



GRADE 9-12

*You shall be
witnesses To Me*

His Holiness Pope Tawadros II



**118th Pope of Alexandria and
Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark**



You Shall Be Witnesses to Me

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St. Mark's Festival 2014 Anthem

God's Witness

God has called me to be His witness,
Showing love, peace and forgiveness,
In peril, famine or death,
By God's grace my heart is fearless

My Church leads me in God's way,
With live examples every day,
Surrounded by a cloud of witnesses,
Let's lift up our hearts to pray

O Lord, help me to testify,
Your Holy Name to glorify,
If you find in me a weakness,
My heart is Yours to purify

You Will Be My Witnesses

To **WITNESS** something means that you have to have seen it with your eyes, not just heard it from someone. There are 2 types of witnessing:

1. **Seeing with your physical eyes:** Like the Apostles who saw the Lord Jesus and witnessed about Him; as St. John says:

"That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us." 1 John 1:3



Our fathers the Apostles lived at the time when our Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, and lived with Him as His disciples the whole time of His service until His sufferings, death, resurrection, appearances, His promise to send the Holy Spirit, and the fulfillment of this promise. Then they went to preach all over the world.

2. **Witnessing by faith:** which means that we believe the preaching of the Apostles trusting their honesty. This is also supported by the mind since the history, the artifacts, the manuscripts, fathers' sayings all witness to the truth in the preaching of the Apostles, and the quick spread of Christianity. It was a desire for the Jews and the Gentiles equally; the Jews were shouting with Isaiah the Prophet: "Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down!" Isaiah 64:1 and the Gentiles were shouting with the philosophers awaiting the savior of humanity to save it from its corruption and death, and bring it to eternal existence.

WHAT DOES WITNESSING FOR CHRIST MEAN?

When one shows with his actions that he is a witness for Christ, and faith fills his heart, and knows that the Lord is watching all his life; people start to see the Lord Christ in him: in his thoughts, feelings, senses, and behavior. St. Paul the Apostle teaches exhorts us saying: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Ephesians 3:17 and also says: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27

Then Christ dwelling in us becomes a reason for salvation, and a promise of eternal glory.



WHERE CAN I WITNESS FOR CHRIST?

1- **Personally:** in my private life. "That they may see your good works" Matthew 5:16 "That your progress may be evident to all." 1 Timothy 4:15

Stand against sin the way martyrs did. When you deprive yourself from the pleasure of sin with joy, when you subdue the flesh to watch and pray with joy, and when you enslave the body to kneel down and raise the hands to heaven in regret returning into the Father's bosom. When you live all this, you are on the way of witnessing like the martyrs. St. Paul teaches us saying: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Romans 12:1 "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:20

If we focus on and follow what St. Paul says: "Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." 1 Corinthians 6:13 and live the life of true repentance and constant request for grace every day; we become temples of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies and senses get sanctified. This is possible through faithfulness, diligence and circumspection.

2- **In the family:** "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," Joshua 24:15

A Christian house is truly Christian in behavior, love, service, and a good example in everything. The Christian family is a witness to Christ in the love between its members; the love that unites them in one being. What is required of Christian families now is to witness to Christ dwelling in them through love and unity not troubles, or differences, or hateful selfishness.



3- **Socially:** to be an ambassador for the Lord Christ in my society.

The ambassador has to be:

- ❖ A representative of his country
- ❖ Interactive with the society
- ❖ Different in his behavior to represent who sent him

Every day, we meet people with different principles. Principles were violently shaken and mixed, and the moral and religious values have faded due to freedom and materialism.

"Therefore do not be partakers with them... Walk as children of light." Ephesians 5:7, 8

Let us be witnesses in face of the deviations affecting the world, and not be part of the unfruitful works of darkness; but instead, we should rebuke it in love and humility.

So we witness for Christ in front of others with our holy life, meekness, love, service, and kind words.

"Let your light so shine before men." Matthew 5:16

The Liturgical Readings



The liturgical readings, which are read during the Holy Liturgy throughout the Coptic year, represent a fulfilling meal prepared for those who listen with their heart and not merely by the ears to the word of God.

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our holy fathers specified readings for each day of the year. These readings offer us a strong and rich spiritual meal. This meal aims to direct us in the way of the Lord. It also reveals to us the nature of the church, its depth, its approach, its theological thought and its purpose for the salvation of men.

Did you know that the Coptic year consists of 12 months? Each month consists of 30 days except the month of Nasi (the little month) which only has 5 or 6 days depending on the year (whether it is a regular or leap year).

While preparing the liturgical readings of the church, the fathers took into account that the Coptic year is a year of agriculture. In the readings of the first and second Sundays of the month of Hathor we read the parable of the sower. The reason for that is that the month of Hathor is the month where the wheat and other important crops of the winter are sown.



"Allow the liturgical readings to reveal to you your sins and to urge you to leave them"
His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

We can divide the liturgical readings into two sections, each one highlighting an aspect of the nature of the church:

1 - **The first section** is the readings of the Sunday liturgies. This line shows the work of the Holy Trinity in the church and represents the unity and the catholicity of the Church.

The readings in this section highlight God's uninterrupted work towards the church and the entire humanity.

2 - **The second section** includes the weekday readings, according to the feasts of the martyrs and saints. These readings are intended to acquaint us with the different members of the church, which is the body of Christ, and the different talents of these members, as an integrated form with the unity of the Church. *The readings in this section highlight the role of the church as the one body of Christ.*

The liturgical readings are considered an integral part of the church's worship. They are read in the first part of the Holy Liturgy which is called the Liturgy of the Catechumens. Through the readings, the church shows her children God's love and His work of salvation, along with the necessity of commitment to faith, repentance and spiritual struggle, in order to be worthy to receive this redemption; so we may become ready for the happy eternity ahead of us, and the kingdom prepared for us since the foundation of the world.



Some of the church's fathers have likened the liturgical readings to the two fish and five loaves in which the Lord fulfilled the hungry multitudes (Luke 9). **The five loaves are the five liturgical readings** (Pauline epistle, Catholic epistle, Praxis, Psalm and Holy Gospel). As for the two fish, they symbolize the Synaxarium and the sermon. As the Lord Jesus Christ has said;

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)



These readings combined represent a rich spiritual meal. In it we find all the elements of spiritual nourishment which strengthen the soul and freshen it. When we eat from this meal we find medicine for our soul and healing to the wounds of sin and solutions to all the problems that confront us in the course of life. Each reading of the Holy Liturgy has an important purpose. For example:

- ❖ **Pauline Epistle:** Shows the work of grace in our life.
- ❖ **Catholic Epistle:** Shows the spiritual struggle of the believer and the Christian disciplined behavior.
- ❖ **Praxis:** Shows the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, as a community and as individuals.
- ❖ **Synaxarium:** Shows the Holy Bible lived by the saints, who are good role models for us to imitate. Looking at the end of their lives, we follow their faith and work.
- ❖ **Psalm:** Shows the prophecies about the Messiah and His work of salvation. This appears when we read the psalm in the light of the New Testament's verses.

"for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Revelation 19:10)

- ❖ **Gospel:** Shows the joyful gospel of salvation and the sincere divine promises.
- ❖ **Sermon:** Shows how to live the gospel's message, as experienced and tested by the saints. When we see the Holy Bible lived by those saints and explained in their sayings, we find power for our lives.

The liturgical readings have a general spiritual and divine line which they follow, and a deep philosophy within them. They are dispersed among 4 books:

1. **Annual (Rotating) Katamaros:** This book includes the weekdays and Sundays readings; a section for the weekdays readings and another for the Sundays readings.
2. **Great Lent Katamaros:** includes the readings of the Great Lent.
3. **Holy Pascha Katamaros:** Includes the readings of the Holy Pascha.
4. **Holy Fifty Days Katamaros:** Includes the readings from the glorious feast of Resurrection until the feast of Pentecost.

Katamaros: Is the book which contains the liturgical readings throughout the year; and it is a two-part book, (Coptic and English).



All the books of Katamaros compose one unit which is very accurately put by the fathers of the church. The main goal of those books is to draw in the mind of the believer the image of the greatest event in the life of every believer, which is the incarnation and redemption and what it contains of God's love for man, and His superlative care.



Annual (Rotating) Katamaros (Weekdays and Sundays)

There are 52 weeks (Sundays) in the Coptic Year as follows:

$$\begin{array}{r} 12 \text{ months} \times 4 \text{ Sundays} = 48 + 1 \text{ (Sunday of Little Month)} = 49 \\ \text{Some months have 5 Sundays} = 3 \\ \hline \text{Total} = 52 \text{ Sundays} \end{array}$$

Note: each Sunday has its own special reading which is different from those of the weekdays.

We can split the liturgical readings into two sections, **Annual Sundays Readings** and **Annual Weekdays Reading**. Each section will highlight an aspect of the nature of the church.

1ST: ANNUAL SUNDAYS READINGS:

The liturgical readings during Sundays show the work of the Holy Trinity in the church and they take the believer on a divine spiritual integral journey. This journey highlights the unceasing work of God towards the church and humanity. It shows God who is never isolated from humanity, but rather the Lover to mankind and the Friend of men. He holds them and lifts up their sufferings so that He may raise man to Him, to eventually share with Him His everlasting glory. This is the ultimate divine love for man.

The readings here also explain the strong impact on the church in terms of its management to the believers' salvation, guidance, and support of its apostolic blessing by which it blesses its congregation saying: *"The love of God the Father; the grace of the Only Begotten Son, our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ; and the communion and gift of the Holy Spirit be with you all."*

The church has made the 4 chapters of the Sundays readings of each month revolve around a single theme; for example:

- **Thoout's readings** = Discusses the love of God the Father
- **Paope's readings** = Discusses the authority of our Savior over the souls
- **Hathor's readings** = Discusses the Gospel of the Savior to His people
- **Koiahk's readings** = Discusses the appearance of the Savior to His people
- **Tobe's readings** = Discusses the salvation of Jesus Christ for the nations
- **Meshir's readings** = Discusses the satisfaction of the faithful with their Savior
- As for the months of **Paremhotep** and **Parmoute** and the first half of the month of **Pashons**, the Great Lent, Holy Week and the Holy Fifty Days take place during them; the special readings of those occasions would be read instead.
- **Pashons readings (second half of the month)** = Speaks of the lordship of our Savior
- **Paone's readings**: Speaks of the communion and the talents of the Holy Spirit, because the feast of Pentecost usually takes place during this month
- **Epep's readings**: Speaks of the Lord's aid to His holy apostles, and during this month falls the feast of the Apostles.
- **Mesore's readings**: Speaks of the Savior's care for His Church.
- **The Little Month's readings**: If a Sunday falls during this month, the church would read Matthew 24 which talks about the second coming of Christ.

The readings of those Sundays speak about the grace of the Only Begotten Son.



The order of the Sundays' readings during the Holy Fifty Days:

- ❖ **First Sunday** (John 20: 19-31): Feast of the New Sunday (Thomas's Sunday) "My Lord and God"
- ❖ **Second Sunday** (John 6: 35-45): The living Bread which came from Heaven
- ❖ **Third Sunday** (John 4: 1-42): The living Water (Gospel of the Samaritan woman)
- ❖ **Fourth Sunday** (John 12: 35-50): Christ is the Light of the world
- ❖ **Fifth Sunday** (John 14:1-11): I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- ❖ **Sixth Sunday** (John 16: 23-33): Weapon of prayer
- ❖ **Seventh Sunday** (John 15: 26- 16:15): Feast of Pentecost



After the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the Sundays' readings of the Holy Fifty Days, we live eternal life on earth.

Fifth Sunday: If the month begins on a Saturday or Sunday, then it will have 5 Sundays. Usually on the fifth Sunday, we read the "Gospel of the Blessing" during which the Lord fed the five thousand (plus) with the two fish and five loaves. This indeed symbolizes the feeding of the believers with the word of God when they read it and listen to it, with care, prayer and open hearts.



The order of the Sundays' readings during the month of Koiahk:

- First Sunday:** Annunciation of the birth of St. John the Baptist
- Second Sunday:** Annunciation of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ
- Third Sunday:** Visitation of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth
- Fourth Sunday:** the birth of St. John the Baptist (the last prophet of the Old Testament)

Application: Review the Sundays' readings of the month of Koiahk and explain the topic discussed in each one of them.

RITUAL: If the fifth Sunday falls on the 29th of the Coptic month, the readings of the 29th of Paremhotep are to be read instead of the "Gospel of the Blessing."

2ND: ANNUAL WEEKDAYS READINGS:

The church has arranged for the liturgical readings during the weekdays to be based on the Synaxarium of the day (the saint's biography of the day). Those readings highlight the role of the church as the one body of Christ. This body takes within it a harmonious unity among its members, the heavenly and the earthly, the people of the Old Testament and those of the New Testament, men and women, clergy and laymen... In those readings we see Christ in the midst of His church while all His members are surrounding Him; just like the solar system as all the planets rotate around the sun, their source of light and life.



If the Synaxarium of one of those days has the biography of more than one saint, the church chooses the reading of the most known saint on that day and arranges the readings based on his/her story. The church has awarded the high ranked saints with "Special" readings which are read on either the day of their martyrdom or departure and is called 'Special Days'. The number of the 'Special Days' are 55 days only. The readings of the 'Special Days' are also read on the feasts of the saints whose biographies are similar to the 'high ranked' saints, and those days are known as the 'Borrowed Days'.

