



Live in peace



WWW.SMFSUS.ORG

College & Graduates

HIS HOLINESS POPE TAWADROS II



**118TH POPE OF ALEXANDRIA AND
PATRIARCH OF THE SEE OF SAINT MARK**



Live in Peace

	Page
St. Mark's Festival Anthem- Live in Peace	2
Live in Peace	3
The Doctrine of the Trinity	6
The Book of Judith	8
Abba Daniel	11
Christian Marriage	13
Time Management	16
Alternative Lifestyle	20
Memorization	23
Coptic	25
Hymns & Rituals	33

Table of Contents

Visit the St. Mark Festival's website at www.smfsus.org
to find the material for the festival and
for guidelines and information on the tests



Live in Peace

St. Mark's Festival 2022 Anthem

When we're planting love and goodness
Peace is what we'll always reap
We're not worried if days are evil
The Lord won't slumber nor sleep x2

Church is an Ark where souls are saved
No matter what hardships we face
Her Sacraments will help us always
Grow in faith and dwell in grace x1

At His word I'd walk on water
Strong in faith and firm in Doctrine x2
I will follow His commands x1

With God joy will never cease
And His Spirit gives us peace. x2

And His Spirit gives us peace. x1

Live in Peace

In the last two years the whole world had to deal with a big challenge, the Coronavirus Pandemic, which caused major losses in lives, affected the health of many, and caused long term challenges to the world economy and general human activity. This big challenge caused some to lose their inner peace and comfort.

Many of us imagine peace in a life without challenges. However, peace does not mean a place with no worry, challenges, or hardships. True peace is to maintain our inner stability and calmness in the midst of life's various storms as St. Paul described:

“peace of God, which surpasses all understanding.” (Philippians 4:7)

Our Lord Jesus Christ Commanded us to Live in Peace:

- ❖ **“But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’” (Luke 10:5)**
- ❖ **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9)**
- ❖ **“Do not worry about your life” (Luke 12:22)** Worrying is a sign of exaggerated fear of challenges we face without faith in the ability of our God who is Pantocrator, all-loving, and able to help us overcome any hardship.
- ❖ **“Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.” (Psalm 34:14)**

- We use ‘peace’ even as the topic of our personal greetings as we say, “peace and grace”.
- The Lord Jesus Christ spoke to us about a special grace coming from Him, His peace, when He said, **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)** It is obvious that the peace which our Lord Jesus promised to give us is different and surpasses peace obtained by any other means.
- Peace is also one of the fruits of the Spirit: **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23)** In our relationships with others, **“the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (James 3:18)**



Our Lord Jesus Christ is the King of Peace

- Our Lord Jesus is the King and the God of peace; eight centuries before His birth, Isaiah the prophet prophesied about Lord Jesus Christ saying: **“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)**
- ‘Peace’ was the melody which the angels sang on the day Christ was born, **“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” (Luke 2:13)**
- He was called Prince of Peace because He brought peace unto the earth; He peacefully spread His message of peace.
- The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was not only a peacemaker, but He was our peace through His redemptive work on the cross. **“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation” (Ephesians 2:14)**

Peace on a Personal Level

Inner peace is connected with God's work inside the person, He **"guides our feet into the way of peace."** (Luke 1:79) For anyone to always live in peace, He must have peace with the following:

1. Peace with God:

- After Adam's sin, peace was no more. Sin entered into the world, and everyone inherited the original sin. Worry, tribulation, hatred, and war entered into the life of mankind. Even between brothers!
- Only through the Lord Jesus Christ's incarnation and redemptive work on the cross was the reconciliation achieved between the Father and mankind.
- Peace with God is achieved by obeying His commandments and living a life of virtue and righteousness. Those who live according to the desires of the flesh are in enmity with God.

"There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked." (Isaiah 48:22)

- The only way to achieve peace again with God is through the sacrament of repentance and confession.

2. Peace with Oneself (Internal Peace):

- Internal peace begins with keeping oneself away from the sources of worry and fear initiated by sin. **"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." (Galatians 5:16-17)**
- Inner peace comes with self-control which is exercised through the periods of fasting and asceticism when we maintain our focus on spiritual matters like prayers, metanoias, and spiritual meditation, forcing the body to be aligned and subdued to the spirit struggling on the way to the heavenly kingdom.



3. Peace with Others:

- The priest always begins liturgical prayers with "peace be with all", several times during the prayers. He prays that peace reaches the hearts of all the believers.
- Scripture also commands to care about others and live in peace with them:

**"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink;..."
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:20-21)**

"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24)

Peace on a Church Level

- **"God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved" (Psalm 46:5)** This was God's promise at the time of King David and His congregation before and after him. **"God is in her midst"** He is her heart, the source of her existence, and her protector.
- The Church is the Body of Christ and shall not be shaken forever. The gates of hades shall not prevail against her, God is her Protector until the end of the ages.
- One of our most repeated prayers is **"Remember O Lord the peace of Your one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."** We say it at the beginning of the minor litanies, at the beginning of the major litanies, in Vespers and Matins raising of incense, and every time the priest does a procession of incense around the altar.
- During the offertory, the priest says: **"Peace and edification to the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of God, Amen."**
- In the Liturgy of St. Cyril, we also pray for the peace of the church in the litany of the leader: **"Speak to his heart concerning the peace of Your one holy catholic and apostolic Church."**

Peace for the Whole World

Peace is an important element in the life of the people; without peace society can never advance or enjoy stability. All nations and countries desire to achieve peace and live in a peaceful, worry-free environment. That desire is according to the will of God who said, **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)**



Christian peace is not a “peace because of...” but rather a “peace in spite of...”; we have peace in spite of the pandemic, inflation, war, and anything else. We have faith in our Savior who is our fortress and refuge. **“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.” (Proverbs 18:10)**

How can we make peace with our brethren?

- By paying attention to the poor and those who are persecuted or in need.
- By extending a helping hand to the sick and those who are in captivity.
- By being supportive of those who are handicapped.
- By hosting those who have lost their homes, feeding the hungry, and being a refuge to those who need it.

How can we live in peace?!

Many reasons could cause some to get worried and lose their inner peace; whether it is fear, illness, pandemic, the unknown future, or even unknown life challenges. In the midst of all these worries they do not remember God’s protective grace, which gives peace and comfort!

To always live in peace we must:

1. **Recognize that our God is Pantocrator**, creator of everything, and in control of everything. He is the origin of life and the sustainer of every living being. **“The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.” (Psalm 121:8)**
2. **Believe that our God is more powerful than any challenge**; He is able to deliver us from hardships or tribulations, and He is stronger than all the powers of evil **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (Ephesians 3:20)**
3. **Be sure that our lives are in the hand of God**; no one has authority over our lives except for God. He is the lover of mankind, who does not wish the death of the sinner but rather he returns and lives.

Being assured of these facts imparts comfort and peace into our hearts so we can sing with King David saying, **“The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1)**, **“The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Psalm 118:6)** and **“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me;” (Psalm 23:4)**

Final thoughts

We often pray asking God to **“Spare the world from death, scarcity, plagues, devastation, the sword of the enemies”** and we have confidence that God, as a loving Father, hears our prayers, and uses any and all hardship or tribulation for the good of everyone.

Therefore, we must always rejoice and say with St. Paul:

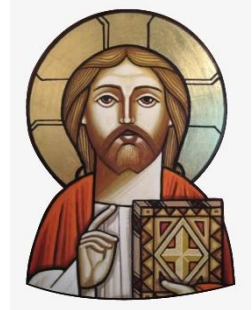
“Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:11)

The Doctrine of the Trinity

In Orthodoxy we believe that our God is a triune God.
He is One in essence and three hypostases (persons).

Understanding “Divine Essence”

The divine essence is the divine nature. The divine essence Has three distinct hypostases (persons). The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



Hypostasis (Plural, Hypostases)

- The Hypostasis is a person of divinity.
- The Father is the divine Hypostasis of existence.
- The Son is the divine Hypostasis of wisdom and speech.
- The Holy Spirit is the divine Hypostasis of life.
- God (the Father) is spoken by His Word (the Son) and alive by His Spirit (the Holy Spirit).

