

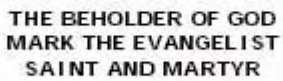


**THE SPRITUALITY
OF THE PRAISE**
According To The Rite Of
The Coptic Orthodox Church

H.G. Anba Mettaous



Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, King of Kings and
Lord of lords



THE BEHOLDER OF GOD
MARK THE EVANGELIST
SAINT AND MARTYR



*H.H. Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of
Alexandria and the See of St. Mark*



His Grace Bishop Daniel
Bishop of Sydney and Affiliated Regions



PREFACE

In The Name of The Father and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit, One God, Amen.

Praise is the work of angels who are always standing before the Throne of Grace praising God without tire or boredom, because it is their utmost pleasure, fullness and joy to praise their Creator.

Praise in the church is the highest level of prayers and talking to God. It is actual participation with the Heavenly hosts in praising God the Creator. St. Gregory the Theologian says in his wonderful Liturgy: “Who gave those on earth the praise of the Seraphim, accept our voices with the unseen, count us with the heavenly hosts...”

The Praise is the precious heritage of the fathers kept in our Holy Church, it satisfies our prayers in our soliloquy to God, it consists of praise, glorification, thanks, requests...etc.

The believer who learns the Praise, its awesome tunes and different ways, becomes a pillar in the church, and is



considered a talented servant carrying one of the dearest mysteries of the church. In addition, there are lots of doctrines, rites, and spiritual contemplations in the Praise.

In this book, I wanted to highlight the Rite of the Praise and its procedures, its contents concerning the Hauses, Psalys, Theotokayas and how they include Orthodox fatherly teachings, theological expressions, beliefs, doctrines and rites.

I included some detailed explanations and meditations for the Midnight Praise, The First Haus, which is the Praise of Victory after the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, also a detailed interpreting for the Second Haus, which is Psalm 135, full of thanksgiving to the Gracious Lord. Then the Third Haus, which is the Praise of The Three Young Saints in the furnace.

In the Praise for the Saints, I mentioned the story of their lives briefly in order to know a bit about everyone of them, because we benefit a lot from their lives and faith.

The blood of the martyrs is considered the seeds sown for the church, also the struggle, devoutness, sweat and tears



of the saints are the water which watered the tree, i.e. the church, and makes it flourish, blossom and gives fruits.

Then we talked briefly about the Doxologies, which are praises of the Saints, said after their lives...

After, comes the Fourth Haus, which is the three last Psalms.

Finally we mentioned:

1. A general idea about the Epsalys
2. The arrangement of the praise in each occasion in the Coptic Church according to the Coptic year
3. The Seven Theotokias used in the Praise
4. The strong relationship between St. Mary, the Mother of God and the Fathers and Prophets of the Old Testament mentioned in the 8th part of the blessed Sunday Theotokeya (a research not dealt with by anyone before.)
5. The spiritual and theological explanation of The Lobsh
6. An explanation of the Defnar or expositions
7. Finally a brief article about ending the praise and starting the Matin Incense.



We ask our Good Lord, to Whom we offer our praise and glorification, to make this book a means of blessing and development in the life of praise of whoever reads it, and a means of spiritual revival to the Rite of Praise in our Coptic Orthodox Church, which is guided by The Holy Spirit, through the prayers of H. H. Pope Shenouda III. Glory and Praise be to God Forever in His Holy Church, Amen.

Anba Mettaous
1980



SECTION ONE

CHAPTER ONE

The Praise: A word said about a group of praises preceding raising the Vesper and Matin Incense

Psalmody: Is the book containing the prayers of the Praise and it is divided into: an annual Psalmody and the Kiahk Psalmody

Haus: A Coptic word meaning praise

Epsaly: A Greek word meaning chanting

Theotakia: A Greek word meaning glorification (to the Mother of God)

Lobsh: A Greek word meaning explanation

Doxology: A Greek word meaning glorification by words

Defnar: A Greek word meaning a brief history

Adaam: A tune especially for Sunday, Monday and Tuesday praise

Watos: A tune especially for Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday praises

The main two tunes in the Coptic Church music are the Adaam and Watos taken from the first words in the Monday and Thursday praise.



Praise Is A Part of The Church

As the church is considered the Living Body of Jesus Christ, praise is one of its functions, as a witness of the continuous Resurrection, it is living in Christ's Mystery. Praise in itself is a kind of transfiguration by which the church expresses its salvation, gained by the hope in fulfilling every righteousness. Thus praise is known as sharing the unseen hosts and the victorious church in heaven, as a practice to the everlasting Kingdom of God. Praise started in the Church since the first day the believers gathered together. The Book of Acts explains the daily life in the church *"So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."* (Acts 2:46,47)

Relation Between The Praise and The Holy Liturgy

The Coptic Orthodox Church cares a lot about the prayers and praises in the Liturgy. It specified long hours day and night, as they are considered the entrance to service and accepting the mysteries, as well as deserving the grace flowing from those praises.

Or as some say, the praise is preparing for the entry of Christ the King to the church. This preparation starts from the previous night for the Liturgy in the Vesper



prayers, then the Midnight Prayer and its praises, then the Matin prayer and its praises.

The Church is teaching us how to prepare ourselves from inside also to receive Christ The King. A soul who does not practice prayers, pleadings and thanksgiving in submission and obedience, is not worthy of the powerful grace gained from the Sacraments.

The elderly fathers considered the prayers of Vesper the Praise. Watching in vigil and praying is the race, while partaking of the Holy Communion is the prize and reward.

The experience believers say, that the person who comes to church at midnight, attends the Midnight Prayer, the Praise, the Holy Liturgy and finally partakes of the Holy Communion, feels a blessing and grace a lot more than the person who comes during the Liturgy and partakes of the Mysteries. In fact, every prayer, praise or struggle in repentance offered to God is because of His Great mercy and grace, which is a fruit of the Mysteries that sanctifies our bodies, souls and hearts. This is enough to protect us from any self-righteousness.



The Praise as a Divine Sacrifice

We need to know that praising is a mere angelic service, which makes us equal to angels concerning honour. It is a total heavenly work, which we read about in Revelation, either regarding the angels; the four incorporeal creatures; the twenty-four priests; the hundred and forty-four thousands or the thousands and myriads who were saved through the Blood of the Lamb. They either praise with thanksgiving songs or the golden violins.

Here we notice that praising is a community with the heavenly spirits, in which we acknowledge standing before God and entering into His presence, where a human being starts accepting God's mercy, compassion and love. Feeling all this grace during praising, a person cannot do anything except raising their heart and mind as a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."
(Rom. 12:1)*

Praise opens the closed doors before the soul to receive God's gifts, which infuriates the love inside the heart, and consequently worshipping God totally without any hindrances. Thus, praising is a means of offering living sacrifices in the New Testament, to Him who offered Himself an accepted sacrifice on the Cross to God the Father.



If praising in church is practiced as a Divine service and prayer, where the work of the Holy Spirit is obviously seen, thus it is considered a divine sacrifice offered by the Spirit, and so, we have to be very accurate and pay special attention to this service. *“Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”* (Ps. 141:2)

The Intercession of Jesus Adds Value to our Sacrifice

A person's natural feeling always yearns to God and to the utmost perfection; he can never find rest in just prayers and asking things of God. In order to find rest we should give, and we cannot feel that we are giving something adequate to God except by giving ourselves. *“Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.’”* (Heb. 10:5)

Prayers and praising were made by God- through Jesus Christ- an open gate for us to complete our love to God, which we previously lost. *“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”* (Heb. 13:15)

Securing the Sacrifice of Praising Against Obliquity



There is a great danger that praising might become just a dry, daily routine, going off the track rather than giving one's self as a sacrifice. So, we should always put in mind while praying or praising, that a condition of accepting our prayers is to be faithful to God's will "*In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, behold I have come in the volume of the book it is written of Me to do Your will, O God.*" (Heb. 10:6,7), and "*By that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*" (Heb. 10:10), i.e. Christ kept following God's will till the Cross where He sacrificed His Body. We are sanctified, if we keep hold of offering our bodies a Holy living sacrifice to God, through our mindly worship, i.e. our prayers and praise. Thus there is a strong relationship between offering our bodies as a sacrifice of praise and keeping strong hold of the sacrifice of Christ. This relationship outlines our worship and submits it to God's will.

The only honour which befits God is not in burning sacrifice, but by offering thanksgiving to Him through hymns and praises, because He created us.

St. Yustinus The Martyr

Settling of the Soul as a result of Continuous Worship and Praise

When one happily gets used to continuous prayers and praising, this gives the soul a chance to have rest in God as its Only Share.



It is not the glittering words, understanding, or deep theological parts that lifts the soul to God, but it is getting used to prayers and praises, no matter how simple it is. A person should not only raise their mind and meditate in God, but also must find rest in prayers, praises, reciting... because this is what lasts with a person at all times.

If a soul reaches the state of rest in prayers and praises, meditation on the first word in a prayer or praise can easily lead to God. This is not gained at an early stage in spirituality, but comes by continuous prayers and praise in joy, preferring them rather than any other vain concerns. The repetition of prayers is useless if the mind is too busy with worldly matters. The soul will never find rest in God unless the mind is far from the temptations and hopes of the world. On the other hand, caring for prayers and praises without happiness and real communication with God creates self-righteousness, and that is a sin resulting from repeating the rites, as a means of making the person happy, but not God.

If we only care for the rite, ignoring the Divine Mystery in it, thus it loses its meaning and power. A person who prays or praises should remember the situation on which this part was said, and God's response to it.

For example, when praying the First Haus, we remember the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, the split of the Red Sea through an incredible Divine power. (Ex 14:28). In the Third Haus, we remember and imagine the Three Young Saints in the furnace, walking



as if in a garden, praising God with this song, calling everyone to join them. We also remember the Fourth companion who was walking with them...

We should connect between these praises and situations in our lives where we need comfort and joy, so as soon as we hear these praises, we can rest and be happy.

Humble and Contrite Prayers and Praises Are Accepted by God

God has declared so many times that He does not accept any prayer, fasting or sacrifice unless it is according to His Commandments, in contrition and submission. Thus, He refused such sacrifices “*‘And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart.’*” (Jer. 7:31).

❖ Important Conditions for an Acceptable Prayer:

1. Total faith in God, He gives us what we ask. “*Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*” (Mark 11:24)
2. Forgiving others so that we deserve the forgiveness of our sins and the acceptance of our prayers. “*And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive,*



neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25,26).

That means that we have to obey God’s commandments practically, from all the heart, thus our worship, prayers and sacrifices will be accepted. Samuel the Prophet says: *“Then Samuel said: ‘Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.’” (1Sam. 15:22,23).*

So, the essence of worship is in following God’s commandments, and the essence of the rites is in following God’s preparation to the matters related to His worship.

That means, fulfilling the rites in itself is nothing, unless it is out of obeying God in humbleness. According to some scientists and philosophers, sometimes God’s commandments look trifle and simple. They believe that each person can set his/her own rules and practices much better than God’s. But in fact it is the obedience, love and faithfulness to God from all the heart which gets us closer to God, it raises up our hearts and spirits beyond the bodily and mental level.

Through this attitude, we can see that salvation and eternal life open before every human being, the strong, the weak, the simple, the intelligent, the youth, the



elder... Each one according to their abilities to complete the commandments of God. The crown is not according to the struggle, but according to the obedience in the struggle, the simple faith in God's Righteousness and Goodness.

The weak ones might get their crowns quicker than the strong ones, the same with the simple ones and the wise well educated ones.

A clear example of this set by our Lord Jesus, is the parable of the labourers whom the landowner had hired for his vineyard, in different hours, then all of them received the same wages at the end of the day. Our Lord Jesus justified this deed by saying "... *because I am good.*" From the beginning, God is making salvation easy to people because of His Goodness, had it not been for man's stubbornness and self-righteousness.

Listen to what God says through Moses the Prophet "*For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it or do it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.*" (Deut. 30:11-14). St. Paul also comments on the verse saying "(Now this, 'He ascended'-what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?)" (Eph. 4:9). So, God never left us to struggle to salvation, but



He came and descended to us, and for us to accept Him.
“*Thy Kingdom come.*”

It is only our obedience that makes us love God’s commandments and follow them “...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” (Eph. 2:6), “...but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness..... For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” (Rom. 9:31, 10:3).

The power of sanctifying and purifying is not in the Old Testament sacrifices, on the prayers of the Body and Blood of the Liturgy now, but it is in Christ, whom the Old Testament sacrifices resembled and Christ who turns the bread into Holy Body and the wine into Honored Blood.?(confussing) Then He Himself sanctifies and purifies all those who partake of them. That is why we read that all the sacrifices that Eli the priest offered after his sons sinned were useless “And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.” (1Sam. 3:14).

The Apostle also warns us that the Holy Communion not only it doesn’t sanctify those who do not deserve it, but also, “Therefore whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the



cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep." (1Cor. 11:27-30).

The Effect of The Prayers and Praises on Human Beings

It is clear that prayers and praises are the work of the Holy Spirit within ourselves, and in practicing them we are having community with the Holy Spirit. Thus prayers and praises make us enter the orbit of those in the Spirit without too much trouble, they can change our worldly appearance into another one, beloved by God, and also by people. The assembly of people inside the church opens our eyes to our heavenly dwelling.



Prayers and Praises and the Spirit of Community

Prayers and Praises which are carried inside the church are actually a means of community, activated by the Holy Spirit, making all the members of the church one body. This is a very old tradition in our church. We read about the early fathers in the 3rd and 4th century who used to live in solitude, and used to come to church every Saturday and Sunday to spend the night in praises and prayers, ending with the Holy Liturgy.

If solitude lasts for a long time, it becomes dangerous. Attending praises and prayers with the rest of the monks would distract the soul from any egoism or unhealthy solitude.

The church is not only satisfied by the presence of the believers in praises and prayers, but it also insists on the presence of the saints who departed and the holy angels. That is why the church specialised some parts in praises for them, with glorification and pleadings in every occasion.

The pictures of the saints decorating the Icon holder and facing the believers, assure their presence and community with us in the church.

“I will praise You with my whole heart; Before the gods I will sing praises to You.” (Ps. 138:1)

“Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His might firmament!” (Ps. 150:1)



*“Kings’ daughters are among Your honorable women; At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.”
(Ps. 45:9)*

“I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.” (Ps. 22:22)

Praise is a Community with the Heavenly Chorus

Participating in praises at the church, or even listening, is considered a community with the chorus of those who are living and those who have departed. Thus, in the Fourth Haus we pray *“Praise God in all His Saints,”* because every service offered by a person in the church is “in the saints.”

We are praising according to what those saints handled us concerning their words, faith, tradition....etc.

He Who Gave Those on Earth The Praise of The Seraphim

The Seraphim are the highest rank of angels. Seraphim means “the inflamed,” because they are inflamed with God’s love and warmth in His worship, praise and service.

Isaiah the Prophet mentioned this rank in his vision in Chapter Six. He heard them singing their everlasting hymn *“And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy,*



holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!’” (Is. 6:3).

In the wonderful Liturgy of St. Gregory the Theologian he says: *“Who gave those on earth the praise of the Seraphim, accept our voices with the unseen, count us with the heavenly hosts...”*

Here on earth, we use the same praise as that in the heavens (Holy, Holy, Holy...), and this is originally the Seraphim’s praise which Isaiah the Prophet heard them singing, while surrounding the Awesome Divine Throne...

St. John also mentions in Revelation, that he saw the heavenly hosts praising before God’s Throne:

1. *“The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!’” (Rev. 4:8)*
2. *“ And by Your will they exist and were created.” (Rev. 4:11)*
3. *“...You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things saying with a loud voice: ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!’” (Rev. 5:12)*
4. *“And every creature which is in heaven or on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the*



sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: 'Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!' (Rev. 5:13)

(From these last two praises the church formed its praise during Pascha week: *"To You is the power and glory and blessings and honour forever Amen, Emmanuel our God and our King..."*)

5. *"...and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' (Rev. 7:10)*
6. *"...saying: 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.'" (Rev. 7:12)*
7. *"Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" (Rev. 11:15)*
8. *"And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshipped God," (Rev. 11:16)*
9. *"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down." (Rev. 12:10)*
10. *"...saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgement has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.'" (Rev. 14:7)*



11. *“They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!’” (Rev. 15:3)*
12. *“And I heard the angel of the waters saying: ‘You are righteous, O Lord, The One Who is and Who Was and Who is to be, because You have judged these things.’” (Rev. 16:5)*
13. *“After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord Our God!’” (Rev. 19:1)*
14. *“And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, ‘Amen! Alleluia!’” (Rev. 19:4)*
15. *“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!’” (Rev. 19:6)*

It is clear that the church uses many of these praises in its different prayers as in the Agpia, the Liturgy, and many other prayers.

Throughout the ages, the Saints resembled the heavenly hosts in their praises and continuous mention of God. David the sweet chanter of Israel says: *“Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous judgements.” (Ps.119:164), “I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.” (Ps 69:30).* In his time there were 4,000



singers praising the Lord with different instruments specialised for praising (1Chronicals 23:5). The priests were divided into 24 groups to organise the service of praise, offering incense, morning and evening sacrifices...

In the New Testament, from a very early stage the church cared about praise offered as an accepted sacrifice pleasing the Lord, so we read in Acts “...praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47).

The Praise is Extracted from Theological Doctrine

All the praises and hymns in our church contain theological and dogmatic beliefs, as an example:

- ❖ ***From Sunday Theotokeya: He is One of Two. Holy and Divine without Corruption. Equal to the Father. A Pure Human born without marriage. Equal to us according to the preparation.***
- ❖ ***From Thursday Theotokeya: While He is still God, He became The Son of Man. But He is the True God, came and saved us.***
- ❖ ***From Friday Theotokeya: He took what is ours (the body) and gave what is His (becoming His children). We praise and glorify Him and Exhault Him.***



They all express our thoughts and beliefs about God's Nature, as a clear witness expressed in words, tunes and spirit.

The Christian hymns and praises have a great effect on the soul because they all deal with God's mercy and strong love, seen in the person of Jesus Christ His Son, who was slaughtered on the Cross for the sake of the sinners and outcasts.

Praise in our church is also considered a response to God's work and love *"What shall I render to the Lord For all His benefits towards me? I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people."* (Ps. 116:12-14)

But, what really makes praising in the church warm and infuriated with the Spirit, is the unseen presence of Christ amidst the chanters, and this presence is declared clearly afterwards in the Mystery of Holy Communion. The prayers and praises preceding the Eucharist are very important in blazing the heart and Spirit, getting ready to receive the groom Who will enter the soul through the Holy Communion.

- ❖ In the Praise, Christ comes and attends amidst the church blazing the heart with love.
- ❖ Through the Holy Communion He enters every blazed heart.
- ❖ In the Praise, we confess, openly, our love.



And in the Holy Communion God declares openly His love... as a Sacrifice, but God still is Superior in His Love.

The Value of The Praise Which is Extracted From Theological and Doctrine Facts

The praise is so rich and full of mysteries concerning the Birth of Jesus, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, Christ's life and miracles, the Holy Trinity, the descent of the Pentecost... etc.

When these meanings were tuned, it raised its spiritual level higher. The tunes in our church became as wings carrying the spirit above the whole creation, having a glimpse of the mysteries of eternity, thus our minds may reach the undefiled prayers...

Throughout the whole year, we pray and praise for every occasion, thus, it is not just chronicles commemoration of different incidents, but here earthly meets the heavenly.

- ❖ [Praying with the psalms is a remedy for the soul] St. Asanasious the Apostolic.
- ❖ [it is wonderful for human beings who are on earth to follow the angels, praising and chanting, so the day starts with glorifying and honoring the Great Creator through hymns and tunes.] St. Basil the Great.

Worship in the church is not how much we care about occasion, but how much we glorify and honor them.



Actually, the church us celebrating the presence of God in the occasion.

Rules for attending the Praise

Everyone who participates in worship inside the church should consider himself a place for God's dwelling, and the declaration of His Will according to the Holy Spirit, which descends upon this person. *"And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you is the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them And walk among them, I will be their God. And they shall be My people.'"* (2Cor. 6:16).

"A man of prayers should always watch for God's presence in all the gates and doors of senses." St. Makarios, Sermon No.33.

So, as long as we believe that Jesus Christ is dwelling in us, according to the promise, and that the Holy Spirit descends and sanctifies us, thus you should be humble and contrite, because

"For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." (Ps. 84:11);

"O, do not let the oppressed return ashamed! Let the poor and needy praise Your name." (Ps. 74:21)

"You who feared the Lord, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He



hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.” (Ps 22:23,24)

During the Praise, there should be no talking or unnecessary movements. Those who are chanting are doing the same job as the angels...

David the Prophet knew this fact perfectly well, he says out of his personal experience “*I will praise you with my whole heart; Before the **Gods (angels)** I will sing praises to You.*” (Ps. 138:1).

See the greatness of praising! We are chanting the hymn or tune before God!

David the Psalmist warns us “*Serve the Lord with fear; And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.*” (Ps. 2:11,12).

The Deskeleya (The Teachings of the Apostles) warns the Bishop while praying the Praise, [You Bishop, if you are praising and a noble man enters the church, keep praying or even listening, do not call this man to come to the front seat, but rather, be calm and steady.]

(Deskoleya Chapter 10)



Ways For Chanting the Praise

1) Quadratic Method (Antiphona)

That is when the chanters sit on both sides responding to each other with parts of chanting. This method was used since the days of Ezra and Nehemiah the Prophets:

“Then the priests and Levites purified themselves , and purified the people, the gates, and the walls. So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. One went to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuse Gate. After them went Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah, and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, and some of the priests’ sons with trumpets- Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son os Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, and the brethren, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanai with the musical instruments of David the man of God. Ezra the scribe went before them. By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the City of David, on the stairway of the wall, beyond the house of David, as far as the Water Gate eastward. The other thanksgiving choir went the opposite way , and I was behind them with half of the people on the wall, going past the Tower of the Ovens as far as the Broad



Wall, and above the Gate of Ephraim, above the Old Gate, above the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and they were stopped by the Gate of the Prison. So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me.” (Neh. 12:30-40).

This method is the same method that Isaiah the Prophet saw and heard the heavenly chorus using: *“Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!’” (Is. 6:2,3).* Also in (Rev. 7: 10-12).

In the contemplating wonderful Liturgy of St Gregory he says: *“You are Whom around You stand the Cherubim and the Seraphim, each has six wings: they cover their faces with two, they cover their legs with two and they fly with two, **crying to one another**, sending the praise of Victory and Salvation crying out and saying ‘Holy, holy, holy...’”*

According to history, this way was used by the Jewish who were baptised and became Christians when they came to Alexandria.

A condition of this way is that the higher in rank or eldest in monasticism should stand at the northern chorus, also he is the one that should start the tune.



2) Solo Method: Leadership (Tractus)

This is when one person only chants, (in the old days it had to be the priest), while the rest listen only and do not share in chanting.

3) Chorus Method

This is when the chanter starts a quarter of the hymn and the congregation finishes it and so on:

- a) Usually, the congregation's response is the same eg. the response of the Second Haus, or the response of Saturday and Sunday Epsaly "*O My Lord Jesus Christ...*"
- b) Or, the response might differ a little bit eg. the Third Haus has 2 different responses
- c) Or, the response might be one word only as in the Big Haus.

4) The Whole Church Chanting Method

Where everyone chants and only the leader deacon might play the cymbals to tune the praise process.

Every Haus has its fixed tune to end with and it is no ones choice to choose how to end it.



THE COPTIC TUNES

You would be amazed to know that the Coptic hymns started with the early church, at the time of St. Mark in Alexandria. They were composed at the best flourishing eras of our church, the First Apostolic era, where the gifts were poured without limits.

Those tunes were handed to us exactly as they were first composed, and that is because of the accuracy and the honesty of handling from generation to generation.

Thus, the tune is an important factor for uniting the church, becoming one body. The aim of tunes is to activate the congregation and infuriate their love to Jesus Christ their Saviour. It also has a great effect on soothing hearts and re-directing bad thoughts and intentions, thus, we come out of the church comforted and full of peace.

The Tunes of The Praise

The praise is full of wonderful spiritual tunes:

1. Ni Ethnos Tiro (NεθNoc THποΥ)

Said at the Vespers after the Psalms and before starting the Vespers Prayers, it is followed by the 4th Haus.

2. The Big Allali Tune

Said before the Big Haus in the month of Kiahk, Christmas, Epiphany and Resurrection

3. Hoas Epshois Tune

Is the first quarter of the Big Haus in Kiahk and the Holy Lent

4. Ten Theno Tune

Is the first quarter of “Ten Theno” tune in the Midnight Praise

5. Khen O Osht Tune

Is the first 2 quarters of the 1st Haus explanation, then the rest of the explanation is read (with no tune)

6. Maun O Ona Evol Tune

Is the 2 first quarters of the 1st Haus explanation

7. Ezmo Epshois Tune

Is the second last quarter and part of the last quarter of the 3rd Haus

8. Hos Erof Ari Hotshasf Tune

Is the last part of the last quarter of the 3rd Haus, and some chanters divide it into 2 tunes

9. Tenin Tune

Is a Greek hymn for the Three Young Saints said at Kiahk and Epocalypses (Easter Saturday Vigil Night)

10. Ten Oweh Ensok Tune

Is the tune for the Third Haus explanation, it differs according to the occasion (annual, Kiahk, Fasting, Palm Sunday, Joy).



6. **Marin O Ona Evol Tune:**

It is the two first quarters of the first Haus Cantic explanation

7. **Alleluia Vai Pepi or Ova Penoti Pi Tune:**

It is a wonderful hymn for the last quarter of the fourth Haus Cantic.

8. **Loypon Tune:**

It is the introduction of the Adam Theotokia, for Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, it is like Ten Ou Osht tune with a slight difference, containing four quarters.

9. **Sherene Maria Tune:**

It is the first two quarters of the seventh Part (A) of Sunday Theotokia, and the other quarters are chanted in a detailed tune.

10. **Simoty tune:**

It is the first four quarters of the seventh part (B) of Sunday Theotokia.

11. **Tioy Ethikanos Tune:**

It is the first quarter of the tenth part of Sunday Theotokia, followed by the next quarter in a shorter tune.

12. **Efeen Piarsh Ereus Tune:**

It is the thirteenth and fourteenth quarters of the fifteenth part of Sunday Theotokia.



13. Evsholeem Tune:

It is the fifteenth and sixteenth quarters of the fifteenth part of Sunday Theotokia.

14. Evol He Ien Tune:

It is the seventeenth and eighteenth quarters of the fifteenth part of Sunday Theotokia.

15. Ariteen thonti Tune:

It is the first quarter of the eighth part of the Sunday Theotokia.

16. Ti Galileeya Tune:

It is the first quarter of the seventh part of Wednesday Theotokia.

It has the same tune of Ariteen Thonti, and is said during the month of Kiahk.

17. Shere Thi Themeya Enehmot Tune:

It is the tune of the explanation of Saturday. The first and second quarters of the first Sheres are said in tune, and the rest in compact. It differs according to the occasion (yearly, Kiahk, fasting, Palm Sunday, Joy).

18. The tune for the introduction of the Tark (Exposition):

It is said as an introduction to the Tark (exposition) in Vespers of Kiahk and the Holy Lent.

19. The tune for the introduction of the Defnar:



It differs according to the days of Watos and Adam.

20. **Av Eranav Tune:**

It says: Glory and Praise to our God – Praise the Lord our God because He is worthy of Praise.

It is said as a response between the quarters of the final part of the fourth Haus Canticle (Ps. 150) only in the month of Kiahk.





The Deep Spiritual Meanings of The Daily Praise

The church starts its daily worship at midnight, to highlight the importance of its faith in the Second Coming of the Lord, “*And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him’*”. (Matt. 25:6)

Thus, the church wants to be ready, watching and waiting for this hour.

Procedures of the Midnight Prayer Service:

❖ The **First Service** of the Midnight Prayer talks about the ten wise virgin, whose watching is crowned with hope.

❖ The **Second Service** is about the sinful woman, whom the Lord has forgiven her many sins, according to her great love declared to Him. Here, we truly meet the Lord and disclose our sins, announcing our love in praise and thanksgiving, as a means of kissing the Lord’s feet, in tears, sighs and metanias; in order to hear the happy voice saying “Your faith has saved you”.

❖ Finally, the **Third Service** which is about “the little flock” whom the Lord promises to grant the kingdom of Heaven, so we don not have to fear anything. Here, the church lives in peace and comfort, according to God’s promise.

Then the Third Service is ended by “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your



word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation”. Here, the church expresses the state of transfiguration, as if already taken to the kingdom and is in the presence of God.

The order of the Midnight Praise:

1. Ten thenov
2. The Resurrection Praise: Tinao
3. The First Haus Canticle, then its explanation.
4. The weekdays (except Sunday), the 7th, 8th and 9th parts of Sunday Tethekaya are said after, “Lord, now, You are letting Your servant depart in peace”. On Sunday, the second Haus Canticle is said straight after the First, because these parts for St. Mary’s Praise will be said in its usual turn in Sunday Tethekeya.
5. The Second Haus Canticle, then its explanation.
6. The Third Haus Canticle.
7. Watos Epsaly of the Three Young Saints. “Aripsalin”, then the Third Haus Canticle explanation.
8. The Commemoration: St. Mary, the Angels, the Apostles, the Martyrs and the Saints.
9. The Doxologies: after the commemoration and with the same tune.
10. The Fourth Haus Canticle.
11. The Epsaly of the day or the feast.
12. The Tethekeya of the day.
13. The Lobsh (Explanation) or Sheres in Saturday.
14. Conclusion of Tezakeya (Adaam or Watos according to the day).
15. The Dephnar.
16. The Creed.
17. Lord Have Mercy.
18. The priest concludes by reading the Midnight Absolution.



CHAPTER TWO

Arise, O Children of Light

After concluding the Midnight Prayer with its three services, the choir starts chanting the wonderful long tune:

❖ **Arise, O Children of Light, Praise the Lord of Hosts:**

As if the Lord has appeared and the children of light are getting ready to meet Him with their lanterns lit with chanting and praising.

The Children of Light are the children of God because:
“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declared to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” (1 John 1:5), the Psalmist also says about Him *“who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.” (Ps. 104:2)* Our Lord and God Jesus Christ says about Himself *“Then Jesus spoke to them again saying ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’ (John 8:12)* This Divine Light, who is Jesus Christ, is addressing the disciples saying *“Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’, so now I say to you” (John 13:33).* St. Paul explains this saying *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit*

of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'. The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together". (Rom. 8:14-17)

I wish we would know how precious we are, with the honour of being God's children, so that we might praise Him with the intimacy of sonship and love of children to their Father. Let us not mingle with the evil ones, sharing their life of amusement and lust, because "***Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever***". (2 Cor. 6:14-15)

Then what is the duty of the children of Light?

To raise from the slumber of laziness to praise their Father, the Lord of Hosts, to share the heavenly choir in praising the Creator for His gifts and blessings, as the Psalmist says: "***Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God: for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful***". (Ps. 147:1)

The Psalms are full of this advise to praise, bless,..etc. and there are some Psalms which are totally about praise such as Ps. 65, 103, 104, 105, 135, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150.