Examples:

- ❖ On the commemoration of one of the patriarchs' departure, we read the gospel of the Good Shepherd.
- ❖ On the commemoration of the departure or the martyrdom of one of the apostles we read the gospel of sending the disciples out for preaching.
- ❖ On the 8th of Thout the church celebrates the departure of Moses the prophet. Therefore, you will find the readings on this day speaking of the prophets, their faith and labor; just as follows:



-**Vespers' Psalm:** "Saying, do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm." Psalms 105: 15

-**Vespers' Gospel:** "That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation." Luke 11: 37-51

- **Matins' Psalm:** "He sent Moses His servant; and Aaron whom He had chosen." Psalm 105: 26

- **Matins' Gospel:** "And, behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him." Matthew 17: 3



- **Pauline Epistle:** "By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" Hebrews 11:24

- **Catholic Epistle:** "For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:21

- **Praxis:** "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city." Acts 15:21

- **Liturgy's Psalm:** "Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon His name; they called upon the LORD, and He answered them." Psalm 99:6

- **Liturgy's Gospel:** "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify." Matthew 23:34



These are also read on the commemoration of other prophets:

- On the 4th of Thout: **Departure of Joshua, son of Nun**
- On the 20th of Koiahk: **Departure of Haggai the prophet**
- On the 23th of Paremhotep: **Departure of Daniel the prophet**
- On the 25th of Paone: **Departure of Elisha the prophet**

Activity: Try to discover on which occasions the following readings are read. Choose from the following options: a) **Departure of a saint** b) **Feast of the Virgin**

1. a) ___ b) ___ **Vespers' Psalm:** "The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; Among them were the maidens playing timbrels." Psalms 68:25
2. a) ___ b) ___ **Vespers' Gospel:** "Assuredly, I say to you, Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." Matthew 26:13
3. a) ___ b) ___ **Matins' Psalm:** "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger." Psalm 8:2
4. a) ___ b) ___ **Matins' Gospel:** "The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." John 4:15
5. a) ___ b) ___ **Pauline Epistle:** "Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5
6. a) ___ b) ___ **Catholic Epistle:** "But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers." 1 Peter 4:7
7. a) ___ b) ___ **Praxis:** "Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord." Acts 13:12
8. a) ___ b) ___ **Liturgy's Psalm:** "She shall be brought to the king in robes of many colors; The virgins, her companions who follow her shall be brought to You." Psalm 45:14
9. a) ___ b) ___ **Liturgy's Gospel:** "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom." Matthew 25:1

In the book "The Paradise of Monks" we read to what extent do the liturgical readings impact the purity and sanctification of the soul, and lead it to repentance.

Once, it happened that St. Paul the Simple once came to the church and was contemplating those walking into the church. He saw everyone walking in happily and their angels are following them with joy. However, there was a man who walked in with a sad face darkened because of sin. The devils were surrounding him while his angel was following him from far off, unhappy. When St. Paul saw this man he wept and left the church. When the fathers insisted that he comes back to pray the Holy Liturgy with them, he refused and stood at the door weeping. When the prayer finished and the congregation began to exit the church, St. Paul was watching the man who entered accompanied with the devils. However, he came out full of joy accompanied by his angel but the devils were following him from far away ashamed. When St. Paul saw this he leaped with joy while clapping his hands. He asked that brother about the reason by which the Lord has changed his appearance. He confessed openly that he has been living in sin to a very far extent, but when he saw St. Paul crying while entering the church, his heart began to change. When he turned to the liturgical readings he heard Isaiah the prophet saying: "**Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil; Come now, and let us reason together**", Says the LORD, "**Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.**" (Isaiah 1: 16-18) Once those words entered his heart, he poured himself in front of the Lord, cried and repented from all his sins. When those who were standing heard this, they shouted out loud with one voice saying:



"O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all," (Psalm 104:24)



Witness through Salvation

In the Holy Book of Jonah in the Old Testament, God wants us to know an important fact: that the prophets were not of a different nature but were people "with a nature like ours" (James 5:17), having weaknesses, shortcomings and faults, and it was possible for them to fall like us. The only thing was that the grace of God worked in them and gave them power. It was not their power but the power of the Holy Spirit working in their weakness, that the power may be of God and not of us, according to the Apostle's words (2 Cor. 4:7).

Jonah the Prophet was one of the weak persons of the world whom God chose to put to shame the mighty ones (1 Cor. 1:27). He had faults and he had virtues, and the Lord chose him despite his faults, worked through him, in him and with him to give him guidance, teaches him and designated him to be a great and saintly prophet. In doing so, God also shows us that He can work with us and use our weakness to make us stronger as He did with Jonah.

The Book of Jonah has a very important place in the Church's liturgical year. The Church sees within this book's simple story an icon of Christ symbolically represented. Unlike other prophetic books, the Book of Jonah does not contain "words of prophecy," but rather it tells a story of Jonah's personal encounter with the Lord. Reading these symbols spiritually, we behold the mystery of salvation in Christ exemplified in poetic precise images. We also see a unique instance in the Old Testament of God's love and concern not just for His own people, Israel, but for a nation of Gentiles who were actually Israel's enemies. We find an archetype of Christ's mission of salvation extending beyond Israel to embrace the whole world, all the enemies of God. He also shows us ourselves in the people of Nineveh, the ship's mariners, and even Jonah, a fleeing prophet.



Background: Jonah, according to Hebrew tradition, was the son of the widow, whom Elijah, the prophet, rose from the dead at Zarephath of Sidon (II Kings 17: 10-24). He was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom of Israel around 825-784 BC. Therefore, Jonah prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II, the King of Samaria (II Kings 14:25). He was around at the same time as the prophet Amos.

Chapter 1: Jonah is called by the Lord, he disobeys, and the Great Fish:

The Lord uses Jonah's disobedience to save. *"In this way you will be a blessing when I send you and a blessing when you flee. You will be a blessing to the people of Nineveh when they dread you as a prophet, and a blessing to the mariners when you are cast out into the sea as a guilty person. I will carry out My purpose through you in whatever state. Even when you are in the belly of the whale, not among the Ninevites nor the mariners, but when you are on your own in the belly of the whale, I will make you a prototype of My death and resurrection so that in mentioning your story people will learn."* How great our Lord is to use Jonah, a rather weak prophet, to save the Mariners, the city of Nineveh, and even himself.

Jonah 1:1-6 ~ The story immediately begins, Jonah disobeys and rebels: Jonah was called by the Lord to go to the great city of Nineveh and cry out against it and preach a message that the city would be overthrown in forty days because of its wickedness. Instead of listening to the Lord, he fled from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, found a ship, paid a fare, and went down into it to flee from the Lord.

What happened next? A storm at sea.... The storm scared the mariners where each one prayed to his own god. And where was Jonah? He was in the lowest part of the ship sleeping. The captain woke Jonah up and asked him to call on his God so that they may not perish.

Jonah's fleeing from the presence of the Lord carried within it other sins, namely, foolishness and lack of faith. This one who flees from the Lord, to where will he flee when the Lord is Omnipresent (present everywhere at the same time)? O great prophet, do you not believe that God is present in every place to which you flee? God is present in the ship which you will board, and in the sea which will bear the ship, and in Tarshish to which you wish to escape. So where do you wish to hide from the presence of the Lord?

Rightly did David the Prophet say to the Lord: *"Where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hands shall hold me"*(Psalm. 139:7-10).

Jonah 1:7 ~ Casting of lots: After this, the mariners agreed to cast lots so that they may know who was the cause for this severe storm. (Lots were used in the Old Testament to figure out what was the will of the Lord.)

Examples of casting lots:

1. **Aaron** was to cast lots upon the two goats to determine which one was to be slain and which one was to be sent away into the desert bearing the sins of Israel. (Leviticus 16:7-10)
2. **Achan**, the man who stole the spoils of the Battle of Jericho and brought defeat upon the Israelites in their attack upon the city of Ai, was found to be the guilty one by the casting of lots. (Joshua 7:14)
3. **Joshua** divided the land of Canaan among the twelve tribes of Israel by lot. (Joshua 18:10)
4. **The sons of Aaron** received their cities by the casting of lots. (1 Chronicles 6:54)



Jonah 1:8-16 ~ The mariners learn who the One True God is and are saved: So the lot fell on Jonah and after questioning him, he told them he was Hebrew, who his God was, and his story of fleeing from the Lord. They asked him what they should do to calm the sea. He told them to throw him into the sea and it would calm. The mariners were nice and tried to row back to dry land instead of throwing him overboard, but the sea became worse. They then began to pray to Jonah's God and threw Jonah into the sea. The sea became calm and the mariners feared the Lord and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows. (They received salvation in praying to the One true God).

God who is able to turn evil into good was also able to make use of Jonah's disobedience. Through Jonah's disobedience the mariners would be saved. When Jonah disobeyed the Lord he went down into a ship where there were people belonging to the Lord, whom the Lord loved and sought to save. They were **gentiles** like the people of Nineveh, and were likewise in need of salvation. Jonah was an instrument in the hand of the Lord. It was as though the Lord said to Jonah: *"Do you think, Jonah, that you have fled from Me? No, you have not. I will send you to the mariners, not as a prophet, nor as a preacher, nor as a voice crying out calling people to repentance, but as a guilty person and a sinner, and a cause of a dilemma and trouble for others. Thus I will save them through you."*

Indeed God is beneficent; He can perform good out of everything. He could make use of Pilate's cowardice and Judas' betrayal in the act of salvation. Anything that comes into the hand of God will surely yield something good. God saves by all possible means and as the apostle said: "all things work together for good to those who love God," (Romans 8:28).

Jonah 1:17 ~ The great fish; 3 days and 3 nights: Afterwards, Jonah was swallowed by a great fish and stayed in its belly for 3 days and nights. Here God's care for Jonah becomes very evident. Events do not happen without Divine Providence. God sent the great winds and waves to show His displeasure with Jonah's disobedience. Even so, the Lord also sent Jonah a place of safekeeping in his oppression. Jonah could have met death as he was tossed over the ship. But the Lord in His Goodness chose to protect Jonah.

Why did God love Jonah? God sent a fish beside the boat to swallow Jonah. Jonah, inside this fish's belly, was most probably in darkness, tossed about constantly, salty water all around him. As Jonah underwent all of these perils within the fish we are not told of anything negative he said against the Lord. Jonah surely realized the God of the sea received him and protected him. The fish was Jonah's shelter and not a punishment. It would take a very wise man to rationalize this message under these terrible circumstances. He was given a place of safekeeping not death. For 3 days and 3 nights he remained in the belly of the whale. **Perhaps God loved Jonah for his inspiring faith while captive in the fish.**



Chapter 2: Jonah in the Belly of the Fish (Prayer and Repentance)

Jonah 2:1-10 ~ Jonah has a realization, prays, repents, and is vomited out: When the great fish swallowed Jonah, what did he do? He returned to his senses, knelt down and prayed in the belly of the whale, and the Lord beheld him and rejoiced: It's as if **God is saying:** "For a long time I have wanted to talk to you and reason together, but you were angry, you fled and refused to talk. But now is an appropriate opportunity to reconcile together." Jonah returned once again to his prophetic rites, to his former image as an obedient God-loving man, firmly believing in God's promises, trusting God and offering Him thanksgiving. **Jonah's prayer/psalm:** I am completely confident that I will come out of the belly of the whale and accomplish my mission, because God's word is never disproved nor does it return empty." "So long as God commanded that I should go to Nineveh, then I will go there and carry out His sacred will, undertake my preaching ministry and then return to the temple of God to worship there. I will sacrifice to the Lord and offer my vows. All this I see clearly and without doubt before my eyes. My present temporary state in the whale and the sea has no effect on this at all."

Jonah was chosen by the Lord because of his faith. Yes he sinned against God, but his essence was still good. When Jonah's faith reached that wonderful level, the Lord spoke to the fish ordering it to vomit him onto dry land.

Chapter 3: Nineveh Repents and is Saved (An abundance of fruits)

Jonah 3:1-4 ~ A second time Jonah is called: The Lord spoke to Jonah again and told him to go to Nineveh and preach the message because of their wickedness. Jonah obeyed, entered the city, and cried out "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

Jonah 3:5-10 ~ How did the Ninevites react to what Jonah said: The people of Nineveh (who were not Hebrews; they were Gentiles) believed God and the message they heard, proclaimed a fast, put on sackcloth (made from goats hair...sign of affliction, abstinence and rejection of worldly pleasures), and prayed. Every single person did this (120,000) from the highest (the king) to the lowest including all the animals. The king set out a decree for all to follow and turn away from the violence in their hands and pray so that God would not turn away from their anger, so they would not perish. God saw their works that they turned from their evil way, and relented from the disaster He would bring upon them.



The word of the Lord produced an **abundance of amazing fruits**. The first fruit of the Ninevites was **faith**: "So the people of Nineveh believed God. "The second fruit was the unfeigned **contrition of heart**; humiliating themselves before the Lord. Thus they put on sackcloth "From the greatest to the least of them". The word of God also yielded **fasting** and **prayer**. *The most important fruit was repentance.*

Their repentance was a sincere repentance in every meaning of the word: serious and from the heart, everyone turned 'from his evil way and from the violence that was in his hands." By this repentance they deserved God's mercy. He pardoned and forgave them; received them. It is a great story of love from God unto the Gentiles. Repentance led them to faith because sin was an obstacle between them and God. The fruit of their repentance was their humiliation, fasting, wearing sackcloth and crying out to God.

Chapter 4: The reason behind Jonah's fleeing; God's teaching is gentle (God is long-suffering. He does not hastily abandon or become angry with those servants who fall by the wayside)

Why did Jonah try to flee from the Lord? -PRIDE. Pride, he was too aloft to say a word that would be disproved and not carried out. His reverence, honor and word were more important to him than the salvation of a whole city! Although Jonah knew for sure that God was merciful and compassionate, and that He would forgive the city if it repented, he didn't want to say something to the people that might be disproved. **Jonah's thinking:** I shall cry out against the city, the city will repent, and God will return and show compassion and spare the city, and my word will be disproved. Therefore, in order to safeguard my own honor, my reputation and the awesomeness of the prophecy, it is better for me not to go. Here we see God is showing us an important fact: The prophets were not of a different nature, but were people "with a nature like ours" (James 5:17). They had weaknesses and shortcomings and they fall just like us.

Jonah 4:1-3 ~ Jonah's reaction to Nineveh's salvation for 120,000 people: There was joy in heaven over Nineveh's salvation. The angels, congratulating one another, saying: "Nineveh has believed and repented, and one hundred and twenty thousand persons have 'joined the kingdom of God in one day." However, amidst the rejoicing of heaven there was one man who was miserable on account of this great salvation, and that was Jonah the Prophet. *"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry" (Jonah 4:1)*

A prophet's work is for the salvation of people, a lesson he received from God had no effect on him, if, after his experience, he obeyed God outwardly yet remained unchanged from within. He did not rid himself of his egocentric nature nor of his personal dignity. The matter is clarified and becomes even more amazing when he prayed to complain and to justify himself, grumbling against God's treatment and requesting death for himself because death to him was far better than losing his dignity.