What does it mean that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

- Pope Shenouda III explained that the sonship of the Son is not carnal nor bodily. When we say the Son is begotten of the Father, He is begotten spiritually from the Father’s existence and has nothing to do with the humanly understanding of sonship.
- He gave an analogy saying, when we say that “an idea was born from a great mind”, we do not refer to the idea as being born a humanly, physical birth from the mind. Similarly, the begetting of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God (the incarnate Word) begotten from the Father.
- In a physical human birth we see a separation between the mother and the child. However, the Son is begotten from the Father and has no separation as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as said in John 10:30 **“I and My Father are one.”** He is begotten from the Father as an idea is begotten from the mind and light is begotten from fire.
- As if someone has an idea and publishes that idea, many people will have access to his idea and the idea was never separated from his mind.

The Holy Spirit Proceeds from the Father

- The Holy Spirit is in a state of continuous procession from the Father from the beginning of time to the end of the ages, similar to the procession of heat from fire. There is no heat without a heating element (fire) and there is no heating element (fire) with no heat. The Lord Jesus said about the Holy Spirit **“The Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father” (John 15:26)**

The Holy Trinity in the Old Testament

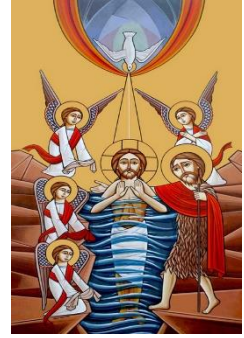
- There are many instances in the Old Testament where the Holy Trinity was evident. For instance in Genesis 1:26, we read, **“God said, “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”** ... Notice here God (One) ... Our image (Trinity) ... Our likeness (Trinity).
- Some argue that speaking in plural is to assert reverence. However, that is not true in the Hebrew language which was the language of the book of Genesis. The Hebrew language does not use plural for reverence.

The Oneness of the Trinity in the Old Testament:

- **“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! (Deuteronomy 6:4)**
- **“Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me” (Deuteronomy 32:39)**
- **“You are the Lord God, You alone.” (2 Kings 19:19)**
- **“O Lord, there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You” (1 Chronicles 17:20)**

The Holy Trinity in the New Testament

1. In Matthew 3:16, **“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.”** In the Lord Christ’s baptism we see the Holy Trinity: the Father (voice from heaven), the Son (in the Jordan river), and the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove).
2. In Luke 1:35 we read the annunciation of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ; **“And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest [the Father] will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One [the Son] who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”**
3. In Matthew 28:19, **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”** notice here the Lord Jesus Christ said in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He did not say in the “names”.
4. In 2 Corinthians 13:14, **“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ [the Son], and the love of God [the Father], and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”**
5. In Hebrews 9:14, **“how much more shall the blood of Christ [the Son], who through the eternal Spirit [the Holy Spirit] offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God [the Father]?”**
6. In 1 John 5:7-8, **“For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”**



Analogies to describe the doctrine of the Holy Trinity:

1. The Human

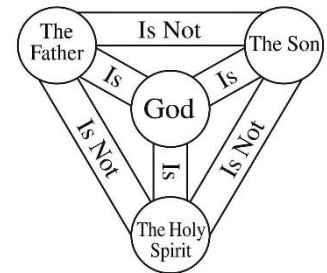
God created man according to His image and likeness. Man is body, soul, and spirit. The three are distinct but they are one and cannot be separated.

2. The Sun

The Sun is one in essence (nature), we see it as a yellow bright circle in the sky, we feel its heat, and its light makes us see all things. We cannot separate between the sun itself and its heat and light, the three are one and cannot exist without the others. The light rays are generated from it and heat proceeds from it as well.

3. The Triangle

The Son is not the Father nor is He the Holy Spirit; The Father is not the Son nor is the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is not the Father nor is the Son. However, all three are God.



Why is it important to have a clear understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity?

Some may wonder, “How does the doctrine of the Trinity affect my life and why do I need to learn and understand it?”

1. The fact is, the majority of the Christian dogma depends on the doctrine of the Trinity. If you do not have a clear understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, how will you understand ...
 - The doctrine of the incarnation
 - The doctrine of salvation
 - The mystery of the divine love for mankind
 - The Transfiguration and the Theophany
2. The doctrine of the Trinity shows how we were created in God’s image, which should encourage us to offer sacrificial love to those around us as He offered sacrificial love towards us.
3. The doctrine of the Trinity reveals to us God’s loving nature. The Holy Trinity existed before the creation of everything in unity, love, and holiness.
4. All the Church sacraments are given to us through the work of the Holy Trinity in us.

The Book of Judith

The Book of Judith is one of the Deuterocanonical books.
It tells a heroic story of deliverance of the Israelites by the hands of a woman, Judith.

The Zealous Servant and Active Citizen

- Judith represents the zealous believer, who has zeal for the glory of the Lord, and derives from Him strength and wisdom to confront the forces of evil. She cut off the head of evil, and defeated Satan in his own home.
- The book of Judith also represents belonging. As members of the body of Christ, the church, each one of us should have a sense of responsibility towards others.
- As for Judith herself, she is a woman of rare qualities combined in one personality: She was full of spiritual virtues and characteristics of a spiritual and patriotic personality. She combined wisdom and decency, wealth and asceticism, courage and humility, beauty and chastity.



The Main Storyline

- After overtaking the cities of Medes in the East, Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrian king, sent asking for the support of the cities of the West, but the latter mocked his messenger, and raised the banner of disobedience.
- He therefore attacked them with an “army like locusts” which was nothing like they had seen before, and took revenge on them with an evil vengeance, through Holofernes, the commander of his armies. He harvested men with swords, burned the crops of the land, and imposed tribute, in money and materials.
- The rulers of the cities which had not been conquered yet sent to him declaring their obedience and submission, and providing supplies to his great army, except for the Jews who refused to be included among the submissive ones. They did not send apologies or surrender like the rest.
- When the commander of the armies learned of their disobedience, and their lack of submission, he was astonished and convened a “council of war”, in which he summoned the commanders of Ammon and Moab, inquiring from them about the nature of the Jewish people and why they were so rebellious.
- Although the Ammonites and Moabites were enemies of the Jews, Achior, the commander of the Ammonites, warned Holofernes of the danger of clashing with the Jews, advising him to turn away from them because the God of heaven is fighting for them.
- However, the commander was not convinced of any of what Achior said and threatened to kill him in case the Jews were defeated and sent him to the Jews.
- The city at the frontline of the Jews and its people received instructions from the high priest in Jerusalem to block all ports through which the enemy is likely to attack.
- Likewise, the geography of the land made storming of the city by enemies a kind of adventure and gamble, which made Holofernes accept the advice of his advisors to resort to the siege and cut off the city's water supply. He did this in order to achieve two goals indicated by the Jewish neighbors' advisors:
 - **First:** the people will be subject to hunger and thirst, which will lead them to put pressure on their leaders to surrender the city.
 - **Second:** forcing them to consume God's share of tithes and firstfruits, which brings His wrath upon them, so He delivers them into the hands of their enemies.

- It happened that after five weeks after the start of the siege, the water ran out of the city and they suffered a great famine.
- The people cried to their three leaders who promised to surrender the city.
- Enters Judith, a beautiful and rich widow of piety. She heard the leaders' determination to hand over the city, so she came to reprimand them for their diminished confidence in God, and asked them for a deadline in which God would make salvation on her hands. So they agreed with her without knowing her plan and without her asking for help from anyone.
- She then offered a long prayer in the upper room of her house and after that, she adorned herself with all the jewels she owned which she had thrown aside since the death of her husband. She went to the city gate, the guards opened the door for her, and she went out with her maid. They headed to the enemy camp, who were dazzled by her beauty, and sent her to their leader as she requested.
- There she stole the mind of Holofernes, especially since she had deceived him by telling him that the people were inevitably defeated, and that she ran to him in order to escape the certain destruction. She indicated to him what he should do, that he should wait for the start signal from her which she would take from God.

