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“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” Matt 24:44



H.H. Pope Tawadros II

Pope of Alexandria &
Patriarch of the See of St. Mark



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	4
Be Ready	6
The Book Of 1 Samuel	16
The Letter To Philemon	38
The Church Readings	44
Comparative Theology	52
Memorization	58

INTRODUCTION

MAHRAGAN ALKERAZA 2018

As we celebrated the conclusion of last year's Mahragan with the distribution of the trophies for the first, second and third place winners, we were grateful for God's blessings for a successful 2017 Mahragan. His Holiness Pope Tawadros II said during the Awards Ceremony in Egypt, "I am happy to see the activities of the Youth Bishopic, I am glad that our beautiful Church that is 2000 years old is full of young youth and I am proud to see the creative work and achievements of the youth."

Last year, in addition to the usual participation from Egypt and Sudan, we had a great worldwide participation from 192 Churches representing more than 20 countries and 8 languages.

The theme for Mahragan 2018 is "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Matt 24:44). This year, God is asking each one of us to grow in Christ. To do this we will learn about the following topics:

- Be Ready
- The Book Of Samuel
- The Letter To Philemon
- The Church Reading
- Comparative Theology

We hope that all of you will participate in the Mahragan activities this year, and encourage everyone you know to join us in one of the greatest annual events, presented by our mother, the Coptic Orthodox Church.

May God bless Mahragan Alkeraza this year and the efforts of all the participants and coordinators, through the prayers of our beloved father Pope Tawadros II.

✠
My best wishes for a happy
Festival
✠ Bishop Mousa

Be Ready

“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” Matthew 24:44

Facts

We All Believe That

1. God exists, He is the creator of the whole universe the secret of our existence and our salvation
2. God created Adam and Eve from the dust of the earth “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” Genesis 2:7
3. “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.” Genesis 2:8
4. “And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food” Genesis 2:9
5. “The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” Genesis 2:9
6. “Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden” Genesis 2:10
7. “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man” Genesis 2:21-22
8. “ And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” Genesis 2: 23
9. “ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24
10. “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” Genesis 2:25

What Did God Do With Adam And Eve After The Fall?

A new nature after the fall

1. Adam and Eve fell when the serpent deceived Eve saying: "in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5
2. "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate" Genesis 3:6
3. "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." Genesis 3:8
4. "Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" Genesis 3:9
5. "So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." Genesis 3:10
6. "And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Genesis 3:11
7. "Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." Genesis 3:12
8. " So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life" Genesis 3:14
9. "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Genesis 3:15

This is what happened on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, He "crushed Satan" although Satan made the Jews "crushed His heel" referring to the wounds in His body.

So we see

1. The completion of the creation
2. The fall of man
3. The promise of salvation and redemption
4. This is what our Lord accomplished through His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension into heaven for our sake
5. He sent us the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, who instituted Churches the ship of salvation
6. He promised to come again with glory, He will come in His glory and the glory of His Father and give each one according to his deed. (Divine Liturgy)
7. We all exclaim, "according to your mercy O Lord and not according to our sins"
8. Through faith, repentance, confession, spiritual guidance, partaking in the Holy Mysteries we abide in Christ and He in us and we have eternal life

Hence, the sons and daughters of the Church are keen to partake the Holy Communion since their Baptism, which should not be delayed except for necessity and under the guidance of the priest. So we abide in Christ and He abides in us *"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him" John 6:56*

Preparing For The Second Coming

The Church teaches us the importance to prepare before taking communion *"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" 1Corinthians 11:27*

1- Be Ready By Faith

"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins" John 8:24

In the Old Testament when Moses asked God about His name, *"And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.'" And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you. Exodus 3:14* in Greek EGO EMI which has a theological meaning (I am the origin of the existence)



We believe in one God creator of heaven and earth. We believe in His promises in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in the New Testament (incarnation, redemption, resurrection, ascension, second coming, eternal life)... This is what we proclaim in all our prayers, in the liturgies, all the Church's rites and prayers. We believe He is the God of both Testaments Old and New and that The Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament. The New Testament is hidden in the old as our fathers taught us

We believe that both testaments are one book with one inspiration *"for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."* 2Peter 1:21

Here we pause in front of some of the present age claims who are trying to detract from the sanctity of the Old Testament or some of his books and ignore that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" 2Timothy 3:16

2- Be Ready By Means Of The Doctrine

Goal

To understand the Coptic Orthodox doctrine, protect it from misleading teaching and how to answer heresies

We explain our dogma in simple attractive ways suitable for all ages, and worn against the "No Sectarianism" which aims is the annulment of the Coptic Orthodox Faith, wo we ought to understand the Holy Trinity, the difference between the different denominations, the right understanding of Christian unity, the role of the Nicean council in rationing the faith and putting together the Nicean Creed... and *"the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints"* Jude 1:3 and to deliver to other generation

Coptic Orthodox Doctrine

1- Sound Doctrine

Meaning it is controlled by the Scriptures and Tradition. Giving special attention to the subjects of the sacraments, intercession, prayers for the deceased, fasting, feasts and so on...

With the grace of God our Church was able to provide Christian theologians who have been able to acquire the Christian faith and the sound doctrine and formulate the Creed and other Christian truth in an accurate manner that was and still witnessed by the whole world.

The return of the two Orthodox families to St. Cyril of Alexandria statement "One nature of the incarnate Word of God" was and will be the main reason of the unity between them

2- Straight Doctrine

Never deviated to the right or to the left, since the era of the Apostles till now. In a straight line without any slight deviation. Some deviated to the right, and has some opposition who deviated to the left... If they ever sit together to discuss they will find refuge in the Orthodox roots. We do not claim any special thing in us, but this is history.

3- Comprehensive Doctrine

Do not tend to exaggerate on an issue on the expense of another ... for example: talks about faith without neglecting the work, praises the Virgin without raising her up to the level of divinity, allows people to read the Bible and meditate on its words without giving them the freedom of putting individual explanation. Respects the priesthood and its authority without denying the people's right to make the Church decision. It talks about grace and also talks about spiritual struggle.

4- Biblical Doctrine

The Coptic Church is a Church of Tradition, it believes in the importance of the ecclesiastical Tradition and that the Bible is the gift of the Tradition and part of it. It believes that the Bible is the rule of every doctrine, tradition and ritual. Therefore all the Church's doctrines are biblical. Hundreds of verses about the sacraments, the intercession, unction of the sick, priesthood, the altar, honoring of St. Mary... etc. The doctrine of the Coptic Orthodox Church is the right understanding of the Bible this is the inheritance that we received from the fathers. All our forefathers lived the bible and we study our lives and their sayings and their bible explanations and commentaries and we follow their way: *"Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith"* Hebrews 13:7

"But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." Matthew 13:23

3- Be Ready Spiritually

God give man a spirit, for man to communicate with God. Beware do not neglect this part in your life. The Church was careful in helping its children to have good communication with God through: prayer, fasting, Holy Bible, Eucharist, spiritual readings, spiritual meetings, service, praises... etc. To prepare them for the life of sacrifice and to help them to tolerate the sufferings for the sake of Christ.

4- Be Ready Through The Church

- a. Commitment to the Church life, on a personal level, in the family, in the Church. So everyone would know about the history of our glorious Church and the fathers who kept the faith (Pope Athanasius the Apostolic- Pope Cyril the great – Pope Dioscorus- Pope Shenouda) and what they have written and recorded with their lives

- b. The rituals is a reflection of life, our Church's rituals are fulfilling at the intellectual, mental and spiritual level. The ritual in the Church is a vessel for the dogma. Also our Church membership is the union of the believers (on earth) with the saints (in heaven) with our Lord who is the head of the Church and her heavenly bridegroom.

