’ The bishop prayed for her and she asked him to pray in the Divine Liturgy for her son.

- ✝ When her son saw her in tears praying for him, he did not care and said to her, “I wish that you would become like me and not I like you.”
- ✝ Augustine wanted to travel to Rome seeking more glory and recognition. His mother tried to prevent him but he lied to her and went to Rome.
- ✝ **In Rome:** the governor of Milan asked the governor of Rome to send him an excellent teacher in philosophy. The governor of Rome sent Augustine to Milan.
- ✝ In Milan: Augustine met the bishop of the city. His name was Ampresus. Bishop Ampresus was so kind to Augustine and taught him a few things from the Bible.
- ✝ Augustine started to read the Bible, not to gain or learn anything from it, but he read it from a critical and philosophical point of view.
- ✝ One night in Milan he was sitting with one of his friends when a visitor came. This visitor was a man of God. The visitor started to talk to them about St. Anthony of Egypt and how he was a good person who had dedicated all of his life to God. He also explained to them that the sinful life is going to lead to complete destruction here in this world and also after death.
- ✝ Augustine started to think of all his lustful past and his sinful life. Comparing himself to St. Anthony who did not have an education but was a simple person who had gained eternal life, he said: “I stood naked in my own sight”. He looked at himself as a philosopher who was losing both his life here on earth and his eternal life.
- ✝ Augustine started to cry in repentance. His mother caught up with him in Milan. She took him to Bishop Ampresus who baptized him. Augustine became a Christian by the prayers and tears of his mother. This is why he is called “the son of tears”.
- ✝ It is also important to note that the starting point in Augustine’s repentance was when he learned about the life of St. Anthony and his dedication to God only. This is always the case that the lives of the saints are the best practical example of living according to the Bible. They help us to follow the Saints’ examples. St. Paul said, “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so **easily** ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1). So when we read about the

life of St. Mary, St. Mark, St. Mena, St. George, etc. we are encouraged to follow their example and overcome the temptations of this world.

✝ St. Augustine said, "I am at the top of the world when I do not desire or seek any glory in the world."

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. It is never too late. We may feel at times that we commit a lot of sins and that there is no hope to lead a righteous life. But when we read about St. Augustine we learn that there is always hope. We have only to come back to God and to declare that we are sinners, seek His help and start again.
2. St. Augustine benefited from the prayers of his mother and knowing about the life of St. Anthony. We must also try to benefit from the good example around us (i.e. follow those) and the bad examples (i.e. avoid those).
3. We must not fall into the same mistake twice. We have to be extra careful.

Songs

THY MERCIES, O MY GOD

Thy mercies, O my God	are countless
And Thy tender mercies	are too plenteous
All the rain drops	are counted by Thee
And the sand of the sea	is before Thine eyes.
How much more are	the sins of my soul
Manifest before	Thee, O my God
The sins that I have done	remember not my Lord
And count not	my iniquities
For Thou has chosen the publican	the adulteress Thou hast saved
And the right-hand thief	Thou hast remembered
And me too	the sinner
Teach me, O my Master	to offer repentance
For Thou desirest not	the death of a sinner
But rather that he	returns and lives

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE LOVE OF PROFIT

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

The one who loves to profit would benefit from everything, from everyone and from any incident.

He finds an advantage in everything he experiences.

He profits from the good and also from the bad...

From the righteous person, he takes a good example, love and good treatment. From the evil person he attains the virtues of patience, endurance and forgiveness...

Also, you can learn any virtue when you know the harms and disadvantages of the corresponding vice.

A wise man said, *"I learned silence from a pratter."*

Therefore, realising the disadvantages of prating enabled me to know the advantages of silence and to avoid such evils...

We can learn from our mistakes as well as from the faults of others...

The wise person knows how to profit from mistakes so he will not fall into them once more, and gains experience in life. A person with many experiences is a source of benefit.

The one who wants to profit can also profit from nature, not only from those he meets.

The wise man said, "Go to the ant you sluggard, consider her ways and be wise" It is really beautiful to see the ant as a source of benefit for us.

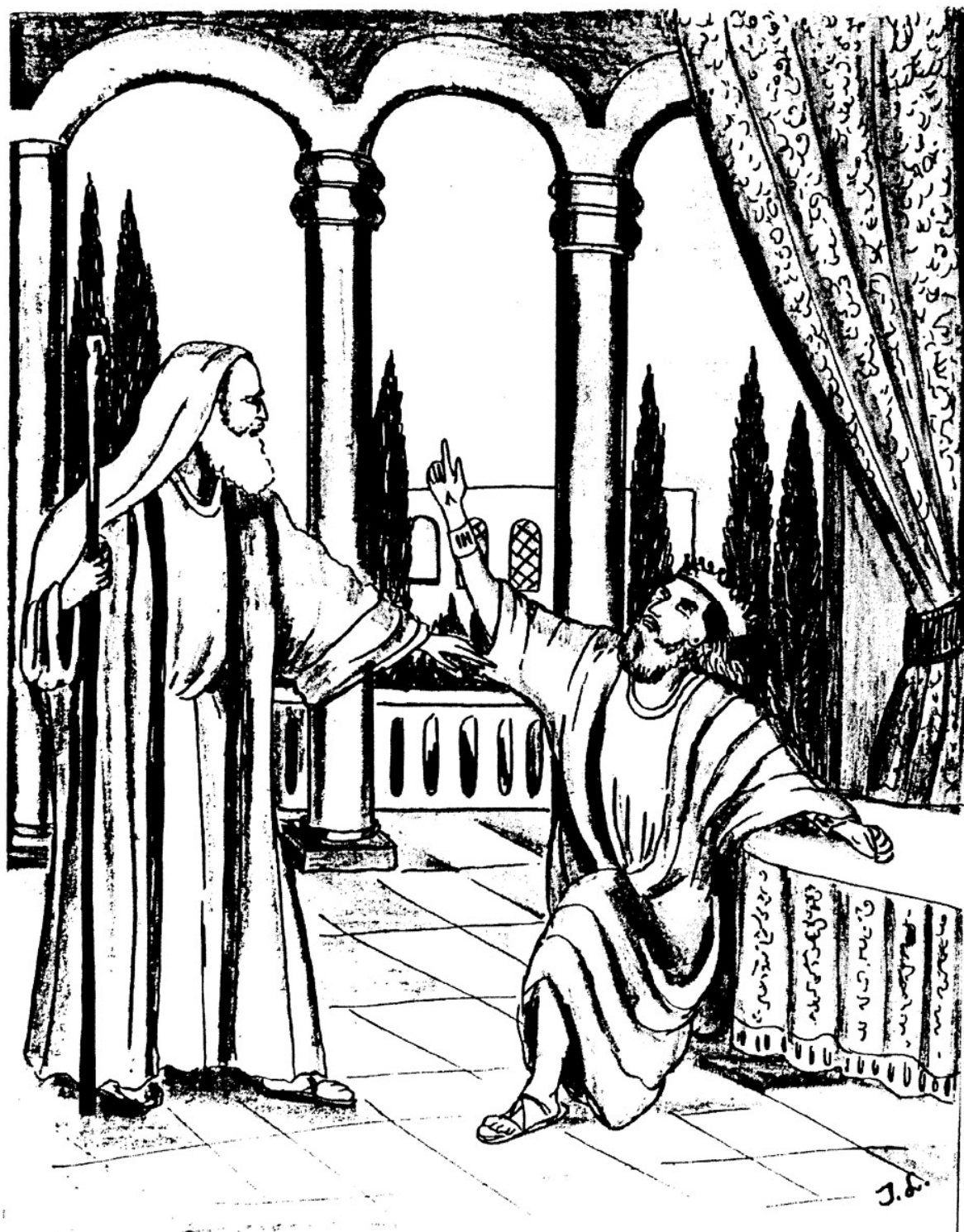
As we benefit from nature we can also benefit from incidents... either what happens to us or to others. They are all useful lessons in life, for those who are keen to learn...

The story of the rich fool was a lesson for many... All the stories and events recorded in the Bible are also lessons, just like historical incidents. As the poet say *"whoever keep history in his heart, adds ages to his age"*.

Spiritual fathers are not the only source of benefit.

As far as the heart is searching for benefit, God will surely send it in various ways and means...

NOTES





**MAY
FOURTH SUNDAY**

DOES IT BELONG TO YOU? DAVID AND NATHAN

Please read 2 Samuel 12:1-13, the attached materials entitled, “The words ‘I have sinned’ between reality and falsity”, “Does it Belong to You?”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn not to take something that does not belong to you. Also, for repentance to be acceptable it has to be truthful.

MEMORY VERSE:

"David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord" 2 Samuel 12:13

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

✝ If you found \$1 on the ground, would you take it?

If yes, did you put \$1 there? Was it yours? Does it belong to you?

In fact, that \$1 does not belong to you, and it is a sin if you take it.

King David took something that did not belong to him.

Today, we will learn about how King David sinned and also about how a saint, Abba Aghathon, never took anything that did not belong to him.

✝ **David's Mistake:**

God gave David a lot of blessings “I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judath. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!” (2 Samuel 12:7-8). But David took for himself the wife of a poor man called Uriah and killed Uriah. “But the

thing that David had done displeased the Lord” (2 Samuel 11:27).

✝ **Nathan’s Parable and David’s Confession:**

Nathan was so nice and he did not want to rebuke David in spite of what he had done. Nathan gave David a parable about a rich man who took one little ewe lamb from a poor man to offer to a visitor that came to him (i.e., to the rich man). Then David judged “As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die” (2 Samuel 12:5). Then Nathan told him, “You are the man.” David confessed his sin and said, “I have sinned against the Lord.” It is important to know that every sin we do is “against the Lord”. When we come back to Him and say that we are sorry and repent, then we can hear “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die” (2 Samuel 12:13). David repentance was truthful and acceptable.

- ✝ Discuss with the students the principle of not getting something which we did not work for, or which does not belong to us.
- ✝ Sometimes even if we have too much, we still look at what other people have. This is a sin and David said, “I have sinned against the Lord”.
- ✝ Tell them about the love and honesty of St. Aghathon (3 stories attached).
- ✝ If we take what belongs to other people, God will not bless what we have. If God does not bless what we have, it might be taken away from us. It is only when God blesses what we have that we become satisfied, thankful and we stop being in need.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. We must not take other people’s belongings. It is against the law of God and man. Above all God sees everything and even if we escape people’s judgment, where are we going to go to escape from God’s?
2. When we say sorry we must mean it. When we say I have sinned we must mean it. Otherwise those false repentance are unacceptable. David repentance was truthful and it was accepted.

Songs

FORGIVE ME MY REDEEMER

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” (Ps 32:1)

REFRAIN

Forgive me my redeemer
My eyes are filled with tears

and bless me O Lord Jesus
pleading for forgiveness

You are the living God
You'll come and forgive us

very soon You will come
and wipe away our tears

With all the world's temptations
O strengthen us, O Lord Jesus

we fall into tribulations
we are pleading O Lord

Lord overlook our sins
And place Your hands upon us

be gracious unto us
please bless us one and all

We are your hands creation
All sinners and believers

Your servants and Your children
lead us to still waters

O Lord we are not worthy
Your love is overwhelming

Your gifts we're not deserving
in reverence we bow down

Our hearts You are seeking
With all his heart repenting

and blessed is the one listening
and with no turning back.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

THE WORDS "I HA VE SINNED" BETWEEN REALITY AND FALSITY

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

Very often the words "I have sinned",- are said from a true and contrite heart, to prove repentance and to receive God's forgiveness...

