

Grade 9 - 12

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Be Faithful

Be faithful, God is your example
as before, on earth He lived

Have true faith, firm as a tree
even strong winds cannot lift

I live the sacraments, my church teachings
and I praise God in all I do



Self controlling, thoughts eternal
I live by God's word, yes I do



Faithful All the Time



“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Revelations 2:8-11)

This is an advice and a commandment that the Lord said to the angel of the church of Smyrna, its bishop. Smyrna is located in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). Smyrna is now the city of Izmir. It was under the supervision of a blessed bishop, **St. Polycarp, the Bishop of Izmir**. The word “Polycarp” means the fruitful, because he was a blessed man and an energetic bishop; he was an excellent Shepherd.

Saint Polycarp

At the age of 86, the emperor wanted to kill him; so his children carried him against his will to a far place to protect him from the wrath of the emperor. During his sleep, he felt that his pillow was on fire; so he realized that the Lord is calling him for martyrdom. Indeed, the soldiers found his place and took him to the governor.

Governor: How old are you?

Saint Polycarp: 86 years old.

Governor: Deny your Christ and raise incense to the idols!

Saint Polycarp: I have lived 86 years with Christ; I lived them in joy with my loving God and my faithful redeemer. How do you expect me to forsake Him now?

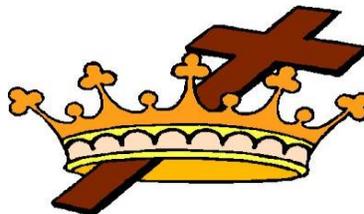
Governor (talking to his soldiers): Burn him alive!

The soldiers took him and laid him on dry wood and started a fire. He asked to pray and kneeled to thank the Lord. They burned him while kneeling to pray. A great light shone on his face and he had a great smile and departed to Paradise in great happiness.

Indeed, the saint entered Paradise and his soul is enjoying the presence of Christ and His angels and saints.

Upon our Lord’s second coming, he will rise again in an enlightened, spiritual, heavenly, and glorified body.

- ❖ **Enlightened:** Made of light.
- ❖ **Spiritual:** Carries a spiritual character.
- ❖ **Heavenly:** Flies up as thunder with Christ to heaven on His second coming.
- ❖ **Glorified:** Wears eternal crowns. Some of them are:
 1. **Crown of Holiness:** Where the enlightened body lives in heaven and does not thirst, hunger, or sin forever.
 2. **Crown of Joy:** Where he would hear the heavenly voice saying “*Enter into the joy of your Lord.*”
 3. **Crown of Unity:** Where he would praise the Lord with the angels and saints.
 4. **Crown of Eternity:** Where he would live an everlasting life without death, a joyful and eternal life with God.



Faithfulness is the Road to Crowns

The faithfulness of this saint was the reason he received all these crowns. We, also, should live with faithfulness. Hence the theme for this year's Festival "**Faithful all the time**" and it has 5 major topics:

1. **Be Faithful in Your Spirituality:** This means that everyone must be faithful in his spiritual life with God. One must participate in the means of salvation regularly: read the bible, pray, partake of the Holy Communion, attend spiritual meetings, read spiritual books.
2. **Be Faithful in Your Church:** One must participate in church activities: learning our Coptic language and beautiful hymns. One must also practice daily Agpeya prayers, learn the lives of saints, participate in liturgies, fasts, and different church events such as Pascha week and the month of Kiahk, etc.
3. **Be Faithful in Your Talents:** Your time, school, and work. Also, different gifts like arts, poetry, music, and sports... And above all, serving others: friends and family, the elderly and the sick, etc.
4. **Be Faithful with Your Family:** In your relationships with your parents and brethren, whether older or younger, and your relatives. Be helpful in the family, and care for the needs of the family.
5. **Be Faithful in Your Relationships:** Your social life at school or work. A Christian should be a light to the world and salt of the earth.

Be Faithful in Your Spirituality

LIVE LIKE AN EAGLE

YOUR DIFFERENCE....THE PROOF OF YOUR UNIQUENESS!



A farmer found a small eagle and decided to raise it with his chickens. "Why don't I raise this eagle in the midst of my chickens, eating what they eat and drinking what they drink, they will live their life and do what they do." The eagle grew living the life of a chicken, a life that is not fit for an eagle, the king of birds.

One day, a bird specialist came to visit the merchant and was in shock to see how this poor eagle was living its life. He said to the farmer: "what have you done to the king of birds." The farmer was so proud of being able to change the nature of the eagle!

The specialist screamed in anger, "I won't let the king of birds live like this!" He held the eagle up and lifted it up and saying "fly eagle, this place is not yours, fly and live like eagles" the eagle looked around, how could it change its way of living? How could it fly when it never did before? It looked up and tried to fly but failed. It looked down and found the chickens inviting it to come back and live a life like them; it went back to live with the chicken.

The specialist took the eagle away from the place of the chicken to the mountains where eagles live, saying: "fly eagle, do not live like a chicken, you are a king." The eagle started looking around but did not see its friends. It, then, looked up and started flying. After a few trials, and with the help of the specialist, it flew high.

Why wasn't the eagle able to fly when it was living with the chickens? How was it able to fly again?

Simply because it was different!

Think about this: Are you different from others? What makes you different?
Is it the way you talk? The way you dress? Your actions? The way you think? Your relationships?

You are different! Will you be able to pay the price of being different? People will avoid you!

What else can happen because of your uniqueness or difference?

Does being different make you happy or is it a cause for confusion and sadness?

You could choose to either be a thermometer or a thermostat!

Do you know the difference between the two? (Ask your servant)

Today, we will meet a person who was able to be different despite the circumstances.

Name: He had 3 names

Address: In exile in Babylon. He lived in the king's palace and had 3 friends

Characteristics: He was called the beloved man; he was very successful to the point that he became a ruler in the place of his captivity. He has a book in his name in the Holy Bible. **He is** _____.

Daniel and his 3 friends were taken captives to Babylon; their names always reminded them that they belong to their God and that they are always in His presence.

But why did the king change the names of Daniel and his three friends?

Do you know what this change meant? (Ask your servant)

Think about this:

Ask yourself about how much others influenced are by your actions? How much influence do you have on them?

What are some challenges that you might come across in your community which are hard to face or resist?

Do you submit to your surroundings and say everyone is doing it?

What is your opinion about the statement "everyone is doing it"?

"I may be present in a place where I would need to change, not my name, but my behavior"

what do you think? Is this possible in our community today??

Daniel had 3 names: _____

Daniel in Hebrew means _____.

Beltshazzar in Keldanian means _____.

The beloved man in heavenly language _____.

Reference: _____.

"They knew that not the earthly meat is what grants people the beauty and strength but the Grace of God that is granted by His Word" (St. Hepholytes the Roman).

PRINCIPLES IN THE LIFE OF DANIEL:

The First Principle: "what is in his heart" (Dan 1:8)

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank" What do you see in the phrase *"purposed in his heart."*.. Daniel did not only fast by abstaining from food, but also placed it in his heart. True spirituality is having a treasure in the heart. It starts from within the heart then appears as deeds. What was God's reaction to what Daniel purposed in his heart? How did God reward him? The bible says *"God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs."* As for us, as much as we are faithful in our relationship with God, He will grant us peace, grace, mercy and success. *"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."* (Revelations 2:10)

What about you...What did you purpose in your heart?

The Second Principle: Be a living fish swimming against the current (he refused to be defiled by the king's delicacies)

- ❖ Even though he changed his place, he did not change his principles.
- ❖ Even though his circumstances changed, his relationship and faithfulness with God did not change.
- ❖ Even though he learned and spoke a new language, his faith did not change.

**Daniel, the great prophet, favored death over stopping to pray for one moment.
By this, teaching us that stopping to pray is much worse than death.**

The Third Principle: Learn the Art of Communication:

Find in Daniel's dialogue with the chief of eunuchs the principles of communication.

Daniel conversed in bravery but in gentleness, in the spirit of humbleness not self-righteousness. For true righteousness is living in moderation. One should not live in complete submission and passiveness, nor be violent, not respectful to others. His speech had wisdom and respect accompanied by faith that God is the one who changes the heart. So we have to enter a secret element in the dialogue: that God's interference is for our spiritual wellbeing. It is clear that the result of Daniel's conversation with the chief of eunuchs was not a result of Daniel's personality alone, but the Grace that God granted him in the eyes of the chief of the eunuchs. The hearts of those who rule over us, even if they are non-believers and hardhearted, are in the hands of God who moves all the events for our benefit when we are faithful to Him. Daniel and his three friends were serious about their faithfulness to God in everything despite the harsh circumstances, and were submissive to the commandment of God regardless of what this may cost them. Therefore, they were worthy of having their names in the Holy Bible and in the Book of Life.

“As You were with Daniel in the palace of his sojourning, be with me according to Your grace wherever I am, grant me success in all the works of my hands.”

FAITHFULNESS IN THE LIFE OF DANIEL:

Daniel was an example of faithfulness, not only to his God but also to the teachings of the law. He was faithful to his Jewish community and was interactive with the new community in Babylon. He learned the new language and was faithful in his work. Daniel's faithfulness was a principle for his life, no matter what this faithfulness may have cost him of hardships or tribulations.

The commandment says *“You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Exodus 20:3)*. Let's now see to what extent was this commandment applied in the life of Daniel. *“Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm” (Daniel 6:3)*.

What was it that distinguished Daniel over all the governors and satraps that the king gave thought to set him over the whole realm?

It was simply his righteousness in spirit and his faithfulness to his God, his work, and his community. He was able to interact with the new community, but at the same time, stay faithful to the God of Israel and witness to Him and hold onto his principles and values. *“So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. Then these men said, “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.” (Daniel 6:4-5)*

What do we need to achieve this testimony? Is it possible in our modern day to be without blame or fault?

What is the secret of this testimony?

Is it possible for others to see no fault in us except concerning our relationship with God?

What did Daniel do when he heard about the King's decree?

“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.” (Daniel 6:10).

Daniel could have stopped praying for 30 days until the decree days were passed; or just pray secretly in his house while having the windows closed and ignore the presence of the Statue. However, Daniel found it a chance to reveal his faith, so he opened the windows and challenged evil, not to show off his strength but to bear witness to his faith.

NOTICE:

There are many things Daniel did when he knew about the king's decree.

- ❖ **Went to his house:** He did not go to ask for the king's mercy or try to solve his problem in a human way. Instead, he went to his house to pray, where he can find his true savior.
- ❖ **Windows open toward Jerusalem:** He was not afraid to do what he always does in his relationship with God, in true faith and trust that He is able to save him. How?..... He did not know!! He only knew one thing: that there is a strong God in heaven who is able to save him. This was the secret of his triumph.
- ❖ **He knelt on his knees three times during this day, he prayed and thanked God:** It is understandable that one would thank God when one is happy and successful; but how could one do so during the time of tribulation? What could he be thankful for? He felt that giving thanks to God is fitting at all times; He is stronger than all the events. He thanked God for what He will grant him even if he does not see. This was his trust in God.
- ❖ **As was his custom:** His relationship with God did not start as a result of a hardship, but he was used to standing in front of Him all the time. His relationship with God was part of his life. We cannot live without this relationship and this daily fulfilling meeting with the Lord. Yes! God invites us to seek Him during the hardships but we should not only seek Him in hardship but everyday regardless of what goes on in our lives.

An Open Window + Raised Hands = Lions' Mouths

Think about this: Would it have been wise for Daniel to pray in secret to avoid the wrath of his enemies? God would still appreciate his faithfulness. Doesn't the New Testament encourage us to pray in secret?

What is amazing is that the King was sad about Daniel's fate and lost sleep that night because he failed to save him; he had already signed a decree and could not change it. God Himself saved Daniel and the King witnessed and believed in the God of Daniel; which was the greatest gain of this situation. It is good to make others believe and confess the strength of your God. The king believed saying: *"I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end. He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."* (Daniel 6:25-27).

Ask Yourself: Is your relationship with your God like the pagan king's, or Daniel's? Will you be able to say: my God will save me from all evil doers, for I was found faithful in His eyes? If Daniel was taken back in time, and had the opportunity to get out of his hardship, would he have refused to be thrown into the lions' den? Discuss it with your servant.

Application: Read chapter 1 and chapter 6 of the Book of Daniel:

1. Write down the verse that had the most influence on you in Chapter 1 and also in chapter 6?
2. Find verses that reflect the meaning: you should answer questions slowly with a yes or no?
3. Find five qualities in Daniel's character, and mention a situation that portrays those qualities.
4. Which of these qualities would you like to have, and struggle to acquire?