5- Be Ready Through The Service

The Church is in need of a servant who has the right faith and the right belief in his regular life. We must know that although the service is giving the servant also receives from the service. *"The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself."* Proverbs 11:25

There are many ways for the service like: the service of the word, the service of outreach, the service of prayer, the service of aghaby...etc.

We must serve with all our strength to the glory of the God's name, the extension of His kingdom, the growth of our personal lives and the building of the kingdom of God

6- Be Ready For Eternal Life

Our daily goal is; "we look for the resurrection of the death and the life of the coming age".

The journey of all Christians will end at this point, the point of the harvest, when the Lord Jesus comes again in a visible manner *"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him"* Revelation 1:7 unlike the first coming when He was born of the Virgin Mary humble and His divinity was hidden purposely for our redemption *"for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."* 1Corinthians 2:8, but He will come again in *"His glory"* Matthew 25:31 manifested *"the brightness of His coming"* 2Thessalonians 2:8

The goal of the first coming was salvation. The goal of the second coming is judgment. It is an important responsibility before every believer. Everyone must pay attention to his daily life, his regular confession, and his spiritual life, waiting for the end of the world or the end of life.

Be Ready In Your Daily Life

As many ask is thing lawful or unlawful? St. Paul gave us rules to follow in our daily life

- a. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 1Corinthians 6:12
- b. All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 1Corinthians 10:23

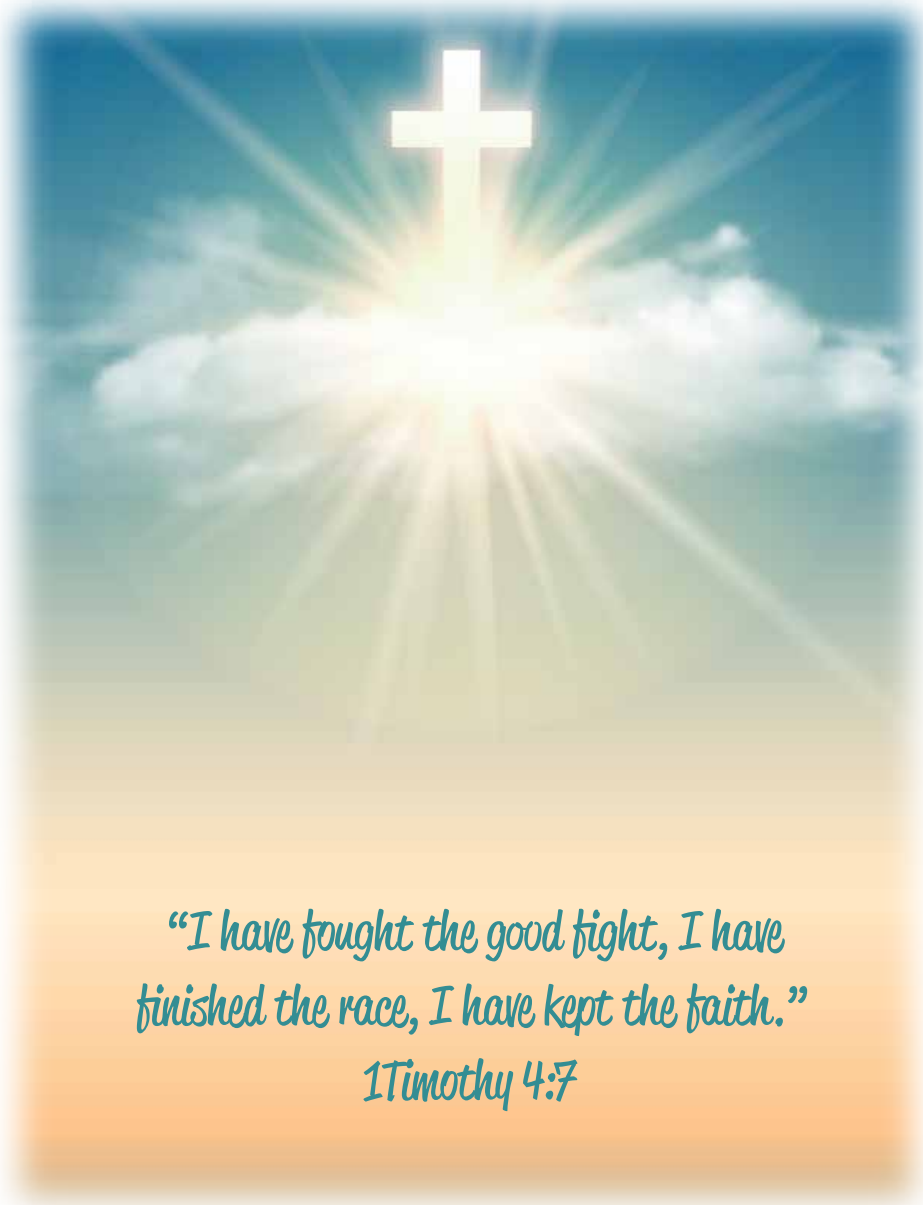
In everything we should ask ourselves:

- Is it **helpful** for us as children of God?
- Is it **edifying** to our life?
- Would this **overpower us?** For example: smoking, drugs, adultery

So we can take the right decision to benefit our family, our Church, our country and ourselves. Refuse all negativities and all what is against the Christian faith, the Holy Bible and the Christian dogma. Beware of all the negatives on social media, internet.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
1Timothy 4:7

May the Lord keep us in His right hand and help us in our salvation through the prayers of His Holiness Pope Tawadross II



*“I have fought the good fight, I have
finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*

1 Timothy 4:7

The Book Of 1 Samuel

Chapters 1 - 15

Introduction:

1. The books of first and second Samuel were originally one book in the Hebrew Bible, but the Septuagint translation split them into two books.
2. The name Samuel means, "God hears". His mother named him Samuel because God heard her prayer.
3. The two books of Samuel were written by the prophet Samuel himself, until his death in the second book. The second book of Samuel was then completed by Gad and Nathan, the prophets.
4. Up until the time of Samuel, Israel had no king. God was their King and chose leaders to rule over them, prophets and judges such as Moses, Gideon, Samson, and Samuel. But the people wanted to have a king like other nations. In spite of that, God did not leave His people but continued to care for them.
5. The Book of Samuel is considered the link between the period of judges, the last of which was Samuel the prophet, and the period of kings, the first of which was Saul.
6. The main theme of this book is prayer. It talks about the respect of God's house and the punishment of those who dishonour His house.



7. The first book of Samuel is divided into 3 parts:
- Chapters 1-7: Samuel the prophet and judge
 - Chapters 7-15: King Saul
 - Chapters 16-31: King David

Name	Meaning	Notes
Samuel	God hears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last judge • The author of the first book of Samuel • He anointed the first two kings of Israel
Elkanah	God creates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samuel's father • From the tribe of Levi
Hannah	Grace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samuel's mother • God gave her 6 children (4 boys, 2 girls)
Peninnah	Pearl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elkanah's wife
Eli	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel's judge and priest • He sinned by not punishing his sons for breaking the Law
Dagon	Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A god who had the head and hands of a man and the body of a fish

Saul	Asked for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel's first king • The Israelites liked him because he was an impressive young man • His heart was not totally with God so God refused him
Nahash	Serpent or Snake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leader of the Ammonites • He threatened the people of Jabesh Gilead to take out their right eyes • He is a symbol of Satan
Name	Meaning	Notes
Jesse	Man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David's father • Son of Eubid, who was the son of Boaz and Ruth • He was from Bethlehem
Goliath	Exile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Palestinian giant who defied the army of Israel
Jonathan	Jehovah gives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saul's son • David's best friend

Key Places:

