



MAHRAGAN ALKERAZA | 2020

# “MY CHURCH IS SPIRIT AND LIFE”

GR. 1-2 | ENGLISH EDITION

# “MY CHURCH IS



H.H. Pope Tawadros II

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



H.G. Bishop Mina

Bishop of Mississauga,  
Vancouver and Western Canada

# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
Introduction	4
My Church Is A Beautiful Vine	6
Our Good Shepherd Protects The Church	12
Well Established With Strong Roots	19
We Are Its Watered Branches	24
It Makes Me Experience The Taste Of Eternal Life	28
Memorization	32

## INTRODUCTION

### Mahragan Alkeraza 2020

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 2019 Mahragan. His Holiness Pope Tawadros II said during the Awards Ceremony in Egypt, "I am happy to see the activities of the Youth Bishopric, 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 2020 is "My Church Is Spirit & Life". This year, God is asking each one of us to grow in Christ. To do this we will learn about the following topics:

1. My Church Is A Beautiful Vine
2. Our Good Shepherd Protects The Church
3. Well Established With Strong Roots
4. We Are Its Watered Branches
5. It Makes Me Experience The Taste Of Eternal Life

# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

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

## **My Church Is A Beautiful Vine**

The Church “the House of God”  
(Genesis 28, 35)

The church is the house of God, where the believers gather to pray. In the church, we learn how to live with God here on earth and prepare for our eternal life.

The idea of the “House of God” was first mentioned in the Old Testament.

When Jacob left his house and his country to go to his uncle Laban, he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. There, he took one of the stones and put it under his head, and went to sleep. He had a dream and saw a ladder set up on the earth, with its top reaching up to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. The Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants... Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land” Genesis 28: 12-15

# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

When Jacob woke up from his sleep, he said: “Surely the Lord is in this place...”



## **MEMORY VERSE:**

***“How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” Genesis 28:17***

Jacob then rose early in the morning, took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. At that time, pouring the oil was a sign that this place will

# “MY CHURCH IS



be consecrated to God. He called the name of that place Bethel meaning the “House of God” and made a vow. He promised that if God will be with him so that he returns back to his father’s house in peace, the stone which he had set as a pillar would become God’s house.

Twenty years after Jacob visited his uncle, he returned back to his homeland with his wives and children. As Jacob had promised, God said to him to go to Bethel and make an altar there to God.

Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him to purify themselves and change their garments because that place



# SPIRIT AND LIFE”



is consecrated to God. They went to Bethel and there he built an altar to thank God because He was with him and protected him until he returned safe to his country.

As we see in this story, God's house is:

1. The place where He is present among His people, as Jacob said: "Surely the Lord is in this place"
2. The place where the children of God feel His





# “MY CHURCH IS

presence with them, as God promised Jacob: “Behold I am with you”

