



MAHRAGAN ALKERAZA | 2020

“MY CHURCH IS SPIRIT AND LIFE”

GR. 3-4 | 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

	PAGE
Introduction	4
My Church Is A Beautiful Vine	6
Our Good Shepherd Protects The Church	11
Well Established With Strong Roots	20
We Are Its Watered Branches	24
It Makes Me Experience The Taste Of Eternal Life	35
Memorization	41

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

The church is the Body of Christ, Christ is the Head of the Church and we, the believers, are the members of this body.

As St. Paul writes:

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:22-23).

“Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body” (Ephesians 5:23).

MEMORY VERSE:

“Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually”
1Corinthians 12:27

The word church in the Greek language is “Ekklesia”, which means “a called-out assembly or congregation”. Therefore the church is the assembly of the believers. It is the consecrated house of God, anointed with the Holy Myron oil. In it, we are

“SPIRIT AND LIFE”

surrounded by the angels and the saints and it is only through the Church that we can partake of the Holy Body and the Holy Blood of Christ.

A. Bible Verses

1. “We are all baptized into one body” 1Corinthians 12:13

When we are baptized, we become members of the

body of Christ. We are born again as children of God.



2. “But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 1 Corinthians 12: 20-21

The body has many members

that complement each other and the members all need each other. Each one of the believers has a different role but we all need each other. The church cannot all be priests, or all



deacons or all congregation. The church needs all and unites all. Also, each one of us has a talent that can be used to serve others because we are all members of one body.

3. “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” Romans 12:15

“And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”

1Corinthians

12:26

This verse explains that each member of the body of Christ cares and feels for the other members. We care

for each other, we pray for each other, we help each other and we are there for each other in times of pain and in times of joy.



B. The Church Rites And Prayers

In every church, everywhere, and at any time, we all pray using

SPIRIT AND LIFE”

the same words and in one spirit, whether it be in the liturgy, during the midnight praises, during the Agpeya prayers, etc.

1. In The Liturgy

a. Vespers and Prime raising of Incense

In the liturgy, the congregation gathers in prayer. The church prays and cares for each one. We also pray for the people who could not come. For example, in the litany of the sick, the church prays for the spiritual, mental, and physical wellbeing of the congregation. In the litany of the travelers, the church prays for the safety of her children. In the litany of the departed, the church prays for the departed because they are alive in heaven “For there is no death for Your servants, but a departure.” Though in heaven and no longer on earth, they are still members of the one body.

b. Petitions

In the liturgy, the priest remembers all who are in need. One of the beautiful prayers we pray is for the success of



“MY CHURCH IS

the students, which shows that the church even cares for the success of her children

c. Congregation Of The Saints

The priest remembers the saints by their names. This shows how in the liturgy, the whole church is united together; the Victorious church, i.e. the saints in heaven and the struggling church, i.e. us here on earth.



2. The Church Fasts

The church put together congregational fasts, where we all fast together and at the end of each fast, we celebrate the feasts together.



Our Good Shepherd Protects The Church

Gideon The Judge
(Judges 6, 7)

After the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt and settled in the land of Canaan, the Promised Land, they began to leave God and worship idols. God delivered them into the hand of their enemies who enslaved them and made their life very difficult. When they were oppressed, they repented and cried to God, so God sent them a judge to deliver them.



When they were no longer under the bondage of the enemy, they settled for a while and worshiped God, but then went back and worshiped idols. This trend was repeated again and again over the period of 400 years. This period is what we call the rule of the judges.

“MY CHURCH IS

Judges were people chosen by God to rule and to deliver the Israelites from the bondage of their enemies. There often was more than one judge at the same time. One of the famous judges at that time was Gideon. He was from the tribe of Manasseh and he was the youngest of his brothers. His name means warrior.



When the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Midianites for seven years. The Midianites were very hard on the Israelites, so much that the Israelites had to make for themselves dens and caves and strongholds in the mountains to hide from them. The Israelites cried out to



SPIRIT AND LIFE”

the Lord and He sent them Gideon to deliver them.