Name	Notes
Ramah	Samuel's place of birth
Shiloh	The place of the Tabernacle and the Ark of Covenant
Mizpah	Where Samuel and the Israelites gathered to pray, asking for God's mercy to help them in the war against the Palestinians. God heard their prayer and helped them.
Gilgal	Where Saul was crowned king

Chapter Summaries:

Chapter 1:

1. Elkanah was a righteous man, from the tribe of Levi. He was called an Ephraimite because he lived in the Ephraim mountains. He had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah.
2. Hannah was barren and mourned the fact that the Lord shut her womb. However, Elkanah loved Hannah more than Peninnah, which made Peninnah jealous so she treated Hannah harshly.
3. At that time, it was shameful for women to be barren because every woman wanted to be the mother of the Messiah. It was thought that if a woman was barren, it must be because God was angry with her.
4. Hannah was a righteous woman who put her problems before God in tearful prayers. Every year, her husband took the whole family to celebrate the feast and offer sacrifices.
5. When Hannah was praying in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!" But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now." Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him."
6. Hannah made a vow to the Lord. She promised God that if He gave her a baby, she would give him to the Lord all the days of his life.
7. God answered Hannah's prayer and she gave birth to Samuel. When Samuel was a young boy, she brought him to the temple to serve God, and she would see him once a year when she went to celebrate the feast.

Lessons Learned

1. Do not treat people differently. Elkanah's partiality towards his wives made Peninnah jealous and caused her to treat Hannah harshly.
2. The first solution to any problem is prayer.
3. When we defend ourselves, it must be with humility and patience, just as Hannah defended herself to Eli the priest.
4. Be patient on the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Because of Hannah's patience in prayer, she gave birth to one of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament.
5. We must offer our greatest gifts to the Lord just as Hannah offered her only son.
6. Hannah found the solution to her problem in the temple. We must learn from Hannah that in difficult times, we must go to Church and put our problems before God in prayers and tears.



Chapter 2

1. Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving (1 Samuel 2:1-10) illustrates how the Lord rewards the weak, lifts up the humble and fills the hungry, but opposes the proud and the unjust.
2. While Samuel was growing in the service of the Lord, Eli's sons were corrupt and followed the way of Belial. They dishonoured people's sacrifices by taking more than their portion from what was dedicated to the Lord. They would not wait for the fat of the sacrifice to burn according to the rites. Because they were wicked and dishonoured the rites of the Tabernacle, their punishment was death.
3. The Lord rewarded Hannah by giving her three other sons and two daughters.
4. Because Eli the priest was not strict with his sons, his punishment was severe. All the members of his family would die young, his two sons Hophni and Phinehas would also die and there would be poverty in his house. "For those who honour Me I will honour, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Samuel 2:30).

Lessons Learned

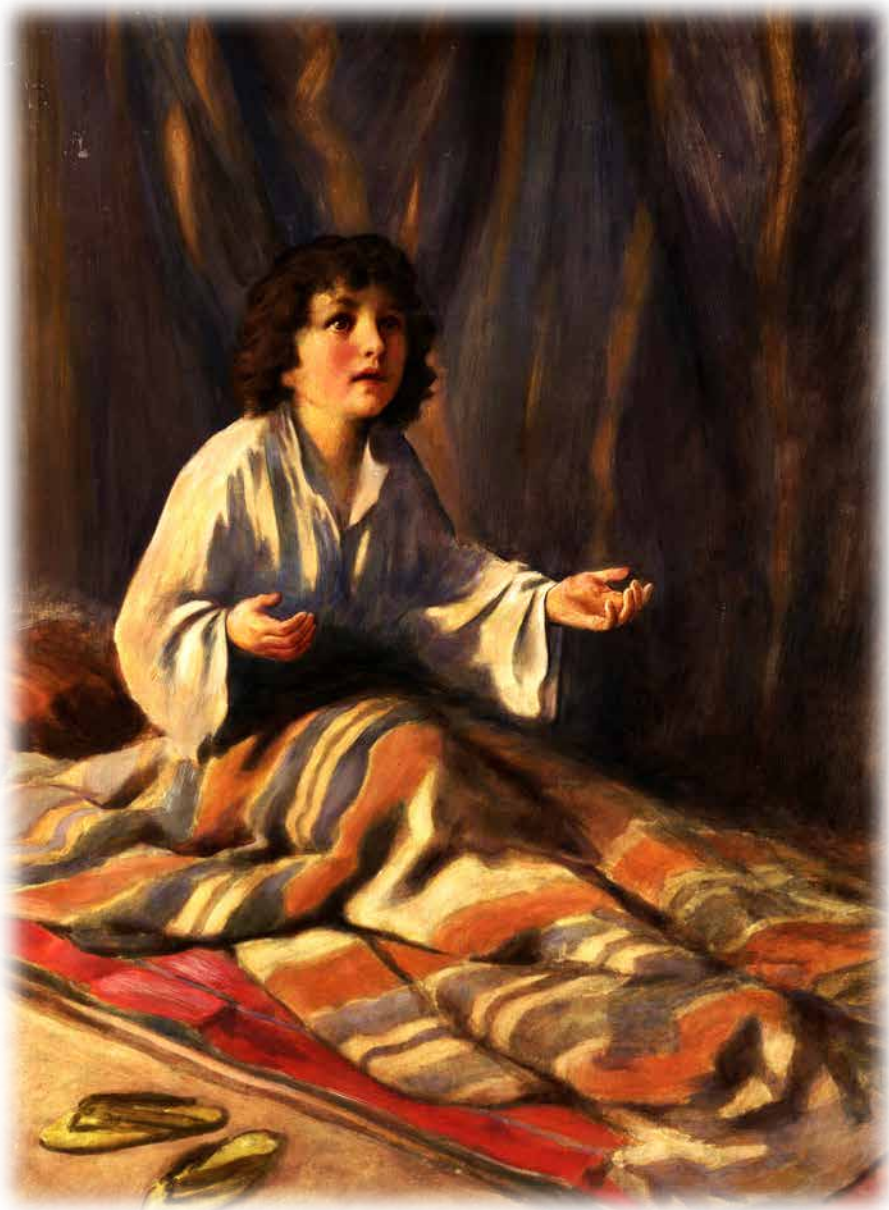
1. Do not forget to give thanks to the Lord for His gifts.
2. It is important to grow in the knowledge of God day after day, "And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favour both with the Lord and men" (1 Samuel 2:26).
3. It is the duty of our parents to be strict as this is their responsibility before God. If they are negligent, they will be blamed by God as Eli was blamed for his lack of firmness with his sons.
4. We have to respect the Lord's house and not abuse the tolerance and patience of the Lord.

Chapter 3

1. The wickedness of the people increased, so the Lord stopped appearing to them in visions for guidance and teaching. "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11).
2. The Lord wanted to send a message to Eli the priest through Samuel. God called Samuel but Samuel did not realize that it was the Lord's voice because visions were not known at that time due to the people's wickedness. Samuel thought that Eli was calling him, but when this happened three times, Eli told Samuel that when he hears the voice of God, to answer saying "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears" (1 Samuel 3:9).
3. Samuel did as Eli instructed, and the Lord told Samuel what He would do with Eli. When Eli learned from Samuel the Lord's message, he said, "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him" (1 Samuel 3:18).
4. Samuel was twelve years old when the Lord called him. He grew and the Lord was with him.

Lessons Learned

1. If we abide in the Lord's house like Samuel, we will be far from the corruption of the world.
2. As Samuel rushed to help Eli when he thought that he called him in the middle of the night, we too must learn to obey and serve others.
3. When in doubt, we should seek guidance and advice from the elders of the Church, just as Samuel did.



