



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

**The Monthly Message
to the Priests' Wives
March 2019**

My Dearest Sister in Christ,

Being the wife of the priest can be hard. You have to deal with uncomfortable situations. You have to speak to and interact with a wide variety of personalities. You must be respectful to the eldest senior and kind to the smallest child. You must let down your guard among the humble and give your best manners among the exalted.

You know things that are heavy to carry. You know where there is pain, where there is suffering, where there is fear. You attend a baptism in the morning with a wide smile on your face, and third-day prayers in the evening dressed in a somber air.

You face criticism and scrutiny, not only for what you do but for what your husband does, for what your children do, and for the decisions your bishop or pope make. You must bear it all with dignity and grace, while also not letting it harden your heart towards God or His people.

But you know what, my sister? You can do hard things.

Yes, you can do hard things. You are a strong woman. You are capable. You were given natural strength by God, and you are fed more by His strength with each passing day.

You are not being tested beyond what you are able. Do not underestimate yourself and the gift of grace God has given you.

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13)

You are not alone in facing these tests. You are not the first. Most importantly, God is faithful. He sees the trials you are undergoing, even if others cannot, and He makes for you a way of escape and a way to bear it.

Sometimes the load feels so heavy, but you are playing an important part in the extraordinary works of God. Your effort is not invisible, even if some members of the congregation seek to make you feel small. Even if some are pushing and shoving. Even if some are taking advantage. *"Your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly"* (Matthew 6:4)

I recently needed to explain to someone that building on sand would actually make houses collapse. I pulled up a YouTube video about an apartment complex in California about to fall off a cliff from extreme erosion of the coast.

I was trying to explain that building on rock was not an optional thing or just something we sing in that one song about the wise man and the foolish man. It's not a hyperbolic metaphor. It's not a parable based on fantasy. It's fact.

As the news anchor described how the houses shake with every wave and the land beneath crumbles with every storm, I thought about that verse: *"Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved"* (Psalm 125:1).

You draw your strength from the Lord. Remember that you have chosen to build your life on the Rock, on the firmest foundation. *"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation"* (Isaiah 28:16). When the winds come, He is not shaken. When the waves beat at you, He does not crumble.

All you have to do is your part. All you have to do is stay rooted in Him.

Your small efforts to grow in virtue will have massive consequences with His support. Your life will bear fruit.

Each day, despite the apparent difficulty, take one step forward. Reconcile with someone, build a new connection, or re-energize a service. Remember that while you do your part faithfully, you trust that He will provide the right results at the right time.

"The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance is of the Lord" (Proverbs 21:31). You must prepare your horse, and let Him worry about the outcome. You practice kindness, longsuffering, gentleness, and all the fruit of the Spirit. He will work the miracles.

Sister, you can do hard things. You have your feet planted in the Rock. *"When the whirlwind passes by, the wicked is no more, but the righteous has an everlasting foundation"* (Proverbs 10:25).

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.