



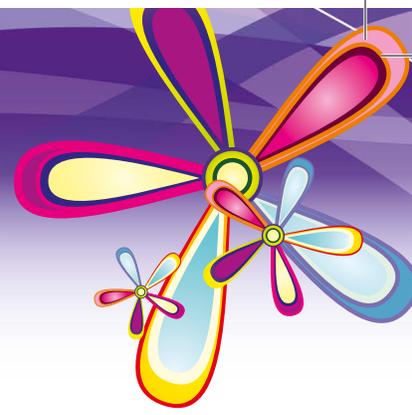
.....So that you surely

Rejoice!



9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grades





**H.H. Pope Tawadros II**

Pope of Alexandria &  
Patriarch of the See of St. Mark



**H.G. Bishop Saraphim**

Bishop of the Diocese of Ohio,  
Michigan, and Indiana





# INTRODUCTION

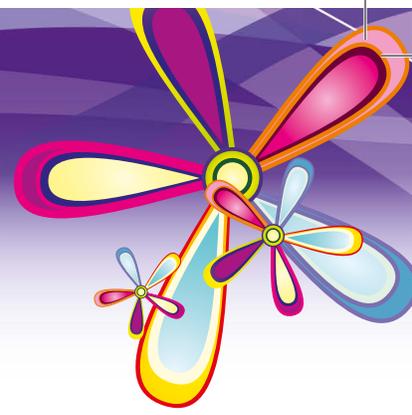
We hope all of you will participate in KERAZA activities this year, and encourage everyone you know to join us in one of the greatest annual events, presented by our mother church, the Coptic Orthodox Church.

God bless the efforts of all who participated in the coordination of KERAZA activities and all the participants.

✠  
My best wishes for a happy  
Festival  
✠  
Bishop Mousa



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# REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS

The sensual joy is a joy in the lusts of the flesh, like Solomon when he rejoiced in all his pleasures and riches. As for the spiritual joy, the Holy Bible says about it, "Rejoice in the Lord always..." (Phil 4:4).

## **Sensual Joy**

You read about Solomon's joy in (Ecclesiastes 2) and you wouldn't find the name of the Lord at all! It is joy with the gardens and orchards, with herds, gold, silver and female singers, etc., not with his spirit nor in his communion with God. It is just a sensual joy, vanity and grasping for the wind. Therefore, in matters of joy, we should differentiate between many expressions such as pleasures (which relate to the flesh and the senses), joy and happiness (some relate to the senses and others to the spirit). Christ's Disciples sometimes fell in sensual happiness. The seventy returned with joy after being sent to preach and said to the Lord, "Even the demons are subject to us in Your name" (Luke 10:17). The Lord rebuked them for this sensual joy and said to them, "Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice rather because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). And so the Lord differentiated between the two types of joy: rebuked for one and called for the other.

## **Spiritual Joy**

You rejoice because you have known God. You rejoice because you have a relationship and a fellowship with God. You rejoice because the Spirit of God dwells in you and guides you. You rejoice because you have tasted the kingdom of heaven on earth. You rejoice for the victory of your spirit who has been set free by God (John 8:36). You rejoice because you were able to lead people to God.

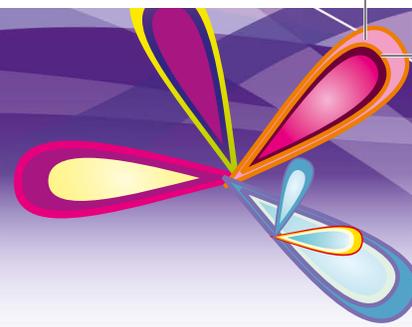
The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord and the Magi when they saw the star of nativity. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord after resurrection. "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20). The Holy Bible has explained to us the joy of the shepherds when the angel proclaimed to them the salvation, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy...for there is born to you this day in the City of David a Savior" (Luke 2:11).

## **Rejoicing in Gifts vs. Fruits of the Spirit**

Another example is the joy and boasting of some in the gift of tongues. It is rejoicing in something that glorifies one before people and lifts him up!! He wants to be exalted on account of God's gifts. It was better to care about the purity of his heart, filling it with the fruit of the spirit. The Apostle said about that, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor 13:1).

**Therefore, rejoice in the fruit of the spirit more than rejoicing in the gifts.** "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). These will lead you to the kingdom while the gifts, signs and revelations may not...! The Lord says, "Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you, depart from me you who practice lawlessness!" (Mt 7:22, 23).





It was said about St. John the Baptist that he never performed one sign (John 10:41). In spite of that, the Lord witnessed for him and said, "Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11). When John's birth was announced to Zachariah, it was said about him, "He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Lk 1:15). Do not rejoice then in signs. The holy and true joyfulness is derived from the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5: 23).

St. Paul the Apostle feared because of the many revelations and disclosures of knowledge. Because they are dangerous and may cause his heart to exalt. Therefore he said, "And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Cor 12:7). And he prayed three times that God may take away this blow, but his prayers about this matter were not accepted. The one who rejoices in receiving the gift of signs and miracles is still within the level of the sensual joy. As for the spiritual joy, it is rejoicing in the Lord and not in His gifts and the greatness that they bring

### **Suffering versus Vainglory**

The mother of the two Apostles, James and John, fell in the same vain, sensual joy. She came to the Lord asking from him to grant that her sons may sit, one on His right hand the other on the left, in His kingdom (Matthew 20:20-21). However, the Lord did not want this joy to be in greatness, but that her sons would have joy in partaking suffering with Christ. So He said to them, "Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptised with?" (Matthew 20:22). The Lord answered the request of this saint and her son (James) was the first amongst the twelve Apostles to be martyred, (Acts 12:2) and he sat at the right hand of the Lord!

Rejoicing in pain is truly part of the spiritual joy. Therefore after the Disciples were imprisoned and flogged, the Holy Bible says about them, "...They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Act 5:41).

And St Paul the Apostle says: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake" (2 Cor 12:10)... And so was the joy of the saints, the martyrs and the confessors when they faced torment and death. It is a spiritual joy. The righteous rejoice over temptations and reproach (James 1); "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials" so that I rejoice over tribulations. Perhaps one of the outstanding examples is that about the great saint whose five sons were slaughtered on her lap while she was encouraging them to be martyred, in order to rejoice with the Lord in His kingdom.



### **Joy of repentance**

The Father said, "It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again" (Luke 15:32). The joy of repentance of a sinner is in Heaven and on earth! When the Good Shepherd found the lost sheep, "He lays it on his shoulders rejoicing" (Luke 15:5). He also says, "There will be more joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents..." (Luke 15:7). The widow also rejoiced when she found her lost coin and called all her neighbors to rejoice with her. The righteous rejoiced over the fruits of their holy toil, "Those who sow in tears reap in joy" (Psalm 126:5).

### **Greatest Joy**

We rejoice in the Church, the dwelling of the Lord. "I was glad when they said to me 'Let us go to the House of the Lord'" (Psalm 122:1), "There is a river whose streams shall make glad the City of God." (Psalm 46:4). Finally, the greatest joy is that of the Kingdom, "Enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matthew 25:21). This is the ultimate joy, where we rejoice in the Lord and in His company. Although we have not reached His Kingdom yet, we rejoice while waiting in hope. As the Apostle says, "Rejoice in hope." (Romans 12:12)

*This article is adopted and edited from the book of Spiritual Man by the Late Pope Shenouda III*

# Struggle for Joy

## Genesis 24-36



*We have read about how God created man and how man fell, then God devised a plan to save His beloved creation (Genesis 1-11). Then we embarked on a journey of faith with Abraham as he leaves his homeland and follows wherever God takes him ( Genesis 12-23). Jacob starts his struggle by deceiving his brother, but then finds true joy in the Presence of God.*

### Chapter 24: A Bride for Isaac

#### Dispatching the Chief Servant in Abraham's House

After three years of Sarah's death, Abraham said to the chief servant in his house, "... swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country (Mesopotamia) and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac" (Gen. 24:2-3). Abraham requested that his son should marry a wife from his kindred, so as not to be attached to a Canaanite, who may deviate his heart away from the love of God; believing that God Who called him, will surely send to his son, the wife that would help him in God's way, the way Sarah did to him.

#### In the City of Nahor

"Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water. Then he said, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham" (Gen. 24:10-12). Origen sees in the well, a reference to the Scripture, where the soul encounters its Groom Christ saying, "Rebekeh used to go every day to the well to draw water; and there she encountered Abraham's servant, and got to marry Isaac... Learn to come every day to the well of the Scripture to draw continuously the water of the Holy Spirit."

#### An Encounter with Rebekeh

The chief servant in Abraham's house, finished his talk of faith with God, as Rebekeh, the granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came to the well to draw water. Besides her physical beauty, she was tender in her speech and great in her generosity; when the stranger asked for a little water from her pitcher to drink, she quickly let her pitcher down, to give him a drink, and to offer to give water to his camels as well, even before he asks for that. Through that loving spirit, Rebekeh set forth from being a girl who lives in a pagan country, to become a wife for Isaac, and a mother to Jacob, father of all tribes. "And the man wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. The man took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten sheckels of gold" (Gen. 24:21-22). Origen says, "Rebekeh's beauty was only manifested when Abraham's servant came to adorn her. Her hands are not to be adorned except by what Isaac sends her. Yet, she could not enjoy them, nor be worthy of them, unless she came to draw water from the well." He further elaborates that if we come to the well of Scriptures, we will be adorned by golden words coming from our mouth and golden deeds by our hands. When the man asked her whether there is room in her father's house for them to lodge, she answered, "We have both straw and food enough, and room to lodge, Then the man bowed down his head and worshiped the Lord" (Gen. 24:25-26).



### **In Rebecca's House**

As Laban saw his sister Rebekeh, adorned with the nose-ring and the two bracelets, and heard what happened to her, he hastened to the man to say, "Come in, O blessed of the Lord! Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels," He began to talk about how the Lord has greatly blessed his master Abraham. How Sarah, his master's wife bore a son to him in his old age. How his master commanded him concerning the marriage of his son Isaac. Then, he ended his talk by saying, "Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left" (Gen. 24:31).

### **Success of the Mission of the Chief Servant of Abraham's House**

With every successful step, the man "worshiped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth" (Gen. 24:52), offering a thanksgiving sacrifice to God, who arranges everything with His own hands. The servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekeh (Gen. 24:53). As the procession was about to move, they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally; then they called Rebekeh and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' And she said, 'I will go'" (Gen. 24:57-58). They believed in freedom of choice. If God respects man, and sanctifies his free will, we, on our part, should believe in the freedom of others and should not compel them, but counsel and support them.

### **Rebekeh, Wife of Isaac**

Rebekeh set forth to go to her groom Isaac, after having left her kindred and household; as though she is the Church of the New Testament, that forsook what she had inherited from the pagan world, to receive the Lord Christ as her Groom. And as the servant encountered her by the well, Isaac came out to encounter her by the well of "Beer Lahai Roi," as though by the water of baptism. Isaac represented the Lord Christ, who forsook His glories, and set forth to the field through incarnation, to receive the modest Rebekeh who, when seeing Him, she dismounted from her camel to meet Him... Thus, Isaac brought Rebekeh into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took her to become his wife, and loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death (Gen. 24:67).

## **Chapter 25: The Birth of Two Nations**

### **Abraham's Marriage to Keturah**

Abraham married Keturah after the death of his wife Sarah, and gave birth to children who became heads of nations. Abraham died, yet he did not lose what he got in the Lord, as he delivered it in the heart of his son Isaac, to carry his same thought, and to harbor the same practical faith in the Lord. By that, even though Abraham died by flesh, yet he rejoiced for what his son had received.

### **Abraham Breathes his Last**

"Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people" (Gen. 25:7-8). Although Abraham died, yet he is alive in God, "For all live in Him" (Luke 20:37). We yearn for such a death, "Having died to sins, might live for righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24).





### **The Genealogy of Ishmael**

Ishmael begat twelve sons who became princes of tribes and peoples, according to God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 17:20).

### **The Birth of Esau and Jacob**

Isaac got married to Rebekeh when he was 40 years old. As she was barren, Isaac pleaded with the Lord for her, and the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekeh conceived after 20 years of marriage. The twins struggled together within her, and she said: "If all is well, why am I this way" (Gen. 25:22). The struggle between Esau and Jacob, that began while still in the womb, and seemed as though unable to accommodate both of them, continued and became more intense as they grew up. Some Fathers see in that struggle, a portrait of the continuous struggle between evil and good within the womb of the Church.

As Rebekeh suffered the intense pain, "she went to inquire of the Lord" (Gen. 25:22), The Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, two people shall be separated from your body. One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23). The secret behind that superiority was receiving the promise of God, and enjoying the divine blessing; Out of him prophets will come, and of his descendants the Word of God will incarnate. The older was the firstborn according to the flesh, yet because of the corruption of his heart, he would lose his firstborn status and his blessing. The younger, because of his strife and spiritual longing, would, through faith, enjoy the spiritual birthright, and the blessing. The first was called Esau, meaning 'hairy or rough,' as his body was covered with hair; while the second was called Jacob, as his hand was taking hold of his brother's heel. These two children were symbols for the carnal and the spiritual man: the first was hairy, a reference to bond with the flesh. He lived as a violent hunter, fond of shedding blood, a character inherited by his descendants 'the Edomites.' Jacob, on the other hand, was a symbol of the spiritual man, who chases others for the sake of acquiring eternities. He was, as described by St. Jerome, "a wrestler and a striver for spirituals."

### **Jacob Purchases the Birthright**

Esau appeared a carnal man, as he sell his birthright to his brother Jacob, for a plate of red stew; therefore his name was called Edom. His disinterest was demonstrated in his saying: "Look, I am about to die, so what profit shall this birthright be to me?" (Gen. 25: 32), "Esau despised his birthright" (Gen. 25:34). A son with birthright, used to represent the head of the family, who inherits from his father the right to 'Priesthood,' being the one to offer sacrifices on behalf of the family. Esau represented someone who did not care for spiritual graces and eternal glories, for the sake of food and bodily lusts, Jacob, on the other hand, represented someone who loved the spirituals. That is why, from Jacob's seed, came the tribe of 'Levi' who were assigned the priestly role. St. Augustine comments on the fall of Esau and says, "It is to teach us that the fault does not lie in the creation of God, but rather in the stubborn rebellion and shameful lust; The first man did not earn death because of pig meat, but for a fruit (Gen. 3:6); and it was not because of a meal of birds, but for a plate of stew, that Esau sell his birthright."



## CHAPTER 26: ISAAC SOJOURN AS A STRANGER IN GERAR

### God's Promise to Isaac During the Famine

Isaac had the same experience that his father Abraham went through, "There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham" (Gen. 26:1). Isaac sought God's counsel, who told him "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all this land, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven. I will give to your descendants all these lands, and in your seeds all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 26:2-4). When famine occurred in the days of Abraham, he went down to Egypt, without God's counsel, to face a probable loss of his wife, if it was not for God's intervention. Isaac, on the other hand, seems to have sought God's counsel, who appeared and made covenants with him. In obeying the voice of the Lord to remain in Gerar, and not to go down to Egypt, Isaac enjoyed the appearance of God, and the renewal of the divine covenant. If, in time of affliction, we listen to the voice of God, we shall, likewise, enjoy His appearance in us, and the renewal of His covenant and promises with us!

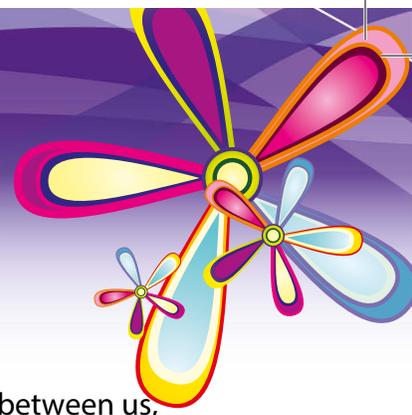
### Isaac's Claim that Rebekeh was His Sister

Isaac harbored the same weakness as his father. Because of his fear lest the men of the place should kill him for Rebekeh, because she was beautiful to behold, he claimed that she was his sister. But this time, Abimelech, who was most probably another one than Abimelech of Abraham's days, saw Isaac showing endearment to Rebekeh. So he called Isaac and nobly rebuked him, then charged all his people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death" (Gen. 26:11). The Scripture is keen on revealing the weaknesses of such righteous people, like Abraham and Isaac, to show us how vulnerable we are towards sin, and to persuade us not to judge anyone.

### The Philistines Envy Isaac

"Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold, and the Lord blessed him. The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him" (Gen. 26:12- 14). If Isaac, in his weakness, did wrong, yet God sent to him a pagan king to rebuke him. But that did not keep God from blessing him, or realizing His covenants with him. "Abimelech said unto Isaac go away from us; for you are much mightier than we" (Gen. 26:16).





### **Isaac Makes a Covenant With Abimelech**

"We have certainly seen that the Lord is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you. That you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good, and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the Lord'" (Gen. 26:28-29). If the prosperity of Isaac had caused fear and envy among the inhabitants of the region, yet, as they saw in it the work of God, they became witnesses of the truth, so they called Isaac "the blessed of the Lord," and requested a covenant with him. How marvelous, for the believer to have a testimonial from those outside, to realize that he is the man of the Lord, and to feel that the Lord's dignity is surrounding him. The feast that Isaac made for them, and the reconciliation he offered them, refer to the faith, wide enough to absorb every philosophy and every thought on Christ's account.

### **Esau Takes Hittite Wives**

Esau took two Hittite wives, who grieved Isaac and Rebekeh (Gen. 26:34- 35). He had been unwise in uniting with two pagan women, who corrupted his relationship with his parents, and deprived him and his descendants of peace.