Chapter 4

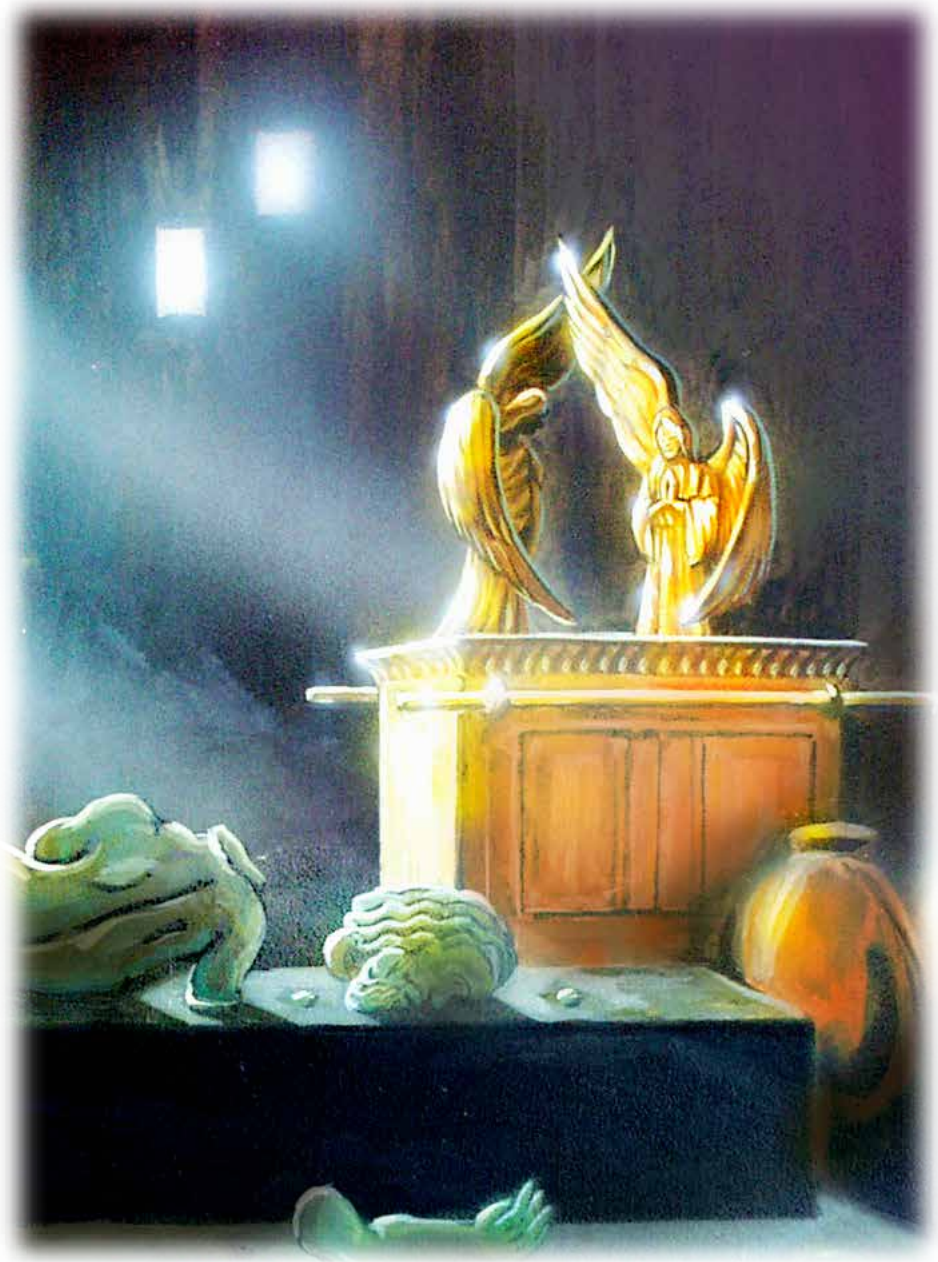
1. The Israelites went out to fight the Philistines at Ebenezer without sanctification and without asking the Lord, so they were defeated.
2. They returned to take the Ark of covenant, where God dwells, from Shiloh in order to win the battle. They wanted the Ark not because they wanted to repent, but because they depended on superficial worship and deceived themselves. Once again, they were defeated, 30,000 men were killed and the Philistines took the Ark.
3. Hophni and Phinehas were killed. When Eli heard that the Ark was taken and his sons were killed, he fell down and broke his neck and died.
4. Phinehas' wife died while giving birth. She named her son Ichabod saying, "the glory has departed from Israel" because the Ark of God had been captured and because her father-in-law and her husband died.

Lessons Learned

1. True worship is from the heart and is accompanied by repentance. Prayer without repentance is superficial.
2. God will not help us if we refuse to take the sin out of our lives, even if we are always in the Church.

Chapter 5

1. Dagon was the god of the Philistines. His name means fish, and he was half man, half fish.
2. The Philistines took the Ark of Covenant and put it in Dagon's temple in Ashdod although they knew that the Ark was a symbol of God's presence. In the morning, they found Dagon, fallen on its face on the ground before the Ark of the Lord. They took Dagon and set it in its place again, but when they arose early the next morning, they found Dagon once again fallen on its face. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold. The hand of the Lord was heavy upon the people of Ashdod as He brought devastation upon them and afflicted them with tumours and rats to eat their crops.



3. They carried the Ark from Ashdod to Gath and then to Ekron but the hand of the Lord continued to afflict the people so they decided to return the Ark to Israel.

Lessons Learned

1. Just as Dagon and the Ark could not coexist in their land, we cannot keep both God and our sinful habits in our lives at the same time.

Chapter 6

1. The Ark remained in the land of the Philistines for seven months.
2. God used even the pagan priests and the diviners to witness for Him. The priests and the diviners did not return the Ark empty but with a trespass offering. The five cities of Philistine gathered, and made five golden tumours and five golden rats.
3. They made a new cart, took two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitched the cows to the cart. They took away the calves from the cows, then put their offerings on the cart with the Ark and sent it on its way. They believed that if the cows went up towards Beth Shemesh, then it was the Lord who brought this disaster on them. But if they do not, then it was not the hand of the Lord that struck them, and the disasters were by chance.
4. Although the Philistines separated the cows from their calves, the cows walked towards Israel and settled in Beth Shemesh. The unyoked cows, heading towards Israel, are a symbol of the colt that Jesus rode into Jerusalem.
5. The people of Beth Shemesh did not honour the Ark as a symbol of God's presence. God struck fifty thousand and seventy men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the Ark of the Lord.

Lessons Learned

1. Just as the Philistines offered a new cart with unyoked cows, we also must offer God a new heart. We cannot walk with God and commit sins at the same time.
2. We have to approach the Holy Sacraments with respect and honour the house of the Lord.



Chapter 7

1. The people of Beth Shemesh became afraid of the Ark. The men of Kirjath Jearim then came and took the Ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the Ark of the Lord. It was there for twenty years. The men of Kiriath Jearim realized that the Ark was a symbol of the presence of the Lord and a source of blessing.
2. Samuel used the return of the Ark of Covenant to teach the people to return to the Lord and put away the foreign gods. They accepted what Samuel said, put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths (Baal's wife) and served the Lord. They began to pray and fast together in one accord.
3. However, the people's worship was superficial. Their minds were with the Lord but their hearts were after other gods. Samuel gathered the people at Mizpah because the only way to reform the people was through prayer.
4. When the Philistines heard that the Israelites were gathered at Mizpah, they ascended to fight them. The children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."
5. Samuel prayed and offered a sacrifice on behalf of the people. The Lord answered him and the Israelites won the battle. They took back some cities that were taken by the Philistines and Samuel set a stone between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name "Ebenezer", saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us."