The Angel of God appeared to Gideon. In the Old Testament, the Angel of God was the appearance of God, the Word Jesus Christ Himself. He said to him:

MEMORY VERSE:

“The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!” Judges 6: 12

The Lord said to Gideon “Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?” (Judges 6:14). He reassured him and said “Surely I will be with you” (Judges 6:16).



Gideon asked the Angel of God to show him a sign so that he can be sure that it was God who was talking to him. Gideon said to Him “Do not depart from here until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You”. Gideon went in and

“MY CHURCH IS

prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread. The Angel of God said to him “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on the rock, and pour out the broth”. When he did so, the Angel of God touched them with the stick that was in His hand. A fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread.



Gideon then perceived that He was the Angel of God. The Angel of God then asked Gideon to tear down his father’s altar of Baal and to build an altar to the Lord and offer a burnt sacrifice, so Gideon did as the Lord asked him.



In the meantime, the Midianites gathered a huge army of 135,000 men to fight against the Israelites. Gideon asked God for



SPIRIT AND LIFE”

a sign to reassure him that He will save Israel by his hand. Gideon put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor and asked God to put dew on the fleece only and to leave the ground dry. God did as Gideon asked. Then Gideon said to God, let the fleece be dry but let the dew be on the ground only, and again it was so.

Gideon then started to prepare for the war against the Midianites. Gideon gathered 32,000 men. The Lord said to him, “the people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, “My own hand saved me”.



The Lord asked Gideon to tell the people that whoever is afraid can go back. Therefore, 22,000 men returned and only 10,000 men remained. But the Lord said to Gideon, “the people are still too many”.

The Lord asked Gideon to bring the people that were left to the

“MY CHURCH IS

water. The Lord said to him, “Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise, everyone who gets down on his knees to drink”. The number of those who lapped was only 300 men.

The Lord then said to Gideon, “By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you and deliver the Midianites into your hand let all the other people go each man to his place.” Remember that the Midianite army had 135,000 men!



And so it was that Gideon divided the 300 men into three groups of 100. He gave each man a trumpet, a pitcher and a torch inside the pitcher. He took with him one group and told the rest to look at him and do likewise.



SPIRIT AND LIFE”

Gideon and the hundred men who were with him went to the Midianites' camp in the middle of the night and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. The other groups did the same on each side of the camp and they all cried, "The sword of Lord and of Gideon". The Midianites' army was troubled and instead of fighting the Israelites, they fought each other.

The Midianites tried to run away, but the men of Israel gathered and pursued them. They seized the watering places and God gave them victory over the Midianites. As we see in this story, it is not by our might, nor by our power, but by God's power, that we can be victorious.

“MY CHURCH IS

ACTIVITY

Gideon Selects His Army



Let the world
SUPER
COLORS

What Should You Do?

Judges 6:33-40

Judges 6

³³Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. ³⁴Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. ³⁵He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.

³⁶Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—³⁷look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and

all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.” ³⁸And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.

³⁹Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew.” ⁴⁰That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Well Established With Strong Roots

Saint Timothy and Saint Mora, his wife

St. Timothy was from the city of Ansená. He was a deacon in the church and was responsible for guarding the church books, and making copies. His wife's name was Mora. They both attended the church and Bible study regularly.

One day, the emperor ordered the persecution of all Christians, ordering the burning of their books and forcing them to worship idols. Because of their great love for God, the Christians refused to worship the idols, and many believers stood strong in their faith and became martyrs, witnessing for Christ by sacrificing their lives for their faith.



SPIRIT AND LIFE”

In order to follow the emperor's orders, Arianos, the governor of Ansena, called St. Timothy and ordered him to bring all the church books to be burned and asked him to offer incense to the idols. St. Timothy refused and told the governor that the church's books are very precious to him because they have the word of God. The governor was angry, and threatened to torture him if he does not obey his orders.

St. Timothy told him that he is not afraid because the Lord Jesus Christ will help him. The governor ordered his soldiers to torture him. During his suffering and torture, St. Timothy prayed to the Lord Jesus to give him courage and strengthen him. Despite all the tortures he was subjected to, St. Timothy stood firm in his faith.