- After three days, Holofernes invited her to his feast and while he was lusting for her, God was preparing salvation for his people that night.
- He was heavy with his drinking and became drunk like a dead man. His soldiers left him with Judith and went out. Judith found that the decisive moment had come, so she pleaded with God, gathered her courage, fell with a dagger on his neck twice, and his head separated from him.



- While trembling, she took his head, put it in her food bag, and carried it with her maid, she came out of the camp as usual, and no one objected her.
- When she reached the city wall, she called out to the guards, they opened for her, and she cried out announcing the news of the victory.
- Everyone went trembling, and the chiefs and the people gathered and when they learned the news. They hung the head on the wall, opposite the enemy camp, and in the morning they opened the gates of war.
- The Assyrians became angry, and went to wake up their leader to issue an order to crush those men. They found him dead without a head, and at that moment they understood the whole trick which was woven by a daring Hebrew woman.
- The army was disturbed and the soldiers fled in random ways, which allowed the Jews to chase and scatter them despite their number, which was estimated to be about two hundred thousand men, between soldiers and knights. They took possession of their luggage and the contents of their tents, and Judith became peace to Israel, throughout the days of her life and also after her for a long time.

Judith's Character

- Judith appears in the book as an example of Jewish piety, as well as loyalty and obedience to the law.
- She derives her strength and courage - in the face of the enemy - from her honesty in her relationship with God.
- She prepared for battle by seclusion while praying and fasting.
- Judith also gives a living example of what a servant should be. She is an example of devotion.
- Chastity in her widowhood is also one of her distinctive characteristics.
- Her beauty, richness, and youth had been set aside, and she is cut off for worship in her house, in what looks like a monastic cell. However, she left her solitude when it was necessary to do so, when her people were endangered.
- She kept her prayers on time and washed for prayer as required by the law.

Prayer

- Judith had abstained from the world, turned her back on its joys and pleasures, and confined herself with God, spending her time in prayer and meditation accompanied with fasting.
- She was beautiful in the image, wise (like Susanna and Abigail), with a great deal of wealth, but she chose a life that resembles monasticism, in an upper room resembling monks' cells on the roof of her house.



Praise

- Praise for Judith was the spiritual expression, the appropriate translation in the book of joy in the Lord, and the celebration of victory.
- The festivities in the book are also spiritual, the songs are spiritual, and talking about the works of God in them.
- Praise was the constant language Judith used when she expressed her thanks to God the Almighty and powerful.
 - Judith calls the people to praise (8:25-27)
 - Judith praises God in her prayers (19:1-19)
 - Salvation Song (16:1-17).

Chastity

- Judith resembles the hermits who used to leave their caves and go down to share the Church's struggle in the days of heresies and persecutions. They were not satisfied only with praying in their caves.
- The Church is one body with many members. Judith left her room and went down to her dwelling, where she stripped herself of all aspects of widowhood and hermitage including sackcloth and ashes and changed her appearance in preparation for her mission.
- Some may think that the description in the text shows her abandonment of her chastity, but even though she had taken off her clothes of sorrow, she was not excessively adorned or glamorous because she knew very well that this was not pleasant in the sight of the Lord.

Fasting

- It is mentioned in the book that Judith fasted all the days of her widowhood, except on the days of the Sabbaths, feasts, and celebrations, like many of the hermits we know from Church history.

Abba Daniel

The Hegomen of Scetis

Synaxarion of the 8th day of the Coptic Month of Pashons (May 16)

Abba Daniel is mentioned in the commemoration of the saints in the Liturgy of the Faithful.

Daniel is a Hebrew name which means “God is Judge”. Abba Daniel, the hegumen of Scetis, is one of the sixth-century saints whose biography testifies to the asceticism and power of the Coptic Orthodox monasticism manifested in authentic spirituality and service.

Father of many monks in the desert of Scetis, he presented to the church many bishops fortified with knowledge and discernment through the study and preparatory programs offered in the monasteries, in which Abba Daniel taught along with other well-learned and pious elders. In addition, Abba Daniel's educational fortification extended to the nuns' convents.

Childhood and Early Life

Abba Daniel was born in 485 AD. At the age of sixteen, he went to the desert of Scetis embracing monasticism. His desire to live a solitary life led him to the inner desert. He used to eat only once a day at sunset, and his work was weaving baskets. While in his cave, he fell into the hands of the Barbarians three times and every time, he managed to escape.

When he advanced quickly in his spiritual level, they ordained him as a hegumen, then a leader of the monks. The Lord had granted him spiritual wisdom and discernment by which he led thousands of monks, as well as the gift of disclosing their inner thoughts and sins. It is worth noting that at that time, it was not common for monks to be ordained as priests except for one who was ordained a priest for the whole Scetis region, to celebrate the divine liturgies and receive the monks' confessions.

His Disciples

One of the most famous disciples of Abba Daniel was St. Anastasia the Worshiper, who lived under his guidance in the wilderness for 28 years. She was a deaconess from Antioch of rich and noble descent whom the Emperor of Constantinople wanted to marry. She escaped to Egypt with St. Severus of Antioch (518 AD). Disguised in men's attire, she revealed her story to Abba Daniel who allowed her to stay in a cave close by where she had lived in disguise for twenty-eight years.

Her food and water supply were provided for her once a week by one of Abba Daniel's disciples, who would leave the provision by the door of her cave. Whenever St. Anastasia needed spiritual advice, she would write to Abba Daniel in Greek, a language that the disciple who would carry back the written script did not understand. Thus, back and forth messages were conducted without revealing her identity until her time of repose.



Eulogius, the Stone Cutter

On his way to the city to sell his handwork, the baskets, Abba Daniel met Eulogius, a stone cutter gaining his daily living by cutting stones and helping the poor. Seeing how hard Eulogius worked to care for the poor and house the sojourners, Abba Daniel prayed asking God to give the man more money.

In response to Abba Daniel's prayer, Eulogius found a treasure hidden in the stones he was cutting. In Constantinople, Eulogius left his first mission of almsgiving and pursued worldly desires and status, becoming a minister. Upon hearing about the wrong path that Eulogius had taken, Abba Daniel went to Constantinople to meet with him but was prevented by the guards of the palace. One night, Abba Daniel saw a vision as if the Lord Jesus Christ, the judge, demanded Eulogius' lost soul from Abba Daniel.

Back at his monastery, Abba Daniel continued praying for Eulogius. However, an angel of the Lord appeared to him asking him to stop rebuking him for rejecting God's judgment concerning His creation. Later, in 532 AD, Eulogius participated in a conspiracy against Emperor Justinian. After that, he fled to Egypt and went back to his original trade, that of cutting stones. Then he met with Abba Daniel and narrated to him what had befallen him because of the money that had led him astray. Abba Daniel comforted him and restored him to his love of the poor and almsgiving.

The Repentant Thief

One night, a thief pretending to be Abba Daniel and dressed similarly, broke into one of the nun's convents overseen by Abba Daniel. The nuns, fooled by the thief's appearance, asked him to pray for their blind sister. Ridiculing their faith, the thief asked them to wash her eyes with the same water they had used to wash his feet. To his amazement, the nun had her sight restored. The thief was deeply moved. In repentance he sought Abba Daniel to confess his awful deed. Abba Daniel told him that he had been present with his spirit at the convent during the incident. The thief adopted Christianity, was baptized, and became a follower of Abba Daniel.

Standing for the Orthodox Faith

Abba Daniel showed a great deal of tolerance of persecution because he held fast to the faith he received by his fathers.

Abba Daniel was exposed to terrible beating to the point of death for having rejected the Tome of Leo, Chalcedonian heresy, before Emperor Justinian's representative. Consequently, upon the advice of his disciples, Abba Daniel escaped to Tambok where he established a monastery and stayed there till the death of the Emperor (565 AD).



