



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of
the Southern United States

The Monthly Message
to the Priests' Wives
November 2014

The War of Glass House

The inhabitants of the city woke up early in the morning hurrying up to attend the celebration of the enthronement of the king. After the ceremony had finished, the procession proceeded to take the king and his family to the palace prepared for their residence. The procession passed in the streets of the beautiful city until it reached a high hill in its midst where the palace was built. As soon as the procession arrived at the palace and the king, his wife and his children got out of the car they became surprised. They found that the marvelous palace was all made of transparent brilliant glass. As they were shocked the king turned to the minister inquiring about the secret of the glass

house. The minister replied, *"This is the custom of our city. We inherited it from our ancestors. All kings who ruled this city had to live in this palace. As the palace is made of glass and constructed on a high hill, all the city inhabitants can closely monitor what happens inside the palace. Therefore sacrificing one's privacy became one of the tolls that the inhabitants of that royal palace must pay"*. Hence, the king and his family had to yield. They felt that they couldn't retire after the ceremony of enthronement had already taken place. They couldn't renounce by any mean.

So, the king, his wife and his children entered the marvelous glass palace. Life started to move in a very fast way. The king was very busy and preoccupied with fulfilling his duties toward his people with honesty. As for the king's wife she realized that the responsibility put on her husband king put her and her family under microscope. She was then pleased to offer every sacrifice for the sake of the people. She prepared herself to accept renouncing her privacy and freedom, taking the chance of living inside the

glass house to acquire the virtue of constant vigilance and watchfulness.

But after a while she started to feel agony, confusion and tension in an ascending pattern. The spectators and bystanders were constantly monitoring her and her children from behind the glass walls. Unfortunately, the city was full of people that had nothing to do except following up the news of the king's wife and his children and spreading them among the whole city.

It happened one day that the king's wife went out in the evening to walk in the garden of the palace. The serpent then came to her and the following conversation took place.

- Serpent: *What a poor miserable one you are!*
- Wife: *Why are you saying that about me?!*
- Serpent: *What kind of life you are living? Do you consider living inside a glass house a life? You and your family look like the fish put in a glass bowl to be constantly monitored...!!*

- Wife (very astonished): *Fish in a glass bowl?! What are you talking about?*
- Serpent (mocking): *Haven't you been made a spectacle both to men and to angels? Haven't you become the ridicule of all your people, their taunting song all the day?*
- Wife (confused): *This is not true. It is a sacrifice that we accepted with full pleasure.*
- Serpent: *What price did you gain from this sacrifice other than falling, you and your children, under severe psychological stress? Do you think that you will be able to find any help in case you become tired or broken down?*
- Wife (with confidence): *Yes. My husband king loves me and will never abandon me.*
- Serpent: *Didn't I tell you that you are poor! O naïf one, your husband is no more interested in you. He is preoccupied with being honest in fulfilling his duties. Accepting being a king's wife gave you nothing back except stress and agony.*
- Wife (sighing): *You are right. I feel tired, tense and irritable all the time. But what can I do now? It is too late to go back. I and my children*

must have regard for good things in the sight of all men and must be an example to all people in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity...

- Serpent: *That's why I counsel you to avoid being an offence to others by acquiring the form of godliness even if you have not its power. This is the law of living inside the glass palace.*

The poor wife came back to the glass palace after the deceiving poison of the serpent had flowed within her. She then called upon her maidservants and ordered them to prepare for her all types of masks and fancy dresses. She became convinced that the ultimate solution for the problem of living inside the glass palace is to hide behind the masks of godliness and piety.

Few weeks later, the king's wife went to visit her father who was a wise elder. She loved him, respected him and trusted his counsel and guidance a lot. She then started to tell her father about her suffering from living

inside the glass palace and how she had to undergo a strict monitoring of the minor words or deeds of hers. She also explained how she accepted the counsel of living behind the masks hoping that these masks would be able to hide her weakness, as well as her children's, from the sight of people. May be these masks would help them avoid the scrutinizing eyes and bitter comments as she couldn't bear this situation anymore.

The wise elder then looked at her and rebuked her saying, *"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are already to die...Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent...He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments"* (Revelation3:1-5).