✝ For example when the prodigal son said to his father, "...I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. " (Lk 15:21). He was forgiven and the fatted calf was killed for him.

✝ Another example is what David said, "Against you, you only have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight. (Ps 51:4). We repeat the same words in each of the seven daily prayers.

But there are other occasions where the words, "I have sinned", were said, without proving repentance and were not accepted by God!...

✝ Pharaoh repeated this phrase more than once. It was a policy he adopted, due to fear, so God may take away the punishment. But once the plague was removed, he hardened his heart, as before ! !

When the hail struck, Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said to them "I have sinned this time. The Lord is righteous and my people and I are wicked. Entreat the Lord that there may be no more mighty thundering and hail, for it is enough. I will let you go. " (Ex 9:27). But when the plague ceased, he hardened his heart once more.

When the plague of the Locusts struck, Pharaoh said to them, "I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. Now, therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God that he may take away from me this death only... " (Ex 10:16,17).

Many say "I have sinned".. like Pharaoh, then turn back as he did.

✝ Balaam, whose straying was mentioned in the Bible, said to the Angel of the Lord, "I have sinned, " (Num 22:34); then turned and disobeyed...

✝ King Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. " He repeated it twice, not for repentance but because he wanted the prophet to honour him before the people (I Sam 15:24-30). Saul perished and God rejected him.

✝ Achan, the son of Carmi, said to Joshua, "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God... " (Josh 7:20). And Achan perished, like Balaam before him and like King Saul after him, despite their saying the phrase "I have sinned. " 62

✝ Shemei, the son of Gera, also said to King David, "I have sinned" (2 Sam 19:20). He might have said it because of fear or flattery. It was not accepted and Shemei perished.

✝ What else is there to say? Judas, the betrayer himself said, "I have sinned."

He said to the chief priest and elders, in despair and after it was too late, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood" (Mt 27:4). Then he departed and hanged himself,

And so Judas perished after saying, "I have sinned.

DOES IT BELONG TO YOU?*

Abba Aghathon was wise, meek and full of love and activity. He was simple in his looks, food and clothing. Also he was very efficient in handiwork.

His love:

He said, "Inasmuch as I could, I have never slept resenting any person and have never let anyone sleep resenting me.

He also said, "If I win my brother, I shall make an offering." Abba Youssef related that once, one of the brothers came to Abba Aghathon and found a big needle with him. He expressed his admiration for it because it was good. Thereupon Abba Aghathon gave it to him at once.

Once, as Abba Aghathon went out to sell his handiwork, he met a stranger lying sick with no one to look after him. He carried him and rented a house for him and lived with him taking care of him and doing work for four months until he regained his health. Then he went to the wilderness saying, "I wish I found a leper who would take my body and give me his."

It happened once that while he was going down town to sell his handiwork, he met a leper on his way. The latter asked him, "Where are you going?" He replied, "Down town". He told him, "Have mercy upon me and take me with you where you will sell your handiwork."

He carried him on his shoulders and went to sell his handiwork. When he had done so, the leper asked him, "How much did you get out of your selling?" He told him the amount. Thereupon the leper told him to buy him a net and such and such food, and he did. Then while he was returning to his cell, the leper told him to take him back to the place where he had found him, "Blessed are you by the Lord our God who created heaven and earth." Abba Aghathon lifted up his eyes but could not see him. He had vanished. He was the Lord's angel sent to test him.

His Honesty:

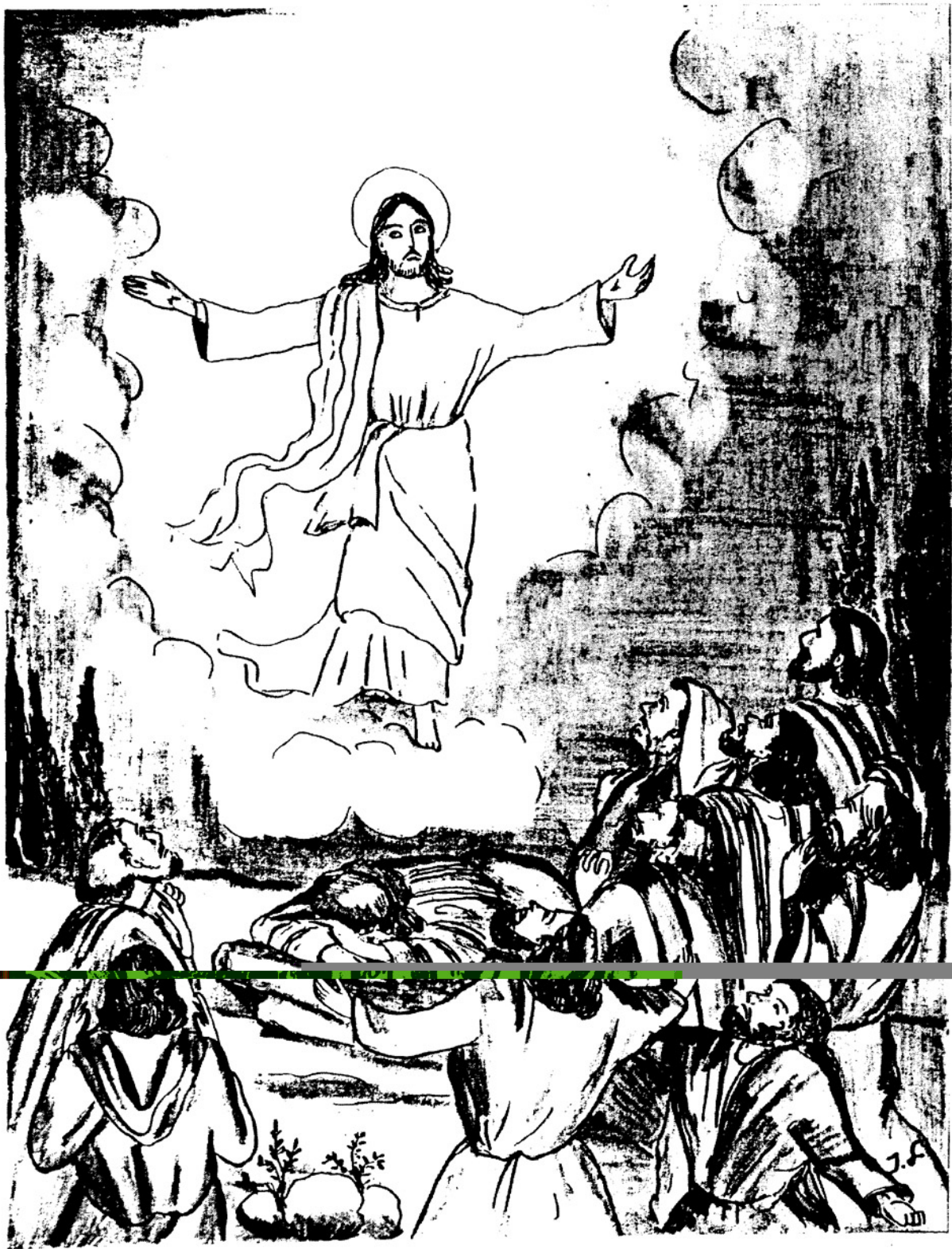
A brother came to him once, desiring to dwell with him. He had brought with him a little natron (container with table salt) which he had found on his way there. When Abba Aghathon saw it, he asked him, "from where did you get this natron?" The brother replied, "I found it on my way here." Abba Aghathon replied, "If you wish to dwell with me, go back to where you found it and leave it there."

At one time Abba Aghathon was on a journey with his disciples. One of them found a little bundle of green peas on the road, he said to the old man, “Abba, if you will, I shall lift that bundle.”

The old man looked at him with astonishment, and said, “Did you put it there?” The brother answered, “no”, and the father said, “**How could you take something that does not belong to you?**”

***Note:** This article is taken from “Voice of Jesus” magazine, St. Mark and St. Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church, March, 1983

NOTES





**JUNE
FIRST SUNDAY**

THE ASCENSION FEAST, THE BLESSINGS OF THE ASCENSION

Please read Luke 24:44-53, Acts 1:1-2, 6-11, the attached article entitled “Notes on the Ascension of Jesus”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn about the blessings of the ascension in our life.

MEMORY VERSE:

“I go to prepare a place for you” John 14:2

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✝ Christ died for us on the Cross, and then He resurrected from the dead. Is that the end of the story? Did Christ remain on earth after that?
Well, yes, but only for forty days, after which He ascended to Heaven, His real home.
What about us? Is earth our real home, or is Heaven?
Today, we will explore what the ascension of our Lord Jesus teaches us.
- ✝ Describe at first the events of the ascension as mentioned in Luke 24:44-53 and Acts 1:1-2, 6-11.
- ✝ Our Lord Jesus Christ continued to appear to His Disciples for forty days after His Resurrection. These repeated appearances were sufficient to remove any doubt about His Resurrection and His victory over death. The Disciples then went to the whole world and proclaimed the Resurrection of our Lord as they had witnessed it.

At the end of the forty days, Jesus appeared to His Disciples for the last time. He explained to them “that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me” (Luke 24:44). “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day” (Luke 24:46). “And you are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:48).

- ✚ Ascension is not just a historical event that we celebrate once a year forty days after Easter.
- ✚ The ascension of our Lord Jesus to heaven has various spiritual lessons for us. Some of them are as follows:
 - The ascension of Jesus to heaven helps us to lift our eyes to heaven. Our help comes from there, our future is there and our God, the Almighty One dwells there. That is why when we pray we say “Our Father Who art in heaven...”
After His Ascension, heaven has become the dwelling place for our Lord Jesus Christ. We lift up our eyes and hearts to Him when we give Him thanks, ask Him for forgiveness or when we are in need spiritually or otherwise.
 - The ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ indicates to us that our future is not here on earth, it is in heaven:
 - a) Man after his fall in sin thought that earth is his final destination. Therefore the Jews were waiting for Christ to come and give them an earthly kingdom. But our Lord explained to them “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).
 - b) The ascension of our Lord Jesus in the flesh which He took from our human nature, emphasized to us that the true place of the believers is in heaven. Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you Myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2, 3).
This means that we are granted a good place in heaven, because Jesus will take us with Him in the second coming and we will be with Him for ever.
 - The ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ resulted in granting us the Holy Spirit:
 - a) Jesus promised His Disciples that if He did not go to heaven, the Holy Spirit the comforter will not come “Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not

come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you” (John 16:7).

- b) Our Lord Jesus asked His Disciples before He ascended to heaven not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the fulfillment of His promise, the sending of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8).
- c) The gifts of the Holy Spirit are granted for us to be able to defeat the devil in our spiritual struggles.

- The Ascension of our Lord strengthened the faith of the Disciples. It helped them to mature in their faith. When our Lord was with them in the flesh, they were, except for very few times, only observers. They merely stood by while He was teaching or performing miracles. When He ascended to heaven, they had to take the full responsibility of preaching the Gospel of Salvation to the whole world. Give the example of the mother who looks after her child. If she continually carries him, he will never walk on his own. But if she trains him and then leaves him to depend on himself, he matures. However, she can still advise him. Similarly, the Holy Spirit advises and leads us.
- The scene of the ascension which the Disciples witnessed remained in their minds giving them strength and joy. That is why they met persecution and suffering not only without fear, but with joy looking ahead for the eternal life awaiting them in heaven.

✚ St. Stephen said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56). So, Stephen got the strength to withstand all the suffering because of what he saw.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Train yourself to always lift up your eyes and your heart to heaven where Jesus Christ ascended to prepare a place for you.
2. Try always to be prepared spiritually for that moment when Christ calls on you. Don't let the temporary comforts and pleasures of this world make you lose your eternal place with God in His Kingdom.