❖ The Lord of Hosts:

He is the Only Strong, the Lord of Hosts, either in heaven or on earth, the Almighty. The word Lord of Hosts has many meanings:

1. **The Angels:** as mentioned: *“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits” (Ps. 103:2)*

2. **The Grace:** as St. Paul says: *“And He said to me ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”.*

(2 Cor. 12:9) Here, the Lord of Hosts means the Lord of every grace, because any grace is proceeding from Him, as St. John says *“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16)*, also *“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”.* *(John 1:17)*

3. **The Rulers and Governors on earth:** In Hebrew the Lord of Hosts is translated the Lord of all soldiers and officers. Our Master Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord of Hosts because every power or authority in this world is subdued to Him, *“I will declare the decree; The Lord has said to Me ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.” (Ps. 2:7-8)* Also, *“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and on earth is Yours;*



Your is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honour come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. (1 Chronicles 29:11-12) He is the Lord of Hosts because He is the Absolute Ruler over all the unlimited hosts of angels. He is also the Ruler of the whole creation as it worships and serves Him, such as the fire, frost, wind, snow ... etc. and all other elements and creatures.

❖ **May He bestow upon us the salvation of our souls:**

This is the simple important fact of worship and praise, that when we praise the Lord with a pure heart, in warmth and love, He will have mercy on us and forgive our sins.

Praise and being in the presence of God gives the soul a kind of contrition and repentance, so we cry out with Isaiah the Prophet ***“Then I said: ‘woe to me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.’”*** (Is. 6:5)

For this humble confession and repentance, we deserve ***“Then one of the Seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.’”*** (Is. 6:6-7) This



concerns the sins already committed, as for the present and the future, the continuous praise and presence with God restores us from sin, as well as giving us a sensitive conscious, which pushes us to repentance and confession as soon as we sin.

Such a person who struggles in purity and repentance deserves God's salvation and his/her name will be written in The Book of Eternal Life.

❖ When we stand up bodily before you, take away from us the sleep of carelessness:

The Children of Light are pleading to God to give them an enlightened mind, concentrating in prayers and praises, and to take away the sleep of carelessness, which is being lenient and lazy in prayers. The devils always tempt those praying and praising at Midnight, feeling that they are so tired and exhausted, preventing them from going to the church of the Monastery and attending the Midnight Prayer and Praise.

One of the fathers said: [If the bell rings for the Midnight Prayers and you still feel asleep, repeat this short prayer "Holy, Holy before the devil gets authority totally", asking the Holy One to help you in resisting the devil.

❖ Give us alertness so we may learn how to stand before You at the time of prayer:

It is nearly the same as the previous pleading, asking the Lord to give us alertness, intellectual enlightenment and



spiritual vigil in our praise, so that we might stand before God properly, feeling the presence of the Lord of Hosts, lest we should annoy Him instead of pleasing him. Also, taking care lest the devil might kidnap the words of praise from our mouths, encouraging us to pray in leniency and laziness, thus the result would be a curse, not a blessing as the Prophet says, ***“Cursed is he who does the work of God deceitfully”*** (Jer. 48:10)

Standing for prayer, not only needs the alertness of the body, but also the spiritual alertness, understanding the meanings of the words and meditating in them, not allowing the mind to be reckless in worldly matters. St. Paul the Apostle himself is pleading God to give his children this alertness. ***“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”*** (Col. 1:9,10)

The Lord Himself also urges us to comprehend ***“whoever reads, let him understand”***. (Matt. 24:15) He also rebukes those who do not want to understand His words in which are Spirit and Life, ***“Why do you not understand my speech?”*** (John 8:43), then, Jesus Himself also answers the question ***“Because you are not able to listen to my word”*** (John 8:43). That means, whoever is not intending to listen and understand and open his/her heart to the words of prayers and praise, will



never benefit from anything, even if he/she reads from evening till the next day.

❖ **And send up to You appropriate glorification to gain forgiveness for our sins:**

The highest level of prayers is that of glorifying and praising God. It is an actual participation with the Heavenly God and the Heavenly hosts in glorifying the Creator, other than the prayers when we ask something of God, either for us or for the others.

The heavenly hosts do not have personal things to ask the Lord for, so, all their prayers are praising and glorifying “Holy, Holy, Holy... Glory to God in the highest...”

As long as we are in the presence of God, we have to glorify our Creator and Lord in alertness, so that He might accept our prayers, and then we can say “and gain forgiveness of our sins”.

❖ **Glory be to You O Lover of Mankind:**

“For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16), out of this pouring love of Jesus’ heart, He “but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of man” (Phil. 2:7). Sometimes, He used to talk about His Glory and Divinity, which was a stumble to the Jews, so, once they wanted to stone Him saying, “The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good



work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, make Yourself God” (John 10:33), considering Him blaspheming.

As a sign of his Humble Divine Love to mankind His kindness towards the rejected ones, He gathered, talked, and ate with them, thus he was called *“a friend of tax-collectors and sinners” (Luke 7:34)*

While the Jews considered this an accusation to The Master, we consider it great mercy and kindness of The Master Who came to save what was destroyed.

The greatest sign of the Divine Love was declared on the cross, *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13)*, and because of this great sacrificing love, we glorify Him saying: **[Glory be to You O Lover of mankind].**

O Lords, the Jews rejected You, they despised You because You despised their glory saying, *“I do not receive honour from men” (John 5:41).*

You did not accept their glorification as a King on earth, you refused the worldly glory *“Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by himself alone” (John 6:15)*, because the Father in Heaven is glorifying You *“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was.” (John 17:5)*, and you heard this openly from the Father *“Then a voice*



came from heaven, saying, ‘I have both glorified it and will glorify it again’ (John 12:28).

We are not introducing something new when we glorify You, because You are glorified since the beginning of the world. Even when You ***“but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7)***, You were glorified in different occasions e.g.: at Your Birth, ***“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’” (Luke 2:13-14)***, in Your flight to Egypt, the idols collapsed, Your Epiphany and Transfiguration are miracles, and in Your Resurrection dashing death. When we glorify You, the mention of Your Great Holy Name sanctifies our mouths.

This response is repeated many times, and every time we say it, we should remember Your glory revealed in all the occasions mentioned before and others, thus ***“What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding” (1Cor. 14:15).***

❖ **Come, praise the Lord, all his servants, all who serve in His Temple at night:**

This is Psalm 134, and the true servants of the Lord are those who worship Him in upright faith, good deeds and pure heart. They stand in the house of God with respect,



asking the forgiveness of their sins, then [Lift up your hands in the Sanctuary and bless the Lord]. “At night” could be literally considered because we are praying at Midnight, and it can also mean during hardships and afflictions. They lift up their hands saying: You are blessed, O Lord, in joy and grief, health and illness, richness and poverty, rest and weary, repeating with Job the Righteous *“And he said: ‘Naked I came for my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord’”.* (Job 1:21)

❖ **The Lord Who made heaven and earth bless you from Zion:**

Zion means bright, it symbolizes heaven where the Lord ascended and sat on the Right of Glory. He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, He is God, and is ready to give His blessings to whoever worships Him with all his/her heart, in Spirit and truth.

❖ **Let my supplication draw near You, O Lord, give me understanding according to Your wisdom. Let my request reach Your presence, O Lord. Give me life through Your Word:** (last part of Ps. 119)

There is no use of prayers and pleadings unless they reach God’s presence! Consequently, our prayers should meet the conditions, which make any prayer reach God, as the total faith in God’s presence, He can grant us more than we ask.



We should also pray after forgiving anyone who did evil to us, so that the Lord might accept our prayers and also forgive our sins!

❖ **My lips overflow with Your praise, as you taught me Your justice. My tongue speaks your words, since all your commandments are righteous:**

When God teaches us His Commandments, and we follow them and enjoy His Promises, we never stop praising and thanking Him, for He had mercy upon us and enlightened the eyes of our hearts to know the constitution of Heaven and the commandments.

All His commandments are true, they are Spirit and Truth. In them there is the Power of God, Who established them.

❖ **Extend your hand for my salvation for I have chosen your precepts:**

A person who longs for God's commandments, reciting them day and night, with an alert pure heart, definitely God will redeem him/her from their sins.

The word of God preserves us from sins and fatal ignorance *“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lords are right, rejoicing the heart the commandment of the Lord is pure,*



enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned” (Ps. 19:7-11)

❖ **I long for your salvation, O Lord, and Your law is my delight. Let my soul live, and it shall praise you, and let your judgment help me:**

Jeremiah the Prophet longed for the Lord’s salvation so he cried out saying *“Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for You are my praise” (Jer. 17:14).*

It is logic that whoever longs to the Lord’s salvation and mercy should learn and follow His commandments, using them practically in his/her life, because they are the light leading to salvation. He/she who recites God’s commandments day and night will live alert and active here on earth, and eternally in heaven.

❖ **I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments:**

I have gone astray as a sinful person, but You restore me as a merciful God, there is no servant without sin and no God without forgiveness. I am still keeping your Holy commandments, although I cannot fulfill them totally, but I have great hope to restore me to the flock of Your



saints. O Good Shepherd, You always fetch for the lost sheep, and when You find it, You lay it on Your shoulders, rejoicing, calling the angels saying ***“Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!”*** (Luke 15:5-6)

❖ **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever more. Amen:**

It is called the (Zoxasi) or (glorification of the Trinity) and always accompanied by bowing or metania before the Trinity for glorification. This phrase is repeated many times in all the church prayers, such as “Tinao” tune (a tune for the Resurrection), the end of Adaam Epsaly, and at the beginning of each of the Agpia prayers as we start.

“In the Name of the Father ...

Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord bless us. Amen

Glory be to the Father and to the Son ...

O Lord make us worthy to pray thankfully “Our Father...”

It is said as a response to the parts of the Agpia hours prayers, in the 4th Haus Canticle, in the Tresagion, after the signing of the oblation in the Liturgy, as a continuation to Psalm 117 in “Piethnos tiro” at the Vesper’s Prayer, at the end of the congregation prayers, “Amen Alleluia Zoxapatri...”

Thus we give appropriate honour and glory to the Holy Trinity at the beginning and end of our prayers. “For



You are always worshipped and glorified in Heaven and on earth”.

❖ **Glory be to You, O Lover of mankind. Hail to Your Mother Virgin Mary, and all Your saints:**

After giving glory to God in contrition and bowing, we give glory to the Ever Virgin, the Second Heaven, with the rest of the victorious saints, asking their intercession.

❖ **Glory be to the Holy trinity. Have mercy upon us:**

This prayer “O Holy Trinity have mercy upon us” is said at raising Morning Incense when opening the curtain of the altar, and as a response to one of Kiahk Adaam, in the Three Young Saints’ Praise. We are asking mercy from the Holy Trinity and forgiveness of our sins.

❖ **Let God rise, and all His enemies will scatter, and those who despise His Holy Name will disappear:**

Here, we ask the Lord not to delay, and get victory over His enemies. The devils are both God’s enemies and men’s enemies, so, if we confess our weakness towards the least of them, God – Who is stronger than them – will fight on our behalf and crush them under our feet quickly.

❖ **As for Your People:**

Here, we ask a blessing for God’s people to increase and for His Gospel and kingdom to spread out in the whole



world, living in purity fulfilling God's commandments, so that no one might perish.

This prayer and the one before are also said in the Litany of gathering prayed after the Vesper Gospel, Morning and the Holy Liturgy.

❖ **O Lord open my lips, and let my mouth praise You:**

We ask the Lord to help us, give us an alert heart and mind, concentrating in our praise and the words said by our lips, to explore all the hidden treasures awaiting us, asking God to cast away the devil of slumber and laziness and not to give it a chance to snatch the wonderful praise of our mouths.

When I open my lips, O Lord, give me an appropriate praise, so that You might accept my prayers. This part of praise is a wonderful beginning for a wonderful praise in our Coptic Orthodox Church, in it there is spiritual nourishment, comfort, happiness, joy and fullness.





CHAPTER THREE

TINAO: THE RESURRECTION PRAISE

This praise is said during the Holy days of Pentecost, and then it is said only on Sundays till the end of the month of Hatour (because we start Christmas commemorations at the beginning of Kiahk).

This praise is divided into parts chanted in the same tune as the parts of the 3rd hour of the Pentecost feast (The descent of the Holy Spirit)

❖ **We look at the Resurrection of Christ and we worship Holy Jesus Christ Our Lord, Who alone is without sin:**

This praise is said for the Resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which is truly the corner stone of our Orthodox faith, it is worth to be always mentioned glorifying our God, Who crushed death by His death and resurrected from death on the third day, raising us up with Him, to live in the newness of life.

So as the praise says, we believe in Christ's Resurrection as our doctrine, worshipping Christ with His disciples at Mount Olive when He ascended to heaven. Let us catch His Holy feet with the Mary's, because He is worthy of bowing and worship. He is the Only One without sin
“For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy,



harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;” (Hebrews 7:26).

❖ **We bow down to Your Cross O Christ and we praise and glorify Your Resurrection:**

The cross and the Resurrection are twins that could never be separated. Christ the Saviour had to pass through the Cross, Golgotha and the tomb before getting to the Resurrection and sitting on the right hand of the Glory. So He gave us an example to follow: without a cross we can never reach the Resurrection same as without war there is no victory. An honest disciple to Christ should pass through the cross, suffering, the tomb and its darkness first before reaching the resurrection, with its light and glory.

Bowing or kissing the cross is not honouring the wood or metal which a cross is made from, but it is bowing and kissing Christ, Who was crucified on it and saved us from our sins. *“And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.” (Colossians 1:20)*

The cross is a characteristic accompanying Christ always. *“But the angel answered and said to the women. ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified’.” (Matthew 28:5)* St Paul’s message was to preach and talk about “Christ crucified” *“But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,” (1 Corinthians 1: 23).* Many



times he was proud of the cross calling it “Gods Power”.
“ But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6:14).

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18). He also rebuked the Galatians who didn’t obey the truth. ***“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, ‘before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?’”(Galatians 3:1)*** because Jesus Christ Himself is the Truth.

The Apostle addresses the Corinthians ***“ For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”(1 Corinthians 2:2).*** We glorify the cross by kissing it, bowing, carrying, hang on our chest, sign it everywhere because it symbolizes Christ. If the flag of any country is raised it is honoured by everyone, so what about the Cross, which is the flag of all Christians. If we bow with the head in front of the country flag, we have to worship the Cross and bow down completely before it, honouring Christ Who was crucified on it.

❖ For you are our God, we know none but You and after Your Name we are called. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit:

We confess that Christ the Resurrected is our God, we don’t know or worship other gods ***“And if it seems evil to***



you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” So the people answered and said “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods;”(Joshua 24:15-16). “And the disciples were first called Christians (related to Christ) in Antioch, “And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

❖ **Come all you believers let us bow down to the Resurrection of Lord Jesus, through His cross joy has entered into the whole world:**

The joy of salvation didn't enter the world through the abstract cross, because the cross itself is a curse “*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written’ Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree).*”(Galatians 3:13) but the cross that was followed by the Resurrection is the one, which brought joy not only to the world, but also to Hades. As we say in the Liturgy of St Basil “ He descended into Hades through the cross and restored Adam and his children.”

❖ **Let us bless the Lord continually and glorify His Resurrection for He was patient and destroyed death by His death now and forevermore Amen:**



That's what is said in the Resurrection Fraction "He crushed death by His death and rose from the dead on the third day...and those who were in Hades bestowing on them eternal life."

He crushed the devil, the ruler of darkness and spiritual death through the cross, "***Inasmuch as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.***" (***Hebrews 2:14***). What made Jesus achieve this honourable victory is His obedience to His Father and His patience without complain for all His sufferings, which He tolerated from those whom He created. "***who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; (1Peter 2:23)***).

All joy befits you, O Mother of God. For through you, Adam was returned to paradise and Eve gained grace to replace her sadness. Through you she gained freedom once more as well as eternal salvation.

St. Mary, The Virgin, had the honour of giving birth to The Son, The Logos, born from her for our salvation. He was crucified, saved us, descended to Hades, broke its copper and iron gates and restored Adam and his children as well as all the righteous who were reposed to Paradise once more, "***For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just or the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the spirit, by***



whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,” (1 Peter 3:18-19).

Of course among them was Eve, our first mother who rejoiced because of her daughter St Mary (the second Eve).

❖ **And we too, let us glorify you as a treasure of resurrection. Hail to the treasure through which we were given life. Hail to her who gave birth to Christ our God, who gave us life through His Resurrection. Blessed are you O Lord, teach me your justice:**

The Virgin, our kind mother rejoices when her children glorify Her, as she had prophesied *“For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.” (Luke 1:48)*. We give her peace with Gabriel and glorify her as the precious treasure that conceived the Expensive Pearl our Lord Jesus Christ. She is a unique treasure through whom our Lord entered and came out from, and yet, it is sealed with a great mystery.

O Lord You are the source of every spiritual blessing,
Your cross is the source of every blessing in the church.

Through the sign of the Cross:

- + Sanctification and consecration take place.
- + The priest blesses the congregation.
- + The Baptismal Font is blessed and we gain the “New Birth”.



- + The priest anoints every organ of the baptized person with the Holy Myrrour, thus the body is sanctified.
- + All the mysteries of the Church are completed such as: Holy Communion, Priesthood...
- + We bless our food and ourselves for protection.

Christ the Owner of the cross and He is the Source of Blessing. We sing in the Praise "Let God bless us, and let's bless His Holy Name. In the past, God blessed us in the personality of Abraham ***"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing."*** (Genesis 12:2). He is giving us spiritual and bodily blessings each day, and we also bless, glorify, praise and exalt Him. When we do this, our mouths, tongues, hearts and souls are blessed through the mention of God's Holy Name. ***"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:"*** (Psalm 103:2) ***"Praise the Lord, O my soul! While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being."***(Psalm 146:1). It is not only we, but your whole creation O Lord praises you. ***"They continue this day according to your ordinances, for all are your servants"*** (Psalm 119:91). ***"The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows his handiwork."*** (Psalm 19:1). Teach me your justice, commandments and orders O Lord, so that I might hide them in my heart and never sin to You, to recite them day and night, feeling the spiritual warmth filling me totally." ***My heart was hot within me; While I was musing, the fire burned."*** (Psalm 39:3).



Teach me your justice, O lord, to be my light, guiding my feet to the path of peace...to Jerusalem the country of peace. (The angelic hosts were amazed when they saw you counted among the dead. Yet you destroyed the power of death. O Saviour, You raised Adam with You and freed him from Hades. Blessed...all the heavenly hosts were ready to carry any orders from you during your trial and crucifixion, destroying those who humiliated and insulted You as a criminal, while you are the blessed and Holy. You could have asked Your father to send you more than twelve Legions of angels ***‘Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?’*** (Matthew 26:53). These hosts were astonished to see you. ***‘He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth’.*** (Isaiah 53:7).

Their astonishment increased when they heard you crying out and giving up your soul in the Hands of the Father ***“And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said “Father, ‘ into your hands I commit My spirit,’ “, Having said this, He breathed His last.”*** And counted among the dead, but your death had a great eternal meaning. Why do you mix tears, fragrant oil and mourning, you followers of the Lord? This is the Lords voice to the daughters of Jerusalem while carrying His cross ***“But Jesus, turning to them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”*** (Luke 23:28)



When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary both carrying their spices didn't find Jesus in the tomb, they started weeping and wailing in grief, that's what a weak person would do. But, in fact, there are no tears after the Saviour's Resurrection, "*Woman, why are you weeping?*" (John 20:13) there is rather joy, happiness and a cheerful preach "*Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'*" (John 20:17) As it will be the last Resurrection, where God wipe away all our tears, where there is no grief or worry.

The luminous angel said to the women carrying the spices by the tomb: look and beware that the Saviour has Risen from the dead "Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, Why do you seek the living among the dead? "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee," (Luke 24:1-6) .The women rushed very early to your grave carrying fragrant oil while crying. But the angel stood before them saying: "The time of weeping is over, do not cry, but preach the Resurrection to the Apostles. *Now after the Sabbath, as*



the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord ascended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightening, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.'" (Mark 28:1-7)

The women, carrying their spices and incense, came to Your tomb, O Saviour, They heard the angel say to them why do you seek the living among the dead. And He, being God, had risen from the grave. Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God. Amen

"Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. 'Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away – for it was large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were



alarmed. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.” (Mark 16:1-6)

We worship the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit one in Essence, and we proclaim with the Cherubim saying; Holy, Holy, Holy are you Lord Now and Forever Amen.

This quarter is repeated three (3) times while bowing the head and making the sign of the cross, which befits our Orthodox doctrine honouring the Holy Trinity.” ***God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”(John 4:24).*** The submissiveness of worship, concentration of heart and all senses is the worship in spirit. Blessed is the person who prays in such a manner and belief, truly I say to you that his/her prayers will rise up straight to God without hindrance and gain its pleadings.

We are crying out with the Cherubim full of eyes’ and participating with them in praising God, as seen by St John in the Book of Revelations ***“The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”(Revelations 4:8)***

O virgin, you gave birth to Him, the Giver of Life, you saved Adam from sin, you granted Eve joy instead of



sorrow, you granted us life and salvation from corruption and alteration.

It is a glorification for St Mary the virgin who gave birth to Jesus, The Giver of Life, who saved Adam and Eve from the darkness of Hades, He opened the gates of the closed paradise and entered all those who died and were waiting this hope. As for us, the living, He established for us the way of life and the kingdom of God, so whoever lives faithfully in this path, fulfilling the commandments honestly and in Gods fear, will enter the kingdom and be saved from the eternal destruction.

“You became our intercessor before God, our Saviour, who incarnated from you.”

It is very well known in our Orthodox doctrine that the intercession of St Mary is the most powerful to the Lord. We notice that in the old icons, if St Mary is with the Apostles, she is in the middle, as a sign of her honour. Sometimes she is drawn raising her hands up (to the level of her forehead) symbolizing her strong intercession, while the Apostles raising their hands just the height of the shoulders. When the church intercedes through the angels and saints, St Mary comes first of the list, we call out intercede for us “Aripres Varin Ehriagon”, which is the same of the Cherubim, the seraphim and the heavenly hosts, while we cry out to the rest of the saints (except St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist) “ Ask the Lord on our behalf” (Toveh Emep shois ehri egown)



Her intercession comes the first also in the blessing said at the end of any prayer in the church, also it ends “and the blessing of the Mother of God the Pure St Mary first and last.” May the Lord accept her intercession on our behalf and grant us salvation, Amen.

“Amen Alleluia Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.” Amen Alleluia is nearly the shortest praise in the Holy Bible. St John the theologian recorded it in his revelation. *“And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God who sat on the throne, saying “Amen! Alleluia!” (Revelations 19:4)*

“Amen” is a Hebrew word which means Let it be, or respond, “Alleluia” consists of two Hebrew words: Alle meaning than, Yahoo means let it be or (the), it is translated in the Holy Bible in Greek “Kerios” which means Lord, thus Alleluia means “Thank the Lord”.

The word Keryalaion or Lord have mercy is frequently used in our church. It is a very short prayer to ask the Divine mercy at all times; because we always fall in numerous sins, knowingly and unknowingly, willingly and unwillingly, the hidden and the visible, thus we need Gods mercy lest we perish. The phrase “Amen, Alleluia, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy” is said at the beginning of the four daily Cantic House



SECTION TWO

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST CANTICLE HAUS (ODE) THE PRAISE OF VICTORY Moses the Prophet's Praise In Adam Tune

First: The Praise of Victory

The praise of the First Canticle Haus is the Praise of Moses, which he sang with the children of Israel after crossing the Red Sea, while Pharaoh and his soldiers were drowning. It is exactly the same words said by Mariam with the ladies while dancing. Chanting this praise, also mentioned in Revelations *They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the Saints! (Rev. 15:3)*

The church feels it is standing by the glass sea in front of the throne, singing with harps. It is clear that the Church is living now in the faith of its salvation of the sea of the world and the Pharaoh of the mind, as if we actually had crossed death, so we praise and thank God for giving us a share in that glory.



There are wonderful meanings in this praise, that's why the church had put it at the beginning (First Canticale Haus).

Pharaoh and his soldiers who had enslaved the children of Israel is exactly like Satan and his soldiers enslaving the human beings. As Moses saved the children of Israel, Jesus Christ also saved us from the slavery of the devil. Drowning Pharaoh and his soldiers in the sea is like drowning Satan and his soldiers in Hades through Jesus' Cross.

❖ **Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord and spoke saying: "I will sing to the Lord for he had triumphed gloriously:**

The Lord says "*Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.*" (Psalm 50:15) It was a day of great trouble to the children of Israel when they came out of the land Egypt and reached the shore of the Red Sea. Suddenly, they found Pharaoh, his soldiers and knights behind them. "*And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were afraid, and the children of Israel cried to the lord. Then they said to Moses,*" *Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt?" Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'?" For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than we should die in the*

wilderness.” And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. “The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.” And the Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. “But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.”(Exodus 14:10-16)

“Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on the right hand and on the left.” (Exodus 14:21-22)

“So the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses.” (Exodus 14:30-31)

The glory of Jesus Christ was in His Great wonderful salvation on the cross, through His death, His mercy was glorified and He saved Adam and his children. This glory was hidden from Satan, who came to the cross to take Jesus' soul, as he had done with those who had died



before and put them in Hades. But the Lord of glory was glorified through the Power of His Divinity and cast Satan into Hades, as He did with Pharaoh and his soldiers. Thus we are saved from Satan our enemy as the children of Israel were saved from Pharaoh.

❖ **The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song and He has become my salvation.**

Through His power, God cast Pharaoh and all his chariots in the sea, so they drowned and the children of Israel were saved. Jesus Christ also saved us from our mental Pharaoh and cast it in Hades. When the disciples came back from their first mission happily Jesus said to them. *“And He said to them (Luke 10:18) After Lord Jesus heard the wonderful quick response from the father “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”(John 12:28), He said “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself.” (John 12:31-32).*

Through Christ *“That we should be saved from our enemies” (Luke 1:71)* thus we praise him in Pascha Week. ‘My Lord Jesus Christ my good Saviour, my strength and my praise who became my holy salvation’. **He is my God and I will glorify Him, my Fathers God I will exalt Him.**

As the Lord has done this great salvation for them, He is worthy for glory and exalting His name according to His holy commandment. *“Call upon Me in the day of*



***trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”
(Psalm 50:15)***

In the New Testament we believe that Jesus is the Great God, the Saviour of the world, every time we look at the cross, we glorify Him, though He looked ‘***He is despised and rejected by men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (Isaiah 53:3).***

‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him’ (Matthew 27:42)

‘Save Yourself, and come down from the cross!’ (Mark 15:30)

The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is His name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his army He has cast into the sea.

Why do we glorify the Lord? Because He is a man of war. He ended the war between the Israelites and the Egyptians, with this great victory to the children of Israel. He ended the war between Israel and the seven nations in the land of Canaan, also at the time of the Judges ***“Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. (Judges 7: 16)***



“After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.” (Judges 3:31)

“And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him ‘Come, I will show you the man whom you seek.’ And when he went into her tent, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple. (Judges 4:22)

“He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. (Judges 15:15)

Also He ended the war during Hezekiah the king’s reign
“And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses- all dead.” (2 Kings 19:35. The mighty God is the Lord, the Almighty, the Pantocrator.
His chosen captains are also drowned in the Red Sea.

They are special strong knights of Pharaoh, who were famous for their bravery and skills in war, were drowned in the red sea and couldn’t be saved from God’s hand
“far above all principalities and power might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”(Ephesians 1:21)

❖ **The depths have covered them, they sank to the bottom as a stone**



“Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.” (Ex. 14:28) They sank in the deep sea because they were armoured with heavy weapons, thus their weapons were the reason of their death.

Jesus also, droned our armoured enemies - through His Cross - in the bottom of Hades.

❖ Your right hand O Lord, has become glorious in power. Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces

The right hand always symbolizes strength, and our strong Lord destroyed Pharaoh His enemy, who blasphemed and said, ***“And Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know that Lord, nor will I let Israel go’.” (Ex. 5:2)*** The word right hand also means the Only Begotten Son, He is the power of the Father. He defeated Satan and its soldiers through His Cross. God sent His Son, born of a woman, He saved His creation from the authority of the enemy and restored us to the Heavenly Canaan.

❖ And in the greatness of Your Excellence, you have overthrown those who rose up against You. You sent forth your wrath, it consumed them like stubble

Stubble cannot resist fire, it consumes so quickly and becomes ashes in seconds, and the same with God’s wrath, as soon as, He sent His wrath on the Egyptians,



they were destroyed in minutes. Yes, ***“For our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:29)*** and, ***“For His anger is but for a moment, His favour is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.”(Ps. 30:5)***

⌘ **And with the blast of Your nostrils the waters were gathered together, the flood stood upright like a wall and the depths were congealed on the heart of the sea**

With Your power, you created the waters and gave it its liquid texture to carry out Your will. Water is an obedient servant to You: When You walked on it, you changed its quality as if walking on land. When You ordered Peter to walk on it, he did. When You rebuked the sea, it obeyed.

So, no wonder then that the sea was split and the waves congealed as huge wall, because, ***“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.” (Matt. 19:26)***

❖ **The enemy said; I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, and my hand shall destroy them. You blew with your wind, the sea covered them, they sank like lead in the mighty waters**

When Pharaoh saw the divided sea, while the children of Israel crossing, he was encouraged and followed them to destroy them and take all their possessions, because it

was written that the children of Israel, *“Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold and clothing. And the Lord had given the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.”* (Ex. 12:35-36) How wonderful are Your judgments O Lord! The same reason which saved the Israelites, destroyed Pharaoh and his powers, *“To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?”* (2 Cor. 2:16) Glory be to You O Lord!

“With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. For You will save the humble people, but will bring down haughty looks.” (Ps. 18:25-27), also *“The Lord watches over the strangers; He relives the fatherless, and widow; but the way of the wicked He turns upside down.”* (Ps. 146:9) *“Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.”* (Ex. 14:28)

So it was, when Satan saw the Lord of glory, incarnated then crucified, as a weak person, saying on the cross, *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”* it thought that Jesus was just a human being and wanted to capture His Soul when it departs His Body. But, when Jesus died His divinity never departed His Humanity for



a single instance or a twinkle of an eye, thus He captured Satan and tied it up, thus we were released from its bondage, and became captives of Jesus' sacrificing love, ***"Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up of the parents, but the parents of the children."*** (2 Cor. 12:14)

❖ **Who is like You O Lord among the gods? Who is like You glorified in His saints, amazing in glory, performing wonders?**

Who is like You among the gods O Lord, they are all false gods made by the Gentiles through the devil's deceit to deprive them from your way. But You are a zealous strong God, ***"For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry."*** (Ps. 73:27), ***"Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, who boast of idols, worship Him, all you gods."*** (Ps. 97:7), ***"The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes that have, but they do not see; they have ears but they do not hear; nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them are like them; so is everyone who trusts in them."*** (Ps. 135:15-18)

Some people worship things that You created like the sun, moon, stars, rivers, animals.....

You are glorified in all Your saints, You performed miracles and wonders through them, they witnessed for you during the times of spiritual ignorance. Crossing the



Red Sea and Jordan River are considered one of the great miracles which You performed Lord for those who fear Your name. In every age, ***“And these signs will follow those who believe; In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;” (Mark 16:17), “And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.” (Mark 16:20)***

❖ **You stretched out Your right hand, the earth swallowed them. You in Your mercy had fed froth the people whom You have redeemed. You have guided them, in Your strength, to Your Holy habitation**

O Lord, You drowned Pharaoh and all his soldiers, but Your people, whom You loved and had chosen; ***“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.” (Hosea 11:1), “For the Lord has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel for his special treasure” (Ps.135: 4), “Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.” (Deut. 8:4)*** You guided them to Canaan, the place of Your Holy habitation, which You have sworn to their fathers to give it to them and their descendants.

