

MIGHTY MAGAZINE **ARROWS**



LIFE.GOD.TRUTH.FOR COPTIC YOUTH



Galatians
6:14

Fall 2010 Volume 9 No. 1

"Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth" Psalm 127:4

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God, Amen!

My Dear Beloved Youth,

In this issue of the Mighty Arrows Magazine, we will share and discuss with you the power, the strength, the joy, the courage, the wisdom, and the beauty of the Holy Cross. This season in the church is commenced by the Coptic New Year (1727) in which we celebrate the era of the holy martyrs who courageously and lovingly shed their blood so that we of future generations can enjoy the church and deliver it to other future generations in the same manner and care. In the amazing lives of the martyrs, we see the power of the Holy Cross and the joy by which they lived by it.

This blessed season also marks another significant commemoration: the Martyrdom of the great Saint and Forerunner, John the Baptist. He bore many titles as one alone was not sufficient to describe the impact his life would have on the repentant and the faithful as they journey their way unto Salvation through the Holy Sacraments beginning with Holy Baptism. These are the kind of servant leaders who by the grace of God have empowered those who serve in the ministry and helped the church to flourish in spirituality regardless of monetary or political adversities.

We ought to remember that each day is an opportunity for renewal. We put to rest the former pains and trials of each day with prayer and closure, thus, beginning each morning, we look towards the world around us with hope, optimism, and love. If we choose to see God in everything and in everyone, he will surely reveal Himself. Therefore, we ought not to be disheartened by the challenges of the day, the setbacks, and even the rejections. In His awesome economy, we stand confident in His unfailing love, never defeated by our inadequacies. We rest upon His willingness to heal our weaknesses, His delight in every effort we make to persevere in His love, and His strength to overcome temptation and evil by His Grace.

I pray that you will continue in awareness of the immense blessings that surround you at all times. When in fear or doubt, do not be afraid to call upon your friends who are the angels and saints and request their aid. The Holy Cross is our badge of honor, whether it is the one you wear or the one you bear.

Glory to the Holy Trinity, forever, Amen!

God bless you,



Bishop Youssef
Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

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Mission Statement

We, the magazine staff, have a mission regarding you, the reader: to encourage you on your Christian walk and to strengthen you through articles, answers, and more about God's very special plan for you.

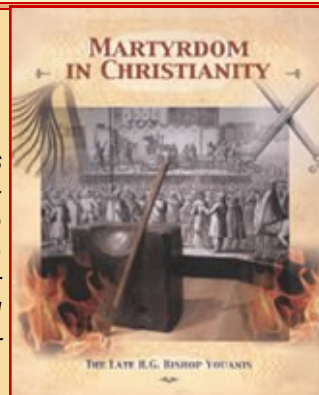
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RECOMMENDED READING BY HGBY:

"Martyrdom in Christianity" by the late H.G. Bishop Youanis

Excerpt:

"Besides the care of the Church—congregation and servants—for confessors and martyrs from the material, psychological and spiritual aspects, the Church tried to charge the emotions of the believers and motivate their feelings, love, and longing toward God through the writings of some of its leaders and instructors urging martyrdom. Whoever peruses these writings will perceive the burning enthusiasm, the ideal spirituality and the glory waiting for martyrs. Among the most outstanding fathers and instructors who dealt with this subject and who lived amidst the fire of persecution were Scholar Origen, Scholar Tertullian, and martyr St. Cyprian."



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Thank you for your prayers and support of this ministry.

Servants in Christ,
Mighty Arrows Magazine Staff

**Coptic New Year
September 11**

**Feast
of the
Holy Cross
September 27-29**



MIGHTY ARROWS
MAGAZINE

FALL 2010



O John, Son of the Promise

By Mareya Naguib

As we begin to celebrate a new Coptic year, we are reminded of the story of the great hero, St. John the Baptist. On Tout 2nd, the forerunner and great prophet, St. John the Baptist, son of Zacharias the priest, was martyred by King Herod's orders. His life consisted of preaching and crying out to the people to weep for their sins and to "*repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!*" (Mt 3:2). The two main messages that St. John the Baptist gave are those of repentance and confession. It is with those two actions that one can move closer to the heavenly gates of the Kingdom of God.

Repentance has great value in the eyes of God, as depicted in Psalm 51:17, "*A broken and a contrite heart... God... will not despise.*" God is happier when His children note the error of their ways and seek to be purified of their sins. St John the Baptist cried in the wilderness, urging the people to wake up and repent since the Kingdom of God was near. In Hebrew, the word "repentance" means "turn." According to St. John the Baptist, repentance is clearly not something that can simply blossom in a heart full of emotions and good intentions. It has to be proven. The "turn" is a return back to God in obedience and trust. To obey God means following the Law and His will to do good. Through this, God grants remission of sins, saving the righteous from condemnation in the Final Judgement.

However, one's repentance is incomplete unless it goes hand-in-hand with confession. People must confess their sins to their father of confession so that they can receive the absolution. The Christian individual is then completely purified and can, thus, once again continue on the path towards the kingdom of heaven. People were baptized by St. John, confessing their sins, so that they might be prepared to receive the Messiah. Confession of sin was a sign of repentance that is essential to baptism. St. John's baptism was for remission of sins only, purifying people for the coming of the Messiah and helping to deliver them from the wrath that is to come. It did not, however, confer regeneration nor adoption as children of God, as does Christian baptism.

