



**Coptic Orthodox Diocese of  
the Southern United States**

**The Monthly Message  
to the Priests' Wives  
December 2016**

## **A Gracious Woman**

Solomon said about her, “A gracious woman retains honor, but ruthless men retain riches” (Proverbs 11:16). The Septuagint uses a stronger expression for this verse saying, “A gracious wife raises to her husband glory, but a throne of dishonor is a wife detesting righteous things”. This means that all wives, including priest’s wife, can add honor to the honor of her husband priest by becoming a gracious woman. St. Mary, the pride of every woman, was prescribed by the angel not only to be gracious but a “highly favored one” and that she has “found favor with

God” (Luke 1:28,30). It was said about Jesus Christ himself, to Whose image we are required to be transformed, that “the grace of God was upon Him” (Luke 40:2) and that He was “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Also, it was said about the Apostles that “great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

Being gracious means that when one becomes full of the Holy Spirit, He gives him grace in the eye of both God and people. The grace of the Holy Spirit is seen in gracious man in three aspects:

(1) **Grace on lips:** The Bible says that “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34). Therefore, it is a natural thing that grace would flow on the lips of the one whose heart is full of grace. He imitates His Master about Whom it was said, “Grace is poured

upon Your lips” (Psalms 45:2) and that the multitudes were “marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke 4:22). In fact, it is not something optional for God’s children to acquire the grace on lips but it is a mandatory commandment that God gave us through St. Paul saying, “Let your speech always be with grace seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4:6).

Grace on lips means that a priest wife has sweet tongue and soft words. She gains her husband, children and all those she serves by her sweet gentle genuine words applying the Bible saying, “A sweet word multiplies friends and mitigates enemies, and thankful words abound in a good man” (Sirach 6:5), and its saying, “The words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious, but the lips of a fool shall swallow him up” (Ecclesiastes 10:12)

(2) **Grace in mind:** by which it is meant wisdom and good understanding as it is said in the Bible, “Good understanding gains favor” (Proverbs 13:15) and that wisdom, “ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace” (Proverbs 3:17). In Sirach, the wisdom says, “All grace of the way and of the truth is in me. All hope of life and of virtue is in me” (Sirach 24:25). Daniel and the three saintly children found grace in the eye of Nebuchadnezzar because “God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom” (Daniel 1:17). Also, Abigail found grace in David’s eyes because “she was a woman of good understanding” (1 Samuel 25:3) and he praised her saying, “Blessed is your advice” (1 Samuel 25:33).

Now, if any of the priests’ wives lacks wisdom, let her ask of God, who gives to all liberally and

without reproach and it will be given to her (James 1:5).

(3) **Grace in conduct:** which is being guided by the Holy Spirit and always behaving per the Bible's commandments like what St. Paul said, "We conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God" (2 Corinthians 1:12). Humble conduct brings God's grace upon one, "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). Meek behavior gives man grace in God's eye, "with the incorruptible beauty of the gentle and quiet spirit which is very precious in the sight of God" (1 Peter 3:4). Grace in conduct also means being merciful, "Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of

God and man" (Proverbs 3:3-4). It is also behaving with chastity and self-control, "He who loves purity of heart and has grace on his lips, the king will be his friend" (Proverbs 22:11). St. Gregory the wonderworker has a wonderful saying regarding this matter that says, "Meekly, then, did grace make election of the pure Mary alone out of all generations. For she proved herself prudent truly in all things"

Now, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16) supplicating with Moses the prophet saying, "Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight" (Exodus 33:13)