Jesus Christ also redeemed Adam and His children after His death on the Cross, but the living, He gave them His Holy Spirit through the Baptism and Mayroun, as a fixed seal by which they can face Satan’s fights and conquer it. After His Ascension, He guided us to His kingdom through His disciples and the descent of the Holy Spirit. They preached and wrote the Gospels and Epistles in



order to show us the way to Christ and his kingdom. O Lord! You also gave us the means of salvation in the Church's mysteries, gaining power and remission of our sins.

❖ **The people will hear and be afraid, sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Palestine**

“So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel.” (Josh. 5:1) So, they started planning to prevent the children of Israel from entering into the Promised Land. The same with Satan, when it saw that the human beings are being lifted to Paradise it was angry and tried to stop them, by tempting them to sin and to be lazy in the prayers and worship, so that they might not reach the level which it lost because of its pride.

❖ **Then the dukes of Edom will be amazed, the mighty men of Moab, trembling will take hold of them**

Moses sent a sensible message to the king of Edom to let them pass through his lands, *“Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. ‘Thus says your brother Israel; ‘You know all the hardship that has befallen us, how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the*



Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. When we cried out to the Lord, He heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border. Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.' Then Edom said to him, 'You shall not pass through my land, lest I come out against you with the sword.' (Num. 20: 14-18), but it is written, "Then he said, 'You shall not pass through,' So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand." (Num. 20:20) .

The same, when the Apostles preached the word of God, their preaching returned people to worshipping the true God and the idols were destroyed.

❖ **All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away, fear and dread will fall on them**

"So Joshua said to the children of Israel, 'Come here, and hear the words of the Lord your God'. And Joshua said, 'By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jesusites'." (Josh. 3:9-10) "And it came to pass when all the kings who were on this side of the Jordan in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon – The



Hitite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite – heard about it.” (Josh. 9:1)

Israel won all these battles because God was with them, ***“And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.” (Josh. 16:10*** thus the curse of Noah their father was fulfilled, ***“Then he said: ‘Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren’.” (Gen. 9:25)***

❖ By the greatness of Your arm they will be as still as stone, till Your people pass over O Lord, till Your people pass over whom You have purchased

With Your Mighty Power, O Lord, make these nations like stone, in order to fulfill your promise and Your people would reach the promised land. Truly, the Lord has promised to make these nations their food, because His Power is sustaining the children of Israel. Moses repeats, ‘Till Your people pass over’ twice, to assure that they will reach the Promised Land. So, the honest pastor has to care about the salvation of his congregation guiding them to the Kingdom of Heaven.

“By the greatness of Your arm” means through Your Holy Spirit dwelling in Your people through Baptism dread the devils and make them still like stone, till Your people – whom You purchased with Your Precious Blood might reach the Paradise.



- ❖ **You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which You have made for You to dwell in**

Moses repeats his pleading fervently, asking for Israel to enter the Promised Land and plant in Zion mountain fruitful fruits of prayer, worship and praises, pleasing God's heart. Thus, in the New Testament, we look at the new city, *"for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."* (Heb. 11:10)

- ❖ **In Your Sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established, the Lord shall reign forever and ever**

O Lord, You had prepared this sanctuary for us long ago, when You said to Abraham; *"And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: 'Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are-northward, southward, eastward and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendents forever'"* (Gen. 13:14-15). We also ask Christ to reign over our hearts, *"Thy Kingdom Come", "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance."* (Ps. 33:12)

- ❖ **For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea. And the Lord brought back the waters to the sea upon them but the children of Israel went on dry land in the mist of the sea**



God is glorified at all times. He saved Israel, and was glorified, and He drowned Pharaoh and his soldiers and was also glorified (in everything You are blessed and glorified). It also means that the believers living amidst the world, with the power of the Holy Spirit, can walk and live on earth guarded by God and His angels, while their enemies, the devils, drown in the Hades prepared for them since even the beginning of the world.

❖ **And Miriam the Prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with praises**

The Prophetess, leading the Israelite women, resembles St. Mary, the Mother of God, the first believer and Christians who praised.

❖ **And Miriam answered them saying, ‘Sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and its rider, He has thrown into the sea. Let us sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously**





CHAPTER TWO

Lobsh (Praise) of the First Canticle Haus

It also deals with the children of Israel and their salvation in crossing the Red Sea, led by Moses the Prophet. Then we ask the prayers of Moses the Archiprophet and the intercessions of St. Mary for the forgiveness of our sins.

Then we thank and worship the Holy Trinity, for preparing our salvation from our mental Pharaoh, and the sins of the world. It also protects us to His Kingdom, and enlightens our souls with His Divine Light, saving us from the darkness of sin and death. He gave us to walk in a path that was deserted before, that's the path of the cross. *“by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.” (Heb. 10:20)*





CHAPTER THREE

A Praise To St. Mary The Angelic Peace

On the weekdays (except Sunday), after the First Canticle Haus and its Lobsh, the 7th, 8th and 9th part of Sunday Theotokia are said after the readings from a Chapter from St. Luke, “*Lord, now, You are letting Your servant depart in peace...*”.

It is very appropriate to read this part of the Gospel, because after praising victory and conquer in the First Canticle Haus, the Gospel speaks about getting released, and the 7th, 8th and 9th parts talk about Christ the Saviour, who gave us salvation through His Incarnation form the Pure Virgin St. Mary.



SECTION THREE

CHAPTER ONE

THE SECOND CANTICLE HAUS

It is Psalm 135, its response is, *“O give thanks to the Lord for He is Good, His mercy endures forever.”*

It is a praise of thanks offered by the church to God for His everlasting Goodness and Mercy. It is offered by the children of Israel, thanking God for releasing them from Egypt, sustaining them in the wilderness, protecting them and making them enter into the Promised Land. In faith, the church considers it has passed through this, and entered its inheritance.

N.B. The repetition of *“for His mercy endures forever”* 28 times (and the Holy Spirit never repeats in vain) denotes that God’s mercy prevailed over all the generations: from David the Prophet, who chanted the Psalm till the coming of Christ, as St. Matthew says: *“So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.”* (Matt. 1.17)

Also, repeating Alleluia (which means rejoice for God) after each quarter signs to the happiness, rejoice and thanksgiving to God, Whose mercy endures forever.





- ❖ Give thanks to the Lord for He is Good.
Alleluia, His mercy endures forever]
- ❖ Give thanks to the God of gods. Alleluia.
- ❖ Give thanks to the Lord of lords. Alleluia.

Give thanks to the Lord means witness to His Good deeds with us and gifts, He who, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”* (James 1:5)

Why do we thank God? Because He is Good and Merciful and His mercy endures forever, *“The Lord has appeared of old to me saying: ‘Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.’”* (Jeremiah 31:3). Thanksgiving is the beginning of any prayer, also the Agpia Prayers is full of thanksgiving Psalms and parts, as the Apostles advice us, *“But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”* (2 Cor. 4:2)

God does not need our thanks but we are the ones who benefit when we thank Him, as we soften His heart, then He gives us more and more, because [A gift without thanks will never increase].

David the Prophet knew quite well the blessings of thanksgiving, so he specified Psalms totally for this, as an



example: Ps. 74, 91, 104, 105, 106, 107, 117, 135 and 137.

For the importance of thanksgiving, we see Jesus Himself praying, *“Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.’”* (John 11:41-42).

In fact, if we spend all our life thanking God, it would not be enough for Him, *“Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.”* (Ps. 116:2), He already gives us spiritual and body blessings; *“Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”* (Acts. 14:17), generally, *“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.”* (1 Tim. 6:17)

O Lord, give us a humble heart, that feels and gets ashamed because of your many gifts, so that we cry out, *“I will praise You with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praises to You.”* (Ps. 138:1)

The righteous and uprights are called gods because God granted them this situation, *“So the Lord said to Moses: ‘See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron*

your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land.” (Ex. 7:1), God also calls the rulers and judges “gods”, “God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods.” (Ps. 82:1). He also calls the righteous ones “gods”, “I said, ‘You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High’.” (Ps. 82:6). As for the lords, they are the angels and heavenly hosts.

But the True Lord with One Hypostasis is the “Lord of lords and God of gods”. The Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator and Almighty. His mercy endures forever, *“He will not always strive with us, not will He keep His anger forever.” (Ps. 103:9)*

❖ **To Him Who alone does great wonders.
Alleluia.**

God, through His power, performed great miracles, which goes beyond the human mind, that is proof of His Power and Might, *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” (Rom. 1:20).* The greatest miracle is His Incarnation of a Virgin, becoming a human being like us except without sin, tolerating all kinds of torture for our salvation. During His service on Earth, He performed many miracles and wonders which captured the minds of the witnesses. When he healed the paralytic, *“And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled*



with fear, saying ‘We have seen strange things today’.” (Luke 5:26), also, *“But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, ‘Hosanna to the son of David!’ they were indignant.”* (Matt. 21:15). There is no wonder in this because, *“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.”* (Is. 9:6)

❖ To Him Who by Wisdom made the heaven.
Alleluia

“Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.’ Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.” (Gen. 1:6-8). Thus He established the heaven, fixed it up high without pillars to let us comprehend His Might and Greatness. He made it beautiful, *“who stretch out the heavens like a curtain”* (Ps. 104:2)

❖ To Him Who stretched out the earth above the waters. Alleluia

“Then God said, ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear’, and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He



called Seas. And God saw that it was good.” (Gen. 1:9-10) Scientists proved that the Earth is round in shape surrounded by water from all sides, but in strange power, *“You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.” (Ps. 104:6-9)*

✠ [To Him Who made great lights. Alleluia. The Sun to rule the day, the Moon to rule by night. Alleluia]

“Then God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the Earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.” (Gen: 1:16-18). Just looking at these great creations gives us a clear idea about God’s greatness. Scientists proved that the sun is too big, much bigger than the earth and so far, it gives its rays to lighten the whole world, purify the atmosphere and helps plants and trees to grow, pointing to the Sun of Righteousness, *“But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.” (Malachi 4:2)*

When the sun sets away, the beautiful silver moon starts glooming surrounded by endless stars, to lighten the world and break the night darkness. Looking at the sky by night gives us an awesome and happy feeling, makes us cry out with the Psalmist, *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.*



Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.” (Ps. 19:1-2)

❖ **To Him who smote Egypt in their first born.
Alleluia**

That was the tenth plague before the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, “the death of the first born, *“And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.” (Ex. 12:29-30).* It is a proof of God’s power, who didn’t strike the children of Israel’s houses marked by the blood on both door posts. The Egyptians were the soldiers of Pharaoh whom the Lord smote. As He strike the soldiers of Satan through Jesus Christ His Son.

❖ **And brought out Israel from among them with
a strong hand and stretched out arm. Alleluia.**

We see that Pharaoh, whose heart was too hardened, *“Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, ‘Rise, go out from among my people, both of you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the Lord as you have said. Also take your flocks and your herds as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also’. And the Egyptians urged the people that they might send them*



out of the land in haste. For they said, ‘We shall all be dead’.” (Ex. 12:31-33)

Truly, O Lord, You fulfilled Your promise to Your people ***“Therefore say to the children of Israel; ‘I am Lord; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.’” (Ex. 6:6).*** But now, as they disobeyed the Lord, the Divine wrath has fallen on them, they are no longer the chosen generation as they refused Christ, and did not believe in Him.

❖ To Him Who divided the Red Sea into parts. Alleluia. And made Israel to pass through the midst of it. Alleluia.

Some historians lean to the fact that the sea was divided into 12 parts for each tribe to pass, depending on the words, ***“Who divided the Red Sea into parts”***. God gave strength and courage to His people, so they never feared or doubted while crossing the sea. The Red Sea is a sign of “Baptism”, where a baptized person comes out redeemed of his/her sins, then having the seal of Mayroun through which we conquer the enemy. It also symbolizes Hades where Jesus descended to through the Cross, releasing the upright and righteous and all those who reposed on the hope. He left all the wicked ones behind, exactly as Pharaoh and his soldiers had drowned.

❖ And overthrew Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea. Alleluia.



“You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters. You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness. You broke open the fountain and the flood; You dried up mighty rivers.” (Ps. 74:13-15). Pharaoh, the wicked sea serpent and Leviathan, you broke their heads O Lord, with Your strength, You made their bodies as food for the birds of the sky and fish of the sea.

❖ To Him who led His people through the wilderness. Alleluia.

God protected His people and sustained them 40 years, He fed them, their clothes and shoes never wore out, ***“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.” (Ex.13: 21-22),*** although they always complained, ***“When your fathers tested Me; they tried Me, though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, ‘It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways.’” (Ps. 95:9-10)***

❖ To Him Who retrieved water from a rock. Alleluia.

When the people were thirsty and they murmured to Moses, he cried out to the Lord Who ordered him ***“Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will***

come out of it, that the people may drink.’ And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.” (Ex. 17:6) That was the first time, at the beginning of their trip, and it happened another time towards the end. At the wilderness of Kadesh near Canaan *“Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying; ‘If only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! Why have you brought up the assembly of the Lord onto this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink’.” (Num. 20:2-5)*, Moses was greatly troubled, *“So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the Lord appeared to them. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying ‘Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water, thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.” (Num. 20:6-8)*

Here Moses committed his great sin which forbid him from entering the Promised Land, when he struck the rock twice with his rod, instead of just “speaking to the rock” as God ordered him. As they were so thirsty, they drank from the water as if it was sweet honey, as the Psalmist says, *“He would have fed them also with the*



finest of wheat; and with honey from the rock I would have satisfied you.” (Ps. 81:16)

The water that sprang out of the rock was a sign of the water and blood that came out of Jesus’ side, the True Rock. We drink it because it is so important to our spiritual life, as water was essential to the children of Israel while dwelling in the wilderness.

St. Paul says, ***“and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” (1Cor. 10:4)***

❖ **To Him who smote great kings and slew famous kings. Alleluia.**

On their way to the Promised Land, the children of Israel killed many great kings such as the king of Edon, ***“Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. “Thus says your brother Israel; ‘You know all the hardship that has befallen us’.” (Num. 20:14)***, the king of Arad ***“The king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim. Then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners.” (Num. 21:1)***, Sihon king of Amorites ***“Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites saying” (Num. 21:21)***, Og King of Bashan ***“And they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. So Og king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.” (Num. 21:33)***, Balak the son of Zippor the king of Moab ***“Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.” (Num. 22:2)*** and Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and

Reba, 5 kings of Midian *“They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed – Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.”* (Num. 31:8)

Crossing the Jordan River with Joshua, after taking Jericho and killing its king (Joshua 10:28), taking Ai and killing its king (Joshua 8:28-29), then *“And it came to pass when all the kings who were on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon – the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite the Hivite, and the Hebusite – heard about it, that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.”* (Josh. 9:1-2). Five other kings gathered together to fight Israel, *“Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Bebir king of Eglon, saying.”* (Josh. 10:3), yet Israel arrested and killed them, *“So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, ‘Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings’. And they drew near and put their feet on their necks. Then Joshua said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight’. And afterward Joshua struck them and killed, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening. So it was at the time of the going down of the sun that Joshua*

commanded, and they took them down from the trees cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day.” (Josh. 10:24-27)

In addition to king Makkedah, “*On that day Joshua took Makkedah, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them – all the people who were in it, He let none remain. He also did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.*” (Josh. 10:28), Libnah's king “*And the Lord also delivered it and its king into the hand of Israel; he struck it and all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword. He let none remain in it, but did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.*” (Josh. 10:30), Horan king of Gezer, ing Lachish, the kings of Debir, Eglon and Hebron, “*And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, on the west from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon as far as Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, which Joshua gave to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their divisions, in the mountain country, in the lowlands, in the Jordan plain, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the south – the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Hebusites; The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; the king of Jarmuth, one, the king of Lachish, one; the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; the king of Libna,*



one; the king of Adullam, one; the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; the king of Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; the king of Araanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; the king of Dedesh, one; the king of Jokneamin Carmel, one; the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, one; the king of the people of Gilgal, one; the king of Tirzah, one – all the kings, thirty-one.” (Josh. 12:7-24)

All these kings, in addition to those whom Moses killed, the most famous:

❖ **Sihon, the king of Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan. Alleluia**

Sihon was the king of Amorites, and Og of Bashan, *“For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants. Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead (is it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit.” (Deut. 3:11)* prevented Moses and his people from passing through their countries, so they were killed after a fight with Israel.

Those two kings symbolize the devils who are flying between heaven and earth, preventing their believers from crossing to heaven.

Those devils beautify sin, they tempt the believers to neglect praising and glorifying God, so that when their



souls depart from their bodies, they haste to take them and throw them into the eternal fire, prepared for Satan and his soldiers, but our Lord Jesus Christ Who captured them on the cross, and granted us all the means of salvation, and the help to overcome the devils, so that we may rise up to heaven and inherit the kingdom, from which the devils were dismissed because of their pride and arrogance.

❖ **And gave their lands for a heritage. A heritage to his servant Israel. Alleluia.**

After Moses took possession of the lands of the Amorites and Bashan, he divided the land and gave it to the tribes of Israel. Our Lord Jesus Christ also *“And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.’ (Luke 10:18)* dismissed of its kingdom and heritage, so He went to prepare a place, *“‘In My Father’s house are many mansions;’ if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.” (John 14:2)*, and divide the land for us, the true believers who are worshipping Him in uprightness, pure heart and good deeds, *“to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.” (1 Peter 1:4)*

❖ **Who remembered us in our low estate... Alleluia... And has redeemed us from our enemies. Alleluia.**

“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.” (Ps. 34:18). This is well known in the spiritual life. He who is



humble, is saved from all the enemies and God will have mercy on him. Because of St. Anthony's humbleness, he could get rid of all the devils surrounding him. He also said that humbleness and lowliness will subdue the beasts under our feet, so what about the people who are created on God's image.

A person should be humble and has long-suffering to be able to accept any temptation, thanking God at all times. Does not haste to anger or envy. If he does any mistakes, quickly bowing in a metania and apology, forgiving, obedient, simple and serving everyone. Through all these virtues, true humbleness will be inside him, enabling him to inherit the kingdom of heaven.

❖ **He who gives food to all flesh... Alleluia...**

God is the Provider of every creature, *"The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season."* (Ps. 145:15), also He *"You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing"* (Ps. 145:16), even the wild beasts, *"The Young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God."* (Ps. 104:21), and the creatures of the sea, *"These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season. What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good."* (Ps. 104:27-28) and *"He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry."* (Ps. 147:9). He also advises us saying, *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' Or 'What shall we wear?' But seek first the kingdom of God and His*



righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you’.” (Matt. 6:31,33)

❖ **Give thanks to the God of Heaven. O give thanks to the Lord of lords for He is Good... Alleluia for His mercy endures forever.**

The Psalm started by thanking God, then presented examples of God’s mercy and support to His children. *“The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.” (Ps. 145:18).* Here, he assures that we should pray and offer thanksgiving to God always, the Good Lord of lords, as we are not worthy of all His mercies poured on us.

God is Kind and Good from the beginning till the end, this should be our prayer and meditation through our whole life. It is even the secret of life, where we continuously, in our life, discover His Goodness and Kindness, and praise Him with “Alleluia”.





CHAPTER TWO

The Second Canticle Haus Lobsh

It starts with a beautiful tune for the first and second part, then the rest in the usual known tune. In this Lobsh, we also express our joy and thanks to God Who bestowed on us His salvation, “Let us give thanks, to Christ our God, with David the Prophet and Psalmist” who thanked God a lot, and is urging us also to continuously thank God “Thank or Confess thanks”.

The most important part is where it says “He made men, in His image and His likeness, that he may praise Him”, then the following part, *“Let us praise Him and exalt His name, and give thanks to Him, His mercy endures forever.”*

Then we ask for the blessings of the prayers of David the Prophet and the intercessions of St. Mary and all the heavenly hosts for the forgiveness of our sins.

Finally, we bless our Lord Jesus Christ with His Gracious Father and the Holy Spirit, which means to confess the greatness of His glory and wonders, especially His coming for the salvation of our race. *“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Cor. 9:15)*





SECTION FOUR

CHAPTER ONE

THE THIRD CANTICLE HAUS

The Third Canticle Haus is the praise of the whole creation led by the church. It is the praise said by The Three Young Saints in the furnace. When we all chant it in the church, we are symbolizing the world with all its bitterness and temptations, yet we are preserved by the Son of God (Dan. 3:25). The fire of the world has no authority on us. The church has tasted the love and mercy of its Groom, so it is calling everyone to share in praising and glorifying Him.

The church has gained its authority over all the creation through the authority given by God. As it is living in the Divine Paradise here on earth, it is inviting the whole creation to praise God “exceedingly to be praised and exalted above all, forever”, as an announcement for the new heaven.

The First and Second Canticle Haus express the victory of the children of God over their enemies, through God’s strong and stretched arm, while the Third Canticle Haus expresses the victory of man over his pains and temptations, accepting them joyfully, as if they are a gift from God’s Hand, ***“For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” (Phil. 1:29)***



After scourging the Apostles in the Jewish Council ***“And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” (Acts. 5:40-41)***

❖ As the fire didn’t burn the Three Young Saints, also the fire of Hades did not burn the righteous ones, but the fire rather burnt the devil’s followers, and it is written in the Holy Bible ***“Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” (Dan.3: 25)***

❖ The fire of the furnace raised 49 cubits high, symbol of the 4000 years from Adam’s disobeying God till the promise of Christ’s coming saying that the descendant of the woman (Christ) will crush the serpents head till the start of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (a cubit is equivalent to 100 years)

❖ The three Young Saints addressed Christ 6 times. “Blessed are you....” a symbol of the 600 years between the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and the birth of Jesus Christ, thus since Adam till Jesus’ birth is 5500 years (4900 + 600). This is quite assured.

❖ The Three Young Saints addressed the creation to bless the Lord 34 times, denoting the 33 years and a half that Master Jesus lived on earth.

❖ In the first six quarters, they praise God for the Glory of His personal characteristics, and in the following quarters till the end of the Canticle Haus, they



praise His revealed Glory in the whole creation, and also through the whole creation.

❖ **[Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our fathers, and exceedingly to be praised, and exalted above all forever]**

David blessed the Lord before all the congregation, saying, *“Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, for ever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all”* (1 Chr. 29:10-11)

The Psalms are full of the word ‘blessed’ or ‘praised’, *“Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me!”* (Ps. 66:20), *“Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits the God of our salvation! Selah”* (Ps. 68:19), *“O God, You are more awesome than Your holy places. The God of Israel is He who gives strength and power to His people. Blessed be God!”* (Ps. 68:35)

The church also uses this expression for praises in lots of its occasions, as the tune of “Ekez Maroot”, “truly You are Blessed with Your Good Father....”

The Three Young Saints also praised God Who was pleased to be the God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, (Ex. 3:6), *“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth.”* (Ps. 149:6)



❖ **[Blessed is Your Holy Name and Your Glory, and exceedingly to be praised and exalted.]**

“And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.” (Ps. 72:19) [Let God bless us, and let’s bless His Holy Name, at all times His Praise is in our mouths]. That is the end of Watos Theotokeya. From the Saturday Epsaly (I bless Your Holy Name each day from morning till evening), and [With each breath I praise Your Holy Name].

❖ **[Blessed are You in the Holy temple of Your Glory and exceedingly....]**

The house of God is the most appropriate place to praise Him, *“Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever, and my eyes and my heart will be there perpetually.” (2 Chr. 7:15-16)*. David the Prophet who loved and honoured the house of God says in his Psalm *“Your testimonies are very sure, Holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, forever.” (Ps. 93:5)*

The church of the New Testament, established by our Master Jesus Christ with His Honoured Blood, where He finds rest to dwell in, orders Its children to respect the House of God, in awe and reverence, out of their faith that God is dwelling in this place, crying out inside their hearts, with Jacob when he saw the angels of God



ascending and descending the ladder, and the Lord standing on top of it, who said, ***“And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!” (Gen. 28:17).*** So, a Christian person should feel unworthy to step inside the church, he bows before the holy sanctuary saying ***“But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy. In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.” (Ps. 5:7)***

The church is heaven on earth, those who enter the church should stand respectfully as the inhabitants of heaven, in awesome like the angels. Their eyes always fixed towards the altar, their feet steady, their hands by their sides, to open their mouths only for praise.

It is very clear that the only reason for coming to church is to praise the Lord and glorify His Holy Name, ***“I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You.” (Ps. 22:22)***

❖ [Blessed are You who behold the depths and sits upon the Cherubim, and exceedingly....]

“And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire sone; on the likenessof the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it.” (Ezek.1: 26). It is a fixed doctrine in the church that the Cherubim, full of eyes, carrying the Throne of God, so the priest says [You are Who is sitting on the Cherubim and the Seraphim, looking to the lowly], also in the



Reconciliation Prayer of the Mass of St. Gregory [O Christ our God... Who is sitting on the blazing Cherubim throne, served by the fiery hosts...]

“Who Behold the depths” refers to the fact that God is the Testifier of hearts and kidneys, He knows the thoughts and intentions of everyone, ***“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (Heb. 4:13)***

The Psalmist also say, ***“Though the Lord is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar.” (Ps. 138:6)*** also, ***“The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.” (Ps. 33:13-15), “For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven the Lord viewed the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to release those appointed to death.” (Ps. 102:19-20)***

In Monday Epsaly we say [The Cherubim and the Seraphim surround you, they can’t look at You yet we see You daily on the altar and partake of Your Holy Body and Blood]

In the Fraction of the heavenlies, the priest says:

❖ **[Blessed are You on the throne of Your Kingdom and ...etc.]**

“Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne saying: “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power. For you created all things, and by your will they exist and were created.” (Rev.4: 9-11)

Yes, Lord, because, *“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.” (Ps. 45:6)* and Lord, *“For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness. But the Lord shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment.” (Ps. 9:4,7)*

❖ [Blessed are You on the throne of Your kingdom, and exceedingly...]

“Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crown before the throne, saying ‘You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created’.” (Rev. 4:9-11), “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your



kingdom.” (Ps. 45:6), “For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness. But the Lord shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment.” (Ps. 9:4,7). You are blessed O Lord, sitting on Your Holy Throne, “But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.” (Ps. 22:3) The Cross is the beloved throne to Christ the Saviour, “Say among the nations that the Lord reigns” (Ps. 96:10)

It is a throne of love and sacrifice, Christ was lifted up on the Cross, attracting everyone to Him, “*“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” (John 12:32)*

❖ [Blessed are You in the firmament of heaven, and exceedingly]

Truly, O Lord, You are Blessed in the firmament of heaven, when we look at the glory and order of the sun, the moon, the stars and everything in the sky, we can do nothing except praising with David, “*O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions.” (Ps. 104:24), “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” (Ps. 19:1-2), also the lovely praise of the church, “Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness!” (Ps. 150:1-2)*



We praise You, O Great Lover and Creator, because You formed the heavens for me as a ceiling, and You fixed the land for me to walk on it (The Liturgy of St. Gregory). You are glorified my Lord, when You stopped the sun in the sky, until the children of Israel won the battle, when Joshua asked You, ***“So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.”*** (Josh. 10:13)

You are glorified my Lord, in the firmament of heaven when the unusual star appeared at the time of Your miraculous birth, the star which led the wise men to the place of Your birth, ***“When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.”*** (Matt. 2:9-10)

Also, when the sun hid its rays, in modesty and objection for hanging You naked on the cross, while You are the God, wearing light as a robe, ***“Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.”*** (Matt. 27:45)

❖ [Bless the Lord, O you works of the Lord, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

David the Psalmist chants, ***“Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O***



my soul!” (Ps. 103:22) O Lord, You created haven and earth and everything in them, seen and unseen, “They continue this day according to Your ordinances, for all are Your servants.” (Ps. 119:91)

Every knee worships You O Lord, above and underneath the earth. I am one of the works of Your hands, O Lord, so I praise You, ***“I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” (Ps. 34:1), “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!” (Ps. 103:1)***

The Three Young Saints called all the creation to participate with them in Your praise, that is because of their blazing love to You. Also, to rebuke the ignorant people who claim that there are two Creators. A good one who creates the talking creatures, those on a higher level than others, and a cruel one who creates the non-living things or the lower creatures.

❖ **[Bless the Lord, O Heaven, praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

“Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.” (Ps. 104:2), that is why heaven also praises You, “The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.” (Ps. 103:19), “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” (Ps. 19:1)



But, how can the heaven praise the Lord, while it can not talk? Whoever looks at the creation of heaven and stars would think of the Wonderful Creator, thus he praises and glorifies God, and in this way the heavens and the stars are announcing the glory and wisdom of God, the Creator. Heaven is also representing the saints, whose lives and sayings are not earthly, but heavenly, thus they are announcing the glory of God.

❖ **[Bless the Lord, all you angels of the Lord, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

The angels are luminous creatures, which God had created to praise Him unceasingly, “*Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.*” (Ps. 104:4) He created them for “*Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*” (Heb. 1:14) We pray in the Liturgy of St. Gregory “You who are praised by the angels and worshipped by the archangels, thousands of thousands standing before You, and myriads of myriads offering you service” David the Prophet also says, “*Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word.*” (Ps. 103:20)

If we know that the angels were created for praise, why then are we, the human beings, call them to praise?

We should know that the order of the human service is much higher than that of the angels. God gave a greater honour to us, do not they cover their faces and legs in the presence of God because of the glory of Him who is



sitting on the throne, while we touch the Body of Christ, take His Body and Blood in our mouths daily, and It runs through our system? Did not Christ Himself promise to be with us always, “ *‘teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’ Amen*” (Matt. 28:20)?

❖ [Bless the Lord all you waters that are above the heaven, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

“Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and let it divide the waters from the waters.’ Thus God made the firmament, and divided the water which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.” (Gen. 1:6-8) The firmament, means the space surrounding earth containing the air, in preparation of creating the living creatures such as animals, plants, man, as air is essential for their living, the cycle of the wind and rain and so on. The upper layers of the firmament appear in the lovely blue colour which we call the sky, on the clouds which falls on the land as rain, watering plants and giving us all the goodness of the earth.

The waters of the rain has a great power to praise and glorify the Creator: God used it during the flood on the wicked creation, He also prevented it , as a punishment to those who strayed and followed the Baal at Elijah’s time



“And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab ‘As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be dew nor rain these years, except at my word’.” (1 Kings 17:1). The drought lasted for 3 years and 6 months, the Bible witnessed, ***“So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria.” (1 Kings 18:2),*** which made the cruel Ahab leave his throne, going around the country and wandering as a poor shepherd looking for grass to feed his horses and cattle, ***“So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.” (1 Kings 18:6),*** ***“And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.” (James 5:18)*** God, in His Great Kindness, ***“that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matt. 5:45),*** as a sign of His forgiveness and patience, so we praise and glorify His Holy Name, He is still ***“Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness’.” (Acts 14:17)***

The church prays daily for the waters of the rivers, the rains ...etc.

❖ [Bless the Lord, all you powers of the Lord, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

“Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.” (Ps. 103:21). O Lord, You are



the Lord of hosts, You sent some of these powers, *“Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”* (2 Kings 2:11), You sent some to protect Elisha from the army of Aram *“And Elisha prayed, and said, ‘Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see,’ Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”* (2 Kings 6:17) Elisha was calming his disciple Gehazi saying: *“So he answered, ‘Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them’.”* (2 Kings 6:16). You sent some of these powers on the night of Your Birth, *“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying; ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’”* (Luke 2:13-14) These unseen powers were ready, on the night of Your arrest in Gesthemane, if You asked Your Father, He would have sent You more than twelve legions of angels, but You preferred to fulfill the prophecies of Your sufferings, burial and Resurrection!!