Many youth dislike confessing to their father of confession and argue that it is good enough to feel guilty and to confess their sins to God alone. This is a misunderstanding. When we were baptized, we were given citizenship into heaven and we, dressed in purity, were pronounced God's children. However, as we grew older in the world, we began to fall into many sins and the purity of our minds and hearts collapsed. This is why we need the sacrament of confession, because it restores us to our original pure state that was attained immediately after baptism. Every time we confess our sins, it is like our baptism, and our garments turn back to being whiter than snow.

As the New Year begins, we must all turn back and try to be better people so that we can be with Christ forever. We must learn from St John the Baptist to always repent and to confess. For "*if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 Jn 1:9). Let us begin the New Year with a clean and pure heart so that we may fight the good fight and continue in steadfastness throughout the race.

Synexarium: Vol. 1, pg 3

Dialogue with a Young Man: My Life Is Lifeless

By Victor Beshir

Youth: Do you have a few moments to talk? (This is how this young man stopped to address me. His face looked tired, as if he had not slept for days. Since he had never asked to talk to me before, I concluded that this must be about something important.)

Servant: With pleasure my friend.

Youth: Since I know you tell the truth, I came to ask you a question that, not only bothers, but tortures me. (He stopped for a moment as if he was trying to pick the right words to formulate his question. Then he asked), Is life worth living?

Servant: Why do you ask this question?

Youth: Because I feel like my life is lifeless, full of emptiness. Nothing has succeeded in giving me a sense of deep happiness.

Servant: Are you familiar with natural laws?"

Youth: You mean the natural consequences of our actions.

Servant: Yes. Now, if I expose myself to extreme heat or extreme cold, I will get sick, right? Likewise, if I eat spoiled food I will get sick.

Youth: Yes, I agree.

Servant: Good. Life is the same. We need to make choices every day. If our choices are good, then we will harvest satisfaction and happiness. However, if our choices are sinful, evil, or against the natural law of giving, then we will harvest unhappiness.

Youth: What do you mean by 'the natural law of giving'?

Servant: Look around you: the sun rises daily to give light and warmth; rain freely showers the earth with water for humans, animals, and plants; oxygen is available to all without charge to sustain life; the morning breeze travels the earth to give freshness to all. There are millions of natural things that give freely to each creature individually, or to all creatures collectively, in order to sustain life. Therefore, we can come to the conclusion that *giving leads to positive actions toward sustaining life and consequently toward happiness*. Now you can understand why Christianity praises the act of giving, as St. Paul says: 'And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Youth: I never realized that giving could be a secret path to happiness. But I can achieve this easily.

Servant: How?

Youth: I will participate in some of the United Way programs to help children, the elderly, or the sick.

Servant: Wonderful! However, keep in mind that you can give, not only through a charitable organization, but also to all the people you deal with on a daily basis.

Youth: Do you mean my parents or siblings? I do not have anything to give to my parents.

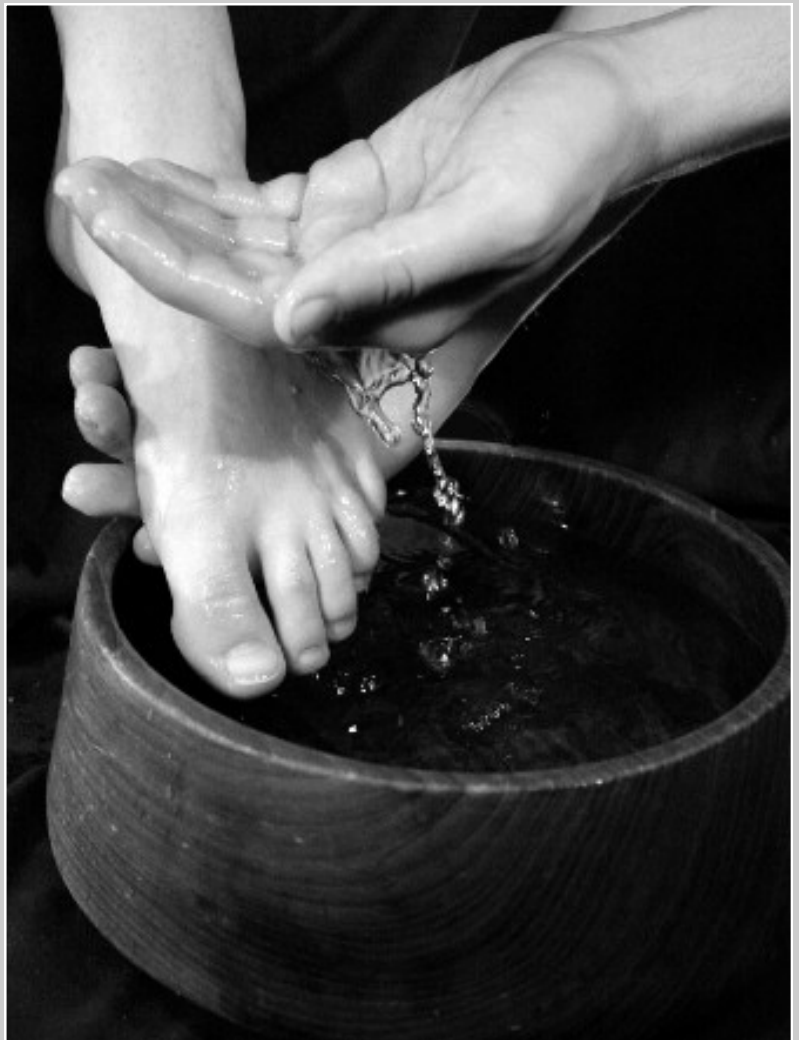
Servant: It seems that you understand giving as a solely materialistic matter; materialistic giving is just one aspect of giving. There is another, greater type of giving that is non-materialistic. Your parents need hugs, acceptance, and words of thanks; listening to and spending time with them will have more value than materialistic giving. For your siblings, colleagues, and others, allow time to listen, to uplift, to support, to provide a shoulder to cry on and a heart to rest on. Love them and give to them whenever you can.