Jonah 4:4-6 ~ God's attitude with Jonah; His reaction to Jonah's reaction; was it anger? God saw that Jonah was miserable and angry, Hence He wanted to do him an act of love. While Jonah was thinking of himself, God was thinking of people's salvation. God did not think of His own honor as Jonah did. He did not think of how Jonah had disobeyed Him and grumbled at His judgment, but He thought of how to comfort Jonah and save him from his misery. How wondrous God's love is! Indeed God was seeking Jonah's salvation also. *This person who preached repentance to people, needed to repent also.* He needed to rid himself of his pride and self-esteem. As is always God's way, He began the reconciliation. When He saw Jonah miserable He prepared a plant and made it come up over him, that it might be shade for his head. He wanted to rid him of his misery and his wrong attitude.





Here God is saying: I shall uproot stubbornness from his heart by the merciful deeds which I shall work with him, so that he may perceive and learn. Just as I had compassion on Nineveh I shall have compassion on him, because compassion is My nature. I had compassion on him when he was cast into the sea, in the belly of the great fish, in all his lapses and sensitivities, and I shall have compassion on him now in his misery. I have prepared for him a plant that it might be shade for his head because I know that he will greatly rejoice over it. I seek his joy no matter how much he grumbles at My judgment and no matter how much he becomes angry with My deeds. *It happened as God willed. "Jonah was very grateful for the plant" (Jonah 4:6)*

Do you rejoice greatly, Jonah, over the plant which gave shade to your head? Jonah you hardly rejoiced, but rather became angry, at My mercy which overshadowed 120,000 people. It would have been more appropriate that you should rejoice thus over the salvation of Nineveh.

Jonah 4:7-11 ~ God speaks to Jonah and teaches him: When God's design started to bear fruit, He prepared a worm and it damaged the plant. The role of the plant ended and remained for God to use it as an element for teaching! Throughout all these spiritual designs Jonah was immersed in his materialistic thoughts; he rejoiced over the plant and became angry when he lost it, without thinking of his own salvation and without caring for reconciliation to God. Again, Jonah grumbled and was angry at the plant's withering. **A second time he asked for death.** If the Lord would have answered his prayer, Jonah would have perished and not seen the kingdom of heaven. Thankfully, God's mercy sometimes does not answer our prayers if we ignorantly pray for our hurt. The Apostle rightly says: "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss" (James 4:3). God began to reason with Jonah and convince him. He said to him:

"You have had pity, on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons?" (Jonah 4:10, 11).

CONCLUSION: God's love for reasoning is clear throughout the Holy Bible: ... "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18). The story of the burning of Sodom gives us a clear picture of how God reasoned with Abraham (Genesis 19). Also the Lord reasoned with Moses the Prophet and carried out for him his own opinion (Exodus 32). The Holy Bible gives us a marvelous picture of how God reasons with man. God does not intend every time He reasons with us to convince us with something He imposes on us, but He may condescend to our opinion and agree with us as He did when He reasoned with Moses and relented from the evil which He said He would do, and did not do it.

God reasoned with Jonah, and it was He who began. He said to Jonah, "Come Jonah! Let us reason together and do not be angry", "Is it right for you to be angry?" and Jonah replied: "It is right for me to be angry even to death!" God was not displeased from Jonah's reply, but He began to convince him practically and verbally that Nineveh should have been spared.

God does not use His mightiness in fulfilling His will. He does not use the term 'I said so, so it should be'. This manner is found with man. And man sometimes is unsure of his honor and wishes to confirm it by forcing his opinion. It is an inferiority complex in man and is not found in God who is absolute perfection, who sees that He does not decrease when He reasons with man and when it appears to us that He changed His opinion.



The blessings of our Lord, through the prayers of Jonah, keep us all, Amen.

A Witness for Christ

THE 1ST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN: He writes this letter as an honorable father writes to his beloved children, related in strong spiritual bond. It was written from Ephesus toward the end of the first century after the temple was destroyed and the Jewish nation ended. The Epistle along with the Gospel was written toward the end of St. John's life. He brought together all the teachings of the evangelists (Gospels) and Apostles and concentrate them all into one unique gem = **Theology of Love.**



THE PURPOSE FOR WRITING THE EPISTLE: *St. John mentions 4 goals:*

1. That our joy may be full (1 John 1:4)
2. That we do not sin (1 John 2:1)
3. To avoid the deceivers (1 John 2:26)
4. To know that we have eternal life and to have confidence in Him. (1 John 5:13, 14)

"And this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

Chapter 1: The Incarnate Logos- *The divine incarnation, its purpose and its effect on us as believers-*

1 John 1:1-2 ~ FROM THE BEGINNING: *"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life. And declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us, that which we have seen and heard we declare to you." (1 John 1:1-2)*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, *"That which was from the beginning"*, the eternal and invisible took flesh and became Man. St. John heard our Lord Jesus Christ, he saw Him, touched Him and realized Him as *"The Word of life"*. He wants to declare this to us. **St. John was a true eyewitness!!**

1 John 1:2-4 ~ THAT WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP, JOY, AND ENJOYMENT OF THE ETERNAL LIFE: The disciples, as **eyewitnesses**, touched, realized, and have delivered this testimony to the next generations. So every generation delivers, with joy, to the following generation the faith delivered once to the saints. Having this **apostolic faith**, the one faith across all generations for the one church, we can, through the church, enjoy the fellowship with the Father and the Son, the Bridegroom of the church, thus we achieve the perfect joy, for the sake of the fellowship, the love and the true unity and enjoyment of eternal life.

1 John 1:5-7 ~ TO FOLLOW GOD AND ABIDE IN THE LIGHT: By following God we get closer to the light. Knowing, submitting and being enlightened by Him. Alone we are full of darkness, and cannot be light unless He alone enlightens us! Since we stumble by ourselves, we should not stumble by Him. We stumble by Him when we do not realize that we are sinners. Enlightenment by Him means that we realize that we are darkened by sin and desires to be enlightened by the light so we come closer to Him. Also, anyone who walks in the darkness of sin but claims that his mind is not darkened does not have a relationship with God.

To abide in the light is having true fellowship with one another, full of love and unity, as one Orthodox faith and members of one body, and to continuously enjoy being cleansed from sin through **repentance** and **confession**, through the Blood of Christ.

Note: St. John gives us the message of fellowship before saying, *"the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin,"* for one cannot enjoy being purified by the Blood of Christ outside this one church.

1 John 1:8-10 ~ TO CONFESS OUR SINS: How can we be light while living in darkness by sin and evil and be cleansed from it? St. John says, "And the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." How great is that guarantee! Being in this world amidst temptations, we sin, even after our sins are forgiven in baptism; however, we have to confess our sins, so Christ may heal us with His Blood. Verses 8-10 clearly states **confession** is necessary. If one thinks he does not need repentance or confession and believes he is righteous, he is:

- 1. Deceiving himself.** He ignores the truth of his weakness and that he is susceptible to fall in sin any time.
- 2. The truth is not in him.** For if it was in him, the truth is light to reveal to man his reality.
- 3. We make God a liar.** We accuse God Himself who emphasizes that there is no goodness in man, and no matter how high he attains in the life of holiness, he may fall if he is proud or becomes careless in struggle.
- 4. His word is not in us.** For this is the word of God and His commandment to ask every day, "Forgive us our sins."

The need for repentance, confession, and forgiveness is ongoing throughout the Christian life; otherwise, the Lord would not urge believers to seek forgiveness on a continuing basis (Matt. 6:12; Luke 11:4). In biblical terms "confession" (Greek: *homologeō*) is something you do with your lips and not simply in the silence of your heart (Mk. 1:5; Rom. 10:10; James. 5:16)

Chapter 2: The Incarnate God and the Love to the Lord and our Brothers (based on the subject of Love)

1 John 2:1-2 ~ THE LOVE OF CHRIST TO US: As a loving father, St. John reveals to his children the reason of writing this epistle so that they may not sin, to live a holy life appropriate as children abiding in the light. Everyone sins! Therefore, he adds, "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father." This Advocate is a just Lawyer who defends us to make us innocent in the trial. He has paid the price, without partiality "not for our sins only but also for the whole world." He is "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:20). Whoever comes to Him, He does not cast away.

Note: St. John did not write, "your Advocate," instead wrote "we have an Advocate." He chose to be counted with the sinners, even though he was a righteous man so Christ may also be his Advocate.

1 John 2:3-11 ~ OUR LOVE TO GOD BY KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS, WHICH CONCENTRATE ON BROTHERLY LOVE: The Lord Jesus said "If you love Me keep My commandments." (John 14:15). We keep His commandments by knowing and experiencing the power of God and the effect of the Holy Spirit in our lives which transforms into love. When one tastes the sweetness of the commandment, he tastes the sweetness of God's love in a perfect way. "The Love of God is perfected in him." The commandment is not strictly order, not to do that, but he looks at it as love from God toward man, for He presents to us His word so we may have fellowship with Him and see Him inside us. One way of keeping the commandments is to walk as Christ did, taking the road of the cross. The narrow road of practical **love** which sacrifices, crucifies the ego and all the lusts and the cares of the world, so that the heart **may cleave to the Lord only**. The commandment of love is not new, for it is old, man knew it by nature. When Cain killed Abel, he realized his sin right away. It is also new from the way which man understands it, "which thing is true in Him," for on the cross, we knew that love is not mere emotions or complimentary words, but sacrificial love for the salvation of men. Also, a person who claims he is in the light, but hates his brother, is really in darkness and walks in darkness and does not know where he is going because his eyes are blinded by the darkness.

"If a man hates his brother, he walks in darkness and does not know where he is going. In his ignorance he goes down to hell, and in his blindness he is thrown headlong into punishment, because he withdraws from the light of Christ."

Caesarius of Arles

1 John 2:12-27 ~ OUR LOVE TO GOD: (4 Aspects):

Through baptism, we are called children of God and are granted the forgiveness of sins for His name's sake.

1. Our capabilities as believers who love God: St. John addresses young men, children, and fathers. The Fathers are the priests; for they know the Eternal Father who has the true Fatherhood toward all humanity, receiving their fatherhood from Him. The Young men are the youth who were granted the power of victory, for the devil fights us but he cannot overcome us, because we are strong in Christ Jesus. The Children are the children of Christ.

2. Our rejection to the love of the world: Through baptism, we receive the new birth; therefore, we should not love the world lest the holies that are in us be converted to a curse instead of becoming for power and salvation. **But how do we not love the things in the world?** If a bridegroom offers his bride a ring, will she love the ring more than him? Is she going to love the ring and say that she does not want to see the face of the groom? Likewise, he who loves the creation and not the Creator; this love is considered adultery. St. John speaks of 3 points (v. 16) that are in the world that the devil used to tempt the Lord Jesus Christ after He fasted for 40 days; (lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life).

3. Rejection of Heresies: "It is the last hour." These are the last moments for the battle between God and the devil. God extends His help to His children to give them victory, and the devil, seeing that his days are coming to the end, stirs his spirit in the antichrist to defile the faith and life of God's children. St. John is encouraging his children not to be afraid of the attackers. We are anointed by the Holy Spirit (v. 20). The Holy Spirit reveals the mysteries of God in the heart, teaches us, makes us taste the sweetness of His fellowship, and opens our minds so we may learn everything. The Holy Spirit reminds us of the truth and grants us discernment to reject all foreign teachings (heresies).

4. Our Abiding in God: We should abide in what we have heard from the beginning and what we have received from the previous generations. By abiding in the Orthodox faith and life in Him, we abide in the Son and in the Father, looking for the promise which we desire which is "eternal life." The foreign teachings have reached up to approximately 600 new denominations. We should stick to what the Holy Spirit has delivered to us, the Spirit of Truth, which has no deception.

1 John 2:28-29 ~ THE LOVERS OF GOD AND THEIR ADOPTION TO HIM:

When the Lord appears at His second advent, the one who knows the Son and the Father according to the knowledge will have confidence and will not be confounded, for confusion is a great punishment.

Chapter 3: THE ADOPTION TO THE FATHER

1 John 3:1-2 ~ God's love granted us the Adoption: Since St. John ended the previous chapter by saying, "Everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him," now he explains our position toward God, discerning between belonging to God and belonging to Satan. We, as believers, were baptized in His name and became members in His Mysterious Body; therefore we were transferred to the adoption of God. St. Paul said, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:26, 27). Many are called Christians by name, but they are not Christians in their life, conduct, faith, hope, or in their love! As Christians, we should abide in righteousness and despise the evil in the world, and not accept to be enslaved to the desire of the flesh (alcohol, drugs, and sexual lusts).



1 John 3:3-24 ~ OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS CHILDREN OF GOD: (4 responsibilities):

1. Resemble God in purity: St. John says, "purifies himself" emphasizing our participation in the behavior. We cannot be purified except by the Holy God, but we also will not be purified unless we accept that and respond to God's work, struggling and persevering.

2. Resemble God our Father being sinless: "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness and sin is lawlessness." (v.4) Lawlessness is a disregard for rules and authority. This is not appropriate for the children, for the Lord Jesus came to abolish the dominion of sin. Following in the Lord's footsteps and abiding in Him will lead us to become without sin.

3. God's children practice righteousness and are loving: Love is the trait of the cross of the Lord Jesus, whereby we grow as long as we abide in the Lord. However, whoever does not love is deviated toward the road of the devil, rejecting the adoption of God and accepting the adoption of the devil. Those who are attached to the world that is the evil, have no true love and can tolerate neither God nor His children.



What are some examples today where we see that people are attached to the world (or evil), can tolerate neither God nor His children? (Ex: Avoid praying in public because we do not want to be mocked, Prayers being excluded from public schools because of people who are not believers are offended. -The debate about the Ten Commandments monument placed in front of city buildings. Creationism excluded from school curriculum.)

