



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

Monthly Message for the Monastic

January 2019

My Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

In this much unexpected world where nothing is truly predictable or certain, I have only You to lean on.

Grant me Lord, to always keep my eyes on You.

The Desert Fathers often spoke about the great danger of forgetfulness — it seems almost impossible that one would forget all of the graces You have bestowed upon us, but soon after we were taken out Egypt and fed with manna, we began to doubt and to fear. We allowed troubling thoughts to enter into our hearts and we sought a way out of whatever we were in.

You have told us to enter by the narrow gate, but when the path becomes more and more narrow, we begin to grumble and wonder if You have forgotten us.

My Lord, my beloved — out of Your great humility and incomprehensible love, You were incarnate and became man; You lived a sacrificial life teaching us by Your very example and in the end You were crucified in order to give us life. When we understood this, we also took up our cross and followed You, declaring that “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” (Matt. 26:35). Lord, I rely not on my own strength and I ask You, that when it comes time for me to suffer, that I may not lose my faith.

“If indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Rom. 8:17).

You are my keeper, Lord (Ps. 121:5) and I know You will never leave me nor forsake me (Deut. 31:6) even in the darkest hour. I confess that I do not always understand, but though You slay me, I will trust You (Job 13:15).

When we feel that the difficulty of the journey is more than we can handle, when we feel “burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life”

(2 Cor. 1:8) grant us the heart to believe that we “had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us” (1 Cor. 1:9-10).

I offer to You, O my Master, the symbols of my freedom¹ You are my Lord, the One who gives strength to the weary and power to the weak (Is. 40:29).

When we are faced with the unknown, grant us the faith of Abraham to submit to Your will. When we are entangled in error, grant us the perseverance of Jacob to seek Your blessing. When we are faced with the walls of Jericho and things seem absolutely impossible, grant us to trust in You like Joshua did. When we are afraid, grant us the courage of David in the face of Goliath, and when we have fallen, grant us the tears of the sinful woman, the hope of St. Peter and the heart of the thief on the right.

There is no greater journey than the one with You.

Glory be to you, O Lord. Amen.

¹ The Divine Liturgy of Saint Gregory the Theologian