## **CHAPTER 27: ISAAC BLESSES JACOB**

### **Isaac Calls Esau**

"Now it came to pass when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, then he called Esau his older son and said to him, 'My son,' and he answered him, 'Here I am.' And he said, 'Behold now, I am old, I do not know the day of my death. Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die'" (Gen. 27:1-4).

St. Jerome presents to us a concise symbolic interpretation, quoted from the writings of St. Hippolytus, summarized as follows, "Isaac, in his call to his son Esau, to bless him as his eyes grew dim with old age, refers to the heavenly Father, who called, at the fulfillment of time, the Jewish people, being the firstborn, yearning to grant them the biblical blessing, and let them enjoy the eternal salvation ... As to Rebekeh, she refers to the Holy Spirit who, knowing that the older shall serve the younger, she cared for the Gentiles (the younger son) to get the biblical blessing unlike the Jews, who rejected faith in the Messiah, the Savior."

### **Rebekeh Supports Jacob**

Rebekeh heard what her husband Isaac said to Esau, and now in her love for her son Jacob, she told him all what happened. It was expected from Rebekeh, as a prudent mother and a loving wife, to be loyal to Isaac, opening her heart to remind him of the divine voice concerning the blessing of the younger son. Yet God used, even her weakness, for the good. Nevertheless she tasted the bitter results of her impulsive conduct.





Rebekah mastered her role perfectly: she prepared for Isaac his favorable meal, she enticed Jacob to wear his brother's clothes, bearing his smell, and to put the skins of kids of the goats on Jacob's hands and on the smooth part of his neck. This is how, through taste, smell, and touch, Isaac was convinced that it was his elder son and blessed him. Concerning the clothes, some scholars believe that Esau, being the firstborn, had a priestly garment to put on in the days of his father's old age, to offer the sacrifices on behalf of the family. Isaac said: "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen. 26: 22), and he blessed him! It is a living portrait of the Lord Christ: His voice is that of the Son, the Only-begotten. Yet, His hands are ours, as he carried our nature in Him! Although being the righteous Jacob, yet He, as Esau, carried our weaknesses and our sins!

### **Jacob Gets His Father's Blessing:**

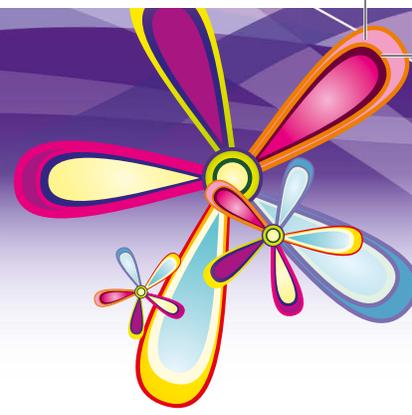
"Then his father Isaac said to him, 'Come near now and kiss me, my son,' and he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said, 'Surely the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord had blessed. Therefore, may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let people serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you; and blessed be those who bless you'" (Gen. 26:26-29).

Some people may probably wonder: Where had Esau gone wrong, to be deprived of the blessing usurped by his brother, through a plot from their mother, Rebekah? Esau had been negligent with what he already had - the birthright - so, as result, he lost the blessing. This, and his whole conduct, deprived him from getting the blessing. Esau's exceedingly great and bitter cry, means that he, according to the apostle, "sought the blessing diligently with tears" (Heb. 12:17), but he did not seek it with a spiritual concept. He sought it for worldly blessings, proved by his request to get a blessing as well, saying to his Father, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" (Gen. 27:36). It is one blessing only, through which he would enjoy Christ the Lord coming from his seed. So how could this blessing belong to two brothers?!

### **Esau Holds a Grudge Against His Brother**

Despite his grudge against his brother, we cannot deny Esau's noble reaction. He refused to kill his brother for the sake of his father's old age. He expected a quick death for his father, without anticipating that he was to live for a long time afterwards. Rebekah asked Isaac to instruct Jacob to depart to Haran to marry from there, instead of taking a wife of the daughters of Heth, as his brother Esau did. Thus, she found a way for Jacob to get his father's blessing before fleeing from his brother's face. Finally, as a result of her plot, and after deceiving her man, Rebekah was deprived from her beloved son Jacob.





## CHAPTER 28: JACOB AND THE OPEN HEAVEN

### Isaac's Commandment to His Son Jacob

Indeed, Isaac could have sent one of his servants to bring a wife for Jacob, as Abraham did for him, but because of Esau's anger towards his brother, Isaac and Rebekeh preferred to send Jacob off to his uncle Laban, to stay with him "a few days." These few days extended about 40 years, during which Rebekeh died and did not see her son Jacob. Isaac blessed his son Jacob before leaving to his uncle Laban, the brother of Rebekeh (Gen. 28:5).

### Esau Marries the Daughter of Ishmael

When Esau saw how his brother got the birthright and the blessing, that was confirmed by sending him to 'Padan Aram' to marry one of his uncle's daughters, and felt that his own marriage to two of the pagan daughters of Heth, had deprived him of much. He intended, for the sake of pacifying his parents, to marry a third wife, 'Mahalath,' daughter of Ishmael, son of Abraham.

### The Heavenly Ladder

And now, having fled before the face of his brother Esau, deprived of the compassion and care of his parents, he found himself alone and prone to many dangers. As Jacob laid down to sleep, putting his head on one of the stones of that place, he dreamed of a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven. Amid affliction and deprivation, there comes God to respond to any need, and to give in much more abundance than we ask for. If the stone is the Lord Christ (as per St. Jerome), we would never enjoy heavenly visions and exalted divine knowledge, as long as we live spoiled, leaning on others (Jacob in his fathers house). St. Jerome says, "I believe that the cross of the Savior is the ladder seen by Jacob. On that ladder, the angels were seen ascending and descending. On that ladder, namely on the cross, the Jews were descending, and the Gentiles were ascending." St. Jerome encourages us saying, "The lesson we learn from that ladder, is that it is not fit for the sinner to despair of salvation, nor for the righteous to relax in peace concerning his virtue."

### Jacob and the House of God

Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place!... How awesome is this place!... This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!... Then he took that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it, and he called the name of that place 'Bethel,' namely, (the house of God)" (Gen. 28 16-19). God intended to present to the sacred congregation, through their father Jacob, two facts of faith, mainly His presence with them, and the opening of heaven to those on earth. As to His presence with His people, we find God's confirmation "I am with you," at a time when Jacob found no one to support him. As to the opening of heaven to those on earth, the reconciliation has been realized through the true ladder, and the Church became the house of God, and the dwelling place of His angels.



## CHAPTER 29: JACOB'S MARRIAGE TO LEAH AND RACHEL

### An Encounter With Rachel

"So Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the people of the east. And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth" (Gen. 29:1-2). The three flocks of sheep, lying by the well, were waiting for someone to roll the large stone that covered the well's mouth, for all to be watered. Jacob is the type of the Lord Christ, Who came to the world to acquire the true Rachel - the Church of the New Testament - as His bride. He came to the field, namely to the world, where there was a well, that was the closed up baptismal font, that was in need of Jacob to roll the large stone from its mouth, and to reveal its mystery through His coming into it.

"Now while he was speaking with them (the shepherds), Rachel came with her father's sheep... When Jacob saw Rachel,... he rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept; then he told Rachel that he was her father's relative, and that he was Rebecca's son. So she ran and told her father... Laban ran to meet him,... and told him, 'Surely you are my bone and flesh.' And he stayed with him for a month" (Gen. 29:9-14). Rolling of the stone also reminds us of what happened the day of His resurrection, when He was risen, while the stone was still on the mouth of the grave; But He sent His angel to roll the stone, in order to let us drink from the water of His resurrection, through being buried with Him, and also risen with Him; As said by the apostle: "Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12). Jacob stayed with Laban for a month; as it was the custom at that time to give hospitality for a maximum of one month, after which the guest is to be treated as one of the family, sharing with them their regular daily life, including work, although he earns a wage for it.

### Jacob Serves His Uncle

"Then Laban said to Jacob, 'Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me what should your wages be'... He said, 'I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter.' So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed but a few days to him, because of the love he had for her" (Gen. 29:15-20). Jacob could have passed the first month as a guest, doing only very simple work; but as a man of strife, he gave all his energy, that Laban considered him indispensable. When asked about his wages, he asked to marry his younger daughter Rachel. Jacob represented the Lord Christ who descended to the world as a guest, although He is its Creator; and persisted in working in the world for the sake of the younger daughter Rachel, namely, the Church of the New Testament, to acquire her as a bride for Himself. If 'Leah' means 'faulty' or 'blemished,' probably because of her weak or delicate eyes, and 'Rachel' means a 'female goat;' the true Jacob, the Lamb of God, seeks Rachel, the female goat, sanctified by the blood of the Lamb; while 'Leah' has lost her beauty, because of her weak inner eyes or of her spiritual insight. It was said of the years that Jacob served for Rachel that "they seemed but a few days to him, because of the love he had for her" (Gen. 29:20). And as St. Jerome says: [With love nothing is difficult; Labor is easy to those who long for it.] If, for the sake of his marriage to Rachel, Jacob worked for seven years, that seemed as though a few days, then worked for an extra seven years; how much, it is fit for us to labor, for the sake of our enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven, and our union with our Lord Christ?





### **Jacob's Marriage to Leah and Rachel**

Having completed his seven years service, Jacob demanded that Rachel be given him as his wife, as his days are fulfilled, according to his uncle's promise. Laban made a feast, and in the evening he brought his daughter Leah to Jacob, and gave her 'Zilpah' as her maid. In the morning, when he discovered his uncle's deceit, Laban apologized saying, "It must not be done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years" (Gen. 29:26- 27). Deceit was not a difficult task, as the bride, all along her wedding feast, used to be covered with a thick red veil, and in the darkness of the evening, it was not easy to recognize her. If Jacob had deceived his father Isaac in his old age, getting his blessing instead of Esau, even though that was with good intention and for a spiritual goal, then, he was to be treated by the same measure he treated his father.

### **The Children of Leah**

It was not without reason, that God, seeing that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb, to bear to Jacob Reuben, Simeon, Levi, then Judah, before she stopped bearing. God gave Leah the privilege to be loved by her husband for the sake of her children. From another aspect, Leah, represented the Jews, who were fertile, as far as knowledge of God was concerned. As to Rachel, she represented the Gentiles, who were before, barren, with no spiritual fruit, because of paganism. The Jews were, in the eyes of the Lord, the firstborn, until the Gentiles took away from them the spiritual birthright.

## **CHAPTER 30: A STRUGGLE IN JACOB'S LIFE**

### **A Struggle Between Leah and Rachel**

Leah, having been with weak eyes, older than Rachel, and of less beauty, God granted her children to bring her the love of her husband Jacob (Gen. 29:31). This made Rachel jealous of her sister, who said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die" (Gen. 30:1). Jacob's soul was very bitter, as he longed to satisfy Rachel whom he loved; and now, she is asking for something he cannot provide. So, angrily he said to her, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" (Gen. 30:2). And when she gave Jacob her maid Bilhah to have children with her, he got himself into more continuous struggles, between Leah and Rachel. Each of them wanted to have more children than her sister. The causes of that struggle were:

- The struggle was based on the longing of each of them, for the divine promises to be fulfilled by her children.
- Leah felt that she was unloved; She assumed that bearing him many children would probably open up his heart. That was apparent when Rachel asked Leah to give her the mandrakes, brought from the field by her son Reuben (Gen. 30:14). It is a plant called 'apple of love;' believed by the common people at that time, to bring about a husband's love to his wife.

Rachel, on her part, has been jealous of her sister, who bore four sons to Jacob, while she was barren. Rachel was a symbol of the Church of the New Testament, of the Gentiles, who were previously with no spiritual fruit; then was granted children; the Holy Bible says: "Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived and bore a son, and said, 'God has taken away my reproach.' So she called his name Joseph, and said, 'The Lord shall add to me another son'" (Gen. 30:22-24).





Amid that bitter struggle between Leah and Rachel, Jacob's soul had been surely bitter, trying to satisfy both of them. By that, he experienced the bitterness previously felt by his brother Esau, amid their struggle for the birthright and blessing. The descendants of Jacob began with 'Reuben,' the firstborn according to the flesh, in whom it was proclaimed that God saw our affliction, so He granted us fruit; and would keep granting us until we enjoy 'Benjamin;' namely, through pain, we should reach up to God's right hand, in fellowship of eternal glory.

### **Jacob Demands His Wages**

As soon as Rachel gave birth to her son Joseph, a kind of family stability began to appear in between the two sisters; Leah felt secure because of her many sons, and Rachel began to feel less jealous. Then, Jacob started to think of going back to the land of Canaan, saying to his uncle Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done to you" (Gen. 30:25-26). He spent 14 years serving for marrying his two wives; then 6 years of service, for nothing more than his mere sustenance and that of his wives and children. Laban, realizing how God blessed his household because of Jacob, said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the Lord has blessed me for your sake... Name me your wages, and I will give you" (Gen. 30:27-28).

Here, Jacob asked Laban to give him every speckled sheep (the white spots on their skin are about equal to the black), every spotted sheep (black, with some white spots), and every black one; beside all the speckled and spotted among the goats. So he chose the few and left for his uncle the many. After executing that agreement, Laban gave his flocks into the hands of his sons; and put three days' journey (about 40 miles) between his flocks and those of Jacob (Gen. 30:36). This reveals the extent of wealth that Laban reached, to have to isolate the two flocks by such a distance. The three days refer to the fellowship of resurrection of our Lord Christ, let us get away from the love of the world, attach ourselves to the Lord, risen from the dead, to be like Jacob, who set forth a three days journey, to be said of him, "Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous" (Gen. 30: 43).

## **CHAPTER 31: RETURN TO CANAAN**

### **Escape of Jacob**

Laban's sons felt that Jacob had taken away all that was their father's, and acquired all his wealth (Gen. 31:1), something that changed the countenance of Laban toward Jacob. At that time "The Lord said to Jacob, 'Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you'" (Gen. 31:3). Jacob's heart was surely attached to the land of Canaan, being the land promised by God to Abraham and his descendants. He wanted to get married to Rachel, then return to inherit. But 7 years have passed, followed by 7 more years, and now, he is there for twenty years; he had to set forth from Haran; He had already gotten the beloved wife, children, numerous sheep and cattle, besides servants and maids.





If the behavior of Laban and his sons was through jealousy and evil spirit, yet Jacob felt that all occurred at the right time. We learn from this that everything in our lives is for the good, if we surrender our life in His hands; something that was felt by the apostle Paul who says, "All things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28). So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Lea to the field, to his flock, so that seeing the extent of his wealth, they would listen to his counsel, and set forth with him together with their children. It seems from his talk to them, that they were aware of the dream he had, on his escape from the face of his brother, and how he anointed the pillar, and made a vow (Gen. 31:13). It is as though, by his previous talks with his wives, he had prepared their hearts and minds for what was to come, to respond to his talk saying, "Whatever God has said to you, do it" (Gen. 31:16). Jacob has succeeded in gaining his family on God's account, and in preparing their lives to submit with joy to Him. So they encouraged Jacob to depart "Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels, and he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan... So he fled with all he had. He arose and crossed the river" (Gen. 31:17-21).

### **Laban Pursues the Procession**

Realizing, on the third day that Jacob fled, Laban "took his brothers with him and pursued him ... and he overtook him in the mountains ... But God had come to Laban ... in a dream by night, and said to him, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad" (Gen. 31:23-24). If Jacob set forth escaping from the face of Laban (rescuing his family from his authority), yet he was leading the procession of the Church, militant (struggling) and victorious. As said by the apostle Paul, "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ; and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place" (2 Corinthians 2: 14). When the devil recognized our procession of triumph, having known Christ the Lord, as the Granter of resurrection, instead of retreating, he took his brothers with him, and pursued us, as though the enemy use every available means, and everyone, to fight against the procession of triumph. He would fight against us as long as we are still in the world, as long as we are still in the body, he would never rest, in hope of gaining us for his kingdom, and diverting us from the way of our salvation. The war or the rivalry was not between Jacob and Laban, but it was between the kingdom of God, and that of the devil. For this reason, God Himself intervened in the proper time, and warned Laban against harming His man Jacob.

### **Laban (The Devil) Seeks What is His in Us**

Laban rebuked Jacob for "carrying away his daughters like captives of war," and not letting him kiss them or their children, as he "might have sent them away with joy and songs" (Gen. 31:26, 27). It is obvious that Laban would not have allowed Jacob and his family to depart; he might probably hinder him, as Jacob himself said. After proclaiming that he is incapable of causing Jacob any harm because of God's warning to him in a dream, Laban's only question was "Why did you steal my gods?" (Gen. 31:30). To that, Jacob answered, "With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours, and take it with you" (Gen. 31:32).





### **Making a Covenant**

Laban wisely asked for a covenant to be made between him and Jacob, his son-in-law, so that none of them would harm the other. Jacob took a stone and set it as a pillar; and they made a heap of stones, and they ate on the heap for the sake of reconciliation. If Jacob and Laban have set a pillar and a heap of stones, as a covenant of reconciliation, and ate there, as a sign of peace, in fact, they shared one bread as well as one blood. That pillar refers to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, lifted up on the Mount of Calvary, offering His body and blood as a sacrifice of love for our sake.

### **Departure of the Two Parties**

“Early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place” (Gen. 31:55). At the end of that situation, Laban returned to his place, and Jacob went on his way. Laban had put his heart in Haran, while Jacob put his in the land of promise, and God gave each of them his heart’s request. Whoever puts his heart in dust, will hear the divine voice saying, “For dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:19).

## **CHAPTER 32: PREPARING FOR THE ENCOUNTER WITH ESAU**

### **Jacob with the Angels of God**

“So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, ‘This is God’s camp,’ and he called the name of that place, ‘Mahanaim’” (Gen. 32:1-2).