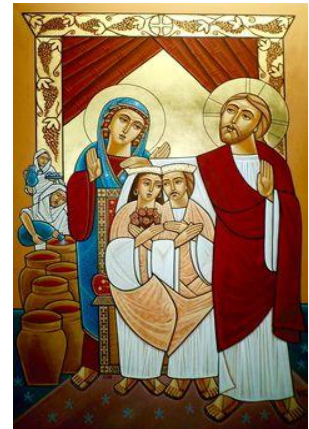
For forty and half years, Abba Daniel lived a life of fasting and prayers in the deserts performing a lot of miracles, fathering many monks and nuns, and bearing a lot of suffering for the sake of his faith. Near the time of his departure, he gathered his disciples to inform them and to strengthen and console them. He reposed on the 8th day of Pashons, of the year 296 of the martyrs.

Christian Marriage

Marriage in Christianity is different from how it is seen by the world. It has superior goals and it is a fulfillment to God's commandments by establishing a new family and new members of the body of Christ. The value of matrimony in Christianity is driven from it being a sacrament, established by our Lord Jesus Christ at the wedding at Cana of Galilee.

Scriptural Understanding of Matrimony

1. It is a natural law established by God from the beginning; **"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 2:15) "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)**
2. Our Lord Jesus blessed the wedding at Cana of Galilee with His attendance along with St. Mary and His disciples. He also elevated the value of matrimony and made it a sacrament, a mystery by which **"they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."** (Matthew 19:6)
3. St. Paul explained that the relationship between a husband and a wife is similar to this between Christ and His Church **"This is a great mystery"** (Ephesians 5:32).
4. Both the bride and the groom must be Orthodox Christians (received the Sacrament of Baptism in the Coptic Orthodox Church) in order for the Sacrament of Matrimony to take place. **"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers."** (2 Corinthians 6:14)
5. It is an inseparable bond between one man and one woman. **"They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." (Matthew 19:7-8) "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery." (Matthew 5:32)**
6. Celibacy is sacred just as the sacrament of matrimony is sacred, but it is a special calling that requires a person to strive to protect himself/herself in it. **"Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well." (1 Corinthians 7:37)**



The Purpose and Fruit of the Christian Marriage

1. Achieving a true life of fellowship, love, and unity in Christ **“So then, they are no longer two but one flesh.” (Matthew 19:6)**
2. Growth and continuation of the human race **“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28)**
3. Bringing forth new members to the body of Christ (the Church) who are pleasing to God in thought and action **“Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.” (1 Timothy 2:15)**
4. Liberation from lustful desires through the oneness bestowed from the Holy Mystery by the work of the Holy Spirit **“Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. ... but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” (1 Corinthians 7:2,9)**
“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled” (Hebrews 13:4)

Therefore, the goals of Christian Marriage can be summarized as follows:

In order for our marriage to be according to God’s will, our goals from the marriage need to be aligned to God’s commandments.

1. **The union of spiritual love**; that is the first goal in marriage. **“and the two shall become one flesh” (Matthew 19:5). This union is by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Matrimony because “what God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matthew 19:6)**

Love has 3 different definitions in the Holy Bible:

- **Eros**: Lustful and carnal love
- **Philia**: The natural human love
- **Aghapy**: Spiritual and holy sacrificial love



Marriage is a union of sacred spiritual love, which transcends the natural love that is subject to change and above the sensual lustful love that withers with time. The spouses are then united with a spiritual love by the action of the Holy Spirit, who renews human nature through baptism, dwells in it with the Chrism, adjusts its course, and sanctifies it through repentance and confession and the faithfulness of the spiritual struggle.

2. **Cooperation in life** **“It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” (Genesis 2:8)**. As a loving Father, God saw Adam’s need for companionship. **“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. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 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 2:21-23)**

Their love is a sacrificial love above worldly ordinary love; therefore, the second goal in the Christian marriage is unity and cooperation in life based on the understanding of both spouses of the equality of value and diversity of roles.

3. The salvation of the husband and the wife. There is no doubt that this is one of the highest and most important goals of the Christian marriage. The goal of every Christian in life is to be saved, and holy matrimony helps the person in controlling the course of his spiritual life, so that his natural desires are fulfilled within the holiness and sanctity of matrimony: sex, fatherhood, and motherhood. Thus, marriage helps the individual by protecting him/her from temptation and sin.

“Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.” (1 Corinthians 7:2)

“For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” (1 Corinthians 7:9)

It is important to note that marriage is not the only factor affecting one’s salvation, but rather just an auxiliary factor. There are many who are saved by their celibacy. It is important for both of them, the married and the celibate, to adhere to the basic pillars of salvation such as: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the Redeemer and Savior, Baptism, Chrismation, honest and sincere Repentance and Confession, in addition to being filled with the means of grace such as the Eucharist, prayer, reading the word of God, attending spiritual meetings, reading spiritual books, fasting and doing good works.

4. Continuation of the human race. Undoubtedly, the desire to have children in marriage is a sacred and blessed desire, through which the human race continues, and generations of human beings pass, glorifying God, exploring His works in the universe, history, and human beings, and working together for good.

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.” (Psalm 127:3)

5. Bringing saints into the world. This is one of the most superior goals of Christian marriage as a whole, for both spouses - in Christ - are sanctified and inherit the heavenly kingdom. Their sons and daughters will all reach - through faithful spiritual parenting - the same heavenly inheritance, and thus the process of procreation will not only be a bodily function, but turns into a spiritual matter as the list of saints increases in heaven, and all of them rejoice in their Redeemer and Savior in a living fellowship with Him, eternal and happy in the heavenly Jerusalem. Therefore, the true Christian family is always keen on the faithful spiritual parenting of its children, from physical, mental, social, or spiritual aspects.

Thus, every Christian family says with Joshua **“But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15)** while the ultimate goal is to stand before God and say **““Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.”” (Hebrews 2:13)**



Time Management

Time is an important aspect in our lives. Some have great use of time, some look for ways to kill time, some try to save time, and some try to redeem the time. We often find ourselves pressed for time; life is busy, and we run between our studies, work, family responsibilities, and service. There is always a general feeling of lack of time ... but is it enough time that we are lacking or good time management?

What is time?

Before we talk about time and time management, we need to understand the concept of time and how it relates to us.

- Time is defined as an indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole.
- Time is measured by the movement of the earth around the sun, that is why time is measured differently on other planets as their cycle around the sun is different than earth.



Time as it Relates to God

Since time is relative to created matters, then God is not bound by time. He is above time; He created time by creating our solar system. Time does not limit God nor that He is bound by time.

“Who inhabits eternity” (Isaiah 57:15)

However, even though God is not bound by time the way we humans are, He still puts great emphasis on it. He made it clear that He is the God of order and not confusion.

**“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”
(1 Corinthians 14:33)**

- He is always punctual—He always acts at the right time (even if it may seem to us like we have to wait a long time).
- He also has set aside certain times that He has blessed—for our benefit (i.e. the Lord’s day, Holidays, etc...). These are designed to teach us important lessons and to reveal His plan to us.

Our Time is Limited

Our life on earth is limited, the average human lifespan is 70-80 years. Time is the most valuable asset in our lives, even more valuable than wealth; if you lose money, it can be regained. If you lose time, it’s gone forever. That’s the perspective we must have in order to be intentional with how our limited time is spent as we read in James 4:14.

**“For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.”
(James 4:14)**

It’s imperative that one should make the most of his/her time while being here on Earth, for our lifetime is but a fleeting mist in the scope of eternity.

“Life is not measured by its length but by its depth” - HH Pope Shenouda III

The Value of Our Time

The value of time is increased or decreased based on what we do with it! In the secular world, some professions have a high rate per hour (i.e. lawyers, physicians, etc...) which indicates how valuable their time is.

You can meet with someone for a few minutes and feel that this time was a blessing to your whole day, and sometimes something can ruin your day in a matter of a few minutes!

We have many examples of people who used their lifetime to do great things and glorify the Lord, take St. John the Baptist for instance, his ministry was only about 1 year, and during this time he brought many to repentance. St. Paul did not waste any time during his ministry, he spread Christianity to the majority of the ancient world. Our Lord Jesus Christ changed the world and the life of everyone during the few hours he was on the cross! Time can be very critical!