AN EXAMPLE OF UNFAITHFULNESS, Read Joshua 7

Throughout the history of the Israelites, a blessing would come upon the people when they would remove the sinner from their midst. We, too, will conquer when we get rid of all our sins.

Whenever you sin, be careful of covering a sin with another. When Achan, the son of Carmi stole, he could have repented. Instead, he stole and hid what he stole, then lied about it.

Rest assured that when you sin, bravery is repenting; and this is what will help you overcome the sin.

True strength is announcing your weakness!

The sin was one person's sin but all the people suffered the defeat. The people are one body, when one member sins, the punishment affects all parts of the body. Ai represents a small sin that may be ignored by a strong person (since he just overcame bigger sins like Jericho); but it leads to his defeat because evil found its way to the heart.

If Achan the son of Carmi was the sinner; why did God punish the people for the sin of one?
How do you see this in our lives? Ask your servant.

God gave Achan enough time to confess his sin and repent, but he did not use it wisely (Joshua 7:16-18).

God allowed the stoning of Achan to:

1. Give a lesson to all while showing the ugliness of sin and how one needs to remove it to start anew.
2. Achan wanted the quick material gain, but if he had waited, God would have blessed him more.
3. Despite the length of time it took for the lottery, he did not confess; nor did he confess on his own.



Whenever we stand in front of a mirror, we see our image as it is. When we read the Holy Bible, we see how our image should be.

The things he stole were:

1. Beautiful Babylonian garment: represents the lusts of the flesh
1. Two hundred shekels of silver: represents the love of money
2. Wedge of gold: represents a tongue that does not praise.
3. Fifty shekels: the number fifty represents freedom; as if Achan became greedy, lusting the dust and did not take advantage of his freedom.

What were the outcomes of sin for Achan? What were the outcomes of removing the sinner from Israel?

The Israelites overcame Ai using 36 men, the same number used in the sacrament of confirmation. The priest anoints the organs of the baptized individual, as if Ai, the small, could kill the organs of the body because of its corrupted heart. A small evil thought that we may think is simple, if not removed, will compromise the purity of the entire body and also would cost us our eternal life.

“Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.” (Proverbs 14:34)

What do you think of Joshua's response when he found out that Achan has betrayed the covenant with God?

The defeat did not utter Joshua or the people's mind and therefore he:

1. Tore his clothes: representing this extreme sorrow
2. Fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel. This means that they knelt in front of the ark with fasting and prayer.
3. They put dust on their heads: representing meekness and humbling themselves in front of the Lord.
4. Then Joshua started explaining what was inside his heart through a deep prayer.

“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” (Psalm 50:15)

Three things we need to overcome Satan:

Beware!!! The devil's main goal is to attract us to earthly things. When we concentrate on earthly gains, we get too attached to them. Therefore:

1. Any words from the devil are unacceptable (Stealing the gold, etc.)
2. Raise your eyes to heaven. (Do not treasure the earthly things).
3. Declare your faith through the word of the Bible (Do not steal).

In your opinion, what made Achan betray God? From the story of Achan, what steps of sin did he go through?

Ambition is necessary but greed is unacceptable. Therefore:

1. Know your talents and capabilities, material and intellectual ones.
2. Accept your circumstances as part of God’s plan for your salvation.
3. Hope for a better future in God’s approval.
4. Work hard to achieve your goals and dreams.
5. Refuse the illegal ways to achieve your dreams.



Prayer: My Lord and beloved Jesus Christ, grant me to love You more and more, because You said he who loves Me keeps My commandment. I want to obey You, only because I love You not because I fear the punishment that awaits me. For love is stronger than death.

I Have Not Tasted Anything Like It

Have you tasted prayer or you still stand at the outer peel of a tasty fruit, while giving the excuse that the peel is thick and that it is hard to taste the beauty of prayer.

“When praying, become one with the words” (St. Augustine)

I. **What is prayer?** What is the resemblance between prayer and the following three things?

From each one bring out a definition for prayer

1. **The secret rope:** Then Prayer is _____
2. **Jacob’s Ladder:** Then Prayer is _____
3. **The Mountain of Moses:** Then prayer is _____



Story: Why do not I meet with Him?

It was a view he saw every day, but this time it left a strong impression that time will never erase. This time he did not just look but also had a deep thought. This person was a villager and, everyday at sunset; he used to see the neighbor’s camels kneeling in front of their owner as he lifts off their heavy loads at the end of the day. This time he thought to himself: “I, like the camels, carry heavy loads; loads of worries... Why do not I do like them? Why do not I meet my owner who bought me with His precious blood? Why don’t I kneel in front of Him so He could lift those loads off me? Why don’t I meet with Him every day so He could comfort me?”

This is Prayer, a meeting with my Lord and King.

“I don’t mean only the prayer of the tongue but I want to praise You with all my being; to You I offer praises with my voice, and others with my deeds and life.”



“You have to struggle in prayer to unite your inner thoughts with its words. “ (St. John El-Daragy)

Prayer is simply a friendly conversation with God...Just like the body needs air and food, our souls need their creator. The meeting with God does not require going to a certain physical place to find Him. It requires shutting the outer senses and starting an inner conversation with Him.

Application 1: Rate each sentence from 1-10 as to how it relates to the meaning of prayer.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. A withering flower meeting the sun light.										
2. A soldier attending morning training.										
3. An engaged couple spending a long time together.										
4. An employee signing in and out.										
5. A living being taking a breath.										
6. Someone opening his refrigerator when he’s hungry.										
7. A mother training her child to brush his teeth daily.										

Application 2: Why pray? Check your reasons for prayer.

- 1. I got used to praying daily before going to bed since I was young.
- 2. When I don't pray, I feel that something is missing from my day.
- 3. How do I love Him, if I don't talk to Him?
- 4. Frankly, I need a lot of materialistic things.
- 5. So He won't get mad at me.
- 6. Of course it is a biblical commandment.
- 7. Because I know the power of prayer.



**“Grant me to hear Your voice, to learn to look forward to meeting You.
Teach me to prepare what allows me to see You.”**

Then in your opinion why do we pray? (Discuss with your servant)

When you meet someone who talks about God through a personal relationship; be certain that the secret is the long and continuous time he spends in prayer.

“God does not ask for words but a heart.”

II. How should you pray?

- 1. Many people do not pray unless they need something. How would you feel about your friend if he only calls to ask you to do something for him?
 - a. You will end your relationship with him
 - b. You will confront him about this
 - c. You will give him what he needs but you will not get too close to him.
 - d. You will always love him regardless of how long he continues to do this.

2. Write five different examples of materialistic things that most people pray for:

- 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
- 4. _____ 5. _____

3. Mention 3 reasons the Lord Jesus Christ told us not to place priority on materialistic things using one example from the first question (Matt 6:26)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

3. What do you think?: How would you describe a man who only asks God for a material need and keeps asking for it without even asking for peace from God and only prays about this request?

III. What do you say in prayer?

- 1. You should understand the importance of what you are about to do. Then pray:
 - A. What do You want to tell me, O Lord?...I wish You'd speak in my heart
 - B. As for me, this is what I need to tell You.
 - C. Stay quiet for few minutes and look at an Icon of the Lord Jesus
- 2. Divide the time of prayer into different sections according to the order God wants us to follow
 - A. Praise
 - B. Give thanks
 - C. Ask for repentance and forgiveness
 - D. Ask for the spiritual then the material needs
 - E. Pray for others

Application: Find verses that contain praise, thanksgiving, and asking for forgiveness and repentance.

Remember: *“The more we pray, the more we develop eagerness to pray more. This eagerness will grow in us more as we pray.”*

“Pray, and prayer itself will teach you to pray.” (St. Mark the Hermit)

1. **Praise:** In it, we praise God for all His qualities and the way He deals with us. The prayers of the Agepya and praises will help us in this:

- ❖ “Who *is* like the LORD our God, Who dwells on high” (Psalm 113:5)
- ❖ “LORD, who *is* like you” (Psalm 35:10).
- ❖ “Let my soul live, and it shall praise You” (Psalm 119:175).
- ❖ “Gather in me all my senses to praise and glorify my Lord Jesus” (Monday Epsalia).

Find more verses to praise God in your prayer

2. **Give thanks:** We forget to thank God for all He has given us and then ask for more. Remember God’s gifts to you, at least the recent ones and thank Him from all your heart. *Write an example or a phrase of thanksgiving.*

(2 Corinthians 4:15) (1 Thessalonians 3:9) (Philippians 1:3)
(2 Thessalonians 2:13) (2 Timothy 1:3) (Philippians 4:6) (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

3. **Ask for Repentance and Forgiveness:** Prayer is a good source to offer repentance to God for your deeds, thoughts, and senses throughout the day.

4. **Request your Spiritual then Material needs:** Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to ask from Him but He made the requests according to His will and joy of heart. Therefore, He invited us to seek first the kingdom of God. The meaning of the word “first” that there should be second and third, etc. You have to know how to take from God what you want. He gives you first, the kingdom of heaven. What you need other than this main gift (the kingdom of heaven) should not be placed above it.

5. **Pray for Others:** Do not be selfish in your prayer. However, always remember that you are responsible for many others. Translate your love to others by praying for them. Pray for the peace of the church, the father the Patriarch, your church, your father of confession, your family, friends, your servants, those who sinned against you, the sick, the sad, and those who have no one to mention them.”



“Don’t forget to ask for the intercession of St. Mary and the saints to help you with your prayers.”



Story: Sitting with him: Their relationship was not like any father-daughter relationship. They were friends, spending a long time together, and having long conversations. Suddenly, the father noticed a change. He noticed that his daughter was too busy and is no longer the way she used to be. The father was saddened but kept this to himself until it was his birthday; the daughter gave him a beautiful jacket made of wool that she made herself, and then the father understood the reason why she was different. *What do you think the father said to her?*



**“If you stand in prayer, struggle to pray with feelings not just because it is a habit”
(St. Mark, the Hermit).**

IV. Barriers of Prayer:

1. Luke 18:1

- a. The first barrier the Lord Jesus Christ warned us about is found in Luke 18:1.
 - b. What is the opposite of this word...and why does He ask for this characteristic?
 - c. How would you feel when you want to give a friend a book you wrote, but you don't feel eagerness from him to read it? He also shows you that he's not serious and does not want to read it.
 - d. Find and memorize this verse (2 Peter 3:9).
2. **Daydreaming:** lack of concentration: Sometimes, you may feel alarmed when you find that you cannot concentrate in prayer, so you get annoyed and leave prayer.

Know that the beginning of prayer is the most important moment in prayer. It is up to us to start a good prayer. It may be difficult, if not impossible, for someone to continue to pray long without losing concentration unless he was helped by the Grace of God. If you are unable to keep your concentration for a long time, do not despair because, being unable to concentrate for a long time is a character of mankind. Follow the following steps:

1. You should learn how to stand in front of God regardless of Your weakness; and do not be afraid to reveal your true self in front of the Lord Jesus.
2. Try to pray whenever your thoughts are quiet, not right after conversations with people.

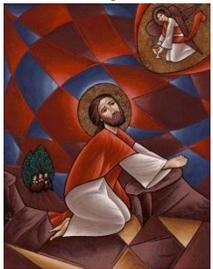
“We won't be judged for the movement of the shapes and thoughts in us, but we find the Grace if we do not agree with it and fight it. We will be judged if we agree with it and give it a way into our thought.”

3. If you are praying alone, raise your voice and use a tune. This will help you concentrate.
4. When we pray we should train ourselves to speak each word clearly, with every word coming from the heart; and we say the words of prayer in a way that would encourage us to continue praying.
5. Reveal to God the thoughts that distract you during prayer; and ask for His assistance in it. Know that you cannot prevent the thoughts from your mind as much as you could control it and present it to God.
6. Apathy and lack of desire: Sometimes we end our conversation with a friend because there is nothing to talk about, or we do not go to the doctor because we have no complaints. This too can be a reason why you end your prayer.

The Remedy:

1. **Pay attention during your prayer:** It is very important to be attentive in prayer, without it there is no prayer. Concentrate on the fact that you are standing in front of God and that He is looking at you and awaits your presence.
2. **Discuss with God** a situation or an event from your day in your alone time with Him. Whether to thank Him...Ask for His help...Ask Him to protect you...Ask for others...and many other situations in life.
3. **Prepare your heart** by singing a song or a hymn you like, so you can enter the prayer mode.
4. **Raise your heart** in short prayer using verses or words of praise throughout the day to prepare yourself for your alone time with Him.

The Prayer of the Lord Jesus...What is it and how is it performed?



“Men always ought to pray and not lose heart” How could we pray always?

We should learn to pray outside the times of prayer.

How are we going to spend the whole day in prayer? We should make all our words a continuous prayer by having moments of prayer throughout the day.