While Laban returned with his brothers to the land in which he had put his heart, Jacob, in turn, set forth with his household and all his possessions toward Canaan, as though to the heavenly Canaan, the promised land. Jacob represents the Church sojourning on the earth, setting forth with all its hearts, members, and all its possessions, toward the bosom of the Father, by the Holy Spirit, through its union with, and abiding in its Head, Jesus Christ. It walks hidden in its Christ, and supported by His hosts (the angels of God). That was what Jacob saw, as he said, “This is God’s camp...”.

### **Jacob Sends Messengers to his Brother**

God showed Jacob twice His presence in his life, the first through His appearance to Laban, who intended to harm Jacob, but was stopped by God. The second was through the appearance of His angels to him. Yet Jacob, in his human weakness, feared the wrath of his brother Esau, so he sent messengers to test his feelings toward him. Jacob sent messengers with a message of hope to have favor in his sight, without seeking the counsel of God, or asking for his support... even though, in his message, he used the spirit of love and humility, calling his brother ‘lord.’ Esau listened to the message. He was very rich, and came to meet his brother with 400 men with him, something that made Jacob afraid and distressed (Gen. 32:7). He divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels into two companies, so that in case Esau attacked one of them, the other company would escape, and thought of sending a present of love, to find favor in the sight of his brother.





### **Jacob Resorts to God, God of his Fathers**

Greatly distressed and afraid of his brother Esau, Jacob resorted to God by prayers that came strong and effective, having the following characteristics:

-He speaks with God through a personal relationship, calling Him: "God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac" (Gen. 32:9). This was obvious in the life of St. Augustine, who once said, that he feels that there is nobody else in the world, but God and himself; God granting him all love, and he responds by presenting God with his whole heart.

-He reminds God of His promises: "The Lord who said to me, 'Return to your country and your kindred, and I will deal well with you'" (Gen. 32:9).

-In his prayer, he feels unworthy before God's exalted and rich love saying, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and all the truth which you have shown your servant" (Gen. 32:10).

### **Jacob Sends Presents to His Brother**

Wisely, Jacob sent to his brother a present of love, to extinguish the flame of wrath that kindled 20 years ago, seeking his love through heads of animals. He sent his present in succession, in order to appease the heart of his brother. With the present, he offered humility, commanding the servants who delivered his presents to say to his brother, if he asks them, 'Whose are these in front of you?' "They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us. For he said, 'I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me'" (Gen. 32:18-20). May we make peace with all people, including the ones that hate and stumble us, to gain everyone as a friend through the matters of this finite world, and with the spirit of humility, that lifts us up in the eyes of God, of His angels, and also of people!

### **Jacob Wrestles with God**

"Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of day" (Gen. 32: 24). Having crossed, together with his family, the stream, Jacob was left alone to meditate; as though he was getting ready for his encounter with his brother Esau, through an encounter with God. Jacob says, "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen. 32:30). And, it was said to him, "For you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed" (Gen. 32:28). "When He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint, as He wrestled with him" (Gen. 32:25). Namely, the angel saw that Jacob, in his struggle, did not surrender but resisted all night; a situation, in which, the angel appears, as though defeated by man, He lightly touched the socket of Jacob's hip. Jacob insisted, not to let the angel go "until He blesses him" (Gen. 32:26). St Ambrose explains the wrestling with God as our struggle for virtue, to become better imitator of God.



St. Augustine comments on saying, The man defeated the angel; yet the conqueror persists in holding the angel until He blesses him. What a great mystery! The defeated blesses the conqueror! He was defeated, because He chose that, to appear weak in His flesh form, although in His greatness, He was strong; "For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God" (2 Corinthians 13:4). What happened with Jacob, before his encounter with Esau, to overcome him with love, refers to what the Lord Christ did, coming as weak, carrying our nature, to occupy the last row, to be counted as a trespasser, and to bear the disgrace of the cross; but, risen from the dead, He blesses our nature, and renews it in Him! The struggle ended with the angel asking Jacob about his name, not that He does not know it, but in order to change it to a new name fit for him as a struggler saying to him, "Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have struggled with God, and with men, and have prevailed" (Gen. 32:28). As said by St. Clement of Alexandria, "The new name was presented to him for the new people," as though this gift was not granted to Jacob personally, but to the whole people of God, as a sign of their spiritual strife.

### CHAPTER 33: JACOB'S ENCOUNTER WITH ESAU

#### The Encounter of the two Brothers

"Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Lea, Rachel, and the two maidservants. And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Lea and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother" (Gen. 33:1-3).

This plan revealed Jacob's feelings: He put his beloved Rachel with her son at the end of the procession, in order to give her more chance to escape, in case of any attack by his brother and his men. As for him, he crossed over before all, as though he is offering himself a ransom for all, even for the two maidservants. Jacob precedes the procession, not out of a spirit of haughtiness or arrogance, but of a spirit of humility, bowing himself to the ground seven times, as a sign of submission. As to Christ the Lord, the heavenly Groom and Head of the Church, He preceded the procession of conquest by His humility, "making Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant... and being found in the appearance of man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:7-8). The Bible did not disregard the good heart and feelings of his brother Esau. Once Esau saw his brother, "He ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept" (Gen. 33:4) as though he had forgotten the past, with all its envy and grudge!

### CHAPTER 34: DINAH AND THE PEOPLE OF SHECHEM

#### Shechem Violates Dinah

"Now Dinah the daughter of Lea, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land; and when Shechem the son of Hamor, ... , saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her" (Gen. 34:1-2). The spiritual apostle Paul says, "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9: 27). Dinah going out to see the daughters of the land, represents the spoiled body that destroys the soul, and deprives it of its peace. Dinah, by going out to see the girls of the world, to follow their ways in life, lost her virginity and freedom, and was violated by the world.

### **Hamor Asks for Dinah, as a Wife of His Son**

Hamor came to Jacob, asking for Dinah to be a wife for his son Shechem, after the latter violated her, for which Jacob was shocked, but he kept quiet (Gen. 34:5), waiting for the return of her brothers from the field to tell them about the incident. Considering what was done “a disgraceful thing”, they thought of revenge, not against Shechem alone, nor against his father together with him, but against all the inhabitants of the city; Simeon and Levi took over themselves the execution of that inhuman task. Hamor assumed that he was making up for Jacob’s honor, by asking for Dinah to be a wife for his son, offering a proposition to enter with Jacob’s household into marriage relationships; and to dwell and trade and acquire possessions in their land.

### **The Deceitful Response Jacob’s Sons**

If Hamor did wrong by counting marriage like a trade bargain, by his land and wealth, to acquire Dinah, Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi in particular, did wrong by their hypocrisy, and by taking advantage under the name of religion to take revenge in an inhuman way. Simeon and Levi demanded, as a condition of their consent, that Hamor, his son, and every male of the people of Shechem become circumcised in order to permit this marriage and they all become one family. As their demand was met, Simeon and Levi took their swords and killed all the males of the city, on the third day, and took Dinah out from Shechem’s house and left. Their brothers took advantage of the situation: they killed many, plundered the city, and took the children and the women captives. It was a savage crime that surely troubled Jacob’s soul, moreover, he feared that the inhabitants of the land would come together and avenge the people of Shechem, since he and his household were foreigners and few in number.

## **CHAPTER 35: JACOB DEPARTS TO BETHEL**

### **Jacob Departs to Bethel**

“Then God said to Jacob, ‘Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother’ (Gen. 35:1). While Jacob was troubled in Shechem because of what his sons did, and of his fear of the neighboring nations and people, God, Himself, called on him to go up to Bethel, to dwell and to make an altar there to God. It is to be noticed:

Jacob commanded his household and all who were with him, to put away the foreign gods, like the household idols which Rachel stole that were her father’s, the idols that were in the servants’ possession before they entered into the divine covenant, and those that Jacob’s sons might have taken from Shechem. Jacob commanded his household to change their garments. If putting the foreign gods away refers to sanctifying the soul, purifying the garments refers to the purity of the body. As Jacob journeyed to Bethel, the neighboring peoples did not dare to pursue him, as “The terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them” (Gen. 35:5). The nations feeling the awe of God in the life of Jacob, dwelling in God’s house, could not pursue him. Finally, Jacob dedicated the first house of God after the fall, as is said, “Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He (God) talked with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it” (Gen. 35:14). Jacob presented a pillar of stone, a drink offering, and oil, that were received by God from the hands of Jacob, to make that place a dwelling for him and His angels, He Who, heaven and earth are not wide enough for him. He lovingly accepts that place, as a sign of His dwelling in the midst of His people, and entering with His love into their lives.

### **Birth of Benjamin and Death of Rachel**

Jacob and all his procession departed from Bethel toward Ephrath; Rachel traveled in childbirth, and she had such hard labor. And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name 'Ben-Oni,' meaning 'son of my grief,' because of the severe pain and grief she was suffering; but his father called him Benjamin, meaning 'son of the right hand.' Rachel was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is Bethlehem); and Jacob set a pillar on her grave. Rachel's heart was, without doubt, aflame with hope, to have a brother to Joseph from his father and mother, and lived all the days of her pregnancy rejoicing for that gift.

Rachel came to represent the Church of the Gentiles, and Jacob was a type of Christ the Lord. The Church kept on laboring hard with her children, that once the elects are consummated, the whole church would depart, to have eternal rest. What gives grief to the Church, to call him 'Ben-Oni,' gives joy to God, to call him Benjamin.

### **The Sin of Reuben**

After the death of Rachel, it happened that Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, dared to lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine, who was given to him by Rachel to give her children; Because of that defilement, Reuben lost the blessing of birthright, something that was mentioned bitterly by Jacob on his deathbed (Gen. 49:14). What Reuben, the firstborn, dared to do, refers to what Satan did, he who was previously the 'morning star,' to whom God gave exalted possibilities and gifts, but, in the pride of his heart, deceived man to draw his heart away, the dwelling of God, for the devil to occupy.

### **Death of Isaac**

Isaac breathed his last, and he joined his people, old and fulfilled with days (Gen. 35:29). Isaac presented numerous fruits during his time. Our life is not to be counted in years, but in how pious it has been.

## **CHAPTER 36: THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU**

After Isaac's death, his sons, Jacob and Esau, buried him. The Holy Bible presented us with lists of Esau's descendants and the chiefs who proceeded from him, and the descendants of Seir, and the kings of Edom.

*This lesson was adopted from the church fathers commentary on Genesis by Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty*



# Jubilation in Tribulation

*We have learned about the inception of Christianity in Egypt by the hands of St. Mark, and the establishment of the school of Alexandria that led the Christian thought. Sts Athanasius and Cyril defended against many heresies. After the Council of Chalcedon, the body of Christendom was split, and the Coptic church was regarded heretic, thus, starting an era of oppression of the Copts by the Byzantine Chalcedonians. Despite the tribulations of the Copts under the Islamic rule of Egypt, God filled them with rejoicing and jubilation.*

## **The Dynasties of Egypt from the Seventh to Eighteenth Centuries**

7-8th: Rashidun and Ummayds

8-10th: Abbasids (Tulunids and Ikhshids)

11-12th: Fatimids

12-13th : Ayyubids

13-16th : Mamluks

16-18th : Ottomans

## **The Arab Conquest**

The last years of Byzantine rule were characterized by persecution due to rejection of the Council of Chalcedon (451) by the Coptic majority. The Persians then occupied and plundered Egypt, leaving the Copts in severe poverty. After regaining Egypt from Persian occupation, Emperor Heraclius, appointed Cyrus, as Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria. In order to achieve religious unity within the Empire, the Melkite Patriarch was also appointed effectively viceroy of Egypt giving him almost absolute civil power to impose his will on the non- Chalcedonian Copts. The vigor with which he did this led to ferocious persecution. His Arabic sobriquet Al-Mukaukas, is still a byword for brutality. The Coptic Patriarch Benjamin was forced to flee into the desert.

## **Abba Samuel the Confessor**

The life of Abba Samuel the confessor demonstrates the persecution under the Byzantines. While at the Monastery of Saint Macarius, a Byzantine imperial envoy attempted to convince the desert monks to confess the Chalcedonian faith. Samuel became zealous and seized the imperial letter and tore it into pieces. Seized with anger, the envoy ordered Samuel to be beaten. One of the strikes enucleated one of his eyes.

When Cyrus of Alexandria came to the city of Faiyum, he had Samuel brought to him in chains like a thief. When Cyrus saw him, he ordered the soldiers to beat him until his blood ran like water. Cyrus was filled with fury against the saint, and signed to the soldiers to strike him dead, but the ruler of Faiyum delivered him from their hands. When Cyrus saw that Samuel had escaped, he ordered him driven away from the Scetis. Samuel then dwelt in Mount Qalamoun, where he founded a monastery that carries his name and still exists to this day.





### **The Return of Pope Benjamin**

By the Arab Conquest of Egypt, the yoke of Byzantium was removed from the Copts with regard to the heavy taxes. More important still that they obtained the right to choose their church leader, allowing him to practice his pastoral duties. The church restored many church buildings from the state, and the Copts started repairing what was destroyed. A dialogue started between Amr Ibn Alaas and the Copts about the return of the Pope and his bishops to their chairs. He gave the Egyptians freedom to worship and free disposal in legal and administrative matters. He appointed some Copts as directors in various districts, yet he deprived them of the honor of defending their country and joining the military. In an amicable atmosphere, the Pope met with Amr who showed him esteem and veneration.

The Copts therefore enjoyed considerable freedom in the administration of their internal affairs and the incidence of conversion was remarkably low in the first centuries under Islam. The imposition of the jizyah (literally meaning 'penalty') payable by all non-Muslims, was at first no worse than the high taxes imposed previously.

### **“The Umayyad” and the “Abbasids”**

Under the first Caliphs and their successors of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, Egypt was ruled as a province by ethnic Arab governors appointed by the Caliphs in Damascus or Baghdad. The Caliphs feared lest the rulers of Egypt would separate and rule Egypt independently. This made the Caliphs refrain from allowing the rulers of Egypt to stay in their posts for a long time. The average period of each ruler was about two years, so short a period that each ruler was never concerned about the welfare of the public or the future growth of the land resources. Their interest in Egypt was largely fiscal: the rich income deriving from agricultural taxation as well as the poll tax on the *dhimma*. This weakened the development of the country and the Egyptians could not afford to pay. The ruler therefore began to ask the clergy and the monks to pay tribute.

### **God's Nature Intervention**

In the time of Pope Michael, the Umayyad caliph took over the rule by force and terrorism, he ordered the ruler to double the taxes on the Copts in order to destroy their will and abolish their chances to revolt against him. Consequently, the ruler asked Pope Michael to pay him a huge sum of money. When the Pope could not pay, the ruler sent him to prison in a cave in the rock without an opening for air or light. He also sent to prison a large number of Copts, and the Pope kept consoling them with words of grace. The ruler then set the Pope free on the condition that he would travel all over the country to collect money for him. However, a violent earthquake struck the city, so the ruler's heart softened at the anger of nature and accepted the sum collected by the Pope without discontent. When the king of Nubia heard about the imprisonment of the Pope, he led his army and conquered Upper Egypt until he reached the capital. But the Pope interceded to him and asked him to return back to his country in tranquility. This intercession had the deepest effect on the caliph who loved the Pope, became kind to the Copts and developed good relations with the bishops.





### **The Bashmurs**

Five rebellions took place in their times as a result of the intense oppression exerted in collecting tributes and taxes. The rebellions were speedily crushed. Only the Bashmurs were able to resist and engage in periodic attacks on the Muslim army. The last Umayyad Caliph brought an army to support the forces already engaged under his governor and carried away in irons Pope Michael I as a hostage. Undaunted, the Copts defeated his forces. In the resulting chaos of the Abbasid overthrow of the Umayyads, the caliph fled and the Pope and other imprisoned clergy gained their freedom. However, the Abbasid Caliph dispatched an army to put the revolt down. His efforts were to no avail as well. Finally a further army under the caliph himself prevailed amidst great slaughter, wholesale deportations and wasting of entire villages.

### **The Tulunids and the Ikhshids**

The Tulunids and the Ikhshids ruled Egypt independently, although they remained under the authority of the Abbasid caliphate. Egypt was changed from a subordinate governorate to the center of a great empire and the situation in the country improved. The Tulunids treated the Copts favorably. However, the governor took every chance to impose fines on the Pope to keep the church in a state of poverty and deprive him from any public leadership.

### **The Fatimids**

Al-Muizz conquered Egypt and established the Fatimid empire. During his reign, Egypt flourished economically and artistically. The Fatimids were a Shi'ite dynasty, whilst the majority of Muslims in Egypt remained Sunni, so during their time the Copts and Jews enjoyed significant positions in their administration, as well as the essential positions as clerks, accountants, physicians and scribes. He allowed the Copts to rebuild and renovate their churches and monasteries.

His son and successor continued his father's policy of religious tolerance. As a result, the Copts were able to live in peace, their incomes increased, they prospered and became able to pay the taxes with ease and satisfaction. Generally speaking, we may say that the Fatimids were known for their tolerance. However, towards the end of their era their kingdom was weakened, and was a reason for oppressing the Copts.

### **A Pope in the Lion's Den**

The Fatimid era was darkened by Caliph Al-Hakim, who was known for his brutality. He ruled the first seven years of his rule with justice, however, he eventually became aggressive. He ordered the Copts to wear black garments and forbade them to wear soft or colored clothes. Every Copt had to wear a five pounds wooden cross. He beheaded his Coptic minister and fired the Copts from the government posts. An order was given to destroy the churches and confiscate their property. These acts agitated the populace against the Copts; who used to insult them, kill them, and plunder their belongings. He summoned Ghabriel Abu-Nagah, a Coptic archon and requested him to deny his Christ in order to appoint him his Vizier (minister). When he refused, an order was given to flogged one thousand lashes, but he died halfway through scourging. He imprisoned Pope Zakaria, and ordered to release hungry lions to kill him, but they did not approach him. Al-Hakim supervised keeping the lions hungry and threw the Pope again after staining his garment with blood. Once more the lions did not hurt him, so Al-Hakim released him.