"It is not to be wondered at if evil people, who are here called the "world," hate those who live godly lives according to the commands of Christ. It would be much more surprising if such people loved us instead! "St. Didymus the Blind"

If we love our brothers, in deed and in truth, that is in Christ Jesus, and not in vain glory, then we know that we are abiding in Christ "The Truth," and our hearts are confident before God who examines the hearts.

4. Our Trust in God our Father: When we love God, we keep His commandments. He is pleased with us, and does not make us in need of anything, but trusts us with everything, since we are faithful in our love to our brothers.

Chapter 4: LOVE IN WISDOM: St John is urging us for "Love"

1 John 4:1-6 ~ Love and Wisdom - Love means rejecting what is against the Spirit of God:

Love grants us simplicity so that one believes everything. However, we have to discern and be wise so we are not deceived by false prophets who disguise themselves under the name of "Christ" and the word "love," to hide their poison in enticing words and false philosophy, claiming that they are guided by the Holy Spirit. The Lord has warned us by saying: "Take heed that no one deceives you, for many will come in My name saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." (Matthew 24:4, 5).

St. Paul was concerned about the church so he said, "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it!" (2 Corinthians 11: 2-4).

As St. Augustine said that there are many heresies that do not deny that Christ came in the flesh, but they deny His divinity or the divinity of the Holy Spirit like Arianism. These people came out of the church, the one body of Christ, but had different faith and opposite thoughts, and thus they became against Christ, even if they relate themselves to Christ.

Now, there are more than 600 denominations, **so how do we know the true faith from the fake faith?** Let us return to the faith of the One Church before the schism of the council of Chalcedon in the 5th century. Through the first four centuries, in spite of the widespread of the church from east to west, and in spite of the various environments and the numerous parishes and the multitude of the clergy and the Christian writings, yet the church was characterized by the **one thought**. The writings of St. Basil, the Archbishop of Caesarea, Hilary, the Bishop of Poitiers, and St. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, St. Athanasius the Apostolic, Pope of Alexandria, St. Cyril the Great etc., and thousands more of the fathers have interpreted and sent letters with the same meaning, as if they were all disciples in one school, and all had one mind. This is the Truth which the One Church has absorbed and which every generation delivers to the next generation. The apostles and the disciples delivered the pure faith to the church. Let us all return to the apostolic faith, which was delivered once to the saints, rejecting every modern philosophical thought. **This makes us witnesses to the Lord!**

1 John 4:7-11 ~ The source of true Love is the Cross: Again St. John expresses and stresses Love. It all comes back to this commandment. We find in the cross the fountain of abundant love. The more we reflect on the cross, the more we feel His unconditional and unlimited love. He loved us before we even knew Him, it is appropriate for us to love, too.

1 John 4:12-21 ~ HOW TO TASTE LOVE (2 ways):

1. Through our love to our brothers: God's love is perfect; however we do not enjoy that love unless we open our hearts to our brothers. By this love, our hearts are purified by the Holy Spirit, so we may see God. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

2. Through our joyful waiting for the Lord's day: Once we taste God's love and respond to it, then all our desire is to long for the Lord's Day with confidence, because we follow His example here on earth, therefore, we have a share with Him in the life to come. It is good that we start with the fear of God, so we may fear the Lord's Day and become alert against our enemy, which is sin. The more we enjoy God's love and the love of our brothers, the more we yearn for the Lord and desire His embracement, joyfully waiting for the wedding day as a chaste virgin adorned with faith, hope and love. Therefore, fear is removed from us to be replaced by love, for the apostle St. John said: **"The perfection of a faithful man is love."**



"The more the love of God is increased, the more the fear is diminished. The less the love, the more is the fear. However, if there is no fear, there is no love. When we sew, a needle pokes the thread. If the needle does not come out, then the thread will not come out either. In the same manner, fear occupies the soul, but it does not remain but is replaced by love." **St. Augustine**

Chapter 5: THE CAPABILITIES OF OUR FAITH IN THE INCARNATE LORD *the power of faith in the Son of God*

1 John 5:1-3 ~ FAITH AND LOVE: St. John immediately joined love to faith, because without love faith is useless. Our second birth is based on our faith in the Lord Jesus that He is the Christ who has reconciled us with the Father. Thus, through baptism, we become children of the Father and love Him. Our love to the Father drives us to love the Son. By accepting the Head of the body, we accept the members of the body.

1 John 5:4-5 ~ FAITH AND THE LIFE OF VICTORY: One may ask: **Who can fulfill God's commandments and overcome the love of the world with all its enticements?** Through our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has overcome the world and still overcoming by His work in us. When we abide in Him, the narrow road becomes easy, the heavy burden becomes light, all the enticements of the world become as nothing, and all the afflictions of the world as the subject of our joy.

1 John 5:6-10 ~ The Foundation of Faith Witnessing to Him: Our faith is based on the Blood of Christ, our dying and burial with Him in baptism. The Holy Trinity witnesses to the power of baptism in the New Testament, and this we have seen in the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism is the work of the Holy Spirit, who grants us the forgiveness of sins, and binds us with the Holy Trinity. Baptism is established on the work of the Holy Trinity, for it is based on the cross of Christ. Often we accept the witness of men, so how about the witness of the Father to His Son! The Father testified of His Son in His baptism, in the Transfiguration, in His death and resurrection. **Verse 10** can be explained as: *We do not need any external witness, when we believe in God, but the Spirit of God testifies in us with a practical experience, so we may trust the word of God, without any doubt. However, he who does not believe God makes Him a liar. We do not have to ask "how," but with faith accept the Scripture.*

1 John 5:11-13 ~ FAITH AND THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE: The goal of our faith is to enjoy eternal life. This life is not a mere gift from God, but the Son of God Himself is our life, "This life is in His Son." This is the purpose of the incarnation; the Lord came as the First-born; He died, and rose. By His ascension, He carried us in Him, for the Incarnate God rose to the highest heaven, where the eternal doors were opened and the heavenly hosts were astonished in front of the glory granted to human beings in the Person of the God Incarnate. The members of the mysterious Body rise up to the First-born and live there forever.

1 John 5:14-15 ~ FAITH AND THE ANSWER OF PRAYERS: The believer, who responds to the Spirit of God, learns what to ask from God, therefore, everything which he asks is according to God's will and the Lord will answer him.

1 John 5:16-17 ~ THE BELIEVERS AND THEIR PRAYERS FOR THEIR BROTHERS: St. Augustine said: Even though the Lord commands us to pray for our very persecutors, this passage clearly shows that there are some brothers for whom we are not commanded to pray. We notice that St. John did not command not to pray for those who commit sin leading to death, but did not ask them to pray, leaving the option to the believer.

1 John 5:18-20 ~ THE BELIEVERS GRANTED SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT WITH THREE CORNERS: The Three Corners are 1. Being born of God, 2. Realizing we are of God and 3. Knowing the Son of God. Being born of God, you should struggle and keep yourself from the evil of the world. Realizing you are of God and are God's children is not just by talk, but by living with Him. Knowing the Son of God, the believer knows who the Lord Jesus is. He is the Truth, the Grantor of life. This is the inner enlightenment, in which the soul envisions that the Lord Jesus is the whole Truth so it may be satisfied with Him. He is the source of life; hence the soul abides in Him and does not forsake Him.

1 John 5:21 ~ THE FINAL WARNING: It is not appropriate to submit ourselves to other things than the Father, for the idols mean submitting the heart to others than God. He reminds us of our position as children of God, asking that our hearts become sanctified for Him. In the meantime, he encourages us to struggle and persevere. "Keep yourselves," so we may not accept anyone to replace God's place in our hearts.

**The blessings of our Lord, through the prayers of St. John the Beloved and all the saints keep us all,
Amen.**

When Love Speaks

Seven Words of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross

In His passion on the Cross, our Lord made seven statements. These words He spoke for our benefit and salvation. In them, we find the virtues of love and giving. Let us look at the effectiveness of these words in our lives.

- ❖ **The First Word:** "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do"
- ❖ **The Second Word:** "Today you will be with Me in Paradise"
- ❖ **The Third Word:** "Woman, behold your son...behold your mother"
- ❖ **The Fourth Word:** "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"
- ❖ **The Fifth Word:** "I thirst."
- ❖ **The Sixth Word:** "It is finished."
- ❖ **The Seventh Word:** "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit"



Important Observations: There are several very important points that we must contemplate carefully.

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ addresses the Father in two ways, as "Father" and "My God." In these words He establishes both His *divinity* as being the Son of God and His *humanity* by referring to the Father as "My God." He gave our forefathers the evidence they needed to refute many heresies that threatened the early Church. Also note that His divinity comes before His humanity.
2. In addition to addressing the Father, He also addressed humanity with words of forgiveness, redemption, and everlasting life.
3. Although He was persecuted and crucified unjustly, He spoke no words of condemnation or punishment. Our Lord did not come to destroy but to save the world. His first three words pertain to the acts of forgiveness and providence, while His last four words are a declaration that the act of redemption was fulfilled.
4. The order of His words shows us His selflessness in that He puts others before himself. Also, He mentions His enemies before His friends and family.
5. The last two statements reveal His joy in accomplishing redemption for all of mankind and defeating the devil.

Is there significance in the number seven?

1 - "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

FORGIVENESS

The Lord cared for His persecutors first before He cared for Himself or His friends and family. The first thing He did was offer forgiveness, and not only forgiveness, but an excuse for His persecutors' behavior. Notice that He offered forgiveness while He was in the depths of His suffering and not after the fact. How wonderful is our Lord's limitless love? The Lord puts into practice one of His most important teachings. "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven;" (Matthew 5:44). We too should forgive our enemies and not wait for when we are healing to do so, but we should forgive during our suffering. Our Lord paid the wages of sin for all.

Although our Lord Jesus Christ asks the Father for their forgiveness, nobody can obtain forgiveness and thus salvation without faith and repentance. "That whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn 3:16). "I tell you, no; but, unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). On the other hand, three times in chapter 8 of the Gospel according to St. John the Lord says, "For if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins." Many people were converted to Christianity because of our Lord Jesus Christ's words of forgiveness on the cross. Examples of those who were granted forgiveness though their faith and repentance are:

1. **St. Longinus** is a very good example of someone who "did not know" what he was doing. He was the soldier who pierced Christ's side with a spear. Through our Lord's forgiveness, he was converted and believed. He taught throughout Cappadocia and gained the crown of martyrdom at the hands of Caesar Tiberius. Many miracles took place through his death.
2. **St. Arianus** the magistrate of the city of Ansenia is another example. He put to death many thousands of Christians by inflicting multiple atrocities upon them until he believed in Christ and died a martyr at the hands of the Roman Emperor Diocletian.
3. **Saul of Tarsus** is another example of someone who "knew not what he did" until he believed and repented. He became St. Paul the Apostle who preached the name of Christ and suffered more at the hands of Emperor Nero. He became one of the great pillars of Christianity.

Are you able to think of people who followed our Lord Jesus Christ's example and asked for the forgiveness of their enemies while in the midst of their suffering?

It is important to realize that the phrase "Forgive them" was an announcement of the era of forgiveness. This is not a promised forgiveness but a paid for forgiveness. The Divine Justice was satisfied that the penalty had been paid in full. It is a deed entitling the Purchaser the merchandise for which He paid. Our Lord Jesus Christ paid for us with His blood.



2 - "Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

FORGIVENESS

The thief to whom our Lord Jesus Christ spoke led a life of sin. He even joined the other thief on the cross in reproving the Lord. However, he was transformed and had faith. With few words he declared his belief that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord and King. Through this declaration, he was saved. We should note that the thief believed while observing our Lord Jesus Christ's torment and humiliation, but not His glory. He did not observe the miracles that our Lord Jesus Christ did but observed His pain. It is likely Jesus Christ's forgiveness of His persecutors that influenced that thief to believe. This thief not only heard Jesus Christ's words but likely recognized the true loving kindness in His voice for those who were tormenting Him.

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave this thief a quick response while He declined to answer others with one single word. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth (Is 53:7). Many were those who derided Him in anticipation of a response. His silence offered no defense for Himself. However, His few immediate words offered forgiveness to this thief and the promise of Paradise. It is the thief's example that the Church meditates upon and recites.

It is conceivable that our Lord Jesus Christ could have simply offered the thief forgiveness as He did to others. He could have told the thief that he would be in Paradise. Instead, Jesus offered Him the immediacy of forgiveness, salvation, and companionship. The Lord promised and assured the thief that he would be in Paradise with Him "today." "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).

The thief did several things with very few sincere words.

1. He acknowledged Jesus Christ as the Lord when he said, "Lord, remember me."
2. He acknowledged Him as King by saying, "When You come into Your Kingdom."
3. He acknowledged Him as Savior capable of conveying him to Paradise.
4. He confessed his personal sins and admitted that he deserved death.
5. He rebuked the other thief saying, "And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds."
6. He reproached the other thief for his abuse of the Lord Jesus Christ saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation...but This man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:40-41).
7. He admitted that Christ was righteous and free from sin, which means that He was crucified for the sins perpetrated by others.
8. Of all the multitudes, including the twelve disciples, the thief was the only one who defended Jesus.
9. He asks for remembrance, implying a prior relationship with the Lord, that being crucified together.

The Lord said, "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones" (Matt. 18:10). Never think that you are better than a condemned sinner, for we are all sinners, and it is the condemned who may be the only one to defend the Lord and achieve salvation while we Christians stand silent. Often people's actions differ at the hour of death. Our Lord hears the last words of His children. How different are the two thieves, one was concerned with his eternity, while the other with the love of the world and his earthly life.

We also see the Lord's divinity in these few words. He forgives the thief as an act of God, declaring that He is God. He does not need to ask the Father for the thief's forgiveness. He also reveals that He will be opening the gates of Paradise, a Divine Act, as He corrects the thief by telling him he will be with Him in Paradise, not His Kingdom.

We learn that there is no purgatories as others mistakenly believe. The Lord says "Today." This implies no waiting period but immediacy upon death. In addition, the false belief that the spirit of the deceased haunts the place of residence on earth until the third day is also proved false by this one word.