The governor heard from his soldiers that St. Timothy had a young wife, so he brought her in to tell her to convince her husband to change his mind and to offer incenses to the idols. The governor knew that they had just been married for 20 days, so he called her and told her that he was sad for her, and that he did not want her to be a widow at such a young age. He told her to try to convince St. Timothy to worship the idols and save himself from the pain and suffering. Otherwise, he would die from the severity of the tortures.



“MY CHURCH IS

Mora was worried about St. Timothy and decided to speak to him. She was very sad to see him suffer and tried to convince him to appear to the governor as if he renounced his faith and offer incense to the idols, just so that the governor will let them return to their home safely. St. Timothy did not let her finish her words and stopped her. He reminded her of their eternal life, the beautiful life that they will live in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ. He reminded her of the promises in the Bible...

MEMORY VERSE:

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Revelation 2:10

When she heard all these words from her husband, she repented and regretted her weakness and how she forgot the love of the Lord for her. She wept and asked God to forgive her and reward St. Timothy who opened her eyes. She asked St. Timothy to pray for her so that God would give her strength and courage to stand before the governor and proclaim her faith.

She went to the governor and told him, “You sent me to persuade my husband to deny his faith, but I came to tell you that I am sticking to my faith and prefer to be martyred with

SPIRIT AND LIFE”

my husband than to live in idolatry”. The governor was furious he ordered her to be tortured. After much suffering, both St. Timothy and his wife received the crown of martyrdom on the 5th of Hatour.

Their story not only encourages us to remain strong in the faith but also teaches us about the importance of our Church Books.

We Are Its Watered Branches

St. Peter the Apostle

{Synexarium 5 Abib}

Saint Peter, also known as Simon Peter, was one of the twelve Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was born in Bethsaida. He and his brother Andrew were fishermen. It was Andrew who introduced Peter to our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus gave him the name “Cephas” which is translated “Peter”, from the Greek word “Petra” meaning stone or rock.

One day as the multitude gathered around Jesus to hear His words, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret and saw two boats standing by the lake, but the fishermen were washing their empty nets. They had worked all night and caught nothing.



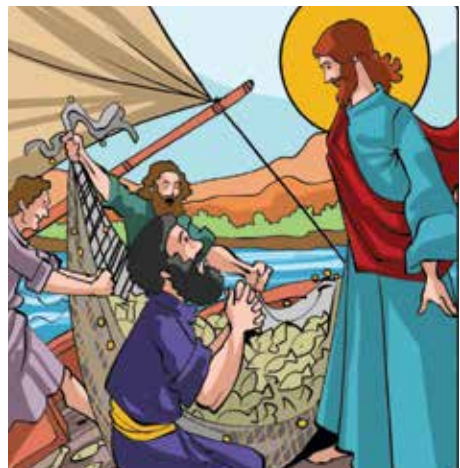
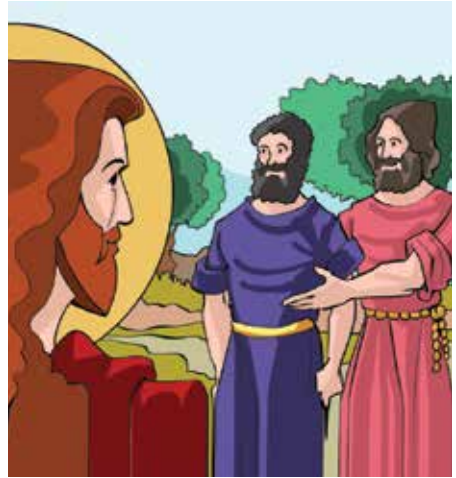
“SPIRIT AND LIFE”

Our Lord Jesus got into one of the boats, which was Peter’s and taught the multitudes from the boat.

When He stopped speaking, He said to Peter, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch”. It was daytime, and every good fisherman knew that fishing is best at night time and near the shore not in the deep.

