



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

### **Monthly Message for the Monastic and Consecrated Servants**

**March 2018**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, for granting us another blessed year on this sojourn to share in fasting and praying as did our Lord Jesus Christ before He began His ministry on earth. Grant, Father, that we may begin all things by first seeking Your will and not our own. Bless us and grant us Your peace so that we may be filled with Your light and radiate Your boundless love in everything we do and with everyone we meet.

Let us not waste this time in vain, but grant that this fast be for us the beginning of a new journey brining us closer to You. May we forget those things which are behind and reach forward to those things which are ahead (Phil. 3:13) and start anew — as though this were our very first fast — with a new beginning filled with the zeal to fight against the flesh and with willingness to accept all things, whether good or bad, expected or unexpected, just or unjust, with the utmost love and thanksgiving.

My heavenly Father, I do not want to live a mediocre life going through the motions of my routine, but I desire to live a life of perfection. Perfect me and let me not waste a single moment in negligence. Help me not walk but run this race eagerly seeking to please You and glorify Your name in all that I do. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me” (John 5:30) and so what is there to say of me who constantly seeks to satisfy my ego and my own desires? Who reacts poorly when criticized and runs away from any labor that interferes with my time? Help me to cling to what is from Your hand — such gifts as humility, submission, mercy, forgiveness, peace, and joy, rather than discard these so that I may free my hands to hold tightly to the darts of such things as anger, entitlement, complaining, vainglory, and pride shot at me by the enemy.

O Father, increase our faith and grant us to believe that “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28) in order that we may give due thanks for all that comes our way. Do away with our will and our pride and humble and purify us. Grant that we may be at the feet of our brothers and sisters and serve them as did our Lord Jesus Christ. Remove from us the delusion that inclines us to seek to be first and to appear righteous in the eyes of man. What will it profit us in the end if we gain the whole world but lose our own souls (Matt. 16:26)?

We can abstain from food, give alms, and meditate on the daily readings but without You all is without any depth. Without You Father, we sow on stony ground and are easily made to stumble when tribulation comes our way (Mark 4:5). Help us Father to sow on good ground and to overcome our laziness; to stand firm and to be ready to endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:3). Grant that we may bear fruit a hundred fold and be counted worthy to be amongst Your saints in Your Heavenly Kingdom. Glory to be to You, O Lord. Amen.