We should learn to pray simply wherever we are, by words, this continuous prayer, may come once from words of the Bible or by just looking at an icon of the Lord Jesus Christ, or a situation we went through during the day. We deliver it to Christ through a short prayer.

You could pray using short and simple prayers throughout the day by raising your heart to God:

Ask your servant about the prescription for prayer!

- Lord Jesus, reveal Yourself to me.
- Lord Jesus, show me your love and grace.
- Lord Jesus, I do not love You as much as I would like, show me how to love You more.
- You said: seek My face, I seek Your face O Lord.
- Lord Jesus, help me offer true repentance that would please Your heart.
- Lord Jesus, teach me how to bear witness to You in front of my colleagues.
- Lord Jesus, I need Your peace that supersedes the entire mind.
- Lord Jesus, I thank You for covering my weaknesses and sins.

**“Whenever you say my Lord Jesus,
you are like a soldier carrying his sword to fight his enemy.”**



The main exercise for the prayer of “Lord Jesus” is to say:

- My Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me the sinner.
- My Lord Jesus Christ, help me.
- I praise You my Lord Jesus Christ.

Be In Control

Learn to use the word NO, for it is an important word that may lead you and help you at times. If a person wants to fix something, he has to have the appropriate tools to do so. The word “no” is a tool that can fix many faults in our lives. Our lives may need some control in many ways.



Why control?

What should I control?

How do I control?

1- Why control?

Were you ever on a road going somewhere and you realize that your watch was not working? Did it bother you that your schedule is now messed up because of it? And now, you have to fix it or you will miss your appointments? Did you ever walk on an uneven or unpaved road? Did you feel that you were falling in holes and that your foot was twisting under you due to the uneven ground? Did that bother you or did it make you happy? If these things bother you, then you may feel the same way if your life did not have control. If you were bothered by a broken watch or an uneven road, then you would not like having your life out of control. Know that if you do not fix your watch, no one will fix it for you and you are the only person that will be affected from it not being fixed. It is in your best interest to fix the watch of your inner life as it also will cause your happiness and benefit.

“Control yourself from errors before your life ends and withers.”

2- What should I control? How do I control?

When God created man, He created him perfect, pure and of His image. Man chose his destiny; for God commanded him not to eat from the tree of knowledge, but he did not obey because of his weak self-control. He ate from the forbidden fruit and fell into sin and corrupted his nature.

*Solomon the King says **“he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city”.** (Proverbs 16:32).*

Picture the following scene with us (Genesis 3)

In what matter was Adam unable to control himself, so he corrupted the human nature?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

First, Control your Senses: The senses are the doors of the mind. So guard the door of sight, hearing and touch so that no wrong thought would enter your mind. Make your senses pure and whatever gets to your senses unintentionally do not think about. **But the second look is always intentional, so you have to repent about it.**

Your senses do not only bring thoughts to you, but they also live in your subconscious mind and become dreams and speculations. So controlling your senses will help you gain the purity of thoughts and emotions.

Fill in the blanks:

“Also do not take to heart _____ say, Lest _____ servant cursing you.” (Ecc 7:21).

“But I say to you that _____ for her _____ in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28).

“Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him _____ and _____ made well.” (Mark 6:56)

“The mouth of the righteous _____ wisdom, And his tongue _____ justice.” (Psalm 37:30).

Fill in the blanks in the previous verses and discuss with your servant what senses you have to control and how you can control them?

Second, Control your Thoughts: Every act a person does starts out as a thought. The fall of mankind in sin was only a thought that the devil placed in the mind of Eve. Therefore, God does not only judge us for our actions but also our thoughts.

Someone might say: my thoughts are inside me and do not harm anyone else, so what is the problem? The problem is that those thoughts may be revealed in an inappropriate action or gesture. It is just like someone raising a dangerous wild animal and saying that it is not harming anyone because the door is closed. But if the animal escapes, you will be the first to get injured by it.

Therefore, you have to know that God will judge the inner thoughts of man. Our teacher David the prophet says “*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.*” (Psalm 66:18). This is because if you regard the evil thoughts, you will be separating yourself from God.

The devil may tell you to steal to become rich, and then shows you others that have stolen and became rich. He says there is no way God is upset with those people if they made it this far. What would you do?

Or he may try to convince girls: “Do not be old fashioned, this is today’s fashion and everyone wears these types of clothes. You have to be like others and try everything.” How would you act?

Remember: *Your thoughts are the first battle with the devil, Your thoughts are the base of innovation, God knows and will judge the thoughts of people, False thoughts will prevent God from answering our prayers.*

**Plant a thought, reap work... Plant an act, reap a habit...
Plant a habit, reap a behavior... Plant a behavior, reap a character...
Plant a character, reap eternity.**



It is important to know how to control your thoughts:

Purity of thought: Your mind is like a food processor. If you put positive things in your mind, you will get out positive things. If you put stories, pictures or jokes that are not clean then you will get out unclean things.

The problem is not just the thoughts but the bigger problem is _____
_____ (Discuss with your servant)

Reject bad thoughts: This means that if a bad thought tries to enter your mind; simply reject it and do not allow it inside your head.

“Do not mention, or think about things you should not be doing.” (St. Basilios)

If you let the thought come in, it would be much harder to get rid of it than if you rejected it in the first place. Think of an unwelcomed guest. He comes in and asks for food to eat and then decides to take a nap, you let him sleep. Then he says “My job is close by here, can I have a copy of the house key to come and rest during my lunch breaks?” Then this unwelcomed guest takes control over the household and disturbs everything and it becomes very difficult to get rid of him.

The initial thoughts you may not be responsible for. You may have encountered it on the street, on TV, or in the community. But you are to blame if you respond to the idea and if you start to look for it through pictures, magazines, or movies.

“You cannot prevent birds from flying over your head but you can prevent them from building a nest.”



Therefore God does not judge us for the initial thought but for responding to it. If you let the thought stay longer in your mind, it would be harder to get rid of it. We have a very effective weapon against those thoughts, which is the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.”
(Proverbs 18:10).**

Repeat God’s Words All the Time: The devil always tries to control our imagination. Therefore we have to sanctify our thought by the word of God. Change the thoughts if you are approached by evil thoughts. The darkness will not approach your mind as long as the light of God’s word is in there.

Be Careful of Emptiness: The empty mind is the devil’s workplace, which means that you have to have your mind occupied with beneficial things. One of the most beneficial things is reading because when you read, you are renewing your mind as stated in the Holy Bible “*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” (Romans 12:2). This means that your appearance will change as your thinking is changed. Look at your thoughts; change the negative ones to positive ones. Always think about the liability of the thought before you follow it or transfer it to others.

Reveal your thoughts: Always reveal your thoughts to your father of confession, thoughts of judging, hatred, or lust, revealing your thoughts will help you get rid of them.

Third, Control Your Emotions: If you do not control your senses, it will bring you evil thoughts. If you do not control the evil thoughts, then it will become emotions, or even lusts. In order for you to control your emotions, you must control your thoughts and to control your thoughts you have to control your senses. If you are tempted by lust fight it quickly before it transforms into an action. If you fall into the action, then stop immediately before it becomes a habit. Control any emotions of anger, lust, and envy, so that one word does not change your temper and your reactions.

Conclusion: Know that if you can’t control your inner self, you will be forced to control your outer self. The spiritual person controls his inner self through self-control, because of his righteous nature and his love of God, and seeking perfection. Therefore, it is best for one to have self-control to gain a heavenly reward, rather than being forced to do so against his will.

Self control encompasses everything. A spiritual person controls himself and does not allow excessive rest or pleasure, controls his relationships with others and his emotions and senses, and controls his use of the time.

Take initiative to change things yourself, so others will find a role model in you. Say no to evil thoughts, lusts, and sin and change them immediately to positive thoughts that you can share with friends.



What would you do if you were me? I chose to replace a lust by being placed in jail, and gained a free salvation and this is because of my faith, what would you do if you were me?~ Joseph

Please allow me before I leave...I have some last words, say no even if others do not agree with you. Say no even if no one befriends you....say no because your savior died for you.

~A friend that cares about you.





Be Faithful In Your Church

Know..Understand..Live

The Holy Liturgy Attendance and Life

The Holy Liturgy is the root of group worship and prayer in church. In it, the Holy Spirit and angels come down and the bread and wine turn into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Liturgy is a union with heaven. Time in the liturgy is time spent in heaven.

Know:

The Liturgies used in our church: The Liturgy of St. Basil, The Liturgy of St. Gregory and The Liturgy of St. Cyril.

Understand:

During the liturgy, the bread and wine are consecrated and become the Holy body and blood of the Lord.

Live:

How to benefit from the Holy Liturgy:

- ❖ Come to church early
- ❖ Participate in the prayer
- ❖ Choose a quiet place in church to be able to concentrate in prayer and not be preoccupied by those around you.
- ❖ Use the prayer books and concentrate and contemplate the meanings of the prayer.

The Liturgy is made up of 10 parts:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. The Raising of Incense. | 6. The Consecration |
| 2. The Offering of the Lamb | 7. The Litanies |
| 3. The Readings | 8. The Commemoration of the Saints |
| 4. The Prayer of Reconciliation | 9. The Fraction |
| 5. Where Are Your Hearts? (The Anaphora) | 10. The Prayer of Submission and Communion |

1. The Raising of Incense: It is an introduction to the Liturgy because it includes different prayers offering thanks, praises, and asking for the blessing of the Lord. Every liturgy must have the Raising if incense of Vespers and Matins (Except in the liturgies during the Great Lent, excluding Sundays. It does not include Vespers because the Liturgies end late.)

Match the verse with the corresponding prayers from the Liturgy:

Revelations 4:11	1 Timothy 3:16	1 Timothy 2: 1 -2	Revelations 5:8	Psalm 119:105	Matthew 5:24
Revelations 6:11	Hebrews 11:40	Isaiah 6:3	John 6:56	Matthew 26:26-28	1 Corinthians 11:27

The Great Mystery of Godliness	You Proclaim My Death	He gave Himself for us	Guidance on the Road	Preparation by Repentance	Meet and Right _____
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The Commemoration of the Saints	Unity with God	Holy Kiss	The Incense	Consecration of the Offerings
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Prayer for the President and Army	The Praise of the Cherubim
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Know: The Prayers of Raising of Incense includes:

- **Thanksgiving prayer:** The church begins all the prayers with it. Either in vespers or matins, the church offers thanks to God for all His works.
- **The Mystery of Incense:** the priest puts 5 spoons of incense and says: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This signifies that the incense is consecrated for the Trinity. The five spoons refer to 5 men in the Old Testament who offered acceptable offerings to the Lord: Abel, Noah, Melchizedek, Aaron, and Zachariah.
- **The Prayer of Ephnoti Nai Nai:** In this prayer, the priest asks for God’s mercy and the people answer back by saying Kyrie eleison three times.
- **The Litany of the Gospel:** In it the Psalm and Gospel are read.
- **The Small Litanies:** The priest prays the 5 small Litanies: Peace, Fathers, The place, the waters, and congregation.
- **The Absolution:** The priest reads the absolution and dismisses the people after the benediction.

Live: The incense is a declaration of the presence of God. Therefore we say “Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” during the circling of the priest while raising the incense. During this time, put your head down and offer repentance and confession and ask for the Lord’s forgiveness.

Understand: The priest processes around the Altar and this symbolizes the preaching of the Trinity in the four corners of the world. In the procession of the priest, he turns counterclockwise. This means that there is no relationship between time and eternity and our relationship during the prayers of the liturgy is with heaven.

The offering of the Lamb is the start of the trip.

2. The Offering of the Lamb: The church stresses its relationship with Christ, the Lamb. We pray the Psalms before offering of the Lamb because they represent prophesies about the incarnation of Christ. The church prays the prayers of the third and sixth hours on the days of feasts, Saturday, and Sundays but on the days of the fast, the church also includes the ninth hour. In the Great Lent and Nineveh’s Fast, the church also includes the prayers of the eleventh and twelfth hours.



The priest examines the offerings to choose the best one. While choosing the Lamb, the priest lays his hands on the oblations in the shape of the cross and says “the Lord chooses for Himself a Lamb without blemish.”

Know: The number of holy bread to be chosen has to be an odd number 3, 5, 7, etc. Ask your servant why?

Understand: The priest chooses the Lamb while facing the people and this declares that no one is worthy to face God. But there is an intercessor between us and God the Father, which is His Son who offered His life on behalf of us all for the remission of our sins.

Live: While confessing our sins, we place our hope in Christ; and at this point we can do nothing but beg for mercy and therefore we chant “Kyrie eleison.” While offering the Lamb, it’s time for offering repentance, so raise your heart asking for forgiveness and asking for God’s mercy.

