



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

Monthly Message for the Priests Wives

June 2023

Let Love Be Genuine

“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ No, ‘if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12: 9-21 NRSV)

Dear Sisters in Christ,

As I sat to write to you this morning, St. Paul’s words, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” were on my heart. Then I read the passage in its context; in the NRSV it under the heading “Marks of a True Christian,” I could not help but think that if clergy wives had a “job description,” this is it, as our place in the body of Christ is no more or less than to be a “true Christian.”

What a privilege we have to “rejoice with those who rejoice” and “weep with those who weep,” as we, more than any other woman in our parish family, know the joys and sorrows of our fellow sisters and brothers, as they and our husband (insofar as he is able due to confidentiality) share with us.

In this passage Saint Paul lays out everything that is needed to faithfully follow Christ. So, let us take time this month to read and ponder this passage over and over and consider the unique opportunity we have as clergy wives to be “true Christians” within and to all the faithful in our parish families. Here are a few questions to keep in mind:

1. How can I allow Christ to more genuinely love through me?

2. How do I presently show honor to fellow brothers and sisters, and how can I do better?
3. How do I extend hospitality, given my season of life and circumstances, and knowing that hospitality has different “faces”?
4. How do I tend to respond to those who “persecute” my husband? How can I learn to “bless” them?
5. How do I walk beside those who both rejoice and weep?
6. Reflect on the meaning of “living in harmony” with others, considering how to do so without compromising integrity in Christ.

As I write to you this morning, I realize the treasure of these words of St. Paul in a new way. These are words worth pondering over and again, as we live out our personal lives and the vocation/calling of being a clergy wife.

With love in Him,

Kerry