Lessons Learned

1. By prayer, we can defeat Satan and be united with the Lord.
2. Just as God forgave the sins of the Israelites through their sacrifices, God forgives our sins through the sacrament of the Eucharist.
3. Prayer and sacrifice are the practical solutions to our troubles and afflictions.

Chapter 8

1. Samuel's two sons, Joel and Abijah, did not walk in their father's ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. However, at that time, they were not under their father's guidance. Samuel was in the north, at the

city of Ramah while they were in the south at Beersheba, which is why God did not punish him as He did with Eli.

2. The elders of Israel asked Samuel for a king to rule over them. Samuel felt that they had rejected him as their leader. God, however, told him to answer their request as they rejected God Himself not Samuel. God does not deny man's freedom. He asked Samuel to warn them that the king will enslave them and take their sons and daughters to serve him. But they insisted to have a king like other nations, so the Lord asked Samuel to do as the people requested.

Lessons Learned

1. The Israelites wanted to be like other nations but did not realize the grace they were losing.

Chapter 9

1. The Lord chose Saul, which means, "asked for", to be their king. "There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people" (1 Samuel 2:9). Although he had good intentions, his heart was not with God because he was proud.
2. Kish, Saul's father, had lost two donkeys and sent his son to look for them. After a three-day journey, Saul considered returning home so that his father does not begin to worry about him. Saul's servant told him to first go see the man of God, Samuel, to inquire about the donkeys. God planned for this to happen in order to bring Saul before Samuel.
3. Before going to see Samuel, Saul asked his servant what gift they would bring to the man of God. He was taught not to enter the Lord's house empty handed. They decided to give Samuel the little money they had.
4. When Samuel saw Saul, he reassured him that they would find the donkeys and asked him to stay with him until the next day.

Lessons Learned

1. God often uses little trivial incidents in our lives to direct us towards His bigger plan for us.
2. Giving should be with joy and we should offer God the best we have.

Chapter 10

1. Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head to anoint him king. At that time, oil was used to anoint priests and prophets. Samuel explained to Saul what will happen to prove to him that everything is according to God's plan.
2. God wanted to teach Saul a lesson at the beginning of his rule. Samuel asked Saul to visit Rachel's tomb and told him that there, he would meet three men, one carrying three goats, one carrying three loaves of bread, and one carrying a skin of wine. The man carrying the three loaves would give him two loaves, one for him and one for his servant, to teach him the life of poverty and austerity. The man carrying the goats would not give him any, to teach him not to interfere with the duties of priesthood. The man carrying the wine would also not give him any, to teach him to stay away from the life of pleasure.
3. Along the way, he met a group of prophets and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. He prophesied and joined them in praising God and was transformed into a new man.

Lessons Learned

1. We should be occupied with heavenly matters not earthly matters.
2. As God taught Saul, we too should be satisfied with less and stay away from earthly pleasures.
3. We must understand our responsibilities and not interfere with the duties of others.
4. God's plan for us is to live a life of praise and always seek His advice.

Chapter 11

1. Nahash the Ammonite, whose name means snake, came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you." Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel."
2. This angered Saul, so he gathered an army of thirty-three thousand men to fight the Ammonites and won. The people rejoiced and offered sacrifices and enthroned Saul in Gilead.



Lessons Learned

1. Nahash represents Satan, the right eye represents spiritual insight, and the left eye represents earthly lust. Satan wants to take from the believers their spiritual insight and make them concerned with earthly matters.

Chapter 12

1. As Samuel grew old, he gathered all the people to witness for his faithfulness. He wanted to teach Saul about spiritual leadership. During his life as a judge over the people of Israel, he did not cheat, oppress or take bribes.
2. He told the people about the wonders that the Lord had done for them, beginning with the story of Exodus until their victory over the Ammonites.
3. The people asked Samuel to pray for them he replied, "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23).

Lessons Learned

1. Let us all pray for each other.

Chapters 13 and 14

1. Saul prepared a small army of 3000 soldiers to fight against the Philistines' large army. The people of Israel realized that they were in grave danger and became very distressed.
2. Saul waited for Samuel, but when Samuel was late, Saul offered the sacrifice himself, a task that may only be done by priests. Although he was instructed not to, he interfered with the duties of priesthood. When Samuel arrived, he said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you" (1 Samuel 13:13-14).
3. The Philistines did not allow the Israelites to have any swords or spears; even their



axes were sharpened by them.

4. By faith, Jonathan, Saul's son, and the young man bearing his armour went alone to the Philistines' camp saying, "For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few" (1 Samuel 14:6). The Philistines thought that Jonathan had a great army behind him, and they panicked.
5. In the meantime, Saul asked the priest to enquire from the Lord, but he did not wait to hear His answer. He went after his enemies without considering the needs of his people who were very tired. He ordered them not to eat until the battle is over.
6. Jonathan did not know about his father's oath and ate honey. Jonathan was condemned to death because he did not follow Saul's oath but the people of Israel defended Jonathan because of his great victory. Because the men could no longer tolerate the hunger, they ate meat with blood, which was forbidden by the Law.
7. As time went on, Saul defeated many armies and accomplished a great victory over God's enemies. He was strong and courageous. "When Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself" (1 Samuel 14:52).

Lessons Learned

1. It is important to leave the priestly duties to the priests ordained for the service. Only priests can administer the sacraments.
2. Just as God gave victory to the Israelites through a small army, He can also give us victory over the devil through the little that we have.
3. Only by faith can we defeat the devil.
4. We must pay attention to the needs of others and carefully consider the oaths we take.

Chapter 15

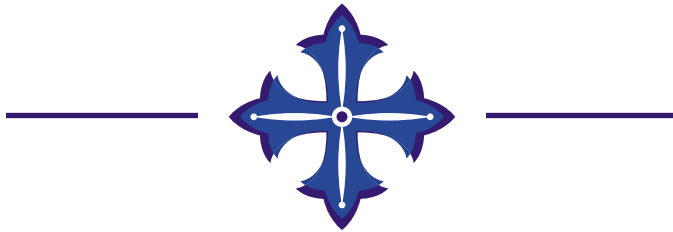
1. God ordered Saul to fight the Amalekites, to destroy all they had.
2. However, Saul did not obey the Lord. He kept the good cows and sheep and killed

only the weak ones.

3. Saul tried to defend his actions by telling Samuel that he had left the good animals to offer them as sacrifices to the Lord. Samuel however replied, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

Lessons Learned

1. Do not justify wrong behaviour. Saul did not obey the Lord and justified it by pretending that he wanted to offer a sacrifice to the Lord.
2. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit" (Psalms 51:17).



A Winner of Souls is Wise!

The Letter to Philemon

Imagine the following situation:

- Your expensive cell phone was lost and you saw it with a friend. You confront him and a problem arises. How would you react to the situation? What would you do?
- What is more important to you? Getting your cell phone back? Or maintaining your friendship? Which do you consider a greater loss? Which is more painful?
- Imagine the same situation happening to a priest, a servant or a regular person. Do you expect each one of their reactions to be different?

Did a similar situation happen with a prominent figure in the Bible?

Indeed this happened between Philemon, the master and Onesimus, his slave.

St. Paul the Apostle was the mediator between them and reconciled them.

From the Epistle to Philemon, let's learn how St. Paul resolved the conflict between them.

Who?

Philemon

- Born in Colosse (or maybe just brought up there)
- St. Paul the Apostle traveled to Colosse, where Philemon was converted to the Christian faith through his teachings.
- He may have met St. Paul in Ephesus.
- He was ordained Bishop of Colosse.

Where & When ?

- The Epistle may have been written in Rome in the year 62-63 AD while St. Paul was in prison for the first time.
- St. Paul mentions that he is a prisoner in the book of Acts.
- He talks about his hope to be released from prison. Asking Philemon to prepare a lodging for him, he has Onesimus deliver the letter to Colosse.