Understand: The priest wets his fingers with water then washes the Lamb from top to bottom, representing the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ where He was submerged in the water by the hands of John the Baptist. Then the Priest says “Glory and Honor,” while standing at the door of the Altar, then processes around the Altar. He, then, places the lamb in the *Paten* (tray) and with it the *chalice* (cup), then they are both covered with the *Prosporine* (large napkin), representing the death and burial of Christ after His crucifixion.

In the plate of offerings, there are multiple breads (*Korban*) which represent the incarnation of Jesus among the people.

Do you know the meaning of the word *Espadicone*? Ask your servant

3.The Readings: The readings are a guide for us to understand our position towards God and His place in our lives allowing us to achieve our goal.

Know: The readings are called the *Liturgy of the Catechumens* because it is the educational part of the liturgy. The church has 5 different readings in the liturgy. A portion from the:

1. Epistles of St. Paul, called the Pauline Epistles
2. Catholic Epistles, which include the Epistles of James, Peter I & II, John I, II & III and Jude.
3. Book of Acts, called the Praxis
4. Synaxarium, the Chronicle of the Saints. *Synaxarium* means the news or biography.
5. Psalms and Gospels

Live: At the end of the Liturgy the priest says, “The holies for the holy.” How will we obtain holiness without the work of His word in us? The words of the Holy Bible require our **acceptance and full submission to God** giving Him our heart and examining our thoughts and deeds in its light. When the priest processes around the church with incense, it is a call for repentance and to accept the word of God with purity and holiness.

Understand: During the Pauline Epistle, the priest processes around the church but during the Catholic Epistle he processes only in the first rows. Do you know why?

What is the meaning of the words Praxis, Katamaras and Spasmos?

4.The Prayer of Reconciliation (the Holy Kiss).

Know: We are created according to God’s image and are able to Love. So if one is unable to repent and reconcile with God, he won’t be able to offer true love. Sin makes us lose the ability to love; therefore, offering the kiss of love is a true act of repentance.

Live: “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.”(Matt5:23-24). This means that we should reconcile with others and love others as we have reconciled with God.

Understand: Why does the priest raise the *Prosporphine*? The Priest raises the *Prosporphine* to declare the resurrection. It was manifested in us by our reconciliation with God through repentance and with others through the Holy kiss.

The priest prays the Prayer of Reconciliation offering thanks to God in two parts:

Part I: Contemplation of God’s creation without corruption then the fall of man by the deception of the devil; therefore, the Liturgy starts by the prayer of reconciliation as a mark of our reconciliation with God before partaking of communion.

Part II: When the priest asks for the Lord to fill his and our hearts of His heavenly peace. Therefore, the deacon proclaims, “greet one another with a holy kiss”. This is said so the church would be one mind and one heart to get ready for partaking of the Holy Communion. The priest, then, starts out by saying, “the Love of God the Father, be with you all.”, meaning that the love of God will dwell in us if we love one another.

We don’t pray the Prayer of Reconciliation on Covenant Thursday because it signifies that the true reconciliation was obtained only by the crucifixion, which will happen on Good Friday.

5.Raising of our Hearts (The Anaphora):

When we start praying on the bread and wine, the priest and the people start to pray for one another. The congregation prays: “And with your spirit”, meaning that we are also praying for the priest.

We get ready to raise our hearts to heaven. Therefore, the church proclaims the reconciliation of God with His people in Jesus Christ and we answer this practically by reconciling with one another.

What does the word *Anaphora* mean? Ask your servant.

Know: Here everyone is to raise their heart and answer all together “it is with the Lord.” Then the priest answers, “let us thank the Lord” for His grace that allowed us to stand in His presence. Then the people answer “meet and right” because He is worthy of all, thanks and praise.

Let us all ask God at the beginning of each liturgy to give us this grace that our hearts will be preoccupied with Him throughout the liturgy.

Live: If you truly present your heart to God, you must thank Him by proclaiming “meet and right,” because this is truly the grace from Him.

Understand: Then the priest raises his arms and prays “Agius” making the sign of the cross 3 times: the first on himself, the second on the deacons, and the third on the people.

When the priest asks the people to “raise their hearts,” they feel that they are in heaven and start praising like the angels saying “Holy, Holy, Holy”. We praise the Lord because He was incarnated for us, crucified, buried, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and will return to judge each one according to his deeds.

Live: Praise God and thank Him for His work with you because, we reconcile with Him through repentance, with our brethren through love, we raised our heart and thoughts to care about heaven, so we can become a part of the heavenly choir singing and proclaiming, “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

What is the difference between the word “Holy” and the word “saint”? Ask your Servant.

Why does the priest put incense in the censor when he says “He was incarnated and became man”?

“As if every person, indeed, went to heaven; and is standing by the throne of God, flies with the Seraphim and sings the Holy song.” St. John Chrysostom



All the powers of heaven come to sing this new song, the altar is filled with angels, so how dare you, Christian, come to the offering without the proper respect. The church is heaven indeed.” (St. John Chrysostom.)

Know:

6.The Consecration: The consecration is the most important part of the liturgy. In it the Holy Spirit descends on the offering and transforms it into the blood and body of our Lord Jesus Christ. In it we remember how our Lord gives us His body and blood everyday on the altar. The priest prays inaudibly and proclaims the transformation of the bread and wine to the body and blood of our Lord. The candles are lit around the altar during the sanctification of the bread and wine declaring that the true light has shined on the offering.

He calls for the Holy Spirit while kneeling because, it is the Lord Himself who instituted this mystery and He is the one who sends His Spirit onto the offering.

Understand: Here the priest points to the sacrifice while having his hands covered with the napkins and says: “He instituted for us this great mystery of godliness.”

When the deacon proclaims “worship God in fear and trembling”, the priest asks the Holy Spirit to join and transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then he makes the sign of the cross on the bread and says “He gave thanks...He blessed it...and sanctified it.”

Then he puts his hand at the edge of the Chalice and makes the sign of the cross 3 times and says “He gave thanks...He blessed it and sanctified it” Each time the people answer saying “Amen.”

What does the statement “do this in remembrance of Me” mean? Ask your servant.

7.The Litanies: Litany means request or supplication.

Know: The Litanies are supplications for many things, as we share one body; we offer supplication for the unity of heart. We pray for our loved ones placing their needs in the presence of the Lord. We ask for the unity of the church, the safety of our Patriarch, the priests, and servants. We pray for the widows and orphans, strangers and guests, the sick and travelers. We also pray for those who are suffering, the president, and the soldiers (Ephesians 2:1-2).

The priest prays the seven small litanies: Litany of peace, the fathers, the priests, the mercy, the place, the waters or plants or the heavens, and oblations.

Live: Through these supplications, we live in love which is full of care for others’ needs. No one can stand in the presence of God alone, but we all ask for one another as we are all members of one body.

Pray that you, too, be purified, so that you would be filled with the spirit of love and be freed from all selfishness.

8. The Commemoration of the Saints: Unity with the victorious church.

Know: After the litanies, the priest prays the Commemoration of the Saints. It includes the fathers of the church; then he mentions the names of our beloved who passed away. The Commemoration of the Saints is the presence of the whole Catholic Church, not only the living but also the ones who passed away. In it we unite with the victorious church, we ask for their prayers and we pray for them.

Understand: On Covenant Thursday we do not pray the Commemoration of the Saints, why?

It is fit that we pray for the believers who passed away and to offer a mysterious sacrifice so God would have compassion on them. (St. Cyril the Pillar of Faith).

Live and Participate: During the commemoration of the saints keep quiet and stand to keep your concentration. Contemplate on some of the characteristics of those saints and ask for their intercession. Pray for those who passed away so that God would give rest to their souls.

9. The Fraction: The prayer of the Fraction is offering thanksgiving to God for all His blessings. His giving us His Holy body and precious blood. Then, we offer praises for Him to grant us the purity of heart, the soul, and the body, so we can partake of His Holies.

There are many types of Fraction Prayers. There are ones that pertain to the feasts like St. Mary, the angels, the fasts, and more that pertain to other church occasions, in addition to the annual fraction prayers.

Understand: The priest cuts the body into 12 different pieces around the *Espadicone* and this represents the passion of Christ. The priest, then, smears the body with the blood in the shape of a cross and this represents that our Lord was immersed in the passions. It also resembles the blood that came out of His side as He was speared on the cross.

Live: During the Fraction, contemplate on the passion of Christ for you. Think about the suffering and the pain He endured for you. Remember that all of this was for your sins, and pray saying: Lord forgive me for I am a sinner.

10. Prayers of submission and Communion: The deacon proclaims, “Bow down your heads to the Lord.” Then the people answer “before you O Lord.” This is a moment of repentance and it prepares you to receive the absolution from the priest. When the priest reads the absolution, we have to give repentance.

Then the deacon proclaims, “let us attend in the fear of God.” The priest then answers “Peace be with you all” and the people would answer “and with your spirit”.

Then the priest proclaims “the Holies for the Holy.” And the people answer, “One is the Holy Father, One is the Holy Son, One is the Holy Spirit.” By this the people are proclaiming that we are not holy, we are sinners and unworthy and no one else, but God the Trinity, is holy.

Then the priest says the final confession and, each time, the people answer: “Amen”.

Then the deacon says “Pray for the worthy communion of the Immaculate, Heavenly, and Holy Mysteries, Lord, have mercy.”

The Eucharist is a sanctification of the material creation to regain its original image.

It is a declaration of God’s presence and proof of His love and care for man who is created in His own image.

Now we all line up as if we’re all going to heaven with our mouth open resembling the manger that received God incarnate. It is truly a moment of joy and sanctification.

Understand: Offer praises of joy as a soul that was sanctified by the blood of Christ.

**“One should not prevent himself from partaking of communion daily because in it healing for the soul.”
(St. Augustine).**

Summary:

1. Raising of Incense in Vespers and Matins: we proclaim that God is in our midst despite the fact that we are sinners.
2. The Lamb of God gave himself for our sake (The Offering of the Lamb).
3. He gave us His word to guide and purify us (The Readings).
4. Reconcile with your brethren (The Prayer of Reconciliation) because as long as we are reconciled with God, we have to be reconciled with one another.
5. We raise our hearts to live in heaven (The Anaphora).
6. He presents His body to us so we could be in His body (The Consecration) and as long as we are His body...
7. We also have unity with one another (The Litanies)
8. We will also have unity with our brethren in heaven (the commemoration of the saints).
9. We also have unity in His passions that He endured for us (The Fraction).
10. And finally, we take communion, take His body and blood so He will always be in us. And we also would have unity with our brethren because we are members in His body. Communion makes us one in Him and with our brethren.



An Invitation for Joy

Imagine that you went back in time, to the time of Jesus Christ, exactly in Jerusalem where He was teaching and healing the sick. You were standing there looking in His face closely and suddenly, Jesus' eyes fell on you, He ran towards you, hugged you and kissed you in front of everyone.



Describe your feelings in one word: _____

Think about what you have done to make Him run towards you, hug you and kiss you??

“And he arose and came to his father.

But when he was still a great way off” (Luke 15:20)

What did the son do: _____

What did the father do: _____

Then _____ is the way to enjoy the hugs and kisses of the heavenly father.

PRINCIPLES OF REPENTANCE

True or False: Repentance in its orthodox meaning is a change in direction, from looking towards sin to looking towards Christ.

True or False: Repentance is not only abstinence but also fulfillment with God.

True or False: Repentance is struggle and grace. Struggle is the intent of no return to the way of sin and hating sin. Grace is the work of God and His role in my repentance: His hands strengthen me.

True or False: Repentance means holiness without falling.

True or False: Repentance is renewable and continuous throughout life.

True or False: There is no sin without repentance. Repentance is endless and no matter how great our sins are, it does not surpass the love of God.

“A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, But to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.” Proverbs 27:7

God Is Calling You

The normal human being after falling in sin, runs away from God, therefore

God gives him comfort calling him in the following verse:

“Return to me because, I redeemed you.” Isaiah 44:22

THERE ARE TWO ACTIONS HAPPENING IN THIS VERSE, WHICH ONE OCCURRED FIRST?



White T-shirt: After a long day at work, the white T-shirt became dirty. Does this mean that it is not suitable and we must get rid of it? Of course not- we will wash it and it will become clean again. Does cleaning it this time insure that it will not get dirty again? What do you think? Obviously, it will get dirty again and our role is limited to cleaning the T-shirt if it gets dirty.

This is our life; when we get soiled by sin, we must repent, so we would be clean again. This act of repentance is repeated throughout our lives. It is a journey of struggle on earth, your only role is to care for cleaning the T-shirt and do not procrastinate, claiming that it is easy to keep it clean.