Youth: I have never said a word of gratitude to my parents. I left them a few years ago. I never understood them.

Servant: Again, think back to the importance of choices; you can choose to listen to them, to accept them as they are even though they are different, to understand their world which is surely different from yours, and to put yourself in their shoes.

Youth: (The young man started to smile) I will go and do this and I will let you know what happens.

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Dt 30:19).



Rare, Medium, or Well-Done?

By Miena Armanious

I still remember when I was first asked that question; I even remember the whole dialogue. A friend invited me out for dinner. It was my first week in the United States and I was still trying to understand how things run in this country. This is how it went:

Writer: I will try the rib-eye steak.

Waiter: Do you want it with soup or salad?

Writer: Salad will be fine.

Waiter: What kind of salad do you want?

Writer: Mmmm, green salad will be fine.

Waiter: What dressing do you prefer?

Writer: (Internally: Mmmm, Isn't it just olive oil and vinegar?) What kind of dressing do you have?

Waiter: We have Caesar, ranch, vinaigrette, thousand island, blue cheese...

Writer (Internally: Oh My Lord! I did not recognize any of the names that he said.) What was the first one?

Waiter: Caesar?!

Writer: I will try the Caesar one.

Waiter: You also have a choice for one side.



After I picked something from the menu, I thought I was done! But here came the question that struck me most: "Sir, how do like your meat?"

I remember very well that I originally misunderstood the question, thinking that he was wondering how much I liked meat, which seemed awkward. Luckily, my American friend made it clearer, "How do you like your meat cooked: rare, medium, or well done?" At that moment, I was speechless, not because I did not know what I want as before, but because I felt there is no limit to choices, thinking "Truly, this is the land of freedom!"

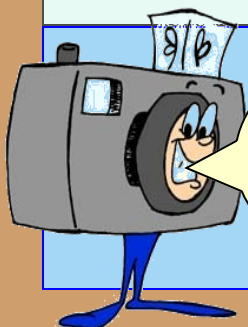
It is very interesting how we associate freedom with the number of choices or the different options that life offers to us. It is a very well established concept in the minds of many Americans and Egyptians alike. But I also think that it is a concept that dwells first within our earthly human nature before it manifests itself as part of the culture. On a more personal level, I always find the idea that I still have many options in my life a very pleasant idea. It makes me feel that I am still free and in control of my life. I sometimes even do not make a choice because I know that once I do, I give away my freedom to choose! It is a very depressing idea, isn't it? However, it explains why the commitments to choices we make in life are hard to keep; we are giving away our freedom.

There is also the other extreme, which I call the "Don't-miss-the-chance!" misconception. It is always driven by the fear of losing what life offers us at the moment; what is offered today might not be available tomorrow! Therefore, we rush in making decisions when patience is asking us to wait. As Christ said, *"By your patience possess your souls!"* (Lk 21:19)

What should we do then? To answer this question, I need to address the essence of the problem: it is our definition of liberty or what we call freedom. Liberty is a state that manifests itself in different ways in our lives, namely spiritual and materialistic manifestations. As humans, we lean more towards the materialistic manifestations, simply because we do not need much effort to sense them. In some way, these materialistic manifestations go very well, sometimes perfectly, with our carnal nature. On the other hand, the effect of any materialistic stimulus does not stay long enough after the stimulus fades away. This creates a dilemma in our minds because many times, we make choices that should make us happy and satisfied but these feelings do not last long. Interestingly, this dilemma is resolved when we look at the spiritual aspect of liberty. From a Christian point of view, the human nature cannot coexist in a state of liberty and a state of sin. In a state of sin, we simply cannot say, "No!" to our carnal desires; we are just slaves to chemicals and hormones in our bodies that control us. I wonder how different from animals we are at this point. Maybe we are more sophisticated in responding to these chemicals, but definitely not free. I would say we act more like a better-programmed robot! 2 Pet 2:19 says, *"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage."* A very sad picture, isn't it? Christianity does not leave us with this negative picture, but rather offers the way out; *"For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."* (Gal 5:13)

St. Paul, the apostle, made it very clear in 2 Cor 4:18 when he said, *"We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."* We seek liberty through the unseen choices, but by doing so we cut down the number of the "seen" choices that we have. *"As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."* (2 Cor 6:10)

An earthly freedom might be a choice between rare, medium, or well done. True freedom is to be able to say and practice what St. Paul said in 1 Cor 8:13, *"Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble."*