Finally, we see that the Lord cared for the individual even when the whole world's salvation was at stake. He does not forget the individual among the group.

**What lessons did you learn
from these few words?**

3 - "Woman, behold your son...behold your mother" (John 19:26, 27).

LOVE AND CARE

The Lord was preoccupied with others while He suffered on the cross. He entrusted His mother who stood beside His cross, to the only disciple who followed Him to the cross. He gave us the example of giving care to our kin, and in particular our parents. His first concern was the forgiveness of sins, and then He turned His attention to social care, and first to His mother. Often in our zeal to become involved with the Church we neglect our kin, especially our own household. Jesus teaches us that such devotion does not give a person an excuse for the neglect of his parents. "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). We also witness the love of His mother, "The world rejoices in receiving salvation, while my heart burns as I look at Your crucifixion which You are enduring for the sake of all, my Son and my God." In addition to love, we witness the obedience of His mother to Him as her God. She obeys Him and goes to live with His beloved disciple. Even so, the Lord initiates the speech to His mother, He is not simply responding as He did with the thief. He actively addresses her to ensure that she is cared for. In doing so, the notion that the Virgin Mary had other children is refuted. If she did, there would be no need for our Lord to entrust her care to St. John the Beloved.



4 - "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46).

REDEMPTION FULFILLED

These words do not mean a separation of the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ, nor does it mean that the Father has forsaken the Son. It means rather that the Father has allowed Him to be tormented, and our Lord Jesus Christ felt true pain as a human. Through these words we know that Jesus Christ truly did suffer, and He did bear the blame and suffered God's wrath over our sins. Because He is God, it is conceivable that He could have eliminated the pain or could have been immune to the suffering. Our Lord Jesus Christ felt all of the pain, both emotional and physical. He had to experience this pain; otherwise, no penalty would have been paid. There would have been no acquittal of our sins and no redemption. Even so, **His divinity never separated from His humanity.** "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him" (Is 53:10). The word "forsaken" means that the torment of crucifixion was actual and that God's wrath was excruciating. By saying "My God, My God," our Lord Jesus Christ was representing humanity. He represented humanity in many ways throughout His life.

1. Christ fasted on our behalf.
2. He represented us in observing God's law. He was obedient to God.
3. He represented us in death and the atonement of sin.

***Many theologians believe that the Lord was reminding the Jews of Psalm 22 which begins with these words. The Jews used to identify each Psalm with its opening verse.*



What does Psalm 22 say and how was its prophecy fulfilled in the crucifixion of our Lord?

5 - "I thirst" (John 19:28).

REDEMPTION FULFILLED

Again, Jesus shows us His humanity and silences the heretics. He was dehydrated due to extensive perspiration and bleeding. Our Lord knew that they would not give Him water to quench His thirst but vinegar. Thus, the prophecies were fulfilled, "And for My thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Ps 69:21).

Are we doing the same thing?

The Lord thirsts for our salvation and for drinking of the product of the vine which sap flows within us, but we offer Him instead the vinegar of our trespasses, inadvertence, and neglect.



While Jesus Christ was thirsty in the physical sense, He was also thirsty in the spiritual sense. He was thirsty for the forthcoming salvation that He was offering to the world. There is an analogy between what He said here and what He said to the Samaritan Woman, "Give Me a drink." He was not then referring to water in the common sense, knowing that "Whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again," (John 4:7, 13). He was thirsty for her and for all the Samaritans, for her salvation and for theirs.

6 - "It is finished" (John 19:30).

REDEMPTION FULFILLED

He was able to accomplish what the Father wanted Him to accomplish and then cry triumphantly, "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4). He achieved the redemption of sins from the original sin of Adam until today and beyond. With those words, we know that our sins today, tomorrow, and the next day are paid for.

This was a cry of joy and triumph. The act of salvation for all has been accomplished, redemption has been fulfilled, and the Son of Man was able to crush the serpent's head.



Where do we find this promise from God in the Old Testament?

7 - "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46).

REDEMPTION FULFILLED

Since the Act of Redemption had been accomplished, there was no reason for further delay. He had to depart from this body to accomplish the act of salvation for the deceased also. He had to descend to Hades and carry the good news to the faithful among the deceased and to transfer those deceased saints from Hades to Paradise, thus opening Paradise for the first time since the original sin.

The Gospel according to St. Matthew tells us that the Lord Jesus "Had cried with a loud voice" (Matt 27:50). Let us pay particular attention that our Lord Jesus was exhausted and a single moment from death. It would have been humanly impossible to cry with a loud voice at that time. Crying with a loud voice at the hour of His death means that He had another power that surpassed His human power. In other words it demonstrates His divinity and indicates His triumph of defeating death by His death.

Our Lord Jesus Christ also assures us of the immortality of the spirit. The spirit does not end with death.

May we be sure that we too commit our spirits in the hands of the Father. Amen



Like and Share

Think about this: What is influence? Think of a situation in your life when you felt the importance of being influential, or felt that there was a person who had an impact on you. Imagine life without the presence of an influential person. What do you imagine that to be like? Are all influences positive?



Jesus

Share

JOURNEY TO THE DEPTHS

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does your appearance, including facial expressions and cheerfulness, show that you are a Christian?
- Does your face convey messages of love, acceptance and peace to others?
- Do I see the Christ who is in you whenever I see you?
- Do you care about others and offer them a helping hand?
- Do you think of giving more than you think of taking?
- Do all who interact with you feel that you are faithful in your conduct?
- Are you positive in your relationships?
- Do you desire good things for others?
- Do you rejoice for your friend if he advances ahead of you?
- Do you follow others in all their actions, no matter what they are?
- How do you behave if those around you are behaving in an inappropriate manner?
- Do you follow every fashion?



What is influence?

It is the ability to bring about change in others without the use of power or official authority.

Who is an influential person?

Characteristics of the influential person: **satiated, involved, spiritual, scholarly, interactive, influential in the community.**

1. Satiated with Christ:

a. Knows Christ: One who understands Christianity. One who knows who Christ (the Logos) is – One of three Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity who was incarnate for my sake, who redeemed me on the Cross, who rose from the dead and ascended, who sent the Holy Spirit for my sake, who laid the foundations of the Church and established the sacraments within it for me, and who will come to take me to live with Him forever...



b. Satisfied with Christ: One who knows Christ through companionship. He prays every day and says "O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me" and is satisfied with the means of salvation, the Bible, the Agpeya, etc...

c. United with Christ: That is, he partakes in communion in order to be established in Christ and Christ in him, and so is fruitful and conducts himself just as He did. His words are seasoned with salt, and he becomes a bearer of Christ within.



2. Involved in the Church:

- a. **Has a relationship with other believers:** that is, he is a member of the Church (struggling church), knowing also, that there are members of the Triumphant Church in heaven, and that Christ is the head of this Body.
- b. **Has a relationship with the Saints:** that is, there is an association between him and the Saints, in which he asks for their intercessions.

3. Spiritual:

"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh"
Galatians 5:16

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III said "Who is the spiritual man? It is the man whose soul leads his body and is led by the Holy Spirit" This means that grace fills him with spiritual fruits, while he is separated from sin and is not enslaved by it. "A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb." (Prov. 27:7)



4. Scholarly:

That is, the individual is committed to reading in three areas: biblical, ecclesiastical and general.

- a. **Biblical:** Reads the Bible and is filled with its teachings.
- b. **Ecclesiastical:** Knows the rites, dogma, history and Saints of the Church.
- c. **General:** Reads widely in order to know a little about everything.

5. Interactive:

There is no doubt that Christianity does not call for isolation from the society, but rather emphasizes our role in the society. This is very clear from the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in [The Gospel according to St. John, chapter 17](#), in which He outlines several facets of the relationship of the Christian to the world or society:

1. "You are not of the world" – meaning that the Christian has a different approach than those around him, and has a distinct behavior. A Christian:
 - looks to immortality.
 - fulfils the commandments of God with joy, such as love and forgiveness.
 - strives to be the temple of the Spirit of God.
 - cares about salvation from sin.



2. "As You have sent Me into the world, I also send them into the world." There is then a mission from God, and a divine mandate for us to be influential in society, to walk in love, to extend goodness and to present a picture of Christ who dwells within us to the world.

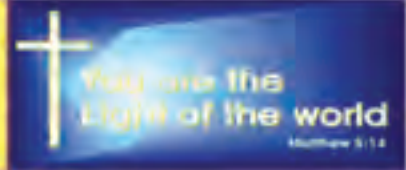
It is through these facets that you must behave as an active and interactive Christian – who does not withdraw nor flee nor antagonizes nor succumbs to sin.

6. Influential in the Community:

What is meant is the positive interaction in the society rather than the withdrawal from public activities..

Are all influences positive?

In reality, the influential person is able to change the lives of people, without a great deal of effort. Therefore, if you are of this type, know that you have a dangerous weapon that can control people's tendencies and moods, but though it is your weapon, it may turn against you.



Absalom, the third son of David, took advantage of his charm. He was very loved by his father and the people. With his conduct, characterized by tact, his good looks and extreme cunning enabled him to captivate the hearts of the people from the beginning. He lived the life of luxury and he owned a lavish chariot and fifty men to run before him. (2 Samuel 1:15-12).

This influence could have been utilized well, but instead we see him using it to rebel against his father, taking advantage of his obvious influence on people. So, instead of being his father's supporter, we find him rebelling against him and being a cause of bitterness for him, and finally we see him fleeing to Jerusalem and with him two hundred men. Before the feast, he sent spies to all the tribes of Israel to provoke discontent, and then the people met under the banner of Absalom in Hebron. Large numbers responded to the call. He was an influential person who used his influence not to the benefit but rather to the detriment of his father, the kingdom, and finally to himself dying in the end... the death of Absalom was a source of great sorrow.

GOLDEN RULES TO BECOMING INFLUENTIAL

1: Know who you are?

Before you influence others, you must first understand yourself, understand the keys to your personality; become acquainted with your actions, your reactions and your expressions in different situations. Know your abilities and skills. This understanding of yourself and your ability to understand your conduct, will give you the strength and ability to deal with yourself with intelligence and awareness. For this reason, you must know that image by which others will see you before you have an impact on them. The person who lacks full knowledge of one's self cannot understand other people well.

Therefore, the influential person must know himself very well and know his capabilities and talents in order to be able to utilize them in an optimum way and thus be influential.

Socrates the Philosopher wrote these words in letters of gold on the Greek temple in the city of Delphi, "**Know Thyself**" The Christian person who does not know the talent granted to him by God faces difficulties in knowing his place in the body of Christ. The Christian who does not appreciate his abilities and potential is as if he were saying, "I just want to live for myself as I cannot offer anything to those around me."



This behavior is devoid of a sense of the value of human existence, and the true meaning of the goal of living, and thus becomes non-influential. Those feelings cause people to fall short of their abilities, and reduce the motivation for love and service for others. So we have to seek our own growth, this will help us appreciate all gifts given to us by God.

2: Change your Picture

In order to be an influential person, you have to change the way you see yourself, and you have to know that you are able to influence yourself and others.

A Story



It was said once that a student had passed the University entrance exam with a score of 98. This student mistakenly thought that this was a measure of his IQ, that he was of average intelligence and that the University would therefore require a mental ability greater than his. Because of this negative impression, the student failed many tests and finally decided to drop his studies. His father went with him to the university and he was informed that his result on the entrance exam meant that his IQ was 140, an excellent result. This piece of new information was sufficient to completely change the way this young man saw himself so that he passed the first year with honors.

There are many examples in the Bible of people who, when they had changed their perception of themselves, were able to leave a big impact on their own lives and on the lives of many others.

Examples in the Holy Bible:



1. **Moses'** old perception of himself was that he was slow of speech, and that he would not be able to influence Pharaoh; however he was able to lead the people in the wilderness.

2. **St. Paul the Apostle**, was transformed from a persecutor and an enemy of Christians to a preacher and a teacher who taught the principles of love and forgiveness. It was he who said of himself **"I persecuted the Church of God."**



3. **Amos**, who was a tender of Sycamore fruit, a simple job, and who had no educational or social qualification in order to speak and rule over God's people, but who followed the guidance of the Lord to him, and so his image changed and his deeds became influential throughout history.

Moreover, you, as a Christian person, should change the negative image you have of yourself so that **you may become effective and successful in your life**. God, who is able to use a rod, a large fish, five loaves, two fish and a handful of oil, is also able to use you for the glory of His name! When Satan sows in you the idea that you cannot be influential, answer him, **"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"** (Philippians 4:13).

When he sows doubt within you, making you feel small, say within yourself, **"Let the weak say, "I am strong."** Joel 3:10. Whatever the weaknesses, you can be influential. When we look at the individuals used by the Lord Jesus Christ to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom, we will arrive at a clear conclusion, that is: God can use him who wants to be used by God. Jesus Christ had used fornicators, publicans, shepherds, soldiers and priests. When they had surrendered themselves to Christ, they gained their value in the eyes of God.

3: Do not hide in the land of "if only"

If only I was more beautiful ... If only I was talented... If only I was not disabled... If only I had money... If only I was raised in another family... Every "if only" carries within itself feigned excuses.

The fact is that there is only one person responsible for your life, and that person is YOU! Some Christians live their entire lives blaming others and circumstances for what they have suffered of trials or failed experiences in life. The Holy Bible, however, affirms that influential persons are those who strive.

What if?

- What if **Amos** had used the excuse that he was uneducated, to reject his calling to be a Prophet of the Lord?
- What if **Isaiah** had not answered the question of the Lord, *"Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"* Isaiah answered *"Here am I! Send me."* Isaiah 6:8
- What if **Nehemiah** had said, "The people are frustrated, I have a prominent position which I cannot leave, Jerusalem has been completely destroyed, the people are in captivity and all circumstances hinder us from rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem"?

Amos, Isaiah and Nehemiah, all had an adequate excuse to abdicate their responsibility, but they chose to accept the challenges anyway and to use what God had given them of abilities and talents in the best way, and so were influential.