But Peter obeyed our Lord Jesus and said to Him “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless, at Your word I will let down the net” Luke 5:5

When he had done this, he caught a great number of fish. When Peter



“MY CHURCH IS

saw the miracle, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord”.

But our Lord told him “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men”. From this time onwards, Peter left everything and followed Him.

One day, Jesus wanted to teach His disciples a very important lesson about faith.



He asked His disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? They said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets”. He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him “Blessed are you ...”

MEMORY VERSE:

“You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the

SPIRIT AND LIFE”

gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” Matthew 16:18

- Thus, our Lord Jesus Christ made it clear to all that the foundation upon which the Church is built is the faith in Christ the Son of the living God, as declared by Peter. And Christ is the One who supports His church and protects it from any danger.



- Saint Peter continued to follow our Lord Jesus, learning a lot from Him. He learned about the great love of our Lord for everyone and His acceptance to all who sin and repent.
- Despite the fact that at the time of the trial of our Lord Jesus, Peter was weak and



“MY CHURCH IS

denied Jesus three times, he repented and returned and our Lord accepted his repentance.

- The Bible confirmed our Lord’s acceptance to Peter, when He appeared to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias after the resurrection. Our Lord Jesus asked him three times “Do you love Me? Peter answered, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You”. Our Lord said to Him “Tend My sheep”. Just as Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times, Jesus confirmed Peter’s love for Him three times. Our Lord wanted to give him hope and reassure him that He had accepted his repentance.



- After the ascension of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit came on the disciples in



SPIRIT AND LIFE”

the Upper Room on the day of the Pentecost. It was the beginning of the foundation of the first church. With the power of the Holy Spirit, St. Peter stood up and began preaching to the people.



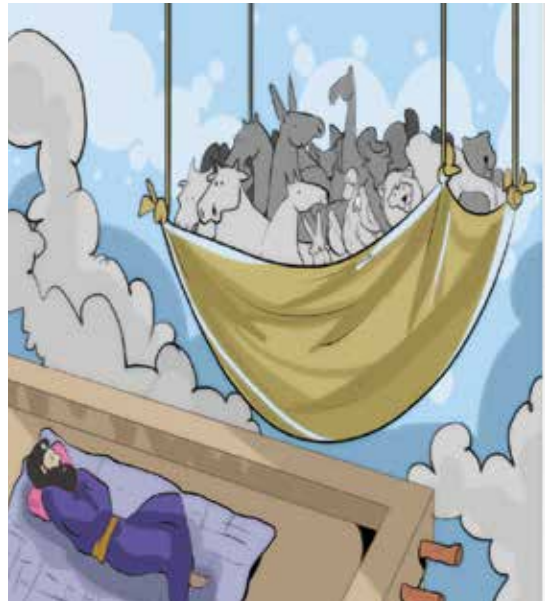
When they heard St. Peter’s speech, they were cut to the heart and asked “What shall we do?” St. Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” Acts 2:38. With the power of the Holy Spirit, they rejoiced and accepted the Word, and on that day three thousand people were baptized.

- Christianity began to spread and many people entered the faith. Many miracles took place with the power of God, so much that St. Peter’s shadow



would heal the sick. St. Peter began to outreach all the surrounding Jewish villages (Judea, Galilee and Samaria). God performed many miracles by his hand like healing Anianus, the lame man, and raising Tabitha from the death.

- As the word of God spread in the land of Judah, our Lord opened the door of the faith to the gentiles. This was declared in St. Peter's vision. One day, when St. Peter was in Joppa in the house of Simon the tanner, he went up on the housetop to pray. He became hungry and wanted to eat, but while they got the food ready, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to earth. In it, were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things and birds of the air. A voice came to him saying, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." But



SPIRIT AND LIFE”

St. Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.” But the voice spoke to him again the second time, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” (Acts 10)