We'd love to hear about your news and events. Send us your pictures and a Caption describing the occasion: mightyarrowmagazine@suscopts.org



**S.U.S.B.L.
Basketball
League
2010
Orlando, FL**

For real life Wisdom

By Christine Massoud

taught me that it cannot. But the truth of the matter is, *when you KNOW what you believe, you can easily BE.*

Finding ourselves is about acknowledging a simple truth: regardless of the roles we're acting out or the circumstances of our lives, we are each, quite simply, a soul in search of our Creator. Shaped in God's image, imbued with a soul that has eternal value, "who we are" is, for each of us, *"a child of our heavenly Father, an heir to His kingdom"* (Gal 4:7). Now stop here. Did you have a hard time reading this statement? Be honest with yourself: that's the first step. Do you truly feel that you are a son or daughter to Almighty God? Don't take it at face value, but stop and consider. Ask the hard questions, and challenge yourself and your faith. God wants us to know for sure, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that we are loved as children and heirs to His kingdom. To be honest with you, this statement is hard for me to read as well. But I have asked God, in sincerity, to show me who He is. *Show me Your glory, Lord.* And don't

Wisdom for REAL life: Who am I?

As we approach the beginning of a new year (Coptic year that is), I would like to introduce a new series: Wisdom for REAL life. I can't remember the number of times I have asked myself as I read verses or heard sermons, "Now how is that suppose to apply to me?" Well, I hope to use this series to do just that.

Do you sometimes take stock of the many hats you wear, and think, "I'm a student, a teacher, a sister, a brother, a cook, a friend, a business professional – *not to mention the president of No One Knows How To Do Anything Right Unless I Do It Myself, Inc.* – so why is it, then, that even with this full house of roles, I still wonder about who I am?" Many of us think this very same thing. And so, off we go on a search to find the "real me." We seek the advice of our friends and of the gurus of the self-help world, all who send us on wild-goose chases to set boundaries, better manage our time, or build our self-esteem. We buy a new Day-Timer, demand our fair share of daily hugs, and learn to tell our selves "I love me" more. But still we end up wanting. Why? Because the search for self-identity is not about self-esteem. It is neither a mystery nor an elusive truth; it is simply the acceptance of one's self. Self-acceptance is one of the concepts least talked about in Christianity today. Why? Because we simply accept that we are sinners. But does accepting this fact mean that we will sin more or less? The verdict is out. The majority claim yes. But, what if I say that I am a sinner who has been forgiven? Now, if I accept that, does it mean that I will sin more or less?

The answer definitely falls back to our foundation and our beliefs. But that's where the search begins. What do you believe about yourself? When no one is watching, who are you really? Are you someone who happened by chance? Were you put on this planet for a purpose? What do you really believe? You see, the focus here has shifted very quickly to your fundamental beliefs, because without fundamental beliefs how will you ever know who you are? For example, I went to the store the other day and was not charged for a pack of sodas I had at the bottom of my cart. Do I go back, stand in line again, and ask to pay? Or do I take the pack thinking that I already paid, in a way, because this store overcharges me for everything else? There are only two choices here: pay or don't pay. How does belief affect this situation? I believe I am an honest person; THEREFORE, I will go back and pay for what I have. Can everything in life be black and white like this? Wisdom has

think, for one second, that the God who created you, and even died to grant you the freedom to worship or reject Him, will ignore that request. If you are strong in faith, pray for others who don't see him. Pray that, in His time, He draws them near to Him.

There is great wisdom in knowing who we are. Nothing could be more important than to ask, "Who am I?" And nothing is more freeing than knowing who you are. But you should not be satisfied with just knowing, just repeating over and over what you were told about yourself. That can be a two-edged sword. If you are told great and wonderful things about yourself, but they are exaggerated, then you become high and mighty in your own eyes and only in your eyes. But on the other hand, if you are told negative lies and put downs, you will lose all sense of self worth. Listen to those who have nothing to gain from telling you how and who you really are. One of them is God. God is unchanged by our actions, never surprised or shocked by events that take place, yet *His Words are the best self-help ever written.*

Whether life showers down roses or rains only their thorns, the person we see staring back in the mirror is the same: the same person who was given this awesome privilege of knowing God, of standing in His courts, of seeing His mighty works, and of always having His love as a son or daughter. Accepting this birthright means that, in spite of many twists and turns in the roads our lives take, we know who we are. We must know and live who we are. It is an obligation—an honor, but not a burden—to reflect God's love.

During those questioning times—would the real me please stand up?—remind yourself of who you really are. You may be many things to many people, but the grace, strength, love, and leadership you bring to these roles look and feel different when you are clear about your true identity.

"Dear God, as busy as I am and as one day most assuredly melts into the next, I sometimes ask myself if there is more to life than the many hats I wear. I know that I am needed, wanted, and loved. Still, on some days, God, it feels like something is missing in my life. I do know that You are my God and I am Your child—an heir. Your heir. On those days when the world drowns out my knowledge of who I am, please remind me, heart to heart, that, apart from all that I am on this planet, believing in You first gives rise to my true identity—an awesome identity. Thank You for this enormous gift and for the price paid for it through Your beloved Son. Amen."

SEARCH THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

HOLY BOOK OF GENESIS

Chapter 29

What is the irony in the younger/older role reversal in Jacob's life?