### **Carrying the Cross**

The Coptic scribe, Bakira, did not bear anymore to see all these atrocities. He quit his work at the Caliph's court and went to the Caliph's palace carrying his cross. At the door he shouted, "Christ is the Son of God." Al-Hakim summoned him and ordered him to renounce his faith. He refused and was imprisoned, and a steel chain was put around his neck. Bakira stood praying fervently in joy. One of his friends came and asked him if he wished to convey a message to his family, upon which he said, "Tell them to be in peace since I shall be among them tonight." Indeed, Al-Hakim released him and he went around encouraging the afflicted. Three days later, everything changed and Al-Hakim allowed the Copts to carry on with their affairs in freedom. Bakira was a man of charity, he fed the poor and paid the overdue debts for those who were imprisoned for their debts.

### **Moving the Mountain:**

Al-Muizz was known for his tolerance, justice and his interest in religious discussions. He had a Jewish vizier (minister) who asked the Caliph to allow a Jewish person, to debate with Pope Abraam in his presence. Al-Muizz told the Pope courteously about this matter, then the Pope went to meet him, he came together with Abba Sawiris (Severus). The Pope allowed the bishop to speak, and the bishop said, "It is not suitable that I speak to a Jew in the presence of a Caliph." The caliph liked the gesture and wanted to stop the debate, but the Jewish vizier considered this a great insult and started to read the New Testament until they found this verse: "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move" (Matt.17:20; Mark 11:23). They showed this verse to the Caliph and enticed challenge the Pope to move the Muqattam Mountain.

The Caliph sent for the Pope and asked him if such a verse really exists, and Anba Abraam affirmed it. Upon this the Caliph asked him to fulfill it or else the Copts would be subjected to the sword. The Pope asked for a three days' respite, he went directly to St. Mary's Church (Al-Muallaqa "Hanging Church"). Moreover, he asked everyone to fast and pray during these three days. All, along with the Pope, prayed in one spirit with bitter hearts. Before the dawn of the third day, as the Pope dozed off, he saw the Virgin Mary. She comforted him and told him that he shall meet a one eyed man carrying a pitcher and he will move the mountain.

The Pope woke up and hurried out. When he found the mentioned man, the latter tried to decline but when he knew about the Pope's vision he put himself at the patriarch, pleading that he tell nobody about him until the matter ends. The Pope came to know that the man was called "Simon," and that he worked as a cobbler. One day a woman came to repair her shoes and tried to incite him with her beautiful legs, he poked his eye with a needle and pulled it out, and thus the woman cried and fled. He used to wake up early every morning, filling his pitches with water to distribute among the aged and infirm. After this he goes to his work and stays fasting till sunset.

The Pope, clergy and some of the people went up to the Muqattam mountain. The Caliph stood beside the Pope, and the vizier had already aroused many people against the Copts. Simon stood behind the Pope. All prayed, and when they cried "Kyrie leyson" or "Lord have mercy" and knelt, the mountain was raised up. The matter was repeated thrice, then the Pope embraced the Caliph, and the two became close friends. Al-Muizz requested the Pope to ask for anything he wished. He refused but on the Caliph's insistence the Pope asked for rebuilding of the churches. The Caliph issued a decree for rebuilding the churches and offered him a great sum of money. The Pope thanked him for the decree but refused the money, and thus Al-Muizz honored him highly, for his piety and renouncement.





## Ages of Crusades

The First Crusade commenced at the end of the Fatimid age. This and the Mamluk's are considered the worst ages the Copts had lived through. The European kings and princes prepared an army bearing the banner of the cross with the purpose of freeing the holy lands from Muslims' hands. As for the Copts, they were the victims of all these raids. On one hand as the Muslims saw the invaders carrying crosses on their chests, they assumed that the Copts would side with the invaders. On the other hand, the Latins viewed the Copts (miaphysites) as outcast, worse than heretics. That was the reason why subsequent to their occupation of Jerusalem, the Crusades disallowed the Copts from going on pilgrimages to the holy city as Copts. Furthermore, the Crusade wars exhausted the resources of the Arab countries and henceforth led to raising the taxes in general and more persistently on the Copts.

Jerusalem's Latin King invaded Egypt, he killed all its natives, enslaving women and children. He killed the Muslims and the Christians indiscriminately. In the period between the Fatimid era and the beginning of the Ayyubid rule, Egypt suffered from troubles, and famines; the Copts were laid off from their jobs, banned from riding horses and forced to wear certain clothes and a heavy tribute was imposed upon them. It was so much that some in Upper Egypt had to enslave themselves to survive and many others denied their Christ.

### Hard Pressed On Every Side

In Salah al-Din's era, stability and justice were restored along with generosity and abundance which made all Egyptians, both Christians and Muslims, cherish him and become loyal to him. In his era the Copts enjoyed peace for the following reasons:

- He ended the confusion and vandalism which prevailed at the end of the Fatimids.
- Although he gave orders banning the Copts from all government jobs, he soon realized how efficient and capable the Copts were and that they did not pose any danger to his rule.
- His citadel on the Mokattam Mountain, which was designed by two Coptic architects, became the main government office and remained as such until the 19th century.
- The two Crusades left deep scars on the Copts. On one side the Crusader treated the Copts as atheists. They took the liberty to kill the Copts regardless of their age or sex. On the other side, when the Crusade reached the Egyptian shore, violent strifes took place in Cairo because the public thought that the Copts allied themselves with the Crusaders. During these strifes the ruler pressed the Copts - including the clergymen - to pay for the war exuberant sums. The Muslim soldiers avenged by robbing the churches and destroying them. Because of many hardships some Copts had to flee from Egypt. The King eventually realized the true position of the Copts, he brought them closer and restored what was taken from them.

### The Mamluk's

The Mamluk's were originally slaves who were set free. The Mamluks and Turks were not afraid of revolutionary movements by the Copts. They were all assured that the Copts were peace-lovers. The Copts never took advantage of the Crusaders nor did they sympathize with the western invasion against their Muslim brethren in Egypt. All the Mamluks cared for was to make use of the Copts' artistic, administrative and financial abilities. This whole era is considered chaos for Egypt in general and for the Copts in particular. One time, a Moroccan minister visited Egypt, while the Copts were then living in peace, he provoked the king to humiliate the Copts, by closing their churches and forcing them to wear blue turbans and sacks around their waists. The Muslim historian Al-Maqrizy reported in bitterness how the churches were destroyed and the worshipers were killed, and how the general atmosphere was charged against the Copts throughout the country.





During the papacy of Pope John X, the Crusaders confiscated the properties of both Muslims and Christians alike. The daughter of a priest had to offer all she owned in order to save the Church. Also the authorities summoned the Pope to the court where he and his companions were severely humiliated and lost all their possessions.

### **Water From Heaven**

During the papacy of Pope Matthew I, the Europeans waged a raid on Alexandria where they looted, vandalized and took women as hostages and fled. A Mamluk prince, enraged against the Copts, seized the abbot of St. Anthony's Monastery and some of his monks and took them to Cairo. The elder St. Mark the Antonian who was among them raised his eyes to heaven and said, "For you refused to give us water, the Lord will do so Himself." As soon as he finished these words, heaven actually poured rain and they all drank. However, his heart was not changed, and eventually the Sultan had decreed to free them.

At the end of their era the Mamluks were preoccupied with external wars and domestic strifes themselves which diverted their attention away from the Copts, who together with their Muslim brothers - were relieved during the era.

### **Eminent Copts During the Ayyubid and Mamluks Eras Ibn-Kebr**

He was the scribe of the Sultan . However, he left the Sultan's service and was ordained a priest. He gave much attention to the pastoral care of his people. He wrote a valuable book about the liturgy rituals which is considered one of the most important references.

### **St. Barsoum El-Erian (The Naked)**

He lived in the midst of severe troubles and tribulations, bearing a living faith. He also offered the comfort of the Holy Spirit to the suffering people. Moreover, God granted him the gift of performing signs and miracles. After his parents died, his uncle was greedy and coveted the inheritance. Barsoum did not enter with him in a strife, remembering the words of the wise man: "Vanity of vanities all is vanity" (Eccl. 1:2). Some of his relatives tried to incite him to sue his uncle, but he utterly refused.

He went out to live in a cave, bearing the heat of summer and the cold of winter, heedless to the danger of the wildness. He lived an ascetic life, practicing unceasing prayers and metanoias. He used to wear only a goat-skin around his waist, therefore he was called "Al-Erian" [the Naked]. God guided him to a cave beside the St. Mercurius' Church in Old Cairo, (which is still preserved to this day). It was a huge serpent which hindered the people from descending the cave. St. Barsoum prayed saying: "You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra. The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot" (Ps. 91:13). God tamed the serpent and it became a companion to the saint in the cave.

In his time, the church suffered severe tribulation. Churches were closed all over Egypt. St. Barsoum continued praying in the church and refused to put on the blue turban imposed on the copts. Some people incited the ruler against him. He ordered him to be flogged, and imprisoned him. After he was set him free, St. Barsoum then went to live on the roof of the church. The suffering people came to him seeking Divine comfort. Through his prayers God stopped the tribulations.



## The Ottomans

As the Turkish seized power in Egypt in the 16th century, the era of the Mamluks "Circassians" came to an end. They removed from the Mamluks the public authority and government leaving for them the regional and local authorities. The Turkish era is known for its tyranny, violence and utter destruction of the Egyptian civilization by moving the skillful artists, laborers and craftsmen to Turkey. The Turks had two objectives: secure their authority and collect money from all Egyptians and Copts in particular. Under such circumstances Egypt survived three centuries in political disgrace, scientific and financial poverty and social inferiority to the extent that an English writer said that the Turks left nothing on the map of Egypt other than the eternal pyramids.

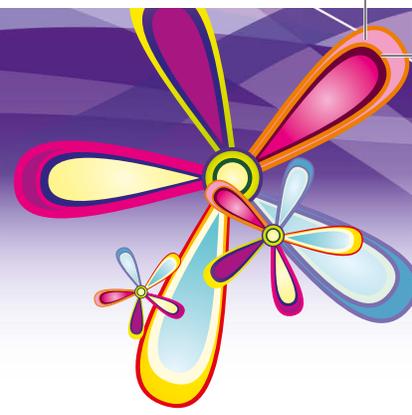
We can imagine the situation of the Copts in such a crucial age from the following examples:

- The Sultan forced Pope John XIV to pay a surtax he had to collect during his pastoral voyage for the purpose of visiting his people and collecting the tribute. At that time, the Turkish rulers tightened control over Christians in Nubia through terrorism, and relieving the people of their money. Many were obliged to immigrate, others fell martyrs and the rest denied their faith. As a result Christianity disappeared from Nubia.
- A monk from Anba Pishoy's monastery was martyred, when one of the governors arrested him while coming out of the monastery and tried to force him to deny his faith. When the monk refused, he stabbed sharp knives into his hands and put fire into his shoulders, mounted him on a camel's back and handed him to the mob to show him around the city. At last, he tied him up to a wood beam and kept torturing him until he died.
- Pope Mark VI was imprisoned and the governor announced that he was the heir of any Copt. In order to inherit, he killed one or two every day. His victims reached about one thousand and two hundred who were killed leaving behind them widows and orphans without any inheritance.
- In the time of Pope John XVI, the governor issued a decree that every Copt should hang two bells around his neck before entering the public bath and wear a black turban. Copts were not allowed to wear clothes made of wool, and the Coptic ladies had to wear black not white garments.

## The Relationship with the Church of Rome and the Western Churches

Unfortunately during that rough period in which Egypt in general and the Copts in particular suffered under the Ottoman rule, Rome played a painful role. She seized every opportunity to benefit from the degradation and hardships that surmounted the Coptic Church as a chance to force Copts to accept Rome's leadership. Pretending to play the role of savior and helper if the Coptic Church does resign, an attitude that the Copts in general did not comply with. For example:

- In the time of Pope Gabriel VII, the Pope of Rome sent messengers to Alexandria suggesting the affiliation under his patronage. Pope Gabriel met them with benevolence and affirmed his strict adherence to the faith of his fathers.



- Money poured forth from abroad to attract the Copts to abandon their church. This happened while Copt suffered from heavy taxes and fines regardless of his limitations, and bore the burden of anguish guilt.
- The missionaries built schools and offered some to travel to Rome to complete their studies, like Roufail Al-Toukhi, whom they promised to become bishop. He worked on printing Coptic prayer books after making some alterations to agree with the Catholic faith. Some young men were brought to be taught in Rome to encourage their families to adopt Catholicism. Roufail was the first catholic bishop to be installed over the Catholic Copts.

### **Sultan of the Copts**

He was born to poor, humble and pious parents. He was educated and mastered writing and mathematics since his early childhood. He used to transcribe the religious books. The Pope was pleased with his piety and zeal, drew him near to himself. He started his work as a scribe for a Mamluk prince until he became the Chief Scribe for all of Egypt, a post which nowadays is equivalent to that of the prime minister. This position increased his humility and generosity, and all the hearts of Egyptians were attracted to him.

His son died. However, this bitterness changed to a strong desire for helping the widows and orphans and comforting the grieved and the afflicted. He was much loved by the rulers and the people who used to call him "Sultan of the Copts." The well-known historian Al-Gabarty writes, "He surpassed all his countrymen in attaining glory, authority and a great fame for a long period. He was consulted in the major and minor problems for he was one of the brilliant men of his time. He used to cover the weaknesses of everybody, and the people's hearts were attracted by love towards him. At the beginning of the month of Ramadan [the month of fasting for the Muslims] he used to send candles and gifts to the prominent Muslim people as well as others who were not well known. During his time, the churches and monasteries flourished and he endowed them many properties and lands."

One day his brother, Guirguis, came complaining of some of the youth who insulted him on his way home, and he asked Muallem Ibrahim to take an authoritative action against them. The answer was that he would cut their tongues. The next day while he was walking along the same route he found himself being much loved and honored by the same youth. When he inquired about what happened, Muallem Ibrahim told him that he sent them many gifts and thus he cut their tongues by love, and they abstained from pronouncing evil.

### **His Longing for Serving Others:**

Muallem Ibrahim returned after the Easter liturgy at midnight and found his house in darkness. When he asked his wife about the cause, she answered, "How could we be joyous and celebrate the feast of Light that shone through the empty tomb, while the wife of an imprisoned Copt and her children are in need of food and clothes?!" Muallem Ibrahim used his influence to release the imprisoned man and he put on the lights and celebrated the feast, together with the man and his family. What is more astonishing is that when Muallem Ibrahim offered this man a job, he told Muallem Ibrahim that he had a friend who was in more need of this job. The Muallem was very delighted by the man's openness of heart and love, and offered another job to his friend.





### **Love that Conquers Death:**

Muallem Ibrahim departed in the Lord, but his life did not end by death. It was said that a man used to come, perhaps from another city, asking for financial help at regular intervals. When he came to the Muallem's house and knew that he died he was deeply grieved. He went to his tomb and wept bitterly until he slept from weariness. Muallem Ibrahim appeared to him in a vision and said to him, "Do not weep! There is an oil merchant who owed me ten golden coins. Go to him, give him my greetings and ask him for the money and he will hand the coins to you." When the man woke up, he felt ashamed to go. At night, Muallem Ibrahim appeared to him again in a vision and asked him to do as he was told. He hesitated again, and for the third time he said to him "Do not be disturbed, go as I told you and I will inform him about the matter." The poor man rose up and went without mentioning anything. He was asked to recount what happened, and when he informed him, he said "You said the truth because Muallem Ibrahim appeared to me too and told me about the message he gave you. Take what I owed him, and an additional equivalent amount from me."

*This lesson was adopted from "Introduction to the Copts" by Fr. Tadros Malaty and "The Coptic Orthodox Church Under Islam" by Abba Seraphim*



# Rejoicing Tongue



## Raising of Incense: Vespers and Matins

### The Offering Or Raising Of Incense

The apostles joined the daily temple service and they never thought to abandon it except when they were forced away. This service consisted of singing of psalms, readings from the Old Testament, praise, petitions, and the offering of incense. It was said, "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple" (Acts 2:46). They entered the temple daily to share in worship and to witness for the Lord Christ, for it is written, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42).

The offering of incense was not like the animal sacrifice which ended when Lord Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice. It was said of this heavenly service, "the four living creatures and the twenty four presbyters fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Revelation 5:8). The psalmist says, "Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Psalm 141:2). God Himself confirmed the raising of incense with the offerings of the holy Eucharist from the nations, "'For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My Name, and a pure offering; for My Name shall be great among the nations,' said the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 1:11).

### Communal Worship

The Coptic liturgical worship is characterized by a communal spirit, for the role of the congregation (people) in the liturgies is vital and essential. For this reason the church does not recognize secretive liturgies that priests practice without the people.

Long time ago, all the people used to sing together all the liturgical responses, and there were not any designated cantors (chanters who lead the people) until weakness developed in the church. It is important to note that the church books specify, "the congregation reply" not "the deacons reply." Truly, successful deacons' choir blend their voices with the people in perfect harmony. Separation of the deacons' voice from the people is a sign of weakness that needs correction. When one deacon's voice stands out from the others, this is a deviation that should be avoided, for we do not find in the Divine Liturgy anything that calls for a solo response from any deacon outside the sanctuary. We should also note that the word "liturgy" is formed from two parts: the first part "lio" means "the people" and the second "gia" means "work." Thus the liturgy is the communal & collective worship and not that of a single priest or deacon.

### Inaudible Prayer

Even with the church's emphasis on collective communal worship, it does not ignore the role of the personal prayer, whether priest, deacon, or member of the congregation. For example, the church looks at the priest as a man of prayer, whose mouth and heart do not stop praying from the time he enters the church until the time he leaves. The priest is continuously praying, audibly and inaudibly, throughout the Vespers and the Matins, during the readings, the preparation of the altar, etc. until the people depart. The church aims for the priest to be continually occupied in his thoughts with prayers without stopping.