A Quick Change: St. Paesia:

There was a beautiful woman named Paesia who was living in sin. She loved the sin she fell in but she also took it as a profession and was very famous for it. One day, Paesia the beautiful woman, got an unexpected visit from a great man to her house, where she committed the sin. Who was this great man? Her house was always full of the rich and famous, but this time, it was different, it was St. John the Short.

Do you know the rest of the story? How did he lead her to repentance?

In this visit she decided to change her life and decided not to return to what she did before. Her repentance was strong because, his words changed her heart. She cried and asked him, “is there repentance for me?” He answered “Yes, but not in this place” So she decided to leave with him wherever he led her. It started to get dark so he left her by a nearby stone and he went to pray, as he was praying he saw a vision of an angel carrying the spirit of Paesia. In the morning, he went to her to resume their trip; he found that she died so he started to cry asking God why didn’t He give her time for repentance? So he heard a voice from heaven saying: “*God accepted her repentance in her house.*”

So the Saint was comforted and thanked God for His great love for sinners.

Notice that Paesia changed from a sinner, to a repentant, then, finally to a saint...All in just one day.

Notice that joy is the sign of true repentance.

Joy is one of the signs of the orthodox repentance, as described by one of the fathers.

Confession

Have you ever asked why is it necessary to confess to a priest?

I don’t like to confess because _____

A Father of confession is a father full of tenderness and love. In whom you feel God’s love and firmness, help and discipline. We confess to get an absolution for our sins and a solution for our problems.

Confession is...: Confession is to yourself by repentance, to others by apology, to God by repenting and asking for forgiveness, and to the priest by admitting the sin to seek absolution.

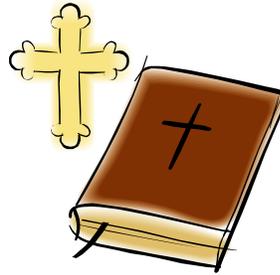
Inspection and Explanation — Decision and Impact

Inspection: The sacrament of confession is not only recalling your sins in front of the priest, even if this is simply the truth, but it is, in the first place, a true repentance. What leads to confession is a true honest feeling of regret and sorrow for what sins you’ve done and, at the same time, a true desire to return and eagerness to change your way. Remember that recalling your sins in confession is in front of God and not in front of a human being, and that the Holy Spirit is present to hear you and grant you forgiveness. (*Review the story of Ananias and Sapphira- Acts 5:3 and the story of Achan, the son of Carmi -Joshua 7:1*)

Inspection means confronting yourself to give account for your sins. Sit in a quiet place, alone and pray then start inspecting yourself in the light of the Holy Spirit, inspecting both the positive and negative struggle. Then write down what you need to do.

The Positive Struggle: (Spiritual Growth and Owing Virtues)

1. Prayer: How much do you care for it? What type? Problems and barriers?
2. The Holy Bible: Daily reading (Old and New Testaments), Contemplation, Application and Memorization.
3. Giving
4. Liturgy and Communion
5. Fasting
6. Church attendance and spiritual meetings
7. Spiritual readings
8. Spiritual exercises and virtues
9. Service to others



The Negative struggle (struggling against sin)

1. **Sins of thought:** Thoughts of adultery or any other lust; thoughts of anger or envy, revenge, judging, day dreaming, pride.
2. **Sins of the heart and feelings:** Feelings that do not please God, feelings of envy, jealousy, hatred, love of money, love of positions, love of control, love of the world, and going with the ideals of the world, anger, complaining, depression, unholy sadness, etc.,
3. **Sins of deeds:** Adultery, stealing, fighting, bad habits, lack of obedience.
4. **Sins of the tongue:** lying, judging, blasphemy, swearing, bad jokes, negative conversations, unholy conversations, etc.,
5. **Your relationships with others:** Anger, pride, sinning towards others, bad company, violence, love of pride, hypocrisy, etc.,

The Traffic Light Game:

Write the appropriate color after reading the following phrases:

Red (do not say) - Yellow (wait) - Green (say this)



1. I felt that.... - _____
2. I did this because... - _____
3. Someone suggested that I do this... - _____
4. I did not do this... - _____
5. Places, details, and introducing the situations... - _____
6. I had thoughts of...- _____
7. I was mistaken in...- _____
8. Try not to say anything while the father tells you guidance exercises. - _____

Choose 4 of the previous phrases to include in your confession

I will tell my father of confession the following:

1.	3.
2.	4.

Explanation: Whenever you feel how heavy your sins are, and you become small in your eyes, sit with God and tell Him your regrets and confess all you've done and explain to Him all the details. Do not complicate your words when talking to God but just talk to him frankly as a son talking with his father. Try to know the reasons you fell in sin so you could avoid it in the future and why do you not pray (e.g. I do not organize my time) so you know why you fall.

Decision: Decide to return to your Father's bosom and leave sin. In your prayer, do not forget to ask the grace of the Lord Jesus to help you in your struggle, repentance, and confession. Sit with your father of confession to get an absolution for your sins and a solution to your problems.

Remember this in your confession: When you sit with your father of confession, be careful that you should not have favor with him so that you do not end up telling your sins as one who tells a story or reading a news report, but in pain and fear. Do not give yourself an excuse and do not hide anything from him regardless of how bad or embarrassing it is. Remember what the bible says:

"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."

Proverbs 28: 12

Do not try to give the sin another name because you are embarrassed, but be honest with your father of confession and tell him everything that you have in your heart, even if you had something in your heart against him personally. Listen carefully to his advice as your spiritual father and if there is something that is bothering you, tell him.

Source of Power: When you finish your confession and the priest puts his hand on your head, this reminds you of the love of the Heavenly Father who accepts the sinners.

The Absolution: Write the part that you like the most in the absolution (this is a part of it).

Now, also, we ask and entreat Your goodness,

O Lover of mankind One, for Your servants,

my fathers, and my brethren, and my weakness;

those who bow their heads before Your holy glory.

Dispense unto us Your mercy, and loose every bond of our sins,

and, if we have committed any sin against You,

knowingly or unknowingly, or through anguish of heart,

or in deed, or in word, or from faint-heartedness;

Do, O Master, Who knows the weakness of men,

as a good and Lover of mankind

One, God, grant us the forgiveness of our sins;

bless us, purify us; make us absolved, and all Your people absolved.

Fill us with Your fear, and straighten us unto Your holy, good will.



Impact:

1. After confession, it is better that you leave and be alone to contemplate on how much the Lord has done for you and had mercy on you so that you can benefit from your spiritual condition.
2. After confession, you will find that joy is filling your heart after you hear that the Lord has loosened every bond of your sins and forgave you.
3. Have all the intent to leave the sin and do not return to it again. Ask for the grace of God so that He would strengthen you in your struggle.

A Beautiful Symphony



Daniel was drawing black dots on a paper in front of him. Suddenly Peter asked him why he is ruining the white paper. Daniel answered Peter and said wait till I am done. When he finished he had completed beautiful musical notes that he played and Peter liked it a lot.

In our life, God can turn many black dots of our weaknesses into something beautiful. We may think that it ruins our life but the Lord uses those weaknesses to draw His love in the most beautiful Symphony and turns our weaknesses into strengths.

Can you remember two events from the Bible where there was confession and repentance?

Be Faithful In Your Talents

Daily Agenda



NEWSPAPER CLASSIFIEDS: Help needed immediately:

Job 1: A technician needed to work in a pharmacy. The salary is \$1000/month.

Requirements: Experience in taking blood pressure, glucose monitoring, wound care and knowledge of the medication brands and their use in emergencies.

Job 2: A satellite channel is seeking program announcers. The salary is \$1000/day.
A great opportunity for both males and females!

Job 3: A global corporation specialized in different products: real estate, cares, food, medicine, clothing, and accessories. The salary is \$86,000/day. Both male and female sales representatives are required to personally use those products. The company will pay the employee \$86,000/day to be able to purchase those products and spend it before the end of the day to let everyone know the beauty of using those products.

Requirements: Spending the whole amount before the end of the day.

IMPORTANT

Important/Urgent Tasks: Studying on an exam night- Doing something urgent at the last minute like memorizing the contest hymns days before the deadline- Visiting someone who is having surgery or is sick.

Important/Non-urgent Tasks: Studying since the first day of school- Memorizing the hymns a long time before the deadline to make sure you know them well.

URGENT

Unimportant/Urgent Tasks: Urgent tasks that are not important.

NON-URGENT

Unimportant/ Non-Urgent Tasks: Internet browsing- games- taking trips at the wrong time- excessive sleep- watching TV- computer.

UNIMPORTANT

Tell me how you spend your days; and I will tell you what your future will look like

TEST YOURSELF: Think of the activities you did yesterday... Under which category do most of them belong?

Jesus' Daily Tasks: Read Mark 1:14-35. Apply this table to a day in the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, starting from the morning to the evening to discover the square that holds most of His tasks. Were His tasks important and urgent, important and non-urgent, or unimportant?

IMPORTANT

URGENT

NON-URGENT

UNIMPORTANT

Compare your task table for yesterday and today to the Lord's task table.

Accomplishments = Your Talents

Jesus gave us Himself as an example to follow His lead.

Discussion: Look at the classifieds. We can see that God gave each one of us, just like the greatest saints and the greatest inventors, an allowance of 86,400 seconds a day (24 hours).

And by creating the Task Tables, we learned how to organize our time. We learned to start with the important /urgent tasks, then the important/non-urgent ones; and do less of the unimportant ones.

Notice: if you find that you have a lot of important and urgent tasks, it is probably because you were not able to manage your time in the past. However, as you use this table to manage your time, you will have less urgent important tasks because, you will find that you completed those tasks when they were important and non-urgent. Here we learn that the person that knows the importance of time knows how to organize it and does most of his important tasks when they are non-urgent; and will seldom have any tasks under the category of unimportant/non-urgent tasks.

Brain Teasers:

1. If you are 24 years old, and you watch 4 hours of television a day? Multiply that by how old you are. How many YEARS of your life did you spend watching TV?
2. If you are 18 years old and sleep 12 hours a day on average, how many YEARS did you sleep during those 18 years?
3. If you are 15 years old and spend 30 minutes with the Lord in prayer and reading the Bible and you spend 8 hours a day on the computer, how many YEARS did you give the Lord and how many did you give the computer?

**“Go to the ant, you sluggard!” (Proverbs 6:6)
Hurry and find positive tasks and do not give up!**

Beware of the thieves of time

1. Excessive use of the phone.
2. Day dreaming and bad thoughts.
Remember to turn those into good thoughts and not give into them.
3. Excessive use of the computer.
4. Excessive TV watching.
5. Spending too much useless time with friends.
6. Excessive sleep, which leads to depression and laziness.
7. Depression: the eagerness and motivation allows you to do in days what you couldn't do in months; for example studying the night of an exam or like those who *were hired* at the eleventh hour (Matt 20:1-16).
8. Randomness and lack of organization: because organizing the time of eating and sleeping save time and effort in time you may spend in depriving yourself of sleep or food to complete the task.
9. Hesitancy



Rewrite this list of thieves in the order of what has the most impact on you. Start with what affects you most often so you could win over it through the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How do we find the time? The difference between one and the other is not that one finds time to accomplish his tasks but the other does not. The difference is that one is able to organize his time while the other is not. One person may be able to do many tasks at a time, while another is able to manage a group of companies, another spending days in the lab researching a cure. On the other hand, another is wasting his time socializing, doing nothing useful and watching television or browsing the web. If you review your time at the end of the day, you will notice many hours were wasted ...What a great loss! On average, a person sleeps about a third of their age, so a 30 year old person spent 10 years of his life sleeping.

In the past, people lived hundreds of years like Adam and Noah but now we live fewer years. One time the devil was trying to tempt one of the fathers of the wilderness and told him that he still has 25 years to live and that he should take it easy on himself. So he answered and said, thank you for alerting me to how short my time is.

First: Act as if you are a faithful steward of your time.

The word of God tells us that we, and everything we own, belong to God. “*The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.*” (Psalm 24:1). So time belongs to God and we have to use time like St. Peter said: “*As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*” (1 Peter 4:10). **Time is the greatest talent God gave to us.**

Also, St. Paul says “*redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*” (Eph 5:16). The word “redeeming” is originally an expression that was used in trade. It was used when people used to trade for things before the use of money. Thus this verse is telling us that, if we can trade anything for time, we should do it; we should buy the time, if we can.

Why do you think time is that important? Discuss with your servant.

St. Paul says “the days are evil.” This phrase has multiple meanings: First, the days are short and will end fast as in a story or vapor that would appear but quickly disappear. It also means that the days are unfaithful, today you are able to work and accomplish things but you do not know what tomorrow will bring.

It also means, the chances may not return again. The day that ends cannot be relieved, you cannot live it twice.