Chapter 32

Did Jacob need to be afraid of Esau? Why or why not?

ANSWER TO A BIBLE QUESTION from the previous issue

What wrong doing did Isaac, Rebecca, Esau, and Jacob commit?

Isaac preferred Esau over Jacob.
Rebecca deceived her husband by helping Jacob impersonate Esau.
Esau did not value his birthright.
Jacob lied to his father.

ordinary people

PILLARS OF OUR TIME

MOTHER ERINI

Beloved Abbess of Abu-Seifen Convent

By Maria Fawzy



Serving in Extraordinary Ways

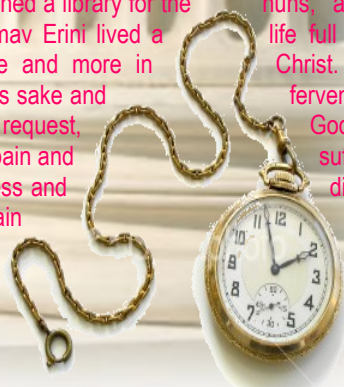
Tamar

As an Egyptian newspaper mentioned, the week of her departure to our Father, Tamav Erini was "A woman who lived a life of light!" She was a precious pillar to our generation. Ever since her birth in February of 1936, she was a chosen fruit, and her mission was clearly assigned. "She is not yours; she is ours, but look after her and bring her up properly," were the words of St. Mary when she appeared to Tamav Erini's mother while in labor. Her family lived a life full of glorification and praise to our Savior and had living relationships with the saints, including many apparitions and conversations. Tamav Erini was no different; she had a very special relationship with Abu Seifein.

Tamav Erini was passionate about the monastic life from a young age, and at the age of 18 she started her mission at the convent. In 1962, after the departure of the mother superior of the convent, Tamav Erini, the youngest of all the nuns, was dragged and pushed in tears to the church to be ordained by His Holiness Pope Kyrillos VI, as the next mother superior who is responsible for the convent of Abu Seifein. She had previously refused the position of leadership because she felt it impossible that she become mother superior as a youth, but this was the will of God.

Through fervent prayers, fasting, and metanias, Tamav Erini sought to revive the monastic life and established needed monastic disciplines. Amongst many others, Tamav Erini established the communal table, laid the foundation of the Pachomian communal life, established a library for the nuns, and built several churches at the convent. Tamav Erini lived a life full of spiritual depth and desire to grow more and more in Christ. She even desired to be a martyr for Christ's sake and asked for it in prayer. According to her request, that she suffer sickness and undergo pain and for His sake. She accepted the sickness and with joy and marvel. Throughout the pain suffering, she was thankful and glorified God until her last breath. Her heavenly wedding was on November of 2006.

May her prayers be with us. Amen.



Marriage

How do we know when a person is emotionally mature and ready for marriage?

Your spiritual father will be the gauge to assess your emotional and spiritual readiness. When a young man is emotionally and financially ready to establish a household, he should solicit his spiritual father's guidance, and that of his own parents. A young woman, as well needs to consider her own obligations and also consult her spiritual father and her own parents. When Abraham, Isaac's biological and spiritual father, saw that it was the right time to seek a wife for his son, he gave specific instructions to which Isaac and Rebecca complied; thus reaping the fruit of obedience and experiencing love and romance in their successful marriage (Genesis 24).



Contemplations on the Historical Significance of the Cross

H. G. Bishop Youssef
Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern US



Crucifixion, as a method of punishment, was in use among the Egyptians in the Old Testament, *"Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree and the birds will eat your flesh from you"* (Genesis 40:19). The Holy Book of Esther (7:10) reveals that the Carthaginians and Persians also utilized crucifixion to punish their criminals. *"So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the kings' wrath subsided."* It is commonly known that the Greeks and Romans used crucifixion from the earliest of times. That is why perhaps many scholars believe that the Jews learned the concept of crucifixion from the Romans.

In addition to its being documented in the Old Testament as a painful instrument of death the cross is also documented in the New Testament and in the writings of Church Fathers.

In the New Testament times, in particular, crucifixion was purposefully meant to be a demeaning way in which to die. It was reserved for the vilest of criminal acts, as an emblem of a disparaging slave or servants' death, and a murderers' punishment. Degradation was an added dimension of the cruel infliction. The cross was to all a symbol of the profoundest horror.

There are now thought to be three different forms of crosses used for crucifixion during Biblical times. The first resembled the small letter "t", the second formed the capital letter "T", and the third was in the form of an "X".

Most Biblical scholars believe that the cross, which the Lord Jesus Christ suffered upon, was a Latin cross in the form of the small letter "t". The Latin cross, "t", had an upright beam above the cross bar, on which a "title" could be placed. There was a projection from the central stem of the cross, which the body of the sufferer could rest upon. This was not to provide occasional relief from suffering but the purpose of the projection was to prevent the weight of the body from tearing the hands away.

Other scholars refer to the Lord Jesus Christ's Holy Cross as in the form of the capital letter, "T". No one alludes to His cross as being in the form of "X".

Barnabas (c.70-130) writes, "The cross was to express grace by the letter "T".

