



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States
Monthly Message for the Priests Wives
March 2022

Kindness and Forgiveness

My Dearest Sister in Christ,

Today, we are surrounded by negativity that is all around us: the news, the internet, and even some people. It's easy to give in to negativity and let it spiral out of control. Worst of all, we can get caught up in it and let it affect the lens we use to view other people.

As Christ said, "When your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness" (Luke 11:34). So, if we want to live a happy life, one that's guided by Christ and not our own desires, we have to learn stay positive and assume the best about other people.

BE KIND

First, be kind and generous with those you meet. I'm thinking here especially of those members of our congregations who are new or who are different from us.

We all want to feel loved and appreciated for who we are, and it starts with loving and appreciating others for who they are—even and especially if they are not exactly like you. In his letter to the Romans, Saint Paul writes, "Let love be without hypocrisy... Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans 12:9a,10).

Honoring those in our congregations who are unlike us is one way we can reflect the light of Christ who appreciates the diversity of His people.

BE FORGIVING

Perhaps it's easier to be kind and generous with people when they are being kind and generous to us. But sometimes we will need to think the best about others and forgive them, even when they really do hurt us. The world is a better place when we are thoughtful even towards those who are thoughtless.

The comments and the actions of others can hurt, but you never know what's going on in the lives of those people that led to that moment, that comment, or that act. Don't judge them too quickly.

To the Ephesians, Saint Paul tells us to forgive “even as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32b), that is to say without reservation, wholeheartedly, and even undeservedly. Truly, none of us deserve Christ’s love, forgiveness, and redemption, but He offers it anyway.

If someone hurts your feelings, it's okay to take time to process that feeling, but don't dwell on it. Instead, try to focus on the good things in your life and on the good they have done you or others previously.

If someone has wronged you, forgive them and make an effort not to resent them. It will help you stay happy and healthy. Christ even asks us to choose to stay positive and forgive people who really don't deserve it. This is His call to love our enemies.

FIND SUPPORT

If you're feeling down or unappreciated then reach out to friends or family for support instead of letting yourself sink lower into negativity.

Sometimes we make the mistake of reaching out to our friends and family simply to complain about other people. But we can actually get even more relief from our negative feelings by engaging warmly with our friends and family instead.

A phone call spent venting about some third party for 45-60 minutes does not build our connection to the person on the other line and does not free us from our feelings. Instead of spending that time on negativity, ask about and listen to that member of your family or friendship group. Listen to her stories about her life. Find out about new projects or events she’s engaged in.

Then, when you hang up the phone, instead of feeling stagnant and unsettled—and yes, even ashamed for having engaged in gossip—you will feel positive, warm, loved and loving. You will be shining the light of Christ, having shared it with your friend or family member.

By being kind and forgiving and finding support when we really need it, we can counteract the world’s negative message. We can find strength in God’s promises and commit ourselves to His commandments.

Your sister in Christ,

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