Why?

The epistle that St. Paul wrote to his friend Philemon is personal and for the sake of his fugitive slave, Onesimus, after he repented and confessed. He sent the letter with Onesimus asking Philemon to forgive him.

What?

Philemon was a rich man living in Colosse and Onesimus was his slave. Onesimus stole from his master Philemon and ran away. Later he was captured and arrested in Rome and put in jail, where he met St. Paul.

Onesimus was one of many of those imprisoned in Rome, who believed because of St. Paul's teachings. St. Paul had seen the remorse of Onesimus, who confessed and repented for what he had done. St. Paul then advised Onesimus to return to his master so that his repentance may be complete.

It was a difficult situation because there was a chance that Onesimus would lose his life! A master had the right to kill the escaped slave or severely punish him. The other slaves had to be taught that they should not follow in his footsteps.

St. Paul, however, wanted the repentance of Onesimus to be completed by apologizing to his master and trying to pay back for what he stole.

The whole epistle is a letter from the St. Paul the apostle to Philemon who accepted the faith through his teachings, encouraging him to accept Onesimus not as a slave

but as a brother. That is why the introduction of the letter is filled with wisdom and overflowing with love from St. Paul to Philemon, before he asks him to forgive Onesimus.

Note 1: The subject is sensitive and personal because Philemon as a master is entitled to discipline his slave so that no other slave would emulate his behaviour.

Note 2: The epistle here is dealing with a serious issue in society, which is slavery.

Think: Why didn't Jesus order for slavery to be banned as a divine commandment?

Can you find the sentences of wisdom and gentleness in the words of St. Paul to Philemon? What is the etiquette of conversation and of making requests of others?

Question:

Can you act as a mediator between two people who have a problem? How can both sides win and be reconciled?

Characters from the Epistle

Archippus:

A Greek name that means "master of the horse". Archippus was a worker with Philemon and Apphia. He may have been their son. His name is mentioned in the letter to the Colossians. "And say to Archippus, 'Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.'" Col 4:17

It is evident that Archippus had a strong connection with the church of Colosse.

Apphia:

She is a Christian woman in Colosse. She may have been Philemon's wife.

Onesimus:

He was Philemon's slave. He stole from him and ran away to Rome where he met St Paul the Apostle. He believed in the Christian faith, repented and was baptized.

Consider the following:

- Do you think that Onesimus was afraid to go back to his master?
- Describe your feelings if you were in Onesimus' position.
- Is it possible for you to be in circumstances similar to those of Onesimus one day?
- Don't hesitate to describe your feelings if you were in Onesimus' position.

What did it mean to be a slave in those times?

- A slave was considered part of the estate and was owned just like a piece of furniture.
- The master had the right to beat up his slave or even kill him without being questioned.
- When a slave died, no funeral was held and no one mourned for him or her.
- The punishment of theft could be as severe as death.
- To their master's, the slaves did not have any rights or dignity. They could be humiliated for the smallest reason or even without reason.
- The Roman law also deprived the slaves of all human rights. They were not included in any census even though they formed one third of the population.

How would you describe the style and tone of the letter? Does it sound like a demand or a request? Explain.

St. Paul is accustomed to behaving in a Christian way. That is why we find him bestowing a lot of love on Philemon before he asks him to do something for him. He begins his request boldly, "In Christ;" not only did he request but he also commanded, for his request was reasonable.

From your point of view, what makes this request reasonable?

1. Love persuades Philemon to accept Onesimus: "Since we were still sinners, Christ died for us", especially because it is St. Paul, who is the father, the elder and the prisoner, who is making the request.
2. The new status of Onesimus: He has become a son to St. Paul. As St. John Chrysostom puts it, "This was not to embarrass Philemon, or quench his anger. It was to bring him joy."
3. New Characteristics of Onesimus: He announces that he was good for nothing in the past but adds that he is now valuable. This is an interesting comparison: Onesimus means useful and St. Paul wants to say he now lives up to his name and became valuable for both of them. St. Paul sent him back to Philemon so that he may witness the transformation for himself. If Onesimus had caused Philemon sorrow when he was an unbeliever, it is now time for Philemon to experience the goodness of his former slave's renewed life.
4. Doing well: He wants to give Philemon the chance to do well by his own will and not by force. Here St. Paul imitates Christ. God does not force us to do what is right, but allows us to exercise our own good will. He supports us with His grace and walks with us along the way but without forcing us to follow His way.
5. Understanding God's Wisdom: God's children know that He fills their life with many opportunities from which they can benefit. Philemon should ask himself why God allowed Onesimus to rob him then run away. God changed the escape of Onesimus into an opportunity to transform him from a slave to a brother who would be joined with Philemon in an eternal bond. Note that he cares for Onesimus' feelings, in which he didn't use the word "escaped" but rather "departed from you."
6. St. Paul will pay for him: "I consider Onesimus as myself and that is why I ask you to accept him without hesitation and I will return what he may have stolen from you. He is my peer, so consider myself as him. A guarantor and payer for him. He says, "But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay-not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides." Philemon 1:18-19

What would you do if you were in Philemon's position?
Consider Philemon's position as a master among other masters and slaves.

From this story, can you determine an important Christian value?

Application

Ask yourself:

- Were you unfaithful at any point in your life? In your actions, relationships, your time and/or in your studies?
- In what way were you unfaithful? Do you want to change yourself? To what extent can you change that? What will it cost you?

Practice:

Find five verses about honesty and/or faithfulness. Provide the biblical references and memorize them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

The Church Readings

If you met a very hungry person, do you think they would be satisfied if you gave them a picture of bread? They would need real bread to satisfy their hunger.

The Liturgy readings that are read throughout the year are meant to satisfy the hunger of our hearts and ears.

The Coptic calendar has 13 months, 12 of them have 30 days. The month of Nasie, the last month of the Coptic year, is only 5 or 6 days long. Since Hatour is the month of wheat harvest and other winter crops, the parable of the sower is read at the first and second Sunday of the month.

Through great wisdom, guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church fathers put together the readings of each day of the year. Their purpose is to teach us how to walk in the Lord's way, and to highlight the importance of salvation.

“Let the Church readings show you your sins and encourage you to leave them” Pope Shenouda III.

The Church readings are divided in two:

1. Sundays: A reading about the work of the Holy Trinity in the Church is read every Sunday, to teach the reader about the theologically supported importance of unity throughout the Church
2. All other days of the week: Special daily readings are read according to the feast, saint or martyr that is commemorated on that day. The readings should reveal the different gifts that the Church and its members have been given, and how they have strengthened it.

The Katamarus is the name of the book that has all of these readings.

1. Part 1- describes the continuous work of God in the Church and in mankind. He is the lover of mankind; He works for the good of mankind and shares its troubles. He is elevating mankind, inviting them to share in His eternal glory, and this is the perfect love of God to mankind.
2. Part 2- describes the unity between the struggling and victorious Church, between the earthly and the heavenly, between the people of the Old Testament and the New Testament, between men and women and between the clergy and the congregation. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Light that unites all members of His Church, just as different solar bodies gather around the sun, the source of their light.

These are not just stories to be read, they are part of the rituals of the Church, and prayed using the Church tune for that occasion (annual, Kiahk, sad or joyful).

Through these readings, the Church provides a full picture of the love of God and His work for our salvation. They also show the importance of perseverance and repentance in order to be worthy of this salvation. They teach us about heavenly meditation, accepting both suffering and joy, partaking in Church sacraments and enjoying the word of God. Most importantly, they guide us on having a personal relationship with God and preparing for the Kingdom of Heaven, which God has been preparing for us since the beginning.

The part of the liturgy in which the Church readings are read is known as the Liturgy of the catechumens. The Katamarus contains the readings read during Vespers, Matins and the Liturgy.

