

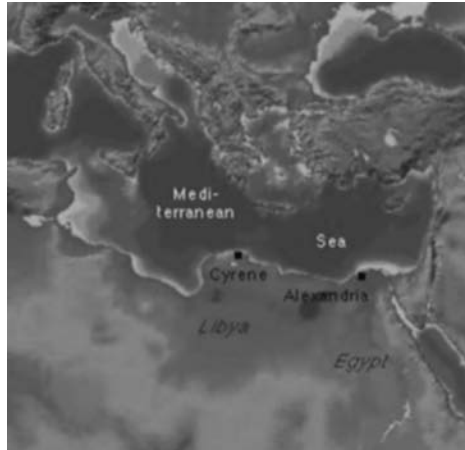


Should the Righteous Perish with the Wicked?

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On a recent missionary trip to South Africa, the participating youth became acquainted with many native African youth on a very personal level. They spent numerous hours in prayer, singing, outings and missionary activities together. After many days, they truly felt that they were a part of the one Body of the Lord Jesus Christ and members in the one holy Universal church.



children accuse their parents for their lack of understanding and involvement in their daily lives. I often speak with youth who feel that no one knows exactly what they are going through and the amount of pressure being laid on them. One youth said that according to her school mates she is too conservative and backward; while according to her parents she is too liberal and has forgotten her heritage and values.

It was only natural to start comparing the North American versus the South African cultures, church activities, social status and obviously... **parents**. While there were many striking differences between both continents, there was one area where they all agreed. All the youth agreed that in spite of their innumerable attempts to please their parents, the parents were never fully satisfied with their achievements; and always made them feel that they were lacking something and that their children will never be as good as they were.

One of the African youth said that his father is continuously blaming him and his generation for the AIDS epidemic in South Africa which was due to the deviation of the youth from the moral values of their parents. While it is true that the country has an AIDS epidemic, that particular youth had nothing to contribute to it. With teary eyes, that deacon said **“Why is it that the righteous should parish with the wicked?” (Genesis 18:25)** Why is it that we are constantly blamed for something we did not do?

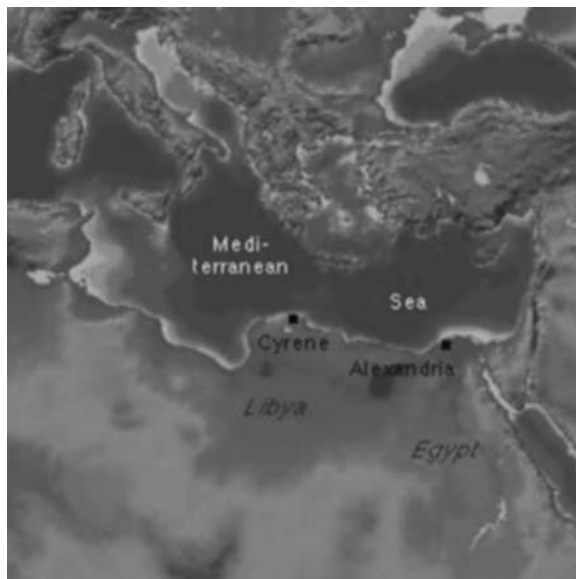
There is no doubt in anyone’s mind that we now live in a broken world. Parents are often complaining concerning their children’s lack of discipline while

ten her heritage and values.

Teens see their school friends allowed and even encouraged to participate in promiscuous behavior while they are being held back by their values and their Coptic faith. It is only natural that our children get torn apart between the liberal and conservative cultures. We will notice that our children would often make wise and educated decision while at other times their choices could be foolish and undesirable. It is specifically at that time, more than ever, that we parents need to offer children a healthy relationship and a true feeling of compassion and friendship. A mistake is by no means a separation in family ties but rather glue that strengthens its bond.

Joseph: A Role Model for Youth

The righteous Joseph was a true role model for all youth in the way that he honored his faith and his values. He was sold by his brothers, brought into Egypt as a slave, convicted for a crime which he did not commit and thrown into jail. In spite of all these difficulties, he managed to remain faithful and refused to sin (Genesis 39:9), he offered Egypt a solution out of the famine (41:34-36), mastered the hieroglyphic language and was kind to his brothers who had wronged him (45:1-5).



Today, as we read the story of this remarkable young man, who defeated all odds and came out on top, we never realize what kind of struggles Joseph went through until he reached this level. We ask

ourselves how was it like for a teenager to live in the most liberal culture at the time after coming from Canaan and tending his father's flock. How did he feel while being locked up in jail and losing all hope for a safe exit. What was it like as the second man in Egypt after Pharaoh at only thirty years of age? The Word of God tells us that **"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)**. Thus, we can conclude that Joseph just like any other human being had his faults and sins. Yet, he was counted as a hero of the faith **"By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones" (Hebrews 11:22)**.

Call to Parents for Balance

You may want to share this portion of the article with your parents....Being friends with our children and understanding the challenges which they are going through does not necessary mean that we have to agree with them in every thing. Balanced parenting means that we should not be quick to judge but rather to allow a chance for discussion and conveying different opinions. It should not always be about who is right but rather on what is right! One thing I do know for sure is that parents spare no effort in chastising and bringing up their children to be the best people in the world. We are really blessed to have such parents who would sacrifice their own comfort and rest to provide the best life for their children. At the same time, we must trust in the Lord who has helped us as parents to mature in his love and knowledge that he will also

help our children know and live in his faith. We must not at any time underestimate our children's spiritual maturity and growth.

A Message of Hope

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13). In spite of the brokenness in the world which we live in today, we always have hope in the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. The Lord said **"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)**.

The King of Peace is the only One who can offer us peace at the time of the storm. There are no minor or major problems which our Lord Jesus Christ can not solve. This is the time to **"trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him. And He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5- 6)**. Indeed, we lay our trust in the hands of a mighty God who is able to protect us, our children and our Universal Church from all harm or doubt. Let us encourage one another to remain loyal to the apostolic faith which will guard us from the fiery darkness of the evil one. Let us hold fast the sanctity of the family unit both as youth and parents which were and will always be a safe haven and a beacon for any member who falls in trouble or despair.

May the Lord protect us by His Mighty hands; through the intercession of the Holy Theotokos, the Virgin St. Mary, St. Mark the apostle and the prayers of H.H. Pope Shenouda III. Amen. ✠