Songs

GOSPEL RESPONSE FOR THE ASCENSION

Alleluia. (4) Pekhrestos aftonf
Evol khi ni-ethmo-ut
Owoh afshenaf
E-epshoy e –nifiowi:

Vay ere pi –o-u ...

Alleluia (4) Christ has risen
From the dead, and
Ascended into the
heavens.

This is He ..

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

NOTES ON THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

- ✝ There is no prophet or Saint who died, arose from the dead and ascended to heaven except the Lord Jesus Christ Son of God.
- ✝ The ascension of Jesus after His resurrection is a proof of His Divinity.
- ✝ When Jesus talked to Nicodemus He told him “No man has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven” (John 3:13).

So the Lord Jesus when He was speaking with Nicodemus, He was in heaven at the same instant.

- ✝ But Jesus ascended with our flesh which He took from the Virgin Mary, that is with my flesh and yours. Hence, Jesus blessed our bodies and opened the gate of heaven for us.
- ✝ “And raised up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6).
- ✝ He ascended into heaven so that we could realize that our true place is in heaven. We should be thinking about heaven and should not let the things of the world control our lives.
- ✝ We can remember the ascension in the following:
 - Every time we pray the Lord’s Prayer and say “Our father who art in heaven...” we realize that Jesus meant that praying is standing in heaven.
 - During the Divine Liturgy, when we stand in the altar, we are considered as if we are standing in heaven.
 - Every time we neglect the world and concentrate on Jesus we ascend to heaven.





**JUNE
SECOND SUNDAY**

**PENTECOST: THERE WERE ADDED THAT DAY ABOUT
THREE THOUSAND SOULS**

Please read Acts 2:1-41 and the attached material entitled “Pentecost”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the point below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To show the power of the Holy Spirit and its effect on St. Peter’s Sermon so that about 3,000 people believed.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Then those who gladly received His word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” Acts 2:41

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ When did you receive the Holy Spirit? (Chrismation).
When did St. Peter (and the rest of the disciples) receive the Holy Spirit? (Pentecost).
St. Peter sinned before he received the Holy Spirit. What did he do?
Today, we want to learn, through the life of St. Peter, the role that the Holy Spirit has in us.
- ✚ Describe at first the events of the Pentecost. The Disciples and the Virgin Mary were in the upper room for 10 days praying. Then the Holy Spirit descended on them and they heard the sound and saw the tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them.
- ✚ They were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in different languages. Therefore, they were able to preach the word of God all over the world.

- ✚ When the Jews in Jerusalem saw what had happened, that the Disciples were speaking in tongues, they were confused. Some of them thought, especially those who opposed (rejected) the Lord Jesus and did not believe in Him, that the Disciples were drunk. But St. Peter, along with the rest of the Disciples refuted their accusation.
- ✚ Now let us study the Sermon of Peter after he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter concentrated in his Sermon on:
 - ✚ The great miracles and signs that the Lord Jesus Christ did in front of all the people.
 - ✚ The Jews crucified Jesus by His own will and His previous knowledge.
 - ✚ Jesus arose from the dead. St. Peter reminded his audience about what David had prophesied concerning Jesus that He would rise from the dead (Acts 2:25-28).
 - ✚ Jesus is the Messiah who came as descendant of David by flesh.
 - ✚ Then St. Peter talked about His ascension. “Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear” (Acts 2:33).
- ✚ Discuss the Sermon of St. Peter as you read Acts 2:22-36.
- ✚ Compare St. Peter’s belief after he was filled with the Holy Spirit with his belief before, when he denied Jesus in front of a maid!!
- ✚ Then discuss the results of his sermon “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37), Then St. Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38).
- ✚ “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (Acts 2:41).
- ✚ Aided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, the Disciples established the church across the whole world.

- ✝ Also at the end of Chapter 2 of Acts: “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).
- ✝ Everyone of us as a Christian has accepted the Holy Spirit to dwell in him or her since he or she was baptized. As we try our best in our spiritual fight against the devil, we find the Holy Spirit inside us providing us with help. This is the reason for calling Him the Holy Spirit “the Helper”. Also, when we feel disturbed because of any problem we may have, we find the Holy Spirit inside us comforting us. This is the reason for calling the Holy Spirit “the Comforter”.
- ✝ St. Paul summarized the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believers by saying: “But the fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

We must give the leadership of our life to the Holy Spirit dwelling within us by obeying Him. As the Holy Spirit provides strength to the Disciples and the Apostles to establish the church, He can provide us with all the fruits of the Holy Spirit mentioned above.

Songs

LET US ALL PRAISE THE LORD

Let us all praise the
Lord for He is in glory
Glorified

Maren hos e-epchoise: Je
Khen ou –o –oo ghar afetchi o-oo

REFRAIN

He ascended into heaven
And send us the Paraclete
The Spirit of truth, the
Comforter Amen. Alleluia

Afshenaf e-epshoi enifio –wee
wee af oo- orpe nan empi
parakliton piepnevma ente
timethemi: Amen . Alleluia

He made the two into one
Which is heaven and earth

pentaf er piesnav en owai
ete fai pe etfe nem epkahi

O come all ye nations, let
Us worship Jesus Christ

Amoini nilaos tiro: entenoo-
osht en Isos piekhrastos

This is God our Saviour
And Lord of every one

Fai pe efnooti pensotir : owoh
epchoise ensarex niven

Three in one and one in
Three; the Father the
Son and the Holy Spirit
The spirit of truth the
Comforter. Amen Alleluia

Oo-etrias esjik evol: esoi
enshomt esoi enowai: ete fai
pe efiot nem epshiri nem pi
epnevma ethoo-wab; piepnevma
ente timethmiL amin Alleluia

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

PENTECOST

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the Old Testament Pentecost was the feast which occurred fifty days after the Passover. As the Passover feast commemorates the exodus of the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt, so Pentecost celebrates God's gift of the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. In the New Testament as well, the Pentecostal feast is fulfilled and made new by the coming of the new law, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Disciples of Christ.

The Apostles received "the power from high" and they began to preach and bear witness to Jesus as the risen Christ, the King and the Lord. This moment has traditionally been called the Birthday of the Church.

It must be noted that the feast of Pentecost is not simply the celebration of an event which took place centuries ago; it is the celebration of what must happen and does happen to us in the Church Today. We all have died and risen with Messiah-King, and we all received his most Holy Spirit. We are the "Temple of the Holy Spirit". God's Spirit dwells in us. We, by our own membership in the Church, have received "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit" in the sacrament of Chrismation.





**JUNE
THIRD SUNDAY**

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE SAINTS

Please read the attached material entitled “Our Friends in Heaven”, also take with you to class our church book of the Divine Liturgy. Please give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn about God’s Saints and benefit from it.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Wherever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial of her” Matthew 26:13

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Why do we have a special prayer in the Divine Liturgy to commemorate the saints? We are going to learn about why we remember the saints and what role they should play in our lives.
- ✚ Please read the attached sheet in the class, explain it and ask the students the simple questions that it contains.
- ✚ In every Divine Liturgy, we have “The commemoration of the Saints”. We remember the Saints because:
 - 1) When we remember the Saints we see a good example of a person in whom the grace of God has worked together with this person’s efforts. The grace of God coupled with our will and efforts are needed so that we can live a good life that satisfies the Lord.

- 2) We look at them as good examples and follow in their footsteps. Sometimes we think that the commandments of God contained in the Bible are too difficult for us to follow, for example, when Jesus said "Love your enemies". We sometimes feel that these commandments are good for angels not for humans, but when we remember the community of the Saints and the way they lived, we find that these people have applied God's commandments. They are like signs for us on the road. Saint Paul said, "Since, we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily enslaves us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1).
- 3) We ask them to pray on our behalf. Since they have a special favour in Jesus' sight because they have faithfully followed Him, their prayers and requests are well heard by our Lord Jesus. Remember that the first miracle that Jesus did at the wedding of Cana of Galilee was performed because of the intercession of St. Mary. In the Coptic Orthodox prayer book of the hours called "The Agbeya" we ask for her intercession when we say: "Hail to Thee! We entreat Thee, O Saint, full of glory, the ever-virgin, the Mother of God the Christ, to lift up our prayer unto thy beloved Son that He may forgive us our sins. Hail to her, the Saint, the Virgin, who gave birth to the true Light, Christ our Lord, entreat the Lord to have mercy on us and forgive us our sins."
- 4) When we remember the Saints, we remember that the day will come on which we, like them, will leave this world. "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14)

✝ In the Orthodox Church, St. Mary is always put at the head of the list of saints and is considered our first intercessor because she is the Mother of God; Theotokos. (Theo = God, tokos = mother).

✝ Who are the confessors?
They are the Christians who suffered persecution to maintain their faith and were jailed. They were ready to be killed but their lives were spared.

✝ St. John the Baptist was called the forerunner because he came before Jesus to tell the people that Jesus was the Messiah.

✝ At St. Mark's home, Jesus had His Last Supper meal.

✝ **Who was St. Mark?**

St. Mark was one of the seventy apostles of our Lord. It was at his house that Jesus

Christ our Lord made the Last Supper. At Gethsemane, when all forsook Jesus and fled just before His arrest, it was St. Mark, the young man, who stayed behind until the soldiers laid hold of him and he escaped. (Read Mark 14:50-52). St. Mark was the Apostle who preached Christianity in Egypt and he is its Patron Saint.

✠ After the Commemoration of the Saints, we pray for all the people whose souls God has taken into heaven.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. We remember the saints and we study their lives so that we would be able to follow in their footsteps.
2. The saints intercede on our behalf before the throne of God. Their prayers and intercessions are well received and well heard by Him.
3. Each one of us should have a Patron Saint, a friend from the community of the saints with whom he talks, and whom he will have as a personal intercessor.

Songs

THE PRIME DOXOLOGY

We worship the Father, the Son	and the Holy Spirit
Hail to the Church	the house of the angels
Hail to the Virgin	who brought forth our Saviour
Hail to Gabriel	who brought her good news.
Hail to Cherubim	Hail to Seraphim
Hail to all	the heavenly orders
Hail to John	the great fore-runner
Hail to the	twelve Apostles.
Hail to our father	Mark the Evangelist
The destroyer	of the idols.
Hail to Stephen	the first martyr.
Hail to George	the morning star.

Hail to all the choirs Hail to Abba Anthony	of the martyrs. and the three Macarii.
Hail to all the choirs Hail to all the saints	of the Cross-bearers who have pleased the Lord
Through their prayers Accord to us mercy	O Christ our king in thy kingdom.
O Thou True Light That comes	which lights every man into the World
Thou hast come to the world All the creation	through Thy love for man has rejoiced at Thy coming.
Thou hast saved Adam Thou hast delivered Eve	from the beguiling from the pangs of death
Thou hast granted us We praise Thee; we bless thee	the Spirit of Son ship with Tine angels
When the morning hour O Christ our Lord	comes upon us the True Light.
Let the thoughts of light And let not the darkness	abound within us of passion cover us.
That we may praise Thee With David	with understanding and proclaim and say:

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

OUR FRIENDS IN HEAVEN

“Assuredly I say to you, wherever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told for a memorial of her.” (Matthew 26:13)

Long time ago, before Christ was crucified, a woman came to the house where Christ was staying. She brought along with her a bottle of very expensive perfume and poured the perfume on Christ’s feet. Christ was so pleased with what the woman did, that He told His Disciples that whosoever they preached the Gospel, they must tell the story of this woman, so that people will always remember what she did. Although the woman is in Paradise now, we still remember her whenever we read the Bible.