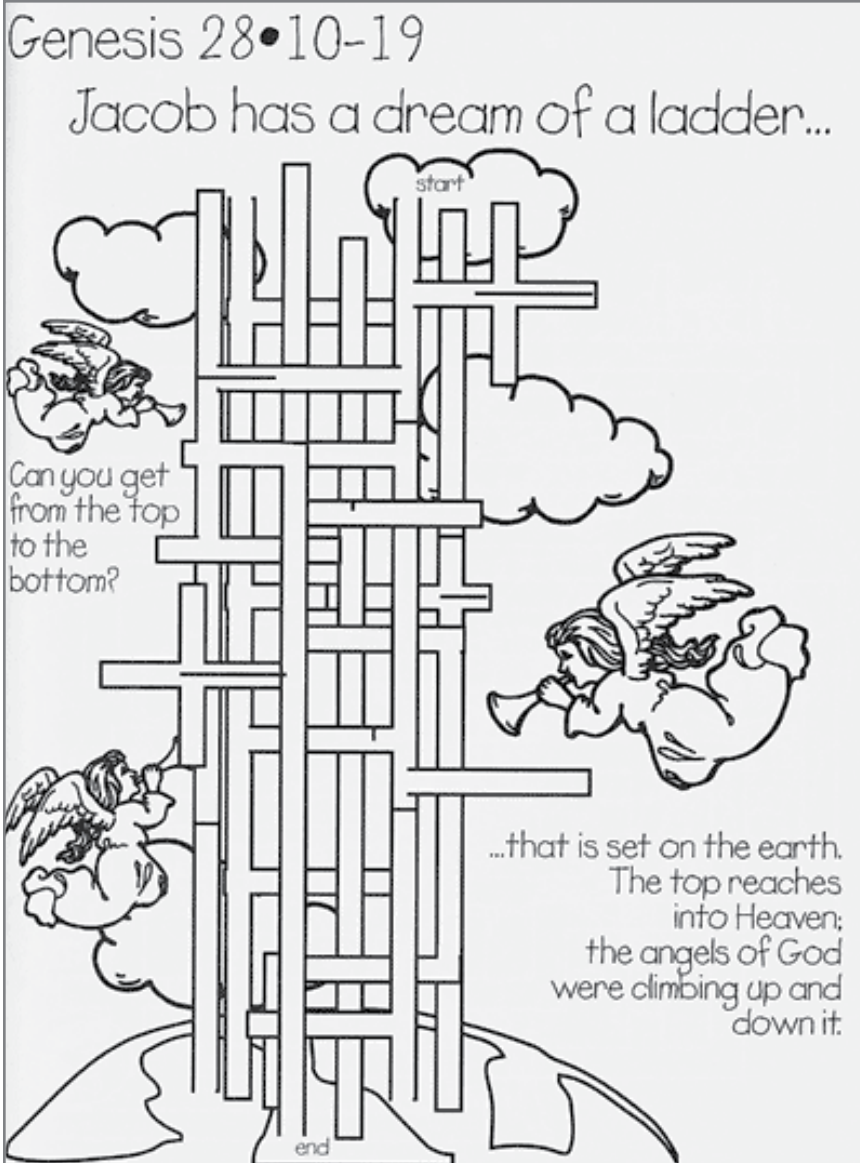
3. The place where the children of God taste heaven on earth, as the ladder Jacob saw in his dream, which connected the Heaven with the earth. Likewise, during the liturgy, when we participate in the prayers our mind & heart is lifted up to Heaven and when we partake in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of Eucharist , we have union with God.

# “SPIRIT AND LIFE”

## Jacob's Ladder Maze

Genesis 28•10-19

Jacob has a dream of a ladder...

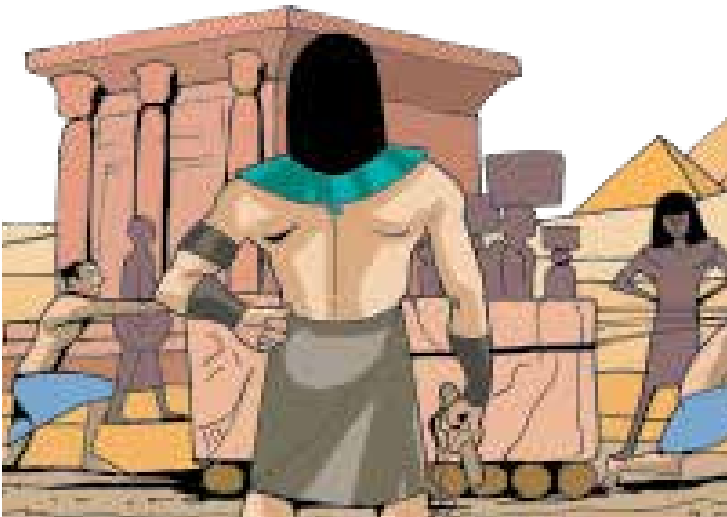


Can you get from the top to the bottom?

...that is set on the earth.  
The top reaches  
into Heaven;  
the angels of God  
were climbing up and  
down it.

## Our Good Shepherd Protects The Church

Crossing of the Red Sea  
(Exodus 14, 15)



After Joseph revealed himself to his brothers in Egypt, the people of Israel left Canaan and went to Egypt to live with their brother Joseph in a land called Goshen (Israel was another name for Jacob, so the people of Israel were the descendants of Jacob).

They stayed there for many years. Years later, after Joseph and

# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

all his brothers died, a new king came over Egypt who did not know Joseph. He did not like the people of Israel and made them slaves, in fear that they would one day overpower the Egyptians and take over his kingdom. The Israelites stayed in Egypt for about 430 years, crying to God to save them from the bondage of the slavery.