❖ **[Bless the Lord, O Sun and Moon, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

Sunrise dispense darkness, calling every creature to wake up, offering appropriate praise to the Creator, then work and toil for earning their living. The sun also sends its rays to kill lots of harmful microbes, in winter it gives warmth, activity and health. Thus, all creatures offer



you praise and thanksgiving for these free blessings and gifts, because ***“that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”*** (Matt. 5:45). The moon also lights the nights with its beautiful silver rays, ***“If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me’. Even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.”*** (Ps. 139:11-12)

When the sun rises, we remember You, O God, “the Sun of Righteousness and healing in It’s Wings”. You shine on Your beloved ones, giving them spiritual health, light and holiness, going in their way strongly without stumbling. Looking at the moon, we remember that it is a dull object in itself, yet it deprives its light from the sun, the same like us, we are dusty dull creatures, with no light whatsoever in ourselves, but if You shine on us with Your Grace, our hearts get filled with your Light and Holiness, reflecting it on others around us.

Sometimes we see the moon in full light and brightness, other times we can see only half of it in light and the other half in total darkness, and so on. The reason, is that only the part which is exposed to the sun gets light, while the other part stays in darkness. As for us, as much as we allow Your Grace to enlighten our hearts, the more we have light within us. The calm light of the moon captures the soul, it makes us enjoy the beautiful nature, praise the Lord, Who, after creating everything, ***“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it***



was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” (Gen. 1:31)

❖ **[Bless the Lord all you stars of heaven, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever]**

Just the look of the stars make us glorify God for His Mighty Power, all those stars far and near, big and small are counted before the eyes of God. St. Paul gave us an example about the ranks of saints in heaven, *“There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.” (1 Cor. 15:41)*, also St. Mark adds *“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.” (Mark 13:24-25)*

❖ **[Bless the Lord, O rain and dew, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

“Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew?” (Job. 38:28) The rain has no father, but You are its Creator, O Lord, the rain, like the rest of the creation praise and glorify You.

In the Old Testament, when You wanted to destroy everything on earth, You ordered Noah and his family to enter into the Ark, then You ordered, *“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the*



windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.” (Gen. 7:11-12)

Also, during Elijah’s time, the obedient rain stopped for three and a half years, according to Elijah’s prayers and following Your orders O Lord!! Then, Your Prophet prayed, and it rained ***“Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel.” (1 Kings 18:45)***

Thus, the rain is obeying You Lord, fulfilling Your Divine will...

The dew also is one of Your blessings, O Lord, You hinder it whenever You will to chastise the cruel, ***“Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit.” (Haggai 1:10)***, You grant it in abundance when You are pleased with Your servants, ***“For the seed shall be prosperous, the vine shall give its fruit, the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew – I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these.” (Zech. 8:12).***

❖ **[Bless the Lord, O You clouds and winds, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

The clouds and winds are also among Your honest servants, O Lord, who carry Your will, ***“He binds up the water in His thick clouds, yet the clouds are not broken under it.” (Job 26:8)***



In the Old Testament, You walked with the children of Israel on their departure from Egypt in a pillar of cloud at daytime, and a pillar of light at night.

You also descended in a cloud on the Tabernacle to talk to Moses or Joshua. In the New Testament, You dwelled in the womb of the human cloud, The Virgin St. Mary, ***“Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst.”*** (Is. 19:1)

At Your Ascension, a cloud took You off, ***“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven’.”*** (Acts. 1:9-11), assuring the Prophet’s words about the second coming, ***“Clouds and darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about. His lightnings light the world; the earth sees and trembles.”*** (Ps. 97:2-4)

❖ [Bless the Lord, all you winds... Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

Many incidents in the Holy Bible show us the work of the winds, obeying God and carrying out His orders. When God wanted to dry up the waters of the flood, after it full

filled its mission *“bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly”* (2 Peter 2:5). He *“Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.”* (Gen. 8:1) Also, in the plague of locusts in Egypt *“So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe, previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them.”* (Ex. 10:13-14) with the same wind, He took off the locusts when Moses prayed *“And the Lord turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt.”* (Ex. 10:19)

Also, in splitting the Red Sea, God used His obedient servant, the wind, *“Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.”* (Ex. 14:21-22) When Jonah the Prophet *“But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish*

from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.” (Jonah 1:3), he entered the ship, then, “But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.” (Jonah 1:4), and when Jonah was thrown in the sea, “So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.” (Jonah. 1:15)

O Lord, when You wanted to teach Your disciples a great lesson about faith and strength, the wind was the best thing showing Your Divinity, You said to them, *“Let us cross over to the other side”* then, *“And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, ‘Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?’ Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, ‘Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?’ And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, ‘Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!’”* (Mark 4:37-41)

❖ [Bless the Lord, O fire and heat, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

The fire is another honest servant to Your will, O Lord. You burnt Sodom and Gomorrah when their inhabitants

went extreme in their iniquity, ***“Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So he overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.” (Gen. 19:24-25)***

You also used it as a guidance for the children of Israel, ***“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.” (Ex. 13:21-22)***

The fire also was an instrument of destruction for the sons of Aaron Nadab and Abihu, ***“Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.” (Lev. 10:1-2)***

Yet, the fire in the furnace where the Three Young Saints were thrown did two things:

1. ***“Therefore, because the king’s command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed Nego.” (Dan. 3:22)***
2. ***“And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counsellors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed***



nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.” (Dan. 3:27)

Thus, this fire forced the King of Babylon to bless God saying, *“Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, ‘Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered his servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.” (Dan. 3:28-29)*

And so, we see that the fire has blessed You and revealed Your power, *“by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.” (2 Cor. 6:7)*

During the days of Elijah the Prophet, fire was also a means of glorifying You, O Lord, after he prepared the sacrifice, he prayed a short prayer, *“Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and they said, ‘The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!’” (1 Kings 18:38-39)*



Thus, people refrained from worshipping the Baal, ***“And Elijah said to them, ‘Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!’ So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.” (1 Kings 18:40)*** Elijah was about to cut the worship of the Baal completely from Israel, but he fled to the wilderness for fear of Jezebel’s threats!!

❖ **[Bless the Lord, O cold and heat... Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

You organised nature, O Lord, in this manner, ***“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.” (Gen. 8:22)*** This wise rotation is very useful for all creatures, for example, it is important for the human being’s body, as he cannot tolerate continuous cold or hot weather. The same with plants and the rest of the creatures. A story told about a person who went to the monastery to become a monk, so on his first day, the Abbot took him to his cell, but forgot to give him a blanket, as it was winter and it was a freezing night. At midnight the Abbot remembered him and went to give him a blanket, but as he approached his cell, he heard him praying and saying. [I thank you very much, dear Lord, because there are lots of rich people, sleeping in luxurious warm beds, yet they are sick or having troubles, truly they are wealthy, yet they are captured, while I am healthy and free...]



And so on, he kept mentioning the gifts of God that he was enjoying and did not complain about the cold, then his cell was full of the Lord's light. Hearing this, the Abbot glorified the Lord and returned to his cell.

This story teaches us how to turn our tribulations into a subject of praise and thanksgiving.

When You wanted to teach Jonah the Prophet a lesson in mercy, *“And the Lord God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered.”* (Jonah 4:6-7)

Also, when you wanted to punish the children of Israel for their reluctance in building Your holy house, You said, *“Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labour of your hands.”* (Haggai 1:10-11)

❖ [Bless the Lord, O You dew and winds, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

The dew is a sign of the abundance of goodness and blessings of the Lord on earth, *“I will be like the dew to Israel; He shall grow like the lily, and lengthen his roots like Lebanon. His branches shall spread; his*

beauty shall be like an olive tree, and his fragrance like Lebanon.” (Hosea 14:5-6)

When Isaac blessed his son Jacob, he said to him, ***“Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine.” (Gen. 27:28)*** In the early morning with the dew, the children of Israel used to collect the manna, ***“So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground.” (Ex. 16:13-14)***

Whenever the Lord was pleased with the children of Israel, it is written, ***“For the seed shall be prosperous, the vine shall give its fruit, the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew – I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these.” (Zech. 8:12)***

When He wanted to punish them for their iniquities, He said, ***“Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruits.” (Haggai 1:10)***

As the dew cools, moistens and prevents the strong heat of the sun, also Jesus came as decent dew, ***“My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?” (Ps. 42:2)*** He cooled and soothed our souls with His teachings, life and good example, ***“Let my teaching drop as the rain, my speech***



distill as the dew, as raindrops on the tender herb, and as showers on the grass.” (Deut. 32:2)

As for the winds, we have talked previously about them, the church always asks the Lord in its prayers to bless the winds of the heaven for the sake of plants and fruits of the year.

In the atmosphere, there is a gas called Ether, which is a very fine gas, it could never be seen or felt, yet it is well known through the great advance of technological instruments. This Ether occupies the whole universe, we can never feel it unless the sense of touch in us is a million times more advanced. It is finer than air and stronger than steel. It stops the crash of planets and stars in space.

And, while some scientists do not believe in the existence of God because they have not physically seen Him, they believe in other materials they have not seen, such as Ether. Here, we remember the beautiful verse said by St. Paul, ***“For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”***
(Rom. 1:20)

❖ **[Bless the Lord, O you nights and days, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

The settled sequence of day and night, short and long, according to the different seasons of the year is by itself a

continuous praise to the Wise God, as David says, ***“Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.” (Ps. 19:2)*** This means, that the sequence of day and night utters speech, not vocal, but through meditation and praise to the Wonderful Creator, ***“The day is Yours, the night also is Yours; You have prepared the light and the sun. You have set all the borders of the earth; You have made summer and winter.” (Ps. 74:16-17)***, thus he says, ***“Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefiits, The God of our salvation! Selah” (Ps. 68:19)***

The daytime reminds us of every good deed that we have to complete, according to the commandments, ***“Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.” (Gen. 2:15)*** ***“When the sun rises, they gather together and lie down in their dens. Man goes out to his work and to his labour until the evening.” (Ps. 104:22-23)*** Night time reminds us of getting ready to repose and the eternal life. Daytime also reminds us of God, Who is, ***“This is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” (1 John 1:5)***, but night time warns us to escape the eternal darkness and head towards heaven where, ***“Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).” (Rev. 21:25)*** ***“The Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me-” (Ps. 42:8)***

This means that God commands His loving kindness and His angels to surround us at daytime, where we go out



for work and travel, being exposed to dangers and troubles. When night comes and we go back to our homes safely, we thank and glorify God as He had protected us from sins and temptations on that day, this is the church's prayer in the sunset Absolution after sunset prayer in the Agpeya.

During daytime, we glorify God through our good deeds towards others, while at night we glorify God with our praises and prayers, as Mar. Isaac says. **[Night is specified just for prayers]**, also David says, ***"I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed."*** (Ps. 77:3), ***"I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, and my spirit makes diligent search."*** (Ps. 77:6), ***"I remember Your name in the night, O Lord, and I keep Your law."*** (Ps. 119:55), ***"At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You, because of Your righteous judgements."*** (Ps. 119:62), ***"my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches."*** (Ps. 63:5-6)

One of the blessings of night is that a person comes back to calmness and serenity, giving an account of his trespasses while at work or under stress, so he sits with himself, and with God, offering daily repentance according to the Prophet's advice, ***"Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still."*** (Ps. 4:4), who has preceded us in this practice, thus he says, ***"I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night"***



*seasons.” (Ps. 16:7). Also, he is offering us a high example of repentance and purity saying “**I am weary with my groaning; all night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears.**” (Ps. 6:6).*

So, in real repentance, a person cries out in the Absolution of the Prayer Before Sleeping, **“O Lord, forgive us all those sins we committed against You this day...”**

Night also reminds us of Christ’s Second Coming, **“And at midnight a cry was heard; “Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!”” (Matt. 25:6)**, and at the end, Jesus advises us, **“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” (Matt. 25:13)**

A believer always tries hard with his soul, which usually yearns to sleep and rest – saying ‘keep your watch my soul, keep awake and shout, Holy, Holy, Holy ...’, then ‘awake and light your lamp with the oil of joy’.

At night human beings have good rest, getting ready for another day of hard work, also the animals, but as for the plants, it absorbs the heat and light of the sun during the day, then at night respiration takes place, taking oxygen necessary for its flourishing. **“O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions.” (Ps. 104:24)**

❖ **[Bless the Lord, O light and darkness, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**



“The day is Yours, the night also is Yours; You have prepared the light and the sun.” (Ps. 74:16), so as the Bible says, “Then I saw that wisdom excels folly. As light excels darkness.” (Ecc. 2:13), “Truly the light is sweet, and it is pleasant of the eyes to behold the sun;” (Ecc. 11:7)

The light blesses You Lord, because it reminds us of You, the True Light, giving light to the whole world.

It blesses You, reminding us of Your Transfiguration where, ***“and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.” (Matt. 17:2)***, also it differentiates between the good and the bad, ***“For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” (John 3:20)***

A robber hates light, because it prevents him from stealing, also the killer, the adulterer... ***“But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (John 3:21)***

Blessed is that Light which appeared to Saul of Tarsus, and transferred him from the darkness ***“They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.” (Acts. 26:5)***, to the Light of the New Testament.



Darkness also blesses You O Lord, because when it is dark we remember the tomb and Hell, so we tremble and flee to You crying out.

Darkness glorified You Lord when it prevailed the earth on the sixth hour of Your Crucifixion; many of the attendants glorified You, *“So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, ‘Truly this was the Son of God’.” (Matt. 27:54) “And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned.” (Luke 23:48)*

When it is dark, we put lights on, so that we can see and perform our jobs, remembering Your blessed words, *“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” (John 8:12)* then we can comprehend St. Paul’s words *“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.” (Eph. 5:8)*, so we offer You the appropriate praise to You, as St. Peter says *“... that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)*

❖ [Bless the Lord, O frost and cold, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

The frost is tiny little pieces of ice falling because of the extreme coldness of the clouds. It is a tool of chastisement in Your hand O Lord, You use it to chastise

the sinners. It was one of the ten plagues on the land of Egypt *“And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.”* (Ex. 9:23-26) About this severe plague, David says, *“He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost. He also gave up their cattle to the hail, and their flocks to fiery lightning.”* (Ps. 78:47-48)

On their way to the Promised Land, the Amorite kings tried to stop them, *“So the Lord routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.”* (Joshua 10:10-11)

On the final plagues coming on the world before Judgement Day, the hail will be the first, as St. John the Beloved says, *“The first angel sounded; and hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up,*

and all green grass was burned up.” (Rev. 8:7), also “And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.” (Rev. 16:21) We also bless the Lord in Psalm 147:16-18, “He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes; He casts out His hail like morsels; who can stand before His cold? He sends out His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, and the waters to flow.”

❖ [Bless the Lord, O snow and ice, praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

The snow is the natural water in oceans and seas, in the very cold areas, but the ice is the pure water frozen artificially in the laboratories to use it in different fields. It also resembles the fine white snow covering the tops of mountains and trees in winter, which melts quickly as the weather gets warm. In this, Job says, *“As drought and heat consume the snow waters, so the grave consumes those who have sinned.” (Job 24:19)*, and because ice makes one cool and fresh in a hot summer, so Solomon the king says in Proverbs, *“Like the cold of snow in time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him, for he refreshes the soul of his masters.” (Prov. 25:13)* David the Prophet asks the Lord to *“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” (Ps. 51:7)*, and this is the will of God for us to be as white as snow, so He says, *“Come now, and let us reason together”, says the Lord, ‘though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as*



snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool'. ” (Is. 1:18)

During His Transfiguration the Lord’s clothes resembled the pure white snow, *“His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.” (Mark 9:3)*

The white colour of the snow is a sign of holiness, purity of heart and chastity, and the church uses this colour in the priests’ and deacons’ garments resembling God, *“His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;” (Rev. 1:14)*

❖ [Bless the Lord, O You lightnings and clouds, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

“Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.” (Ex. 19:16), “So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. Then the Lord came down in the cloud, and spoke to him,” (Num. 11:24) So, in the Old Testament, the Lord used to talk to the people through clouds and lightnings, as David the Psalmist says, *“He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar; they kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them.” (Ps. 99:7)* The heavy thick clouds denote God, Who is concealed *“Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O*



God of Israel, the Saviour!" (Is. 45:15), also God Who is Incomprehensible, Unlimited...

It also denotes the sins of human beings, which form a wall between heaven and earth, as for the lightning, it denotes God's wrath, ***"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."*** (Rom. 1:18)

Clouds carry rain to the dry lands, turning them into fruitful fields, and the people praise the Lord Who ***"Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."*** (Acts. 14:17)

Our fathers the Apostles were like clouds carrying plenty of spirituality blessings, with all the richness of Jesus Christ. They filled the whole world with the heavenly teachings; their spiritual rains produced fertile fields full of virtues, giving fruits hundredfold, thirty and sixty.

When the Lord ascended to heaven, He was carried by a cloud, and so will everyone see Him in His Second Coming, ***"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*** (Matt. 24:30), ***"Clouds and darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the fountain of His throne. A fire goes before Him, and burns up His***



enemies round about. His lightnings light the worlds; the earth sees and trembles.” (Ps. 97:2-4), as for those who will still be alive “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thes. 4:17)

❖ [Bless the Lord, all the earth, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1), “The Lord by Wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens.” (Prov. 3:19) God created the earth in a very strange power, “He stretches out the north over empty space; he hangs the earth on nothing” (Job 26:7), also David the Psalmist says, “To Him who laid out the earth above the waters, for His mercy endures forever;” (Ps. 136:6). Thus the earth is hanging with a miraculous Divine power, which makes us praise and glorify the Lord. Everything is perfectly designed for the weight of the earth, the speed of its rotation, “He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct, He who teaches man knowledge?” (Ps. 94:10)

Let us meditate in this amazing incident, *“So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies.” (Josh. 10:13)*, and this was according to Joshua’s desire so that he could defeat the Amorites, obeying God’s orders, Who is the God and King of all nature.

Another amazing incident was, *“So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the Lord, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.”* (2 Kings 20:11). How could this unusual thing happen? It is the obedience of nature to its Creator, thus we all cry out, *“O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, who have set Your glory above the heavens!”* (Ps. 8:1)

The land, like all other creatures, is an honest servant to God’s will, if God is pleased with people, their land will give forth fruits, *“You visit the earth and water it, You greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; You provide their grain, for so You have prepared it, You water its ridges abundantly, You settle its furrows; You make it soft with showers, You bless its growth. You crown the year with Your goodness, and Your paths drip with abundance. They drop on the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side.”* (Ps. 65:9-12), *“Lord, You have been favourable to Your land; You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.”* (Ps. 85:1), *“So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from the land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.”* (Ex. 3:8), *“For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey;”* (Deut. 8:7-8)

If the Lord is pleased with those who fear His Holy Name *“He turns a wilderness into pools of water, and dry land into watersprings. There He makes the hungry dwell, that they may establish a city for a dwelling place, and sow fields and plant vineyards, that they may yield a fruitful harvest. He also blesses them, and they multiply greatly; and he does not let their cattle decrease.”* (Ps. 107:35-38)

But if He is displeased and wants to chastise them, *“The heavens will reveal his iniquity, and the earth will rise up against him. The increase of his house will depart, and his goods will flow away in the day of His wrath.”* (Job 20:27-28) The earth will rise up against him – means will not give fruits, *“You shall carry much seed out to the field but little in, for the locust shall consume it. You shall plant vineyards and tend them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. ”* (Deut. 28:38-40), *“He turns rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of those who dwell in it.”* (Ps. 107:33-34)

God uses the land as a means of chastisement, as what happened to Qorah, Datham and Ebiram *“Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. So*

they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly.” (Num. 16:31-33)

The land also is a symbol of the church, as the Psalmist says, ***“Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Ps. 37:3-4)*** i.e. join the congregation in the church, keep the holy right faith in order to get saved, for there is no salvation outside the church. Worship the Lord in spiritual joy and pleasure, being in His presence in His holy house, in order that He might give you the desire of your heart, if it is useful to you and according to His Holy Will.

The Land also gives us a great lesson in humbleness, if you put anything on the ground, it never falls, because it is already below, one of the saints described humbleness as “a land carrying virtues”, so, a humble person never puffs up or falls no matter the amount of fruits of the Holy Spirit he is bearing.

The land reminds us with our dusty nature, where we came from, ***“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” (Gen. 2:7)*** remembering that one day we will go back to dust, ***“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” (Gen. 3:19)***



The saints always advise to look down to the land bowing our heads in humbleness.

St. Ephram once learnt a useful lesson from a lady, while he was walking, the lady kept staring at him, so he asked her, [“why are you staring at me?” She answered, “Staring at you is normal for me because a woman was created from a man’s rib, but you were created from earth, you should always look down”].

If we see a good land and bad land, look inside your heart, see what kind of land it is, does it have the richness of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, or is it dry and empty of any good thing?

The land reminds us of the new land in the Heavenly Kingdom, *“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” (2 Peter 3:13)*

❖ **[Bless the Lord, O You Mountains and hills, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

The warmest and strongest prayers and praises have risen from the mountains and hills, either by the saints, or the Lord Himself during His Incarnation.

If a monk is praying and praising in a mountain or hill, there he will see no one else but Jesus. (*Matt. 7:18*)

The mountain was Jesus’ favourite place, where he spent lots of time there, because He had nowhere to lay down His head amongst the people, “So He Himself often



withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.” (Luke 5: 16) St. John the Beloved wrote this down in touching words saying, ***“Then the Jews said among themselves, ‘Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?’ But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ” (John 7:35, 8:1)***

The mountain had seen many times Jesus fervent prayers and sighs, ***“And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.” (Mark 6:46)***.. As an experienced inhabitant of the hills and mountains, Jesus used to take His disciples to lift their hearts and eyes up, away from the troubles of the world, ***“And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.” (John 6:3)***, even at his last farewell hours, he accompanied them to the mountain, ***“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.” (Matt. 26:30)***

Jesus is the humble meek lad of the mountains whom the bride in Song of Songs saw and thus says, ***“The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.” (Song of songs 2:8)***, He is ***“Make hast, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.” (Song of songs 8:14)***

All these mountains, which the feet of Jesus had touched, were blessed, churches and monasteries were built there, and there are lots of prayers and liturgies rising up from



these holy places, blessing the Lord who granted us the Holy Salvation.

The more we go deeper in our spiritual life and inner wilderness, climbing up towards the high spiritual peaks, the greater is the fight of the devil, because it gets more envious, taking advantage of this chance, showing us all the kingdoms and glories of the world, ***“And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’” (Matt. 4:9)***

What would be our response towards such a temptation of pride and vainglory? Many had won different battles, but failed in front of this cursed bright one. Thank God, although the high mountain (or the high spiritual level) is a chance for this temptation, yet Christ with His victory over it gave the example for many saints to despise the vainglory saying with their Master, ***“Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.” (Matt. 4:11)***

Let us sit among the congregation and listen to Jesus on the Sermon of the mount!! Let us calm down all our senses sitting at the Feet of Jesus, Who, when He opens His Mouth, ***“You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever.” (Ps. 45:2)*** because, ***“His mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!” (Song of songs 5:16)***, and get the special blessing of those who listen and act, ***“And having come in, the angel said to her, ‘Rejoice, highly favoured on, the Lord***



is with you; blessed are you among women!” (Luke 1:28)

Let us go with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, *“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves.” (Matt. 17:1)* where we can witness Jesus’ Transfiguration, and there we will *“see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2)*. When our souls will be nourished with Jesus, we will say with Peter *“Lord, it is good for us to be here” (Matt. 17:4)*

Transfiguration is the state of grace which fills the heart which is not looking anymore for worldly matters, it is the fullness of the soul who climbed on top of the mountain of soliloquy and retreat, longing to see Jesus, and *“no one but Jesus only” (Matt. 7: 18)*

- ✠ This is a token for what we will enjoy in heaven.
- ✠ Let us live in prayers and devoutness, and offer ours to God, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1)*
- ✠ Let us not imitate the children of the world and be patient till the Lord is Transfigured for us *“Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.” (Song of songs 4:6)* And so, we keep following Jesus, from one mountain to another, till we reach the Mountain of Ascension, *“and raised us*

up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” (Eph. 2:6)

- ✠ The mountains also are a symbol of the saints and their steadfastness, although they are exposed to many external hardships, yet they are strong when facing fights and tribulations.
- ✠ Sometimes different contractions and earthquakes hit the mountains, so they crack and fall down in pieces, the same could happen on the spiritual level, if pride and haughtiness hit great saints, they easily fall, yet, if they repent and regain their humbleness, they will be accepted through God’s mercy, that is why St. Paul warns us, *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. 10:12)*
- ✠ Moses and Aaron asked Pharaoh to let them go with the children of Israel to worship the Lord in the wilderness, *“Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel; ‘Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness’. So they said, ‘The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days’ journey into the desert and sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.’” (Ex. 5:1,3)* Yet Pharaoh refused to let them go and said, *“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, ‘Go, sacrifice to your God in that land.’” (Ex. 8:25)* i.e. to worship the Lord, in the land of Egypt, but Moses refused firmly *“And Moses said, ‘It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians*



before their eyes, then will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as He will command us.” (Ex. 8:26,27), and he insisted, until Pharaoh gave up at last, “So Pharaoh said, ‘I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me.’” (Ex. 8:28)

- ✠ The saints knew that God is pleased with the worship in the wilderness, so they inhabited the mountains and deserts till these places were turned into great worshipping places, from which the Lord smells the sweet aroma of sacrifices and incense of prayers.
- ✠ Our father Abraham lived in Moriah mountain, where he experienced many tribulations, yet, he became a great saint in his faith, about when it was said, *“Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him.” (Is. 51:1-2)*
- ✠ Moses, the great prophet, lived in the wilderness of Midian for forty years, where he learnt the skills of leadership and how to stand before the Lord, *“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was*

burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn. So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!' and he said, 'Here I am' Then he said, 'Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.' Moreover He said, 'I am the God of your father – The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said: 'I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.' (Ex. 3:1-10).

- ✠ In the wilderness of Sinai where he lived for another forty years, he met the Lord many times, and he was handled The Commandments written by the finger of God. His face used to be luminous after meeting God and coming down the mountain. On the



mountain he saw a model for The Tabernacle, there also, he died lonely and deserved to be buried by the hands of the Lords, ***“So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.” (Deut. 34:5,6)***

Then the Lord sent the Archangel Michael to guard his blessed body against the devil’s meddling, in order not to reveal it to the children of Israel lest they worship him instead of God. (***Jude 9***)

- ✠ Elijah was a man of the mountains, he experienced the power of prayers in the Carmel Mountain, he resisted the prophets of the Baal, and he stopped the rain, and then pleaded to God to rain. When he escaped he headed to Horeb Mount, where he met God, ***“and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.” (1 Kings 19:12)***

- ✠ Elisha experienced heaven’s sustain when he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire, ready to defend him against the army of Aram. (2 Kings 6:17). He also used to live in the Carmel Mountain, so when the son of the Shunamite woman died, ***“And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel. So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, ‘Look, the Shunammite woman!’” (2 Kings 4:25)***

- ✠ John the Baptist lived in the Mountain of Judea all his life, where he was growing in body and spirit; he was there until, ***“So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of***

his manifestation to Israel.” (Luke 1:80). The wilderness made of him a courageous man, witnessing for the truth, fearing no one even Herod the tyrant king!! There, he learnt devoutness in the world’s pleasures and fearing nothing, in this, St. Augustine says. [I stood on the top of the world when I didn’t desire anything, when I didn’t fear anything]

The monk lived in the mountains following the footsteps of St. John the Baptist in devoutness and continuous presence before God. We cannot talk about all the fathers, the saints, the hermits, the Archimandrites, *“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trail of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive*



the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.” (Heb. 11:32-40)

What could we say about great saints of monasticism like St. Anthony, St. Paul, and St. Macari, St. Amoun, St. John the Short, St. Bishoy ... those who turned the wilderness into ***“a city for habitation” (Ps. 107:36)***

- ✠ In the wilderness those saints reached high spiritual levels, about which all generations are talking, they were described by one of the fathers as earthly angels and heavenly human beings.
- ✠ ***“For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” (Is. 55:12)***
- ✠ ***“Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.” (Amos. 9:13)***
- ✠ ***“Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for He is coming to judge the earth, with righteousness He shall judge the world, and the people with equity.” (Ps. 98:8-9)***
- ✠ ***“Mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars;” (Ps. 148:9)***

❖ **[Bless the Lord, all you things that spring up on the earth, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

“Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth’; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” (Gen. 1:11-12)

It was pleasant for God’s eyes that He created the plants and trees, to give forth fruits according to its kind, and in keeping this law, the trees and plants are glorifying the Great Creator and testifying His everlasting wisdom.

The plants bless the Lord as they grow according to His order, to become food for His living creatures, to keep living and moving, ***“And God said, ‘See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed, to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to the bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food’; and it was so.” (Gen. 1:29-30)***

At that time, there was no thorns and thistles, but all were useful and good trees and plants.

Then, when Adam sinned, God brought forth thorns and thistles, also to glorify Him rather than Adam who fell, ***“Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of***



which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’ ‘Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.’ (Gen. 3:17-18). These thorns performed a great role to fulfil God’s plan of salvation when they made a crown of thorns and put it on Jesus’ head, thus confessing His Kingdom and Authority, even without intending to do so, *“And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His head, and began to salute Him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews.’” (Mark 15:17-18)*

There are some specific plants and trees, which glorify the Lord, such as:

✠ **The Wheat:**

Out of which the clean pure flour is processed, then we use it for baking the Offertory, which is then turned into Christ’s Life Giving Body.

✠ **The Vine:**

It has a beautiful spiritual aspect, out of the grape juice, mixed with water, we have the Blood of Christ, after Its sanctification, which is shed for the whole world, he who drinks of it – with repentance – will gain eternal life.

The vine is also a symbol of Christ, *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.” (John 15:1)*, also the church, *“Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts; Look down from heaven and see, and visit this vine” (Ps. 80:14)*, also St. Mary who carried the Cluster of Life Who gave life to the world dead in sin.



✠ The Olive Tree:

The olive tree also has a special spiritual tune; it is the tree of peace, under which our Lord Jesus – The King of Peace – had rested many times, when He used to go to The Olive Mount.

The olive oil is used in the Mystery of “the Unction of the Sick”, in the Holy Mayroun, through which we get the Holy Spirit in Baptism; it is the seal of confirmation of the Holy Spirit. Lanterns in churches are lit with olive oil for glorifying the Lord and a symbol of His Watching Eye guarding His church.

Lanterns are also lit before the saint’s bodies and icons, for glorifying the Lord Who worked strongly with them, so they became light for the whole world, people saw their good deeds and life, so they glorified their Father Who Art in Heaven.

❖ [Bless the Lord O you fountains. Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

Abraham, the father of fathers said in his blessing to Joseph his son, *“By the God of your father who will help you, and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb”* (Gen. 49:25). ‘The deep that lies beneath’ is the spring water, which leaks towards the porous layers of the land and land on hard rocks, thus it stays there until, with one way or the other, it comes out, sometimes by flowing in springs, or through digging. The pure spring water is

considered a main source of water for the Nomads, by which they live, plant, bring up cattle... etc.

Thus, the fountains are glorifying the Lord because they revive a dry dead land that is why our fathers Abraham and Isaac cared for digging springs and there were lots of fights concerning this matter in the Old Testament.

