



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

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

Dearest Sister in Christ,

Whether it's your first feast as a priest's wife or your 50th, the devil will find some opportunity to point out to you what you lack, to point out to you what you left behind or what painful changes are taking place in your life.

There will be friends together, and you might be alone. There will be families gathered, and you might be without your family. The feast, after the priesthood, will not look like the feast before the priesthood. The feast last year will not look like the feast this year.

One member of our congregation this year is spending her birthday and the feasts around it without her husband or children. Because of their work obligations, they are all out of town. You can see the tears forming in her eyes as she tries to be brave about it around us.

Perhaps there is a person you used to always spend this time with that you don't or can't spend that time with now. Perhaps there is a tradition you used to participate in that will not be possible now.

Children are born into our lives and basic tasks become impossible. People move away or situations change. Friendships shift. People depart to the bosom of our heavenly Father.

Every year, something is missing. Every year, something NEW is missing. This can be very painful.

Sometimes I look at what I'm lacking and despair. Things don't always go the way I want, and I get so anxious about it. But God does not want us to focus on what has been taken away from us but to open our hearts and our hands to receive the gifts He is offering.

Perhaps you have seen that illustration of Christ asking a tearful little girl for her tiny, beloved teddy bear. She is afraid to give it to Him. She knows she will miss it. But behind Christ's back is a much bigger and more snuggly bear that He desires to give her.

Recently, I saw a beautiful image to illustrate this again. A set of electric outlets are covered in plastic, and a small label says, "Something I want but God said no." A shiny new pacifier is

labeled, "A gift from God that's much, much better." A baby, representing us, holds the sweet pacifier but looks at the deadly electric outlets, crying so hard his face is soaked in tears.

Are we so busy looking at what we are lacking that we are missing the sweetness of what we have been given? Is God pointing us in a particular direction for our sake and for the sake of our growth, and we are hesitant?

(Remember: For Lot's wife, this hesitation turned her into a pillar of salt.)

When I feel I am lacking something, I repeat this verse to myself:

"No one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life."

(Mark 10:29-30)

It has been a wonder in my life, over and over again, feeling that I lack and watching God replace it with something even more amazing and miraculous. He never fails to give, with time, more and more wondrous gifts.

The gift isn't always a new beloved friend or financial support just in time, though that can and has been the case. Sometimes the gift is a virtue developing or the relationship between me and Him deepening--these are the gifts that prepare us for eternal life.

This is my proposal to you today. Turn away from what you feel you lack and look towards where you might be needed, where you might grow, and where Christ is offering gifts beyond your wildest imagination.

In Christ,

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