It is evil because, the world was placed in the hands of the evil one. Many people fall in sin and inequity, so it is our role as God’s people is to be careful and try to save those who are lost.

You are entrusted with your time, so here are some suggestions for optimal use of your time:

1. **Take the time to plan ahead** because, for every minute you spend planning, you will save 3 minutes in execution. Learn to spend time in planning for your future and your goals.
2. **Start a daily routine** of when to sleep, wake up, eat, go out, and rest. Organizing your time will make your life easier.
3. **Set your priorities:** In the beginning of each day, write your tasks in the order of their importance.
4. **Set a deadline for each task.** Many times, we set a time for when to start a task but forget to set the time it should end. Be realistic. Insist on using this plan, so you could develop a good sense of time; but make sure to have spare time for emergencies.
5. **Forget all other tasks and only concentrate on the task at hand.** Too many tasks destroy your concentration.
6. **Stop procrastinating:** Procrastination is the biggest waste of time because starting a task is much easier than worrying about finishing it.
7. **Reward yourself.** After completing a task, congratulate yourself; take some time to rest and clear your mind, and enjoy the feeling of accomplishment.
8. **Reduce your hours of sleep.** Too much sleep leads to more laziness; so as much as possible try to reduce your hours of sleep so that it does not alter your ability to concentrate.
9. **Create a to do list.** One of the most important time management principles is having a to-do-list. In a to-do-list, one creates a list of the tasks of the day. In a to-do-list, one would list the daily tasks for the day while listing the tasks in order of their importance and time of completion.
10. **Start.** Be sure that, after following the previously mentioned steps, you are ready to start. So, do not let an opportunity go or hesitate, but start your practical steps according to their order because, hesitation is a satanic war aiming to stop you from starting your task. A start is characterized by accurate application of the task, thinking it through, and organizing the required steps for its completion.
11. **Take time to rest.** After completing your tasks, you have to set time to rest; meaning that you do not get overwhelmed with your daily tasks and discover at the end of the day that you used up all your mental and physical energy. Therefore, it is important that you set some time to take breaks and rest. A philosopher once said, “Do not think that taking a break is a waste of time.”

Think about time management! When you receive an amount of money, you always think about how you are going to use it. Apply this also with the time God has given all of us!

“Whenever I am able to stand, I do not sit; when I can walk, I do not stand, and if I can run, I do not walk.” -Joseph Wade, a Businessman

Be Faithful in Your Family



Different – But Understanding- The Family

The family, a system created by God

God created man in a family in order to provide him with social relationships. The family unit is able to provide care and security for its members...In this God gave the parents the responsibility of caring for their children to provide them with their different needs.

The Holy Bible, in the beginning, talks about the formation of the family of Adam and Eve and the story of salvation talks about the holy family: *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.”* (Matthew 1:18). Then the Lord gave the parents the responsibility of caring for their children, gave them authority and commanded the children to obey their parents. *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”* (Ephesians 6:1).

As people grow, each one gains their independence gradually. As for youth, they fall somewhere between dependence and independence. Here we find the youth always asking for more freedom more than what their parents allow, and at the same time we find that the parents refuse to give up their responsibility towards their children.

“It is best to obtain your independence gradually while growing your personality and experiences so that you would be prepared for the responsibility.”

Disagreements between parents and children:

You may have disagreements with your family. Rearrange them starting with the ones that cause the biggest problems to the least important.

- Going out a lot
- Curfew
- Helping in house chores
- Cleaning your room
- Watching TV
- Going to church
- Your friends
- Your clothes
- Listening to their opinion
- Obeying their opinion
- Food
- Studying
- Using the computer (time spent)
- Using the internet (time spent)
- Other _____

Reasons for disagreeing with parents

The most important reasons for disagreeing with your parents are:

1. **Age Difference** (The conflict of generations) meaning that there is a difference in experience, social environment, etc., but each one of us needs the other. I need my parents because they represent to me the experience; and they can learn new things.
2. **The Pressures of Daily Life:** Obviously, things changed from the past; from relationships to the way of living to different technologic advances. This affected the pressures of our daily lives.
3. **Expectations:** The youth expect parents to fulfill all their needs and to deal with them in a certain way; and if the parents don't fulfill these expectations, children think their parents are not up to the responsibility. Also, the parents expect certain behaviors from their children which may be, according to the youth, impossible in the current day and age. As if the parents ask their children to live according to their life, which in the point of view of the youth does not agree with them or the youth may want to behave as others in the society which may not be fitting for the children of Christ.
4. **Seeking Independence:** This to some extent is necessary, but the parents' objection to this may be for many reasons. Usually, this objection is not to independence itself; but it is usually about the timing and the children's responsibility. For independence is responsibility before it being freedom.
5. **Not having a place for God:** As the Lord of the family and all its members. The place or status of our Lord Jesus in our family is the most important point. We have to keep in mind that God is watching us in everything we do, that we will have to give account to all our actions, and that the Lord Jesus is the role model for us in all the stages of our life.

Picture thisWhat would happen?

George and his sister Christina are in high school, they always complain about their parents' dominance over them, asking them to study all the time and to help in the house chores and not to watch TV on school nights; at the same time, they feel that their dad does not spend money on them as he should and that he refuses many of their requests. Also, their mother does not make their favorite meals. They keep thinking about those things. One time, George turned on the radio and found that the host is saying: "A decision was passed to allow the children to be in charge of the parents for one day as an experiment." *Imagine the rest of the story, Write it down and discuss it with your servant.*

"God created a family for us, He wants us to enjoy one another, but this does not mean that there will always be agreement, but there will also be difference. What is important is to keep those differences in the circle of love."

Read: (Gen 25:4-28) and (Gen 45:1:27) What mistakes did these families make in your opinion?

Read: (Gen 33:1-11) Was there a solution for the problems of this family?

How to build a good relationship with your family?

Find principles for this relationship from the following verses:

1. Exodus 20:12
2. Proverbs 1:8
3. Proverbs 23:24
4. Ephesians 6:1
5. Proverbs 8:33
6. Proverbs 12:1
7. Proverbs 15:1-2
8. Proverbs 18:13
5. Proverbs 17:1
10. Ephesians 4:26

If you have a difference in opinion with your parents regarding a decision what should you do?

Use the following verses to guide you:

1. Proverbs 15:23
2. Proverbs 17:14
3. Proverbs 1:15
4. James 1:19
5. Matthew 5:37

Self assessment about your relationship with your family: The goal is to assess yourself, to know if you can build a good relationship with your family and what improvements you need.

1. Do you discuss with your parents any problem you face?
 - a. Yes, I respect their opinion and follow their advice
 - b. Sometimes, depending on the nature of the problem
 - c. Seldom, I always hide my problems from them.
2. Whenever they don't like the dress you chose, or the shirt you bought do you:
 - a. Change it
 - b. You respect their opinion but do what you want
 - c. Stop asking for their opinion
3. Whenever you upset them with something you did, you:
 - a. Feel guilty
 - b. Apologize but in amazement
 - c. Ignore it because, they will forget soon.
4. Do you imitate your parents?
 - a. Yes, often
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Never

5. When you disagree about major issues, do you:
 - a. Admit you are wrong and they are right
 - b. Agree but with reservation
 - c. Try to change the subject quickly

6. When it comes to important issue relating to your future do you:
 - a. Think about it before you seek their opinion
 - b. You go straight to them
 - c. Never ask them

7. When choosing your friends, do you ask their opinion:
 - a. Yes, they are a main reference for me.
 - b. Yes, but their opinion is only for my information, I do what I see right.
 - c. No

8. Do you appreciate the effort your parents do for you?
 - a. Always
 - b. Yes, sometimes
 - c. No

9. I answer my parents word for word.
 - a. Never
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Always

10. I control my temper when I get angry at my parents.
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Never

The Result: If most of your answers are A, then you appreciate your parents very much, listen to what they have to say, and treat them with all due respect.

If most of your answers are B, then you love your family and appreciate their opinion, but not all the time, you do not refuse their obedience but use your mind sometimes which is not wrong. The important part is not to enlarge the gap between the two sides and that each side tries to get closer to the other.

If most of your answers are C, then there is a problem between you and your parents. There is a large gap; therefore you have to take the time to find a solution for this problem because honoring your parents is a biblical commandment (Matthew 15:5-6) and (Ephesians 6: 1-3).

You are a reporter for 30 minutes. Write an article on the differences between the members of the family (parents, children, siblings) Suggest a way to be different but understanding.



HONORING YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER IN THE HOLY BIBLE

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” (Exodus 20:12)

“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise”
(Ephesians 6:2)

“For God commanded, saying, *‘Honor your father and your mother; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death’*” (Matthew 15:4)

Be Faithful in Your Relationships



Souls or Money The Epistle of Philemon

If your very expensive cell phone was stolen and you found it later with one of your friends, who in turn creates this big fight about something else to cover up what he's done, and then he stops talking to you;

How would you react? Which would you care about more, you getting your cell phone back or your friend back? Would you go after getting back with your friend or getting your cell phone back? If this same situation happened with a priest, a servant, or another ordinary person do you think their reaction will differ?

Did this same situation happen in the Bible? This happened with Philemon and his slave Onesimus. Our teacher St. Paul was the mediator between the two. Read the Epistle and explore how St. Paul did his role perfectly.

The Epistle was written in Rome around the year 62-63 during the imprisonment of St. Paul where he called himself:

1. A prisoner (Philemon 1:1)
2. Requested to leave this prison to a better guest room.
3. Onesimus was the deliverer of the Epistle.

Who is Philemon?

Philemon was born in Colosse and may have been raised there. He may have met St. Paul in Ephesus. When Philemon met St. Paul, he became Christian and was baptized. Then he was ordained a Bishop of Colosse.

Archippus: A Greek name that means "the master of horses." He is most likely the son of Philemon and Apphia (a Christian woman from Colosse that was likely to be Philemon's wife.) Archippus' name was mentioned in St. Paul's epistle to the Colossians. "He says to Archippus, **"Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."** (Colossians 4:17).

This proves that Archippus had a strong relationship with the church in Colosse.

Philemon was a rich person living in Colosse and had a slave named Onesimus. Onesimus stole something from Philemon then escaped but he was imprisoned in Rome where he met St. Paul and became a believer. When St. Paul saw the sincerity of his repentance and confession, he felt that it was necessary that he return to his master to fulfill his repentance. This situation was difficult because it was going to place Onesimus' life in danger since, at that time, the master had the right to kill or severely punish the slaves if they escape so that the other slaves would not dare do the same thing. Despite this, St. Paul wanted Onesimus to return the stolen things and to return to his master to apologize. The Epistle was a letter from St. Paul to Philemon asking him to accept Onesimus, not only as a slave, but also as a brother. Therefore, the epistle started out with a long introduction full of love and wisdom before St. Paul would request Philemon to accept Onesimus.

Notice: This issue is a sensitive issue because Philemon has to punish Onesimus in order to avoid others doing the same thing. Find words of love and respect in St. Paul's speech to Philemon (the art of speech) Discuss with your servant. The Epistle deals with a major social problem for that time period, Slavery.

Think: Why didn't our Lord Jesus Christ command us to stop slavery?

Can you be a mediator between two people? How would you win both sides to help resolve the problem?

Onesimus was a slave to Philemon. He stole from his master and escaped and met St. Paul in Rome where he was baptized and repented and confessed. Then he took the letter from St. Paul to his master Philemon asking for forgiveness.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you think Onesimus feared the return to his master?
- Describe your feelings if you were in Onesimus' position?
- Do you think that, one day, you may be in Onesimus' position?
- Describe your thoughts and feelings if you were in that position.

- Was the epistle written as a command or a request?
- The apostle is used to showing the Christian manners in his writings. Before he could command Philemon, he surrounded him by his love.

Through the authority granted to him by our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Paul was able to command but he chose to only command things that are fitting.

In your opinion, why was this request acceptable and fitting? What was a Slave during this time period?

1. A slave was owned just like any piece of furniture.
2. The master had the authority to severely punish or even kill the slave without any judgment.
3. Upon the death of a slave, there was no funeral or mourning.
4. If a slave steals, he can be punished with any punishment, even death.
5. A slave had no pride; he could be insulted for little or no reason.
6. The slaves were deprived from the census according the Roman law despite the fact that they represented 1/3 of the Roman population.