In the same manner, we also remember all God’s Saints that have pleased Him with their good deeds since the world began. We do this in our Liturgy when we mention the communion of the Saints.

We remember the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We remember the Prophets like Moses and Elijah. We also remember the Evangelists. How many Evangelists do you know? What are their names?

We also remember the martyrs, and the Confessors (remember who they are), and all the spirits of the righteous that became perfect in their faith.

Of course when we think of the Saints, first of all we think of the Queen of all Saints; have you already guessed who she is? ...that’s right! Of course she is the ever-Virgin Mother of God, Saint Mary.

Then we remember Saint John the Baptist, who baptized our Lord Jesus Christ and the greatest man ever born of a woman. Do you know who said that?

We also remember Saint Stephen, the first Martyr. I am sure you know his story.

Then we remember Saint Mark; who preached Christianity in Egypt, and also became a Martyr. Then we remember all the other Saints listed in the Communion of Saints.

All those Saints we remember in our Liturgy are our friends in Heaven! They all love us, and always pray to God on our behalf. That is why in many of our Hymns we ask them to pray for us, or ask God to have mercy upon us through their prayers.

After the Commemoration of the Saints, we pray for all the people whose souls God has taken into heaven. We pray that God may find them worthy to be with Him in Paradise. We pray for them because we love them and we care for them. They are also our friends.

Isn’t this a wonderful kind of friendship? We on earth pray for our friends in Heaven, and at the same time, our friends in Heaven pray for us! After all, what are friends for?



**JUNE
FOURTH SUNDAY**

PROPER BEHAVIOUR IN THE CHURCH

Please read: Genesis 28: 16-18, Exodus 3:1-5, Luke 19: 45-46, Mark 11: 15-18, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that the church is the house of God. We must love and respect our church. We like to learn how.

MEMORY VERSE:

“My house shall be called a house of prayer” Mark 11:17

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

(A) All reverence is due to the church

The church is the house in which God, the Angels and the heavenly powers come in. Therefore, the church is a very special place. It is not like a school building, a hospital, or a government building. Although one must respect all places, extra reverence and respect are due to the house of God.

(B) Examples for the reverence to the house of God in the Holy Bible:

1. In Genesis 28:16-18

The first time in the Holy Bible in which the expression “house of God” is mentioned is in Genesis 28:17. When Jacob was fleeing away from his brother Esau who wanted to kill him because he took his birth rights from him, he slept and saw a comforting vision. Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did

not know it.” And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God...” Gen. 28:16-17. So the church is an awesome place. It is a comforting place.

2. In Exodus 3:1-5

At the time of Moses the prophet when God wanted to call on him to lead His people out of the slavery in Egypt; he appeared to him in the Burning Bush. The Bush was burning but did not get consumed (this was a symbol of St. Mary the Virgin who conceived the Lord Jesus and His Divinity did not hurt her). Then God told Moses “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground” Exodus 3:5.

So the place in which God appears, or talks to us is a place to which every respect and reverence is due.

3. In Mark 11:15-17

When our Lord Jesus went to the Altar and found the people who were buying and selling in the altar, He kicked them out and said “My house shall be called a house of prayer.” Mark 11:17

(C) How can we show reverence to the church?

1. Prepare yourself very well before you come to church. Come early. Come with proper clothing. Say the Lord's prayer as you enter and pray saying Ps 5:7 “But as for me, I will come into your house in the multitude of your mercy.”
2. Do not run. Do not talk to anyone. Do not laugh. Stay in one place and do not move unless it is absolutely necessary.
3. When you enter the altar to partake of the Holy Communion, you must be very quiet and of course, take your shoes off. Before you take the Holy Communion, do the sign of the Cross.
4. Help in any clean up or tidy up that is required after the Liturgy.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. We must respect the church because the church is the house of God. God is

present in the church all the time. During the Divine Liturgy the Angels and the Saints also come and join us with Christ on the altar.

2. Come to church early, stand quietly and concentrate on the prayers.

Songs

I LOVE MY BEAUTIFUL CHURCH

I love my beautiful church Where I find my joy	the house of our Lord and everything I need
Jesus comes to stay with us Giving everyone His blessings	granting us His help and the heavenly peace
We see the holy saints Praying always for those here	and the martyrs gather around who are asking for their help
In front of the altar Together with the deacons	Abouna is praying there and it will be then in Heaven
In the liturgy we pray The Holy spirit also comes	and the angels are there blessing us in His power
We share the feast of His Body And before we leave the Church	drink His Blood given for us everyone takes Urbana

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.



St. Mark.

J.F.



**JULY
FIRST SUNDAY**

THE RETURN OF ST. MARK'S RELICS TO EGYPT

Please read the attached material entitled "Doxology for Saint Mark the Apostle" and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn about the return of St. Mark's relics to Egypt as a result of the prayers and the love between churches. Let us also learn the Doxology of Saint Mark and sing it.

MEMORY VERSE:

"That they may all be one" John 17:21

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

✝ Who established the Church? (Christ)

How did the Church become established? (By the Apostles and Disciples preaching about Christianity in every area of the civilized world at the time).

So someone then had to come to Egypt to preach Christianity there too, right? Who was that person? (St. Mark).

And who was the very first pope and patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church? (St. Mark).

If it were not for the passion of St. Mark to go to Egypt and preach there, we may never have become Christians. For that reason, we want to learn about his life.

✝ Start by reading in the class the attached Doxology for Saint Mark and explain as follows:

- The word Doxology is a Coptic word (it is actually a Greek word used in the

Coptic language) that means “glory”. The Doxologies for the various Saints of our church (like St. Mary, St. Mark, St. George, St. Mena ...) are contained in one of our church service books called “Psalmody”. We sing the Doxologies in our church at Vespers and Matins. Doxologies are a good source of information about the Saints’ lives in a condensed form.

- We say “O Mark the Apostle” because St. Mark was one of the 70 Apostles sent by our Lord Jesus Christ before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go (Luke 10:1).
- We say “And the Evangelist” because St. Mark wrote the Gospel according to St. Mark which was the first to be written among the four Gospels.
- We say “who has witnessed the passion of the only God” because St. Mark saw the suffering that Jesus went through. When the Jews captured St. Mark, he escaped from them “Now a certain young man (St. Mark) followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, and he lift the linen cloth and fled from them naked” (Mark 14:51-52).
- St. Mark’s house was a special house:
 - ✙ Where Jesus established the sacrament of Eucharist (Mark 14:12-26).
 - ✙ Where the Disciples stayed for fear of the Jews after Jesus’ crucifixion (Luke 24:33).
 - ✙ Where Jesus appeared several times to His Disciples after His resurrection (John 20:19-29).
 - ✙ Where the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost.
 - ✙ Where the first Christian church was formed.
- ✙ St. Mark preached Christianity in Egypt. He was martyred in Alexandria. Before he was martyred in Alexandria, the hand of the cobbler Anianos was pierced by an awl (a needle). St. Mark healed him and told him about the new faith. Anianos became the first bishop of Alexandria. With him 3 priests and 7 deacons were ordained by St. Mark. So, St. Mark established the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt.
- ✙ After his martyrdom the Pagans intended to burn the body of St. Mark, but the wind blew and the rain fell and the populace dispersed.
- ✙ After St. Mark was buried in the church of Alexandria, two sailors from Rome came and stole his body and transferred it to Rome. They built a huge Cathedral

named after St. Mark and buried his body in it.

- ✝ In the year 1968, Pope Kirillos the sixth sent a letter to the Pope of Rome asking him to return the relics of St. Mark. Everyone thought that this was impossible for the Church of Rome to give up part of the relics of St. Mark. Through the continuous prayers of Pope Kirillos concerning this matter and the good brotherly relations between the two churches, the request was granted.
- ✝ Pope Kirillos sent a large delegation to Rome and Venice to bring the relics of St. Mark. The delegation was composed of 10 bishops, 7 priests and about 90 Coptic dignitaries.
- ✝ On June 24, 1968, when the delegation arrived in Cairo Airport, Pope Kirillos himself was waiting for the relics with a big crowd of Copts. When the relics of St. Mark were transferred from the plane, 3 white doves appeared to the people and they were flying at a high speed. Since doves do not fly that late at night we trust that the 3 doves were representing the spirits of the saints welcoming the relics of St. Mark.
- ✝ The relics of St. Mark now rest in Cairo under the altar of St. Mark's cathedral. The relics are a good source of blessing.
- ✝ May the blessings and the prayers of St. Mark be with us.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. This is a striking example of how God answers prayers, especially those of the saintly people like Pope Kirillos VI. That is why miracles do happen until now through his prayers.
2. To see different churches cooperate in brotherly Christian love like what we have seen in this lesson teaches us that love is not by mere words, but should be expressed in good deeds.
3. In our Coptic Orthodox Church the relics of the Saints is a great source of blessing. When the relics are touched some people get healed, some people get comfort and some people get touched in their feelings and start to repent.

Songs

SAINT MARK DOXOLOGY

In this day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the Land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border." (Isa. 19:19)

Hail to you Saint mark	the son of Arostopolos
Who preached the name of Isos	Marcos piapostolos.
You were born in Cyrene	and fled to Palestine
The land of the Divine	Marcos
You followed Jesus Christ	from the east to the west
While He was in your midst	Marcos
When the lions attacked	you and your father prayed
So immediately they died	Marcos
Our Lord sent Peter	to prepare the Passover
In the house of your father	Marcos
You were carrying a pitcher	that was full of water
They followed till you entered	Marcos
And the Lord said	this is My body and blood
For you it is shed	Marcos
To the garden you followed	the men of you laid hold
You fled from naked	Marcos
In your house the Comforter	descended like fire
God answered your prayer	Marcos
With tongues you spoke to men	from every nation
About the resurrection	Marcos
You brought us the good news	about Piekhrestos
And ordained Anianos	Marcos
You wrote the first witness	about Jesus' greatness
Describing His Holiness	Marcos
In Alexandria you built	a school that was the first
Many popes graduated from it	Marcos
And when you were martyred	your body was not burned

God ordered and it rained

Marcos

You and God's beholder

and our intercessor

Remember us in your prayer

Marcos

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

ANOTHER DOXOLOGY FOR SAINT MARK THE APOSTLE

- ✝ O Mark the Apostle: and the evangelist: who has witnessed the passion: of the only God.
- ✝ You came and enlighten us: with your Gospel: and preached us of the Father, and the Son: and the Holy Spirit.
- ✝ You got us out of darkness: to the true light: and you nourished us with the bread of life: that descended from heaven.
- ✝ All the nations of the earth: are blessed by you: and your sayings have gone out: to the end of the world.
- ✝ Hail to you, O Martyr: Hail to the evangelist: Hail to the Apostle: Mark the beholder of God.
- ✝ Ask the Lord for us: O beholder of God the evangelist: Mark the Apostle: that He may forgive us our sins.



For the success
of this Sunday
School Program
the teacher should
refer to the
HOLY BIBLE
in his/her preparation
of the lessons and in
teaching the students
in the class





**JULY
SECOND SUNDAY**

THE APOSTLES' FEAST: ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL

Please read the attached material entitled “St. Peter and St. Paul”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

MEMORY VERSE:

St. Peter said: “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” Acts 3:6

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To study the life of St. Peter and St. Paul in the commemoration of their martyrdom on 5th of Abib (July 12). As God supported them He is very willing to help us.