Isaiah the Prophet says, *“Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants. Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. The new wine fails, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh.”* (Is. 24:1,6,7). Also in confirming God’s kindness and tenderness towards His Creation, *“The poor and needy seek water, but there is none, their tongues fail for thirst. I, the Lord, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. “I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine and the box tree together”* (Is. 41:17-19) David the Psalmist also says, *“He turns a wilderness into pools of water, and dry land into watersprings. ³⁶There He makes the hungry dwell, that they may establish a city for a dwelling place, and sow fields and plant vineyards, that they may yield a fruitful harvest.”* (Ps. 107:35-37)



- ✠ The fountains are a symbol of eternal rest for those who are coming out of great tribulation, *“They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”* (Rev. 7:16-17)
- ✠ The fountains are also strong weapons of chastisement in the hand of the Lord, so, during the flood, *“In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”* (Gen. 7:11)
- ✠ There are also spiritual fountains that give glory and blessing to the Lord:

1. The Fountains of Thankful Lips:

David the Psalmist says, *“My lips shall utter praise, for You teach me Your statutes. My tongue shall speak of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness”* (Ps. 119:171-172), *“Take words with you, and return to the Lord. Say to Him, “Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously, for we will offer the sacrifices of our lips”* (Hosea 14:2), the sacrifices of our lips are thanksgiving for the Lord Who takes away all iniquity. The Lord Himself commands us saying *“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”* (Ps. 50:15). St. Paul the Apostle advises us to use the holy fountain of our lips to praise

the Lord, *“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”* (Heb. 13:15)

2. The Fountain of the Heart:

The fountain of the heart supplies words to the mouth, that is why there are different kinds of speeches coming out of people’s mouths, *“The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness. The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.”* (Proverbs. 15:2,28), *“My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”* (Ps. 45:1) and that is because *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”* (Luke 6:45) A person whose heart is pure of any evil or sin, could never utter rude words or nonsense *“³The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips”* (Proverbs 16:23). So, it is a shame that curse and blessings come out of the same mouth, *“Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.”* (James 3:10-12)

3. The Fountain of Tears:

Blessed is the person who mingles his prayers with his tears, ***“I am weary with my groaning; all night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears” (Ps. 6:6), “My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, “Where is your God?” (Ps. 42:3)*** David knew the power of tears and its effect on God Himself to gain His acceptance and kindness, ***“Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; do not be silent at my tears; for I am a stranger with You, a sojourner, as all my fathers were” (Ps. 39:12).*** We can know the value of tears because the Lord, ***“You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book?” (Ps. 56:8),*** as a very precious thing, as a great power quenching the blaze of eternal fire, that is why the Lord says, ***“Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me.” (Song 6:5).*** Jeremiah the Prophet knew all this about tears, and he was called the Weeping Prophet, ***“My eyes overflow with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people. My eyes flow and do not cease, without interruption, till the Lord from heaven looks down and sees.” (Lam. 3:48-50).*** He wished, ***“Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” (Jer. 9:1)*** How wonderful and precious are those tears, Jesus Himself says, ***“Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.” (Luke 6:21)***



4. **The Sealed Fountain:**

“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon” (Song of songs 4:12,15). With these sweet words Christ communed His bride in the Book of Song of Songs.

Who is the Bride?

Some says she is St. Mary, others the church, others say she is the soul of a believer. Actually, the bride whom the Lord loves is all of these; we cannot just choose one interpretation and neglect the others.

St. Mary is the Bride without marriage: the perpetual Virgin, she is a “garden closed, a spring shut up.” This spring shut up glorified and honoured the Lord in her famous praise, *“And Mary said: 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour’ (Luke 1:46-47)* She used to see the miracles of her Blessed Son, and to glorify Him inside her heart, *“Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart” (Luke 2:51)* She is still glorifying the Lord with the heavenly hosts and all the saints. She also glorifies the Lord through her wonderful apparition and miracles everywhere.

The church is also the bride of Christ: about which St. Paul says, *“For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor.*



11:2) Thus, the church is a spring shut up consecrated for Christ only. It is also a spring of living water where the Lord had entrusted the blessings of the Holy Spirit. They sanctify, confirm and quench her children's thirst, "***They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light***"
(Ps. 36:8-9)

The soul of the believer: saved by Christ's Blood is a garden closed and a spring shut up. It is a 'holy of the Lord', and only for the Lord, it praises and glorifies Him. David the Prophet urges the soul consecrated to the Lord to praise and overflow in its glorification in spiritual praises and hymns "***Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name***" (Ps. 103:1)

❖ [Bless the Lord, O you seas and rivers, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

The salty water of the sea resembles the world with its troubles and temptations, but the fresh water resembles the spiritual deeds, and the words of God's saints inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Red Sea blessed the Lord when it was split, "***And with the blast of Your nostrils the waters were gathered together; the floods stood upright like a heap; the depths congealed in the heart of the sea***" (Ex. 15:8). This same sea, which was an obstacle in the way of the children of Israel, became a means of salvation, and a tomb to their enemies!! Many times, we look at temptations as horrible and choking,



but the Mighty Hand of God can turn them into a blessing and grace in our lives.

- ✠ When Jonah the Prophet disobeyed the Lord, ***“But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.” (Jonah 1:4)***, thus the sea made Jonah confess his fault and said ***“So he said to them, ‘I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.’” (Jonah 1:9)***, also the sailors ***“Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, ‘Why have you done this?’ For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them” (Jonah 1:10)***. Jonah knew that the mighty tempest of the sea was because of him, ***“So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.” (Jonah 1:15)***. So, the sea was an instrument of chastisement in the hand of God, which made Jonah confess his fault and pray deeply to the Lord while in the whale’s belly.
- ✠ The sea also blessed the Lord because it made the Gentiles to know God and fear Him, ***“Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows” (Jonah 1:16)***
- ✠ The sea blessed the Lord when Jesus was going to the country of the Gergesenes with His disciples, ***“And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep” (Matt. 8:24)***. When they woke Him up,



He rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm, *“So the men marvelled, saying, ‘Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’”* (Matt. 8:27), repeating with the Psalmist *“O Lord God of hosts, who is mighty like You, O Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them”* (Ps. 89:8-9). The sea is the creation of the hands of the Lord, it is an obedient servant to His orders, as David the Prophet says, *“The sea is His, for He made it; and His hands formed the dry land”* (Ps. 95:5), also *“He stirs up the sea with His power, and by His understanding He breaks up the storm”* (Job 26:12).

- ✠ The sea blessed the Lord when He was going to Capernaum with His disciples, *“Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing.”* (John 6:18) and when they willingly received Him into the boat, *“and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going”.* (John 6:21). How did Jesus reach the boat? He was walking on the sea, and so Job was true when he said, *“He alone spreads out the heavens, and treads on the waves of the sea”* (Job 9:8).
- ✠ Jesus gives the believers the power to do the same works which He does and greater, as He asked Peter to come and walk on the water, and Peter did, *“Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God’”* (Matt. 14:33)



- ✠ During St. Paul's journey to Rome, while he was captured, the wind and tempest were so strong, so he made use of this chance and talked to them about God, Whom he worships, and the angel was sent to him saying, ***“Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you” (Acts. 27:24)*** i.e. joining the Christian faith after being saved, and they were 276 persons in the ship, ***“and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.” (Acts 27:44).***
- ✠ The world is a big sea; the wicked children of the world are like a tempest, ***“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” (Is. 57:20)***, yet the Lord is stronger in the Highest. No matter how the temptations of the world around us are strong, because, ***“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1)***
- ✠ The rivers also glorify the Lord; the River Nile showed God's power and authority when its waters turned into blood in one of the Ten Plagues, so ***“The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.” (Ex. 7:21).***
- ✠ The Jordan River was also split before the children of Israel, ***“and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan***

overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.” (Joshua 3:15-17), also for Elijah before he was taken in the chariot of fire, “Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water, and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground” (2 Kings 2:8), the two were Elijah and Elisha. The same happened with Elisha, “Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?” And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that and Elisha crossed over.” (2 Kings 2: 14). The Lord was glorified when the water of The Jordan River healed Noaman the Syrian from his leprosy “And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean." (2 Kings 5:10)

- ✠ When the iron axe head fell in the Jordan River, “*But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron axe head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, "Alas,*



master! For it was borrowed." So the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float. Therefore he said "Pick it up for yourself." So he reached out his hand and took it." (2 Kings 6:5-7). The borrowed axe is a sign of the Spirit which God gave us as a trust, the water is a sign of sin, in which we drown ourselves, and the stick is a sign of the Holy Cross, on which our Lord offered us eternal salvation through His Crucifixion.

- ✠ On the Jordan River, The Holy Trinity appeared clearly: The Son being baptised, the Father in heaven saying "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, and the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus like a dove (Matt. 3). The waters of the Jordan River cleansed the sins of many people, ***"Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him" (Matt. 3:5).*** Water is also used in Baptism, not to cleanse the body, but ***"There is also an antitype which now saves us, baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)***
- ✠ Water is added to the wine for the Holy Communion, and the priest also uses water in washing his hands before the Offertory. Having clean hands would also remind the priest of having a pure heart, that his prayers might be accepted, and that he would be worthy of partaking of the Holy Communion.



- ✠ The church uses water in the Laqqan Prayers in Epiphany, Maundy Thursday and the Feast of the Apostles, and through the prayers on this water, it becomes so powerful in healing and casting out demons. For example, in the Laqqan of Epiphany the priest signs the water with the cross while saying [sanctify this water Amen. To be a source of blessing Amen. To absolve sin Amen. To heal illness Amen. To be dreadful to demons Amen....]
- ✠ *“The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves” (Ps. 93:3), also “Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord,” (Ps. 98:8). It is the human rivers, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38)*
- ✠ The Holy Apostles, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, their voice reached all the ends of the earth *“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.’ (Acts. 2:14). Three thousand people believed after St. Peter’s sermon. The rejoice of bringing people through preaching is expressed in “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” (3 John: 4)*
- ❖ [Bless the Lord, O you whales and all that moves in the water, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]



He who does research in the marine life will notice amazing things about this wonderful world, he can cry out with David the Prophet, ***“O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions. This great and wide sea, in which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great. There the ships sail about; there is that Leviathan which You have made to play there”*** (Ps. 104:24-26)

- ✠ He uses the big whales, which God created in the oceans, for specific jobs that no one else can do, as what happened with Jonah the Prophet, ***“Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights”*** (Jonah 1:17). It was normal procedure that the whale would have eaten Jonah, but God preserved him, changing the nature of the whale and its digestive system. The whale also swam through the Divine guidance towards the shore, ***“So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.”*** (Jonah 2:10) and again, this is contrary to what it is supposed to do, which is catching a prey, not throwing it out of its belly.
- ✠ Fish was the favourite food for Lord Jesus, as we know in the two miracles of feeding the multitudes (Luke 9 and Matt. 15). Also, after His Resurrection, when the Lord appeared to His disciples, ***“But while they still did not believe for joy, and marvelled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some***



honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence” (Luke 24:41-43)

- ✠ When He appeared to them on the sea of Tiberias *“Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.” (John 21:9,10), “Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"-- knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.” (John 21:12,13).*
- ✠ The fish was an obedient creature to the Mighty God in the miracles of catching the fish (Luke 5 and John 21).

❖ **[Bless the Lord, all you birds of the sky, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

The birds have different voices according to their kinds, they all glorify God Who gives them food in due time, *“They went up over the mountains; they went down into the valleys, to the place which You founded for them” (Ps. 104:8).* They also praise Him through the flipping of their wings, flying in the shape of the cross.

- ✠ Let us learn a lesson from the birds who are always happy and singing, although they get their food day by day, and they would not know what is going to happen next, yet they depend on the Lord thankfully, as the Lord says, *“Look at the birds of the air, for*



they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matt. 6:26).

- ✠ Let us learn the beautiful characteristics, which glorify God in the birds, as Solomon the Wise says, ***"Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6).*** The dove of Noah is a symbol of the children of peace. When she left the Ark the first time, there were the clashing waves, rotten corpses floating, so it returned back to the peaceful Ark. So the children of God, when they live in the world with all its cruelty and iniquity, when they see the victims of sin, they flee to the church, the ark of salvation, where they find Christ (The other Noah), waiting for them, stretching his arms and pulling them saying "enter into the Kingdom of Your Lord".
- ✠ The second time it came back with an olive leaf in her mouth, and up till now, peace is pictured as a dove with an olive leaf in her mouth. So, to become children of peace we have to seek it always, ***"And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!'" (Rom. 10:15).***
- ✠ Through the birds, Noah used to know the day and night. It is written in Manuscript No. 27 in El Syrian Monastery:

[The Ark was tightly closed and it was painted in tar from inside, so Noah could not tell if it was day or night without the birds' help. At night the owls used to cry out, after two hours, the dogs barked, after four hours at midnight the geese and ducks quacked, followed by the roosters' crow. At dawn the birds and swallows sang and by sunrise all birds and animals were praising and glorifying God. This was very useful for Noah to know the times of the flood, as well as the hours for prayers].

❖ [Bless the Lord, all your wild beasts and cattle, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

“The beast of the field will honour Me, the jackals and the ostriches, because I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen.” (Is. 43:20). They glorify the Lord because He gives them food in due time, *“You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing” (Ps. 145:16).* God, in His great tenderness, cares for the animals exactly as He cares for human beings, *“Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are a great deep; O LORD, You preserve man and beast” (Ps. 36:6),* also, *“For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is destruction; their throat is an open tomb; they flatter with their tongue. Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against You. But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You.” (Ps. 5:9-11).*



Our Lord Jesus was born in a manger surrounded by the animals, while people refused to give Him a clean place to sleep in. He was warm and protected in this small manger. Also, when Jesus was on the Mount of Temptation, it is written ***“and was with the wild beasts”***. (***Mark 1:13***) They never hurt Him as they knew He was their Creator, they smelled His Divinity and Tenderness.

Here, it is very clear that the beasts glorify the Lord more than human beings, because when He left the mountain and went down, people started to persecute Him and it kept growing until He reached the Cross.

✠ The beasts used to glorify God in Adam's person before his fall. They smelled his holiness and were tame to him, he gave them their names and they served and obeyed him, according to God's order to Adam, ***“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.'”*** (***Gen. 1:28***). Before his fall, Adam was greatly honoured and feared by all creatures.

✠ The same picture of Adam before his fall is renewed in the saints who reached a high level of holiness. When Daniel the Prophet was thrown into the lion's den, it is written ***“My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him”*** (***Dan. 6:22***). The same lions that didn't hurt Daniel, ***“And the king gave the command, and they brought those***



men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions--them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.” (Dan. 6:24), so King Darius issued the decree, “Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; his kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall endure to the end. He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” (Dan. 6:25-27).

This scene was repeated many times with the Christian martyrs during the Roman era, beasts also used to be tame with saints who lived in the wilderness. When St. Paul departed, St. Anthony found two lions waiting his order to dig the grave, and after they finished they excused St. Anthony and left the place.

- ✠ A person who is so close to God, beasts even get scared of him. When St. Balamon asked his disciple St. John the Short to go and get the hyena, as soon as the hyena saw St. John the obedient disciple (who resembles Lord Christ in obeying His Father), it flew, but he kept running after her saying “My teacher wants you”, so she stopped and he brought her to St. Balamon! As for the domestic animals,



they help man in ploughing the fields and other jobs in agriculture.

✠ Job the Righteous advises us, ***“But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; and the fish of the sea will explain to you.” (Job 12:7,8)***

❖ [Bless the Lord, O you sons of man, worship the Lord, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

The Psalmist says, ***“For all are your servants” (Ps. 119:91)***. Everything worship the Lord according to its nature: the earth, the planets by their fixed rotations in a wonderful routine, seas, rivers, rains, animals by their help for mankind, birds by their beautiful voices...

As for man, he is asked to glorify God with his voice, words, attitude, behaviour and also worship, because worship makes man different from other creatures, it is one of the most characteristics of glorifying God, ***“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Ps. 95:6)***

When we worship and go down in humbleness of the body and soul, saying “Holy” we acknowledge God’s glory and greatness and the lowliness of ourselves ***“Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool-- He is holy.” (Ps. 99:5)***, also ***“Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy” (Ps. 99:9)***



There are many reasons for worshipping the Lord:

1. Thanksgiving Worship:

We bow and worship God when being saved from a temptation, passed an exam, getting something we longed for, healed from illness... etc.

As an example of that is the Samaritan who was one of the ten sick with leprosy whom Jesus healed, ***“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God,” (Luke 17:15)***, Jesus was so pleased and wondered, ***“So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?” (Luke 17:17)***

2. Prayer Worship:

God insists on worship during prayers, because it is a true expression of humbles and submission, so it is very appropriate for God Who is the First to be obeyed and submitted to, it is not optional. ***“Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve” (Matt. 4:10), “There shall be no foreign god among you; nor shall you worship any foreign god” (Ps. 81:9)***

Solomon the king after consecrating the Temple, ***“for Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven” (2 Chr. 6:13)***



3. Humbleness Worship:

It is offered to God in pleading and humbleness, during the times of hardship or temptations, asking God's support, for example, "*When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed*" (Matt. 8:1-3) also, "*While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, 'My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.'*" (Matt. 9:18), "*And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.'*" (Matt. 15:22), "*Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, help me!'*" (Matt. 15:25)

The church uses this humbleness worship in the Holy Lent asking for God's mercy, as well as in Passion Week. Metanias are forbidden on Saturdays and Sundays, the Pentecost (50 days), the Lordly Feasts and after partaking of the Holy Communion.

4. Worship in the Rites of the Church:

There are three kinds of worship actions in prayers.

First: Bowing the Head:



Bowing the head while standing with a slight bent forward, done if the words “holy” or “we worship” are said, also while signing the cross, at the beginning of the Agpia prayers.

The priest also bows his head during the Raising of Incense of the Holy Liturgy, while offering incense before the altar 3 hands towards the east: with each hand of incense he bows and says:

1. We worship You O Christ with Your Gracious Father and the Holy Spirit for You have come and saved us.
2. But as for me, I will come into Your house in multitude of Your mercy, in fear of You I will worship towards Your Holy temple.
3. Before the angels I sing for You and worship towards Your Holy Temple.

After offering incense to St. Mary, the Angels and St. John the Baptist, he bows his head eastwards saying, “Let us worship our Good Saviour the Lover of mankind for He had mercy upon us and came and saved us”.

The Priest bows his head at the end of each prayer in the Holy Liturgy and kisses the holy altar, also at the end of long prayers such as the Reconciliation Prayer, the Diptych (Commemoration of Saints) and so on ... except for the Litany of the descent of the Holy Spirit, he has to kneel on his knees before the altar.

Second: Kneeling:

(Eklenomen Taghonata), we use this action rarely now, because it is replaced with complete worship. We hear it in the Prayers of the Holy Lent. The priest kneels before



the altar at the time of the sanctification of the Bread and Wine.

The church was handed the set up of kneeling from the Holy Apostles and Disciples, ***“But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.” (Acts 9:40).*** St. Paul explains that kneeling denotes the depth and pleadings in prayers, ***“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,” (Eph. 3:14,16).***

The church traditions narrate that St. James, who was the first Bishop of Jerusalem, had very tough harsh knees such as those of a camel, because of too much kneeling.

Third: Worship:

This is done by kneeling and bowing the face to touch the ground in many occasions.

- a) Entering the church and worshipping before the holy altar saying, ***“But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; in fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple” (Ps. 5:7)***
- b) At the beginning of daytime Agpia prayers except on Saturday, Sunday and Lordly Feasts.
- c) At the beginning of the Morning Prayer [come on let us worship, come on let us ask Christ our God...]



- d) At the beginning of Raising Incense, the priest worships before the altar while saying [we worship You O Christ with Your Gracious Father and the Holy Spirit].
- e) At the descent of the Holy Spirit during the Holy Liturgy.
- f) When the priest says [the Holy Body, the Honoured Blood]
- g) At praying the last confession in the Holy Liturgy.
- h) Also, in all metanias, as St. Isaac says; [Don't think it's a trifle matter when you worship before God, nothing of any good deed is equivalent to completing your prayers with metanias]

❖ **[Bless the Lord, O Israel, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

While the Gentiles were worshipping different idols and statues, the children of Israel worshipped the Lord, the True God. The tribe of Levi were consecrated for the service of the Lord, “*So when David was old and full of days, he made his son Solomon king over Israel. And he gathered together all the leaders of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and above; and the number of individual males was thirty-eight thousand*” (1 Chr. 23:1-3). All these number of Levis were to serve the house of the Lord, 4,000 of them for praising and singing to the Lord, “*four thousand were gatekeepers, and four thousand praised the Lord with musical instruments, "which I made," said David, "for giving praise."*” (1 Chr. 23:5).

After rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemia the Prophet said, *“So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. One went to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuge Gate. After them went Hoshaiiah and half of the leaders of Judah, and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, and some of the priests' sons with trumpets--Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, and his brethren, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe went before them. By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the City of David, on the stairway of the wall, beyond the house of David, as far as the Water Gate eastward. The other thanksgiving choir went the opposite way, and I was behind them with half of the people on the wall, going past the Tower of the Ovens as far as the Broad Wall, and above the Gate of Ephraim, above the Old Gate, above the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and they stopped by the Gate of the Prison. So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me; and the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, Minjamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers sang loudly with Jezrahiah the director. Also that day they offered*

great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.” (Neh. 12:31-43), and this was fulfilment of the Prophecy, “Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! For He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your children within you.” (Ps. 147:12,13), “You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!” (Ps. 22:23), “But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel” (Ps. 22:3).

Isaiah the Prophet also says, *“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lords, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” (Is. 62:6,7).*

As for now, we do not think that the Lord accepts the prayers and praises of Israel after they rejected Christ, *“When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.” (Is. 1:15).*

Israel spiritually means the person who is always looking to God and contemplating in Divine matters. The Christian church is the real spiritual Israel, which makes the heart of our Lord rejoice. The church never stops saying *“Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart” (Ps. 73:1)*



❖ [Bless the Lord O you Priests of the Lord,
Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

Praising the Lord is gradually specified, so all the sons of men are called to praise, then Israel is specified, i.e. those who contemplate in Divine matters without ceasing, and of them, the priests are specified, as they are the messengers of the Lord of Hosts. They pray not for themselves only, but for the entire congregation. They are the most people who need to be in the presence of God at all times, having a very special relationship with Him.

The priests of the New Testament offer sacrifices for their sins and the ignorance of the congregation, they pray liturgies and perform the Seven Sacraments, they intercede for the church and the whole world because they are the delegates of the Lord of Hosts, they are totally consecrated, exactly like the Apostles, *“but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”* (Acts 6:4)

❖ [Bless the Lord, O you servants of the Lord,
Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

The servants of the Lord here means those who are clinging to the Lord all the time like Moses the Prophet, “after the death of Moses **the servant of the Lord**, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua, the son of Nun Moses’ assistant, saying: ‘**Moses My servant is dead**’”. (Joshua 1:1,2)

The wonderful title about Moses “the servant of the Lord” accompanied his name up till the Book of Revelations. *“They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and marvellous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!’”* (Rev. 15:3)

Out of God’s love to mankind, He called His children His special servants, so He rebuked Job’s friends saying *“And so it was, after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.’”* (Job 42:7,8). God repeated ‘my servant Job’ four times in only two verses!!

The Lord also called David the Prophet His servant, *“I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: Your seed I will establish forever, and build up your throne to all generations.”* (Ps. 89:3,4), and in the same Psalm, *“I have found My servant David; with My holy oil I have anointed him, With whom My hand shall be established; also My arm shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not outwit him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him. I will beat down*

his foes before his face, and plague those who hate him.

"But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him, and in My name his horn shall be exalted." (Ps. 89:20-24).

David, the great king was so proud being God's servant
"Lord, remember David and all his afflictions" (Ps. 132:1)

Daniel, the beloved man, *"At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision" (Dan 9:23),* he was called God's servant even by Darius the king, *"Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" (Dan. 6:19,20),* and because of the beauty of this title St. Paul used it as a start for his Epistles, *"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1),* he preceded the word 'servant' to 'Apostle' *"Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:1), "Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness" (Titus 1:1).*



The word servant, or slave, means that all his life and belongings are submitted between the hands of his Owner, Who can do whatever he wants with them.

This title ‘servant’ is so appropriate for the monks who left their families and came to live in the wilderness worshipping the Lord, like Anna, the prophetess, *“and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.”* (Luke 2:37).

These monks say with David, *“Thus my heart was grieved, and I was vexed in my mind. I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”* (Ps. 73:21-26)

❖ [Bless the Lord, O you spirits and souls of the just, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

The Three Young Saints departed from this world for a while, they hovered with their souls in the place of rest, where the souls of all the righteous were, because this happened before the Lord’s Resurrection and Paradise was still closed. There is a great resemblance between the souls of the righteous in Hades and the Three Young Saints in the furnace, because the souls of the righteous



were not burnt in the blazing Hades, exactly as the Three Young Saints who were not burnt amidst the furnace, but they were as if walking in a garden.

❖ [Bless the Lord, O you holy saints and humble of heart, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]

The prayers of the saints are greatly appreciated in the eyes of God, as it is written *“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints”* (Rev. 5:8). The Lord also smells the sweet aroma raising from the prayers of the humble *“The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit”* (Ps. 34:18), *“This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles”* (Ps. 34:6), *“For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly”* (Ps. 84:11). Some people pray for hours, yet in pride, so their prayers never reach God because, *“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight”* (Prov. 15:8), *“Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; though they join forces, none will go unpunished.”* (Prov. 16:5), *“One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination”* (Prov. 28:9). But the humble, even in prayer is a short one, God listens to him.



The tax collector prayed a very short prayer in humbleness, ***“And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’” (Luke 18:13)***, so it was like an arrow entering into the presence of God, and ***“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:14).***

In the Old Testament, Manassah the cruel king encouraged worshipping the idols, yet, when he repented and turned to God humbly, ***“Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.” (2 Chron. 33:12,13)***

The prayer of a humble person pleases the Lord, it never comes back empty, and the praise of the humble cheers God ***“This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bull, which has horns and hooves” (Ps. 69:31).***

❖ **[Bless the Lord, O Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.]**

These are the Jewish names of the Three Young Saints Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael, and they were different to their Assyrian names given to them in Babel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. Here, the Three Young Saints are encouraged to praise the Lord Who



saved them from the furnace, it resembles David the Prophet when he was encouraging himself to bless the Lord for all His goodness,

“Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.” (Ps. 103:1-5).

❖ [Bless the Lord, O you who worship the Lord, the God of our fathers, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever]

The whole church is asked to worship the Lord, but a true worshipper is the one who has consecrated all his life to the Lord, saying with the Psalmist, ***“In return for my love they are my accusers, but I give myself to prayer.” (Ps. 109:4)***

Those worshippers excelled in the skills of praising and worshipping the Lord, some of them reached a very high spiritual level in the relationship with God. They have a favour in the eyes of the Lord, He listens to them and responds to their prayers. May we have the blessings of their prayers. Amen.



CHAPTER TWO

WATOS EPSALY FOR THE THREE YOUNG SAINTS

It is a Greek and Coptic Watos Epsaly prepared in Greek alphabetical order from Alpha to Omega, and these two letter resemble the Lord, ***“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”*** (Rev. 22:13)

It is the same like the Third Haus, where all the creation is asked to praise and bless the Lord: the sun, moon, stars, rains, winds, animals, days and nights, rivers, man... etc. It is calling everyone to go ahead with the job they were created for ***“Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.”*** (Is. 43:7)

In addition to the lovely sentences like [Christ with His Resurrection defeated and humiliated death], also advising us, according to the Apostle’s words, to ***“that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,”*** (Eph. 4:22-23)

Another sentence: [Talk with the priests] which points to our spiritual conversation with out spiritual guides and confession fathers. The response of this Psaly is always **“Praise Him and exceedingly exalt Him”**.







CHAPTER THREE

A ROMAN PRAISE FOR THE THREE YOUNG SAINTS

SAID IN KIAHKAND JOYOUS SATURDAY
(TENIN)

It has a wonderful tune and meanings, calling the prayers and praises a “mental worship and sacrifice”. It also honours the Three Saints who deserved the Son of Man to walk with them amidst the fire and protect them, *“And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counsellors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.”* (Dan. 3:27), as well as urging us to offer thanksgiving after partaking of the Holy Communion, thus we gain the full blessings of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The disciples and Jesus gave us the example to follow, as it is written, *“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives”* (Matt. 26:30)





CHAPTER FOUR

WATOS EPSALY FOR THE THREE YOUNG SAINTS

(LOBSH EXPLANATION OF THE THIRD HAUS)

It has a beautiful tune, which changes according to the occasion of the year, it is a part of the prayer said by AZariah while in the furnace with Hananiah and Meshael (it is mentioned in the Apocryphal Book).

❖ [We follow You with all our hearts and we fear You, and we seek Your Face, O God, do not forsake us]

God is calling us and saying, *“My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.”* (Prov. 23:26), thus we can say with Azariah the zealous “we follow You with all our hearts”.

Out of His great love to mankind, God repeated this invitation many times, *“Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”* (Is. 55:6-7), *“And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: ‘Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with*

Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.” (2 Chron. 15:2),

God is honest, thus He mentions the price we have to pay for following Him, ***“Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matt. 16:24-25).***

The Lord also called some people individually, for example when He called Simon Peter and Andrew his brother, ***“Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”” (Mark 1:17),*** the sons of Zebedee ***“And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.” (Mark 1:20),*** Matthew (Levi) ***“As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.” (Mark 2:14).***

Many people follow the Lord for different reasons: some, to heal their bodies illness, ***“Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him--from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan” (Matt. 4:24-25),*** some for worldly goodness, like those whom Jesus filled with the five loaves and two fish, they



kept looking for Him, but the Lord, the tester of hearts and thoughts said to them, ***"Jesus answered them and said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.'*" (John 6: 26)**

Let us beware of following Jesus like those people, about whom St. Paul says, ***"whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things"*** (Phil. 3:19), also St. James rebukes these people saying, ***"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."*** (James 4:3)

Some people follow the Lord with a clean and pure heart, out of their full love, ***"So he answered and said, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbour as yourself.'"*** (Luke 10:27). They follow Him just because of His personality, ***"We love Him because He first loved us."*** (1 John 4:19)

This group of people will definitely benefit from the promises and blessings prepared by the Lord to those who follow His commandments:

1. **They will become fishers of men:** ***"Then Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.'*"** (Mark 1:17)
2. **They will walk in continuous light:** as He promises ***"Then Jesus spoke to them again,***

saying, *"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."* (John 8:12). Imagine the blessings of walking in the Light of God, you will never fall or stumble in the traps set by the devil.

3. **They will become witnesses, rebuking the sinners of Judgement Day:** when Peter asked Jesus, *"Then Peter answered and said to Him, 'See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?' So Jesus said to them, 'Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'* (Matt. 19:27-28)

The last word said by our Lord in the Gospels was *"you follow Me"* (John 21:22), and this word is so comforting and encouraging for us, as if Jesus leaving the door widely open throughout all ages to whoever wants to follow Him, as He promised us, *"Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him"* (John 6:27)

The Psalmist says, *"The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy"* (Ps. 147:11), also, *"To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal*



treacherously without cause” (Ps. 25:1-3). He advises us “Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore!” (Ps. 105:4) thus teaching us the life of uprightness “For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright” (Ps. 11:7)

❖[But rather deal with us, according to Your meekness, and according to Your great mercy, O Lord help us]

“If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.” (Ps. 130:3,4). Deal with us, O Lord, according to Your meekness and tolerate our weakness, You are humble and lowly in heart O Lord, one of Your characteristics is “A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory” (Matt. 12:20)

David the Prophet experienced the meekness and mercy of God, so he said, *“And David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.”” (2 Sam. 24:14)*

God’s mercy is very clear in the Holy Bible, although these people upset Him, He was merciful with Adam, Abraham, Jacob, the sinful woman ... etc.

