

## Church of the Martyrs

The Coptic Orthodox Church has been named the "Church of the Martyrs" because of the many who have died for their faith. During the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, there were over 1 million Christians killed for their faith. As commemoration, the Church decided to start its calendar in the year 284 A.D, the "Year of the Martyrs". Despite this persecution, the Coptic Church has only grown stronger with 10-15 million members in Egypt and over 500 parishes outside of Egypt .



St. Mark the Apostle

*We believe in One God, God the Father, the Pantocrator, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and all things seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten not created; of One Essence with the Father; by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became Man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; suffered and was buried; and on the third day He rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures; ascended to the heavens; He sits at the right hand of His Father; and He is coming again in His glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end. Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who, with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified; Who spoke by the prophets. And in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, we confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the coming age. Amen.*

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*"Blessed be Egypt my people"*  
Isaiah 19:25

*"In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt"*  
Isaiah 19:19

Brief Summary of the Coptic  
Orthodox Faith

## Our History

The Coptic Church is more than 19 centuries old. The word "Copt" is derived from the Greek word Aigyptos, meaning Egypt. Now we use the term Coptic to describe Egyptian Christians, the true descendants of the Ancient Egyptians. The Coptic Church is based on the teachings of St. Mark, the Apostle who first introduced Christianity to Egypt around 42 A.D and became its first patriarch.

## What do we believe?

The Coptic Church's beliefs are recited in the Nicene Creed. This creed serves as a statement of Faith and was created at the first Ecumenical Council in 325 A.D held in the city of Nicaea (modern day Turkey).

-see back for full creed -

## The Sacraments

The sacraments are holy mysteries by which we receive the grace and blessing of the Holy Spirit. God's invisible grace is received through visible, material signs. The Coptic Orthodox Church observes 7 holy sacraments: Baptism, Chrismation, Repentance and Confession, The Eucharist, Unction of the Sick, Matrimony, and the Priesthood.

## The Saints

Many saints are recognized within the Coptic Church. They are brothers and sisters in Christ who struggled in life, much like we do, and have departed to Paradise. Just as we pray for our brothers and sisters here on earth, the saints continually pray for our salvation and we venerate them. The icons of the saints appear on the icon-stand and church walls to show the love and respect we have for them. We do not idolize the saints but rather view them as manifestations of God's holiness through his people.

## Prayer

*Prayer is central to the Coptic Church. The Agpeya (meaning: Book of Hours) is the book we use to guide daily prayer. It is arranged in a way to commemorate different events in the life of Christ and the Church. Each hour of the book begins with the Lord's Prayer, The Prayer of Thanksgiving, and Psalm 50. Following the introduction are Psalms, an excerpt from the Gospel, and litanies. Further prayers vary based on the hour being prayed.*



## Fasting

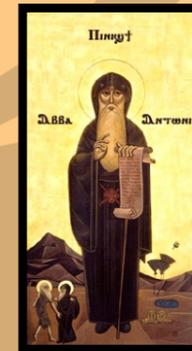
Fasting is one of the most important spiritual means in the Church. As a result, the Church fasts over 210 days of the year. Fasting consists of abstaining and a vegan diet. Why is fasting an important spiritual practice? The simple answer is self-control. As one abstains from eating animal foods, one learns the virtue of restraint. As one restrains their diet, they also restrain themselves from committing sins. While fasting, the spirit becomes stronger and our prayers and contemplations are also deeper.

## Priesthood

Priesthood in the Coptic Church is one of the 7 holy sacraments. A married man fit for priesthood is eligible for ordination. However, if a celibate priest is ordained, he cannot marry. Once ordained the priest has the responsibility of officiating the Sacraments and doctrines of the church. A Priest is responsible for compassionately caring for his congregation with tenderness and love and for humbly serving them as Jesus Christ did for his Apostles.

## Monasticism

St. Anthony of Egypt established monasticism and was the first to be called a monk. The movement quickly flourished and many Egyptian Christians devoted their lives to God by going to the desert to work and pray. For the monks, monasticism is the life of prayer, contemplation, solitude, worship and purity of heart. Their minds, hearts, and feelings are focused on serving God alone.



St. Anthony of Egypt

*For more information, please visit the diocese website at:  
[mvwcopts.ca](http://mvwcopts.ca)*