If we look at St. John Chrysostom, although he departed hundreds of years ago, his sermons are still alive and relevant to this day, the same with many other church fathers, St. Augustine, St. Basil, St. Gregory, etc.... St. Mark the apostle who was martyred in the year 68 AD is certainly alive in our Coptic Church and the many other places where he preached.

Also, in the secular world, there are names that are never forgotten, like Tesla, Braille, Michael Angelo, etc... because of how they used their time to accomplish timeless accomplishments.

Sometimes, a few minutes can be used to do something great and can be used to fall into a great sin! Look at St. Peter for example, in a few minutes he denied the Lord and lived with guilt for a while, and in a few minutes he brought 3000 to the faith by his sermon! Very little time can save someone's life! Look at the right thief, the few minutes being crucified with the Lord saved his eternity, he did not waste time or procrastinate. It is surprising when people say they have "time to kill"! time should be cherished not killed.

Our Struggles with Time

- "I can't get everything done!"
- "I have so much going on right now!"
- "I am busy all the time, but I never feel like I'm getting the important things done!"
- "I have so much to do; I don't know what to do next."
- "When I take a day off, time just seems to slip away and I feel like it was a wasted day."



Does this sound like you? There is no doubt that the responsibilities and pressures of this world take a lot of our attention. The number of tasks pulling us in different directions makes it easy for our time to get swallowed up in less important matters. We are always advised to manage our time but why do people fail to manage their time? Why do they plan but not execute? Why do they find it so hard to get things done? The answer is simple: many people tend to focus more on time, and less on themselves and without even realizing it, they end up doing the wrong tasks at the wrong time.

The fact of the matter is, that you cannot control time. It's simply not possible. We all have the same number of hours in a day. You can't get an extra hour no matter how good you are and you can't re-use the minutes that you wasted the previous day. However, you can manage yourself.

Five Keys to Self-management:

1. Take Responsibility

- The first key is to take responsibility for your use of time; The Lord commanded us to redeem the time, which means to make the most of the time God has given us (Ephesians 5:16). It is a talent like your other God-given talents and you will give account for it.
- Choose to take charge of your time to the best of your ability. If you don't manage your time, something or someone else will.

2. Acquire Wisdom and Discipline

- You need to work smarter not harder, the smarter you plan your day, the more effective you will become in managing your time and completing tasks.
- You also need the wisdom to discern what's important to you.

“If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength; But wisdom brings success.” (Ecclesiastes 10:10)

PRACTICAL TIPS:

- Set your priorities, create a master to-do list, calendar your to-do list, set specific times and days you will get something done.
- A good way to gain wisdom is to learn to live each day with an eternal perspective. **“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11)**
- Knowing that we will have to give an account to the God who gives us time should motivate us to use it well. **“If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next.” C. S. Lewis**
- Ask the Lord to help you manage your recreational time, your family time, and your friendships with others, renew your creative energy, and give you opportunities to serve.
 - Seek the Lord's guidance, too, for the time you spend with your family. Ask Him to help you manage your family time so that relationships are made strong and joyful.
 - Seek guidance from your spiritual father, your servants, and your parents.



3. Put God First in Your Life

We cannot neglect to spend time with God, both in private and within the community of the believers (church). Schedule regular—daily—time with God. He who equips us to carry out the tasks He has given us. It is He who directs our days. Do not manage time as if it belongs to you. Time belongs to God, and we need to ask Him to give us wisdom on how to best use it, then proceed in confidence.

- Christ bought us by His blood, our lives, our time, and everything we do belongs to Him. **“For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.” (Romans 14:8)**
 - That is why, Sunday, the day of the Lord should be kept for the Lord! In it, we should do what is pleasing in the sight of the Lord.
 - God will bless the time of your study when you give Him an adequate portion of your day in His service.
 - It is important to recognize that God has ordained for you a series of good works to accomplish.
 - Ask the Lord each morning to help you identify the good works that He has planned for you on that particular day. Ask Him to show you how and when and to whom you might minister by using the good gifts and talents that He has given you.

4. Plan and Prioritize

- Setting priorities is a divine commandment, **“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)**
- Months can go by without your making any progress toward the fulfillment of your God-given goals if you don't plan your schedule and set your goals and dreams in the context of deadlines.
- Organize your time for maximum productivity and efficiency. If mornings are your most productive hours, set aside those times for work directly related to your goals. Put your greatest concentration and effort into those hours.
 - The Bible is full of examples of organization; Noah, the tabernacle, feeding the multitudes, etc. All these examples were guided and commanded by God.
 - When you assume responsibility, acquire wisdom, and put God first in your life, you will be able to have your priorities aligned.
 - Doing a good job at the tasks put before you are part of God's plan for your life. Interruptions may be lessons that God has for you to learn, including the lesson of flexibility.

5. Review Your Day

At the end of the day, review the way in which you have spent your time; evaluate your schedule. Compare what you did with what you intended to do.

Ask yourself: Did I make good use of my time? Did I procrastinate? Was I able to maintain my concentration? Did I engage in activities that truly were priorities? Did I make progress (even a little) toward the accomplishment of my God-given goals?

- As you see yourself doing things you desire to do in order to be successful in God's eyes, give thanks and praise to God for His guidance, help, and encouragement.
- If you recognize that you have made mistakes or have fallen short of the ideal schedule you set for yourself, ask the Lord's forgiveness for any sins you have committed in wasting time, and then ask for His help to do better the next day.
- Don't give up on the pursuit of your goals! Make adjustments, learn from your mistakes, and begin the next day with fresh enthusiasm and courage.



Alternative Lifestyle

- The practice of homosexuality and the acceptance of it as an alternative lifestyle is becoming widely prevalent in our society nowadays. Nearly every day we read or hear more people, companies, and organizations are accepting homosexuality as normal behavior.
- More ordinances are being passed to grant homosexuals equal rights to practice and promote their lifestyle.
- Unfortunately, even among Christians, many are supporting and encouraging this lifestyle by their acceptance. Some “churches” are calling themselves a “Gay church” and some denominations have ordained priests who are homosexual, even among the mainstream denominations.
- Some churches claim that the spirit of God led them to accept homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle. God is not an author of confusion! It is impossible for God to say in the scriptures that homosexuality is a sin and then reveal to others that homosexuality is not a sin.
- In fact, it is not the Spirit of God who revealed this “alternative truth” that homosexuality is not a sin but rather it is the human spirit that yielded to the societal pressure.

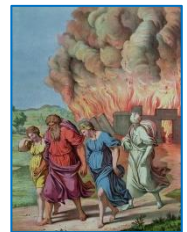
What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

• First, let us establish some fundamentals:

- The truth does not change. There are no versions of the truth. Anything that varies from the truth is considered an opinion.
- As Christians, the word of God is the foundation of our truth. The Lord Jesus Christ said, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life”**.
- The word of God and His commandments also will be the measure by which all will be judged.

• Evidence from the Old Testament

- Homosexuality was clearly considered a sin in the Old Testament. In the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, God was angry with them, and He burned down that city because of homosexuality.
- Some argue that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not homosexuality but lack of hospitality and that their homosexuality was only a sin when it was done outside of marriage.
- 2 Peter 2: 6-7 clarifies that this was not the case, **“and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked.”**
- And Jude 1:7 **“as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”**
- Homosexual conduct was considered a capital crime, under the law of Moses.



“If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman,

both of them have committed an abomination.” (Leviticus 20:13)

“And You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination” (Leviticus 18:22)

• Evidence from the New Testament

The Lord talked about the people who rejected Him. He said that the people of Sodom will be more tolerable, but they will still be condemned more than other cities. **“But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.” (Luke 10:12)**

In Luke 17:28, **“Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;”** When God talked about the days of Noah, He said they were married and given in marriage, but in the day of Lot, God talked about those who were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building, meaning that God doesn’t accept that homosexuality would be called marriage.