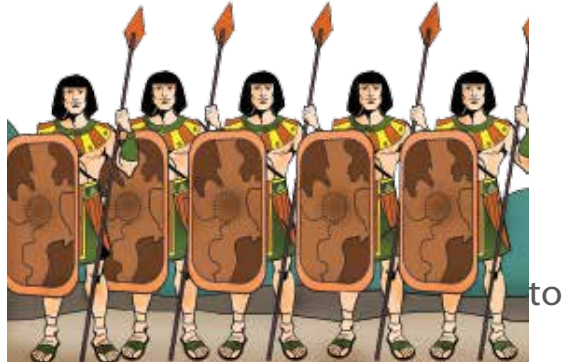
God heard the cry of His people and sent Moses to deliver them. Moses asked Pharaoh numerous times to let the Israelites leave Egypt peacefully, but he resisted. When Pharaoh persistently refused to let God’s people go, God sent ten plagues on the land of Egypt, forcing Pharaoh to finally let them go.

Throughout their journey



# “MY CHURCH IS

God was with them to guide them and protect them. The Lord went before them by day as a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night as a pillar of fire to give them light.



It was not long after the Israelites left Egypt that Pharaoh regretted that he let them go and decided to go after them with his massive army and chariots. The Israelites were in a very tough spot. They found themselves cornered - the Red Sea in front of them and Pharaoh's army behind them. The people of Israel were very frightened but Moses reassured them and said:

## ***MEMORY VERSE:***

***“Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord”***

***Exodus 14:13***

The Lord said to Moses: “Lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.”

# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

So Moses did as he was instructed and stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong East wind all night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided.



So miraculously, the children of Israel walked in the midst of the sea on dry ground, and the waters were like a wall on their right hand and on their left. The pillar of cloud stood behind them, separating between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israelites to allow the children of Israel to move forward and keep pharaoh and his chariots away from them.

The Egyptians continued to pursue them and Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen went after them into the midst of the sea. In the morning, the Lord troubled the army of the Egyptians. He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty.



# “MY CHURCH IS

Finally, the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen.” So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth and drowned the chariots, the horsemen, and the entire army of Pharaoh which came into the sea after them.



The children of Israel were saved! They rejoiced and praised God, their Saviour and Protector.

Likewise, God always listens to our cries and protects us, because He loves us and because He is our Creator and the only One who can guard us, and take care of us.

