

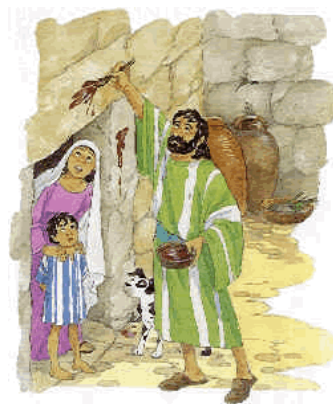


***“That I may know Him and the power of His  
Resurrection and the SHARING of His  
Sufferings” (Philippians 3:10)***

My Beloved Children,

Every year just prior to the Feast of the Glorious Resurrection, we relive the Holiest of all weeks, the **Holy Week**, also known as the **Holy Pascha Week**.

The word “pascha” means “Passover.” It reminds us of the escape of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and the sparing of their firstborn when the destroying angel killed the firstborn of the Egyptians. *“It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when He struck down the Egyptians”* (Exodus 12:27).



The celebration of Passover requires a lamb to be sacrificed. It is during this Holy Week that we witness this lamb being our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins. *“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29).

During this week we live the final days our Lord Jesus Christ spent on this earth. Every day there are church services to remember the events that happened to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a week filled with rituals such as covering church icons, pil-



lars, and lecterns in black and readings of a step by step account of our Lord's sufferings until His death.

You may ask, what is the benefit of sharing the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ? It is His love for us to return to Him.

This year I ask you **Mighty Angels** to *embrace* the love our Lord Jesus Christ reveals to us during this blessed week. He endured pain and died in order to give us life. What greater love is there for one life sacrificed to save another? *"God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them"* (I John 4:16).



In this issue, we will focus on the events of the Holy Week so that you may *participate and understand* the sufferings of our Savior.

May we all experience the benefit of sharing the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ and witness the lasting victory through His Resurrection.

God bless you,

Bishop Youssef

Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States