Another Example:

Joseph did not fall prey to circumstances, although, he had been sold by his brothers to the Egyptians. He continued to work diligently and actively and with high spirits. The result was that he became overseer of the house and property of Potiphar. He did not place the blame on his brothers, on circumstances, or on being unjustly thrown in prison, but rather he worked hard. By doing this, he found favor in the eyes of the keeper of the prison and eventually became the second man after Pharaoh in Egypt; leaving an impressive mark in the history of Egypt because he had not hidden in the land of **if only**. To be influential then, you must accept challenges and not blame circumstances, using whatever gifts and talents God has given you.

4: Follow in the Footsteps of the Great

Thus it was said of the Lord Jesus Himself, *"The world has gone after Him"*(John 12:19). When He entered Jerusalem, the city shook, and whenever He entered a house it became so crowded there would not even be standing room. In the story of:



- **healing the paralytic**, the house was so crowded, his friends could not take him in, so they uncovered the roof of the house and let him down through it (Mark 2:4).
- In the miracle of **the five loaves and two fish**, the number of men, excluding women and children, were five thousand.
- He, as a wise Fisherman, **casts His nets and always brings them back full**, of whom it was said that He, *"Went about doing good."*(Acts 10:38).
He won people over in various ways: **through teaching, evangelism, healing, compassion, love, impact on individuals** and many other ways. **And you – how will you win souls over?**



A wonderful example of a soul-winner, St. Paul the Apostle, he said, "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." (1 Corinthians 9:19-22).

Do not forget that the influential person is successful in the field of human relations and successful in gaining the love of people and in helping them. We are reminded by the Bible, "He who wins souls is wise." (Proverb 11:30). The Lord Jesus Christ has given us a practical example of winning souls.

5: Be a Positive Person

A story tells of a Chinese ruler who placed a big rock in the middle of a major street blocking it completely. He wanted to know the reactions of the people. The first man who passed was a prestigious trader in the town who looked at the rock with disgust, criticizing the one who had placed it there, not knowing it was the ruler. This merchant went around the rock calling out with a loud voice, saying, "I will go and complain about this matter and we will punish whoever is responsible." Then a builder passed by, and did what the merchant did, but less forcefully because he was less influential in town. Then three young friends passed by next, and stood by the rock and mocked the situation in their country, describing the one responsible as an ignorant and foolish rebel. Then they all departed for their homes. Two days later, a poor, common peasant came by and saw the rock. He did not speak but rushed towards it, rolled up his sleeves and sought help from passers-by. Others were encouraged to help and they pushed the rock until they removed it from the road.

Who do you think was the influential one out of the passers-by?
And how did it positivity help in this situation?

Influential Biblical figures:

- Daniel the Prophet
- Elijah the Prophet
- Moses
- The Three Youths
- The Righteous Joseph
- Amos
- Jeremiah
- Esther
- Gideon
- Nehemiah
- Noah
- David

How were they influential despite obstacles? What were the obstacles and how did they overcome them?

Examples influential figures from the history of the Church:

Saint Pachomius: the main reason for his entering the Christian faith was the love he encountered from the Christians of Thebes, who brought food and drink to him and his fellow soldiers. This act of kindness amazed him and he vowed that if he returned from war unharmed, he would become Christian, and indeed he became a Christian, and one of the great Saints in the Church.



Saint Verena: influenced the people of Switzerland when she taught them the Christian faith and the rules of good hygiene and public health. Her picture depicts her carrying a comb in the one hand and a jug in the other.



Pope Athanasius: During the Divine Liturgy, an Ethiopian woman came in with two children (a boy and a girl). He asked her to remain in the Church until the end of the Liturgy, and then he called her over and asked her about the children. When he learned that they were orphans he had pity on them and took them into his care. The boy became Pope Theophilus, 23rd Patriarch, and the girl got married and became the mother of Pope Cyril the Pillar of Faith.



What can hinder a person from being influential?

- 1- Being far from the Lord and living in sin
- 2- Inability to know your identity
- 3- Low self-esteem and lack of a positive self-image
- 4- Hesitation and negative feelings
- 5- Selfishness and vanity
- 6- Imitation and following every new fashion and idea

Be a positive influence despite:

- 1- difficult circumstances and problems around you
- 2- being in a stumbling environment
- 3- weakness of abilities and skills

No one will be proud of you until you're proud of yourself. Be proud of who you are, of your family, church, and environment. Rest assured that you can be influential, even in the simplest acts.

- Being self-confident will make you proud of yourself.
- Respecting others' positive ideas and holding on to your convictions along with your efforts will increase your influence on others.
- Finally, try to overcome the negatives and be distinct and be a true witness to Our Lord.

Profile Picture

A topic about Coptic Icons



Have you ever seen a profile picture? Sure you did! This personal picture can play a very important role in telling you about the person; and through it, you can learn things about them even if you didn't know them before. In the same manner, the **Coptic Icons** help us understand a lot about our Coptic Church.

The Coptic Icon is a teaching method that has a vital role in the life of the church. Through simple colors, the icon declares the Holy Bible and illustrates the teachings of the church; it takes the feelings of the believers to the prospective life. Looking at the icons above, can you tell what story the icon is portraying?

WHAT IS THE ICON?

- ❖ The word icon comes from the Greek word "Eikon" which means image. It is used in the church to mean the pictures representing the Lord Jesus Christ, St. Mary or any of the saints.
- ❖ The icon is not merely a result of the painter's imagination, but is governed by the theology, the rites, and the tradition of the church. For this reason, we find it to have many symbolic features.
- ❖ The icon is considered a book or a sermon written in a simple language that everyone can read, regardless of their language. When a person sees an icon, he remembers the good deeds and the love of the portrayed saint, and tries to follow their conduct keeping his eyes on the heavenly things.

THE ICON PAINTERS:

- ❖ Iconography is an art specific to the service of the church.

In the Old Testament, we read:

**"God has filled Bezalel the son of Uri with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works for the Tabernacle."
(Exodus 35:30-35)**



- ❖ More important than being a good artist, the iconographer has to be a sincere Christian, united with God, who prepares himself for his work through fasting, prayer, confession, communion and has the feeling that he is but an instrument through whom the Holy Spirit expresses Himself. Then his paintings will be a result of deep contemplation in God's love, and in the mystery of human salvation. This contemplation will also result from reading the Holy Bible; that's why most of the icons were painted by monks in the old days.

THE PURPOSE OF USING ICONS IN THE CHURCH:

- ❖ To remind the believers of the people portrayed in them, such as the icon of the crucifixion reminds us of salvation and the price of blood paid for it.



HONORING THE ICONS:

- ❖ When honoring icons of saints, we remember the effectiveness of the prayers of those who preceded us to the triumphant church in heaven.

"Honoring the icon is really honoring the person represented by it. It reminds us to follow the example of that saint. When we contemplate these saints, we desire to be like them"

St. Basil the Great

"We do not worship the icon, but we worship God, symbolized by it. My beloved, when we prostrate to the cross, we don't worship the wood, but He who is on the wood."

St. John of Damascus

ICONS AND CHURCH RITUALS:

We don't use pictures in the church, but the icon used in church becomes part of God's house. Therefore, it has to go through special prayers called sanctification, where the icon is anointed with the Holy Myron oil.

❖ Sanctification of Icons:

-After the thanksgiving prayers the bishop prays:

"O Master Lord, God the Pantocrator, Father of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ who, from the beginning, through His servant Moses gave us the Law to place in the Tabernacle of the testimony the prototype of the Cherubim who cover the altar with their wings. You also granted Solomon wisdom to build Your house in Jerusalem and manifested Yourself to your chosen apostles through the incarnation of Your Only Begotten Son our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, to build churches and monasteries named after Your saints and martyrs. Therefore, we ask You and entreat You O Lover of mankind to send Your Holy Spirit on these icons of the saints and martyrs (name of the saint)"



-Then the bishop anoints the icon 3 times with Holy Myron, blows over them saying:

"that they may become an anchored harbor of salvation and steadfastness for all who approach them faithfully to receive through them grace and forgiveness of their sins from God for blessed and full of glory is Your Holy name O Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (The bishop blows over the icon after communion and before drinking water.)"

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COPTIC ICON:

- ❖ The saint is portrayed bigger than all his surroundings to emphasize that the world is small and is considered rubbish compared to what he's enjoying in the paradise.
- ❖ Saints are not portrayed in closed rooms since they live in paradise, which has no limits.
- ❖ Physical features are not focused upon to grab our attention to the spiritual beauty and the pure life of the saint.
 - The eyes are painted large and animated to express their spiritual insight.
 - The ears are painted large as a symbolic projection of the ears of the soul that have heard and still hear the good news of Christ.
 - The mouth and the nose are shaped small to express that the saint takes no thought of his life, what he shall smell, eat and drink but seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.
- ❖ A halo is drawn around the head to denote the holiness of the represented person. This was taken from roman art.
- ❖ Icons tell the story of the saint and events in their life.



❖ **By far the best icon of God is man who was made in God's own image.**

This is the reason the Orthodox Priest, during the liturgy, turns and censes the congregation after having censed the icon.

**Each person in the congregation is a living icon of God.
Through censing, we pay respect to the image of God in man which resides
in all persons regardless of the color of the skin, or class.**

Memorization

1.



“For you will be His **witness** to all men of what you have seen and heard” Acts 22:15

FROM THE AGPEYA—PRAYER OF THE MIDNIGHT PRAYER- FIRST WATCH

2. Arise, you, O children of the light, to praise the Lord of Hosts, that He may grant us the salvation of our souls. When we stand in the flesh before You, take away from our minds the sleep of forgetfulness, and grant us alertness, in order that we understand how to stand up before You at the time of prayer, and send up to You the appropriate doxology, and win the forgiveness of our many sins.

Δοξα σι Φιλανθρώπωνε. Glory to You, the Lover of mankind.

3. GOSPEL of the Midnight Prayer-THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW (CH. 25:1-13)

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, “Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him.” Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, “Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out.” But the wise answered, saying, “No; lest there should not be enough for us and you: but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.” And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, “Lord, Lord, open to us.” But he answered and said, “Verily I say unto you, I do not know you.” Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. Glory to God forever. Amen.

*Ἰενοῦωυτ ἰμοκ ω Πιχριστος ηευ Πεκιωτ ηαααθου
ηευ Πιπνευια εθογαβ χε ακι ακωφ ἰμοη ηαι ηαν*

We worship You O Christ with Your Good Father and the Holy Spirit, for You have come and saved us.

4. Litanies of the Midnight Prayers

I. Behold, the Bridegroom is coming at midnight, blessed is the servant whom He finds watching. But he whom He finds sleeping is unworthy of going with Him. Therefore, take heed, O my soul, that you may not fall into deep sleep, and then be cast out of the Kingdom. But watch and cry out saying "Holy, Holy, Holy are You, O God; for the sake of the *Theotokos*, have mercy on us."

ΔΟΞΑ ΠΑΤΡΙ ΚΕΤΩ ΚΕ ΔΣΙΩ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΤΙ. Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

II. O my soul, be mindful of that awesome day, and wake up and light your lamp with the oil of joy, for you do not know when the voice will call upon you saying: "Behold, the Bridegroom is coming." So, take heed, my soul, not to fall asleep, lest you stand outside knocking like the five foolish virgins. But watch, entreating that you may meet Christ the Lord with rich oil, and He may grant you the wedding of His true and heavenly glory.

ΚΕΝΥΗ ΚΕ ΔΪ ΚΕΙΣΤΟΥΣ ΞΩΝΑΣ ΤΩΗ ΞΩΝΩΗ ΔΑΜΗ. Now and forever and unto the ages of all ages, Amen.

III. You are the rampart of our salvation, O *Theotokos* the Virgin, the mighty and impregnable fortress. Abolish the counsel of the adversaries, and transform the sorrow of your servants into joy. Fortify our city, defend our governors, and intercede for the peace of the world; for you are our hope, O *Theotokos*.

ΚΕΝΥΗ ΚΕ ΔΪ ΚΕΙΣΤΟΥΣ ΞΩΝΑΣ ΤΩΗ ΞΩΝΩΗ ΔΑΜΗ. Now and forever and unto the ages of all ages, Amen.

IV. O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who is present in all places and fills all, the treasury of good things and the Life-Giver, graciously come, and dwell in us and purify us from all defilement, O Good One, and save our souls.

ΔΟΞΑ ΠΑΤΡΙ ΚΕΤΩ ΚΕ ΔΣΙΩ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΤΙ. Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

V. Just as You were with Your disciples, O Savior, and gave them peace, graciously come also and be with us, and grant us Your peace, and save us, and deliver our souls.

ΚΕΝΥΗ ΚΕ ΔΪ ΚΕΙΣΤΟΥΣ ΞΩΝΑΣ ΤΩΗ ΞΩΝΩΗ ΔΑΜΗ. Now and forever and unto the ages of all ages, Amen.

VI. Whenever we stand in Your holy sanctuary, we are considered standing in heaven. O *Theotokos*, you are the gate of heaven, open for us the gate of mercy.

Coptic



Our Lord spent about four years in Egypt as a baby. He spoke to the people of Egypt in their language, which was Coptic at that time.

THE COPTIC ALPHABET

	Α α Alpha A	Β β Veeta B, V	Γ γ Gamma G, N, Gh	Δ δ Delta D, Th (the)	
Ε ε Eyy E	Ϝ ϝ Number 6 So-oo The number 6	Ζ ζ Zeeta Z	Η η Eta EE	Θ θ Theeta TH (think), T	Ι ι Yota I, Y
Κ κ Kappa K	Λ λ Lavia L	Μ μ Mey M	Ν ν Ney N	Ξ ξ Eksee NS	Ο ο O G
Π π Pee P	Ρ ρ ro- R	Ϛ ϛ seema S, Z	Τ τ tav T	Υ υ Epsilon V, I, Ioo)	Φ φ Fey F
Χ χ Key K, Kh, Sh	Ψ ψ Epsee PS	Ω ω Oo- Oo	Ϙ ϙ Shai SH	Ϡ ϡ Fai F	Ϣ ϣ Khai KH
	Ϟ ϟ Hori H	Ϡ ϡ Ganga G, J	Ϣ ϣ Cheema CH	Ϥ ϥ Tee Tee	

The Coptic Alphabet has 32 letters

- 24 consonants
- 7 vowels (Α Ε Η Ι Ο Υ Ω)
- 1 letter used only as a number (Ϝ)

Origin of the Coptic Alphabet



First 25 letters from Hieroglyphic through Proto-Sinaitic, Phoenician and Greek Alphabets

Last 7 letters from Hieroglyphic through Hieratic and Demotic Alphabets

ⲛⲟϥⲣⲓ	hi
ⲛⲟϥⲣⲓ ⲡⲉⲛⲛⲏⲃ	Hi Sayedna
ⲛⲟϥⲣⲓ ⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ	Hi Abouna
ⲟϥϭⲁⲓ	Bye
ⲟϥϭⲁⲓ ⲃⲉⲛ ⲓⲃⲟⲓⲥ	Bye (in the Lord)



Pronunciation

Pronunciation of the letter Key "ϭ"

The letter is among the letters taken from the Greek Alphabet. In Greek, the sound of this letter is not among the sounds present in the Coptic pronunciation. But in Coptic words, it is always pronounced with the sound "k".