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✝ July is the month of the Apostles. Why does the church have a special fast for them? Without their love for Christ, by which they traveled everywhere to preach His word, and by which they suffered persecution, Christianity would not be so widespread. Could you name some of the apostles?
There are two apostles that stand out among the rest: St. Peter and St. Paul. Let us learn about their lives.

✝ **Greetings to our Saintly Apostles:**

Greetings to our saintly Apostles through whom we obtained the faith. They are called in the Bible “church’s pillars”.

To hand us the faith, they suffered all kinds of persecution which St. Paul describes saying “in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings” (2 Corinthians 6:4-5).

Greetings to those strong in spirit who stood in front of kings, emperors and governors of both Jews and Romans. They came out victorious.

Greetings to those who were chosen by the Lord from the whole world to carry His message and preach His name to the whole world.

Greetings to our Apostles who were filled with the Holy Spirit. They totally submitted to the Holy Spirit who guided them, strengthened them and even spoke on their tongues.

Greetings to them for the Cross that they had carried and the blood that they had shed for the sake of faith and for our sake.

✠ July is the month of the Apostles.

✠ **ST. Peter:**

✠ Our Beloved Jesus called Peter who was a fisherman, to follow Him (Mat. 4:18-19).

✠ St. Peter was the Disciple who declared that Jesus is “the Son of the living God”.

✠ St. Peter was one of the three Disciples present during the Lord’s transfiguration (Mat. 17:1).

✠ At the last supper, like the rest of the Disciples, our Lord Jesus Christ washed St. Peter’s feet (John 13:6-7).

✠ St. Peter followed Jesus to Gethsemane, but could not keep awake so he slept while Jesus was praying (Mat. 26:40).

✠ St. Peter being eager to defend his master, cut off the ear of one of the servants of the high priest (John 18:10-11).

✠ St. Peter was so frightened and denied that he knew Jesus (John 18:25-27).

✠ When St. Peter heard the rooster crow, he remembered his sin of denying Jesus (Mat. 26:75).

✠ St. Peter was one of the two Disciples who went to the Lord’s tomb and found that He had risen from the dead (John 20:1-10).

✠ On Pentecost St. Peter preached to the whole crowd gathered there, and he, along with the Disciples, baptized that day a crowd of about three thousand people (Acts 2:14).

✝ St. Peter healed a crippled man by the power of Jesus' name (Acts 3:1-7). Then Peter said to the Lame Man, "Silver and Gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

✝ St. Peter told Ananias and his wife about their sin of lying to God (Acts 5:1-11).

✝ Tabitha was raised from the dead by the power of Jesus' name through the prayers of St. Peter (Acts 9:36-42). "Tabitha, arise". And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.

✝ St. Peter wrote 3 Epistles (letters) to the believers.

✝ St. Peter was martyred for the sake of his beloved the Lord Jesus Christ.

✝ **ST. Paul:**

✝ St. Paul's name was Saul before he became a Christian. He was a Jewish Pharisee and used to hate the Christians, persecute and arrest them.

✝ On his way to Damascus to arrest more Christians, the Lord talked to him (Acts 9:3-9). "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

✝ A disciple named Ananias baptized him and restored him his sight (Acts 9:10-19).

✝ The Lord told Ananias, "Go, for he is a **chosen vessel of Mine** to bear My name before Gentiles, Kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

✝ For the sake of the Gospel he suffered a lot.

✝ St. Paul had three major missionary trips, through which many people accepted Christianity.

✝ St. Paul wrote 14 Epistles (letters).

✝ At the end, at Nero's command, he was beheaded for the sake of his Beloved the Lord Jesus Christ.

What do we learn from St. Peter and St. Paul's lives?

1. They loved Jesus very heartily. Let us pray that God fills our hearts with His love. Then, like the Disciples, we, through our Christian behavior and conduct, bring glory to Jesus' name.
2. We have to take an extra step towards helping others to know the true Christianity.

3. We can see from the life of both St. Peter and St. Paul that they had weaknesses. No one is perfect. But the Lord helped them a lot. He can help us too. We must never lose hope.

Songs

O TELL ME JOHN

"And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us." (Eph 5:2)

O tell me John, O tell me
And how you were so lucky
Please answer me and tell me
He called me the "Beloved"
He trusted me with His Mother
His heart is ever beating

about His shining face
on His chest your head laid.
John answered me and said,
in His eyes I found grace
I took her to my place
with love for the human race.

And dear Peter please tell me
And how you were appointed
Please answer me and tell me
In spite of all denials
And though I was so bitter
His heart is so forgiving

about the rock of faith
a pillar in His church.
Peter answered and said
His love for me was great
my sins He did erase
for sinners in every place

And dear Thomas how did you
When you were not believing
Please answer me and tell me
I saw with my own eyes
And in His side, the hole
By all his wounds and sufferings

doubt that He is raised
He appeared just for your sake.
Thomas answered and said
the places of the nails
where Blood and Water drained
He opened heaven's gate

And all you His disciples
How when you were in trouble
All the disciples answered
The life that is awaiting
So joyful and so peaceful
Our life is all for Jesus

tell me again and again
for you He took good care.
we can never explain
those who believe in His name
there is no worry or pain
and that is really a gain

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL *

On the 5th of Abib (12th of July) the Orthodox Christians commemorate the martyrdom of the two great Saints, St. Peter and St. Paul.

Peter was a simple fisherman and a native of Bethsaida. When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked His Disciples, saying “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets”. He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”. On that faith, declared by Peter, Christ established His Church (Matthew 16:18).

After he had received the grace of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, he went into the world and preached Christ’s crucifixion. He converted a countless number of people to the faith and many miracles were performed through him. When he was put to trial, he appealed his case to Caesar, He was sent to Rome as a prisoner. But there he stayed about two years and preached freely to the Jews there. Then Caesar condemned him to death by crucifixion.

St. Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin. Before his conversion he had been known as Saul. He had been a Pharisee, well versed in the Torah and very zealous. Christians feared him greatly, for he had been given authority to arrest those who confessed that Jesus was the Christ. One day, as he was traveling to Damascus, a light from Heaven shone upon him and he fell to the ground, He heard a voice, saying: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” and he asked: “Who are You, Lord?” and the Lord said: “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” The Lord then instructed him to go to the city of Damascus, where he would be told what to do. When Saul opened his eyes, he was unable to see.

On arrival in Damascus, Saul was visited by a man named Ananias, who restored his sight and baptized him. After he had been filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, he began to preach the true faith as zealously as he had practiced Judaism and great numbers were converted. For the sake of the Gospel he suffered stripes, imprisonment, captivity, shipwreck and wanderings in the desert. Soon after his conversion he came to be known as Paul.

When he entered Rome, many of the people accepted the Way of Salvation through him. It was to these converts that he sent the first of his fourteen epistles. In the end, at Nero’s command, he was seized and delivered to be beheaded. On his way to the place of execution, he recognized a young girl whom he had once baptized, and she was a relative of the Emperor Nero. When the girl saw Saint Paul with the executioner she

began to weep. After he had consoled her, St. Paul said: "Give me your veil and I will return it to you." She then gave him the veil and he covered his face with it. After the executioner had severed his head, this veil still covered it. As the executioner announced to the wicked Emperor that Paul had been beheaded, the girl asked: "Where is Paul?" to which he replied: "He is dead at the place of execution and your veil covers his head." "You lie" said the girl, "for only a moment ago Peter and Paul passed by, dressed in royal robes and with crowns on their heads. They returned my veil to me and here it is." She then showed them the veil.

***Note:** This article is taken from "Athanasius" magazine, the Church of the Virgin Mary and St. Athanasius, Mississauga, Canada, July, 1983.

NOTES





**JULY
THIRD SUNDAY**

**PSALMS OF DAVID: PSALM 19 THE HEAVENS DECLARE
THE GLORY OF GOD**

Please read Psalm 19:1-10, the attached article entitled, “God’s Love for Us”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To get familiar with the Psalms of David in a two- lesson series. In this lesson we learn to glorify God through the beautiful nature that He created and the commandments of God contained in the Holy Bible.

MEMORY VERSE:

"The heavens declare the glory of God" Psalm 19:1

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ The Psalms is a book of prayers which was written by David the prophet and others under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- ✚ St. Athanasius said that the Psalms (without the parts written as prophecies about our Lord Jesus) can be considered by the reader as his own words of prayers written for his benefits. They contain meditations to help us praise the Lord in all occasions of our lives.
- ✚ **Psalm 19:** The power and mystery of God is revealed to the saints by two methods:

Method 1: (The first part of Psalm 19, namely verses 1-6). The book of creation through which we know the power of God. “The heavens declare the glory of God;

And the firmament shows His handiwork (Psalm 19:1).

Method 2: The Law of God contained in the Holy Bible which tells us about God (the second part of Psalm 19, namely verses 7-14). “The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” (Psalm 19:7).

✚ **Method 1: The Book of Creation**

- ✚ The heavens are speaking of the glory of God, i.e. they declare the power of God. This is a reply to the people who do not believe in God. If heaven is made by the hands of God, can you imagine how great God is?
- ✚ The firmament in heaven proclaims the handiwork of God. All the creatures look down to the earth, except man who was created to look up to heaven. The firmament has a cycle which goes on in an accurate and perfect way day after day and night after night silently and even without being noticed.
- ✚ Night comes after day and the sun comes every morning and appears to the whole world as a beautiful bride coming out of her hiding and as a strong man happy with his victories. During the day the whole world enjoys the light and the heat of the sun. All these are glorifying the Lord who created and organized them all.
- ✚ Therefore, heavens, firmament and sun are silent preachers of God to all nations and tongues.
- ✚ Therefore, we thank the Lord who created all these for us.

✚ **Method 2: The Law of the Lord Contained in The Holy Bible:**

- ✚ David says that the word of God is a source of life for the believers. The word of God reveals the glory and mystery of God.
- ✚ The Psalm 19:7-14 gives the Holy Bible six characteristics:
 - 1) Perfect: The law of the Lord is perfect which means nothing is added or deleted from it. It is given for “the conversion of the soul”.
 - 2) Sure: The testimony of the Lord is sure. The Bible is sure in its hope,

salvation and testimony of God. The Bible cannot lie and its benefit is “making wise the simple”.

- 3) Right: The precepts of the Lord are right. They teach the right way leading to goodness and they avoid the false way leading to wickedness. Their benefit is “rejoicing the heart”. Therefore, the Law of the Lord gives continuous happiness because it changes us from wickedness to righteousness.
- 4) Pure: The commandments of the Lord are pure. They are light to our feet so that we do not stumble in darkness. They enlighten our eyes.
- 5) Fear of the Lord: The fear of the Lord is clean. It cleanses, purifies and makes white the heart and mind of man. Yes, the fear of the Lord endures forever and leads to eternal life.
- 6) True and righteous altogether: The law of the Lord is true and righteous altogether.

✚ All these six characteristics of the Law of God contained in the Holy Bible have various fruits for our souls: they give wisdom, they give joy, and they give light for our minds and our thoughts.

✚ In other words, David is telling us that the Law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord, the fear of the Lord and the judgments of the Lord, all these are, for us, more precious than gold and all the precious metals of the world. Keeping them is sweeter than honey and gives us a great reward.

✚ The word of God helps the person who knows it. It saves him from sins both hidden and manifest. These sins, whether they are hidden evil thought, pride or lustful desires or manifest evil and wrong doings, the word of the Lord preserves him from them all. The Lord is indeed our strength and salvation.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. In His great love for me, God has created the heavens and the earth which declare His glory.
2. He also gave me His word in the Holy Bible to live by and to be my light, my

strength and my salvation.