Victims were flogged and then forced to walk to the site of their impending death dragging the beam of the cross on which they were to be hung. No one could bear to carry the full weight of the heavy cross prepared for the purpose of crucifixion. The one to be crucified was also stripped naked of all his clothes to further add to the humiliation. At the designated crucifixion site the victim was nailed through his wrists and ankles to the wooden cross, which he had been forced to drag.

Tertullian (c. 197) writes concerning the Lord Jesus Christ's crucifixion, "He said unto him, 'Pass through the midst of Jerusalem and write the sign of "Tau" on the foreheads of the men who groan and grieve over all the enormities that are done in their midst" (Ezekiel 9:4). Now the mystery of this sign in which the foundation of life was prepared for mankind, was in various ways predicted.

The Greek letter "TAU" is equivalent to the English capital letter "T" which is in the shape of the cross.

Death upon the cross was meant to be mercifully slow and agonizing. Death by crucifixion usually resulted from suffocation, after the crucified became too exhausted to pull himself up in order to breathe. Crucifixion could entail pain, dizziness, abdominal cramps, muscle cramps, thirst, starvation, fever, tetanus, tormenting crowds, and prey attracted to unattended wounds. It has been documented that the consequences of crucifixion could potentially be body rot as a result of the sun and rain or being devoured by the birds and surrounding countryside beasts.

With the crown of thorns upon the Lord Jesus Christ's Holy head and a mocking crowd below Him anxious to witness His death,, the humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ was completed on the Holy Cross.

Besides the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Apostles St. Peter, St. Andrew, St. James the Less, and St. Simon were also crucified.

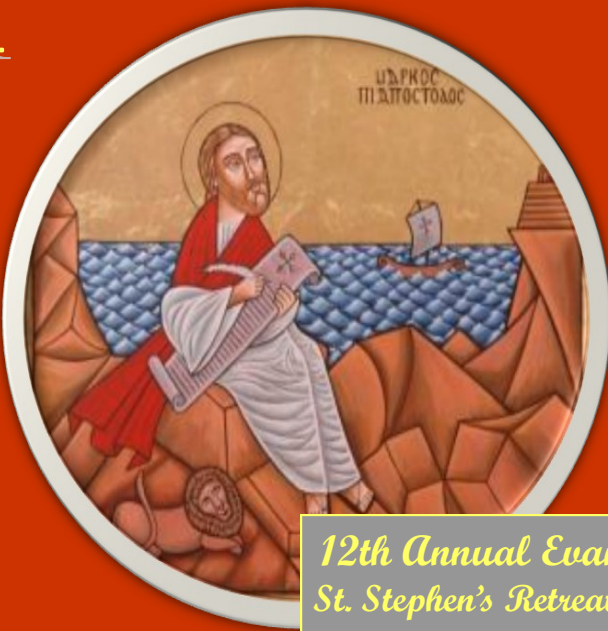
On the Feast Day of the Discovery of the Holy Cross by Queen Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine the Great, underneath amassed accumulated rubble on Golgotha, let us reverently remember the circumstances of our Lord's death and His great and surpassing love for us all.

Let us all take a moment to lift up our eyes toward the Holy Cross in remembrance of St. Helena's finding of the True Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mothers' sister... and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He said to His mother, 'Woman behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop and put it to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said 'it is finished': and He bowed His head and gave up the spirit upon the Holy Cross" (John 19:25-30).

The cross, as the bearer of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ, remains with us today still bearing the same message as it did the day of the Lord's most Holy death, *"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God"* (I Corinthians 1:18).

MISSIONS & PILGRIMAGES



*12th Annual Evangelism Conference
St. Stephen's Retreat Center, Titusville FL*



Bolivia



Mexico



Greece & Turkey



South Africa

CONGRATULATIONS
Consecrations & Grand Openings



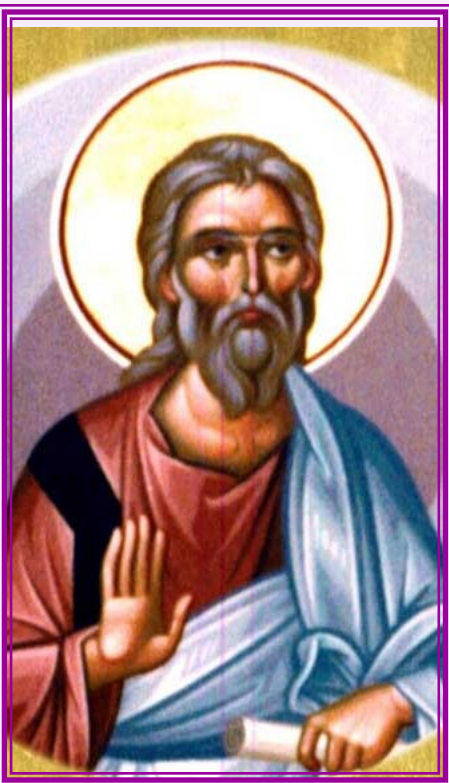
*St. Philopateer
Dallas, TX*



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St. Stephen Christian Retreat Center, Titusville FL



GETTING TO KNOW THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

AN INTERVIEW WITH ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

By James Helmy

Interviewer: Fr. Clement, it is truly an honor! A resident of the great city of Alexandria, home to the largest and best-equipped libraries, the richest museums, the biggest theaters, the longest race track, and the finest philosophers the world has ever seen! Here was where the Septuagint was translated, where the first Christian university was opened, and where the greatest defenders of Orthodoxy were born and bred. I must confess it is rather intimidating to talk with a mind that was nurtured in that great city. I thank you for agreeing to speak with someone so unworthy of your time as a modern journalist.

