



Archangel Raphael Newsletter

ISSUE 2 – VOLUME 1 – DECEMBER 2009



The Adoration of Saint Mary

HG Bishop Youssef

St. Mary is the central figure in the two Gospel accounts of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. The “Mother of God” is seldom mentioned in the New Testament outside of the birth narratives in the opening chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke. The name of St. Mary is mentioned only once in the Holy Gospel of St. Mark and the Holy Book of Acts.

Why then has St. Mary carried a name that has long been remembered as the JOY OF GENERATIONS? It is through her enduring example of obedient faith, strong will, and spiritual purity that we come to understand why she is REJOICED OF ANGELS.

We are told of many hardships the Blessed Mary faced in her lifetime-- the possibility of a divorce, a long, long journey to Bethlehem to give birth to her Son in a shelter for animals.

St. Mary also experienced many joys in her life. Among them were:

1. Shepherds proclaiming the angelic hosts’ announcement of the Messiah’s birth;
2. Two aged prophets in the Temple exalting her Son;
3. Wise men from the distant East kneeling down to worship the baby Jesus;
4. She witnessed our Lord Jesus Christ’s first miracle at the Wedding Feast.
5. In addition, St. Mary was present at the Day of Pentecost and filled with the Living Flame.

Due to St. Mary’s obedient and positive response to the Annunciation, our salvation through her Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, became possible. Through her will and faith, she voluntarily submitted to the will of God.

Therefore when our Orthodox Church honors the “Mother of God” it is not just because God chose her but also because she herself chose submission to the will of God.

St. Mary said, “I am the handmaiden of the Lord, let it be according to your word” (Luke 1:35-38).

Therefore we are able to recognize the free grace of God because St. Mary played an active role in conceiving Jesus Christ. The Divine Incarnation was realized because she perceptively and faithfully accepted obedience.

Church Services

Sunday: Divine Liturgy: 8:00 - 11:30 AM

Tuesday: Divine Liturgy: 6:00- 8:00 AM

Friday: Divine Liturgy: 8:15 – 10:30 AM

The family & parenting ministry meets every first Friday of each month: 7:30 – 9:00 PM

Saturday: Vespers Prayers: 7:00 - 7:30 PM

Kihak nights: 7:30 – 11:30 PM

“Come hearken to me, for I proclaim to you, that the true God has come, and took flesh from the Virgin. Truly she gave birth to Him, through her true virginity.”
Saturday Psali Watos

“In Christ We Have ...”

In Christ we have...

A life that can never die,
A peace that can never be understood,
A rest that can never be disturbed,
A joy that can never be diminished,
A hope that can never be disappointed,
A glory that can never be clouded,
A light that can never be darkened,
A purity that can never be defiled,
A wisdom that can never be baffled,

**RESOURCES THAT CAN NEVER
BE EXHAUSTED**

The use of candles in church

The use of candles in church dates back to the apostolic era, as they were used for lighting.

Spiritual meanings:

+ Candles lighted in front of the icons

In front of the icon of St. Mary, it declares that she is the mother of the Light of the world.

In front of the icons of all other saints, it declares that their lives shine on us, showing us the way to the kingdom of God, so we can be guided by their faith.

+ Candles lighted in church:

Believers light candles to show that they are ready to give themselves up as a live purified sacrifice, through their good deeds.

One of the fathers said about candles: "Do not think it's a small thing to light a candle in front of an icon while praying, and remember that you are offering it to the Lord who is full of glory, who lives in the unperceived light".

Let's practice this saying and promise God to offer our lives and our souls as candles for His sake.



CHURCH NEWS

+ Our high school kids enjoyed their convention in Panama City, FL last week. The theme of the convention was about the Holy Bible.

+ A marriage convention will be held in Houston in January 29th - 31st. Everybody is invited. The convention will be held in Hilton Nasa. Online registration is available now at the diocese website.
www.suscopts.com

+ The Church invites you to join the New Year's Eve celebrations on Thursday, December 31 at 8:00 PM. The Sunday school children will be Christmas caroling and presenting some hymns.

+ The Church congratulates Victor Garas for completing his Ph.D. work course. Victor received his Ph.D. in Engineering from Georgia Tech in December 2009.

+ A new priest will be ordained in West Palm Beach, FL in January 3rd, 2010.



Holidays Church Schedule

- + New Year's Eve Celebrations (Thursday, 12/31) : 8:00 PM– 12:00 AM
- + New Year's Liturgy (Friday, 01/01) : 8:30 – 11:00 AM
- + Nativity Liturgy (Wednesday, 01/06):
Midnight Prayers & Praises 5:30 – 7:00 PM
Matins Prayers 7:00 – 8:30 PM
- Christmas Liturgy 8:30 – 12:10 AM
- + Christmas Day Gathering (Thursday, 01/07):
1:00 – 8:00 PM

NEXT ISSUE

We are always on the lookout for news items about our congregation. Let us know about events such as births, graduations, anniversaries, birthdays, and the like.

Please note that the January issue of the Archangel Raphael Church Newsletter editorial deadline is Friday, January 15, 2010.

Submit your news by email to:
ArchangelNewsletter@gmail.com



FAMILY & PARENTING CORNER



Mark
Your
Calendar!

The next family & parenting meeting will be on **February 5:** "Do We Want to Raise Good Children or Godly Children?"
Fr. Younan Labib



You've Got Questions? We've Got Answers!

From marriage matters, to family matters, to parenting issues, The Family & Parenting Ministry (FPM) of Archangel Raphael will help you get the right answers to your questions. All questions will be answered by specialized family & parenting consultants/professionals.

❖ **What if a wife is spiritually more mature than her husband who is supposed to be the high priest of the home?***

When choosing a partner for marriage, one of the criteria is to look at their spiritual maturity. Unfortunately, in many cases choices and decisions are made emotionally, putting more emphasis on the social, financial, educational level of the partner, while ignoring or undermining the spiritual side. Much happiness in life depends upon making the right choice. It is beneficial to have both spouses spiritually compatible. St. Peter says, "**Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of the their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear**" (1 Pet 3:1,2). Note that the one who thinks of himself/herself more spiritual should not look at his/her spouse as inferior. Growing spiritually is a life-long process that does not peak, but should always be on the rise.

❖ **What does "The man being the head of the wife" mean?***

It means that as the Lord Jesus Christ is the head or governor of the church and the head of man; so is a man the head or governor of a woman. This, however, should not give a husband the license to exercise tyranny nor a woman manipulation. Wives should act under the authority of their husbands as the church acts under the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, her protector and savior. As the church submits to the Lord, so should wives submit to their husbands whose role is to protect and comfort them and provide for all their needs within their capacity of doing so.

* The above questions have been answered by **HG Bishop Youssef, Bishop of the Coptic Diocese of the Southern United States.**

Please send your questions/concerns to:
ArchangelNewsletter@gmail.com

Please note that all published questions will remain absolutely anonymous

To contact Fr. Athanasius Kaldas

Cell: (832) 865-3114

E-mail: athanasiuskaldas@gmail.com