3. There is His great love for me, He came to be united with me and raise me to heaven.

Songs

HE DID NOT COME

He did not come to judge the world
He did not come to blame
He did not only come to seek
It was to save He came.

And when we call Him Saviour (3)
Then we call Him by His name

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

GOD'S LOVE FOR US

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

How great is God's love for us. It's enough to say that God is Love... And "we love Him because He first loved us. " (1 Jn 4:19)

He loved us before we were, therefore He created us...

Because of His love for us, He created us after His image and likeness.

He prepared everything for us before we were created. He raised the Heaven to be a roof and paved the Earth so we can walk on it. He made the light, water, plants and paradise... Then He created us.

When we fell in sin, He prepared for us a way of salvation.

Due to His love for us, He sent prophets to guide us and gave us a conscience and a written Law to enlighten our insights.

It was His love for us that made Him incarnate, take our nature and bless this nature in Him. On our behalf, He obeyed the Law and pleased God the Father by presenting a God-fearing image of humanity.

Due to His love, He died for us, "The just for the unjust. " (1 Pet 3:18)

He became a love-offering on the Cross. He carried the sin of the whole world and washed it with His blood. "The One without sin was considered sinful, for our sake, " and paid the whole price on our behalf.

"... Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. " (Jn 13:1). And, "Greater love has no one than this, to lay down his life for his friends. " (Jn 15:13)

Because He loved us, He said, "No longer do I call you servants, but I have called you friends. " (Jn 15:15). He also called us brethren and, "... in all things He had to be made like His brethren. " (Heb 2:17). We became sons of the Heavenly Father, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God. " (1 Jn 3:1)

To show His love for us, He said, "... I am with you always, even to the end of the age. " (Mt. 28:20) "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them. " (Mt. 18:20)

His love is also shown in His protection, care and guidance for us in everything.





**JULY
FOURTH SUNDAY**

**PSALMS OF DAVID: PSALM 23 “THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD,
I SHALL NOT WANT”**

Please read Psalm 23:1-6, attached article entitled, “God exists”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is the second lesson on the Psalms of David. In this lesson we learn that the Lord takes care of us. My feeling that the Lord exists and He takes care of us is very comforting.

MEMORY VERSE:

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” Psalm 23:1

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

✝ Last week, by examining the meaning behind Psalm 19, we learned that the heavens and earth which God created declare His glory and that He gave us His word in the Holy Bible to live by and give us light and strength and salvation.
Are you ever afraid of anything? We all fear something.
So, today, we will learn the meanings behind Psalm 23, which we can always remember in times of fear.

✝ **The Lord is my shepherd:**

Our Beloved Jesus is the Good Shepherd “I am the Good Shepherd”. He gives spiritual and material gifts to His people. He hovers over them and protects them from the devil and the enemies.

✝ **I shall not want:**

This is an expression of the complete confidence that God is taking care of us. I do not want or need anything because I am the temple of God and God is inside me. If I lose all, I will not care because I have God Himself within me.

✝ **He makes me lie down in green pastures:**

The spiritual green pastures are:

- 1) The word of God contained in the Bible which fills my hungry soul.
- 2) The church with all its sacraments.
- 3) The Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus which I eat and drink to continue my spiritual growth.

✝ **He leads me beside still waters:**

- The water is usually used for both washing and drinking:
 - 1) For washing: He (the good Shepherd) led us to baptism through which we were cleansed from our sins. (Read I Peter 3:21)
 - 2) For drinking: He gives us the living water also in the Holy Communion. Both the pasture that the sheep eat and the water that they drink are the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ which we eat and drink. (Read John 4:14 and John 6:35 and 53-56)

✝ **He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake:**

- The Good Shepherd helps to get me back to Him through repentance and the Sacrament of Confession. Observing this sacrament leads me to righteousness and rest. Here you can mention the story of the Prodigal son, and how the father (God) waits for his repentant son to return, and how does he receive him.
- All these blessings are given to us because of Jesus' name and not because we deserve them.

✝ **Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death:**

- The shadow of death means suffering and temptation. It also means the death of the body. We, the sons of God do not fear death because through the death of

the body we go to a better life. But the death of sinners is an eternal death or eternal damnation.

- As long as God is with us, even if we die, we live.

✝ **I fear no evil for thou art with us:**

God is with us so we do not fear evil, persecution, death or anything and we can go through the shadows of death with great courage because the Good Shepherd is with me.

✝ **Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me:**

- The rod of the shepherd does two things:

- 1) It beats and drives away the enemies of the sheep (the wolves). And through the Cross (the rod) our Lord did beat the devil and gave us victory over sin, over demons and over death.
- 2) It keeps the sheep within the fold, and even if one goes astray it brings it back. This is what the crucifixion does for us; even if we sin it gives us salvation and through it we return to the fold of the redeemed children of God.

- The staff is used for support and the Cross is our support. It is, for us the believers, the source of power and strength. (Read I Corinthians 1:18).

✝ **You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies:**

The table is great because of the greatness of what is on it. In our case Jesus Himself is presented to us on the table (the altar) to strengthen us against our enemies.

✝ **You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over:**

We were anointed with the Chrisma (i.e., the Myroun) to receive the Holy Spirit. And this great blessing filled us with joy like what happened on the day of Pentecost when the Disciples were full of joy to the extent that some people thought that they were drunk.

✝ **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever:**

- The house of the Lord is similar to the place where the sheep enter and find shelter. In the House of God we enjoy inner peace and comfort.
- When we get tired from the world and all its problems and tribulations we must rush to the House of God where we find rest.

- Originally in the church, the believers used to go twice daily to church: in the morning before they go to work and in the evening after they return from work. What a comforting exercise!!!

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Today, we learn the lesson which St. Paul learned and lived by what he wrote: “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). Since we have God with us we fear no evil, but each one of us can go through life confident that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13).
2. When we have problems at school, home or with anyone in the society we live in, we must remember that God exists and He cares. Without this feeling the burden of the problems will be too much for me.

Songs

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

REFRAIN

The Lord is my shepherd
Come to Him all who labour

I shall not want
and He will give you rest

Whenever I am weary
Whenever I am anxious

You wipe away my tears
You calm all my fears.

Whenever I am restless
On the Cross You died

You listen and care
and my sins You did bare

Whenever I am homeless
In a strange country

You open Your door
no one can care more

Whenever I am hungry
Whenever I am thirsty

You give me Your food
You give me Your blood

Whenever I am scorned
Whenever I am happy

You stretch out Your hand
by my side You stand

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

GOD EXISTS

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

A problem, by itself, without God, could cause trouble for some. But the problem, with the presence of God, would not cause trouble...

Hope in God and His interference gives the heart joy and confidence. As the Apostle said, *"Rejoicing in hope."* (Rom 12:12)

✝ **Was the lions' den fearful to Daniel?** Surely it was not, as far as he knew the phrase, *"My God sent his Angel and shut the lions' mouths."* (Dan 6:22)

✝ **Was the fiery furnace a source of loss for the three youths?** No it was a different case, with a **"fourth"** like the Son of God, walking with them in the midst of the fire.

✝ **Did Goliath, the giant, look fearful to David?** He was like that to the army of soldiers who faced Goliath without God. As for David, he was strong and did not fear Goliath and his threats because he had God with him in the battle. He said, *"For the battle is the Lord's. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand."* (1 Sam 17:48)

Our feeling that God is with us is the reason of our confidence. God's name is a strong fortress that the righteous take for a refuge.

"The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in." (Ps 121: 7-8)

"I have set the Lord always before me; because He is my right hand and I shall not be moved." (Ps 16:8)

Truly, letting God in a problem solves it...

✝ In God's name, Elijah faced Ahab.

And in God's name, Moses and Aaron faced Pharaoh... And in God's name, Paul faced Festus and Agrippa.

✝ The Lord was the strength for these Saints and others like them.

The Psalmist said, *"The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation."* (Ps 118:18). And, *"The Lord is my light and my salvation."* (Ps 27:1)

✝ We deal with God and not with people... We set God in front of us in all our problems and He gives us strength.

If you weaken one day, it means you forgot God's strength.





**JULY
FIFTH SUNDAY**

GOD IS READY TO READY TO FORGIVE: ELIJAH TALKS TO KING AHAB

Please read 1 Kings 21, the attached material entitled, “Human Anger”, and gives the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

God is ready to forgive our sins if we repent, confess and take communion. In this lesson we also learn that the human anger and greed can lead the individual to huge sins.

MEMORY VERSE:

“You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive” Psalm 86:5

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ Is anyone perfect? Is there any human being that is perfect in the whole world? No one is perfect, so we will always make mistakes and commit sins. But then what?
Today we will talk about what we all have to do as soon as we commit any sin, by learning about King Ahab of the Old Testament.
- ✚ Please read Chapter 21 of 1 Kings with the students and explain as you go along.
- ✚ **Naboth is murdered for his vineyard:**
King Ahab who was very rich wanted to take the vineyard of the poor man called Naboth in return for another vineyard or for money. Naboth refused both offers because he inherited the vineyard from his father and it became so dear to him. Ahab was angry. His wife Jezebel prepared a wicked plan that would lead to the killing of Naboth. With false witnesses who said that “Naboth has blasphemed against God and the king”, the people stoned Naboth and he died. When Ahab heard that Naboth was killed, he went to take possession of the vineyard.

✝ **The Lord condemns Ahab:**

The Lord sent Prophet Elijah to Ahab telling him what the Lord intends to do in punishing him, his wife Jezebel and all his family. “When Ahab heard those words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning.” Then the Lord said to Elijah, “Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days; but in the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house.” God knew in advance that his son would be very bad. “Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin” (1 Kings 22:51-52).

✝ Why did King Ahab want to take the property of Naboth?

- He wanted more. Wanting more materialistic things is a sin and leads to more sins. Our Lord Jesus advised us not to care for materialistic things. Jesus said, “For what advantage is it to a man if he gains the whole world and is himself destroyed or lost?” (Luke 9:24).
- He did not care about other people. He was very angry and in his anger he fell in huge mistakes.

✝ Jezebel thought that nobody would know about the purpose of her wicked plan. But nothing can be hidden from God. He sees and knows even the secrets of one’s heart and He is the One Who judges every person.

✝ What did Ahab and his wife do when they heard that Naboth is dead?

They were very happy and they rushed to take possession of his vineyard.

✝ Ahab humbled himself before God and God promised not to bring evil in his days.

✝ There are several examples in the Bible for people who repented and God forgave their sins.

- David: Please read 2 Samuel 12:1-15 and tell it briefly to the students. David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.” (2 Samuel 12:13)
- Peter: Please read Matthew 14:66-72 and tell it to the students briefly. Peter

denied the Lord Jesus in front of a maid. When the rooster crowed and Peter remembered the word that his Beloved Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times” (Matthew 14:72). Then Peter wept, and repented. He was forgiven.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. We must humble ourselves before God and He is ready to accept us. The important thing is that we must be serious about our repentance and our request to receive His forgiveness.
2. We must not get angry at things we do not like. Our anger does not help anything. We can fall into huge mistakes as King Ahab did in his anger.