- Luke 17:29, **“but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.”** These verses show that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is a sin of homosexuality.
- In Romans 1:18 **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,”** Those who are saying homosexuality is not a sin and is an alternative lifestyle are suppressing the truth.
- **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)**

Why does the Church not accept homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle?

- First let us make a distinction between “homosexuality” as a sin condemned by God, and the “homosexual” as a person who is struggling with same-sex attraction and relationships.
- We must also distinguish between a person who acknowledges homosexuality as a sin, is struggling to overcome it and offers sincere repentance, and another who is advocating for that lifestyle, resisting the word of God, and rejecting the correction of the Church.
- The Church accepts homosexuals but does not accept homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle. Therefore, the Church tolerates the sinner but not the sin. It is from the Church’s love for everyone that she declares the truth that homosexuality is a sinful lifestyle and puts one’s salvation at high risk.
- Unfortunately, often we see those who advocate for homosexuality also share atheistic ideas and beliefs. Once a person denies the existence of God, he/she denies the authority of the scriptures. Then homosexuality – in their eyes- can be an alternative lifestyle.

Genetic or Environmental?

- Many of those who accept homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle claim that homosexuality is genetic; they claim that “God created them that way” which is far from the truth. Until today, there is not one medically approved research that supports that homosexuality is genetic.
- How can God create something that contradicts His own plan for humanity and design for human sexuality? God does not contradict Himself.
- On the contrary, there are **environmental factors** that have a negative effect on the development of individuals, which contributes to the development of a predisposition towards homosexuality.
 - **Lack of adequate parental relationship:** Rocky child/parent relationships may lead children to have same-sex attraction.
 - **Permissive childhood training:** Permissive parents lack any form of discipline towards their children, defending even the wrongdoing of their children. This contributes to the child’s lack of tolerance and acceptance of correction.
 - **Insecurity of social identity:** Some parents do not deal with their children properly according to their gender; allowing boys to have long hair, try on makeup, etc. which causes the boy to be confused about his social identity and vice versa.

- **Childhood sexual trauma**

- Being exposed to sexual ideas or actions from a young age
- Exposing children to alternative sexuality in schools
- It is important for parents to maintain an open line of communication with their children's daily life to offer adequate support to them when needed.

- **Early interest in sex**

- Allowing children access to a smartphone from an early age (early elementary) without parental control puts them at risk of being exposed to pornographic and over-sexualized content, leading to a multitude of sins related to sexual immorality.
- Early sexual experiences with friends will, later on, lead to getting involved in pleasurable sins and opens the door to sexual deviation.

The above-mentioned factors do not turn an individual homosexual automatically, but rather act as factors that influence one's attitude toward sex and sexuality to be more carnal rather than spiritual.

The Dangers of Homosexuality

Health Problems

- Most of those who adopt homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle have multiple sexual partners.
- Studies also show that homosexuals are more likely to be sexually active and have concurrent partners at an earlier age than heterosexuals.
- The CDC reports an all-time high cases of STDs and HIV, especially among the LGBTQ+ community.

Emotional Problems: By far the most severe consequence of multiple relationships is loneliness in the absence of Godly monogamous relationships within the confines of matrimony. Loneliness also significantly increases as individuals get older without a lifelong partner and children, missing the true meaning of family as God intended it.

Mental Problems: Some international studies reported various mental disorders significantly occurring among homosexuals, including anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, self-harm, alcoholism, and drug dependence.



Is it possible to overcome homosexuality?

- God will not give us a commandment knowing that it is impossible to follow.
- We recognize that there is a great deal of difficulty for those dealing with the sin of homosexuality to repent. However, through the grace of God, everything is possible! As St. Paul said, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)** Through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, this sin **WILL** be forgiven and this person **WILL** be sanctified.
- The Church offers love, acceptance, support, and prayers to those who are willing to repent and pursue a life of holiness.

How can we as Christians react to this issue?

- We ought to speak the truth with love and out of love **“But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head- Christ-” (Ephesians 4:15)**
- Correct (when possible) with humility and not with a prideful or condescending attitude. **“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth” (2 Timothy 2:24-26)**
- Pray for those who are struggling with same-sex attraction for God to fill them with His grace and empower them to fight the good fight and offer true and sincere repentance.

Adapted from a lecture titled "Homosexuality" By His Grace Bishop Youssef in the Faith, Truth, & Life Convention - June 2021 Holmdel, NJ

Memorization

**I. “Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete.
Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace;
and the God of love and peace will be with you.”
(2 Corinthians 13:11)**

II. Second Watch of the Midnight Hour of the Agpeya The Gospel according to St. Luke (Luke 7:36-50):

Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went unto 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 to eat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke within himself, saying, “This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is who touched Him, for she is a sinner.” And Jesus answered and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And he said, “Master, 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 to pay, he freely forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him more?” Simon answered and said, “I suppose that he, to whom he forgave more.” And He said unto him, “You have rightly judged.” And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered into your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman since the time I came in has not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil you did not anoint, but this woman has anointed My feet with ointment. Therefore I say unto you, Her sins, which are many are forgiven, for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.” And He said unto her, “Your sins are forgiven.” And those who sat to eat with Him began to say within themselves, “Who is this who forgives sins also?” And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

Glory to God forever. Amen.

III. Litanies of the Second Watch of the Midnight Hour of the Agpeya

1. Give me, O Lord, many fountains of tears, as You gave, in the past, the sinful woman. Make me worthy to wash Your feet which liberated me from the path of straying, and to offer you a precious fragrant oil, and gain, through repentance, a pure life, so that I may hear that voice full of joy: "Your faith has saved you."
2. When I realize my many wicked deeds, and the thought of that awesome judgment comes to my heart, a tremble takes hold of me, and I take refuge in You, O God, the Lover of Mankind. So do not turn away Your face from me, I entreat You, who alone are without sin. Grant humbleness to my poor soul before the end comes and save me.
3. The heavens bless you, O full of grace, the Bride who was never married. And we, too, glorify your incomprehensible giving birth. O Theotokos (Mother of God), the mother of mercy and salvation, intercede for the salvation of our souls.
4. O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who is present in all places and fills all, the treasury of good things and the Life-Giver, graciously come, and dwell in us and purify us from all defilement, O Good One, and save our souls.
5. Just as You were with Your disciples, O Savior, and gave them peace, graciously come also and be with us, and grant us Your peace, and save us, and deliver our souls.
6. Whenever we stand in Your holy sanctuary, we are considered standing in heaven. O Theotokos, you are the gate of heaven; open for us the gate of mercy.

IV. Sayings of the Church Fathers

1. "Holy men ask for peace, not only that which dwells among men in mutual dealings, but that which belongs to ourselves. For oftentimes we wage war in our hearts, and are disturbed even when no one troubles us; bad desires also frequently rise up against us." St. John Chrysostom
2. "In truth we should convey the message of peace, and that our very first entrance in any place be attended with the blessing of peace." St. Ambrose of Milan
3. "When you have made your inward parts clean from every spot of sin, that dissensions and contentions may not proceed from your temper, begin peace within yourself, that so you may extend it to others." St. Ambrose of Milan
4. "To the peacemakers the likeness of God is given, as being perfectly wise, and formed after the image of God by means of the regeneration of the renewed man." St. Augustine

Coptic



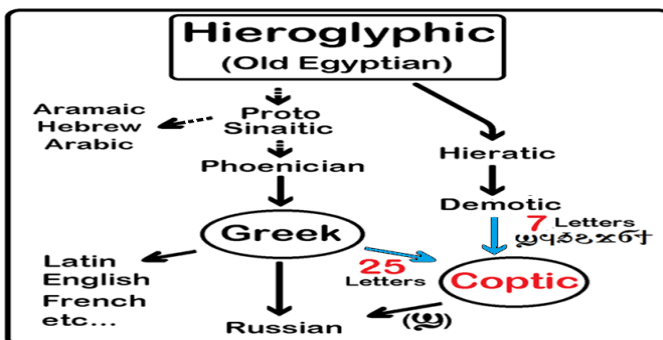
Our Lord spent about four years in Egypt as a baby. He spoke to the people of Egypt in their language, which was Coptic at that time.

