



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of
the Southern United States

The Monthly Message
to the Priests' Wives
March 2018

Service at The Foot of The Cross

As we celebrate this month the feast of the Cross as well as the commemoration of Father Bishoy Kamel's departure, I would like to talk about the essential relationship between the Cross and service. I base my talk upon the methodology Fr. Bishoy Kamel adopted in his ministry and which he expressed in many of his writings and sayings. I bring to you here some of these saying hoping they would help you in examining your attitudes in service and modifying them if necessary.

(1) *"In the Cross, we realize the value of the human soul for whom Christ died: "Do not*

destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died" (Romans 14:15)"

(2) *"In it (the Cross), St. Paul makes the pivot of the service and its center: "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2)".*

(3) *"The servant's goal in the service is to cultivate in every occasion within the people he serves the concepts of the Cross regarding God's love, self-sacrifice, and redemption".*

(4) *"The divine love sprouting from the Cross is the energy that motivates the servants to serve souls. The more the divine love increases the more the energy to serve increases according to the apostle's words: "For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my*

countrymen according to the flesh” (Romans 9:3). Our Lord Jesus Christ loves the entire world through the Cross. Therefore, crucifixion is the utmost degree of love”.

- (5) *“The servant must live his entire life immersed in the love of the Crucified and in the power of the Cross. This is not a subject of meditation for a day, a month, or a certain period of time. But, the divine love in the Cross becomes the entire life of the Christian and the servant. He, through experiencing the divine love in the cross, can cultivate in the people he serves the love of Jesus for them, the awfulness of the sin, and its death that cannot be eradicated except through the blood of the Cross. He does this out of his love to Christ and to the power of love in Christ that cannot, by any mean, be experienced outside the realm of the Cross. The Cross is God’s power for salvation*

through which we conquer the world, the devil, and the flesh”.

- (6) *“The service must begin at the foot of the Cross lest it ends up with failure. The Cross is an infinite love”.*
- (7) *“Whoever ascends on the Cross with Christ must have been tasted the power of death to the world, the power of resurrection, and then the power of ascension to heavens. Carrying this power, he descends to the world to serve, and then ascends on the Cross again with his children”.*
- (8) *“The pastors’ relation with the Cross turns into a life of love and prayer which they fervently seek in order for the church to become a fortress of prayer”.*
- (9) *“The serving pastor is a martyr of love. He seeks it with all the energy acquired from*

the Christ's love on the Cross. He loves and loves, and hates no: "Love (i.e. God) never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:8). Love entails a lot of toil. The servant seeks it with a lot of suffering. When Jesus loved, He sacrificed Himself on the Cross. The source of love must be the love of Jesus for us on the Cross. The motive that pushes the serving priest to serve is his love for Christ and his attachment to the One who died for him. He, then, deals with whoever approaches him as if he is a person sent to him with a recommendation from the Lord Himself, who was crucified for him. He deals with the needy and naked as if he deals with the naked and crucified Christ. He looks at the sinner as if he looks at Christ Himself who carries all sinners. Love is martyrdom: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we are more than

conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:36-37). The servant's sufferings for the sake of love are part of the afflictions of the body of Christ. He joyfully accepts them: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24)".

- (10) *"A service void of love for the Crucified is a mere human labor that must come to an end. A service void of love ends up with fatigue, despair, egoism, lot of struggle over power, or even quitting service completely".*