We should first note that Greek words found in the Coptic Liturgy are two kinds:

1. Pure Greek hymns included in the Coptic Liturgy to retain non-Coptic Christians in Egypt in the Coptic Church.
2. "Loan words" that became part of the Coptic Language. Like the Greek Loan words in the English language: e.g. deacon, martyr, psychic, etc.)

When trying to pronounce the Greek loan words in English, e.g. the loan word "deacon", it is pronounced using the English way to pronounce it and not the original Greek pronunciation.

So when we pronounce Greek loan words in Coptic, we should use the Coptic way to pronounce them.

Therefore, the Greek loan words "ⲡⲥⲓⲕⲏ" and "ⲉⲧⲕⲏ" would be pronounced "psikee" and "evkee".

Tenses: Present, Past, Future I, We

		Present Tense	Future Tense	Past Tense	Negative Past Tense
1 st Person	I	†ϋ̇λ.ηλ I pray	†ηλ.ϋ̇λ.ηλ I will pray	λ.ι̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ I prayed	ι̇π.ι̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ I did not pray
	We	†ε.η̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ We pray	†ε.η.ηλ.ϋ̇λ.ηλ We will pray	λ.η̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ We prayed	ι̇π.ε.η̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ We did not pray

You (M., F., Pl.)

		Present Tense	Future Tense	Past Tense	Negative Past Tense
2 nd person	You (s.m.)	κ̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ You pray	κ̇ηλ.ϋ̇λ.ηλ You will pray	λ.κ̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ You prayed	ι̇π.ε.κ̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ You did not pray
	You (s.f.)	τ.ε̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ You pray	τ.ε.ρ.α̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ You will pray	λ.ρ.ε̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ You prayed	ι̇π.ε.τ.ε̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ You did not pray
	You (pl.)	τ.ε.τ.ε.η̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ You pray	τ.ε.τ.ε.η.ηλ.ϋ̇λ.ηλ You will pray	λ.ρ.ε.τ.ε.η̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ You prayed	ι̇π.ε.τ.ε.η̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ You did not pray

He, She, They

		Present Tense	Future Tense	Past Tense	Negative Past Tense
3 rd person	He	ε̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ He prays	ε̇ηλ.ϋ̇λ.ηλ He will pray	λ.ε̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ He prayed	ι̇π.ε.ρ.ε̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ He did not pray
	She	ς̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ She prays	ς̇ηλ.ϋ̇λ.ηλ She will pray	λ.ς̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ She prayed	ι̇π.ε.ρ.ς̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ She did not pray
	They	ε.ϋ̇λ.ηλ They pray	ε.ε.ηλ.ϋ̇λ.ηλ They will pray	λ.ϋ̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ They prayed	ι̇π.ο.ϋ̇ϋ̇λ.ηλ They did not pray

Negative Present and Future tenses are formed by
ΔΗ or **Ἡ...ΔΗ**

Examples

Present **CEΨΛΗΛ ΔΗ** or **ἩCEΨΛΗΛ ΔΗ**

Future **CENAΨΛΗΛ ΔΗ** or **ἩCENAΨΛΗΛ ΔΗ**

Practice Present, Future and Past tenses
and their negatives with the following verbs

†**CBW** to teach

BCBW to learn

† to give

BI to take, receive

OTWYT to worship

WEPZMOT to give thanks

† to come

CW† to save, redeem

CBOT to bless, praise

ZWC to sing, chant

CWOTN to know

NAZ† to believe

ZWC to sit down

DEPDEP to snore

WY to read

CBΔI to write

OTWU to eat

CW to drink

Conversations

HOYPI Hi

OTZΔI Bye

WEPZMOT Thanks

UMON ZΔI You're welcome (for nothing)

Numbers

At the time of developing the Coptic Script, all known languages at that time were using their alphabets as numbers. (e.g. Copts, Greeks, Arabs, Hebrews)

	Coptic			Greek		Arabic		Hebrew	
1	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲁ̅	Alpha	α	Alpha	ا	Alef	א	Aleph
2	ϥⲛⲁⲩ	ⲃ̅	Veeta	β	Beta	ب	Baa	ב	Beth
3	ϣⲟⲙⲧ	Ⲅ̅	Gamma	γ	Gamma	ج	Geem	ג	Gimel
4	ϥⲧⲟⲩ	ⲅ̅	Delta	δ	Delta	د	Dal	ד	Daleth
5	ϥⲓⲟⲩ	Ⲇ̅	Ey	ε	Epsilon	ه	Haa	ה	He
6	ϥⲟⲟⲩ	Ⲉ̅	So-o	?	?	و	Waw	ו	Waw
7	ϣⲁϣϥ	ⲉ̅	Zeeta	ζ	Zeta	ز	Zayn	ז	Zayin

Later on, the current numbering system (1, 2, 3...) was developed from the system used by the **Phoenician sailors**, where the number of angles in the figure indicated the number.

Phoenician Figures					
Number of Angles	1	2	3	4	5
Phoenician Figures					
Number of Angles	6	7	8	9	0

The Coptic Numbers
(at the time of writing most Coptic manuscripts)

100	ⲡ	ϣⲉ	10	ⲓ	ⲙⲏⲧ	1	ⲁ	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ
200	Ⲅ	ϥⲛⲁⲩ ϣⲉ	20	ⲕ	ϫⲟⲩⲧ	2	ⲃ	ϥⲛⲁⲩ
300	ⲧ	ϣⲟⲙⲧ ϣⲉ	30	ⲗ	ⲙⲁⲡ	3	ⲅ	ϣⲟⲙⲧ
400	ⲩ	ϥⲧⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	40	ⲙ	ϩⲙⲉ	4	ⲇ	ϥⲧⲟⲩ
500	Ⲭ	ϥⲧⲓⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	50	ⲛ	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	5	ⲉ	ϥⲧⲓⲟⲩ
600	Ⲩ	ϥϫⲟⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	60	Ⲛ	ϥⲉ	6	ⲇ	ϥϫⲟⲟⲩ
700	Ⲱ	ϣⲁⲣⲥ ϣⲉ	70	ⲟ	ϣⲃⲉ	7	Ⲛ	ϣⲁⲣⲥ
800	Ⲡ	ϣⲙⲏⲏ ϣⲉ	80	ⲡ	ϩⲁⲙⲛⲉ	8	ⲏ	ϣⲙⲏⲏ
900	Ⲩ	ϣⲓⲧ ϣⲉ	90	ϥ	ⲡⲓϥⲧⲁⲩ	9	ⲟ	ϣⲓⲧ

How to say the numbers in Coptic

100	ϣⲉ	10	ⲙⲏⲧ	1	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ
200	ϥⲛⲁⲩ ϣⲉ	20	ϫⲟⲩⲧ	2	ϥⲛⲁⲩ
300	ϣⲟⲙⲧ ϣⲉ	30	ⲙⲁⲡ	3	ϣⲟⲙⲧ
400	ϥⲧⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	40	ϩⲙⲉ	4	ϥⲧⲟⲩ
500	ϥⲧⲓⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	50	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	5	ϥⲧⲓⲟⲩ
600	ϥϫⲟⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	60	ϥⲉ	6	ϥϫⲟⲟⲩ
700	ϣⲁⲣⲥ ϣⲉ	70	ϣⲃⲉ	7	ϣⲁⲣⲥ
800	ϣⲙⲏⲏ ϣⲉ	80	ϩⲁⲙⲛⲉ	8	ϣⲙⲏⲏ
900	ϣⲓⲧ ϣⲉ	90	ⲡⲓϥⲧⲁⲩ	9	ϣⲓⲧ

How to write and read numbers		
12	ⲙⲏⲧ ϫⲛⲁⲧ	ⲓⲃ
24	ϫⲟⲩⲧ ϣⲧⲟⲩ	ⲕⲗ
49	ϩⲙⲉ ϣⲓⲧ	ⲙⲑ
50	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	ⲛ
72	ϣⲃⲉ ϫⲛⲁⲧ	ⲟⲃ

100	ϣⲉ	ⲑ
111	ϣⲉ ⲙⲏⲧ ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲑⲓⲁ
318	ϣⲟⲙⲧ ϣⲉ ⲙⲏⲧ ϣⲙⲏⲛ	ⲧⲓⲏ
200	ϫⲛⲁⲧ ϣⲉ	ϥ
666	ϥⲟⲟⲩ ϣⲉ ϥⲉ ϥⲟⲟⲩ	ϫⲗϩ
969	ϣⲓⲧ ϣⲉ ϥⲉ ϣⲓⲧ	ϣⲗⲑ

The Days of the week		
Day	Coptic	Other names
Sunday	ⲑⲓⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲑⲓⲉⲗⲟⲟⲩ ⲏⲧⲉ ⲏⲃⲟⲓϥ (Coptic) ⲕⲣⲓⲁⲕⲏ (Greek) (means the day of the Lord)
Monday	ⲑⲓϫⲛⲁⲧ	
Tuesday	ⲑⲓϣⲟⲙⲧ	
Wednesday	ⲑⲓϣⲧⲟⲩ	
Thursday	ⲑⲓⲧⲓⲟⲩ	
Friday	ⲑⲓϥⲟⲟⲩ	ⲑⲓⲉⲗⲟⲟⲩ ⲏⲧⲉ ⲑⲓϥⲟⲃⲧ (Coptic) ⲑⲁⲣⲁⲥⲕⲉⲩⲏ (Greek) (means the day of preparation)
Saturday	ⲑⲓϣⲁⲩⲣⲓ	ⲑⲓϥⲁⲃⲃⲁⲧⲟⲛ (in Hebrew means rest).

ḐEN ḐḐAN ḐḐIWT	In the Name of the Father
HEM ḐḐḐRI	and the Son
HEM ḐIḐNEḐMA EḐOḐAB	and the Holy Spirit
OḐHOḐḐ ḐOḐWT ḐḐḐḐ	One God Amen



ḐE ḐENIWT ETḐEN NIḐHOḐI
Our Father who art in Heaven

ḐRITEN ḐEMḐḐA ḐḐOC ḐEN OḐḐEḐḐOḐ
 Make us worthy to say thankfully

ḐE ḐENIWT ETḐEN NIḐHOḐI
 Our father who art in heaven

MAḐEḐTOḐBO ḐḐE ḐEKḐAN
 Hallowed be Thy name

MAḐEḐI ḐḐE TEKḐETOḐPO
 Thy kingdom come

ḐETEḐNAK MAḐEḐḐOḐI
 Thy will be done

ḐḐḐḐḐ ḐEN ḐḐE ḐEM ḐIḐEN ḐIKAḐI
 On earth as it is in heaven

ḐENWIK ḐTE ḐAḐḐI ḐḐIḐ ḐAN ḐḐOḐḐ
 Give us this day our daily bread

OḐOḐ ḐA ḐḐETEPON ḐAN EḐOḐ
 And forgive us our trespasses

ḐḐḐḐḐ ḐḐḐ ḐTENḐḐO EḐOḐ
 As we forgive

ḐḐḐḐḐ OḐON ḐḐAN EḐḐOḐ
 Those who trespass against us

OḐOḐ ḐḐEPENTEN EḐOḐḐ EḐIḐAḐMOḐ
 And lead us not into temptation

ḐḐḐA ḐAḐḐEN EḐOḐḐA ḐIḐETEḐḐOḐ
 But deliver us from the evil one

ḐEN ḐIḐḐIḐOḐ IḐOḐḐ ḐENḐOIC
 In Christ Jesus our Lord

ḐE ḐḐK ḐE
 For Thine is

ḐḐETOḐPO ḐEM ḐḐOM ḐEM ḐIḐOḐ
 the kingdom, the power and the glory,

ḐA EḐEḐ ḐḐḐḐ
 forever, Amen

Hymns & Rituals



1. Verses of Cymbals for the Feast of the Epiphany

The verses of cymbals are chanted after the prayer of Thanksgiving during the Raising of Incense Prayers (Vespers and Matins). They are chanted in either the annual or the joyful tune depending on the season. During the Feast of the Epiphany, the first ten verses of the Morning Doxology are chanted followed by the verses for the Epiphany in the joyful tune, and then the conclusion for the feasts of the Lord.