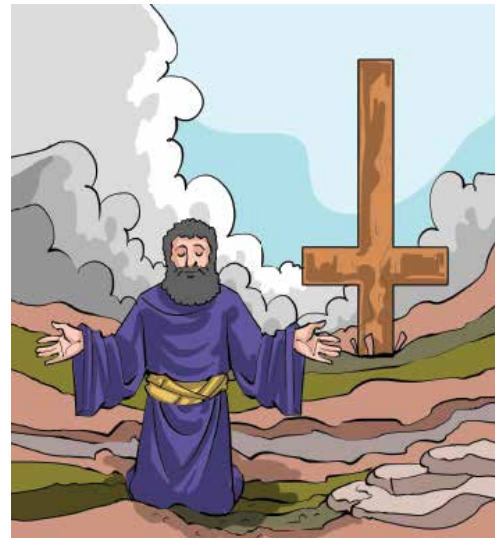
- This was done three times. While St. Peter wondered what this vision meant, three men that were sent from Cornelius, a gentile centurion, came to the house and asked about him. The Spirit said to him, “Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.” St. Peter went to Cornelius and preached to him and his entire household about our Lord Jesus Christ. While he was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon those who heard the word. They all entered the faith and St. Peter baptized them.
- As the number of the believers increased, the persecution against the church also increased. When St. Peter was put



“MY CHURCH IS

in prison and the whole church was praying for him, our Lord answered their prayers and send him an angel to take him out of prison.

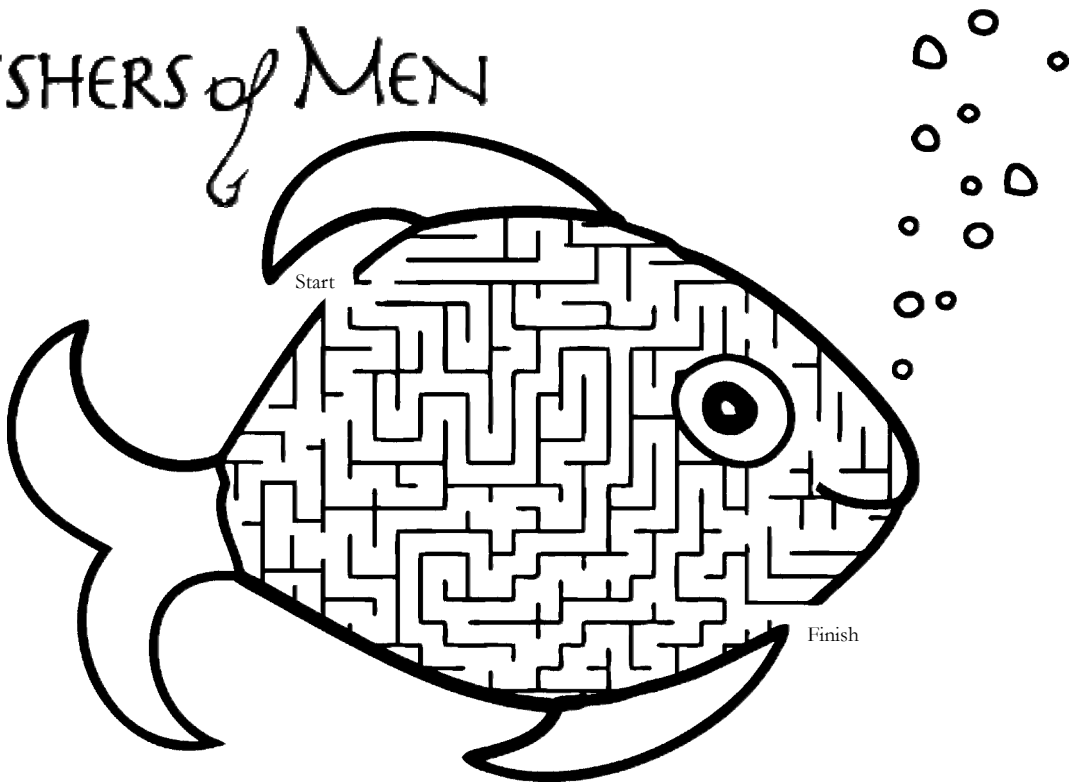
- St. Peter continued to preach the word of God and because of him many entered the faith. He wrote two Epistles in the New Testament. He was martyred by being crucified head down. The church celebrates his martyrdom on the 5th of Abib.