THE COPTIC ALPHABET

	 Alpha A	 Veeta B, V	 Gamma G, N, Gh	 Delta D, Th (the)	
 Eyy E	 Number 6 So-oo The number 6 <small>Not a true letter</small>	 Zeeta Z	 Eeta EE	 Theeta TH (think), T	 Yota I, Y
 Kappa K	 Lavla L	 Mey M	 Ney N	 Eksee KS	 O O
 Pee P	 ro R	 seema S-Z	 tav T	 Epsilon V, I, (oo)	 Fey F
 Key K, Kh, Sh	 Epsee PS	 Oo Oo	 Shai SH	 Fai F	 Khai KH
	 Hori H	 Ganga G, J	 Cheema CH	 Tee Tee	

The Coptic Alphabet has 32 letters

- 24 consonants
- 7 vowels (Α Ε Η Ι Ο Υ Ω)
- 1 letter used only as a number (Ϟ)



First 25 letters from Hieroglyphic through Proto-Sinaitic, Phoenician and Greek Alphabets

Last 7 letters from Hieroglyphic through Hieratic and Demotic



Pronunciation

Pronunciation of the letter Key “ϫ”

The letter is among the letters taken from the Greek Alphabet. In Greek, the sound of this letter is not among the sounds present in the Coptic pronunciation. But in Coptic words, it is always pronounced with the sound “k”.

We should first note that Greek words found in the Coptic Liturgy are two kinds:

1. Pure Greek hymns included in the Coptic Liturgy to retain non-Coptic Christians in Egypt in the Coptic Church.
2. “Loan words” that became part of the Coptic Language. Like the Greek Loan words in the English language: e.g. deacon, martyr, psychic, etc.)

When trying to pronounce the Greek loan words in English, e.g. the loan word “deacon”, it is pronounced using the English way to pronounce it and not the original Greek pronunciation.

So when we pronounce Greek loan words in Coptic, we should use the Coptic way to pronounce them.

Therefore, the Greek loan words “**ψϣϫⲏ**” and “**ⲉϣϫⲏ**” would be pronounced “psikee” and “evkee”.

Tenses: Present, Past, Future I, We

		Present Tense	Future Tense	Past Tense	Negative Past Tense
1 st Person	I	†ϙ̣̣ληλ I pray	†ναϙ̣̣ληλ I will pray	αιϙ̣̣ληλ I prayed	ἰπιϙ̣̣ληλ I did not pray
	We	†ενϙ̣̣ληλ We pray	†ενναϙ̣̣ληλ We will pray	ανϙ̣̣ληλ We prayed	ἰπενϙ̣̣ληλ We did not pray

You (M., F., Pl.)

		Present Tense	Future Tense	Past Tense	Negative Past Tense
2 nd person	You (s.m.)	κ̣̣ϙ̣̣ληλ You pray	κ̣̣ναϙ̣̣ληλ You will pray	ακ̣̣ϙ̣̣ληλ You prayed	ἰπεκ̣̣ϙ̣̣ληλ You did not pray
	You (s.f.)	†εϙ̣̣ληλ You pray	†εραϙ̣̣ληλ You will pray	ἀρεϙ̣̣ληλ You prayed	ἰπεϙ̣̣ληλ You did not pray
	You (pl.)	†ε†ενϙ̣̣ληλ You pray	†ε†ενναϙ̣̣ληλ You will pray	ἀρε†ενϙ̣̣ληλ You prayed	ἰπε†ενϙ̣̣ληλ You did not pray

He, She, They

		Present Tense	Future Tense	Past Tense	Negative Past Tense
3 rd person	He	ἑϙ̣̣ληλ He prays	ἑναϙ̣̣ληλ He will pray	αϙ̣̣ληλ He prayed	ἰπεϙ̣̣ληλ He did not pray
	She	ἑ̣̣ϙ̣̣ληλ She prays	ἑ̣̣ναϙ̣̣ληλ She will pray	α̣̣ϙ̣̣ληλ She prayed	ἰπε̣̣ϙ̣̣ληλ She did not pray
	They	σεϙ̣̣ληλ They pray	σενναϙ̣̣ληλ They will pray	αϙ̣̣ληλ They prayed	ἰποϙ̣̣ληλ They did not pray

Negative Present and Future tenses are formed by

ΔΝ or **Ἰ...ΔΝ**

Examples

Present **σεῦληλ ΔΝ** or **Ἰσεῦληλ ΔΝ**

Future **σενάῦληλ ΔΝ** or **Ἰσενάῦληλ ΔΝ**

Practice Present, Future and Past tenses
and their negatives with the following verbs

†**ἰβω** to teach

βἰβω to learn

† to give

βἰ to take, receive

οὔωπ to worship

πυεπῶοτ to give thanks

ἰ to come

σω† to save, redeem

ἰοοῦ to bless, praise

ζωσ to sing, chant

σωοῦν to know

ναζ† to believe

ζεωσι to sit down

δερδερ to snore

ωπ to read

ἰδῶι to write

οὔωμ to eat

σω to drink

Conversations

νοῦρι Hi

οὔζαἰ Bye

πυεπῶοτ Thanks

ἰμοσ ἰλι You're welcome (for nothing)

Numbers

At the time of developing the Coptic Script, all known languages at that time were using their alphabets as numbers. (e.g. Copts, Greeks, Arabs, Hebrews)

	Coptic			Greek		Arabic		Hebrew	
1	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲁ̄	Alpha	α	Alpha	ا	Alef	א	Aleph
2	Ⲉⲛⲁⲩ	ⲃ̄	Veeta	β	Beta	ب	Baa	ב	Beth
3	ϣⲟⲙⲧ	Ⲅ̄	Gamma	γ	Gamma	ج	Geem	ג	Gimel
4	ϥⲧⲟⲩ	ⲅ̄	Delta	δ	Delta	د	Dal	ד	Daleth
5	ϥⲓⲟⲩ	Ⲇ̄	Ey	ε	Epsilon	ه	Haa	ה	He
6	ϥⲟⲟⲩ	Ⲉ̄	So-o	?	?	و	Waw	ו	Waw
7	ϣⲁϣϥ	ⲉ̄	Zeeta	ζ	Zeta	ز	Zayn	ז	Zayin

Later on, the current numbering system (1, 2, 3...) was developed from the system used by **the Phoenician sailors**, where the number of angles in the figure indicated the number.

Phoenician Figures					
Number of Angles	1	2	3	4	5
Phoenician Figures					
Number of Angles	6	7	8	9	0

The Coptic Numbers
(at the time of writing most Coptic manuscripts)

100	ⲡ	ϣⲉ	10	Ⲓ	ⲙⲏⲧ	1	ⲁ	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ
200	Ⲅ	ϥⲛⲁⲩ ϣⲉ	20	ⲕ	ϫⲟⲩⲧ	2	ⲃ	ϥⲛⲁⲩ
300	Ⲉ	ϣⲟⲙⲧ ϣⲉ	30	ⲗ	ⲙⲁⲡ	3	Ⲅ	ϣⲟⲙⲧ
400	Ⲓ	ϥⲧⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	40	ⲙ	ϩⲙⲉ	4	ⲗ	ϥⲧⲟⲩ
500	Ⲇ	ϥⲧⲱⲩ ϣⲉ	50	ⲛ	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	5	ⲉ	ϥⲧⲱⲩ
600	Ⲙ	ϥϥⲟⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	60	ϫ	ϥⲉ	6	Ⲉ	ϥϥⲟⲟⲩ
700	Ⲕ	ϣⲁⲣⲥ ϣⲉ	70	ⲟ	ϣⲃⲉ	7	Ⲛ	ϣⲁⲣⲥ
800	Ⲡ	ϣⲙⲏⲏ ϣⲉ	80	ⲡ	ϩⲁⲙⲛⲉ	8	Ⲏ	ϣⲙⲏⲏ
900	Ⲕ	ϣⲓⲧ ϣⲉ	90	ϥ	ⲡⲓϥⲧⲁⲩ	9	Ⲙ	ϣⲓⲧ