1. **Love requires Philemon to accept Onesimus:** Especially that the one making this request is Paul, the elder and the prisoner. Though we were sinners, Christ died for our sins.
2. **Onesimus' new position:** He became a son of St. Paul. St. John Chrysostom said that St. Paul did not tell Philemon this to force him but to make him happy for Onesimus' new position as a believer.
3. **Onesimus' new characters:** Onesimus was described as profitable now (Onesimus means profitable). Which means that St. Paul wants to tell Philemon that Onesimus is now worthy of his name. This is why he sent him back to his master. St. Paul addresses Philemon telling him that: if you tasted the bitterness from the Onesimus you knew before, it is your right to now taste his sweetness.
4. **Doing good should be a choice not a command:** This way he's giving Philemon to do good by his own will. This way St. Paul resembled his Master, who never forced anyone to do good but gave everyone a free will. The Lord always walks with us to do well but does not force us into one direction.
5. **Understanding God's wisdom in all what happened:** The children of God understand that their life is a number of chances that are there for their benefit. Philemon may ask, why did God allow Onesimus to steal and run away? God allowed it because it turned Onesimus from a slave to a brother of his master.
6. **Paul will repay Philemon:** "If he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self." What would you do if you were in Philemon's position? Keep in mind Philemon's position as a master among other masters and also with his other slaves.

Important Exercise (Discuss with your servant)

Bring out of this story an important principle that Christianity taught us.

Application (Ask yourself): Were you ever dishonest in your life, your behavior, your relationships with others, your time, or your studies? How were you dishonest? Do you want to improve?

How do you want to fix this? What will this cost you?

Application: Find 5 verses that encourage you to be honest and memorize them.

Two on the Road of Life

On the road of life you will have relationships. Those relationships will influence your future and even your eternity. Who are will you meet on the road of life?

Ask your servant: How could we control our relationships and behavior to insure a good future and win our eternity? How can we have balanced relationships where we don't lose anyone but also not allow anyone to harm us?

Our relationships with our friends: Your choice of friends today will affect your future, this is what the Bible says: "He who walks with wise *men* will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed." (Proverbs 13:20)

The Holy Bible mentions many people that had friendships. There is one whose friendship saved his life (1Sam 19). There is another whose friendships caused his destruction (1 Kings 12).

Friendship is a relationship between two or more people that is characterized by love and serenity and filled with harmony. Therefore, it is important to make sure of the following before choosing a friend:

1. You have to choose someone who is compatible with you. Make sure that your friend is close to your age, environment, and education.
2. Look for someone who has common goals, hobbies, and plans.
3. Do not neglect your parents' opinion about your friends.
4. Obey God in ending any friendships that do not please Him, because your friends can lead you to heaven.
5. Always start yourself, so do not wait for others to like you but always be the one who initiates friendship with others.

Avoid codependence in friendship: Discuss with your servant.

Therefore you have to **choose your friends wisely**.

In your opinion what are the characteristics of a successful friendship?

1. **Giving has to be from both sides:** Giving from one person leads to the loss of the giver and this leads to codependence. In the Old Testament, one of the feasts celebrated was the feast of Purim mentioned in Esther 9:19.
2. **Being there in the time of hardship.** During hardships, this is the most important time for your friends to be there like the friends of Job (Job 2:11-13).
3. **There are levels of friendship.** It is wrong to get close to others at the same level by opening up to everyone and sharing our deepest secrets. Our Lord Jesus Christ had 12 disciples but only one of them leaned on His bosom.
4. **There are conditions to friendship.** One of which is to not harm the individual, or delay one's relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. If the Lord commanded us to cut our hand if it makes us sin (Mark 9:43), He meant in this verse to get away from anyone who would make us sin.
5. **Friendship has to be with someone of the same sex.** Since friendship is sharing ones feelings; if it happens between the sexes, it can lead to unwanted relationships that will not please God. The Lord asked Moses to "let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor."
6. **No friendship with the unbelievers.** The unbelievers have principles that do not coincide with the teachings of our Lord; therefore they may affect our decision making and way of thinking. Our teacher St. Paul says "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14).

How would you react in the following situations?

Show me your friend and I will tell you who you are.

- A friend of yours started using profanity.
- A friend of yours feels that you should dress in a revealing way to gain attention.
- A friend asked you to come with him/her to a party.
- You were fasting on a Friday and your friends decided to go eat ice cream.

Find the following verses that explain the principals of successful friendships from the Book of Joshua Ben Sirach (Sirach 19:7-10) (Sirach 19:13-18) (Sirach 22:25) (Sirach 22:26-27) (Sirach 27:24-76)

What do you think about meeting friends in chat rooms on the computer? Discuss with your servant

Dealing with the opposite sex: Since the beginning, God did not want to separate between the sexes but He allowed them to partake in common duties (Gen 1:28-30). In the family, the sexes deal together naturally, therefore dealing with the opposite sex should be a natural thing and should not be viewed as something strange. Since there are benefits of dealing with the opposite sex, there are also conditions. So, if we want to get the benefits, we need to know the conditions.

Conditions for dealing with the opposite sex:

1. **Socially:** It has to be in a group without placing more emphasis or attention to one particular person. It has to be equal to all as much as possible.

2. **Treating all with respect:** It must be based on respect to all without ruining the friendship by joking inappropriately or seeking attention by inappropriate attire or conduct.
3. **Having limits:** There must be limits to the time spent. There are also place limitations. Also, there are topic limitations. There are topics that may not be discussed with your friends of the opposite sex but the topics must be general topics of common interest.
4. **In a Christian way:** The Christian way of dealing with the opposite sex is characterized by the simple look in which we view everyone as the image of God. The way we talk should be holy and our conversations may not be full of profanities or attention seeking or pretending to be someone that you are not. Be respectful when dealing with the opposite sex and avoid joking with your hands (touching). Avoid being loud or pretending you are someone else.

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

Read the following study: parents of 61% of children who watch television have no rules about what they watch. The parents reported that they only watch with their children 5% of the time. In one year, the average child spends 900 hours at school and 1500 hours watching television. Profanity is used every 6 minutes on television but is used every 1 minute for cable channels. Even the advertisements now contain a lot of sexual clips according to one of the foundations that insures that the image of females is good on television. Television shows and films now have become like fast food. One push on the remote allows you to be part of the show. As if what you watch is what life revolves around.

What do you think about the study? What is the reason for its popularity and what are the results?

Discuss with your servant.

The Influence of the Media:

1. The vast availability: it is readily available via the radio, television, internet, and newspapers.
2. It uses multiple senses the eyes see, the ears hear, and the fingers feel the keyboard.
3. Cheap memberships: Many are able to access movies, shows, and newspapers at a cheap membership fee, few hours of time, electricity bills, and monthly internet fees.
4. It moves the soul: drama, comedy, or action movies speak to one’s soul and it moves one’s emotions.

(The answer is to use the master gland—you will learn this later on)

Exercise: Collect some material from the media:

Television (Shows and advertisement), **Internet websites** (Facebook), **Advertisement** in newspapers or the internet

Discuss: What do you think? Do you like it or not? The date and places shows are showed (why do you think they chose this place and date). What is the rate at which it is showed (is it appealing to you). What is its main theme? (How was the idea displayed for you to accept it as a viewer?)

The Master Gland: Discuss with your servant. The master gland is the gland that takes over the work of all the other glands in order to insure that they secrete the appropriate amount of hormones. This gland is called the pituitary gland. This gland is only geared towards the body but since we are made of body and spirit, there is a similar gland that, when working properly, keeps the balance of the whole being. This gland is called **spiritual ability and discrimination**. These are some of the biblical principles that the master gland operates with:

Questions for discussion: What are the positive influences of the media? What are your decisions towards the media? What are the principles you plan on using when dealing with the media?

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. (1 Cor 10:23)

Coptic Language

Grades 9 - 12

Part 1: Coptic Alphabet

Part 2: Definite and indefinite articles

Part 3: Paragraph for rule application and memorization (Our Father)

Part 4: The pronoun “of”

Part 5: Verb to be

Part 6: Demonstrative pronouns for near objects

Part 7: A paragraph for rule application and memorization: allhloui`a vai pe pi`e\oo

Part 1: Coptic Alphabet

Notes:

- The Coptic Language consists of 32 letters: 24 consonants, 7 vowels (a o w i u e h), and 1 letter only used as a number (,)
- The mark written (`) is called a jenkem. If used with a consonant, it is pronounced like a short e, and if used with a vowel, the vowel is pronounced separately.

COPTIC Alphabet A - O

Letter	Name	Pronunciation	Word	Meaning
A a	Alpha	Short a, as in the word “and”	` Abot	Month
B b	Veta	v, if followed by a vowel	Bw\em	Response
		b, if not followed by a vowel	Noub	Gold
G g	Ghamma	g, as in God, if followed by (e-h-i-u)	Genneoc	Brave
		n, if followed by (g-k-x-[])	` Aggeli`a	News
		gh, otherwise	Gravh	Book
D d	Delta	d, if used in a proper name	Danihl	Daniel
		th, as in the word “this”, otherwise	Diakwn	Deacon
E e	Ei	Short e, as in the word “get”	Ek`klhci`a	Church
< ,	Soo	Only used for the number 6	<? `njwm	6 books
Z z	Zita	z	Zwon	Animal
H h	Ita	Long e, as in the word “need”	Hrp	Wine
Q q	Theta	t, if it follows c or]	` Cqoinoufi	Incense
		th, as in the word “thank”, otherwise	Qebio	Humbleness
I i	Iota	Short i	Iaro	River
K k	Kappa	k	Kemkem	Cymbal
L l	Lavla	l	Laoc	People
M m	Mi	m	Mwit	Path
N n	Ni	n	Nhctia	Fasting
{ [Ksi	ks (k+s)	{ecthc	Pitcher
O o	O	Long o, as in the word “Rome”	Omi	Dirt

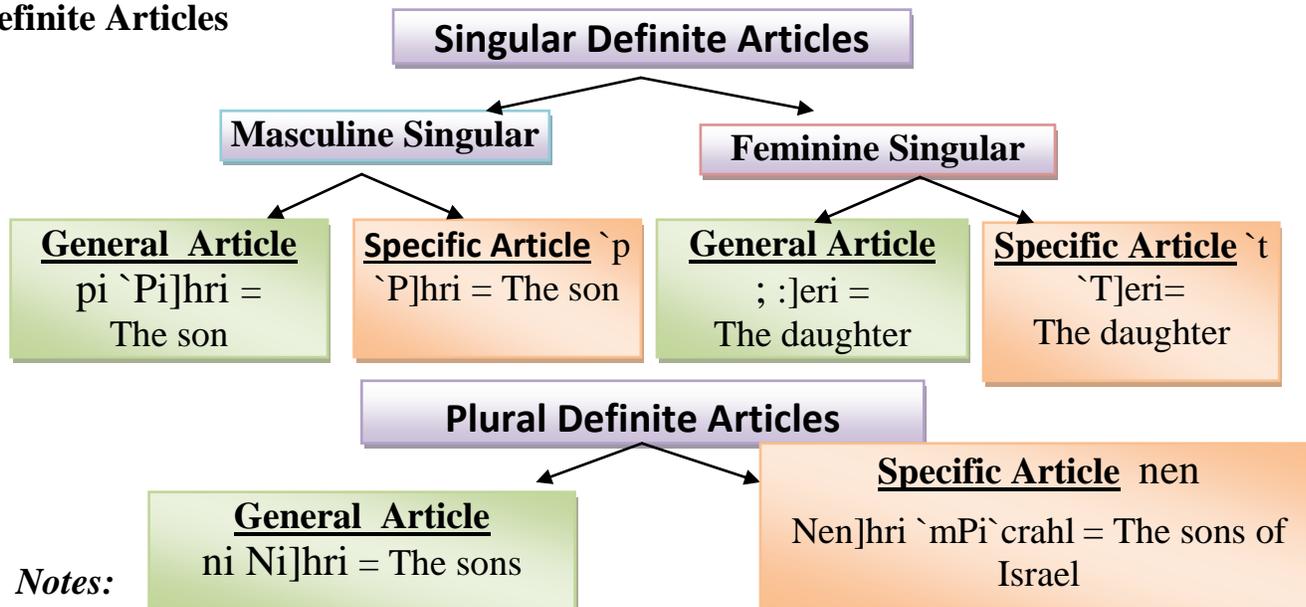
COPTIC Alphabet P - ;

P p	Pi	p	Pictoc	Faith
R r	Ro	r	Raji	Joy
C c	Cima	s	` Cnof	Blood

T t	Tav	t	Totc	Chair
U u	Epsilon	v, if it follows a or e	Euxh	Prayer
		oo, as in the word “food” if it follows o	Ouhb	Priest
		i, otherwise	Pulh	Door
V v	Phei	f	Varoc	Hole
X x	Kei	k, in Coptic words	` Xlom	Crown
		sh, in Greek words, if followed by e-h-i-u	Xiwn	Snow/Ice
		kh, otherwise	` Xrictoc	Christ
Y y	Psi	ps (p+s)	Yalthc	Psalmist
W w	Oo	Long O, as in the word “oil”	Wn'	Life
}]	Shai	sh	` }bwt	Rod
F f	Fai	f	Fwte	Towel
'''	Khai	kh	"hibi	Shadow
 \	Hori	h	or]	Heavy
J j	Ganga	j, if followed by e-h-i-u	Jebc	Coal
		g, as in the word “God”, otherwise	Jwbi	Paper
S s	Tchima	ch, as in the word “check”	` Slil	Sacrifice
;	Ti	ti (t+i)	` Vnou;	God

