



Father Bishop Kamel: “The Sewant of Children”

Written by: Ehab S. Billatos
St. Philopateer Coptic Orthodox Church, Dallas, TX



Fr. Bishop Kamel

When we think of the holy saints of our church, we wonder how they devoted their life to the service of the Lord and were they steadfast in the faith. To answer this question, we can examine Father Bishop Kamel, a devout and pious man of the Church. Father Bishop was born in Sirrs-Alliaan, Menoufia, Egypt, in 1931 and was given the name Samy Kamel.

In the 1950's, he received his baccalaureate from the School of Sciences of Alexandria. He taught in public schools and was appointed instructor at the Education College of Alexandria. He served as a Sunday School teacher in the district of Sporting, Alexandria.

He then asked to be in full-time service because he loved the church so much. In 1959, he was ordained priest. Father Bishop showed his love for us through this saying: “They are your children Lord: Some are good, others are evil, others are wasting themselves ... they all have one thing in common: They are your children ... **I am the servant of your children.** I am a servant and have no right to insult or despise any of them, because if I do, I would be insulting you or despising you ... I only can serve them, love them, and assure them of your certain promise that you loved them all because it is you who carries the sins of the whole world.”

After late evening services such as the Glorious Feast of the Holy Resurrection and the Feast of the Nativity, he used to go around the congregation and give out food and gifts to the needy. He was not fond of materialistic things but helped all those who asked. One night, a young woman came asking for financial help. On the same night, a college student came and asked for money to pay his registration fees. Father Bishop only asked them for patience.

Finally a little girl came in with an envelope containing enough money to solve both their problems. When they asked what her name was, the little girl only said, “My mother, Mary, sends this to you.” She

left them glorifying God.

Father Bishop also worked hard to spread the Word of God. He instituted many churches in Egypt, Europe, Australia, and even the US. In Egypt he opened St. George in Sporting; St. George in Hadra; Archangel Michael, in the district of Mostafa Kamel; St. Takla Hemanout in Ibrahemia; St. Mary and St. Cyril in Cleopatra; and St. Peter in Seedy Bishr. He also opened the first church in the United States, St. Mark in Los Angeles.

The opening of St Mark Church in Los Angeles was a miracle in itself. He was sent to America in 1969. First, he rented other churches like the Syrian Orthodox Church, but then he came across the chance to buy a Russian Orthodox Church. He began to raise money and within a short period of time, had 23,000 dollars. He went to the bank to deposit the money but when he entered the bank, he realized that he had left it in the taxicab that he rode to the bank in. The cab had already left and he felt sad that he had lost it.

That night, someone came to the door. It was the cab driver. Apparently, the driver was thinking of keeping the money for him but felt guilty after he left and from the way that Father Bishop was dressed, he realized that this man was a minister or priest of some kind. He asked around to see where the man might live and was directed to the address of the church. After returning the money, the driver even offered a donation!

Other churches that he indirectly helped in building include the Coptic Church in Denver and even **the Houston Church here in our own diocese.** Father Bishop was a reverent man who loved the Cross. He even had a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ being crucified on the Holy Cross for our sins. It is no surprise then that his departure was on the third day of the Feast of the Cross. Father Bishop Kamel, a great contemporary saint of our Church, used all his energy and shed every tear in order to bring back one lost sheep.