When we look at Vespers and Matins from the beginning to the end, we find a living icon of heavenly life in the midst of the worldly reality in which we live. There is no separation between the heavenly experience where the Spirit of God elevates us to the divine throne. The Coptic liturgical rites emphasizes the primary and essential role of the communal worship along with the individual prayerful spirit.

### **Vespers Praises**

When the believers meet for Vespers, they first offer praise as follows:

- They first pray the Canonical Hours (Agpeya)- the ninth hour, eleventh and twelfth hours. If it is a fasting day, only the 11th,12th hours are prayed.
- In the Prayers of the Canonical Hours, the believers devote all the morning and evening hours of the day to praising God, becoming like the angels and longing to change their life into one of unceasing praise.
- Then we sing the hymn of "All you nations" Psalm 117 (116 LXX) which calls on all the nations to praise: "Praise the Lord, all you nations! Laud Him, all you peoples! For His merciful kindness is great toward us, And the truth of the Lord endures forever. Alleluia".
- The fourth canticle which consists of three psalms (148, 149, and 150) as follows:
  - Psalm 148 is an invitation for all creation to share in praise: the heavenly beings, the stars, the planets, the waters and all creation.
  - Psalm 149 is an invitation for God's holy people to offer new praise to the Holy One with a new heart and mind. God's holy people praise continuously, for our encounter with the Holy One drives us to offer new praise that never ages or wears out!
  - Psalm 150 is an invitation for every individual to share in praise together. All humanity, its talents, and its actions are considered like musical instruments for praising God.
- The Psalm of the day (or of a feast), means a hymn, is similar to a poem. It is a heart-felt prayer through which the believers repeat the name of Jesus Christ.
- The Theotokia of the day, is a hymn for the mystery of incarnation and the Theotokos. It is a theological piece, full of the spirit of the Holy Bible, confirming that the One born from the Virgin is God, the Logos (Word).
- The Conclusion of the Theotokia is addressed to the Lord Christ, the Head of the Church.
- The tune of the praise on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays is "Adam," which is the first word in the Theotokion of Monday. On Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays the "Watus" tune is used.

### **The Rites of the Raising of Incense Prayers**

#### **The Opening Of The Sanctuary Curtain**

- The aim of the rite is to introduce us to heaven, its practical knowledge and the taste of its pledge. The bishop or the priest opens the sanctuary curtain, asking everyone to enter heaven and dwell in it. We say in the prayer of the third hour, "Whenever we stand in Your holy sanctuary, we stand in heaven." St. John Chrysostom says, "When you see the sanctuary curtain open, be sure then that heaven has been opened in its heights." Thus all the believers lift up their hearts as the priest opens the curtain, saying, "Have mercy upon us O God the Father, the Pantocrator. O Holy Trinity have mercy upon us ... (Elyson Emas ..)\*. It was said that, whenever St. John Saba opened the curtain, he would frequently stand silently. Once he stood for almost three hours; one of his disciples found out that he did not dare to enter the sanctuary because he saw the presence of God's glory on the altar with indescribable majesty.





- As we open the curtain, we pray the Lord's prayer.
- This rite is accompanied by reconciliation between God and His people. The priest asks for reconciliation with God through the mercy of the Holy Trinity (as mentioned earlier\*) and then kneels in humility in front of the altar saying, "We worship You O Christ with your Good Father and the Holy Spirit, because You have come and saved us." He then asks for reconciliation with the people by bowing in front of the people and clergy with a metania (bowing) and kisses his brothers the other clergy and says, "I have sinned, forgive me."
- It is impossible to participate in worship without the spirit of love, humility and forgiveness. The Lord says, "And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).

### **The Prayer of Thanksgiving**

- The bishop or priest prays the Prayer of Thanksgiving, our prayers should come from a thankful heart. An ungrateful heart stands as a barrier to the incense ascending beyond the roof of the church, but thankfulness makes the soul like incense that no one can prevent from reaching God's throne.

### **The Five Hands of Incense**

After the Prayer of Thanksgiving, the priest puts five handfuls of incense as he thanks the Holy Trinity:

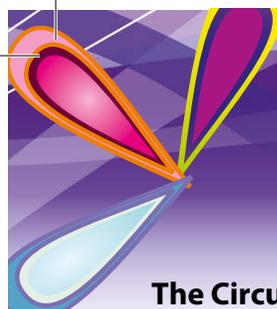
- The first hand: "Blessed be God the Father, the Pantocrator."
- The second hand: "Blessed be His Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."
- The third hand: "Blessed be the Holy Spirit," Who sanctifies our lives.
- The fourth hand: The doxology "Glory and honor ... to the All-Holy Trinity ..."
- The fifth hand: Unending gratitude, "Now, and at all times and unto the ages of all ages. Amen."

The priest prays inaudibly "O God Who has received the offerings of Abel the righteous, the sacrifices of Noah and Abraham, and the incense of Aaron and Zechariah." Each of these offerings had its own significance:

- Abel's gifts: the offering of the choice firstlings (firstfruits) to God (Genesis 4:4, 5).
- Noah's sacrifice: offering signifying full obedience after the renewal of the world by water (Genesis 8).
- Abraham's sacrifice: the entry into a covenant with God.
- Aaron's incense: this is linked to the lighting of the lamps in the morning and evening (Exodus 30:1-8), reminding us of the aim of prayer which is enlightenment.
- Zachariah's incense: the opening of heaven and enjoyment of the service of angels (Luke 1:5-13).

It is notable that almost every prayer, during Vespers or Matins, is offered with incense.





## The Circuit of Incense

- He begins by censuring around the altar inside the sanctuary with the deacon going around the altar three times. During the censuring, the priest inaudibly prays three short Litanies - for Peace, for the Fathers, and for the Congregation, while the deacon, standing across from him on the opposite side of the altar, responds silently to him.
- The priest then offers incense at the sanctuary door in all four directions:
  - The priest offers incense three times towards the east while bowing:
    - We worship You O Christ with Your Good Father and the Holy Spirit, for You have come and saved us.
    - And through the abundance of Your mercy, I enter Your house and worship towards Your holy sanctuary.
    - I sing praises to You in front of the angels and worship towards Your holy sanctuary.
  - Then towards the north (towards St. Mary) and says, "We send You greetings with Gabriel the angel, saying: Hail to you, Who are full of grace, the Lord is with you."
  - Then towards the west (towards the people) and says, "Hail to the hosts of angels, my masters the apostles, and to the ranks of martyrs and to all the saints."
  - Then towards the south (towards St. John the Baptist icon), and says, "Hail to John the son of Zechariah."
  - He again turns towards the east to end the offering in the name of our Savior Who accepts our prayers as sweet-scented incense, "Let us worship our Savior the Lover of Mankind, for He had compassion on us and saved us."
  - The incense offered to the icon of the Lord Christ is considered worship to Him, while for the saints it is to honor them and ask for their prayers.

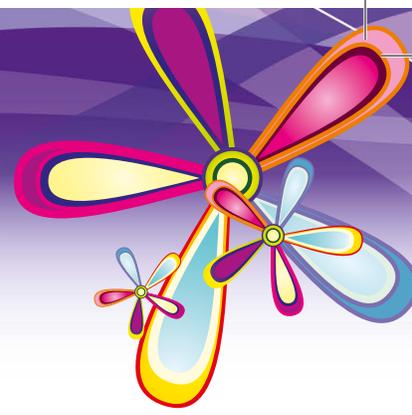
## Verses of Cymbals

During the censuring of the priest, the people and the deacons sing the verses of the cymbals, through which we glorify the Holy Trinity.

## Litanies

During the Vespers the priest prays the Litany for the Departed, while during Matins he prays the Litany for the sick and travelers. The following should be noted concerning these prayers:

- The Litany for the Departed is said during the evening offering of incense because sunset always reminds us of our departure from this world. We ask on their behalf for God's mercy, hoping that those who depart after us will similarly pray for us!
- The Litanies for the Sick and for Travelers are said during the morning offering of incense because the church is like a hospital that opens its doors in the early morning to receive the sick, offering them the Lord Christ as both the Physician and Medicine. Similarly, the church feels the need of travelers for God's care from danger; traveling in the old days was limited to daytime (Psalm 104:22,23), especially in the early morning before the sun got very hot.
- During Matins on Sundays (or during feasts), the Litany for the Oblations is recited instead of the Litany for Travelers for people used to arrive on the day of the Lord and offer oblations to Christ's Church. In this prayer, the church prays for those who offer gifts even by intention, "those who desire to offer to You but have none... give them the incorruptible instead of the corruptible, the heavenly instead of the earthly, and the eternal instead of the temporal." Thus the Church prays for all who are eager to give, even if unable, so that God may grant them heavenly and earthly blessings.
- During Saturday Matins, the Litany for the Departed is recited instead of the litany of the sick, in remembrance of the presence of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ in the tomb on Bright Saturday.



We then pray :

Graciously accord prayer  
Trisagion Prayer  
Doxologies

During the Doxologies, the priest offers incense as mentioned earlier , but this time, he goes around the church amidst the believers with the censer;

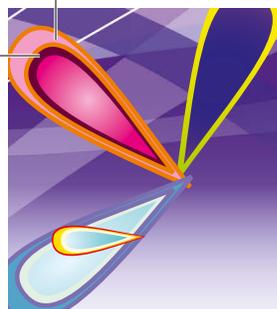
- He offers incense in front of the Holy Gospel.
- Then in front of the bishop and clergy, we pray for them and ask for their prayers. The priest needs everyone's prayers for himself, as well as to open his heart to pray on behalf of everyone else. The incense is not offered to the bishop, but rather for him to raise it to God. The incense is the prayers of the people that the priest or bishop presents to God along with his own prayers.
- The priest passes amidst the congregation, as if he is collecting their silent prayers, which he carries along with the love in their hearts in a censer of love to be offered as sweet incense on the divine altar.
- When the priest approaches the second division of the church, he prays: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8). The priest offers incense in front of the main entrance inside the church in the shape of the cross. The prayers of the priest as he censures are:
  - Towards the east: "He offered Himself as an acceptable sacrifice on the Cross for the salvation of our race" (Ephesians 5:2).
  - Towards the north: "His Good Father smelled Him in the evening on Golgotha."
  - Towards the west: " He opened the gate of Paradise and restored Adam once more to his authority."
  - Towards the south: "Through His Cross and His holy resurrection, He restored man once again to Paradise."
- The priest completes the circuit by heading back to the sanctuary, where he ascends to the altar while praying inaudibly the Mystery of the Return (Repentance Prayer): "O God Who accepted the confession of the thief on the honored Cross, accept the confession of Your people. Forgive them all their sins for the sake of Your holy Name Which is called upon us. Let it be according to Your mercy, O Lord, and not according to our sins".

It is to be noted that until recently the priest used to put his hand on the head of everyone present during the censuring circuit; he used to ask for God's blessing, get acquainted with the people present, and make quick confessions.

### **The Creed And Ephnoti Nai Nan**

When the people finish singing doxologies, they recite the Orthodox Creed, and the priest raises the cross with three candles to ask for God's mercy praying, "Have mercy upon us O God" or "ephnoti nai nan." The bishop or priest takes the cross and three lighted candles, stands in humility, and raises his hands in prayer, God have mercy upon us, Settle Your mercy upon us (making the sign of the cross towards the east). Have compassion upon us. Hear us (crossing the north). Bless us (crossing the west). Guard us (crossing the south). And help us (crossing the east)... That is how the whole church seeks refuge in the crucified Christ, and asks for the mercy, blessing and forgiveness of sins.





## **The Litany For The Gospel**

The priest says the Litany for the Gospel as the deacon asks the people to "Pray for the Holy Gospel," in order that the word of God may bring forth fruits in the hearts of its hearers. The fruitfulness requires the prayers of both the priest and the people.

## **The Gospel**

Psalms are prayed in Coptic, while the priest puts one handful of incense, and goes around the altar with the deacon opposite him carrying the Gospel. The priest repeats the prayer of Simeon the Elder, "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." When he finishes going around the altar, the priest censes in front of the Holy Bible. The deacon admonishes the people, "Stand in the fear of God, and listen to the Holy Gospel." The priest in a joyful spirit offers triumphant praise to God, the "Lord of hosts," Who through the Bible gives the believers victory in their spiritual battle; he says, "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord of hosts." This is the praise which the people uttered when the Lord Christ entered Jerusalem; and it is as if upon hearing the Word of the Bible we are blessed by the entry of our Christ to our hearts.

The Gospel is not read, but is sung, for it is a song of God's love to His Church; both the clergy and people experience continual rejoicing in Him.

## **The Sermon**

The Church is like a mother that offers spiritual nourishment to her children for their spiritual growth. In the sermon, the bishop or priest is addressing himself first before others. As St. Ambrose says, everyone except God alone needs teaching while he teaches.

## **The Five Short Litanies**

The priest prays at the door of the sanctuary the five short litanies for 1) Peace, 2) the Fathers, 3) the Place, 4) the air of heaven (or plants or water), and 5) the assemblies. Along with the litanies, the priest censes so that the prayers mingle with the incense. We then pray the Lord's prayer.

## **The Three Prayers**

In this heavenly atmosphere, the bishop (or priest) asks God to grant him and everyone present the forgiveness of sins, so that everyone leaves the service having cast all their problems and sins at the feet of the Savior.

The following should be noted in these prayers:

- In the Prayer After "Our Father," the priest pleads for the heads of Satan to be crushed under our feet quickly (Revelation 16:20).
- In the prayer of Submission to the Son, the priest prays for Christ, the source of our inner peace (Isaiah 26:12), to grant His peace.
- In the the Absolution of the Son, the priest asks for forgiveness of his weaknesses and those of his people.





### **The Blessing**

The blessing is given from the merciful God Who blesses His children, and cares and elevates them forever. The priest ends it by addressing "O Christ our God" and the people reply, "Amen. So be it."

### **The Royal Anthem**

Before the people leave, the priest proclaims the Royal Anthem, which resembles a royal military anthem that is offered to the Lord Christ, Who in every liturgy declares His kingdom in the hearts of His people. O King of Peace grant us Your peace, establish for us Your peace, and forgive us our sins For Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and majesty forever. Amen.

Then the Lord's Prayer is prayed and the priest dismisses the people by saying "Go in peace; the Lord be with you all. Amen," and the people respond "And with your spirit."

*This lesson was adopted from the book "Praises, Vespers and Matins: Sharing in Angelic Worship" by Fr. Tadros Malaty.*





# Spirit of Joy

*We pray the third hour at 9 am to commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples asking the Lord to renew the Holy Spirit within us and fill us with true rejoicing.*

## **PSALM 22**

*The Lord is He who shepherds me; I shall need nothing. In a place of green pasture, there He has made me dwell: by the water of rest, He has tended me. He has restored my soul:*

David, being a shepherd himself, knows how much love and care the shepherd has for his sheep. He leads them to green pastures to feed them and takes them to fresh water springs to quench their thirst. Similarly, Our Lord cares for us, plans our lives and He feeds us our yearning souls with His love and draws water of the Holy Spirit to water the furrows of our hearts.

*He has guided me into the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake.*

In his book, Isaiah prophesied that the name of God is "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Hence, He strengthens me and guides me into the path of righteousness, not because I deserve His mercy, but because He is a good Father and Wonderful Counselor.

*Even if I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I shall not fear evil things, for You are with me: Your rod and Your staff, these comfort me.*

We shall not be moved because our God has conquered all enemies including death. Death became to us a desirable gain as Paul said "To die is gain" (Philippians 1:21), and a bridge to heaven.

*You have prepared a table before me in the presence of those who afflict me: You have anointed my head with oil; and Your cup makes me drunk like power. Your mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and my dwelling shall be in the house of the Lord unto length of days. ALLELUIA.*

The Table placed in front of the enemies is the table of Eucharist, which when we approach it, we are empowered and given all power to tread upon the enemies. In the Old Testament, only the kings and priests were anointed with oil to consecrate themselves for the service of God and people accordingly. Nevertheless, God has anointed everyone of us to become a king overcoming the whole world and a priest offering pure incense to the Most High God.

## **Gospel**

*When the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, has come, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said unto you.*

Jesus has not left us orphans after His ascension, but God has sent to us the Holy Spirit to dwell in us so we may be united with Him. Knowing our weakness and ignorance, the Holy Spirit reminds us of God's commandments and teaches us to do all righteousness.

*My peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard how I said unto you, "I go away, and come again unto you." If you loved Me, you would rejoice, because I said, "I go unto the Father":*





The peace that God places in our hearts is different from the world's. The latter is temporary and conditional. It is based on a false sense of security secondary to wealth, status and connections with power figures. The peace of God is eternal and unconditional of our income, talents, skills and social class. The peace of God guards our hearts in the valley of death and calms our minds in the mightiest storms of life. Jesus prophesies about His death, resurrection then ascension and finally the second coming. Truly the main reason for our joy is our love for God. His joy brightens our minds and hearts with gladness and stillness.

*For My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that, when it comes to pass, you might believe.*

As per St. Athanasius and St. Cyril, we should not understand that God the Father is superior to God the Son, or that the Father is different from the Son in essence. God the Father and the Son are equal and of one essence (homoousios). This verse refers to how God the Son is begotten from the Father before all the ages, and there was no time when God the Father was and the Son was not.

*I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do: arise, let us go from here.*

Are we enslaved or living a free life? Can we say with Christ, *"The prince of this world has nothing in me?"*

*I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away: and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

Christ is the true Vine, where we are all implanted in Him as branches worthy of fruition, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 6:9). The farmer usually cuts the fruitless branches, so that the fruitful branches get more nutrition and become even more fruitful. If we as branches of the Vine of Christ do not bear fruits, we will be cut. Just like how the branch cannot bear fruit of its own, our only way for us to bear fruits is to abide in the Vine, Christ Himself.

*Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. Glory to God forever. Amen.*

Hearing the word of God regularly and having a lively relationship with the Bible purifies our hearts and prepares them as pure temples for the Holy Spirit to abide in them.





## LITANIES

1. *Your Holy Spirit, O Lord Whom You sent forth upon Your holy disciples and honored apostles in the third hour, do not take away from us, O Good One, but renew Him within us. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence. And do not take Your Holy Spirit away from me.* The same Holy Spirit that God sent upon the disciples, giving them power to preach the whole world and do miracles, wonders and convert the multitudes into Christianity, has been granted to us in our Baptism and Chrismation. We should always pray for God to renew it within us and ignite His fiery work within us. Only God the Creator can recreate our hearts and give us pure hearts that eject sin and seek holiness, hearts that are full of love and compassion.

2. *O Lord who sent down Your Holy Spirit upon Your holy disciples and Your honored apostles in the third hour, do not take Him away from us, O Good One, but we ask You to renew Him within us, O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Word; a steadfast and life giving spirit, a spirit of prophecy and chastity, a spirit of holiness, justice and authority, O the Almighty One, for You are the light of our souls. O Who shines upon every man that comes into the world, have mercy on me.*

The Holy Spirit was granted in the Old Testament to certain people for a certain purpose for a certain time. For example, the Holy Spirit descended on the prophets to prophesy the word of God. In the New Testament, we were all sealed with the Holy Spirit on the day of our Baptism. The Spirit of God brings life to our dead spiritual life, gives us power to trample our lusts and desires, and be clothed with purity. Our Lord Christ is the Light that enlightens every soul coming into the world; we ask Him to shine over us with His Light to illuminate us so we can reflect His Light to the whole world and become sons of Light.

3. *O Theotokos, you are the true vine who bore the Cluster of Life, we ask you, O full of grace, with the apostles, for the salvation of our souls. Blessed is the Lord our God. Blessed is the Lord day by day. He prepares our way, for He is God of our salvation.*

St Mary is likened to the vine that bore the Grape Cluster of life. The Cluster that when squeezed, produced the wine of love and when eaten, granted eternal life. We will bless our Lord every day of our life, for He overruns us daily with His blessings (Psalm 68:19-21), and daily provides for our needs as a compassionate mother and a loving father.

4. *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.*

This is one of the beautiful prayers directed to the Holy Spirit, addressing Him as our King and the Spirit of Truth that guides us in all Truth (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit, the infinite God, is present everywhere and fills everything. The Holy Spirit is the treasury of all the good things and blessings, "For He will take what is Mine (Christ's) and declare it to us"(John 16:14). Let's pray for Him to dwell in us, cleanse us from all foreign lusts and worldly pleasures and deliver us from temptation.





5. *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.*

Peace is a dear blessing that we have lost in this fast-paced world full of hypocrisy and pride. After the crucifixion of Christ, the disciples lost their peace as well and were locked in the upper room for fear of dying at the hands of the Jews and Romans. Yet, Christ came amongst them, appeared by himself and told them "Peace be with you" ( John 20:19). May the Lord, the Prince of peace, manifest Himself in our life, quieten the storms of our hearts and grant us His peace.

6. *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.*

Let us comprehend the immense and glorious blessing we have attained with Christ's salvation. May we be filled with awe and reverence as we enter the church, the dwelling of the Lord of Hosts, experience His presence in our midst and cry with Jacob, "Surely the Lord is in this place .... How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" (Genesis 28:16).

### **Absolution**

*O God of all compassion, and Lord of all comfort, who comforted us at all times with the comfort of Your Holy Spirit, we thank You for You raised us for prayer in this holy hour, in which You abundantly poured the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon Your holy disciples and honorable and blessed apostles, like tongues of fire.*

Our true source of comfort in the midst of all the trouble of this life is God who sent to us the Paraclete, whose literal meaning is "one called alongside," the One who counsels, advocates, helps and comforts.

The Holy Spirit descended on them like tongues of fire and ignited their hearts with the love of God, and filled their mouths with fiery darts that pierced the hearts of their audience bringing them into the Light of Christ.

*We ask and entreat You, O lover of mankind, to accept our prayers, and forgive our sins, and send forth upon us the grace of Your Holy Spirit, and purify us from all defilement of body and spirit.*

It's out of His love, that He poured the grace of His Holy Spirit upon us to purify our hearts, minds, souls and bodies.

*Change us into a spiritual manner of life, that we may walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. And make us worthy to serve You with purity and righteousness all the days of our life.*

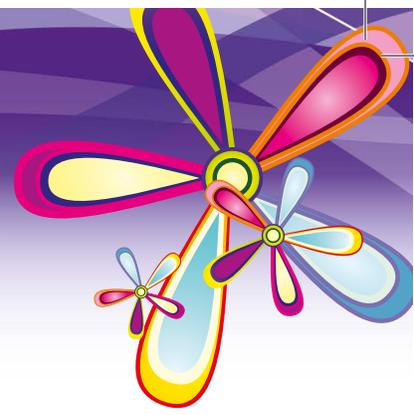
We ask God to help us to walk according to the Spirit not fulfilling our bodily lusts (Galatians 5:16). Being delivered from the bondage of our enemies, we are indebted to serve Him willingly, without fear of any loss or any enemies, all the days of our life (Luke 1:74,75).

*For unto You is due glory, honor, and dominion, with Your good Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of all ages. Amen.*

The praise, majesty and power is due to the Holy Trinity forevermore.



# Memorization



## PSALM 22

The Lord is He who shepherds me; I shall need nothing. In a place of green pasture, there He has made me dwell: by the water of rest, He has tended me. He has restored my soul: He has guided me into the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake. Even if I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I shall not fear evil things, for You are with me: Your rod and Your staff, these comfort me. You have prepared a table before me in the presence of those who afflict me: You have anointed my head with oil; and Your cup makes me drunk like power. Your mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and my dwelling shall be in the house of the Lord unto length of days. ALLELUIA.

## THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN (CH. 14:26-31 & CH. 15:1-4)

When the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, has come, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said unto you. My peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard how I said unto you, "I go away, and come again unto you." If you loved Me, you would rejoice, because I said, "I go unto the Father": for My Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that, when it comes to pass, you might believe. I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do: arise, let us go from here. I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away: and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you.

Glory to God forever. Amen.





### 3rd Hour Litanies

Your Holy Spirit, O Lord Whom You sent forth upon Your holy disciples and honored apostles in the third hour, do not take away from us, O Good One, but renew Him within us. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence. And do not take Your Holy Spirit away from me.

*Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

O Lord who sent down Your Holy Spirit upon Your holy disciples and Your honored apostles in the third hour, do not take Him away from us, O Good One, but we ask You to renew Him within us, O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Word; a right and life giving spirit, a spirit of prophecy and chastity, a spirit of holiness, righteousness and authority, O the Almighty One, for You are the light of our souls. O You Who give light upon every man that comes into the world, have mercy on me.

*Now and forever and unto the ages of all ages, Amen.*

O Theotokos, you are the true vine who bore the Cluster of Life, we ask you, O full of grace, with the apostles, for the salvation of our souls. Blessed is the Lord our God. Blessed is the Lord day by day. He prepares our way, for He is God of our salvation.

*Now and forever and unto the ages of all ages, Amen.*

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.

*Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

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.

*Now and forever and unto the ages of all ages, Amen.*

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.





## **ABSOLUTION**

O God of all compassion, and Lord of all comfort, who comforted us at all times with the comfort of Your Holy Spirit, we thank You for You raised us for prayer in this holy hour, in which You abundantly poured the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon Your holy disciples and honorable and blessed apostles, like tongues of fire. We ask and entreat You, O lover of mankind, to accept our prayers, and forgive our sins, and send forth upon us the grace of Your Holy Spirit, and purify us from all defilement of body and spirit. Change us into a spiritual manner of life, that we may walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. And make us worthy to serve You with purity and righteousness all the days of our life. For unto You is due glory, honor, and dominion, with Your good Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of all ages. Amen.



# Coptic Language Curriculum

Grades 9<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup>



## Lesson 1: Letters similar in look and sound to English Alphabet

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
Αα	Alpha	A (as in Art)
Εε	Ei	E (as in pen)
Ζζ	Zeta	Z
Ιι	Iota (Yota)	I or Y (as in sit or yam)
Κκ	Kappa (Kabba)	K
Μμ	Mei	M
Νν	Nei	N
Οο	O	Short O (as in look or book)
Ττ	Tav	T

### Examples:

ΑΝΟΚ	Anok	I
ΑΝΟΝ	Anon	We
Ζαζ	Zaz	Asphodel (plant)
Ναν	Nan	us
Κε (και)	Ke	And (Greek)
Τοτε	Tote	Then

### Homework: Pronounce each word/phrase out loud & write the pronunciation

Υοι		Give (v)
Νακ		Your /To you
Κατα		According
Μεμ		And (Coptic)
Μιμ		Who
Ζε		Truly
Ναι ναν		Have mercy on us
Ταιο		Honor

## Lesson 2: Letters that sound different than English (part 1)

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
Ββ	Veta (beta)	V if followed by a vowel (except in names)* B everywhere else
Ηη	Eeta	EE (as in seek)
Ρρ	Rho	R
ϸϸ	Sima (sigma)	S

Examples:

ΑΒΒα	Avva	Father
ΑΒρααμ	Abra-am	Abraham
Ισαακ	Isa-ac	Isaac
Ηεννοβι	Nen-Novii	Our sins
Μαρε	Mare	Let or may
Ναι ηη	Nai Nee	Have mercy on me
ϸαβε	Sa-ve	Wise

**Homework:** Pronounce each word/phrase out loud & write the pronunciation

Ͽηρς		All
Μισαηλ		Mishael
Αζαριας		Azaria
ϸε		Yes
Μασιας		Messiah
Ανανιας		Hananiah
Πιβεν		Every
Πιεβιακ		The servants

\* Some sources state that Β should also be pronounced 'V' when followed by the letters β, υ or ϯ.

Examples: αββα (avva), υιβϯ (Shivti), εβυι (evshi)

### Lesson 3: Letters that sound different than English (part 2)

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
Ωω	Oa (Omega in Greek)	Long O (as in boat or board)
Χχ	Key (ki)	1. In words of Egyptian origin: K 2. In words of Greek origin: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sh if followed by e-vowel (ε, ι, η )</li> <li>• Kh everywhere else</li> </ul>
Ττ	Ti (Tee)	Ti or Tee (as in Teepee)

Examples:

ΣΙΩΝ	Si-oan	Zion
ΔΙΣΩΡΕΥ	Ai-soa-rem	I have strayed/ I have gone astray
ΚΩΤ	Koati	To turn or seek
ΧΕΡΕ	Shere	Hail
ΟΝΤΩΣ	On-toac	In Truth
ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ	Yo-an-nees	John
ΣΩΤΗΡ	Soa-teer	Savior
ΣΩΤΕΥ	Soatem	Listen
ΧΗΜΙ	Kee-mi	Egypt
ΣΗΩΝ	See - oan	Sihon (king of Ammorites)
ΧΩΡΙΣ	Khoa-ris	without

**Homework:** Pronounce each word/phrase out loud & write the pronunciation

ΧΑΚΙ		Darkness
ΧΙΩΝ		Ice
ΧΩΛΕΥ		Hurry
ΜΕΤΟΧΟΣ		Sharing in
ΡΩΜΙ		Human/man/people
ΔΙΚΩΤ		You have saved
ΖΗΛΩΤΕ		Zealot
ΚΑΤ		To know or understand

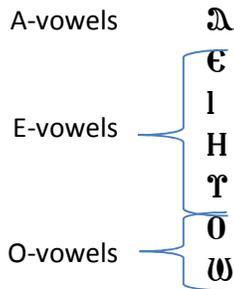
## Lesson 4: Vowels and the vowel point

New symbols	Name	Pronunciation
`	Jenkem	Vowel point: 1. Adds an 'e' sound if placed on a constant (example: ċ is read as 'ES') 2. When placed over a vowel, generally either elongates or stresses the vowel (splits the word).
Ⲑⲣ	Epsilon	1. Pronounced V after ⲗ or ⲉ 2. Ⲑⲣ is pronounced oo as in shoot or root 3. ⲣ is pronounced as e or y everywhere else

### Special Two-letter vowels:

Vowel	Pronunciation
Ⲑⲣ	oo/ou as in shoot or root
ⲗⲣ	av
ⲉⲣ	ev

### All single vowels:



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Examples:

Ⲯⲁⲙⲁⲣ		My mother
ⲒⲥⲞⲮϸ		Jesus
Ⲫⲟⲣ		Glory
̀ⲎⲦⲈ		Of
ⲘⲞⲒⲬⲞⲨⲒⲌ		Communal Life
̀ⲎⲞⲦⲈϸⲠⲟⲣ		Lost or astray
ⲈⲕⲈⲗⲟⲘⲟⲨ		You open
ⲈⲣⲅⲬⲎ *		Pray (Greek)
Ⲙⲣⲓⲟϸ		Lord
ⲮⲒⲣⲟⲣ		All
̀ϸⲙⲟⲣ		Praise
̀ⲎϸⲞⲟⲣ ⲎⲒⲐⲎ		At every time (at all times)
ⲠⲠⲟⲣ		Mouths
ⲎⲒϸⲁⲐⲈⲣ		The wise people
̀ⲘⲈⲁⲣⲠⲟⲣⲦ		Blessed are you
ⲦⲟⲒⲘⲞⲨⲒⲌ		The Economy
ⲟⲣ-		Indefinite article

\* There are currently two acceptable ways to pronounce this word (Evshi and Evki)

Homework:

**Read** the following sentences out loud. **Underline** words you understand. **Circle** words that you don't know.

1. ⲘⲈ ⲎⲦⲒ ⲕⲈ ⲁ̀Ⲓ ⲕⲈ Ⲓϸ ⲦⲟⲮϸ Ⲉ̀ⲪⲎⲁϸ ⲦⲠⲎ Ⲉ̀ⲪⲎⲠⲠⲎ ⲁⲙⲈⲎ.
2. ⲪⲈⲣⲈ ⲎⲈ ⲪⲁⲣⲒⲁ̀ ⲅⲁⲣⲒϸ Ⲧⲟⲣ ⲁⲗⲎⲒⲒⲁⲗ (Daniel)
3. ⲘⲈ ⲐⲎⲦⲠⲠⲠ ⲦⲈⲎϸⲙⲟⲣ Ⲉ̀ⲣⲟⲕ: ⲘⲈ ⲐⲎⲦⲠⲠⲠ ⲦⲈⲎⲦⲠⲠⲠ Ⲏⲁⲕ.
4. ⲁⲘⲈⲣⲐⲟⲕⲒ ⲁⲘⲒⲒⲒ ⲅⲟⲣⲒϸ ⲘⲦⲎⲟⲦϸⲒⲁ.
5. ⲈⲣⲅⲁⲣⲒϸⲦⲒⲪⲠⲠⲠⲈⲎ Ⲧⲟ ⲘⲣⲒⲠⲟ.

## Lesson 5: Letters similar to Greek (part 1)

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
ΔΔ	Delta	1. D in names as in <b>David</b> 2. Everywhere else, rough Th as in <b>The</b> or <b>There</b>
Θθ	Theta	Soft <b>Th</b> as in <b>Three</b> **
Ππ	Pi	P
Φφ	Fi	F or Ph as in phone

Examples:

Υεϑυηι		Truth
Ϸεβε		Because of
Δικεον		Just/right
Πιστος		Faithful
Θωουϯ		Gather
νιϷουρι		The heavens
Διακονος		Deacon
Ϸουουϯ		God (Coptic)
Πουρο		The king/ O king
Παχνι		Snow
Πιθρονος		The thrones
Δωρον		Gift
Θεου		God (Greek)
Δαυιδ		David

\*\* Some sources state that the letter **θ** is pronounced as T when the letter before it is **Ϸ,ϯ** or **Ϸ**.

Examples: **Υατωιδ** (Mattias) and **Προσευξατοε** (Pros-ev-xaste), **Ϸεεε** (eshteh)

Homework:

**Read** the following sentences out loud. **Underline** words you understand. **Circle** words that you don't know.

1. Δνω ἔμων τας καρδιας. Εχομεν ἔρος τον Κτριο
2. Πυκτες κε ημερε ρω πε: φωσκε ἔκοτος κε αστραπε
3. Ιρηνη πασι. Κε τω πνευματι σου
4. Παι ναν Φνοϋϋ Φιωτ Ππαντοκρατωρ. Παι ναν Φνοϋϋ πενωτηρ
5. Σταθητε μετα φοβοϋ Θεοϋ

## Lesson 6: Letters similar to Greek (part 2)

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
Λλ	Lavla (Lola, Lambda)	L
Ϛϛ	Ghamma	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. G as in Go when followed by e vowel</li> <li>2. N when followed by Ϛ or ϛ</li> <li>3. Gh (ϥ) (as in oghnia) everywhere else</li> </ol>
Ξξ	Exi	X
Ψψ	Epsi	PS (as in Psalmody)

Examples:

Προσευχαοε		Pray (Greek)
Κυριε ελεησον		Lord have mercy
Πιερωψαλτης		The Psalmist (hymist)
Μιαστελοσ		The angels
Αγαθοσ		Good
Αγιος		Holy
Πεκμονοσενησ		Your only-begotten
Αξιος		Worthy
Μιεζογρια		The authorities
Αλληλογρια		Alleluia
Ευλοσθητοσ		Blessed
Αριψαλιν		O sing
Ψυχιοσ		Coolness
πιαθλοφοροσ		Struggle-mantled/ struggle-bearer

Homework:

**Read** the following sentences out loud. **Underline** words you understand. **Circle** words that you don't know.

1. Κῶμαρωοῦτ ἄληθως: νεμ Πεκιωτ ἰάσαθος: νεμ Πίπνευμα εθοῦαβ
2. Ἰκαθημενι ἄναςθητε: Ἰς ἀνατολας βλεψατε.
3. ἄσιος ἄσιος ἄσιος Κυριος σαβαωθ: πλήρις ὁ οὐρανός κε ἡ γῆ τῆς ἄσιας σου Δοζης.
4. Ἄξια ἴαγια Μαρια ἴπαρθενος. Ἄξιος Ἄββα Μαρκος πιαποστολος.
5. Προσευεζασθε ὑπερ των ἄσιων τιμιων δωρων τοῦτων κε ἰσκιων ἡμων κε προσφεροντων: Κυριε ἐλεησον.
6. Δοξα Πατρι κε Ἰω κε ἄσιω Πνευματι: Κε νῦν κε ἀὶ κε ἰς τοῦς ἐὼνας των ἐὼνων αμην.
6. Σταθητε μετα Φοβοῦ Θεοῦ ἀκοιτωμεν τοῦ ἄσιο εἰαγγελιοῦ

## Lesson 7: Ancient Egyptian Letters (part 1)

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
Ⲯϣ	Shai (Shy)	Sh as in short
Ϣϣ	Fai	F
Ⲭⲃ	Khai	Kh (خ) as in Khalifa

Examples:

Ⲯⲗⲏⲗ		Pray (Coptic)
ⲁϣϣⲉⲛⲁϣ		He ascended
Ⲭⲉⲛ		In
ϣⲛⲟϣ		Blood
Ⲫϣⲟⲩⲣⲏ		The censer
ⲁϣϣⲟⲩ		He saved
Ⲡⲉⲛϣⲁⲃ		Our teacher
Ⲡⲟⲛⲃ		The Life

**Homework:** **Read** the following sentences out loud. **Underline** words you understand. **Circle** words that you don't know.