Fishers Of Men Maze

ACTIVITY

FISHERS of MEN



And Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” **Mark 1:17**

“MY CHURCH IS

ACTIVITY



Peter & Cornelius

WORD SEARCH

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

SHEET
CAESAREA
PETER
CORNELIUS
CENTURION
LEATHER TANNER

SIMON
PRAYER
YESHUA
HOLY SPIRIT
ROMAN
YAHWEH

ISRAELITES
DREAM
UNCLEAN
CLEAN
DISCIPLE
ANGEL

SPIRIT AND LIFE”

It Makes Me Experience The Taste Of Eternal Life

The Orbana

The Orbana symbolizes our Lord Jesus Christ. It is baked in a room called “Bethlehem” which means the House of Bread. This is to refer to the birth of the Lord Jesus in Bethlehem, but also because our Lord Jesus said about Himself, “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35)



“MY CHURCH IS

White wheat grains are selected and ground to obtain the flour. The flour is then sifted to remove any impurities from it. This is because our Lord Jesus Christ was without blemish (1 Peter 1:19) and also because it is said that “He was crushed for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5)



All the grains of flour are mixed with water to form the dough. Water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit that unites the Church together. All believers are members of the one body of the Church with Christ as the Head of the Church. “For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.” 1 Corinthians 10:17



We do not add salt to the dough. We usually add salt to food to preserve it, but we do not add salt to the bread that will be

SPIRIT AND LIFE”

transformed into the Body of Christ during the liturgy since the body of Christ has not seen corruption.

We add yeast to the dough to make the bread leavened. Yeast is a symbol of the sin that Christ bore for our sake by His redemption on the cross. As the fire stops the act of the yeast, Christ abolished the original sin by redeeming us on the cross and paying the debt on our behalf.



Therefore, when Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist, He used leavened bread. “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Luke 22:19



The Orbana is round, just as God is eternal and has no beginning and no end.

“MY CHURCH IS

It is baked on the same day of the liturgy. Psalms are prayed while baking the Orbara because there are prophecies in the psalms about our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Orbara is engraved with the following:

- A big cross in the middle (symbolizing our Lord Jesus) surrounded by 12 small crosses (symbolizing the disciples).
- The square part in the middle that has the big cross is called “Esbadicon” meaning “Master” symbolizing our Lord Jesus Christ who is in the midst of the church.
- The Five holes symbolizing the wounds of Christ (3 nails, the crown of thorns, and the spear)



SPIRIT AND LIFE”

- “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal” written in the Coptic language. Which is the praise of the angels in heaven, the Seraphim and the Cherubim.

The Orbana that is on the altar is called the “lamb” because our Lord Jesus Christ is “The Bread of Life” and “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”
John 1:29

An odd number of loaves (3, 5, 7...) is in the basket from which the priest chooses the one which will be the “lamb”. The odd number is a symbol of Christ among the disciples as he was sending them “two by two” (Mark 6:7), or the believers with Christ in their midst.



The priest chooses the best loaf in the basket that will be transformed to the Body of Christ through the prayers of the liturgy. In the prayers of the liturgy, the Holy Spirit descends on

“MY CHURCH IS

the offering and transforms the bread into the Body of Christ and the wine into the Blood of Christ.

Each one who partakes of the Body and Blood of the Lord:

1. Receives forgiveness of sins

“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Matthew 26:28

2. Has eternal life

“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:54

3. Abides in Christ

“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” John 6:56



SPIRIT AND LIFE”

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

Memorization

**BOOKS OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT**

Answer me when I call to You, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer. How long, O men, will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for Himself.

The Lord will hear when I call to Him. In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Offer right sacrifices and trust in the Lord. Many are asking, “Who can show us any good?” Let the light of Your face shine upon us, O Lord. You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. Alleluia.

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