Κυριε ελεησον	Lord have mercy.
Τενοωωτ ιφωωτ νευ Πωηρι: νευ Πιπνευμα εσοουαβ: χερε †εκκλυσια ηηι ητε ηιαγγελοσ.	We worship the Father and the Son, and the Holy spirit, Hail to the Church, the house of angels.
Χερε †παρθενοσ: ετασμεσ Πενσωτηρ: χερε Σαβριηλ: εταρβι ωπνηοτχι ηασ.	Hail to the Virgin, who gave birth to our Savior, Hail to Gabriel who announced, to her the Good News.
Χερε Μιχαηλ: παρχηαγγελοσ: χερε πιχοττ ετοτ υπρεσβυτεροσ.	Hail to Michael, the Archangel, Hail to the twenty four, presbyters.
Χερε Ηιχεροτβιμ: χερε Ηιοεραφιμ: χερε ηιτασμα τηροτ: ηεποτταηιοη.	Hail to the Cherubim, Hail to the Seraphim, Hail to all the hosts, of the heavens.
Χερε Ιωαηηησ: πιηω† υπροδρομοσ: χερε πιηητ εηατ: ηαποστολοσ.	Hail to John, the great forerunner, Hail to the, twelve apostles.
Χερε πεηωτ Μαρκοσ: πιεταγγελιστησ: πιρεττωρ εβολ: ητε ηηδαωλοη.	Hail to our father Mark, the Evangelist, the destroyer, of the idols.
Χερε Στεφανοσ: πιωορη υμαρτηροσ: χερε Σωεργιοσ: πισιοτ ητε θαηλτοοτη.	Hail to Stephen, the first martyr, Hail to George, the morning star.
Χερε ηχοροσ τηρτ: ητε ημαρτηροσ: χερε Αββα Αντωνη: νευ πιωουτ Μακαριοσ.	Hail to the whole choir of the martyrs, Hail to Abba Anthony, and the three Macarii.
Χερε ηχοροσ τηρτ: ητε ηιστατροφοροσ: χερε ηνεοοταβ τηροτ: εταρραηατ υΠβοιοσ.	Hail to the whole choir, of the cross-bearers, Hail to all the saints, who have pleased the Lord.
Σιτεη νοτετχηη: Πιχριστοσ Πενοτροσ: ληριοηηαι νευαηη: βεν τεκμετοτροσ.	Through their prayers, O Christ our King, have mercy upon us, in Your Kingdom.

<p>Χε φαι πε παωρηι παμερηι: ετα ταψυχηι τματ ηδνιτ: αερπαοτω σωτεμ ησωφ: χε ησοφ πε πρεφταλδο.</p>	<p>"This is My beloved Son in whom I am pleased. He has performed My will; obey Him, for He is the Giver of Life."</p>
<p>Θεληη ιφρητ ηδανηινβ: ω πιορδανη νεμ πεφδρτωμο: χε αφι ψαροκ ηχε πιηινβ: φηετωλι ιφνοβι ιπικωμοσ.</p>	<p>Rejoice as lambs, O Jordan and your wilderness, for unto you has come the lamb who takes away the sin of the world.</p>
<p>Οτραη ηωουωου πεπεκραντ ω πιστυγενησ ηεμμανοηηλ: ηοοκοτηηωτ δεν ηνεοταβ τηροτ Ιωαννησ πρεφτωμοσ.</p>	<p>A proud name is your name, O kinsman of Emmanuel. You are great among all saints, O John the Baptist.</p>
<p>Χερε Ιωαννησ: πιηωτ ιπροδρομοσ: χερε ποτηνβ πιστυγενησ: ηεμμανοηηλ.</p>	<p>Hail to John the great forerunner. Hail to the priest, the kinsman of Emmanuel.</p>
<p>Ιησοϋσ Πιχριστοσ ησαϋ νεμ φοοτ: ησοφ ησοφ πε νεμ ψα ενεσ: δην οφεηποστασ ηοτωτ: τενοτωωτ ιμοσ τεητ ιωουηαϋ.</p>	<p>Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever, in One Hypostasis, we worship and glorify Him.</p>
<p>Πουρο ητε τζηρηνη: μοι ηλη ητεκ ζηρηνη: σεμη ηλη ητεκ ζηρηνη: χα ηεννοβι ηλη εβολ.</p>	<p>O King of peace, grant us Your peace, establish for us Your peace, and forgive us our sins.</p>
<p>Χωρ εβολ ηηηαλαη ητε τεκκλησια: λρισοβτ εροσ: ηνεσκμ ψα ενεσ.</p>	<p>Disperse the enemies, of the Church, and fortify her that she, may not be shaken forever.</p>
<p>εμμανοηηλ Πεννοττ: δην τεμηητ τηροτ: δην ηωοτ ητε Πεφιωτ: νεμ Πιπνευμα εσοταβ.</p>	<p>Emmanuel our God, is now in our midst, with the glory of His Father, and the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>ητεφωμοτ ερον τηρεη: ητεφτωυβο ηηενεμητ: ητεφταλδο ηηηωνη: ητε ηενψυχη νεμ ηενσωμα.</p>	<p>That He may bless us all, and purify our hearts, and heal the sicknesses, of our souls and bodies.</p>
<p>Τενοτωωτ ιμοκ ω Πιχριστοσ: νεμ Πεφιωτ ηαγαθοσ: νεμ Πιπνευμα εσοταβ: χε ακβιωμοσ ακωτ ιμον ηαι ηλη.</p>	<p>We worship You, O Christ, with Your Good Father, and the Holy Spirit, for You were baptized and saved us. Have mercy on us.</p>

2. Psalm 150 for the Feast of the Epiphany (Short Alleluia)

During the distribution of the Holy Communion (Body & Blood), Psalm 150 is chanted with different tunes according to the season of the church. During the Feast of the Epiphany, it is chanted in the Festive Tune with the refrain for the Epiphany feast following each verse.

Αλ: Αλ: Αλ:	Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.
Refrain: Αλληλοῦα. Ἰησοῦς Πατριςτος ἰψυρι ἠΦνοῦτ: αῖβῶμῃς δῆν πιλορδανῆς.	Alleluia. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is baptized in the Jordan.
Σμοῦ ἠΦνοῦτ δῆν ἠηῆθοῦαβ τηροῦ ἠταρ.	Praise God, in all His saints.
Σμοῦ ἠροῦ δῆν πιταχρο ἠτε τερχομ.	Praise Him, in the firmament of His power.
Σμοῦ ἠροῦ ἠῆρῆ δῆξεν τερμετχωρι.	Praise Him, for His mighty acts.
Σμοῦ ἠροῦ κατὰ ἠψαῖ ἠτε τερμετῆψῆ.	Praise Him, according to His excellent greatness.
Σμοῦ ἠροῦ δῆν οῦσμῆ ἠσαλπιγος.	Praise Him, with the sound of the trumpet.
Σμοῦ ἠροῦ δῆν οῦψαλτηριον ἠεμ οῦκτορα.	Praise Him, with the psaltery and harp.
Σμοῦ ἠροῦ δῆν θαλκευκεμ ἠεμ θαλχορος.	Praise Him, with the timbrel and chorus.
Σμοῦ ἠροῦ δῆν θαλκῦβαλον ἠνεσε τοῦσμῆ.	Praise Him, with pleasant sounding cymbals.
Σμοῦ ἠροῦ δῆν θαλκῦβαλον ἠτε οῦῆδῆλοῦτι.	Praise Him, with cymbals of joy.
ἠεμ ἠβεν ἠαροῦ ἠμοῦ τηροῦ ἠῆραν ἠῦβοις Πῆνοῦτ.	Let everything that has breath praise the Name of the Lord our God.
Δοξα Πατρι κε ῤῶ κε Δγιῶ Πνευματι.	Glory be to the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Κε ἠῦῆ κε ἠῖ κε ἠστοῦς ἠῶῆας των ἠῶῆων ἠμῆ.	Now and forever and unto the age of all ages. Amen.
Αλληλοῦα. Αλληλοῦα. Δοξα σι ὁθεος ἠμῶν.	Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory be to our God.
Αλληλοῦα. Αλληλοῦα. Πῶοῦ φα Πῆνοῦτ πε.	Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory be to our God.

3. Conclusion of the Adam Theotokias

The conclusion to the Adam Theotokias is chanted during Vespers and Midnight praises on Adam days, and after the Morning Doxology every day. Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday are Adam days. Wednesday through Saturday are Watos days.

<p>Νεκ και ὦ Πανοῦ†: θαλατβῖνπι ἕμωου† σεωῦ ἑμαῶω: ἦξε νεκμετψενθῆτ.</p>	<p>Your mercies O my God: are countless: and exceedingly plenteous: are Your compassions.</p>
<p>Πιτελτιλῆ ἕμοτη θωου† σεῖπ ἦτοτκ τηροῦ† πικεῶω ἦτε φιομ† σεχη κλθρεν νεκβαλ.</p>	<p>All the raindrops: are counted by You: and the sand of the sea: is before Your eyes.</p>
<p>Ιεαυηρμαλλοη: ηἰνοβι ἦτε ταψτχη† και εἰῶτωηθ, ἐβολ† ἰπεκῖθῶ Παβοις.</p>	<p>How much more are: the sins of my soul: manifest before You: O my Lord.</p>
<p>Ηἰνοβι εταιατοῦ† Παβοις ἠνεκεροῦμετι† οτδε ἰπερ† θῶηκ† ἐηλλνομῖλ.</p>	<p>The sins that I have committed: do not remember my Lord: and do not count: my iniquities.</p>
<p>Χε πιτελῶνη σακσοτπε† †πορνη ακσω† ἕμοσ† πισοηι ετσαοῦηλαμ† Παβοις ακερπεμετι.</p>	<p>For You have chosen the publican: and the adulteress You have saved: and the right hand thief: my Lord You have remembered.</p>
<p>Ανοκ θω Παβοις† δε πιρεφερνοβι† ματσαβοι ἠταῖρι† ἠοῦμετἄηοῖλ.</p>	<p>And I too: the sinner: teach me O my Lord: to offer repentance.</p>
<p>Χε ἰχοῶω ἕφμοτ αν† ἰπιρεφερνοβι† ἕφρη† ἠτεφτασοο† ἠτ εσωηθ ἦξε τεφψτχη.</p>	<p>For You do not desire: the death of a sinner: but rather that he returns: and that his soul may live.</p>
<p>Ὡλατασθον φηου†: ἐδοῦη ἐπεκοῦχαιε ἄριοῦηνεμαν† κατα τεκμετἄσλαθοσ.</p>	<p>Restore us O God: to Your salvation: and deal with us: according to Your goodness.</p>
<p>Χε ἠσοκ οῦαλαθοσι οτοθ ἠηλη† μαροῦταθον ἠχωλεμ† ἦξε νεκμετψενθῆτ.</p>	<p>For You are good: and merciful: let Your compassions: speedily come to us.</p>
<p>Ψενθῆτ δεροῦη τηρεν† Πβοις φηου† Πενσωτηρ† οτοθ και ηλη† κατα πεκνηῶ† ἠηαι.</p>	<p>Have compassion upon us all: O Lord God our Savior: and have mercy upon us: according to Your great mercy.</p>

<p>Ναι κίρι ὑποταμενίς ὦ πενήνη Πίχριστος ἐκέψωπι δειν τεμμητῆ εκωψ ἐβωλ εκχω ἕμος.</p>	<p>Remember those: O Christ our Master: be among us: and proclaim and say:</p>
<p>Χε ταβιρηνη ἀνοκί †† ἕμοςνωτενῆ τῆβιρηνη ἕΠαλωτῆ †χω ἕμος πεμωτεν.</p>	<p>My peace I: give to you: the peace of My Father: I leave with you.</p>
<p>Πουρο ἦτε †βιρηνηῆ μοι νανῆτεκ βιρηνηῆ σεμνι ναν ἦτεκ βιρηνηῆ χα πενηοβι ναν ἐβωλ.</p>	<p>O King of peace, grant us Your peace, establish for us Your peace, and forgive us our sins.</p>
<p>Χωρ ἐβωλ ἠνιχαχι ἦτε †εκκλῆσιῆ ἀρισοβτ ἐροςῆ ἠνεσκμ ωλ ἐπεβ.</p>	<p>Disperse the enemies, of the Church, and fortify her that she, may not be shaken forever.</p>
<p>Εμμανοτηλ Πεννοϋ† δειν τεμμητῆ †νωτῆ δειν ἦωοϋ ἦτε Περωτῆ: νευ Πίπνευμα εθοταβ.</p>	<p>Emmanuel our God, is now in our midst, with the glory of His Father, and the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>ἦτεϋ εῖμοϋ ἐρον †ηρενῆ ἦτεϋτοϋβο ἠνεβηητῆ ἦτεϋταλβο ἠνιψωμῆ ἦτε πενψτχη νευ πενσωμα.</p>	<p>That he may bless us all, and purify our hearts, and heal the sicknesses, of our souls and bodies.</p>
<p>†ενοϋωϋτ ἕμοκ ὦ Πίχριστοςῆ νευ Πεκιωτ ἠλγαθοσῆ νευ Πίπνευμα εθοταβῆ ζεακβίωμς ακω† ἕμον ναι ναν.</p>	<p>We worship You, O Christ, with Your good Father, and the Holy Spirit, for You were baptized and saved us. Have mercy on us.</p>

4. "A proud name"

The hymn **Ουραν ἠψοϋωϋ** is chanted during the Holy Feast of Theophany, and during the feasts and glorifications of St. John the Baptist. During the Theophany, it is chanted after the reading of the Synaxarium and before the Trisagion hymn (**Αγιοσ**). It is in the same tune as the hymns **Πίπνευμα** from Pentecost and **Αγιοσ** from Good Friday.

<p>Ουραν ἠψοϋωϋ πεπεκρανῆ ὦ πιττυγενησ ἠεμμανοτηλῆ ἠσοκ οϋνηϋ† δειν ἠνεθοταβ †ηροτῆ Ἰωαννησ πρεϋ†ωμς.</p>	<p>A proud name is your name, O kinsman of Emmanuel. You are great among all saints, O John the Baptist.</p>
<p>Κβοσῆ ἐνπατριαρχησῆ κτανηοϋτ ἐνἠπροφητησῆ †ε ἠπεοτον τωνηϋ δειν ἠχιημσιῆ ἦτε ἠβιωμι εϋομη ἕμοκ.</p>	<p>You are more exalted than the Patriarchs, and more honored than the Prophets, for no one has risen among those born of women, who is like you.</p>
<p>Διωμη σωτεμ ἐπισοφοσῆ πιλασ ἠνοϋβ Θεοδοσιοσῆ εϋχω ἠπῆτιο ἠπιβαπτηστησῆ Ἰωαννησ πρεϋ†ωμς.</p>	<p>Come and hear the wise, the golden-tongued Theodosius, speaking of the honor of the baptizer, John the Baptist.</p>

ST. MARK'S FESTIVAL 2014



***You shall be
witnesses To Me***