- Ⲫϣⲟⲩⲣⲏ ⲏⲛⲟⲩⲃ ⲧⲉ ⲩⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ: ⲡⲉϣⲁⲣⲟⲩⲙⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲛϣⲟⲩⲣⲏ: ⲁϣⲙⲓϣⲓ ⲙⲓⲙⲟϣ ⲁϣϣⲟⲩ ⲙⲓⲙⲟⲛ: ⲟⲩⲟⲩ (ou-oh) ⲁϣϣⲁ ⲛⲉⲛⲛⲟⲩⲃ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ.
- Ⲑⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲙⲓⲡⲓⲉⲧⲁⲥⲥⲉⲗⲓⲟⲛ ⲏⲧⲉ Ⲓⲏϣⲟⲩϣ Ⲡⲓϣⲣⲓϣⲟⲥ Ⲡⲓⲙⲏⲣⲓ ⲙⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩⲩ ⲉⲧⲟⲛⲃ
- Ⲡⲓⲛⲓⲟⲩ ⲁⲃⲃⲁ ⲁⲛⲧⲟⲛⲓ: ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲑⲙⲏ ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲡⲁⲧⲗⲉ: ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲙⲧ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ Ⲥⲁⲕⲁⲣⲓⲟⲥ: ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲓⲟⲁⲛⲏⲏⲥ ⲡⲓⲕⲟⲗⲟⲃⲟⲥ: ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲙⲓ ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲡⲁⲧⲗⲉ: ⲛⲉⲛⲓⲟⲩⲩ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲏⲣⲟⲙⲉⲟⲥ Ⲥⲁⲗⲓⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲁⲟⲙⲉⲧⲓⲟⲥ: ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲥⲟⲥⲏ: ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲓⲟⲁⲛⲏⲏⲥ ⲧⲁⲙⲏ: ⲁⲃⲃⲁ ⲁⲛⲓⲁⲛⲏⲏⲗ: ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲓⲓϣⲁⲟⲣⲟⲥ ⲁⲃⲃⲁ ⲡⲁⲃⲟⲙ: ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲥⲉⲛⲟⲩⲩ: ⲕⲉ ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲡⲁⲑⲛⲟⲩⲩ: ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲡⲁⲣϣⲟⲙⲁ: ⲁⲃⲃⲁ Ⲥⲉⲗⲓ (Teji).
- ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲟⲩϣⲟⲩ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲙⲁⲛ ⲁⲙⲏ. ⲁⲟⲩⲁ ϣⲓ ⲕⲟⲩⲣⲓⲉ: ⲕⲟⲩⲣⲓⲉ ⲉⲗⲉⲏϣⲟⲛ: ⲕⲟⲩⲣⲓⲉ ⲉⲗⲉⲏϣⲟⲛ: ⲕⲟⲩⲣⲓⲉ ⲉⲧⲗⲟⲥⲓⲟⲛ: ⲕⲟⲩⲣⲓⲉ ⲁⲛⲁⲡⲁⲧϣⲟⲛ: ⲁⲙⲏ.
- ⲉⲧⲁϣⲕⲏⲏ ⲁⲛ ⲉϣⲟⲓ ⲏⲏⲟⲩⲩ: ⲁϣⲓ ⲁϣϣⲟⲩⲙⲓ ⲏⲏⲟⲩⲩ ⲏⲣⲟⲙⲓ: ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲏⲑⲟϣ ⲡⲉ ⲩⲛⲟⲩⲩ ⲙⲓⲙⲓ: ⲁϣⲓ ⲟⲩⲟⲩ (ou-oh) ⲁϣϣⲟⲩ ⲙⲓⲙⲟⲛ



5. Ἀλληλοῖα ἄε φμεῖτὶ ἵὸτρωμὶ εἰεὸτῶνε, νακ ἔβολ Πῶοις: οτοε, ἵεωεπ ἵτε ὀτμεῖτὶ εἰεῖρωαι νακ. Πιῶτσια ἵπποροφρα ὠποπὸν ἔροκ: ἀλληλοῖα.
6. Ἀκβὶ τῆχαριε ἰωῶτςης: τμετοῖηβ ἵτε ἠελχιεδεκ: τμετῆελλο ἵτε Ιακωβ: πινοε ἵὰεἱ ἵτε ἠαῶοτσαλα: πικατ ετσωπ ἵτε Δαῖιδ: τσοφια ἵτε Σολομων: Πῖπνεμα ἰπαρακλήτοη φηῖταεἰ ἔεεη ἵὰποστολοε.
7. Ἀρῖρεεβεῖτη ἔερη ἔεωη ἰτεηοῖε ἵηηβ τηρεη τῆεὸτοκοε ἠαρια ἰμαρ ἰπεεεωτηρ ἵτεεχα νεηοβὶ ναη ἔβολ.

## Lesson 9: Abbreviations

original	abbreviation	English
Ιησοϣς	Ιηϣ	Jesus
Πιχριστοϣ	Πηϣ	Christ
Φηοϣϣ	Φϣ	God
πνευμα	πηα	spirit
εθοϣαβ	εθϣ	Holy
πβοιϣ	Ποϣ	Lord
ιεροϣαλημ	Ιηημ	Jerusalem
θεοϣ	θεϣ	God (Gk)
Υιοϣ	υϣ	Son (Gk)
αλληλοϣια	αλ	Hallelujah (Heb)

Homework: Read the following sentences out loud. **Underline** words you understand. **Circle** words that you don't know.

Χε πενωτ ετδεν νιφηοϣι μαρεϣτοϣβο ηχε πεκραν: μαρεϣι ηχε τεκμετοϣρο πετεϣνακ  
μαρεϣωπι μηρηϣ δεν τφε νεμ ϣιχεν πικαϣι: πενωικ ητε ϣαϣϣ μηιϣ ηαν μηφοοϣ οτοϣ  
χα ηηετερον ηαν εβολ: μηρηϣ ϣων ητεηχω εβολ ηηηετε οτοη ηταν ερωοϣ: οτοϣ  
μηπερεντεν εδοτη επραϣμοϣ αλλα ηαϣμεν εβολ ϣα πιπετϣωοϣ. ηεν Πηϣ Ιηϣ πενοϣ:  
χε θωκ τε ϣμετοϣρο νεμ ϣχομ νεμ πιωοϣ ωα ενεϣ αμηη.

**Read** the following sentences out loud. **Underline** words you understand. **Circle** words that you don't know.

1. Πευ βολθεν ρωον̄ τι η̄ ε̄τᾱθωον̄†θεν Πικε̄ νευ πι ρ̄ν̄ η̄τε Κωσταντινοπολης νευ  
πι ς̄ η̄τε Εφεος
2. ζ̄ η̄σοπ̄ μ̄ηνη ε̄βολ̄ θεν παρητ τηρη †νᾱςμο̄ ε̄πεκραν̄ Πος̄ η̄πῑε̄πτηρη
3. Δρῑπρε̄βε̄την ε̄ρη̄ ε̄χων η̄ιο̄η̄β̄ η̄τε †με̄θ̄μη πικ̄Δ̄ η̄π̄ρε̄β̄τη̄ρος η̄τε̄χη̄ νενοβι ναν  
ε̄βολ̄
4. Δρῑπρε̄βε̄την ε̄ρη̄ ε̄χων η̄ π̄ῑρ̄μ̄Δ̄ η̄γω̄ νευ πιπᾱρ̄θ̄ενος̄ η̄ε̄τᾱς̄ε̄λῑς̄της η̄τε̄χη̄ νενοβι  
ναν ε̄βολ̄
5. †ωβ̄ε̄ η̄Πος̄ ε̄ρη̄ ε̄χων π̄ις̄ ε̄ο̄† Δββα Ηακαρι νευ νο̄γ̄μη̄ρι η̄ε̄τᾱτροφο̄ρος̄ η̄τε̄χη̄  
νενοβι ναν ε̄βολ̄

**Lesson 10: Definite and Indefinite articles**

❖ **Indefinite Articles:**

- In English, there are two indefinite articles: **A & AN**. These articles are used to introduce or refer to a noun that is not specific such as:
  - This is **a** ball
  - **A** glory
- In Coptic, there two as summarized below:

	Singular Masculine	Singular Feminine	Plural
Indefinite article	ογ		Ζαν

- When the word is singular such as ball, glory, cross we use the article ογ whether its masculine or feminine
- When the word is plural such as heavens, martyrs, apostles we use the article Ζαν
- Examples:

<u>Ογ</u> ωογ	<b><u>A</u></b> glory
<u>Ογ</u> Ταιο	<b><u>A</u></b> honor
<u>Ογ</u> Ζιρηνη	<b><u>A</u></b> peace
<u>Ογ</u> Κωτ	<b><u>A</u></b> building
<u>Ζαν</u> εελϣιρι	Young men
<u>Ζαν</u> εελλοι	Elders
<u>Ζαν</u> παρθενος	Virgins

❖ **Definite Articles**

- However, when want to introduce a noun that is already defined or specific (i.e.THE), such as:
  - The boy
  - The ball
  - The church

- In Coptic, there are three definite articles summarized below:

	Singular Masculine	Singular Feminine	Plural
Definite Article	Πι/`Π/`φ	†/τ/`θ	ΝΙ/ΝΕΝ

- When the word is singular masculine we use one of the following:  
Πι/`Π/`φ
- When the word is singular feminine we use one of the following:  
†/τ/`θ
- When the word is plural, regardless of the gender, we use one of the following: ΝΙ/ΝΕΝ.
- You do not need to know the specific rules for each article, only know the difference between singular masculine, singular feminine, and plural.
- Examples:

ϕρη†	The likeness (masculine)
Πιψαλμοϑ	The psalm (masculine)
τϣερι	The daughter (feminine)
† ϣφερι	The friend (feminine)
πταλβο	The healing (masculine)
θμαγ	The mother (feminine)
Νιπρεβια	The prayers (plural)
Νενϣηρι	The children (plural)

**Exercise:**

**Place the correct definite or indefinite article in front of each word**

The men \_\_\_\_\_ρωμι (masculine)

The daughters \_\_\_\_\_υερι (feminine)

The tongue \_\_\_\_\_ραν (masculine)

Trees \_\_\_\_\_υυηηη (plural)

The hour \_\_\_\_\_αηη (feminine)

The censer \_\_\_\_\_υογρη (feminine)

The brother \_\_\_\_\_σον (masculine)

The sister \_\_\_\_\_σωνε (feminine)

A woman \_\_\_\_\_Σειμε

Fires \_\_\_\_\_χρωη

## Lesson 11: Demonstrative Pronouns

- ❖ Demonstrative pronouns are used to point to something specific within a sentence. Pronouns can be specific to time or place.
- ❖ Demonstrative pronouns used to point to something near in time or distance: this, these
- ❖ Demonstrative pronouns used to point to something far in time or distance: that, those
- ❖ A few English examples:
  - This is a book.
  - These children are going to class.
  - That car is driving fast.
  - Those apples are delicious.

- ❖ In Coptic, the demonstrative pronouns exist in the near and far forms for the masculine and feminine forms.

- ❖ Demonstrative pronouns of the near form

Single masculine	ⲡⲁⲓ	This
Single feminine	Ⲛⲁⲓ	This
Plural	ⲡⲁⲓ	These

- ❖ Demonstrative pronouns of the far form

Single masculine	ⲡⲏ or ⲡⲉ	That
Single feminine	Ⲛⲏ or Ⲛⲉ	That
Plural	ⲡⲏ or ⲡⲉ	Those

- ❖ Examples:

This censer (f)	Ⲛⲁⲓ Ⲙⲟⲩⲣⲏ
This day (m)	ⲡⲁⲓ ⲉⲑⲟⲟⲩ
This table (f)	Ⲛⲁⲓ ⲧⲣⲁⲡⲉⲗⲁ
This place (m)	ⲡⲁⲓ ⲙⲁ
These gifts	ⲡⲁⲓ ⲗⲱⲣⲟⲛ
That land (m)	ⲡⲉ Ⲙⲁⲗⲓ
That woman (f)	Ⲛⲉ Ⲙⲁⲙⲉ
Those things	ⲡⲏ ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲛⲟⲩⲣⲓ
Those who handle	ⲡⲏ ⲉⲧⲱⲱⲧ

- ❖ Note how in the plural form no differentiation is made between male or female.

❖ Exercise:

This man	
This mother	
These priests	
That church	
Those deacons	
These censers	
That bread	
This virgin	

Footnote:

The near forms of the demonstrative pronouns exist in two forms. The one mentioned above is the absolute form which is used as a substantive (e.g. this is the day which the lord has made). The other form is the constructive form which is used immediately before the noun (e.g. this land). However, for our purposes we will only use absolute form.

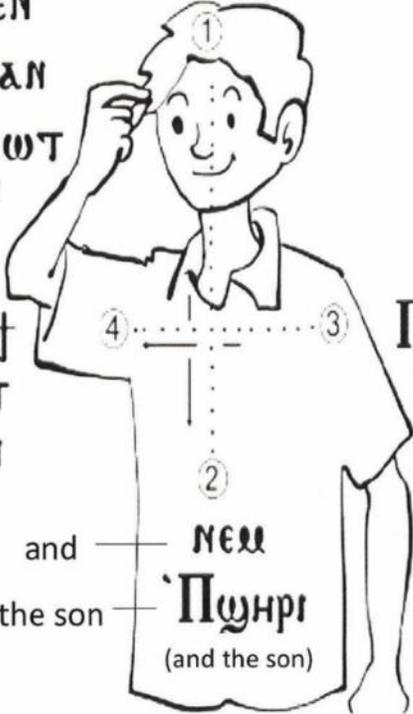
In ——— **ⲛⲉⲛ**  
The name — **Ⲫⲣⲁⲛ**  
Of the father — **ⲓⲪⲓⲱⲧ**  
(In the name of  
the Father)

God — **Ⲑⲧⲛⲟⲩⲧ**  
One — **ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲧ**  
Amen — **ⲁⲙⲛⲛ**  
(One God,  
Amen)

and  
the son

**ⲛⲉⲱ**  
**ⲛⲱⲛⲣⲓ**  
(and the son)

**ⲛⲉⲱ** ——— and  
**ⲛⲓⲛⲛⲉⲩⲱⲁ** — the spirit  
**Ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ** — Holy  
(and the Holy  
Spirit)



## Coptic Vocabulary



ἀποστολος=Apostle



σωτηρ = Savior



ψογρι =Censer



Ψληλ = Pray



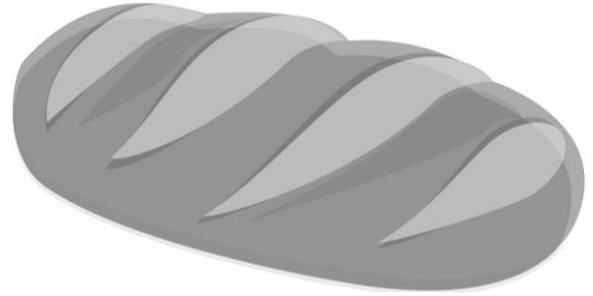
αψτωνϙ = He rose



Διακον=Deacon



Οὐρανὸν=Light



πρωικ = The Bread



Ἐπαρθένος =The Virgin



Ἐθεου = God

## Coptic Curriculum

Adopted from St. Mary and St. Rous Coptic Orthodox Church, Memphis, TN

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Ninth-Twelfth grades' Hymns

Asapsmos Watos

Prayed after the anaphora prayer in the liturgy of St.Basil  
\*Sung in English\*

O Lord, God of the hosts, return and behold from heaven, and look and visit this vine, restore and establish Her, this which Your right hand has planted.	Πὸς Φῆ ἡτε νίζουμ , κοτκ ογορ ζορωτ ἔβολ ḍεν τφε , ἀηατ ογορ ζευπῳινη ἡταιβω ἡλῶλι , σεβτωτς ογορ σεμνητς θα ἔτασῶς ἡζε τεκοῖνῆμ . Ἀλληλοῖα ἄλληλοῖα ἄλληλοῖα .
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Bless the herbs and the plants. May Your mercy and Your peace be a fortress to Your People.	ἶμοτ ἐνιστῆ νευ νισιμ μαρε πεκῆλι νευ τεκρῖρηνη , οι ἡσοβτ ἡπεκλῶς .
"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Your glory."	Χε ἄσιος ἄσιος ἄσιος , Κτριορ σαβαωθ , πλῆρηρς ὁ οφραῆορ και ἡ γη , τηρς ἄσιαρς σοτ λοζῆρς .

