



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



"For without cause they have hidden their net for me in a pit, which they have dug without cause for my life." (Psalms 35:7)

As we celebrate today, April 7, 2022, the feast of the Glorious Annunciation, the feast of good news, we received painful news that filled our hearts with sadness, sorrow and bitterness, the news of the martyrdom of Hegumen Arsanius Wadeed, priest of the St. Mary and St. Paul the Apostle Coptic Orthodox Church of Kermuz in Alexandria, by a terrorist criminal who insidiously stabbed him in the neck causing a deep penetrating wound that killed him immediately.

Hegumen Arsanius Wadeed is known to have been affectionate and gentle-hearted. Here lies the strange paradox between a meek martyr who was overcome by his tenderness and a violent killer who was overcome by the cruelty of his heart. It is the enduring paradox between the sons of the Kingdom of Love, and the sons of Satan, who has been a killer since the beginning!

As these terrorist incidents are repeated in Egypt, especially in the seasons of celebrating our Christian Feasts, our hearts remain in bloody tears as we search for the answer to a question that arises every time: Why is all this hatred, resentment and violence manifested? But we find no response other than the Psalm saying: *"For without cause they have hidden their net for me in a pit, which they have dug without cause for my life"* (Psalms 35:7). Yes, for no reason innocent people are killed, and this makes the crime the most heinous and the greatest!! This is precisely why all the hosts of heaven move in response to the cries of the blood of the meek martyrs, and the groan of their families, loved ones and the people they served, who are overwhelmed by the fire of pain, bitterness, and even anger. Yes, although we rejoice at this venerable father, whose service was entrusted with the crown of martyrdom, being confident that he has today received a happy annunciation: *"Enter into the joy of your Lord"* (Matthew 25:21,23), yet we are not ashamed to declare that we are angry!! How can we not be angry in the face of such a great evil?! How can we not be angry in the face of such repeated boastful terrorist crimes?! But when we get angry, we do not sin according to the commandments of the Holy Bible. We get angry but without hatred. We get angry but without violence. We get angry, but we turn our anger into bitter cries that break through heavens and enter into the presence of God the just Judge who said, *"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay"* (Romans 12:19).

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