Some may find the readings repetitive; however, they are different every day and require focus and enlightened hearts to benefit from the treasures within them.

The readings of the Church are included in 4 books:

1. The Annual Katamarus, which is read year round on any day
2. The Katamarus of the Great Lent
3. The Katamarus of the Holy Week
4. The Katamarus of the Holy Fifty days, which is read from Easter until the Pentecost

These books have been put together with accuracy inspired by God to honour the greatest events that have happened throughout mankind.

Note: There are special readings for Sundays

The Coptic year has 52 weeks:

12 months X 4 Sundays = 48+1 (Nasie) = 49

Some months have a 5th Sunday = 3

Total: 52 weeks (52 Sundays)

1- Annual Sundays Readings

The general goal of these readings is to reveal the work of the Trinity in the Church, by discussing the continuous work of God for the Church and humanity. They describe the love of God for humanity and desire to lift everyone up and give him or her eternal life. They also emphasize the importance of the role of the Church in guiding and helping believers. The believers are blessed by: "The love of God the Father, the grace of His only begotten Son and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all".

The readings of each month have a theme:

Tout: The love of God the Father.

Baba: The authority of the Saviour on the souls of humanity

Hatour: The Gospel of the Saviour to His people

Kiahk: The Saviour was incarnated and became one of His people

Toba: Jesus Christ granting salvation to the Gentiles

Amshir: The Saviour satisfies the believers

Baramhat, Baramoda and the first half of **Bashans** come during the Great Lent, the Holy Week and the Holy 50 days, these events have their special readings
Second half of **Bashans:** the Lordship of the Saviour.

Baona: The gifts of the Holy Spirit and Holy Communion, since the feast of the Pentecost usually falls on this month.

Abib: The Saviour's aid to His disciples and the feast of Apostles

Mesra: The Saviour takes care of His Church.

The Nasie-> if there is Sunday in this month, we read about the Second Coming in Matthew 24

The Sundays of the Holy 50 days:

1st Sunday: Thomas Sunday "My God and My Lord" (John 20:19-31).

2nd Sunday: The living bread coming from heaven (John 6:35-45).

3rd Sunday: The living water, the gospel reading about the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42).

4th Sunday: Christ is the light of the world (John 12:35-50).

5th Sunday: I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14:1-11).

6th Sunday: Jesus Christ has overcome the World (John 16:23-33).

7th Sunday: The feast of the Pentecost (John 16:23-33).

The 5th Sunday of the month:

If the month starts with a Saturday or a Sunday, it will have 5 Sundays. On the 5th Sunday of the month, the Church reads the passage from the gospel about feeding the multitude with the five loaves and two fishes. This emphasises the satisfaction of the believers by the word of God when they hear and read it carefully with open heart. If the 5th Sunday comes on the 29th of the month the readings of the 29th of Baramhat are read instead.

2- The Annual Readings on Regular Days

The Church arranged the readings of the Liturgy each day of the week, except Sundays, according to the Synaxarium of each day. This is done to show the unity between different members of the Church (earthly and heavenly).

If the Synaxarium has more than one saint, the Church chooses readings about the one who is more known. In remembrance of these saints, the Church has special readings for the feasts of martyrdom or departure; these are called "Special days". There are only 55 special days.

There are some readings that are repeated for members of the Church who play similar roles to each other. For example, on the feast of the departure of any Patriarch, the Gospel of the Good Shepherd is read. On the feast of any of the apostles, the Gospel about the apostles ministry is read.

On the 8th day of Tout we celebrate the departure of Moses the prophet; these readings describe the prophets and their faith and their work. As an example, here are the readings of that day:

Raising of Incense for Vespers

Psalm: "Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm" (Psalm 105:14-15).

The Gospel: "The blood of the prophets shall be required of this generation" (Luke 11:37-51).

Raising of Incense for the Prime

Psalm: "He sent Moses His servant, And Aaron whom He had chosen" (Psalm 105: 26-27,45).

The Gospel: "And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him" (Matthew 17:1-9).

The Pauline:

“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter” (Hebrews 11:17-27).

The Catholic Epistles:

“But holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:19-2:8).

The Praxis:

“For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city” (Acts 15:21-29).

Psalm of the Liturgy:

“Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who called upon His name” (Psalm 99:6-7).

The Gospel of the Liturgy:

“I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify” (Matthew 23:13-36).

The Church will read the readings for the departure of certain prophets on the following days:

Tout 4 (Joshua son of Nun)

Kiahk 20 (Haggai)

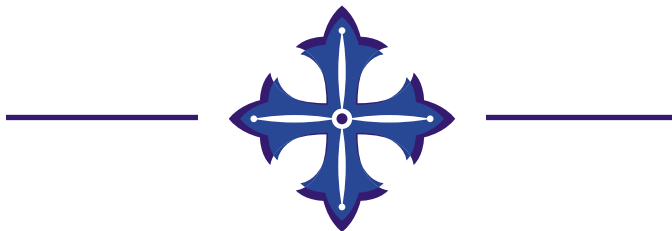
Baramhat 23 (Daniel)

Baona 25 (Elisha)

There is a story in the book of the paradise of Monks that explains the influence of the Church readings on repentance and the sanctification of souls.

St. Paul The Simple came to the Church, and noticed that everyone entering into the Church had a joyful angel following him. He then saw one man surrounded by many devils, who were dragging him, and his angel was following him from afar and was very sad. When the saint saw this, he cried, beat upon his chest and went out of the Church weeping. The people asked him to go back and attend the mass, but he refused and sat at the door of the Church weeping. When the Liturgy was over, he looked at the people coming out and saw that the person who had entered surrounded by devils came out with a shining face, with his angel close by and rejoicing and no devils surrounding him.

St. Paul clapped happily and asked this person what happened that changed him. The man confessed in front of everyone and said: "for a long time I lived a sinful life, and when I saw the father crying, I listened carefully to the Church readings. When I heard the reading from Isaiah saying: 'Come now, and let us reason together.' The Lord says, 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' I repented and confessed." When the people heard this, they glorified God.



Regular
Incense
Liturgy
Holy
Annual
Praxis
Vespers
Psalm
Catholic
Readings
Prime
Pauline
Gospel

Comparative Theology

Three friends met during a break, and after sitting to talk, as they often did, John asked his friends this question:

John: Why do we have different denominations? Mina, you are Orthodox, Nader is Evangelical and I am Catholic. Are we not all Christians?! Are we not all one?

Nader: Of course we are all Christians, John, and we are one and there is no difference between us except in the title. I think that this was only due to differences in some of the formalities of prayer and worship and in what is called the Orthodox rites. Isn't that right, Mina?

Mina: I agree with you, we are all Christians, and recognize that Christ, our God, came for our salvation. But there are clear differences between us in the faith, not only in the form of prayer and worship, but also in our beliefs.

John: Differences in faith!! Where did these differences stem from? And how were such denominations formed, and when did this all happen?

Mina: You know what? I remember reading about this in comparative theology! The Church of the New Testament was one: one faith, one body composed of members who are believers, and its head is the Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ. The church remained one in its faith until 451 AD, the date of the council of the bishops and patriarchs in the city of Chalcedon. In this meeting the one church was divided into two groups. One group believed that the nature of Christ is one nature, which was a result of the unity of His humanity and His Divinity. This belief belonged to the Eastern churches led by the Coptic church of Alexandria. The other group, the Western churches led

by the Church of Rome, believed that Christ had two natures and so the outcome of that council was a split between the two groups regarding the nature of Christ. Since that day, there has been Chalcedonian churches (those who believe in the council of Chalcedon) under the leadership of the church of Rome and non-Chalcedonian churches led by the Coptic church of Alexandria.