The conclusion of Watos Theotokias:

Prayed after the theotokias during midnight praises on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. \*Sung in English\*

+ O our Lord Jesus Christ, who carries the sin of the world, count us with Your sheep, who shall stand upon Your right.	+ Ὡ πενοῦ Ἰηρς Πχρς: φηεῶλι ἡφνοβι ἡπικοςμορς: οπτεν ρωη νευ νεκρῖηβ: ἡλι ετσαοῖνῆμ ἡμοκ.
And in Your second coming, may we never hear with trembling, I do not know you.	Ἀκῳἄνι ḍεν τεκμαρῆσνοτῆ: ἡπαροσῖα ετοι ἡροτῆ: ἡπενῶρενσωτεμ ḍεν οτῶερτερ: ζε τρωοτη ἡμωτεν ἄη.
+ Rather, may we be worthy, to hear Your tender voice, which is full of joy proclaiming and saying.	+ Ἀλλῶ μαρενερπεμῳα ἡσωτεμ: εῆσῖμη εῳμερ ἡρῶψι: ἡτε νεκμετῳαἡλῶθηρ: εσωῳ ἔβολ ερζω ἡμορς.



"Come unto Me, O blessed of My Father, and inherit the Life, that endures forever."	Χε̅ λυ̅ω̅νι̅ θ̅α̅ροι̅: η̅νε̅τ̅μα̅ρω̅ν̅τ̅ η̅τε̅ Π̅αι̅ω̅τ̅: ἀ̅ρι̅κ̅λ̅η̅ρο̅νο̅μι̅ν̅ ὑ̅πι̅ω̅ν̅δ̅: ε̅θ̅μ̅η̅ν̅ ε̅β̅ο̅λ̅ ψ̅α̅ ε̅νε̅ε̅.
+ The martyrs will come, bearing their afflictions, and the righteous shall come, bearing their virtues.	+ Σε̅ν̅αι̅ η̅ζε̅ η̅ι̅μ̅α̅ρ̅τ̅ι̅ρ̅ο̅ς: ε̅τ̅ε̅λ̅αι̅ δ̅α̅ νο̅ν̅θ̅α̅σ̅α̅νο̅ς: σε̅ν̅αι̅ η̅ζε̅ η̅ι̅δ̅ι̅κ̅ε̅ο̅ς: ε̅τ̅ε̅λ̅αι̅ δ̅α̅ νο̅ν̅πο̅λ̅η̅τι̅α̅.
The Son of God shall also come, in His Father's glory, to reward everyone, according to his works.	Ἦ̅ν̅αι̅ η̅ζε̅ π̅ῶ̅ν̅ι̅ ὑ̅φ̅: δ̅ε̅ν̅ πε̅ρ̅ω̅ν̅τ̅ η̅ε̅μ̅ φ̅α̅ Π̅ε̅ρ̅ω̅τ̅: ὑ̅μ̅α̅ ἡ̅ ὑ̅πι̅ο̅ν̅αι̅ π̅ιο̅ν̅αι̅: κα̅τ̅α̅ νε̅ρ̅ε̅β̅η̅ο̅ν̅ι̅ ε̅τ̅α̅ρ̅α̅ι̅ο̅ν̅.
+ O Christ the Logos of the Father, the only begotten God, grant us Your peace which is full of joy.	+ Π̅χ̅ς̅ π̅ι̅λ̅ο̅σ̅ο̅ς̅ η̅τε̅ Φ̅ι̅ω̅τ̅: π̅ι̅μ̅ο̅ν̅ο̅σ̅ε̅ν̅η̅ς̅ ἡ̅μ̅ο̅ν̅: ε̅κ̅ε̅ῃ̅ η̅αν̅ ἡ̅τε̅κ̅ε̅θ̅ι̅ρ̅η̅ν̅η̅: θ̅αι̅ ε̅θ̅μ̅ε̅ε̅ ἡ̅ρ̅α̅ψ̅ι̅ η̅ι̅β̅ε̅ν̅.
As You have given, to Your holy apostles, likewise also say unto us, "My peace I give to You."	Κ̅α̅τ̅α̅ φ̅ρ̅η̅ῃ̅ ε̅τ̅α̅κ̅τ̅η̅ς̅: ἡ̅νε̅κ̅α̅ς̅ι̅ο̅ς̅ ἡ̅ἀ̅πο̅στο̅λο̅ς̅: ε̅κ̅ε̅ζ̅ο̅ς̅ η̅αν̅ ὑ̅πο̅τ̅ρ̅η̅ῃ̅: ζ̅ε̅ τ̅α̅θ̅ι̅ρ̅η̅ν̅ ἡ̅ ὑ̅μ̅ο̅ς̅ ἡ̅ω̅τε̅ν̅.
+ "My peace which I have taken, from My Father, I leave unto you, from now and forever."	+ Ἰ̅α̅θ̅ι̅ρ̅η̅ν̅ ἄ̅νο̅κ̅: θ̅η̅ε̅τ̅α̅ι̅δ̅ι̅τ̅ς̅ θ̅ι̅τε̅ν̅ Π̅αι̅ω̅τ̅: ἄ̅νο̅κ̅ ἡ̅ ἡ̅μ̅ο̅ς̅ ἡ̅ε̅μ̅ω̅τε̅ν̅: ι̅σ̅ζ̅ε̅ν̅ ἡ̅ ἡ̅ν̅ο̅ν̅ η̅ε̅μ̅ ψ̅α̅ ε̅νε̅ε̅.
O the angel of this (day/night), flying up to the heights with this hymn, remember us before the Lord, that He may forgive us our sins.	Π̅ι̅ἀ̅σ̅τ̅ε̅λο̅ς̅ η̅τε̅ π̅α̅ι̅ε̅ζ̅ω̅ρ̅ε̅: ε̅τ̅η̅η̅λ̅ ε̅π̅ῆ̅ι̅ς̅ι̅ η̅ε̅μ̅ π̅α̅ι̅θ̅ῦ̅μ̅ο̅ς̅: ἀ̅ρ̅ι̅π̅ε̅ν̅μ̅ε̅ν̅ι̅ δ̅α̅τ̅ε̅ν̅ ὑ̅Π̅ο̅ς̅: ἡ̅τε̅ρ̅α̅ η̅ε̅ν̅η̅ο̅β̅ι̅ η̅αν̅ ε̅β̅ο̅λ̅.
+ The sick, O Lord heal them, those who slept repose them, and all of our brethren in distress, help us, my Lord, and all of them.	+ Ἠ̅η̅ε̅τ̅ῶ̅ν̅ι̅ μ̅α̅τ̅α̅λ̅θ̅ῶ̅ν̅: η̅η̅ε̅τ̅α̅τ̅ε̅ν̅κο̅τ̅ Π̅ο̅ς̅ μ̅α̅μ̅το̅ν̅ ἡ̅ω̅ν̅: η̅ε̅ν̅ε̅ν̅η̅ο̅ν̅ ε̅τ̅χ̅η̅ δ̅ε̅ν̅ θ̅ο̅ζ̅θ̅ε̅ζ̅ η̅ι̅β̅ε̅ν̅: Π̅α̅ο̅ς̅ ἄ̅ρ̅ι̅β̅ο̅ι̅θ̅ι̅ν̅ ε̅ρο̅ν̅ η̅ε̅μ̅ω̅ν̅.
May God bless us, and let us bless His holy name, and may His praise be always on our lips.	Ε̅ρ̅ε̅δ̅μ̅ο̅ν̅ ε̅ρο̅ν̅ η̅ζε̅ Φ̅: τ̅ε̅ν̅ἡ̅δ̅α̅μ̅ο̅ν̅ ε̅πε̅ρ̅α̅ν̅ ε̅ῶ̅ν̅: ἡ̅σ̅η̅ο̅ν̅ η̅ι̅β̅ε̅ν̅ ε̅ρε̅ πε̅ρ̅ε̅μ̅ο̅ν̅: ἡ̅α̅ψ̅ω̅π̅ι̅ ε̅ρ̅μ̅η̅ν̅ ε̅β̅ο̅λ̅ δ̅ε̅ν̅ ρ̅ω̅ν̅.
+ Blessed is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the perfect Trinity, we worship Him and glorify Him.	+ Χ̅ε̅ ἡ̅ ἡ̅μ̅α̅ρ̅ω̅ν̅τ̅ η̅ζε̅ Φ̅ι̅ω̅τ̅ η̅ε̅μ̅ π̅ῶ̅ν̅ι̅: η̅ε̅μ̅ π̅ι̅π̅νε̅μ̅α̅ ε̅ῶ̅ν̅: ἡ̅ Ἰ̅ρ̅ια̅ς̅ ε̅τ̅ζ̅η̅κ̅ ε̅β̅ο̅λ̅: τε̅νο̅ῶ̅ν̅τ̅ ὑ̅μ̅ο̅ς̅ τ̅ε̅ν̅ῆ̅ω̅ν̅ ἡ̅α̅ς̅.

O the Only Begotten Son:

Prayed after the sixth hour's psalm on Good Friday. *Coptic*

O only-begotte, Eternal and Immortal Word of God; who for our salvation did accept all (sufferings). Who was Incarnate of the holy Theotokos (Mother of God) and ever Virgin Mary.	Ὁ ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝΗΣ ΥἴΟΣ ΚΕ ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ ἸΠΑΡΧΩΝ ΚΕ ΚΑΤΑ ΔΕΞΑΜΕΝΟΣ: ΔΙΑ ΤΗΝ ἡΜΕΤΕΡΑΝ ΣΩΤΗΡΙΑΝ: ΣΑΡΚΩΘΗΝΕ ΕΚ ΤΗΣ ἁΓΙΑΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ ΚΕ ἁΙ (Παρθένου Μαρίας) β̅.
Who without change became man and was crucified Christ God. (Who) trampled down death by death. One of the Holy Trinity, who is glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, save us.	Ἀ ΤΡΕΠΤΩΣ ἘΝ ἄΝΘΡΩΠΙΣΑΣ ὄΣΤΑ ΤΡΩΘΙΣ ΤΕ ΧΡΙΣΤΕ ὁ ΘΕΟΣ. ΘΑΝΑΤΩ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ ΠΑΤΗΣΑΣ: ΙΣ ΩΝΤΗΣ ἁΓΙΑΣ Ἰ Τριάδος: ΣΤΗ ΔΟΞΑ ΖΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ ΤΩ Πατρι ΚΕ ΤΩ ἁΓΙΩ Πνεύματι: ΣΩΣΟΝ ἡΜΑΣ.
Holy God, who being God, for our sake, became man without change.	ἁΓΙΟΣ ὁ ΘΕΟΣ: ὁ ΔΙ ἡΜΑΣ ἄΝ ἄΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ: ΣΕ ΣΟΝΩΣ Ἀ ΤΡΕΠΤΩΣ ΚΕ ΜΗΔΕΝ ΘΕΟΣ.
Holy Mighty, who by weakness showed forth what is greater than power.	ἁΓΙΟΣ Ισχυρός ὁ ἘΝ Ἀσθενία ΤΟ ἸΠΕΡΕΧΟΝ ΤΗΣ Ισχυρός ἘΠΙ ΔΙΖΑΜΕΝΟΣ.
Holy Immortal, who was crucified for our sake, and endured death in His flesh, the Eternal and Immortal.	ἁΓΙΟΣ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ ὁ ΣΤΑ ΤΡΩΘΙΣ ΔΙ ἡΜΑΣ: ὍΤΟΝ ΔΙ ἁΣΤΑ ΤΡΟΥ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ ἸΠΟΜΙΝΑΣ ΣΑΡΚΙ ΚΕ ΔΙ ΖΑΣΤΩΣ ΚΕ ΕΝ ΘΑΝΑΤΩ ΣΕΣΟΝΩΣ ἸΠΑΡΧΙΣ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ.
O Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.	ἁΓΙΑ Ἰ Τριάς ἘΛΕΗΣΟΝ ἡΜΑΣ.

Tenen

Prayed at the end of the Greek Psali Watos for the Three Saintry Children during midnight praises. *Coptic*

We therefore present an offering and rational worship; we send unto you this day psalmodies for Your glory, O our Savior; Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael.	ΤΕΝΕΝ ὀΘΕΝ ὀΤΣΙΑΝ ΚΕ ΤΗΝ ΛΟΣΙΚΗΝ: ΔΑ ΤΡΙΑΝ ἁΝΑ ΠΕΜΠΩΜΕΝ: ΣΕ ΔΕ ΤΩ ΣΗΜΕΡΟΝ ὀΨΑΣ: ΠΡΟΣ ΔΟΞΑ ΣΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡ ἡΜΩΝ. ἁΝΑΝΙΑΣ ἁΖΑΡΙΑΣ ΚΕ ΜΙΣΑΗΛ.
Praise and glorify God at all times.	ΕΥΣΩΣ ΕΥΣΜΟΥ ΕΞΕΨ ἸΝ ΣΗΟΥ ΝΙΒΕΝ.

### **Aspasmos Watos**

Aspasmos is a coptic means "greeting". The hymn is given this title as we pray it after the greeting each other with the holy kiss. The lyrics are inspired from Psalm (80:14-15).

We are indeed God's vine that he labored in; He created, watched over us and saved us when we got corrupted. We are in sorrow, when we are separated from God. Yet, in his mercy, he is willing to visit us again and revive us. In firm hope and strong faith, we raise our hearts with this prayer because we are the work of His hands.

### **Conclusion of Watos Theotokia**

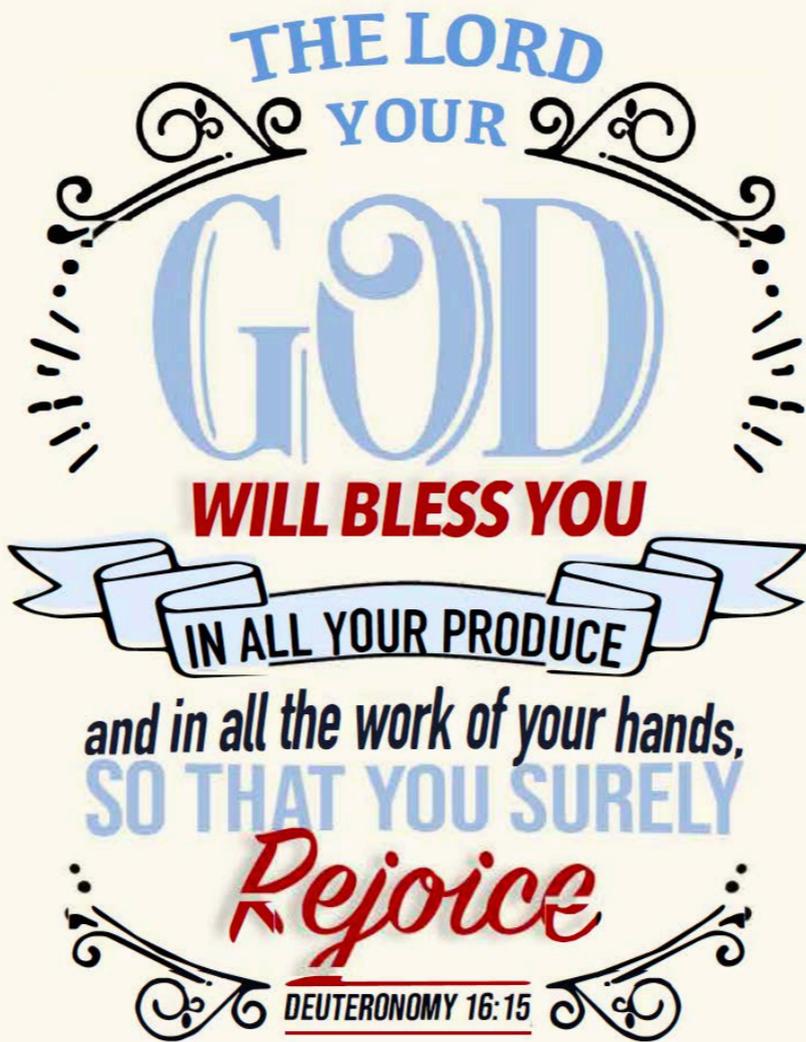
As we conclude the midnight praises, we are lifted up to heaven and filled with the heavenly peace. In the Second coming, Christ will come in glory to judge the living and the dead. Where would we stand? We are reminded with the heavenly prize to focus on our goal and strive harder to attain it.

### **Omonogenesis**

A spectacular hymn prayed by the Church on Great Friday in the sixth hour at the foot of the cross. While the world sees crucified Jesus as weak and humiliated, we behold him God incarnate. While the world consider him dead on the cross, we acknowledge him as the immortal God. He was truly human and was like us except sin alone, thus bearing our corruption, weakness, shame to grant us incorruption, strength and glory. We are speechless in front of the incarnate God and Savior and cry our mightily HOLY HOLY HOLY.

### **Tenen**

A special hymn sung after the Psalm of Aripsalin. It is inspired of the three youth praise in the furnace, hence, we ought to pray it with fiery spirit. Being delivered from the eternal condemnation and the fire of the Satanic temptations, we offer praises to our God. May God dwell in our hearts and minds, and we sanctify every thought and every emotion for Him who loved and saved me. May we offer him our heart as a sacrifice of thanksgiving.



THE LORD  
YOUR

GOD

WILL BLESS YOU

IN ALL YOUR PRODUCE

and in all the work of your hands,  
SO THAT YOU SURELY

Rejoice

DEUTERONOMY 16:15



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