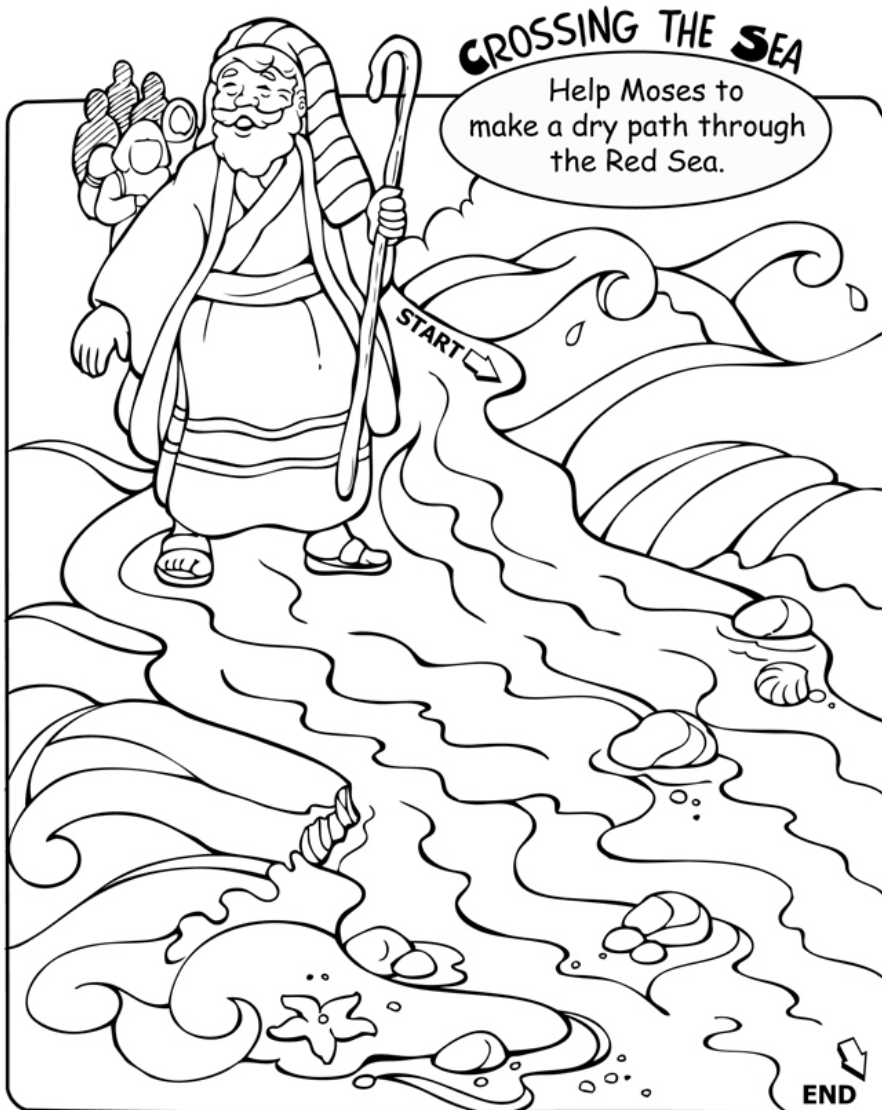




## *Red Sea Cloring Page*



## Red Sea Maze



Moses led his people out of Egypt. God caused the water to part so they could cross the Red Sea and escape from the Egyptians.

(Exodus 13:17 - 14:31)

## Well Established With Strong Roots

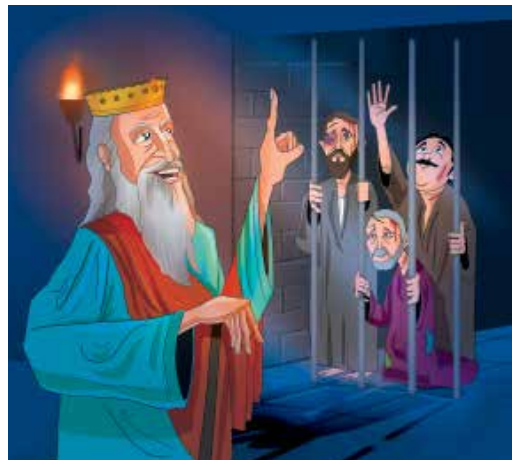
Saint Julius El-Akfahsi

(The writer of the biographies of the martyrs) Synexarium 22 Tout

St. Julius El-Akfahsi was born from a wealthy Christian family, in the city of Akfahs (This is why he was called “El-akfahsi”). When he grew up, he went to the city of Alexandria and lived there. During this time, Diocletian started to persecute the Christians.



St. Julius served the martyrs, visiting them in prison, to help them and encourage them. When they stood in front of kings and governors, he followed them. When they were tortured, he treated their wounds. He also made sure to

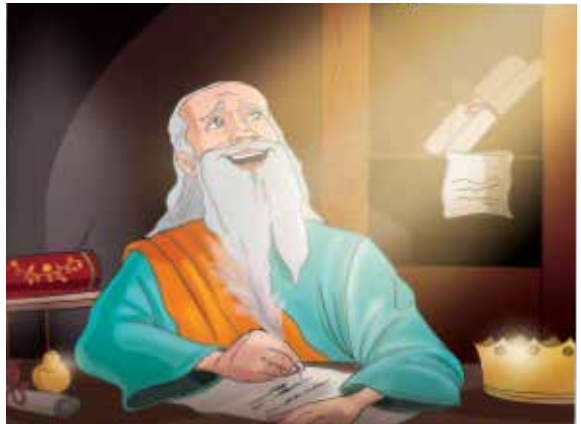


# “MY CHURCH IS

be present in the place of their martyrdom to take care of their bodies, to shroud them and send them to their hometowns. He guarded the bodies of the martyrs in a safe place so that the believers could go and take their blessings.



He had around 300 servants, whom he also charged to go to different places and follow the saints on their way to martyrdom, and to also take care of their bodies and bury them. He asked them to collect all the information about each martyr as well, so that they can write their biographies. St. Julius oversaw the writings and made copies so that each biography would spread and reach as many people as possible.



# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

God protected him and gave him strength to serve the saints. One day, God appeared to him in a dream and told him: “My beloved Julius, the crown is prepared for you, go to the governor of Samanood and witness for My name.



Many will believe because of your witness”. St. Julius went to Samanood and confessed his faith in front of the governor. He suffered many tortures with joy and God was always with him. God gave him the gift of performing miracles and many non-



# “MY CHURCH IS

believers believed because of the miracles he did and because of his strong faith. Even the governor of Samanood himself believed! Finally, he received the crown of martyrdom.

The church celebrates his feast on the 22nd of Tout. The church collected all the biographies he wrote in a book called the Synaxarium. The Synaxarium is the book that contains all the stories of the saints, the church feasts, fasts and special occasions. It is written in chronological order according to the Coptic calendar.

The church still adds to the Synaxarium the stories of contemporary saints and martyrs who lived among us. It is written for us, to strengthen us and so we can learn from their faith and imitate them as the bible says:



# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

***“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” Hebrews 13:7***

Because they are our friends in heaven we always ask of their prayers and intercession. The church venerates the saints by building churches after their names, celebrating their feasts and having their icons in the church. In the liturgy, the priest offers incense in front of their icons. We also light candles in front of their icons because they were the light of the world, just as Jesus had told us, “You are the light of the world”.



## We Are Its Watered Branches

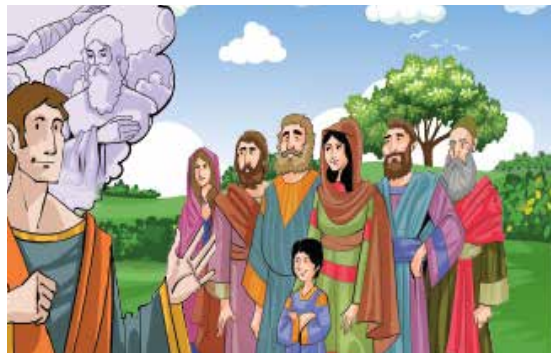
Aquila and Priscilla help Apollos  
(Acts 18 : 18 - 28)

Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria. He was very knowledgeable in the Old Testament books. He was a talented and charismatic preacher and travelled to many places talking to people about God. While



Apollos knew everything about the Old Testament up to the baptism of John the Baptist, he did not know about Jesus.

When he was in the city of Ephesus, a couple named Aquila and Priscilla heard him preach. They understood from his teaching that he was missing information about our Lord Jesus Christ. Since Aquila





# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

and Priscilla loved our Lord Jesus very much and wanted everyone to know about Him, they went to Apollos and told him about Jesus, explaining to him how Jesus Christ



is the awaited Messiah who fulfilled all the prophecies of the Old Testament, and how it was in fact Jesus for whom John was preparing the way. They talked to him about our Lord’s crucifixion, resurrection and redemption.

They also told him about the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples. They fulfilled the word of God who looks at all His children and says:





# “MY CHURCH IS

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

***“who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:4***

Indeed, God wants everyone to believe and be saved. Apollos accepted the teaching of Aquila and Priscilla with joy. He started to preach to everyone about what he learned because he also wanted everyone to know about our Lord Jesus.



## *Aquila & Priscilla Word Search*

### PRISCILLA & AQUILA

Z N F U P D M P W O Z R M E F L B S G W  
K E W E W H K P E V A C N A A C G C O Z  
A M J I R R C Q X P A J H W P O Y R O M  
A G O R G C R D B Q H G E M O R Y I D O  
P T O R A H L D A W Q E O S L I W P N Q  
O M J D U I E A G J B Z S S L N M T E O  
S Q A B L T F Y U Z Y F Y U O T B U W J  
T J D R B I D T X D T N R V S H A R S W  
L S Y D R Z X P A B I C I S B E C E M C  
E L Y I Q I Q F C Q W U S Q N U T S Y J  
E B L S Y J A G H I U I S F Y Z V V F Z  
P J C C Y Y O G U Y N I N H G B N S S J  
A W O I S W G S E M J Q L D Y N T T Z K  
R X Y P O T L T R B E X H A S Y C J I M  
K T J L X C G U H R U C V C Z A Z L E C  
P D T E I X J M V M S T S L O C C Q D Z  
A T Z S B K Y E S H U A J M B I O T H N  
U J I X Q V I X P R I S C I L L A B S X  
L I T A L Y S Y N A G O G U E M A W Z A  
V T S A B B A T H X S S B H Z W Q Z F S