St. Clement: The honor is mine. I truly admire you.

Int: For what? This is the first time you have met me.

S.Clem: Believe me, I sincerely consider that any 21st century individual who takes the time to sit and discuss the ideas of a Church Father who lived about 19 centuries earlier is a very rare and wise person.

Int: Thank you for your kindness. Let's begin with your name; I find it very interesting. Can you please tell it to me in full?

S.Clem: Titus Flavius Clemens.

Int: Are you aware that it is the same name of a very famous person who lived in your day?

S.Clem: Yes, the Roman emperor.

Int: You say it so casually. The Roman emperor—you should be proud!

S.Clem: There is something you should understand: we the Christians of the early centuries paid much less attention to important people than in your days. To an early Christian, since Christ was his personal Lord and Savior, every other personality of note (rich, famous, or influential) was insignificant.

Int: You are right, father. Our society has a tremendous problem with celebrity worship.

S.Clem: I think I know why your generation has this problem: you have an instrument of behavior control much stronger than anything we ever imagined.

Int: What is it?

S. Clem: Media. It has the potential to take a person with, say, a voice just above average, or looks just above average, or even a personality way below average, and thrust him or her into the position of a god—almost a real idol. I believe you even have a television show which frankly names a certain singer or actor as a national "idol."

Int: Oh, but with all due respect Fr. Clement, we do not believe in idols anymore; we will never actually bow down or burn incense to any of these singers.

S. Clem: Yes, but here is something else you must understand. To the early Christians, worship was not defined by a simple physical posture or action. Modern Americans adopt an idol's habits, his words, her clothes, his brand of shoes, her facial expressions. In effect, they become the idol's followers. That is worship. The Church says that you worship Christ if you adopt His teachings and way of life, not just bow down and say, "I'm Christian."

Int: Interesting.

S. Clem: And disappointing.

Int: Hmmm...There is another point of your teaching which I would like to explore. It involves the "New Song." You once wrote:

"Behold the might of the new song! It has made men out of stones, and men out of beasts. Those who were dead have come to life again, simply by listening to this song. It also composed the universe into a melodious

order, and tuned the discord of the elements to a harmonious arrangement—so that the whole world might become harmony." (Exhortation ch. i)

Profound words, but what exactly is this new song?

S. Clem: You must first understand what was the old song? If you can think of all the myths, ideas, and customs of the ancient world as the song of ancient humanity, and that song had gone way out of tune... The old song or noise rather, was saved by the coming of the new song, which is the Word Himself.

Int: You also wrote the following:

He who is of David, the Word of God...by the Holy Spirit tuned the universe, and especially man—who composed of body and soul is a miniature universe—and makes melody to God on this instrument of many tunes.

You are saying that God "tuned" the universe to play this new song?

S. Clem: Precisely—and man is the primary instrument that is tuned. For Christ is our song and hymn; and we are the strings, pipes, and vocal cords. Think of it like this: every man and woman is a musical instrument meant to play God's new song. The more we are in tune with the melody, the sweeter our lives sound; the more out of tune, the more discordant, and harsh will be our lives.

Int: Musical instruments... I never thought of us like that.

S. Clem: Yes, God loves the music; but Satan prefers noise. The more clank and clatter our lives produce, the nicer the sound to his ears, which is why I lament the prevalence of sheer noise in your society. Sweet, harmonious music has lost popularity among Americans. It is the violently disturbing blare that claims the money of the youth.

Int: Well, we have run out of time. Any last words of encouragement for our readers?

S. Clem: Yes: "All this life is a holy festival" (*Stromata* vii, 7).

Int: Light words from someone who speaks of the world's problems with such grave disappointment.

S.Clem: The world disappoints me, but life does not. I have learned to see the world how it is, but never to let it enter inside me.

Int: How do you accomplish such a spiritual feat?

S.Clem: "Abide in Me, and I in you." It is Christ living in me who overcomes. If He ever left me, I would be paralyzed by fear and despair from this world. With the Lord, any believer can be stronger on the inside than the greatest Roman emperor.



Modern Psychology & Orthodox Theology

Expressing Anger Negotiating the Inevitable Conflicts

Identify the issue.

Choose the right time.

Choose the right place.

Begin with a positive stroke.

Stick to the issue.

Do not bring up the past.

Do not hit below the belt.

Take the other seriously.

Express anger non-abusively.

Do not play games.

Do not be passively aggressive.

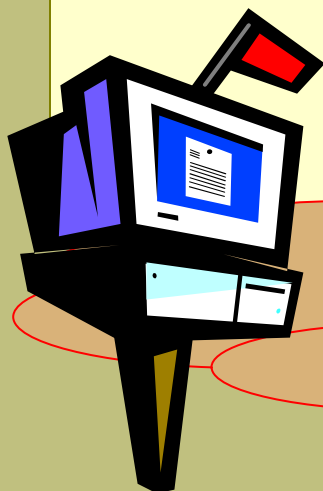
Avoid asking for explanations of behavior.

Avoid labeling and name calling.

Avoid Triangles.