In the eleventh century there was a split between the Western churches. The resulting churches are called the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Churches who followed Constantinople. In the sixteenth century, Martin Luther protested against the Catholic Church, and this was called "the Protestant reformation", and it was launched in Germany, where he objected to some of the teachings of the Catholic Church. His followers were called the protesters, and then came the name "Protestant". Within the Protestant Church, there are now many divisions, and to this day the divisions continue, creating more protestant denominations.

Orthodoxy is a Greek word meaning "true faith", and this name has been used for nearly 14 centuries. For all this time, the church has kept the faith that has been handed down from Our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles. As we receive this inheritance, we have to preserve it faithfully to hand it over to the generations that come after us, until Our Lord Jesus Christ receives His church, which He bought with His own blood.

Catholic is a Greek word meaning "universal" because it brought together all the Western churches, and this has been used since the eleventh century.

Protestantism means "the protest" or "opposition".

Dogma	Orthodox	Catholic	Protestant
Baptism	A sacrament in which the baptized receives the grace of the new birth and it is the gate to all the other sacraments. It is done through immersion using water.	It is a holy sacrament but mostly is carried out through sprinkling or pouring.	It is not a holy sacrament but is a symbol that can either be done through sprinkling or immersion. They believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
Acts 2:38			
Chrismation	A sacrament by which the grace of the Holy Spirit is delivered through the anointing of oil in 36 anointments across the body.	A sacrament similar to the Orthodox Church but is carried out at between the ages of 7-12 and is called Confirmation.	They do not believe in it.
2 Corinthians 1: 21 and 22			
Confession	It is a sacrament where the believers receive the absolution from their sins if they have repented.	It is a sacrament administered with a barrier between the priest and the confessor.	They only confess to God while some denominations have confession in front of the church.

John 22:20-23

Communion

True Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ after the Holy Spirit transforms the bread and wine into the Holy Body and Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. We cannot use anything for communion except the Korban. There also cannot be more than one mass on the same altar except after nine hours just like the rules put by the church for those who will partake of the Holy Communion.

They believe in the transubstantiation into the body and blood. Since the 11th century they have been using the wafer, however, they do not allow the congregation to partake of the Holy Blood. They also allow having more than one mass on the same altar and there is no abstinence prior to the partaking of the sacrament.

They believe that there is no change that takes place but instead it is just a symbolic ritual.

John 6:54

Intercession	We believe in the intercession of Jesus Christ for us in front of the Father and we also believe in the intercession of the saints on our behalf in front of Jesus Christ and we honour them through icons and preserve their relics. We also have them as our role models.	Same ideology as the Orthodox except they use statues to honour them. Statues are not preferred by the Orthodox.	They only believe in Jesus Christ's intercession and deny the saints' intercessions completely.
The Holy Spirit	We believe in the Holy Spirit who comes forth from the Father.	They believe that the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father and the Son.	They believe that the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father and the Son.
Traditions	We believe in the holy traditions of the apostles.	They believe in the same traditions as the Orthodox with the addition of their church laws and Western church fathers teachings and internal councils.	They do not believe in any church traditions hence they are sometimes called evangelical.

<p>The Second coming</p>	<p>A second coming for all and with it is the end of the world.</p>	<p>Same as Orthodox.</p>	<p>The second coming is done in stages. The first stage is when Jesus will come on earth and rule it for 1000 years; then there will be the final judgment.</p>
<p>Final judgment</p>	<p>Eternal condemnation for the sinners and the non-repentant.</p>	<p>They have purgatory where the believers suffer for the sins they committed so that they get purified and enter into paradise.</p>	<p>Like the Orthodox.</p>
<p>The Holy Virgin Mary</p>	<p>She inherited the first sin like all humanity and needed the salvation given through Jesus Christ. But She is the Mother of God and her glory exceeds the angels. We also believe in her everlasting virginity and Jesus Christ was her only child.</p>	<p>She was born without inheriting the first sin and did not need the salvation through Jesus Christ. They glorify her close to the point of worship and that is not accepted by the Orthodox. They also believe in her everlasting virginity.</p>	<p>They deny the title, 'Mother of God' and her intercession. Finally they deny her everlasting virginity and do not give her due respect.</p>

THE SECOND WATCH OF MIDNIGHT PRAYERS

Psalm 120

I will lift up my eyes to the hills-- From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore. ALLELUIA.

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE 7:36-50

Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is

touching Him, for she is a sinner.”

And Jesus answered and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” So he said, “Teacher, say it.” “There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?” Simon answered and said, “I suppose the one whom he forgave more.” And He said to him, “You have rightly judged.” Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman?”

I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.” Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” Then He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

The Litanies

Grant me, Lord, a fountain of many tears like that which You first granted to the woman who was a sinner. Make me worthy to shed my tears on Your feet which have freed me and took me to the right path. I bring unto You a precious ointment, to acquire through repentance a purified life, that I may hear that voice full of joy, "Your faith has saved you."

"Zoksapatri ke Eiyou-ke agi-you epnevmaty" (Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.)

When I am conscience of my many sins, and when I think of Your judgment, I fear and tremble and run to You, O God, do not turn away my supplications. My undefiled Lord, have mercy on me.

"Kenin ke aa-ee ke-ic-touce e-on-ace ton e-onon Amen." (Both now and forever and unto the age of all ages, Amen.)

The heavens praise You, O You full of grace, the ever Virgin bride. We glorify your pure birth of Jesus Christ, which is beyond our comprehension. O mother of God, mother of Mercy and Salvation, make intercession for the salvation of our souls.

"Kenin ke aa-ee ke-ic-touce e-on-ace ton e-onon Amen." (Both now and forever and unto the age of all ages, Amen.)

O Heavenly King, and Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who is in every

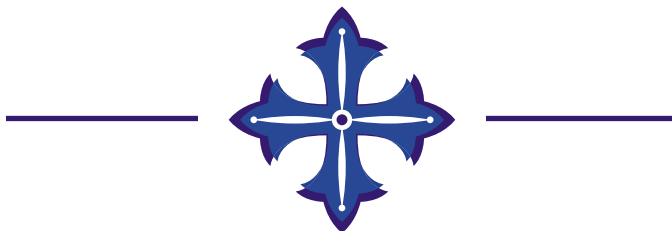
place, and fills all, You who are the Treasure of goodness, and Giver of life, graciously come and dwell in us, purge away all stain, O Good-One, and save our souls.

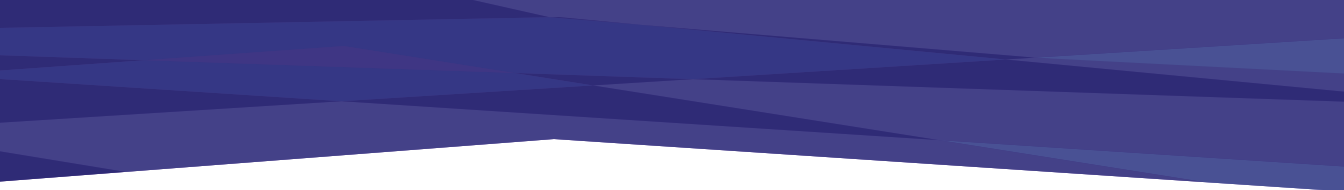
“Zoksapatri ke Eiyou-ke agi-you epnevmaty” (Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.)

Just as you were with Your Disciples, O Saviour, and gave them peace, graciously come also and be with us, save us, and deliver our souls.

“Kenin ke aa-ee ke-ic-touce e-on-ace ton e-onon Amen.”(Both now and forever and unto the age of all ages, Amen.)

Whenever we stand in Your Holy sanctuary, we are considered as those standing in Heaven. O Mother of God, You who are the gate of heaven, open unto us the door of mercy.





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