God is merciful with those who react with His beautiful characteristics, so the Apostle says, *“Therefore consider*



the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off” (Rom. 11:22)

We pray in the parts of the Midnight Prayer “there will be no mercy to those who did not have mercy on others”. Help us O Lord, to be merciful with others, in order to have Your mercy.

❖[May our prayers ascend to You, O our Master, like burnt offerings of lambs and fat calves]

Azariah the zealous cried out to the Lord with his prayers like David the grandfather when there was no altar for the sacrifices in Babylon, so he said, ***“O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.” (Ps. 116:16-17), “Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice” (Ps. 141:2).*** He preferred the sacrifice of praises and prayers than that of animals and fats, ***“I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bull, which has horns and hooves” (Ps. 69:30-31).*** St. Paul talks about this in his Epistle to the Romans, clarifying the importance of worship in spirit and truth ***“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom, 12:1),***



again *“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15).*

❖ **[Do not forget the covenant which You had made with our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob Israel Your saints]**

The worshipper here reminds the Lord of His True Promises with the great Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that He will bless their descendants and be their God...

[O Saviour, spare Your humble people and do not let us perish, do not provoke your promise and do not deprive us of Your mercy for the sake of Your beloved Abraham, your servant Isaac and Israel Your saint]

The Church quoted this prayer for the third part of the Ninth Hour Prayer, while remembering the True Sacrifice offered on the Cross for the sake of the whole world.

❖ **[Bless the Lord all you nations, the tribes and all the kinds of tongues, Praise Him and Glorify Him above all forever]**

Bless the Lord means praise Him and confess the greatness of His glory, blessings and wonderful deeds in the seen and unseen creation.



How quick was God's response to Azariah's prayer, so the king said, *"Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."* Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon." (Dan. 3:29-30). Then, in Chapter Four he wrote, *"Nebuchadnezzar the king, to all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: peace be multiplied to you."* (Dan. 4:1), and the only response was glorifying God and praising Him: *"How great are His signs, and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation."* (Dan. 4:3).

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf, O Three Young Saints Sherach, Meshack and Abed-Nego that He may forgive our sins]

Finally, we ask the intercession of the Three Young Saints on our behalf before the Throne, that God might have mercy upon us and forgive our sins. The name Hananiah means: Jehovah is merciful, Azariah means: he whom God helps and Meshael means: who is like God.

The church celebrates the commemoration of these Three Young Saints on 10 Bashans.



It is worth mentioning that during the days of Pope Theophilus the 23rd Pope of Alexandria, he built a church on their name in Alexandria, then he sent St. John the Short to Babylon to bring their bodies to be kept in this church. St. John asked God's guidance, and he was taken on a cloud to Babylon where they were buried, so he heard a voice coming from their bodies saying [God will reward the Pope for building the church and you for coming to us, but our bodies will be here forever according to God's will. Tell the Pope, on the day of consecrating the church, leave the lanterns without oil and we will come and attend the consecration].

St. John was carried by the cloud back to Alexandria and told everything to the Pope. On the day of consecrating the church, all the Bishops, priests and congregation gathered with the Pope, and the lanterns were left empty without oil, then suddenly a bright light shone in the church and all the lanterns were lit, they stayed lit for a week without oil. Also, incense filled the church, the Pope saw the Three Young Saints walking with him while consecrating the church and he had their blessing and some of the congregation attending were worthy to see them too.

Many miracles were performed on that day and next morning the Pope prayed a Holy Liturgy and it was a great spiritual feast where they all glorified the Lord.

May the blessings of their prayers be with us all. Amen.





SECTION FIVE

THE COMMEMORATION

The commemoration of the Praise includes more saints than those mentioned in the Commemoration of the Holy Liturgy, and the church's aim is to:

1. Follow their lives, their strong faith and love to God, *“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” (Heb. 13:7)*, also *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1)*
2. Honour them because they suffered a lot for God's Name, Jesus even praised the woman who poured the fragrant oil on His Head, *“Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.” (Matt. 26:13)* as an example to be followed in honouring His saints.
3. Feel the unity of the struggling church (us) with the victorious church (in heaven), remembering the Apostle's words, *“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,*



and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1-2).

4. Give us a chance to ask for their intercession and to know something about their lives, because they are not dead, ***“For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him.” (Luke 20:38)***

We ask intercessions from St. Mary, the angels and St. John the Baptist, while we ask the power of the prayers of the rest of the saints.

We notice that there are saints who were not Egyptians, yet they are united with us in faith and doctrine, which proves that we are one ***“In the house of God, which is the church of the Living God, the pillar of the ground of truth” (1 Tim. 3:15)***



❖ [Intercede on our behalf, O Lady of us all, Mother of God, St. Mary the Mother of our Saviour, that He may forgive us our sins]

Mary means lady, and the Coptic Orthodox Church honours St. Mary as the Mother of God ***“For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed” (Luke 1:48)***, exactly the right honour, not exaggerating like some denominations, nor belittling her like others. She is the mother of God, the Second Heaven, the Mother of Light, and the Queen ...



The Coptic Orthodox Church celebrates her commemoration five times each year:

1. Her birthday 1 Bashans.
2. Her entrance into the Sanctuary 3 Kiahk.
3. Her departure 21 Toubah, at the year 44 A.D. at the age of nearly 59.
4. The ascension of her pure body 16 Misra.
5. The building of the first church on her name in Philippi 21 Baouna.

The church also celebrates her commemoration on the 21st of every Coptic month because many incidents in her life took place: her departure 21 Toubah, consecration of her first church 21 Bauouna, the miracle of melting the iron and saving Matthew the Apostle in 21 Baouna, as well as the consecration of many other churches for St. Mary on the 21st Baouna.

A sixth day of celebration now is 2nd April when she started her apparition in El Zeitoun Church in Egypt. The story of the wedding at Cane of Galilee reveals the strong intercession of St. Mary, and it has two main objectives:

1. Present our petition before Christ in faith that is not shaken.
2. If we want our prayers to be answered by the Lord, we have to carry out His commandments faithfully, as T. Mary told the servants, ***“Whatever he says to you, do it” (John 2:5)***



❖ [Intercede on our behalf, O holy Archangels, Michael and Gabriel that He may forgive us our sin]

Michael: a Hebrew name which means “Who is like God”. Archangel Michael is called Michael because he loves human beings and fights Satan on behalf of them (Rev. 12:7). Most Theologians believe that the angels have one chief angel depending on the following verses: *“Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” (Jude: 9), also “At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people.”(Dan. 12:1), “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought” (Rev. 12:7).* There are many other archangels for specific groups, but Archangel Michael is a general Chief.

The church celebrates Archangel Michael on 12 Hatour and 12 Baouna, also on the 12th of every Coptic month. May the blessings of his prayers be with us. Amen.

Gabriel: a Hebrew word which means ‘the man of God’, or ‘the Might of God’ because he informs us about the mighty works of God and His great deeds with us. The church calls him the ‘Announcer’ as he was the angel who brought the Annunciation to St. Mary about conceiving Lord Jesus the Logos in her womb.



The church celebrates Archangel Gabriel on 13th Hatour, 22 Kiahk, 30 Baramhat and 13 Baouna.

❖ **[Intercede on our behalf, O holy Archangels Raphael and Sourial that He may forgive us our sins]**

Raphael: a Hebrew name which means the compassion of God. He healed Tobiath's eyes, regaining his money and helping Tobit his son getting married.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 3 Nesi, when his church was built and consecrated by Pope Theophilus the 23rd.

Sourial: a Hebrew name which means the "blower of God", the church celebrates him on 27 Tubah, and it is written: [On this day the church celebrates Archangel Sourial, who announced the salvation to Adam and saved Joseph the Righteous from the Egyptian woman.

❖ **[Intercede on our behalf holy archangels Sadakiel, Sarathiel, and Ananiel, that He may forgive us our sins].**

These archangels are chief angels above some other angels, under the general chief Archangel Michael.

❖ **[Intercede on our behalf O Thrones, Dominions, Powers, the Cherubim and the Seraphim, that He may forgive us our sins]**



These are the names of 5 great ranks of angels, they are so sublime in their light and power, as well as being so close to God.

The Thrones: they are the angels forming the glorious chairs of the Divine Might.

The Dominions: The spirits that have dominions on people and angels in less ranks.

The Powers: the angels whom God have granted great powers to perform miracles.

The Cherubim: mean the angels with great knowledge and wisdom. The singular is Cherub.

The Seraphim: mean the angels blazing with fire. The singular is Seraph.

The Cherubim are described as ‘full of eyes’ and the Seraphim ”with wings’, glorifying God without ceasing.

❖ [Intercede on our behalf O four incorporeal
beasts, the ministers fervent as fire, that He may
forgive us our sins]

They are the rank of Thrones, carrying the throne of God,
*“Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.
And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne,
were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in
back.” (Rev. 4:6)* also, *“And above the firmament over
their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance
like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was
an likeness with the appearance of a man high above it.”
(Ezek.1: 26)*



The church celebrates their commemoration on 8 Hatour.

❖ **[Intercede on our behalf O Priest of the truth, the twenty four Presbyters, that He may forgive us our sins]**

These luminous priests are a spiritual rank, surrounding the Throne of God, interceding for humankind, offering God the prayers of the saints as incense coming out from the censers, which they are carrying. Each one of them has a violin with which he praises the Lord without ceasing. All the angels and heavenly hosts are standing around God's Throne, but these presbyters are sitting on chairs of light, carrying golden censers, and violins, bowing and worshipping in front of the True Lamb, asking forgiveness for human kind.

The church celebrates their commemoration on 24 Hatour.

❖ **[Intercede on our behalf O Angelic hosts and all the Heavenly multitudes before the Lord, that He may forgive us our sins]**

Here, we are asking the intercession of the 9 heavenly hosts altogether:

1. The Cherubim
2. The Seraphim
3. The Thrones
4. The Dominions
5. The Multitudes



6. The Authorities
7. The Powers
8. The Archangels
9. The Angels

The 10th rank are the saints who won victory on earth and after their departure they inherit the Heavenly Kingdom, being with the heavenly hosts, praising the Lord continuously as well as interceding on our behalf before the Throne of Grace.

There are a whole lot of different jobs delegated by God to these heavenly hosts such as: praying of the depressed people, serving the saints, guarding the believers, carrying the souls of the departed, fighting and defeating the devils, because as it is written in the Holy Bible, ***“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb. 1:14)***

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf, our masters and fathers the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob]**

Abraham: a Hebrew name which means a father to a multitude of nations (Gen. 17:5).

Abraham is the great father of fathers, the example of complete obedience, called the friend of God. He was born in Ur, his father was Tareh, this country used to worship idols, so the Lord ordered him ***“Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I***



will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:1-3). Abraham was 75 years old when he obeyed the Lord and went out of his country. He obeyed the Lord all his life, especially when he was ordered to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice.

He died at the age of 175.

Isaac: a Hebrew name means ‘laughter’. He is one of the three great Patriarchs, he is the son of Promise. He also obeyed his father Abraham when he was tied up and put on the altar as a sacrifice, symbolising Jesus Christ Who obeyed His Father till the cross.

He died at the age of 180.

Jacob: a Hebrew name which means ‘catching the heel’. He is the father of the 12 tribes of Israel, he suffered lots of troubles and temptations. He lived for 17 years in Egypt when his beloved son Joseph was the Prime Minister there, he died at the age of 174.

The church celebrates their commemoration on 28 Misra.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf, O perfect man, the righteous and the just Enoch, that He may forgive us our sins]



Enoch: a Hebrew name, which means ‘consecrated’ or ‘experienced’. The church gives three titles to this great man: perfect, righteous, pious.

He is Enoch about whom the Holy Bible wrote: “*And Enoch walked with God; and he was not found, for God took him.*” (*Gen. 5:24*). God took him, meaning he was taken alive, and he will come back with Elijah, fight the false Christ and then die.

He lived for 356 years before God took him.

❖ [Pray for the Lord on our behalf, O Elijah the Tishbite and his disciple Elisha, that He may forgive us our sins]

Elijah: a Hebrew name, which means ‘My God is Jehovah’, the Greek word for this name is Elias. He is called the ‘fiery prophet’ because of his zeal for worshipping the true God, and his hatred to worshipping the idols, which was common in Israel at the time of the cruel queen Jezebel. He had a great intimacy with the Lord, he prayed not to rain and it didn’t for 3 ½ years, then after killing the prophets of the Baal at Mount Carmel, he prayed and it rained. Elijah was taken to heaven alive in a chariot of fire, the church celebrates this event on 6 Tubah.

Elisha: a Hebrew name which means ‘God is salvation’. He followed Elijah as a prophet, and the Lord performed many miracles through him, even after his death, “*So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they*

spied a band of raiders; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.” (2 Kings 13:21). History records that Elisha’s body, together with St. John the Baptist’s body were transferred to Egypt. When St. Makarios – the Bishop of Edko martyred – he was buried with them, and at that time some miracles were performed from their bodies, some of which were:

A Mute Boy Speaks:

When they were placing St. Makarios’ body next to St. Elisha and St. John the Baptist, there was a mute boy 12 years old who saw St. Elisha the Prophet and St. John the Baptist embracing St. Makarios, so the boy spoke and shouted [Look dad, these two men are embracing the man who was martyred, they are telling him: welcome our brother, come and rest with us in peace]. All the people present witnessed the miracle and glorified the Lord.

Healing the Paralysed:

A paralysed person was creeping amongst the crowd asking for a charity, and accidentally he was pushed on the bodies, so he immediately stood up and started running everywhere and glorifying the Lord.

The church celebrates the commemoration of Elisha the Prophet on 11 Hatour.



❖ [Pray for the Lord on our behalf O Moses the Archprophet and Isaiah and Jeremiah that He may forgive us our sins]

These three prophets are considered the greatest among the prophets of Israel concerning the pouring of the spirit of prophecy on them remarkably. Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, 187 chapters, Isaiah wrote his book, 66 chapters and Jeremiah wrote his book 52 chapters and Lamentations 5 chapters.

Moses: A Hebrew name which means ‘taken from water’. He is the Archprophet who used to talk to God a lot. Brought up in Pharaoh’s house, he delivered the children of Israel from the slavery of Egypt. He led them 40 years in the wilderness tolerating their murmuring and weaknesses. He died at the age of 120 years, *“Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. Then the Lord said to him, 'This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.' So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.*



Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigour diminished. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended.” (Deut. 34:1-8).

The church celebrates his commemoration on 8 Tut.

Isaiah: a Hebrew name, which means ‘God Saves’. He was Isaiah the Son of Amos, who prophesied at the era of 5 kings of Judah about matters concerning Jerusalem, the glory of eternal life, the birth of Jesus Christ, His suffering and Crucifixion, as if he could see the entire incidents in details. That is why he is called the ‘Evangelist Prophet’. Manasseh the king cut his body in two with a wooden saw, and the church celebrates his commemoration on 6 Tut.

Jeremiah: a Hebrew name which means ‘God establishes’. He started his prophecy at the age of 15, according to the Divine order, *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” (Jer. 1:5).* He used to rebuke the people of Jerusalem for disobeying the Lord. He prophesied about the coming of Lord Jesus and His sufferings. He was martyred in Egypt when the Jews stoned him, the church celebrates his commemoration on 5 Bashans.



❖ [Pray for the Lord on our behalf O David the Psalmist, Ezekiel and Daniel, that He may forgive us our sins]

David: a Hebrew name which means ‘beloved’. He is the second king of Israel, born in Bethlehem Ephratha from the tribe of Judah. In his youth he killed a lion and a bear, he was strong and courageous. He killed Goliath the Palestinian and waived away the shame of his people. Samuel the Prophet anointed him as a king replacing king Saul, whom the Lord had rejected. Saul chased David a lot to kill him, but God saved him. God praised him by saying, *“And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’”* (Acts 13:22).

Our Lord Jesus Christ came from his generation, He is considered the sweet psalmist of Israel, *“Now these are the last words of David. Thus says David the son of Jesse; thus says the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel:”* (2 Sam. 23:1), he was so talented in music (1 Sam. 16: 18-23) and he organized the service of singing and praising in the house of God.

His psalms are full of prophecies about the birth of Lord Jesus, His Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and sitting at the Right Hand of the Father.

He died at the age of 70.



The church celebrates his commemoration on 23 Kiahk.

Ezekiel: a Hebrew name which means ‘God gives strength’. He is from a priestly tribe (Ez. 1:3). He prophesied about the perpetual virginity of St. Mary, *“And the Lord said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. As for the prince, because he is the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way.”*

(Ez. 44:2-3). His book contains 48 chapters. When he rebuked the children of Israel for worshipping the idols, they killed him.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 5 Bramudah.

Daniel: a Hebrew name, which means ‘God Judges’. He was born in Jerusalem of a noble family, and was captured with the Three Young Saints to Babylon. The four of them were chosen to serve in the king’s palace. God granted Daniel a Divine wisdom, he explained king Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, so the king appointed him as the ruler of Babylon. His enemies informed the king that Daniel and his three friends did not worship the golden statue, and so he was thrown in the lion’s den, where he was saved through the power of the Lord.



He prophesied about the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of Jesus Christ. His book consists of 12 chapters and the Protestants deleted the last three chapters, but they are written in the Apocryphal Book, and in the Non Protestant editions of the Holy Bible.

He was buried in Babylon.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 23 Baramhat.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Joachim, Anna and Joseph the elder and the righteous Job, Joseph and Nicodemus that He may forgive us our sins]**

Joachim: a Hebrew name which means ‘God revives’. He is the righteous Joachim the father of St. Mary the Mother of God, from Judah’s tribe. His wife Anna was barren, and through their pleading together, the Lord responded and granted them the sweet fruit St. Mary.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 7 Baramudah.

Anna: a Hebrew name which means ‘grace and kindness’. Born in Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah. Since her early childhood, the grace of God overflowed her, she was wise, kind, chaste and praying all the time. As she was barren, she kept pleading the Lord to remove this shame and He accepted her prayers.



When St. Mary was 3 years old, Anna offered her to the temple.

The church celebrates her commemoration on 11 Hatour.

Joseph the Elder: A Hebrew name, which means 'increase'. He is the righteous Joseph who deserved to be called the father of Jesus by the body, the Bible witnesses that he was righteous, *"Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly"* (Matt. 1:19)

He was from the tribe of Judah, and because of his righteousness God chose him to be the fiancé of the pure Virgin St. Mary, *"Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.'" (Matt. 1: 19-21)*

Joseph accompanied Lord Jesus and St. Mary in their journey to Egypt, then coming back to Jerusalem. He departed when Lord Jesus was 16 years old.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 26 Abib.

Job the Righteous: Job means repentant. He is a descendant of Sam, Noah's son's generation. The Holy Bible witnesses for Job that he was, *"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil."* (Job 1:1)

He lived a long time before the establishment of the Christian law, yet St. Paul's words were fulfilled in his personality, *"for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them."* (Rom. 2:14-15).

He was so rich, *"Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East"* (Job 1:3), and he used to offer sacrifices on behalf of his children, *"So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. Thus Job did regularly. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts."* (Job. 1:5).

Job prophesied about the coming of Lord Jesus Christ, *"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall*

stand at last on the earth;” (Job 19:25), also he believed in eternity and life after death, “And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:26).

Job had many virtues, some of which were:

1. Chastity:

People in his generation never cared about chastity, although they knew that impurity was the reason for the flood. Yet, Job the Righteous was a chaste person, as he says, *“I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?” (Job 31:1), also “If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbour’s door, then let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down over her. For that would be wickedness; yes, it would be iniquity deserving of judgment. For that would be a fire that consumes to destruction, and would root out all my increase.” (Job 31:9-12)*

2. Uprightness and Clearness:

He was a straightforward man in dealing with others *“If I have walked with falsehood, or if my foot has hastened to deceit, Let me be weighed on honest scales, that God may know my integrity. If my step has turned from the way, or my heart walked after my eyes, or if any spot adheres to my hands, Then let me sow, and another eat; yes, let my harvest be rooted out.” (Job 31:5-8), also, “Oh, that I had one to hear me! Here is my mark. Oh, that the Almighty*

would answer me, that my Prosecutor had written a book! Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, and bind it on me like a crown;” (Job 31:35-36)

3. Kindness and Compassion:

“Have I not wept for him who was in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor?” (Job 30:25), “If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me, or lifted myself up when evil found him. Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin by asking for a curse on his soul” (Job 31:29-30)

4. Merciful to the Poor and Needy:

“If I have despised the cause of my male or female servant when they complained against me, what then shall I do when God rises up? When He punishes, how shall I answer Him?” (Job 31:13-14), “For that would be wickedness; Yes, it would be iniquity deserving of judgment. For that would be a fire that consumes to destruction, and would root out all my increase. If I have despised the cause of my male or female servant when they complained against me, What then shall I do when God rises up? When He punishes, how shall I answer Him? Did not He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same One fashion us in the womb? “If I have kept the poor from their desire, or caused the eyes of the widow to fail, Or eaten my morsel by myself, so that the fatherless could not eat of it (But from my youth I reared him as a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow); If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or any poor

man without covering; If his heart has not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; If I have raised my hand against the fatherless, when I saw I had help in the gate; Then let my arm fall from my shoulder, let my arm be torn from the socket. For destruction from God is a terror to me, and because of His magnificence I cannot endure” (Job 31:11-23), “If the men of my tent have not said, "Who is there that has not been satisfied with his meat?" (But no sojourner had to lodge in the street, for I have opened my doors to the traveller);” (Job 31:31-32)

5. Worshipping God:

Job insisted on worshipping God although idolaters were everywhere during his time, *“If I have observed the sun when it shines, or the moon moving in brightness, So that my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand; This also would be an iniquity deserving of judgment, for I would have denied God who is above.” (Job 31:26-28)*

6. Total submission to the Lord, although he was very rich:

“If I have made gold my hope, or said to fine gold, "You are my confidence"; If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gained much;” (Job 31:24-25)

7. Living a continuous life of repentance:



“If I have covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom” (Job 31:33), “I would declare to Him the number of my steps; like a prince I would approach Him” (Job 31:37)

8. Courage:

“Because I feared the great multitude, and dreaded the contempt of families, so that I kept silence and did not go out of the door?” (Job 31:34)

When Satan saw that he was so righteous, *“Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?’” (Job 1:8)*, he asked God’s permission to tempt Job in his wealth, children and health, and God allowed Satan to do so for the following reasons:

- a. God noticed that there were some thorns of self righteousness growing in Job’s heart (Job 32:1), and because of God’s great love He didn’t want Job to get destroyed by this sin in spite of his many virtues, so God allowed these temptations to purify Job.

God’s plan succeeded extremely, Job was so humble at the end and said, *“Then Job answered the Lord and said: 'I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things*

too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, "I will question you, and you shall answer Me." "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:1-6)

- b. God knew how honest and strong Job was in his faith, thus, such a temptation will make him glitter and keep fast hold of the Lord stronger than before, as well as the great reward awaiting him.
- c. To make of Job an ideal example of patience and tolerance, as St. James says, *"But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing"* (James 1:4). He mentioned Job as an example to follow in patience and tolerance *"My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful."* (James 5:10:11)

This temptation revealed other hidden virtues in Job:

1. **Tolerating poverty after being so rich:**
He even rebuked his complaining wife saying, *"But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept*

adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (Job 2:10). He used to bless the Lord, "And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong" (Job 1:21-22)!!

2. Tolerating the physical pain:

"So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes." (Job 2:7-8), yet he said, "Man decays like a rotten thing, like a garment that is moth-eaten" (Job 13:28)

His countenance was completely different that when his friends came to him, *"And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great." (Job 2:12-13)*

3. Tolerating the death of all his children:

Job's virtues in this calamity was obvious, he lost his seven sons and three daughters on the same

day, not as a result of normal death incident for one or two, but because of a Satanic plan.

4. Tolerating others mocking him:

All his relatives and friends abandoned him, he tolerated this and rebuked them, *“Then Job answered and said; How long will you torment my soul, and break me in pieces with words?” (Job 19:1)*. He expressed his psychological pains because of others, *“My relatives have failed, and my close friends have forgotten me. Those who dwell in my house, and my maidservants, count me as a stranger; I am an alien in their sight. I call my servant, but he gives no answer; I beg him with my mouth.” (Job 19:14-16)*

5. The horrors of nighttime:

If a sick or tired person sleeps at night, he gets refreshed in the morning, but Job never found rest at night *“Then You scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions,” (Job 7:14)*.

At the end of the temptation God blessed and rewarded Job in wealth and in his children, *“He also had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jerimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch.” (Job 42:13-14)*, then, *“After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days” (Job 42:16-17)*.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 2 Bashans.

Joseph of Arimathea

Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man, it is mentioned about him, *“Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man”*. (Luke 23:50), also *“Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.”* (Matt. 27:57).

He was also a disciple of Jesus *“After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus”*. (John 19:38), when they arrested Jesus *“He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God”*. (Luke 23:51).

His relation and love to Jesus was hidden, until it was revealed on the cross, when he dared to ask for Jesus' Body to bury Him. *“So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph”*. (Mark 15:45), *“and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock, and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.”* (Matt. 27:60), *“then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before.”* (Luke 23:53)



It is taken for granted that this man believed and was baptised and gained eternal life.

May the blessings of his prayers be with us. Amen.

Nicodemus:

A Greek name which means a ‘noble man’

He was a Pharisee, Chief Priest, and a member of the Synhadrim Council. The Holy Bible describes him as ***“a ruler of the Jews.” (John 3:1)***. He came to Jesus by night and talked with Him about the spiritual second birth, he was convinced and admired Lord Jesus. He defended Jesus when the Pharisees attacked Him ***“Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?” (John 7:51)***. His love to Lord Jesus was clear when he shared Joseph in shrouding and burying Jesus ***“And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds” (John 19:39)***, which showed that he was very rich.

It is said that while Joseph and Nicodemus were burying the Lord Jesus, they heard angels from heaven singing “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Eternal” and they were completing the praise with “who was crucified for our sake, have mercy upon us”

May the blessings of their prayers be with us all. Amen.



❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf O Melchizedek and Aaron, and Zachariah and Simeon that He....]**

Melchizedek means the King of righteousness, and there's an interesting story about him:

When Jared the son of Mahalaeel, the sixth of Adam's generation was close to death, he called Enoch his son and Methusaleh, Enoch's son and said to them, "I know that soon you will leave this place, so whenever you depart, take the body of Adam our father with you, together with these three oblations, gold, incense and frankincense. Command your son to bury Adam in the middle spot of the whole world, let him consecrate one of his children to be a hermit for all his life, not to get married, or kill, or offer blood-sacrifices, but just sacrifices of water and wine, because from this spot the salvation of Adam will burst (referring to the prophecy of crucifying our Lord Jesus on Mount Golgotha). He will wear tiger's skin as his clothes, never shaves or trim his nails, and he'll be the Priest of God the Most High.

When God ordered Noah to build the Ark to be saved from the flood, Noah, took Adam's body and the oblations with him in the Ark. After landing on Mount Ararat, Noah asked his son Shem, together with Melchizedek to take Adam's body and bury it in the middle spot of the earth. He asked Melchizedek not to get married because the Lord had chosen him to serve Him, not to build a house for himself, or kill, or offer a blood sacrifice but his offerings should of water and wine, to wear clothes made of tiger's skin, not to shave



his head or trim his nails, and he'll be the only High Priest for God the Most High.

Shem did exactly what his father Noah asked him, together with Melchizedek, the angel of the Lord appeared to them and showed them where to bury Adam, and that was the Golgotha. So Melchizedek was one of Shem's grandchildren.

Melchizedek lived as a hermit in the woods around Jerusalem, when people knew about his piety, they used to offer him presents and offerings, yet he never accepted any, so they built an altar on top of Adam's tomb, then they built a city called 'Salem' which means 'Peace', which was later renamed 'Jerusalem' which means 'The light of Peace'. Melchizedek was the one who blessed Abraham after returning from the defeat of Chedorlaomer ***"Then Melchizedek King of Salem brought out bread and wine, he was the priest of God Most High and he blessed him and said 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High. Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand'". (Gen. 14:18-20)***

Melchizedek the priest and king is a symbol of Lord Jesus the King of kings, the Lord of lords and Chief Priest.

In Hebrew 7:3 it is mentioned about Melchizedek:

1. **"Without father, without mother, without genealogy"** which means that the priesthood of

Melchizedek was not inherited from his father or grandparents, as was the case in the tribe of Levi, where the priesthood was only restricted to the generation of Aaron the Priest, Moses' brother. This is assured by St. Paul's word, "without genealogy" i.e. his priesthood was not inherited but coming from God.

2. **"Having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually"**. This means that as a priest he had no beginning of day, as the Levi priest started their service at the age of 30, 'nor end of life', and they used to end it at the age of 50. But Melchizedek's priesthood was not restricted to this age, but he was made like the Son of Man, remains priest continually, as the Psalm says *"The Lord has sworn and will not relent, you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"* (Ps. 110:4)

Aaron:

He was the brother of Moses and the helper in all the great miracles that took place in Egypt. God chose him and his generation to be his priests. He was a priest for the children of Israel for 40 years in the wilderness. The church celebrates his commemoration on 1 Baramudah.

Zacharias:

Zacharias is a Hebrew name which means 'the mention of God'. He is the father of St. John the Baptist, from



the generation of Aaron the priest. The Holy Bible witnesses for him and Elizabeth his wife ***“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”*** (Luke 1: 6)

When the angel announced the birth of St. John the Baptist to Zacharias while offering incense in the altar, he did not believe, and he was mute till the birth of St. John (Luke 1: 57-79)

When King Herod ordered to kill all the children 2 years and under, Zacharias put John on the altar, where an angel came and took him to the wilderness, so the soldiers killed Zacharias after they couldn't find the baby John.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 8 Tut.

Simeon:

A Hebrew name which means listener or obedient. He is Simeon the elder, one of the 70 elders whom the Egyptian king Ptolemy Philadelphus ordered to translate the Old Testament. When he was translating Prophet Isaiah's book where it says ***“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel”***. (Is. 7:14), he didn't want to write 'the virgin shall conceive' lest the king would mock him, so every time he tried to change it and write 'the girl' or 'the woman' something stopped him.



On the spot, he fell into slumber where he heard in a vision a voice telling him *“you would not see death before you see Immanuel born of a Virgin”*, and it was so.

Simeon lived for 300 years till the birth of Lord Jesus, *“And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: ‘Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.’”* (Luke 2:25-32)

He blessed St. Mary and St. Joseph, and prophesised about Jesus’ service during His Incarnation *“(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed”*. (Luke 23:5)

The church celebrates his commemoration on 8 Amsheer.

❖ [Pray for the Lord on our behalf, O choirs of the Prophets and all the righteous and the just, that He may forgive us our sins]



The worshipper repeats his pleading to the Prophets and righteous saints of the Old Testament, those whom he mentioned, and the others whom he did not mention, like Sheth, Noah, Abel the righteous..., also the heroes of faith *“who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” (Heb. 11:33-34)*

He asks them all to plead to the Lord on our behalf to forgive us our sins.

❖ [Intercede on our behalf, O fore-runner and Baptist, John the Baptist that He may forgive us our sins]

John:

A Hebrew name which means “God have kindness”. He is the great St. John the Baptist, who deserved to baptise Lord Jesus in the Jordan River, he is the conjunction between the Old and the New Testament, the greatest of women born and the greatest Prophet, as Lord Jesus Himself had witnessed for him. He is John the Baptist, the son of Zachariah the Priest the son of Berechiah, his mother was Elizabeth. He was brought up in the wilderness of Jordan *“And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him”.* (Luke 2:40)



He was brave in truth, and rebuked Herod when he wanted to marry his sister-in-law (while his brother was still alive), and the result was that he was beheaded according to Herod's orders.