How to say the numbers in Coptic

100	ϣⲉ	10	ⲙⲏⲧ	1	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ
200	ϥⲛⲁⲩ ϣⲉ	20	ϫⲟⲩⲧ	2	ϥⲛⲁⲩ
300	ϣⲟⲙⲧ ϣⲉ	30	ⲙⲁⲡ	3	ϣⲟⲙⲧ
400	ϥⲧⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	40	ϩⲙⲉ	4	ϥⲧⲟⲩ
500	ϥⲧⲱⲩ ϣⲉ	50	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	5	ϥⲧⲱⲩ
600	ϥϥⲟⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	60	ϥⲉ	6	ϥϥⲟⲟⲩ
700	ϣⲁⲣⲥ ϣⲉ	70	ϣⲃⲉ	7	ϣⲁⲣⲥ
800	ϣⲙⲏⲏ ϣⲉ	80	ϩⲁⲙⲛⲉ	8	ϣⲙⲏⲏ
900	ϣⲓⲧ ϣⲉ	90	ⲡⲓϥⲧⲁⲩ	9	ϣⲓⲧ

How to write and read numbers		
12	ⲙⲏⲧ ⲛⲏⲁⲩ	ⲓⲃ̄
24	ϫⲟⲩⲧ ϣⲧⲟⲩ	ⲕⲁ̄
49	ⲉⲙⲉ ϣⲓⲧ	ⲙⲑ̄
50	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	ⲏ̄
72	ϣⲓⲃⲉ ⲛⲏⲁⲩ	ⲟⲃ̄
100	ϣⲉ	ⲡ̄
111	ϣⲉ ⲙⲏⲧ ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲡⲓⲁ̄
318	ϣⲟⲙⲧ ϣⲉ ⲙⲏⲧ ϣⲙⲏⲏ	ⲧⲓⲏ̄
200	ⲛⲏⲁⲩ ϣⲉ	ϥ̄
666	ϥⲟⲟⲩ ϣⲉ ϥⲉ ϥⲟⲟⲩ	ϫⲗⲉ̄
969	ϣⲓⲧ ϣⲉ ϥⲉ ϣⲓⲧ	ϣⲗⲑ̄

The Days of the week		
Day	Coptic	Other names
Sunday	ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲡⲓⲉⲗⲟⲟⲩ ⲏⲧⲉ ⲏⲃⲟⲓϥ (Coptic) ⲕⲣⲓⲁⲕⲏⲏ (Greek) (means the day of the Lord.)
Monday	ⲡⲓⲛⲏⲁⲩ	
Tuesday	ⲡⲓϣⲟⲙⲧ	
Wednesday	ⲡⲓϣⲧⲟⲩ	
Thursday	ⲡⲓⲧⲓⲟⲩ	
Friday	ⲡⲓϥⲟⲟⲩ	ⲡⲓⲉⲗⲟⲟⲩ ⲏⲧⲉ ⲡⲓϥⲟⲃⲧⲓ (Coptic) ⲡⲁⲣⲁϥⲕⲉⲩⲏⲏ (Greek) (means the day of preparation.)
Saturday	ⲡⲓϣⲁⲩⲣⲥⲓ	ⲡⲓϥⲁⲃⲃⲁⲧⲟⲏ (in Hebrew means rest).

ΔΕΝ ΦΡΑΝ ἈΦΙΩΤ

In the Name of the Father

ΝΕΥ ΠΩΗΡΙ

and the Son

ΝΕΥ ΠΙΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ

and the Holy Spirit

ΟΥΝΟΥΤ ἸΟΥΩΤ ἈΜΗΝ

One God Amen



ΧΕ ΠΕΝΙΩΤ ΕΤΔΕΝ ΝΙΦΗΟΥΙ

Our Father who art in Heaven

ἈΡΙΤΕΝ ἸΕΥΠΥΑ ἸΧΟΣ ΔΕΝ ΟΥΨΕΠΔΜΟΤ

Make us worthy to say thankfully

ΧΕ ΠΕΝΙΩΤ ΕΤΔΕΝ ΝΙΦΗΟΥΙ

Our father who art in heaven

ΜΑΡΕΥΤΟΥΒΟ ἸΧΕ ΠΕΚΡΑΝ

Hallowed be Thy name

ΜΑΡΕΣΙ ἸΧΕ ΤΕΚΜΕΤΟΥΡΟ

Thy kingdom come

ΠΕΤΕΣΝΑΚ ΜΑΡΕΥΨΩΠΙ

Thy will be done

ἈΦΗΡΗΤ ΔΕΝ ΤΦΕ ΝΕΥ ΣΙΧΕΝ ΠΙΚΑΘΙ

On earth as it is in heaven

ΠΕΝΩΙΚ ἸΤΕ ΡΑΣΤ ΜΗΙΥ ΝΑΝ ἈΦΟΥΤ

Give us this day our daily bread

ΟΥΘ ΧΑ ΝΗΕΤΕΡΟΝ ΝΑΝ ἘΒΟΛ

And forgive us our trespasses

ἈΦΗΡΗΤ ΣΩΝ ἸΤΕΝΧΩ ἘΒΟΛ

As we forgive

ἸΝΗΕΤΕ ΟΥΘΝ ἸΤΑΝ ἘΡΩΟΥΤ

those who trespass against us

ΟΥΘ ἈΠΕΡΕΝΤΕΝ ἘΔΟΥΝ ἘΠΙΡΑΣΜΟΣ

And lead us not into temptation

ἈΛΛΑ ΝΑΘΜΕΝ ἘΒΟΛΘΑ ΠΙΠΕΤΘΟΥΤ

But deliver us from the evil one

ΔΕΝ ΠΙΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ἸΗΣΟΥΣ ΠΕΝΒΟΙΣ

In Christ Jesus our Lord

ΧΕ ΘΩΚ ΤΕ

For Thine is

ΤΜΕΤΟΥΡΟ ΝΕΥ ΤΧΟΜ ΝΕΥ ΠΙΩΟΥΤ

the kingdom, the power and the glory,

ΨΑ ἘΝΕΘ ἈΜΗΝ

forever, Amen

Hymns & Rituals



Hymn before the Catholic Epistle – ΔΠΕΤΧΗΚ ἔβωλ

Rites: This hymn is chanted in any liturgy before the Catholic Epistle is chanted. It is a beautiful hymn that meditates on the incarnation and crucifixion of God, the Logos (Word) of the Father. In the hymn, we pray for the blessings of the Holy Trinity, the blessings of the Theotokos, and the blessings of our fathers His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, His Grace Bishop Youssef, and any visiting Bishop. We pray that these blessings come upon the entire congregation. The hymn concludes by introducing the Chanted Catholic Epistle.

The blessings of our Patriarch. The blessings of our Patriarch: the honorable father, the archpriest Pope Abba Tawadros.	Ἐρε πῖςμον ἄπενπατριάρχης: Ἐρε πῖςμον ἄπενπατριάρχης: ἢιωτ ετταῖνοντ ἢαρχιέρερετ παπα αββα Ταωαδρος.
The blessings of our Bishop. The blessings of our Bishop: the honorable father Abba Youssef.	Ἐρε πῖςμον ἄπενἐπίσκοπος: Ἐρε πῖςμον ἄπενἐπίσκοπος: ἢιωτ ετταῖνοντ αββα Ιωσηφ.
Shall come upon this entire congregation. Amen. So be it.	Ἐνὲι ἐὲρην ἐχεν παιλαος τηρεφ: χε ἄμην εσεψωπι.
The Catholic Epistle... The Catholic Epistle...	Καθολικον: καθολικον.



His Holiness Pope Tawadros II



His Grace Bishop Youssef

Note

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

Note

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



Visit the St. Mark Festival's website at

www.smfsus.org

to find the material for the festival and for guidelines
and information on the tests