Songs

FORGIVE ME MY REDEEMER

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” (Ps 32:1)

REFRAIN

Forgive me my redeemer
My eyes are filled with tears

You are the living God
You’ll come and forgive us

With all the world’s temptations
O strengthen us, O Lord Jesus

Lord overlook our sins
And place Your hands upon us

We are your hands creation
All sinners and believers

O Lord we are not worthy
Your love is overwhelming

Our hearts You are seeking
With all his heart repenting

and bless me O Lord Jesus
pleading for forgiveness

very soon You will come
and wipe away our tears

we fall into tribulations
we are pleading O Lord

be gracious unto us
please bless us one and all

Your servants and Your children
lead us to still waters

Your gifts we’re not deserving
in reverence we bow down

and blessed is the one listening
and with no turning back.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

HUMAN ANGER

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

Sometimes, a Holy anger happens for God's sake, but it does not have nervousness and loss of temper, it is a Holy zeal.

James, the Apostle, said about human anger *"... for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."* (Jas 1:20)

Our Saintly fathers, have many sayings on dispraising anger.

Mar Aughoris said, *"The prayer of the angry is a defiled and rejected incense and the offering of the angry is unaccepted."* He also said that *"Anger is an action of the insane... It makes humans like beasts... the eyes of the angry are evil, full of blood, while the face of the gentle is radiant and his eyes look with dignity."*

Anba Agathon used to say, *"Even if the angry raised the dead, it is not accepted by God and nobody will come forward to him."*

An elderly man said, *"The one whose heart is not saddened when his brother disputes with him is like the angels. If he disputes with him, too, then regrets and reconciles immediately, this is the action of strugglers. On the other hand, he who upsets his brothers and gets angry with them and hatred settles in his heart, is a follower of the devil, disobedient to God and God will not forgive his sins as far as he does not forgive the sins of his brothers..."*

Mar Ephram, the Syrian said, *"The wrathful kills himself. He is a stranger to blame and has poor health because his body withers all the time. His spirit is sad and is hated by all."*

"Mar Ephram also said, *"he who hides envy in his heart is like the one who keeps a serpent in his lap. Smoke drives the bees away and hatred drives knowledge away from the heart."*

Abba Isaiah said, *"Anger is desiring to achieve what you want by force, without exercising humility"*.

St. Augustine said, *"What is anger? It is the desire for revenge... If God, despite our offences, does not wish to wreak vengeance on us... do we ask for revenge for ourselves and sin against God everyday?!"*

St. Gregorius, the Bishop of Nassis said, *"Anger makes the black bitterness spread all over the body."*

St. John of Assiut said, *"the weapon of anger hurts its possessor... Anger in the heart is like a woodworm in timber."*

If we refer to the Holy Bible, we will find that it says, *"Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry. For anger rests in the bosom of fools."* (Ecc. 7:9) It also says, *"Make no friendship with an angry man. And with a furious man do not go."* (Prov 22:24)



For the success
of this Sunday
School Program
the teacher should
refer to the

HOLY BIBLE

in his/her preparation
of the lessons and in
teaching the students
in the class





**AUGUST
FIRST SUNDAY**

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM - I

Please read Genesis 12, 13 and 14 (for the teacher to prepare), Genesis 12:1-9 in class, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is part I in a series of two lessons about God's covenant with Abraham. From this lesson we learn that God wants to enter into a friendly relationship with us. He is not interested to give us orders.

MEMORY VERSE:

"So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him" Genesis 12:4

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ What is a covenant? (A promise between two people/parties)
Did you know that you and I have a covenant with God?
Today, we will learn about this covenant and the covenant that God had with Abraham.
- ✚ Abram is the number ten son of Shem the son of Noah. The word "Abram" means honored father. God later on changed his name to Abraham which means father of many nations "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations" (Genesis 17:5).
- ✚ **God called Abram:**
Abram used to live with his family in Ur of the chaldeans (close to Iraq). God called him to leave his family and the house of his father to another land to be given by

God. In this land God promised to bless him and make him a great nation.

God does not neglect even one person who is faithful in the whole city. In Ur of chaldeans the people were worshiping idols and the whole environment was ungodly. God found one heart which was anxious to meet Him, so God invited Abram to go out so that He can make from him a holy church.

This invitation is to every person to depart not from a specific place or specific house but to have his heart depart from the love of money and the world to be able to meet the heavenly Lord. It is an invitation to all generations.

✠ **Abram obeyed God:**

Abram **believed** what God told him, although he did not know the new land and also he used to love his original land. Abram took with him his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot. He took with him also all that he owned. On his way to Canaan, God repeated his covenant with Abram to bless him and give him the land.

✠ **Abram in Egypt:**

There was a famine in the land where Abram lived, so he went to Egypt. Abram had to deny that Sarai was his wife because he was afraid that they might kill him and take his wife for she was beautiful. Although Abram made a mistake in not saying the truth, God made a plan to save him. Pharaoh took Sarai intending to take her as his wife. God afflicted Pharaoh and his house. Pharaoh realized that Sarai is Abram's wife and gave her back to him. Abram took his wife and Lot and left Egypt.

✠ **Abram and Lot:**

Abram went back to the original land where he built an altar, He and Lot his nephew became very rich, Lot's people and Abram's people started to argue about the cattle and the possessions. Abram wanted to keep peace with his nephew, "So Abram said to Lot, 'Please let there be no strife between you and me'" (Gen. 13:8). Abram applied a very important principle which our Lord Jesus taught us "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two" (Matthew 5:39-41). Lot selected the land beside the Jordan River and Abram lived in Canaan. The kings living around Lot wanted to take what Lot had. So, they fought Lot and defeated him. Abram knew about this and went to fight the 5 kings and defeated them and restored Lot's possessions. On his way back from the war, Melchizedek, King of Salem, brought out bread and wine (he was priest of God

most high) and blessed him. Melchizedek was a symbol of Christ.

✚ **Abram refused to take a human reward:**

Abram was entitled to take a reward for his efforts to restore the possessions of Sodom. But Abram said to the king of Sodom “I will take nothing” (Genesis 14:23). Abram was victorious in the war and he was entitled to take everything, but he did not. He refused any human reward and knew that he would receive a heavenly reward.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. As God took care of Abraham, He takes care of us in every instant of our lives. We just have to obey Him similar to Abraham who left his land as God told him, not knowing where to go.
2. Let us learn to seek rewards in heaven for the good deeds that we do. Can we practice to reject rewards here on earth, in return for heavenly rewards?
3. We have to correct our feelings towards God. God is not interested in giving us orders or judging us. God wants to be our friend as He was a friend of Abraham.

Songs

O TAKE MY HAND DEAR SAVIOUR

“Lead me and guide me .. For You are my strength.” (Ps 31:3,4)

O take my hand Dear Saviour
Till at my journey's ending

and please lead me
I'll dwell with Thee

REFRAIN

I need Thee, O Lord
O bless me, my Lord

I need Thee
I come to Thee

Thou Mighty God of ages
When the tempest rages

O be Thou near
I need not fear

When evening shadows lengthen
My faith heart Saviour strengthen

the night has come
and bring me home

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.





**AUGUST
SECOND SUNDAY**

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM - II

Please read Genesis Chapters 15,16,17,18,20, 21 and 22 (for the teacher to prepare). Also read Genesis 18:1-15 in class.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

This is part II in a series of two lessons about God's covenant with Abraham. As we enter into a friendly relationship with God, nothing can be difficult for us. We only have to be patient.

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

✚ Can anyone here walk on water?

How about healing the sick: Can anyone here do that?

So, some things are just impossible for us to do, right?

Well, with God, nothing is impossible.

Last week, we learned that God will always take care of us, and that we just have to obey him; that is our covenant with God.

Today, we will learn more about Abraham and how God did things for him that were just impossible for anyone else to do.

✚ As Abraham entered into a covenant with God, he entered into a deep friendship that was so dear to God. As St. James said "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness and he was called the friend of God" (James 2:23). This unique friendship shows the love of God to his Sons.

✚ The promise of the birth of Isaac:

Abraham was impatient to see God's promise fulfilled. So Sarah told him to take their slave Hagar as his wife to give birth to a son for him. He had a son and named him Ishmael and blessed him. But the Lord told him "from Sarah I give you a son". One day, when he was sitting in front of his tent, the Lord and two angels visited

him and the Lord promised to give him a son from Sarah. Read Genesis 18:1-15. He believed the promise of God and he got a son and called him Isaac.

But Sarah his wife laughed when she heard the promise of God to give them a son because she was too old. God said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh... Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:13-14)

✝ **The faith of Abraham:**

After he got his son Isaac, the Lord wanted to test his faith. He asked him to take his beloved son and offer him to God. Abraham obeyed. He took his son and went to the place where God guided him, to offer his son. On the way, Isaac asked his father, “My father ... Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” His father answered and said that God would send the lamb.

When he took the knife to kill his son, an angel from heaven came and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” Abraham answered, “Here I am’ And the angel said “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” (Genesis 22:11-12). Abraham found a lamb tied in the woods and offered it to God.

✝ **Applications from the life of Abraham:**

- In his treatment with Lot he kept peace.
- He obeyed God in every command that God asked him to do.
- Jesus taught us saying, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). Sometimes we pray and God does not give us what we want immediately. But we have to be patient. God is going to give us all what we need as long as it is good for us, and lots more but in due time. This was what happened with Abraham. He prayed to God to give him a son. It took too long but God answered Abraham’s prayers after teaching him a lesson in patience.
- In every place to which Abraham went, he built a **tent** and an **altar**. The tent is to live in and the altar is for prayer and presenting offerings.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. No matter how difficult the problems we face (for example school exams, or sickness of a member of the family ...etc.), “With God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37).
2. Let us pray to God and let all our needs be known to Him. Then we leave the time and the method of answering our prayers for Him. He knows what is best for us.
3. The Lord is our best friend. His ultimate goal with us is to enter into a friendly relationship with Him. Thus we benefit.

Songs

WHEN HE LEADS ME I WILL FOLLOW

*“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow Me.”
(Mat 16:24)*

I can hear my Saviour calling	take your Cross and follow, follow me
Where He leads me I will follow	I'll go with Him, with Him all the way
If I am sick or if I am healthy	I'll go with Him, with Him all the way
Whether in peace or times of war	I'll go with Him, with Him all the way
I'll go with Him through the judgment	I'll go with Him, with Him all the way
He will give me grace and glory	I'll go with Him, with Him all the way

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.





**AUGUST
THIRD SUNDAY**

THE VIRGIN MARY AND THE LIFE OF MEDITATION

Please read Luke 2:849, the attached article entitled: “Remember”, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn the importance of meditation and how to achieve it from the life of the Virgin Mary. There are very beneficial things that we can remember during our meditation.

MEMORY VERSE:

“But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart” Luke 2:19

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

- ✚ What events happened to St. Mary?
What would you do if these things happened to you?
Most of us would brag about having an angel appear to us, or being the mother of Christ.
St. Mary was different from the rest of us; she led a life of prayer and meditation.
Let us learn about how she led her life and how to meditate.
- ✚ The pure Virgin Mary had seen several great things: she saw the angel announcing great tidings to her; she saw Elizabeth blessing and praising her; she saw the shepherds coming to tell what they saw; she saw the wise men coming from the East, guided by the star, to worship Jesus and present their gifts to Him and she saw Simon the elder rejoicing because he was waiting to see Jesus and the fulfillment of God’s promise of salvation. Despite all what she had seen, St. Luke writes, “But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). This verse indicates a very deep spiritual life. It is a life of meditation. The Virgin Mary was

silent. In her silence she was thinking about God's wondrous acts and meditating.

- ✝ St. Arsanius used to put a small piece of stone in his mouth to prevent him from talking. When the people asked him for the reason, he said "Many a time did I talk and regretted, but for being silent I never did regret."
- ✝ David said in the Psalms "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).