Balswick, Jack O. & Judith K. (2007)
The Family (3rd Edition)
A Christian Perspective on
The Contemporary Home



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less and kindly remember to include your name and refer-

THE CROSS IN MY POCKET

I carry a cross in my pocket,
A simple reminder to me
That I am a Christian,
No matter where I may be.

This little cross isn't magic,
Nor is it a good luck charm.
It isn't meant to protect me
From every physical harm.

It's not for identification
For all the world to see.
It's simply an understanding
Between my Savior and me!!

It reminds me too, to be thankful
For my blessings every day,
And to strive to serve Him better
In all that I do or say.

When I put my hand in my pocket
To bring out a coin or a key,
The cross is there to remind me
Of the price He paid for me.

It's also a daily reminder
Of the peace and comfort I share
With all who know my Master
And give themselves to His care.

So, I carry a cross in my pocket
Reminding none but me
That Jesus Christ is Lord of my life,
If only I'll let Him be.

~anonymous author~
poem submitted by Maria Mansour

GREETINGS FROM AFAR ...

Dear Mighty Arrows Dispatch #1

Its four o'clock in the morning in the deserts of Naqada, and the Monastery of Archangel Michael is a small toy set in the distance for the small band of travelers that are braving the mountains of Qena. A glimpse into their adventure:

"Left, right, left, right" is running through your mind as you walk on the edge of the abyss. Endless chasm to your left, merciless rift to your right and a bloodthirsty wind clawing and pulling at your clothes yearning for a little bit of color to be added to the sun-burnt brown rocks below. "Keep your eyes in front of you" is the plan, but fear creeps into your heart as the gorge to your left and right spin and twist in your peripheral into beings that can only be conceived in the darkest, most desperate nightmares. It seems that the specters of despair shall prevail when your mind reels from exhaustion and dehydration and your knees grow frail beneath you and threaten to give until you finally take your last step across the edge of doom into a holy refuge where Father John has the spirit of God waiting to wrap around you and banish the phantoms of death. Enlightened and protected, you continue your journey through risk and peril to rise at the summit, victorious!



Your Friend,
Kirlos Haroun

Review of South Africa Service Trip May 1st to 18th 2010 "The Joy of the Lord is Your Strength" (Nehemiah 8:10)

Twelve dedicated servants with one heart of service embarked on a journey of eighteen blessed days in South Africa. Servants from California, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas and even Australia met at Johannesburg International Airport on May 2 to begin a journey of service, fellowship, friendship, and spirituality.

We were hosted with sincere kindness and true hospitality by HG Bishop Antonious Markos. His Grace also shared with us stories of missionary and how His Grace began the service in the remote regions of Africa. His Grace was the first dedicated servant to establish churches in Africa and truly deserves the title "Father of Evangelism."

HG Bishop Antonious Markos guided us to serve in Zimbabwe and the outskirts of Johannesburg to a small city called Natal. We were greeted with love and songs by the families, youth, and children.

We were not only blessed to serve with HG Bishop Antonious Markos' discretion, but were exceptionally blessed to have HG Bishop Youssef among us for the entire duration of the trip! HG Bishop Youssef taught us the importance of commitment and seriousness to serve. His Grace also enlightened us that the primary reason for us to go to various places is so we may learn how to serve and bring our experiences and encounters to our own communities and parishes.

Although, the trip was saturated with Nehemiah Bible Study, service, sight-seeing activities, prayers, Divine Liturgies, we did not neglect to develop friendships and fellowship with each other and others and discover our God-given talents. We learned that service should be a prominent aspect in every Christian's life where ever she/he may be and we should all diligently seek to do "the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 5:4).

Mighty Arrows
SUS Diocese
USA

+ Take Care!
Irene Bakheet
South Africa

RESOURCES

Arabic Corner
Audio
Bible Study
Children's Corner
Deacons
Evangelism
Interesting Facts
Literature
Questions & Answers
Reading Recommended
Sunday School Curriculum
Youth Corner

DIOCESE PROGRAMS

Family Ministry Program
Pre-Marital & Newlywed
Resource Ministry Program
Servants/Pre-Servants
Social Services
St. Clement Academy
Theological Seminary

DIOCESE EVENTS

First Annual Coptic Retreat
St. Stephen's (FL) Oct. 15-16

Pre-Marital Retreats

TN: Oct 21-23, 2010
TX: Nov 19-21, 2010
FL: Feb 11-13, 2011
TN: Jun 24-26, 2011
TX: Nov 11-13, 2011

Family Ministry Program (FMP)
Spring Registration: December 10, 2010
Theological Seminary Program
Spring Registration: May 1, 2011

Florida Family Convention
Nov 24-27, 2010

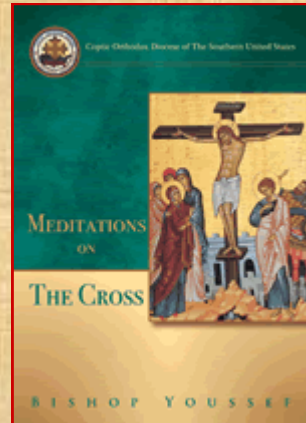
WTL High School Convention
Boys: Dec 20-23, 2010
Girls: Dec 27-30, 2010

WWF College Convention
Jan 2-5, 2011

TCL Graduate Convention
Jan 14-17

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