His holy body, together with Prophet Elisha's body are in St. Makarios' Monastery in Egypt.

The church celebrates his martyrdom on 2 Tut.

❖ **[Intercede on our behalf the hundred and forty four thousand, and the Celebate Evangelist, that He may forgive us our sins]**

The hundred and forty four celibate are mentioned in the book of Revelation *"Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth as found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God."* (Rev. 14:1-5)



These saints are crowned with all these virtues, so definitely their intercessions on our behalf are accepted before the Throne of Grace.

The Celebate Evangelist means St. John the Beloved disciple, because he was a celibate, never got married. The church celebrates his departure on 4 Tuba, also on 16 Bashans.

Note:

We notice that ‘The Commemoration of the Saints’ started with “Intercede on our behalf” for St. Mary and the Heavenly hosts, then “Pray for us” for the Prophets, then back to “Intercede on our behalf” for St. John the Baptist, the 144,000 celibate and St. John the Celibate Evangelist. The reason is that St. John the Baptist is placed in this position according to historical events, he is considered the conjunction between the Old and New Testament. We ask for his intercession, exactly like the intercession of St. Mary and the Heavenly hosts because Jesus witnessed for him, *“As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written; ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You’ Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” (Matt. 11:7-11)*



The 144,000 are also the New Testament saints who lived in purity and chastity, they are following God everywhere in heaven.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf our masters and fathers the Apostles, and the rest of the disciples, that He may forgive us our sins]**

❖ **[The Twelve Apostles of our Saviour Lord Jesus]**

1. **Peter:** means 'rock', martyred on 5 Abib
2. **Andrew:** means 'strong man', martyred on 4 Kiahk
3. **James:** (the son of Zebedee) means 'follower', martyred on 17 Baramudah
4. **John:** (the son of Zebedee) means 'God have kindness' departed on 4 Tubah
5. **Philip:** means 'the knight', martyred on 18 Hatour
6. **Bartholomew:** means 'the son of the plougher', martyred on 1 Tut.
7. **Matthew:** means 'the gift of God', martyred on 12 Babah
8. **Thomas:** means 'the son of the twins', martyred in 26 Bashans
9. **James:** son of Alphaeus, means 'follower', martyred on 10 Amsheer.
10. **Simeon:** (the zealous) means 'listener', martyred on 15 Bashans
11. **Thaddaeus:** means 'compassionate', martyred 2 Abib.



12. **Matteus:** “the gift of God”, was martyred on 8 Baramhat, who was chosen by the Apostles replacing Judas the Betrayer.

The rest of the disciples include all those who believed in Lord Jesus and followed Him, as written “*Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest*”. (Acts 9:1) Those people were called disciples until they had the new name Christians “*And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*” (Acts 11:26)

May the blessings of their prayers be with us all. Amen.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf, O blessed Archdeacon, Stephen the first martyr that He may forgive us our sins]

Stephen: A Greek name, which means ‘crown’. He is the first martyr in Christianity, one of the seven deacons appointed by the Apostles (Acts 6), also “*And Stephen full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people*”. (Acts 6:8) He was martyred when the Jews stoned him till death outside Jerusalem “*and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man names Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’.* Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud



voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin’. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:58-60)

Watching this scene, was the first seed of grace in Saul’s spirit, which led him to Christianity.

The church commemorates his martyrdom on 15 Tut, and the transfer of his holy body on 1 Tubah.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf O Beholder of God the Evangelist, Mark the Apostle that He may forgive us our sins]**

Mark: A Latin name which means ‘hammer’. He is John called Mark, the writer of the second Gospel, one of the 70 disciples and the Preacher of the land of Egypt. The Lord instituted the Last Supper in the Upper Room in his house, he is called ‘the Beholder of God’. He was martyred in Alexandria when the idolaters dragged him through the streets, till his flesh was torn out his blood splashed everywhere then they put him in prison where the angel of the Lord appeared and strengthened him and promised him the crown of martyrdom. Next morning they did the same until he yielded his soul in the hands of Lord Christ.

The church celebrates his martyrdom on 30 Baramudah, also on 30 Babah it celebrates the discovery of his head and the consecration of the first church on his name.



A new celebration was the arrival of his body from Rome to Egypt in the year 1684 for the martyrs, corresponding 1968 A.D.

May the blessings of the prayers of St. Mark, the great preacher of the land of Egypt be with us all. Amen.





CHAPTER TWO

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE MARTYRS

The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, as St. Paul says: *“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.”* (Eph. 2:20-21) Most of the prophets died as martyrs, either beheaded, stoned, cut with a saw... etc.

Our Lord Jesus, the Rock and Cornerstone of every church was crucified, because, as St. Paul says *“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission”*. (Heb. 9:22)

The Holy Apostles followed His footsteps in suffering and martyrdom, they all martyred except for St. John the beloved, yet he also suffered of torturing and exiling.

Then in the era of martyrdom the church offered a cluster of saints, popes, bishops, priests, deacons, monks and nuns, nobles and kings, soldiers, slaves and all ranks.

They all preferred martyrdom than escaping and saving their lives, as St. Paul says: *“women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.”* (Heb. 11:35)

Different means of torture included:

1. Scourging with whips with knots and pieces of heavy lead.
2. Combing the wounds and burning them with slaked lime and vinegar.
3. Tying them to the horsetails and dragging them along the streets.
4. Cutting the body members one piece after the other, taking off fingernails and teeth.
5. Throwing them in furnaces or on heated iron beds.
6. Tying the martyr in two tree-branches after getting the branches closer, so when the branches go back, the martyr's body is divided in two.
7. Hanging the martyr on a pole upside-down, or tying a heavy stone to his body.
8. Throwing the martyr in a lake of ice.
9. Throwing the martyr in boiling tar.
10. Removing the skin off the body.
11. Squeezing.
12. Stoning.
13. Putting the martyr in a pot filled with oil, tar and sulphur, then starting to heat it until it boils.
14. Tying then going over them with a wheel of nails.
15. Crucifixion.
16. Torturing the children before their parents, or slaughtering them on their mothers' laps.

In addition, there are many other tortures that are countless.



Inspite of all these savage tortures, the martyrs were always happy and yearning for being tortured for many reasons.

1. The Beloved Lord Jesus Christ was sharing their sufferings, supporting them with His grace and power, as the Prophet says: ***“In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old.”*** (Is. 63:9), He is the King Lord, ***“So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the Lord, and his soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel.”*** (Judges 10:16) ***“Then the Lord will be zealous for His land and pity His people.”*** (Joel 2:18) ***Nevertheless He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry.”*** (Ps. 106:44)
2. Sometimes, the Lord Himself came and comforted them, or St. Mary, an angel, one of the saints... These visions made them happy about their end and eternal life, giving them a push to continue in the path of martyrdom.
3. Sometimes, the Lord used to send an angel to lighten the sufferings of the martyrs, for example when throwing them in a pot of boiling tar or putting them on a heated iron bed with nails, the angel would flutter with his wings to cool down the heat. Also sometimes the Lord used to heal the martyrs completely of their wounds.
4. Sometimes, amidst the torture, the martyrs used to see an angel carrying crowns for them, so this

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scene filled them with total rejoice, making them tolerate the torture and looking forward to the crowns.

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THE MARTYRS OF THE COMMUNION OF THE PRAISE

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf O struggle
mantled martyr, my master Prince George, that
He may forgive us our sins]

George: a Greek name that means farmer.

He is the great martyr St. George, the Prince of martyrs, born in 280 A.D. in Cabaduk, Asia Minor. His father was Anastasious and his mother Theobesta. His father was a pious noble prince, and after his departure, the family moved to Palestine, the homeland of Theobesta. George joined the army and was a brave talented soldier. When Diocletian issued his decree to persecute the Christians, an angel appeared to George and ordered him to go and rebuke king Diocletian. The angel said to him *“you will be persecuted and tortured for seven years for the sake of Lord Jesus, and will die four times, three of which you will be revived, and on the fourth, Lord Jesus Himself will come and accept your soul where you will reach eternal happiness. Your name will be widespread throughout the whole world, many churches will carry your name and miracles will be performed. Be strong and of good cheer, I’ll be with you in all your troubles”*.

St. George immediately went to king Diocletian and torn out the decree rebuking him. When the king failed to lure him to offer incense to the idols, he started torturing



him with all savage kinds of torture. For seven years St. George was tortured by different kings, he died three times and the Lord revived him. Many became Christians when seeing his courage and the miracles, some of these were King Diocletian's wife and daughter and many guards and soldiers in the palace.

On the fourth time, he was beheaded on 23 Baramudah on the year 303 A.D. His body was buried in Palestine where many miracles were performed.

May the blessings of the prayers of the Great Martyr St. George be with us all. Amen.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Theodorus and Theodorus, Leontius and Panikarus that He may forgive us our sins]**

❖ **Theodorus:** a Greek name meaning 'the gift of God'. He is St. Theodorus El Meshriky, born in 275 A.D. and He was tortured during the time of King Diocletian. He was martyred when they burnt him alive on 306 A.D. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 12 Tubah and on 28 Amsheer for transferring his holy relics to Nicus.

❖ **Theodorus El Shatby:** His father was a Christian and his mother was a pagan daughter to one of the nobles in Upper Egypt. He was baptised when he grew up and became a commander in the army. He



declared his Christianity and was burnt alive in 320 A.D. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 20 Abib, 15 Hatour transferring his holy relics to his homeland Shateb, 20 Hatour for consecrating the church of both St. Theodorus El Mishriky and El Shatby.

❖ **Leontius:** means a lion. Born in Tripoli for Christian parents, he used to advice his colleagues the soldiers in the army to believe in the True God Lord Jesus Christ. When the commander knew about him, he tortured him till death. The Church celebrates his martyrdom on 22 Abib, and 1st Baouna for consecrating his church.

❖ **Panikarus:** He was a commander in the army, and one day he saw a vision as if he was being lifted to heaven and being baptised in a lake of fire, then they gave him to St. Theodorus El Mishriky. The next day St. Tawadros and St. Leontius came and told him that they also saw the same vision. The King ordered to put him in prison when he knew he was a Christian, where he saw Lord Jesus in a vision strengthening him. After many horrible tortures he was beheaded. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 5 Tubah.



[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Philopatir Mercurius and Abba Mina and Abba Victor, that He may forgive us our sins]

Philopater: a Greek name that means He who loves the Father.

Mercurius: a Greek name which means the Chief of conservative soldier. He was born in Rome at the early 3rd century of pious parents. He joined the army and was so close to Diosious the Idolator king. Once, when he was going out for a battle, an angel appeared to him as a person wearing white clothes and gave him a sword saying, “if you win victory over your enemies, remember the Lord your God”. [that’s why he is called ‘The Two Sworded’]. When he won victory, he refused to offer incense to the idols, thus the king started torturing him severely, until he was beheaded on 250 AD.

Abba Mina: Mina means “Amen” or “always”. He is the famous Mar Mina the Miracle Performer. His father was a governor, and his mother conceived him according to a heavenly promise. At the age of 14 he lost his parents, then he joined the army and was appointed in a great position. After 3 years, he left the army and went to the desert in the year 302 AD, where he saw a vision urging him for martyrdom. He went back and confessed his belief in Jesus Christ. He was tortured and finally beheaded on the year 309 AD gaining 3 crowns: one for celibacy, one for devoutness and monasticism and for martyrdom. He was buried in Marriout, Alexandria where his monastery exists until now. The church



celebrates his martyrdom on 15 Hatour, consecrating his church on 15 Baouna.

Abba Victor: Victor means victory. His father Romanos was an idolater and a minister to King Diocletian, but his mother Martha was a Christian. He used to help the poor and he despised the lust of the world, also rebuking his father for worshipping stones. His father was so furious, so he sent him to the governor who cut his tongue and plucked his eyes out, but the Lord strengthened him. Finally he was beheaded, there is a church called St. Victor the son of Romanos in Abnaoub, Manfalout in Egypt. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 27 Baramudah.

[Pray to the Lord on our behalf master Claudius and Theodorus, Abba Ebeskhyroun and Abba Issac that He may forgive us our sins]

Claudius: A Latin name which means lame. He was a close friend to St. Victor the son of Romanos. He was tortured for proclaiming his Christianity till the governor shot him with a spear and he was martyred. His body was buried with St. Victor in Antioch. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 11 Baouna, and the consecration of his church in Assiut, Egypt on 11 Kiahk.

Theodorus: He is the martyr and monk St. Theodorus, born in Alexandria of Christian parents. He became a monk and he used to argue with Arius' followers refuting their heresy and wrong attitude. He was then tied to a horse's tail and dragged in the streets of the city where he



was martyred. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 6 Baouna.

Abba Ebeskhyroun: Abba means father, Ebeskhyroun means the strong. He is the great martyr Abba Ebeskhyroun El Qellini, from Qellin, in Kafr El Sheikh, Egypt. Born to Christian parents and joined the army during the reign of king Diocletian. He was tortured and jailed several times for refusing to offer incense to the idols. Governor Arianus tortured him badly and finally he was beheaded. His body was transferred to St. Bishoy Monastery and there is a church carrying his name there.

The Miracle of Transferring the Church with the Congregation

In his church at Qellin, while they were celebrating the wedding of 7 marriages, the persecutors decided to attack the church at night and kill the believers, but before carrying out this Satanic plan, miraculously the church was transferred with the congregation from Qellin in the north to El Biaho in the South, thus they were all saved through the prayers of St. Abba Ebeskhyroun. The church still exists carrying his name in El Biaho. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 7 Baouna.

Isaac: A Hebrew name which means 'laughter'. He is the great martyr Isaac El Darawi. At the time of Diocletian, when Isaac was 25 years old, he was sleeping in the field where the angel of the Lord appeared to him saying, "Peace be to you, pious Isaac, why are you sleeping here and everyone is struggling for God's



Name?” Then, the angel showed him a crown and continued, “Be strong, this crown is prepared for you. Go to Tamoh (in Beni Sweif) and confess Lord Christ and you’ll die for His Holy Name and inherit eternal happiness”.

The next day, he did as the angel had told him and went to Tamh, where he was tortured and beheaded. Many sick, blind, lame and dumb people took some of his blood and were healed from their sicknesses immediately. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 6 Bashans and the consecration of his church on 6 Tubah.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Basilidus and Eusebius, Macarius and Philotheus, that He may forgive us our sins]**

Basilidus: Derived from the Greek word Basili that means king. He was a great minister in King Nomarius kingdom and he is the father of the two martyrs Eusebius and Macarius, uncle of martyr Theodor El Meshriqi. His wife is the sister of Romanos the minister, and the aunty of martyr Victor. When he declared his Christianity, the king was really scared because Basilidus was of a noble descent, but minister Romanos encouraged the king to arrest and torture them. He suffered horrible tortures such as combing his body with an iron comb, throwing him in boiling tar, cutting his body with an iron saw, until he was finally beheaded. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 11 Tut.



Eusabius: meaning pious. He is the son of Wasilidus, tortured harshly like his father and martyred. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 23 Amsheer.

Macarius: means happy. He is the second son of Wasilidus. King Diocletian exiled him to Alexandria where he was tortured by Armanious the governor. Then they cut his tongue and arms, and then he was beheaded. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 22 Abib.

Philotheus: means he who loves God. Born in Antioch for idolater parents who used to worship a calf, but the saint always refused to do the same, he rather kept searching to know The True God. One day, the Lord sent him an angel who told him about the Lord Jesus and the salvation on the cross. He got baptised, together with his parents, after the calf killed them and he revived them from death. The Lord granted him the gift of healing. King Diocletian called him one day and asked him to offer incense to the idols, when he refused, the earth was opened and swallowed the statues, thus many people believed in Jesus. The king then ordered to behead them all with the saint. There is a church carrying his name in El Motiah in Assuit, Egypt, where part of his body is kept (his arm). The church celebrates his martyrdom on 16 Tubah.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Pisura and Abba Epshoi, Abba Isi and his sister Theda that He may forgive us our sins]**



Abba Pisura the Bishop: Pisura means the hot sun. He was the Bishop of Fowah, El Gharbeyah governorate, Egypt. King Diocletian tortured him together with three other Bishops: Parikhous, Kabaligous and Theodore, and finally they were all beheaded. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 9 Tut.

Abba Epshoi: Epshoi means feast. He is the brother of martyr St. Abba Hur, born in Antioch and ordained as a priest. When his brother Abba Hur and their mother were martyred in Alexandria, he came to see their bodies, so he also yearned for martyrdom. He confessed his Christianity before the governor who tortured him then he was beheaded. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 1 Nisea.

Abba Isi and Theda his sister: Born to righteous rich parents in Beni Sweif, Egypt. St. Isi met St. Victor son of Romanos in Alexandria and they were both tortured there. One day, an angel appeared to his sister Theda and asked her to go and join her brother, where she was tortured with him, finally both were beheaded. The church celebrates their martyrdom on 8 Kiahk.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf O struggle martyrs Justus, Apali and Theoclia that He may forgive us our sins]**

Justus: a Latin name meaning Justice. He is the son of King Nomarius, and a leader in the army. When he announced his Christianity, King Diocletian sent him



together with his wife Theoclia and son Apali to be tortured in Alexandria. They were all beheaded after being badly tortured. The church celebrates Justus' martyrdom in 10 Amsheer, Theclia in 11 Bashans and Apali in 1 Mesna.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Jacob that He may forgive us our sins]

Jacob: Or Jacob the chopped. He used to work in the palace for King Socroud in Persia. This king was an idolater worshipping the fire. When the Bishop burned a temple for the idols, this king ordered to kill the Bishop and torture all Christians. Jacob was so scared and he denied his Christianity, but when his wife and mother knew, they sent him a letter rebuking him. He regretted and went to the king announcing his Christianity. The king started cutting his body parts one after the other while still alive, but he kept thanking the Lord, finally he was beheaded. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 27 Hatour, the consecration of his church on 16 Kiahk.

Sergious: He was a soldier in King Maximianous' army, when the king noticed that he insisted on announcing his Christianity, he sent him with his friend Wakhos to Syria to be tortured, where he was dragged in the streets and then he was beheaded. He has a church in El Rasafa in Syria and a church in Old Cairo, where there is the cave in which the holy Family were hiding for a while when they were in Egypt. The church celebrates his



martyrdom on 10 Babah, the consecration of his church on 19 Harour.

Wakhos: St. Sergious' companion, he was slaughtered in Syria, tied to a rock and thrown into the sea. The angel of the Lord appeared to two hermits and ordered them to go and pick up his body from the seashore. When they went to the seashore, they found a lion and an eagle guarding the body. They glorified the Lord then buried him in a cave. The church celebrates his martyrdom on 4 Babah.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf the struggle martyrs Qosman, his brother and their mother, that He may forgive us our sins]**

Qosman: means the permanent mummified. Qosman and his brother Damian were doctors, while their brothers Antimous, Lawandious and Ebrabious were monks, and their mother was St. Thaodotsi who became a widow in her early age, so she kept bringing them up in God's fear. When Diocletian knew that Qosman and Damian were curing people without charging them fees, as well as preaching about Jesus Christ, he started torturing them. Then he called their 3 brothers and mother and ordered to squeeze them, then to throw them in the furnace for three days, but the Lord healed them. Their mother was strengthening them, so he cut her head in front of them, hoping they might give up, and finally the five were beheaded. There is a church named after St. Qosman and St. Damian in Giza, Egypt. The church



celebrates their martyrdom on 22 Hatour and the consecration of their church on 22 Baouna.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Kir, John his brother, Barbara, Yolyana and Demiana, that He may forgive us our sins]**

Abba Kir and John: They were born in Alexandria, Abba Kir was a hermit since his early age, while John was in the special guarding group of the king. They went to Antioch, but they were sent back to Alexandria where they were martyred. There is a church carrying their name in Alexandria, and one in Old Cairo. The church celebrates their martyrdom on 6 Amsheer, and the feast of transferring their relics to their church on 4 Abib.

Barbara and Yoliana: St. Barbara was the daughter of pagan parents. Her father built her a palace where she used to look at the stars searching for the True God. It happened that erudite Oregon was there, so he taught her about Christianity and she became a Christian. When her father knew, he wanted to kill her. While running after her, she faced a huge rock, but the rock was split for her and she passed through, then the rock came back a whole rock. Her father went around the rock, and took her to the Governor to be tortured. The Lord Jesus appeared to her in jail, healed and comforted her, finally she was beheaded by her father's hand, who was totally deprived from any filial kindness.

Yoliana was attending while they were torturing St. Barbara, and she saw Lord Jesus strengthening her, so



she also was beheaded. Her relics were transferred to Egypt in her church at Old Cairo. The church celebrates their martyrdom on 8 Kiahk.

St. Demiana: Demiana means gentle. She is one of the most famous Egyptian martyrs. She was the only daughter of Mark the governor of Borellas and Zafaraan area. Her father built her a palace to worship the Lord when she refused to get married, then 40 virgins joined her, consecrating themselves as brides to the Lord Jesus Christ. When Diocletian started his persecution of the Christians, he attracted Mark, St. Demiana's father and made him offer incense to the idols. When she knew about it, she went and rebuked him for this disgraceful act, so he went and declared his Christianity, he was beheaded on the 5th of Abib. Later, Diocletian was told that Demiana was the one who made her father go back to Christianity, so he sent one of his princes together with 100 soldiers to convince her to offer incense for the idols. Refusing his offer and temptations, he started torturing her harshly, but Archangel Michael used to come and soothe her wounds and heal her. Many people believed in the Lord Jesus because of St. Demiana. Finally, she and the 40 virgins were beheaded, together with another 400 people on the same day, on 16 Tubah. During the reign of King Constantine, St. Helana the mother queen built a church on top of the burial place of the holy bodies, and it was consecrated by Pope Alexandrus on 12 Bashans. There is a great monastery for St. Demiana now in Belqas, Egypt where the celebrations of her commemoration take a whole week on 12 Bashans, as well as many churches by the name of St. Demiana.



❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf O victorious martyrs Master Apatin and his sister Iraee that He may forgive us our sins]

Apatin was in great position in the army of king Diolektion. He saw Master Christ in his sleep telling him *“Arise, take Iraee your sister and go to Egypt to gain the crown of martyrdom. A person called Samuel will look after your bodies.”* The Lord Jesus also appeared to Iraee saying, *“Listen to your brother and do not disobey him.”*

When their mother knew, she kept them with her for a while, yet they saw the same vision again, thus they left, declared their Christianity before Erianous the Governor, who beheaded them and they gained the crowns of martyrdom. Later, a deacon named Samuel took their bodies to his house and kept them till the end of persecution, then a great church was built for them. There are 2 churches for them now in Assuit. The church celebrates their commemoration on 28 Tut.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf O victorious martyrs Julius and those who were with him that He may forgive us our sins]

He is St. Julius El Aqfahsi who wrote the lives of many martyrs. He was a very rich man and he used all his wealth for the glory of God, in order to have a treasure in heaven. He had 300 employees to look after the bodies of martyrs and bury them, as well as writing their life



stories. He also used to help the martyrs and soothe their wounds, and they always told him, “*You too will shed your blood for the sake of Lord Christ in order to gain the crown of martyrdom.*” The Lord appeared to him one night, gave him peace and told him that he would face tortures, but He would always save him. He farewelled his sons and commanded them to keep looking after the martyrs, then headed to Samanoud and confessed his Christianity before the Governor, when he stood for prayers, the ground was split and all the idols and their priests were swallowed, so the Governor believed in Lord Christ. They both went to the governor of Atrib, where St. Julius prayed, so the Lord sent His angel who broke the idols’ heads. The governor of Atrib also believed in Lord Jesus, then the three were beheaded on 22 Tut. The church also celebrates his commemoration on 25 Babah, the day of the consecration of his Church by Pope Alexandrus, the 19th Pope.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf O victorious martyrs Mari Pahn timer and his sister Sarah that He may forgive us our sins]**

Pahn timer means sleepy.

Sarah means princess.

They were the children of Senharib, the Persian king, who used to worship the fire. Pahn timer was told in a dream to go and meet a Christian hermit in the mountains called “Matthew”, and he would tell him about the right path. He did as he was told and Matthew baptised him. Then it happened that Sarah his sister fell sick, so he took



her to Matthew the hermit, when she believed and got baptised she was healed immediately. Their father knew what had happened so he ordered to cut off their heads on 4 Kiahk, then a church was built where their bodies were placed. As for their father, an evil spirit haunted him and kept torturing him badly, when they called St. Matthew, he prayed for him and he was healed, then he believed in Lord Jesus Christ and got baptised, together with his household and all his country.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Sarapamon the Bishop, Psate and Galinikos that He may forgive us our sins]

Abba Sarapamon: was a Jewish born in Jerusalem, he believed in Lord Jesus through Abba John, Bishop of Jerusalem. Then he went to Alexandria where Pope Thawfilous the 16th, baptised him. He became a monk, then Pope Peter, the seal of martyrs, ordained him as a bishop for Nicea in the Northern part of Egypt. Diolecion tortured this saint for a long time. He was beheaded on the 28th of Harour.

Abba Psate: He was the Bishop of Epsay in Upper Egypt. He used to strengthen his congregation in their faith, so Diocletian brought him to Alexandria. He was tortured badly, also he was thrown in a dirty dark prison for 15 years, but when he was taken out, his face was shinning, and Diocletian was shocked that he was still alive. When he couldn't convince him to offer incense to the idols, he beheaded him in 27 Kiahk. Now, there is a



monastery by the name of St. Psate in Manshaa, Upper Egypt.

Abba Gilinikos: The Bishop of Osim in Cairo. He used to teach his congregation always to reject the worship of idols. When Diocletian sent his soldiers to arrest him, he farewelled his congregation after the Holy Liturgy and partaking of the Holy Sacraments. He was tortured in many different ways, one of which was cutting off his hands and splitting his arms up till his shoulders, so he died because of the wounds and bleeding. The believers took his body and buried it honourably. The church celebrates the commemoration of his martyrdom on 2 Tubah.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf O victorious martyrs the forty saints of Sebaste that He may forgive us our sins]

They were soldiers for King Likinious Caesar, and when he started persecuting the Christians, they refused to deny Jesus Christ, so he ordered them to spend a whole cold night naked in a frozen cold lake in the city of Sebaste near Arminia. In order to tempt them, he placed a pool with warm water next to them. It happened that one of them weakened and threw himself in the warm pool, but he died instantly. Watching this, the guard who was supposed to watch them for the night took off his clothes and jumped into the frozen lake crying out “*I am a Christian*”. He did this because he saw the angels placing crowns on the heads of the 39 other martyrs, while an angel was still carrying the 40th crown, which



was then placed on the head of the guard. In the morning they were burnt then thrown in the sea. On the third day, the Bishop of Sebaste saw in a vision someone telling him “go to the sea and take our bodies”, so he took the priests and got their bodies out of the sea. Later, a church was built on their name. The church celebrates their commemoration on 13 Baramhat for their martyrdom, and 15 Amsheer for consecrating their church.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Pirou and Athom and John and Simeon that He may forgive us our sins]**

Pirou and Athom were brothers born in Sonbat in Egypt to a pious family. When their parents departed, they distributed all their wealth to the poor and left to Alexandria, where they were tortured for confessing their Christianity. The angel of the Lord used to strengthen and heal them. While being tortured, the Governor’s wife died, so they prayed for her and she was revived, thus the Governor believed and all his household and he set them free. Then another Governor started ruling the city, so he tortured them and finally they were beheaded on 8 Abib.

John and Simeon his cousin.

John: a Hebrew name which means “God is merciful”

Simeon: a Hebrew name which means “a listener”

John’s mother was barren, so his father asked the Lord to give him a child to serve the Lord all the days of his life. In his dream, the father saw St. John the Baptist



informing him that God will grant him a son, and that was John. He was ordained as a priest at an early age, while Simeon was his disciple. Diocletian tortured these two saints harshly and finally they were beheaded on 11 Abib.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf O victorious martyrs Abba Pishoy and his friend Peter that He may forgive us our sins]**

Pishoy: A Coptic word that means “feast”

Peter: A Greek word that means “rock”

Pishoy was born to a pious family. His father was called Theopestus (which means he who believes in God), and his mother Khanis (which means grace). St. Peter was his cousin, his father “Sidrak” and his mother “Mary”. They were so close to each other, and one day while they were both praying together, an angel of the Lord appeared and informed them that they will gain the crowns of martyrdom. Irianus, the Governor of Ansena used to torture them with the ‘Henbazin’ (a machine made of two wheels with sharp edges, when placing a person between the wheels then turning them, the flesh is torn out into pieces). The Governor then cut off St. Peter’s head and hanged his body on a piece of wood outside the city, but Abba Pishoy took the body and hid it in his house. Next, they kept torturing St. Pishoy, then he also was beheaded. The Governor put his head and body in a boat and left it in the sea, without a sailor. But the boat was led to Alexandria where a believer found it, and he knew that it was St. Pishoy because he came from the same country of St. Pishoy and used to know him



personally. He took the head and body back to Upper Egypt where he buried him next to St. Peter.

Later, the houses of these saints were turned into churches, consecrated by the Bishop on 26 Kiahk and many miracles were performed through their bodies. The church celebrates their commemoration on 5 Baouna.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Eklog the priest, Abba Epgol and Abba Kav that He may forgive us our sins]**

Eklog: means ‘humble’ or ‘humiliated’, born in El Fent in Egypt and he was a celibate. When Irianous reached El Fent to carry out Diocletian’s decree concerning torturing the Christians, he called St. Eklog, asked him about his name, so he answered, “My name is Christian and my country is the Heavenly Jerusalem’. Many people followed him in confessing their Christianity. When he was thrown in the furnace, the fire became as dew, they thought he was a magician, so the governor ordered to lay him on his back and roll a very heavy pillar on his body, then they hit him with thorns and whips till his blood was splashed everywhere, yet the Lord was strengthening and healing him.

The governor then took him to Ahnasia and went through all the streets in order to scare the people there, yet, on the contrary, many believed when they saw him because of the miracles performed before their eyes. Around 2000 people were martyred in Ahnasia because of St. Eklog. Also, he revived the son of Irianous himself after



he died, yet Irianous' heart was still hardened. Finally, he was beheaded on 20 Tubah in his city El Fent.

The church after his name is still there in El Fent, Beni Sweif, in Egypt where there is a tube containing parts of the martyr's pure body.

[Abba Epgol the Priest]

Epgol: means martyr.

When he saw St. Eklog being tortured, he screamed at the governor's face and said [Woe to you Klosianus, when will you stop torturing God's servants?], so he was tortured, yet he tolerated it in calmness and patience. Many miracles were performed during his torture, yet the Governor related them all to magic saying [you magician, won't you leave your magic and worship the gods, because He whom you are depending on will not save you from their hands!]. The saint answered: [When will you stop insulting the Spirit of God! Stop this now!] He was then put in the Henbazin machine, then on an iron bed where they placed a heavy rock till evening. Then he was hanged on a high pillar while the rock was tied to his body, but miraculously, the rock was released from his body and he went down from the pillar safely.

Finally, a decree was issued to cut off his head, so he shouted out happily "Now my rejoice and priesthood is completed. 40 years I have been serving the Lord waiting for this moment". He was beheaded on 15 Amsheer and won the crown of martyrdom. A church on his name still exists in El Menya in Upper Egypt.