✝ **How can we achieve meditation?**

Meditation could be achieved by taking some time off every day and:

- 1) Think of God's wonders in the universe, in the life of the saints, in your own life ... etc. Just think how great God is, how loving and how tender and caring God is, how merciful and forgiving God is, how powerful God is ... etc.
- 2) Then, praise God and thank Him for what He did and what He does. An excellent example is that of the Virgin Mary when, in her meditation, she said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; ... He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy..." etc. (Luke 1:46-55).
- 3) Think about your own life ... How pleasing to God are you? How are you responding to His love and His mercy? Think of the good things which God has helped you to achieve and thank Him for them. Think also of your mistakes, your sins and your shortcomings and, feeling really sorry; ask Him sincerely to forgive you. Then, in your own heart, commit yourself to struggle with all your might against these temptations and ask for God's help without which you cannot win the battle.
- 4) In your meditation you should read your Bible and meditate on what you read ... You should recite or read some of the Psalms or pray the Agbeya ... You can sing some of the church songs or hymns or some of the praises from the Psalmody, ... You can read the life of a saint or a book that helps you in your meditation, ... You can even watch a video about the life of Christ or the life of one of the saints or Old Testament prophets, you may stop the video in the middle of the showing and meditate on what you have seen ... etc.

- 5) The more time you spend in meditation, the more enjoyment you get out of it, and the deeper you get in your spiritual life. This goes on until you reach a point when your satisfaction and your utmost enjoyment would be reached, not in parties and social gathering and activities, but in meditation.
- 6) Meditation could be best achieved also in the quietness of the night or when you enter your room and close your door away from the noise of the world or the loudness of the worldly music and such. That is why Christ our Lord taught us saying, “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:6).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. Sometimes we feel that our prayers have become repetitive and are said almost without thinking or understanding. The main reason for this is that we do not spend time in meditation. Try to put into practice, from today, the six above-mentioned steps and enrich your spiritual life and really enjoy your fellowship with God.
2. During our meditation let us remember: our weaknesses, the blessings of God for us, the love of people for us, death and eternal life.

Songs

WATCHING US

"Behold, great is thy intercession, strong and acceptable with our Savior."

REFRAIN

Watching us, hearing us, loving us
She is St. Mary
We are her children

she could never possibly forget us
Mother of Jesus who saved us
and she is always guiding us.

She is in heaven in her glory
And is always interceding

the pride of all our saints
with the saints on our behalf

She is heaven but she appears
Spreading on earth love and peace

to her children everywhere
and preserving faith for all

She is heaven but she sees
Mettias was hand-cuffed in jail

when her children are in tears
but she came and broke the chains

She is in heaven but she hears
Anba Abraam come out and see

the pleadings of a great Pope
the faith that moved the mountain

She is in heaven but she leaves
In the church she comes and shares

many miracles where she appears
with faith we witness her care.

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

REMEMBER, O LORD, OUR GATHERINGS, BLESS THEM

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

Our gatherings are not when we get together, but when we meet with God, or when we meet each other and God is there in the midst, according to his true promise, "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.*" (Mt 18:20)

God gathered with Adam and Eve in Paradise, and that was the first Church. Noah gathered with his family in the ark and God was there in the midst. God was also in the midst of the three young men who were in the burning furnace. God gathered with Moses on the mountain and it was a blessed gathering, the face of Moses shone with light as he came near to the real Light.

In the New Testament, God used to gather with his disciples in any place: on the mountain, in a house where he healed the paralytic, or in the wilderness where he blessed the five loaves, or in the fields or in a special meeting at Jacob's well, or in the house of Mary and Martha.

One of the most beautiful pictures presented to us in the Revelation is, "*...in the midst of the seven lamp stands, one like the Son of Man.*" (Rev 1:13). It is the picture of God in the midst of His Church, in the midst of His people and in His right hand, the angels of the Churches. This was preceded by the Lord's gathering with His Disciples for forty days after the resurrection, "*...being seen by them during forty days and speaking of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.*" (Act 1:3). He invited them to this gathering by saying to Mary Magdalene, "*Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.*" (Mt 28:10)

Just seeing Him could be an aim in itself. He said to them before, "*... but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.*" (Jn 16:22). We gather with God in His house, therefore we rejoice in going to the house of God, as the Psalmist says, "*I was glad when they said to me, 'let us go into the house of the Lord'.*" (Ps 122:1)

God used to gather with people in houses:

One of the first houses that became a church is the house of St Mark, "*...the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.*" (Mk 12:12). And in the upper room, the Holy Spirit ascended, and our saint, St Mark, learned the ideals of gatherings and taught them to us.





**AUGUST
FOURTH SUNDAY**

THE NEED OF THE HUMAN BEING TO THE “RITE”

Please read Leviticus 10:1-7, Leviticus 16:1-2, Luke 9:14-17, and give the lesson with emphasis on the points below.

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that rites are systems or organized ways of doing things. We would like to understand the importance of rites in the Old and the New Testaments.

MEMORY VERSE:

“Let all things be done decently and in order” 1Cor. 14:40

PLEASE EMPHASIZE:

✝ What are rites?

Today we want to learn about the rites of the Old and New Testaments and why we need these rites in our lives.

✝ The word “Rites” corresponds to the Greek word “Taxis” which means system or order. In this meaning the word Rites has been used in the Christian church to imply the spiritual system to be observed in worshiping. The search in this area is called “Ritual Theology”.

✝ **Our needs for Rites:**

The need or importance of Rites appears in all aspects of life which have to run in a good order. Anything that is useful must run in a good order. This was the principle

in God's creation. God created everything beautiful, in steps and in a well-coordinated fashion. Moreover, it has been the basic principle for all human work in order to be beneficial. For example:

- **In nature:**
The order is beautiful in nature. The order is prevailing in nature and governs everything in nature: sun, moon, etc. Without this accurate order in nature, everything could be destroyed.
- **In the body:**
The body of all the creatures works according to certain orders. All the organs of the human body function together and in certain order. Every part of these organs can only function according to a certain way and in a special order. Our minds cannot accept the information unless it is well organized and in good order.
- **In the building:**
The house is composed of iron, sand, wood and glass, but all these materials must be arranged in a certain order and built together to form the house. The house itself from inside must be put in order and be divided into rooms and facilities according to their use.
- **In the army:**
One of the most important requirements in the army is discipline and good order. No matter the numbers and the weapons, good order is a must for victory.
- **In church:**
If an order is required for things to run successfully, order or **Rites** are required in the church. The church is the kingdom of God on earth. It must be well organized.
- **In the Old Testament:**

✠ Please read Leviticus 10:1-7 and Leviticus 16:1-2.

✠ “Then Nadir and Abihu, the Sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, **and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them.** So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord” (Leviticus 10:1-2). Even Aaron was warned to observe good orders in serving God. “Now the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the Lord, and died; and the Lord said to Moses: “Tell Aaron your brother **not to come at**

simply any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die. ” (Leviticus 16:1-2).

- ✚ Note that from Chapter 21 of Exodus up to the end of Leviticus is about Rites of worshiping in the Old Testament.
- ✚ God made priesthood only from the tribe of Levi. He made the priests only from the sons of Aaron.

- In the New Testament:

- ✚ Our Lord Jesus was so keen about keeping everything well organized and in good order. Similarly, His Apostles followed His example.
- ✚ Please read Luke 9:14-17. The Lord Jesus wanted everything to be in order when He distributed the bread to the multitude. He asked His Disciples to let the people sit in groups 50 each. From this it is clear that the Lord puts “a good order” as a condition to give His heavenly blessings.
- ✚ St. Paul talked repeatedly about Rites in worshiping:
 - “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40).
 - “And the rest I will set in order when I come” (1 Cor. 11:34).
 - “But we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us” (2 Thess. 3:6).
- ✚ The book of Revelation declares to us that even in heaven there is a very well organized system in praising God and in performing the heavenly Liturgies (Please read Revelation Chapter 4).

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON?

1. We must be organized in our lives, prayers and thinking.
2. We must respect the Rites of the church because God organized them in the Old and New Testaments.

Songs

JESUS, JESUS

“we love Him because He first loved us” (1Jn 4:19)

Jesus, Jesus	can I tell You how I feel?
You have given me your blessings	I love You so
Love, love, love, love	the Gospel in a word is love
Love your neighbour as your brother	love, love, love
Holy God	Holy and Mighty
Holy and Immortal One	have mercy on us

Recitation Curriculum:

Please look at the recitation curriculum at the end of this book.

Recitation Curriculum

In addition to all the memory verses and songs in the lessons, please teach the following recitation items throughout the year:

Recitation 1:

Graciously Accord, O Lord:

Graciously accord, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin. Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and exceedingly blessed, and glorified be Your name forever. Amen.

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according to our hope in You; for the eyes of everyone wait upon You, for You give them their food in due season. Hear us, O God, our Savior, the hope of all the regions of the earth. And You, O Lord, keep us safe from this generation and forever. Amen.

Blessed are You, O Lord; teach me Your statutes. Blessed are You, O Lord; make me to understand Your commandments. Blessed are You, O Lord; enlighten me with Your righteousness. Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever. Despise not, O Lord, the works of

Your hands. You have been my refuge from generation to generation.

I said, O Lord, have mercy on me, heal my soul; for I have sinned against You. Lord, I have fled unto You, save me, and teach me to do Your will, for You are my God, and with You is the fountain of life. In Your light shall we see light.

Let Your mercy come unto those who know You, and Your righteousness unto the upright in heart. To You belongs blessing. To You belongs praise. To You belongs glory, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, existing from the beginning, now, and forever and ever. Amen.

It is good to confess unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Your name, O Most High; to show forth Your mercy every morning, and Your righteousness every night.

Recitation 2:

The Orthodox Creed

Truly we believe in One God, God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten not created; Consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And on the third day He rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again in His glory to judge the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no

end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeded from the Father; who with the Father and the son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. In one Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Recitation 3:

O come, let us worship!

O come, let us ask Christ our God.

O come, let us worship!

O come, let us ask Christ our King.

O come, let us worship!

O come, let us ask Christ our Savior.

O our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, our God, through the intercession of Holy Mary and Thy saints, keep us, and let us have a good start, and have mercy on us according to Thy will forever.

***Note:** It will be beneficial if the teacher can include the recitation items of the previous years as well.



For the success
of this Sunday
School Program
the teacher should
refer to the
HOLY BIBLE
in his/her preparation
of the lessons and in
teaching the students
in the class

MAJOR REFERENCES

(with permission)

1. Books by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III up to March 2005.
2. El-Keraza Magazine, head publisher: His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, all issues up to March 2005.
3. Books by His Grace Bishop Moussa.
4. Recorded Sermons by His Grace Bishop Rowiss up to March 2005.
5. All books by Mr. Kamal Habib (Late Bishop Biman Bishop of Mallawi)
6. Books by His Grace Bishop Youanis, the Bishop of El-Gharbia.
7. Books by Late Father Pishoy Kamel of St. George Coptic Church, Alexandria, Egypt.
8. All issues of “Sout El-Rabi” magazine, St. George Church, Alexandria, Egypt.
9. Books by Father Tadros Y. Malaty, St. George Coptic Church, Alexandria, Egypt, up to March 2005.
10. “Bahgat El-Aiad” by Yassa Mansour, 1970.
11. “The Seven Church Sacraments” by Late Mr. Habib Girgis, 1968.
12. All colouring books, Father Tadros Y. Malaty, St. George Coptic Church, Alexandria, Egypt.



THE FOLLOWING TABLES
OF CONTENTS REFLECT
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TIMING OF EASTER AND
THE ASSOCIATED,
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