



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

**The Monthly Message
to the Priests' Wives
November 2018**

God's Work

My dearest sister in Christ,

It's just one thought. But by it the whole day can be made or ruined.

We were in the car on our way to dinner at a wonderful restaurant when we got the call. I was dressed up for once. The kids were so excited and giggling in the backseat. The idea that there would be good food and no dishes after made me giddy with joy.

Then, from the pocket of his black robe, that dreaded vibration.

Oh, how often have I fantasized about throwing that phone off a bridge! Yes, I'll admit it freely.

It was a tearful mother calling about her daughter and her son-in-law. They were fighting right now, and the marriage was threatening to crumble. "Please, Abouna, please come help them."

In the passenger seat, my whole body tensed. I clenched my jaw, and my hands made little fists.

"You see," the devil whispered. "God won't give you even one night's peace."

Ah, my dear sister, the devil is a tricky one. He'll take every opportunity to talk us into lies, to send us to the edge.

He made a mistake though. He mentioned God. And God and I know each other very well. It's hard to create enmity between two people who often speak to each other.

The devil can whisper, but it's my decision to accept his thought or to reject it.

"It is the will of God that we not go to this dinner tonight, and it's God's work that my husband must go now to do," I whispered back, and he fell silent.

If I didn't know and commit 100% to the idea that this work we do is God's work, I would have lost my mind.

Imagine that I chose to accept the devil's thought, that I chose to entertain the idea that God won't give us peace.

- I would have snapped at my husband for always ruining everything.
- I would have become bitter than I must now cook dinner.
- I would have cursed this fighting couple in my heart.
- I would have scolded my children all night.
- I would have let a seed of a grudge build between me and God.

My husband would still have gone to mediate this couple, but now he would dread returning home to me, as fierce as I can be in my anger.

My giggling children would grow to resent me (for the scolding), resent my husband (for leaving), resent the service and the church (for taking their father), and eventually would resent God Himself.

Instead, I committed myself to God's will, and here's what happened.

- I prayed for my husband that he would be guided by the Holy Spirit and be able to save this marriage.
- I drove to the restaurant with the kids and ordered our food to go, including a meal for my husband. No cooking, no dishes.
- I prayed for this couple with all my might and loved them in my heart even when they could hardly stand each other.
- I smiled and giggled with the kids the entire time. No scolding, no resentment.
- God and I were at peace.

It is just one thought. One tiny choice between trusting God or giving in to bitterness.

My husband finished the mediation quickly and came home to eat dinner with me on the couch. This couple stayed married and are now, a few years later, happier than ever.

Do you know and believe and commit to the idea that you are part of God's larger plan?

If you don't, remember that it just starts with a thought. Choose that thought carefully and see the blessings that overflow from it.

Affectionately,
Ni-ni

Note: Tasoni Ni-ni is a fictional character, a compilation of events and advice gathered through research and interviews. Not everything Tasoni Ni-Ni says or does can be attributed to one person