Part 2: Definite and Indefinite Articles

1. Definite Articles



• **Notes:**

The specific articles are different in words beginning with b.i.l.m.n.o.r

`p	→	`v
`t	→	`q

`pcon	The brother	`viwt	The father
`tcwni	The sister	`qmau	The mother

2. Indefinite Articles: ou for singular nouns, and \an for plural nouns

Example: Ourwmi = a man |anrwmi = men

Sample words:							
ou]eri	A daughter	oumau	A mother	ou]hri	A son	oulaoc	A people
\an]eri	daughters	\anmau	mothers	\an]hri	sons	\anlaoc	peoples
;]eri	The daughter	;mau	The mother	pi]hri	The son	pilaoc `vlaoc	The people
`t]eri	The daughters	`qmau	The mothers	`p]hri	The sons	nilaoc	The peoples

Our Father

Ariten `nem`p]a `njoc 'en ou]ep`\mot je	Make us worthy to say thankfully
peniwt et'en nivhou`i	Our Father who art in Heaven
mareftoubo `nje pekran	Hallowed be Thy name
marec`i `nje tekmetouro	Thy kingdom come
pete\nak maref]wpi	Thy will be done
`m`vrh; 'en `tve nem \ijen pika i	On Earth as it is in Heaven
penwik `nte rac; mhif nan `mvoou	Give us this day our daily bread
ouo\xa nhet`eron nan `ebol `m`vrh; \wn `ntenxw `ebol `nnh`ete ouon `ntan `erwou	And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us
ouo`\mperenten `e'oun `epiracmoc alla na\men `ebol\ a pipet\wou	And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil
'en Pi`xrictoc Ihcouc Pensoic	In Christ Jesus our Lord
je qwk te ;metouro nem ;jom nem pi`wou]a `ene\ `amhn.	For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever amen.

Part 3: A paragraph for memorization and rule application:

Part 4: The pronoun “of”: It can be separate or attached to the word.

Separate: `nte	
Pijwm `nte Came\	The book of Sameh (Sameh's book)
` Pjwm `nte Came\	The book of Sameh (Sameh's book)

Attached: `n / `m	
` Pjwm `nCame\	The book of Sameh (Sameh's book)

Notes: When using a general definite article (pi, ;, or ni), the separate pronoun nte must be used. However, when using a specific article, `p-`v (masculine) `t-`q (feminine) or nen (plural); the separate or attached pronoun can be used.

Nenjwm `mMarkoc	The books of Marcus (Marcus' books)
Nenjwm `nte Markoc	The books of Marcus (Marcus' books)
Nijwm `nte Markoc	The books of Marcus (Marcus' books)

- `m is used instead of `n when used with words beginning with the following letters:
b. m. p. v. y

` Pjwm `mMarkoc	The book of Marcus (Marcus' book)
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Part 5: Verb to be:

Singular Masculine: pe= is

Singular Feminine: te= is

Plural: ne= are

Part 6: Demonstrative pronouns for near objects: (always separate)

Singular Masculine: vai = this **Singular Feminine:** qai = this **Plural:** nai =these

Example: vai pe pijwm = this is the book

Notes: When the word is defined with an article, verb to be is used before it.

Example:

Vai pe pirwmi	This is the man
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However, when it is an indefinite word, verb to be is used after it.

Example:

Vai ourwmi pe	This is a man
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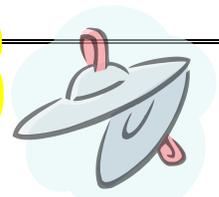
Part 7: A paragraph for memorization and rule application:

allhloui`a vai pe pi`e\ouu	
Allhloui`a vai pe pi`e\ouu `eta `` P soic qamiof	Alleluia, this is the day which the Lord has made
Marenqelhl `ntenounof `mmon `n'htf	Let us rejoice and be glad in it
`w `` Psoic ek`ena\men `w ` Psoic ek`ecouten nenmwit	O Lord, save us O Lord, straighten our ways
`F`cmarwout `nje vheqnhou 'en `vran `m` Psoic. Allhloui`a	Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord Alleluia



Hymns and Praises

Grades 9 - 12



Level 1	Level 2
1. Adam Aspasmos for the feast of Epiphany: hppe afermeqre (with use of cymbals and triangle)	1. Batos Aspasmos for the feast of Epiphany Qelhl `m`vrh (with use of cymbals and triangle).
2. The Joyous Psalm 150 (using the fast tune)+ The response of the Epiphany feast (with use of cymbals and triangle).	2. The Verses of the Cymbals for the Feast of Epiphany + Using the joyous tune + the final verse. The annual Ihc? Pxc? `ncaf (with use of cymbals and triangle).
3. Introduction to the doxologies using the joyful tune.	3. The complete hymn Agioc using the joyous tune (with use of cymbals and triangle)
4. Doxology of the Feast of Circumcision	4. The complete hymn `pouro using the joyous tune (with use of cymbals and triangle)

Rituals

1. Adam Aspasmos for the Feast of Epiphany |hppe afermeqre: This Aspasmos is sung after the deacon says “greet one another with a holy kiss”, and the deacon concludes “Lord have mercy” at the end of it.

The word *Aspasmos* is a Greek word meaning a salutation, greeting or a holy kiss. The word Adam is a Hebrew word meaning human being. In Greek, it means Enethropos and in Arabic it means Adam. Since Adam is the first man and the second man is our Lord Jesus Christ. Adam is the first word in Monday’s Theotokia in the midnight praises. The word Adam is used as a concept for a group of hymns that have a distinguished tune. It is either during the week like in the Doxology such as the Adam Matins Doxology or “Adam Doxology” for the martyrs and the saints, or Adam Aspasmos during the Liturgy.

- Only on Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesday of every week, and this is for the Epsalias, Theotokias, and Lobsh of the days mentioned in the midnight praises.
- The word Batos means “the burning bush.” This is the first word of Thursday’s Theotokia in the midnight praises. This word is used to refer to a group of special tunes.
- These are the doxologies that we pray in the raising of incense of Vespers and Matins. The Batos doxologies or the Batos Aspasmos in the liturgy or on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays of each week and this is for the Epsalias, Theotokias, and Lobsh that are prayed on the mentioned days’ midnight praises. This hymn talks about the baptism of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom the honor and glory, in the water of the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist. Therefore we see that this Aspasmos talks about a great mystery in our church, the mystery of baptism and also talks about the Dogma of the Holy Trinity in the word “*When He had been baptized, Jesus 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” (Matt 3:16-17).*

2. The Joyous Psalm 150 (using the fast tune) + The response of the Feast of Epiphany: This hymn is prayed at the end of the Holy Liturgy and the Confession Prayers and during the Communion on the Feast of Epiphany and with it we pray the following response “Jesus Christ the Son of God was baptized in the Jordan.”

The word “response” means what the people sing during the Liturgy either following what the priest says or the proclamation of the deacon. The response is the participation of the people meaning that it is the role of the people in the church. One of the most famous replies is the Psalm 150 and the response of the Holy Gospel.

The Psalm of the communion is Psalm 150 written by David the Prophet and King. It encourages us to praise and glorify God in His saints, for all His mighty powers; it encourages all to praise the name of the Lord. The word “praise” is repeated 10 times. In this hymn, we, in eagerness, praise God, not like the Levites, and Singers in the Old Testament when the people would gather in front of the temple to praise with the different musical instruments. We praise Him in the spirit of the New Testament, in the covenant of grace, we sing songs of praise for Him who loved us and gave Himself for our sins.

3. Introduction of the Doxology using the joyful tune: It is an introduction for Saint Mary taken from the prayers of the Agpeya. After it, we pray the Batos doxologies.

We pray the joyous doxologies in the raising of incense of Vespers and Matins, after the Trisagion, the Lord’s Prayer, and before the doxologies. The word “doxology” means glorification. It is a glorification for St. Mary, angels, apostles, martyrs, and saints. The introduction of the doxologies consists of 8 verses. It is for Saint Mary asking her to intercede on our behalf in front of her God and son to forgive us our sins. She is the true intercessor for us in front of our Lord Jesus Christ. It talks about the important Dogma of incarnation, the Trinity, and intercession. Saint Mary has great intercession in front of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The 8 verses are divided into 4 sections, and each section consists of 2 verses. The first verse is always for St. Mary and the second is pleading to her to mention us in the presence of our Lord that he may forgive us our sins.

4. Doxology of the Feast of Circumcision: We pray this doxology on the Feast of Circumcision after the introduction of the doxologies, in raising of incense of Vespers and Matins, and in the midnight praises, after the commemoration of the saints.

Doxology: a Greek word meaning glorification. They are Coptic hymns to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ on the feasts of Our Lord Jesus Christ, or in the glorification of St. Mary, the heavenly hosts, John the Baptist, the apostles, the martyrs, and saints on the days of their feasts and they consist of two kinds:

1. **Batos:** We pray it in raising of incense of Vespers and Matins, and it has 6 different tunes (Annual, Kiahk, Palm Sunday, Joyous, fasting weekdays, during the fast on Saturdays and Sundays).

2. **Adam:** We pray it in the glorifications using the same tune of `Pouro glorifications or the Matins praises after the Matins doxologies. This doxology is for the Feast of Circumcision and it explains that our Lord, after His incarnation from St. Mary, accepted circumcision as the custom of the Jews and this is to make us free of the bodily circumcision and this stresses the dogma of the Trinity and the incarnation.

5. Batos Aspasmos for the Feast of Epiphany Qelhl `m`vrh: The word Batos means “the burning bush.” This is the first word of Thursday’s midnight praises. This word is used to refer to a group of special tunes. These are the doxologies that we pray in the raising of incense of Vespers and Matins, the Batos Doxologies or the Batos Aspasmos in the Liturgy or on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays of each week and this is for the Epsalias, Theotokias, and Lobsh that are prayed on the mentioned days’ midnight praises. This hymn talks about the dogma of salvation when it says “Rejoice O’ Jordan and your desert for the Lamb who carries the sins of the world came to you.” And it also talks about the mystery of baptism.

6. The Verses of the cymbals using the joyous tune (4 quarters): These are verses that are sung accompanied by the cymbals in raising of incense of Vespers and Matins, after the thanksgiving prayers. There are verses for the Lord’s feasts that are said using the joyous tune during the days of the joyous rites and using the annual tune the rest of the year. The hymn illustrates the dogma of the Holy Trinity “this is My beloved Son in whom I am pleased because He is the giver of life.” And also, it illustrates the dogma of the salvation as it says “Rejoice O’ Jordan and your desert for the Lamb who carries the sins of the world came to you.” In addition, it glorifies St. John the Baptist in “A name of honor is your name O relative of Emmanuel. You are greater than all the saints O John the Baptist.”

7. The complete hymn Agioc using the joyous tune for the Feast of Nativity: It is also called the hymn of the Trisagion. It is sung after the readings and before the litany of the gospel. The Apostles’ Tradition says that this hymn is very old going back to the first century of Christianity when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were taking down the body off the cross; they heard the angels chanting this hymn. It was used in the Western churches during the time St. Peter until it was removed after the heresy of Arius, but the Eastern Churches continued to use the complete hymn. As for the reason the church repeats the word “Holy”, it is to emphasize the 3 roles of the Incarnate Logos: Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection.

8. The Joyous Hymn `pouro: We pray this joyous hymn on the Lord’s feasts and the joyous periods instead of the blessing “Tenouw] t” after the raising of incense of Matins, at the end of the hymn of the seven ways in the Feasts of (Nativity, Epiphany, and Resurrection), at the end of the midnight praises on Sunday eves that fall on a feast, in the rituals of marriage, and during the removal of the ribbon of the bride and groom; except on the days of Pentecost we pray the hymn of the resurrection instead. It is also included in the ribbon removal of the newly baptized and the deacons.

This hymn has other tunes: it has a standard tune for glorifications, and a paschal tune prayed at the end of the hours at the prayers of the Holy Pascha.

The hymn asks for the King of Peace, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to come in our midst and grant us His peace and forgive us our sins, and to purify us from the disease of the body, soul and spirit, and to scatter the enemies of the church, and at the end we worship the Holy Trinity for He has (come, was born, was baptized, or resurrected) and saved us.