



COPTIC ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES

Bishop Youssef

My Beloved Youth,

May the peace and love of the Lord Jesus Christ and all His holy saints be with you.

The July issue of the Mighty Arrows has been dedicated to the outstanding men and women in Coptic Orthodox history who have departed this world and left behind outstanding examples of true holiness. Despite persecution, political oppression, and desertion of family and friends, the saints carried on the same faith and life of the Church of the New Testament. Through the historical understanding of the saints' lives we can envision the simple Christ-centered faith and love of the holy Apostles. Through Divine Intervention in the lives of the saints our beloved Church doctrines, practices, and services have all been preserved.

Through the writings of the early Church Fathers and through the humble witnessing of the martyrs many have been led to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit continues His Work causing many new people to discover the church each and every day. Student groups are springing up on campuses, convention attendance by youth is rapidly growing, and many are taking advantage of the fullness of faith found within the Coptic Orthodox Church today. The Word is getting out.

Making others aware of our beloved ancient Church and its many saints are not enough for evangelism today. Our mission today is of the same nature as in centuries past, to spread the Holy Word of God. We must become as the saints of earlier times and lead others to the realization that God is the source of all "true holiness." All paths to this endeavor lead toward Orthodoxy.

The saints who inherit God's Eternal Kingdom will have lived in active fulfillment of His Plan of Salvation. In Worship we join the Heavenly Hosts -the saints and the angels—in giving praise to God. Within this Heavenly Vision, the Divine Liturgy remembers "all those who in faith have gone on before us to their rest."

All Christians are called upon to be saints. Romans 16:2 states, "that you may receive her in the Lord, in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also." I Corinthians 1:1-2 tells us, "Paul, called to be an Apostle, of Jesus Christ through the will of God and Sosthenes our brother, To the Church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all those who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs, and ours."

What motivates us to become as saints? The answer to this lies in the knowledge of the Eternal Kingdom. A few saints have been blessed with a vision of Heaven while still in this life. Isaiah was one who saw Heaven (Isaiah 6:1-8), as did Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1-28), and the Apostle John saw a New Heaven, God's Eternal Kingdom revealed as a City (Revelations 21:22-25).

As you read the articles within this special "Saints Edition" of the Mighty Arrows, feel the overwhelming love these holy individuals had for the Lord. Allow their holy example to be reverently placed before the choices you make in your daily lives. Fervently pray to always have the courage to put the Lord first in your life and in the end of earthly days have earned the Everlasting Life in the Eternal Kingdom.

Youssef
God Bless you,
His Grace Bishop Youssef

Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States