CORINTH  
PAUL  
PRISCILLA  
APOSTLE  
CLAUDIUS  
ACTS

SYNAGOGUE  
MARRIAGE  
TORAH  
EPHESUS  
ITALY  
APOLLOS

SCRIPTURES  
SABBATH  
GOOD NEWS  
DISCIPLES  
YESHUA  
AQUILA

## It Makes Me Experience The Taste Of Eternal Life

### The use of Incense in the church

Incense is an aromatic substance that releases fragrant smoke when burnt. It is used in the church's prayers to fulfill God's commandment in the Holy Bible.

#### In the Old Testament

1. God told Moses to make incense, instructing him how to make it. Because it is sacred incense, only priests are allowed to use it.
2. God also commanded that an altar of incense be set up in the tabernacle, which was the place where people used to pray in the Old Testament.
3. There is a prophecy in the Book of Malachi about the use of incense. "My name shall be great among the Gentiles;

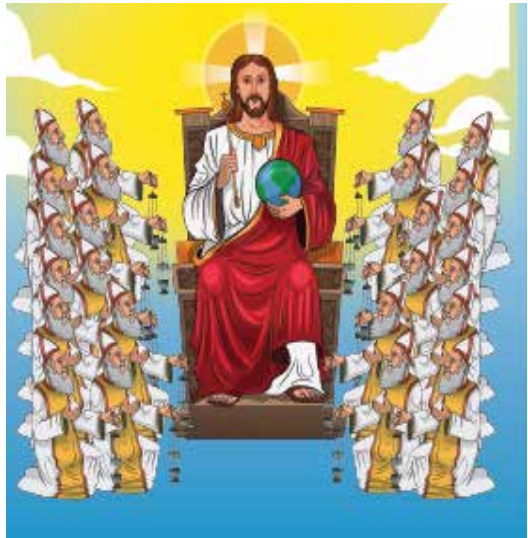


# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering” Malachi 1:11

## In the New Testament

1. At the time of Jesus’ birth, one of the three presents offered by the wise men was frankincense, which is what is used as the incense in the church. This was a symbol of our Lord Jesus’ priesthood.
2. In the Book of Revelation, St. John the Beloved explained that he saw 24 priests carrying censors and offering incense in front of the throne of God. “Each having a harp, and



# “MY CHURCH IS

golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”  
Revelation 5:8

## Today, incense in the church represents

1. Our Prayers, when we pray, we ask God that our prayers go up to Him in Heaven, as the incense also rises up. Just as David wrote in the psalms,



## **MEMORY VERSE:**

**“Let my prayer be set  
before You as incense”**

**Psalm 141:2**

2. The Presence of God in the church. The priest offers incense in many places in the church:
  - In front of and around the altar to show that this place is sanctified and





# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

- that God dwells in it
- During the reading of the gospel to show respect and veneration to the word of God
- In front of the icons of the saints to show that they are praying for us, to ask for their prayers and to honor them
- Towards the congregation, to bless them and to collect their prayers and present it on the altar



**Memorization**

**BOOKS OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT**

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John
5. Acts
6. Romans
7. 1 Corinthians
8. 2 Corinthians
9. Galatians
10. Ephesians
11. Philippians
12. Colossians
13. 1 Thessalonians
14. 2 Thessalonians
15. 1 Timothy
16. 2 Timothy
17. Titus
18. Philemon
19. Hebrews
20. James
21. 1 Peter
22. 2 Peter
23. 1 John
24. 2 John
25. 3 John
26. Jude
27. Revelation



# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spanning the width of the page.



# “MY CHURCH IS

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

# SPIRIT AND LIFE”

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spanning the width of the page.



**COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE**

Diocese of Mississauga, Vancouver and Western Canada

To order please contact

## **Canadian Coptic Centre**

1245 Eglinton Avenue West  
Mississauga, ON, L5V 2M4

905.567.4032

[www.mahragan.ca](http://www.mahragan.ca)  
[info@mahragan.ca](mailto:info@mahragan.ca)