Abba Kav:

Born around the end of the 3rd century in El Fayyoun. When he was a youth, he left his country and lived in solitude for worshipping the Lord, so the angel of the Lord appeared to him and ordered him to go to El Lahoon, one of El Fayyoun cities. There, he met the messenger of Alexandria's Governor ordering everyone to worship the idols. He showed him a small statue, but the saint threw it on the ground and it was broken. The messenger ordered to tie him, then he took him to Ansana, then to Bahnasa where he was tortured badly, finally they cut off his head.

Some believers shrouded his body, but they didn't know his country of origin, so they put him on a carriage led by oxen. Reaching the place where he used to worship the Lord, the oxen stopped, so they buried him there and built a church on his name. The church celebrates his commemoration on 28 Tubah.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba John the Hereclite, Master Piphamon and Pistavros that He may forgive us our sins]**

John the Hereclite: He was born in Hereclia, Asia Minor, his father was a governor during the reign of Diocletian. When he was 20 years old he succeeded his father's position after his departure. He refused to offer incense to Apollo according to Diocletian's orders, he also rebuked him, so the king put him in prison, where the angel of God appeared to him and strengthened him.



Diocletian wanted to deceive him, so he sent him to Egypt to collect the leir and renew the temples of the idols which were destroyed. The saint instead, started to demolish the temples, so he was tied up and sent to Irianus in Ansena, with some confessors. There, he was put in the Henbazin, hit with whips and skinned, they also put fire on his sides and heated iron bars on his face. Then they tied him up to horses tail and was dragged on the floor. Finally, they cut off his legs and arms then his head.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 4 Baouna. A church with his name still exists in Assiut, where his holy relics are kept together with the relics of his uncle the martyr Piphamon.

Piphamon: Piphamon was John's uncle and he was 10 years old when St. John was martyred. He kept weeping on St. John's body, so a voice came out saying "My beloved Piphamon, if you want to become a martyr, leave my body now and go to the Governor of Assiut. The Lord has ordered that our bodies will be put together. I'll come with other saints at the time of your departure to accept your soul". Immediately, Piphamon went to Irianus and declared his Christianity, he was tortured then beheaded on 5 Baouna.

A pious priest called Peter took his body and shrouded it, and it is placed now with the body of St. John the Hereclite in the church carrying their name.

Pistavros: A Greek word which means "Cross".



He was martyred during the Papacy of Pope Benjamin II (1319-1331).

His mother denied Christ, yet Pistavros kept his faith and stayed with his father. Later, some people told the governor that Pistavros was a Christian, so the Governor tried to make him deny Christ, yet he refused strongly, so he was put in jail, where the guard saw a white pigeon standing before his head. They took him then to an open arena, and let anyone who wanted to insult or hit him do so, he tolerated everything in patience and calmness, finally he was beheaded. The Lord honoured this martyr through the many miracles and wonders performed through his body.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf Isidore and Panteleom, Sophia and Ephomia that He may forgive us our sins]

Isidore: A Greek word meaning “the gift of Jesus”

Panteleon: A Greek word meaning “the will”

Sophia: A Greek word meaning “wisdom”

Ephomia: A Greek word meaning “praise”

This was a holy noble family, descendant of the royal family in Antioch. They were all martyred preferring the kingdom of heaven to the richness of the world, repeating with St. Paul, “*But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is*

through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith”. (Phil. 3:7-9)

St. Pantelion, in addition that he was a relative to king Nomarius, had a high position as the Governor of Antioch, the superintendent of King Diocletian’s palace. His wife was called Sophia, his son Isidore and his daughter Ephomia.

The martyrdom of Panteleon:

Panteleon was close to King Diocletian when he was Christian, yet when he denied Christ and started asking people to worship idols, Panteleon resigned, took his son Isidore and lived in a mountain near Antioch. When the king knew, he sent 500 soldiers who brought him and his son back. Asking him about the reason for his disappearance, he answered the king “When you used to worship the Living God, we used to love, honour and serve you, but when you left God and started worshipping idols and devils, we also left you.” In spite of this harsh answer, King Diocletian kept talking gently to him, trying to drag him to the idols’ worship. Finally, the King ordered to cut off his head, together with his son Isidore, so they cut off Panteleon’s head, yet one of the nobles of the palace asked the king to have mercy on the little boy, so he imprisoned him.

The martyrdom of Sophia and her daughter Ephomia:

When Sophia heard about Isidore’s torture, she took her daughter Ephomia and went to comfort and support him. Then she started rebuking the king for his stoned-heart,



so he ordered to cut them into two parts, so Sophia and Ephomia were martyred and won the crown of glory.

Isidore's Bitter Torture:

Isidore went through harsh cruel tortures, he died six times, and the Lord Jesus revived him five times in order to declare His power and Glorify His name. On the sixth time he delivered his soul in the Hands of the Saviour, who gave it to Archangel Michael and the angel carried it on his luminous wings and ascended to heaven with all the angels singing and praising. His name is mentioned in the praise before the rest of the family because of the bitter tortures.

The first death:

They cut his belly and took his guts out, then they threw him on a high mountain for the beasts and birds to eat it.

The second death:

Our Lord Jesus Christ and Archangel Michael descended on the mountain, the angel put the guts back and the Lord signed him with the cross and blew on his face saying "Arise, my beloved Isidore", then ordered him to go to King Diocletian and rebuke him. The king got a shock when he saw Isidore, so he put him on an iron bed, lit a fire under it, put a heated iron ball on his head, yet, he tolerated everything in great courage. When the king ordered him to worship the idols, he rebuked the king and cursed his idols, so the king ordered his soldiers to put him on iron and squeeze him, his eyes came out of his head and he died.

**The third death:**

Again, the Saviour Himself descended with a host of angels. He put all his body parts together and Isidore was revived. When the king saw the boy, he ordered to put him inside a cow made of copper, they closed the door and lit fire under it for a whole day and a whole night. Inside the copper cow, the saint was praying and praising God, while Archangel Michael was guarding him and keeping the fire away. They took him off the cow in shame. He stood before the king and mocked his idols, and made the idols to kill the priests who served them and offered oblations, so the king ordered to cut his head off, together with others who were crying out “we are Christians” and he died.

The fourth death:

The Lord came and called out “My chosen Beloved Isidore stand up with no scar for any wounds”. So Isidore stood up and worshipped the Lord Jesus. Again, he went and rebuked the king who ordered to hang him on a high pillar. Yet, some believers came and took him off the pillar. So the king ordered to tie a heavy rock to his neck and throw him in the sea. After a while the rock floated and the saint used it as a boat until he reached the shore. There he went through the streets of the city preaching the name of Lord Jesus. He then went to the house of a pious person called Peter, so the king ordered to kill both Isidore and Peter, and whoever was in the house with them. But the angel of the Lord took Isidore and Peter and made them stand before the king in the palace. The king was stunned and ordered to kill them, together with a big number of the believers.

**The fifth death:**

Lord Jesus came and called out with His Sweet Voice “Arise, my beloved Isidore, who filled the world with so many martyrs”. Isidore stood up and worshipped the Lord, then went and rebuked the king. The advisers told the king to keep wild beasts hungry for three days, then throw Isidore to them. When Isidore saw the beasts coming towards him, he prayed, exactly as Daniel did, so the beasts were like gentle lambs around him. Seeing this, many people believed, so the king ordered to kill them, and cut Isidore’s body into many pieces, put it in a barrel and throw it into the sea tied to a heavy rock.

Completing His struggle:

The Lord ordered the sea to throw the body on the shore, Isidore stood up and worshipped the Lord. The king became so confused what to do with him, so he exiled him to the island of Solukia west of Antioch. There, the governor believed in Lord Christ, and Isidore lived in great honour for a year. When the king knew, he called the governor and all his family, together with Isidore. The king ordered to cut off their heads, except for Isidore, who was thrown in a dark prison full of rotten droppings for days without food or drink. The angel of the Lord used to get him food. After a long time, they brought him before the king, so Isidore pretended he was going to worship the idols. Huge number of people gathered to watch the great event, but instead of worshipping the idols, he ordered the earth to swallow them. Many believed in Lord Jesus. The king was so angry that he ordered to crucify Saint Isidore on a



wooden cross, and he yielded his pure soul in Lord Jesus' hands Whom he loved.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 19 Bashans.

When the righteous Constantine became a king, St. Isidore appeared to him in a dream saying "Peace be to you, Constantine, O lover of God, send messengers to get my body, my father's, my mother's and my sister's bodies and keep them in your country Constantinople". The king did so and he built a huge church and put the bodies of St. Penteleon and St. Sophia. He build another church in Akimon and put St. Isidore and St. Ephomia's bodies there.

St. Isidore was tortured for 12 years and died 5 times. Many miracles were performed during this time, as well as after his martyrdom.

❖ **[Pray for us on our behalf my master Abanoub and Eptolomos, Apakragon and Sosennius that He may forgive us our sins]**

Abanoub: A Coptic name which means: "Father of Gold"

Born in Nehissa near Samanoud, Egypt. At church, he heard the father priest urging the congregation to keep fast hold of their Christian faith against Diocletian's persecutions. He distributed all his possessions to the poor, headed to Samanoud and declared his Christianity



before the governor, who took him to Atrib. On the way, he hanged Abanoub upside down on the boat's post. While eating and drinking, the cup got stick to the governor's hand and he was in great pain, also all the soldiers on board became blind. The governor looked at Abanoub and saw his nose and mouth bleeding, while the Archangel Michael wiped the blood away, so he screamed, "I believe truly that you, Abanoub, is the servant of the True God, Lord Jesus Christ, the God of Christians". The soldiers also cried out "We are Christians". Arriving at Atrib, the governor and the soldiers were all beheaded.

As for Abanoub, he was tortured for a long time, but the Lord always strengthened and healed him, thus many people believed in Lord Jesus.

The governor of Atrib ordered to cut off his arms and legs with an axe, but the Lord healed him. He was then sent to Armanious, the governor of Alexandria and after many tortures he was beheaded at the age of 12 on the 24th of Abib.

His body is kept in his church at Samanoud in Egypt.

Eptolomos of Dendara:

He is the great saint Eptolomis from Dendara in Upper Egypt. He was the only son of a rich family. One day he went out to the mountain for hunting, where he met St. Pevnotious. Eptolomos took St. Pevnotious to a beautiful garden full of fruit trees and asked St. Pevnotious to stay with him, but he refused. Eptolomos



asked St. Pevnotious to allow him to come and live in the mountain with him, but St. Pevnotious feared the father as he was a rich mighty man. Finally, St. Pevnotious said, “If you want to reach the kingdom of heaven, I’ll send you with a letter to a saint called Theodore at the city of Ansena”.

Reaching Ansena, he went to St. Theodore who said, “listen my son, if you want to reach the kingdom of heaven I’ll tell you about a shortcut because in the life of monasticism we face a lot of satanic fights. Enter the city of Ansena and declare your Christianity before Irianous the governor. Be patient for some tortures, then you’ll gain the crown of martyrdom”.

The saint did so, then Irianous ordered to hang him on a boat’s post for nine days. When the soldiers gave up because he did not die, they speared him in his throat and he was martyred on 11 Kiahk.

As for the post on which he was hanged, honey dripped from it after the saint’s martyrdom, and whoever was sick and ate from this honey, was healed instantly. Some believers took his body and built a church on his name. Many miracles were performed from his body.

Apakragon:

He was a robber, and together with another 2 robbers they went to steal from a monk’s cell in the wilderness of Saint Makarious. They waited outside the cell until the monk finished his prayers and fell asleep. But he kept praying all night until they were so tired. In the



morning, the elder came out of his cell, so they left their swords and bowed before him. He instructed them, then the three became monks. St. Apakagon was a great ascetic, and the elder monk prophesied for his martyrdom in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. After six years, persecution of the Christians started, so St. Apakragon farewelled the elder monk and headed to Nicea in Egypt where he declared his Christianity. He was tortured badly, then they took him to Alexandria where the Lord used to heal him. They put him in a sack and threw him in the sea, but the angel of the Lord saved him, and ordered him to go to Samanoud. He was beheaded on 25 Abib.

Sosennius:

His father was called Sosipatros, and Sosennius was one of king Diolectians guards. One day the angel of the Lord appeared to him and strengthened him concerning martyrdom, so he kept this message in his heart. Later, the king sent him to the city of Nicomedia to renew the worship of idols. The saint grieved and called a priest and asked him about Christianity, he believed and was baptised. When his father Sosipatros knew, he told the governor that Sosenius was refusing to worship the idols. He was tortured and finally he was beheaded. Around 1100 other witnessed his torture and they also gained the crown of martyrdom.

The church celebrates his martyrdom on 26 Baramudah.



❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf the great high priest Abba Peter, the Seal of Martyrs that He may forgive us our sins]**

He was arrested in Alexandria, the headquarters of his Papal Seat. When he was in prison ready to be killed the congregation gathered around the prison all night. When the Pope knew, and for the safety of his congregation, he asked the guard to secretly make a hole in the prison's wall on the other side of the prison, so that no one would see him when he was coming out of the prison and going to get the sentence of martyrdom fulfilled. The guard was so astonished but he did what the saint asked him to do.

The next morning, St. Peter left the prison with the soldier who took him to Yokalia, the same place where St. Mark martyred. Pope Peter went and had the blessings of St. Mark's body, and there he prayed to the Lord to let his blood be the last shed for martyrdom, and the end of the persecution of Christians. Then he heard a voice coming from heaven saying "Amen". That is why he was called 'St. Peter the Seal of Martyrs'.

This does not mean that he was the last martyr in Egypt, but he was the last of the huge number of martyrs that used to be killed as a result of the persecution against the Christians.

In the same year, which is 311 AD, Galerious the Emperor issued a decree to stop persecuting the



Christians, also asking them to pray to their God in order to get healed from a dangerous disease.

In 313 AD the righteous king Emperor Constantine met Emperor Licinius and they issued on March 313 AD a decree called “Milan Decree” giving the Christians the freedom to worship the Lord Jesus and carry out their rites and traditions.

Another reason for calling him “St. Peter the Seal of Martyrs” is because he was the last martyr of the Popes of the Coptic Church.

After praying, St. Peter’s face was shining so brightly that none of the soldiers dared to kill him, so the chief commander offered 25 gold coins to whoever kills St. Peter. Finally, one of the soldiers came and cut his head off. The believers took his body and buried him in St. Mark’s Cathedral in Alexandria.

The church celebrates the commemoration of his martyrdom on 29 Hatour, and the consecration of the first church built on his name in Alexandria on 1st Amsheer.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf O new martyrs Pistavros and Arsanious that He may forgive us our sins]**

Pistavros The New Martyr:

Born in Mallawi in Upper Egypt to a righteous family. He used to spend most of his time in the monasteries with the elder monks. He always asked St. Mary to help him to be a martyr for the Name of the Beloved Son. One



day, he preached to some non-believers, so they imprisoned him, then set him free because of the honour of his father and mother. Yet, he kept talking about Jesus Christ, so they took him to the Governor, who ordered to stone him. Archangel Michael came and covered his body with his wings. Then they imprisoned him, but every time the guard put the cuffs on his hands, he found him released after a while. The guard's wife used to see a luminous lady, brighter than the sun talking to him saying: "Be patient, Archangel Michael will keep you until you complete your struggle, and you'll be a martyr for the name of my Beloved Son".

The guard and his wife told St. Pistavros that they can make him escape from prison and escape with him, but he refused.

One day, the governor decided to send him to Egypt, tied with iron chains, and for many days in the ship, St. Mary appeared and strengthened him. In Egypt, the king ordered to torture him badly, and when he did not deny his faith, they crucified him and put him on a camel, going through all the streets of the city. Reaching the place where they used to cut off the martyrs' heads, they promised to set him free if he denied his Christianity, but he cried out "I'll not die except as a Christian", so they beheaded him at 6pm on Monday 3 Kiahk 1229 for the martyrs, corresponding 1513 AD. They left the body in the street for 3 days, yet nothing happened to it, as the angels of the Lord guarded his body. Then some believers came and took his body to the Cathedral.



Arsanius:

A Greek name meaning “beloved”. He was an Ethiopian monk in St. Mary’s Monastery in El Moharraq, at Qosqam Mountain. He was martyred during the Papacy of Pope Mettaous I the 87th Pope.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf Michael the Hegumen and Michael the Monk that He may forgive us our sins]

Michael the Hegumen:

He is St. Michael El Toucki, from the city of Touck El Nasara in Egypt. He was a pious priest preaching his congregation in righteousness and uprightness. He was martyred on 30 Kiahk 1240 for the martyrs, corresponding 1423 AD during the days of the Memlukes.

While serving the Holy Liturgy, the grace of God used to appear over his head in the shape of a wreath of light. When he was fifty while travelling to Egypt, he sat with some cruel people who hated the Christians, and they started insulting and saying rude words to him. A few months later a soldier came and arrested him because the cruel people claimed false witness against him. His wife, daughters and sons together with all the congregation were weeping and lamenting, as they knew what was going to happen to him, but he prayed to Lord Jesus to comfort them and to grant him the power of the Holy Spirit to face his fate. At Egypt, the cruel people kept offending him, so the governor ordered to imprison him. The guard dug a deep hole in the ground and crucified



him up side down for a whole day, during which he was praying and praising joyfully.

When Pope Gabriel V knew about this saint, he kept standing on his feet and praying for 3 days asking St. Mary to strengthen him. Some believers came secretly to St. Michael and informed him that the bright light shone to the Pope after asking St. Mary's help for him, so he was greatly comforted. The next morning, they lit a big fire in the hole and threw the saint inside it, but it never hurt him. He was calling those who threw him in the fire to come with him because he could see St. Mary and four angels with her. They were so furious that the fire did not burn him and finally one of the soldiers speared him in his side and killed him. He was martyred on 30 Kiahk in the year 1240 for the martyrs.

Michael the Monk:

Born in Rosetta in Egypt and became a monk in St. John's Monastery in Scetis wilderness. One day he went to Cairo where he was deceived by the devil, denied his faith and got married to a Muslim girl. After eight days of their marriage, he repented his deed, went and confessed to the father priest and returned to the Christian faith. The priest ordered him to follow a very strict canon of repentance. Going to the king of Egypt he announced his Christianity, so the king ordered to burn him alive and so he won the crown of martyrdom and everlasting life.



❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf O Choir of Martyrs who suffered for the sake of Christ that he may forgive us our sins]**

There are countless number of martyrs in our church, and because we cannot ask their intercessions each one by his or her name, and because of the strong faith of our church that they have favour to the Lord, we cry out asking for their intercession on our behalf, for Lord Jesus to have mercy on us and help us to complete our struggle like them, and let us have a share with all his saints, *“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.” (Rev. 6:9)*





CHAPTER THREE

THE SAINTS OF THE COMMUNION OF PRAISE

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf my lords and fathers who love their children Abba Anthony and Abba Paul that He may forgive us our sins]

Anthony:

A Latin name which means ‘replacement’. He is the Great St. Anthony the father of all monks, in Egypt and the whole world.

Born in 251 AD in a city called Qemn El Arouse in Egypt to a very rich family. His parents brought him up in righteousness and in the fear of God. At the age of 20 his parents died, and he had to look after his young sister. One day at church, he heard for the readings of the Holy Gospel, “*Jesus said to him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor; and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’” (Matt. 19:21)*, so he considered this a personal message to him from God. He then distributed all his wealth, and just kept a little part for himself and his sister. He went to Church another time, and he heard, “*Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble”.* (Matt. 6:34), so he took his sister to the house of virgins (like a convent now), gave the rest of his wealth to the poor and headed to the outskirts of the city,



then gradually he headed towards the inner wilderness, until he settled down where his monastery exists now, near the Red Sea shore.

He spent 20 years in prayers and contemplations, facing the numerous fights of the devils, yet the righteous saint doubled his fasting and prayers and defeated them through his humbleness.

Many people started gathering around him, because they wanted to be his disciples or they wanted advice and guidance from him. St. Anthony is considered the Founder of Monasticism in Egypt and in the whole world. Sometimes he used to send letters of guidance and instructions for his disciples.

St. Anthony departed in peace on 356 AD, he was 105 years old.

The church commemorates his departure on 22 Tubah and on 4 Misra for consecrating his church in his monastery.

Paul:

Meaning “young”.

He is the Great St. Paul, the first hermit, born in Theba (now known as Luxor in Upper Egypt) in the year 228 AD. He was brought up by righteous parents. After the departure of his parents, his elder brother tried to take more of their inheritance, claiming that Paul was too young to handle such matters. On their way to the judge, Paul saw a funeral of a rich man, so he thought of death



and Judgement Day, and that this world is vain. He left everything, and through the Heavenly guidance, he headed towards the eastern inner wilderness, where an angel of the Lord guided him to a cave in which he lived for the rest of his life praying, fasting and worshipping the Lord. A crow used to bring him each evening half of a loaf of bread, so he thanked the Lord for the bread, and he had water running from a spring next to his cave. After so many years of struggle, the Lord wanted to reveal the life of this angelic person, so He ordered St. Anthony to go and see St. Paul. The Holy Spirit guided him to St. Paul's cave, they met each other cheerfully and kept talking about God's miraculous deeds. As usual, the crow came in the evening, but this time with a whole loaf of bread, and both were greatly amazed at God's mercy.

St. Paul's Departure:

The Lord revealed to St. Paul the hour of his departure from this world while St. Anthony was visiting him. He asked St. Anthony to go to the monastery and get shrouds and the robe of Pope Athanasius the Apostolic, which the Pope had given to St. Anthony, then come back and bury him. St. Anthony did so, and on his way back to St. Paul he saw the angels carrying his soul in great rejoice, singing and praising. When he reached the cave, he found two lions next to the body, St. Anthony ordered them to dig the ground and he buried him.

The Church celebrates the departure of St. Paul on the year 241 AD at the age of 113, spending most of the



years of his life in solitude as a hermit saint, attaining a high level of Christian perfection.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf O Three Saints, Abba Macari, and their children the Cross-bearers that He may forgive us our sins]**

Macari: A Greek name meaning “the blessed”

1. **St. Macari The Great, or Macari the Egyptian:**
Born in the year 300 AD in Menoufiah, Egypt of righteous parents. They forced him to get married, so he prayed to the Lord, and after a little while, the girl died while still a virgin. After his parents’ departure, he gave all his wealth to the poor and lived in a hut outside the country. A lady accused him of sinning with her when she fell pregnant, yet at the time of delivery, she was about to die, so she confessed the truth. When the people went to apologise to him and give him the adequate honour he escaped the vain of glory, going to the wilderness of Scetis. He built a church where the monastery of St. Macari exists today. He kept worshipping, fasting and praying in full devoutness, as well as guiding his monks in purity and piety as if he was an angel. He reached a high level of spirituality. Sometimes while praying, he was taken by the spirit for long hours in the presence of Lord Jesus. On the year 375, the Arian king Valence exiled him with St. Macari of Alexandria to the island of Phila in



Aswan, where the inhabitants of this island were idolaters. There he cast out demons from the daughter of one of the idolater priests, so all the inhabitants believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The two saints went back to their monasteries and their disciples. He departed in peace in the year 390 AD after turning Scetis desert into a second heaven packed with monks and the cross bearers.

The church celebrates his departure on 27 Baramhat and the return of his body to the monastery on 19 Mista.

2. **Macari of Alexandria:**

Born in Alexandria in 296 AD, he headed to the desert in 330 AD, and because of his extreme ascetic life he became a spiritual father to lots of recluses in the area of the cells. The Lord granted him the gift of performing miracles. He was characterised for his simple sense of humour and gentleness. He departed at the age of 100.

The church celebrates his departure on 6 Bashans.

3. **St. Macari the Bishop of Edko:**

He was a blessed man to whom the Lord revealed the sins and deeds of his congregation, whenever he stood on the anber for preaching. He accompanied Pope Discorous, the 25th Pope, to the cursed Council of Chalcedony from where they were exiled to an isolated island in Italy, yet St. Discorous sent him with a merchant to



Alexandria, and prophesised for him that he would become a martyr. Arriving in Alexandria, he discovered that the defiled Thomson Lawn, the messenger of King Merkianous were trying to spread the heresy of the two different natures of Lord Jesus Christ. When St. Macari refused to sign this corrupt decree, the messenger of the king kicked him harshly, and because of his old age and weak body, he died instantly.

The Burial of His Body:

The believers of Alexandria took his body, shrouded him and buried him honourably in the church of St. John the Baptist and Elisha the Prophet. A miracle happened straight after his death. The face of the messenger who kicked him was turned to the back, his tongue got swollen, and he was choked and died. Also a mute boy talked during the burial of the saint, when he saw St. John the Baptist and Elisha the Prophet receiving the saint joyfully; kissing and hugging each other. Later, the bodies of the three saints were transferred to the Monastery of St. Macari the Great in Scetis wilderness and they are still there.

The church celebrates his martyrdom on 27 Babah.

The Cross Bearers:

They are the monks, hermits and recluses who carried the Cross of Lord Jesus Christ, the cross of asceticism and



followed the Lord in the narrow path leading to eternal life. They tolerated many struggles and devilish fights, *“of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.”* (Heb. 11:38) because of their great love to Christ the King.

The church asks their prayers for their children who are still struggling on earth, because of their great intimacy with our Lord Jesus Christ.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf my lords and fathers the hegumens St. John and St. Daniel that He may forgive us our sins]**

St. John the Hegumen of Scetis:

Born around the year 585 AD in Kafr El Zayyat, Egypt. Since his early childhood, he used to live a life of purity, prayers, fasting, and reading the Holy Bible, thus he yearned to monasticism. At the age of 18 he became a monk at St. Macari Monastery then they ordained him a priest against his will, and appointed him the Abbot of the monastery. He became the father and guide of many distinguished monks and recluses, such as Anba Abraam and Anba Gorgi, the two luminating pillars in the Wilderness of Scetis.

The Saint as a Captive:

The saint was captivated three times and sent to the Barbarian cities, where he suffered a lot. On the third time, he met St. Samuel the Confessor, where they used to tend camels together, comforting each other and



glorifying and giving thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally St. John returned safely to his Monastery, where he was ordained a Hegumen. He helped Pope Benjamin I, the 38th Pope in renovating and building the monasteries of the wilderness.

His Departure:

St. John lived in the wilderness as the father and wise guide for his children, giving his life as a good example to follow. Then he fell sick, while his disciples were surrounding him in tears and grief, he did not stop mentioning our Saviour's Name till the last breath, until he departed peacefully.

The church celebrates his departure on 30 Kiahk.

Anba Daniel the Hegumen of Scetis:

Daniel: A Hebrew name which means "God is Judge". Born on the year 485 AD, he became a monk at an early age in the Scetis Wilderness. He used to eat only once a day at sunset, and his work was weaving baskets.

The barbarians attacked the wilderness many times, which led a lot of monks to escape their danger. They arrested St. Daniel three times, yet each time he managed to escape and came back safely to Scetis Wilderness.

When he advanced quickly in his spiritual level, they ordained him as a hegumen, then a leader to the monks.



The Lord had granted him spiritual wisdom and discern by which he led thousands of monks, as well as the gift of disclosing their inner thoughts and sins.

One of the most famous disciples of St. Daniel was St. Anastasia, who lived under his guidance in the wilderness for 28 years, then she departed in peace.

St. Daniel opposed Thomson Lawon's heresy. He tore up the decree when the messenger of the king came to Scetis wilderness for the monks to sign it. He shouted out [let him be anathematised whoever participates in this defiled Council of Chalcedony and whoever approves of it]. The soldiers tortured him harshly, together with the elders. After this incident, the monks scattered in all the cities of Egypt, so St. Daniel went to a village called Tembouk in Kafr El Zayyat, where he lived for a while until the heretic king Yostianous died. He then returned to Scetis where the monks received him happily and he lived there in his cell.

After a short period, the Barbarian attacks started again, so he went back to Tembouk.

He departed there and was buried in the monastery of Tembouk in great honour between 578-580 AD.

The church celebrates his departure on 8 Bashans.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf my lords and fathers who love their children Abba Pishoy and Abba Paul that He may forgive us our sins]**

**Pishoy:**

A Coptic name meaning ‘sublime’.

He is the perfect man, the beloved of our Good Saviour. Born in an Egyptian village on 320 AD. He had six brothers and his mother once saw an angel in a night vision saying “The Lord is saying to you give me one of your children to serve me”. So she answered, [My master, You choose whomever You like]. The angel took St. Pishoy’s hand, but as he was a weak skinny child, the mother said “My Master, take someone strong to serve the Lord”, but the angel of the Lord said, “this is the one whom the Lord has chosen”.

St. Pishoy then headed to Scetis Wilderness and became a disciple to St. Pemwa (a Coptic name meaning ‘the lion’). Pishoy toiled his body in many struggles and high levels of devoutness. His brother in this great struggle was St. John the Short.

St. Pishoy established the Monastery after his name, which still exists. He started with a small number of cells, where he guided the monks in the way of virtue. When the Barbarians attacked this wilderness, he went to Ansena Mountain in Upper Egypt where he completed his struggle and departed in peace on the year 417 AD.

During the Papacy of Anba Yousab I, his holy body was transferred with St. Paul of Tammouh’s body to his monastery, which still exists in the Scetis Wilderness.



The church celebrates his departure on 8 Abib.

St. Paul of Tammouh:

Born in the village of Tammouh in El Giza. At an early age he lived in Ansen Mountain in Upper Egypt, together with Ezekiel his disciple. He toiled himself in great struggles to the extent that the Lord Jesus Himself once appeared to him and said: *“My beloved Paul, that’s enough”*. So the saint in great love announced, *“Let me make my body weary for the sake of You Name, my Master, as You have sacrificed Your Body for the sake of human kind. You are the Lord God and sacrificed Yourself for us, sinners who are unworthy”*. So the Lord comforted and strengthened him.

During the Papacy of Pope Yousab I, he wanted to transfer St. Pishoy’s body to St. Pishoy’s Monastery leaving the body of St. Paul in Ansen Mountain, yet the boat carrying St. Pishoy’s body did not move so they knew that it was God’s will to keep both bodies together. When they took St. Paul’s body with them in the boat, it sailed safely to the Monastery, where they put both bodies in one tube and they are kept in St. Pishoy’s Monastery.

The church celebrates the departure of St. Paul of Tammouh on 7 Babah.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf our holy Roman father Maximus and Domatius that He may forgive us our sins]



Maximus: A Latin name which means ‘great’.

Domatius: A Greek name which means ‘alms or gifts’.

They are the children of Emperor Valentinianus (363-375). First, they became monks in Syria and disciples of an ascetic called Aghabios, where they used to make boat sails. When the Pope of Rome departed, they thought of ordaining Maximus so they left Syria to Scetis Wilderness and became disciples of St. Macari the Great, according to their spiritual guide Aghabios’ command.

They lived in solitude for 3 years, just going to church to attend the Holy Liturgy and partake of the Holy Communion, never talking to anyone.

They reached a high level of spirituality that strings of fire used to come out of their mouths while praying, then ascending to heaven.

St. maximus fell sick first and departed, and after 3 days St. Domatius followed him.

St. Macari buried them and El Baramous Monastery was built where they were buried, in commemoration of their great love to Lord Jesus, whom they loved more than the worldly kingdom and more than the Papacy.

St. Macari considered them as martyrs, and whenever monks or visitors came to him, he used to take them to their tomb saying; *“Let’s take the blessing of the young foreigner martyrs”*.



The Church celebrates the departure of St. Maximus on 14 Tubah and St. Domatius on 17 Tubah.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf O forty-nine martyrs the elders of Scetis that He may forgive us our sins]**

They are the 49 elder martyrs of Scetis whom the Barbarians killed with the messenger of Emperor Theodosius Junior.

The king had sent a messenger and his son Ziouss to ask the elders' advice about having a child to inherit the throne, as he did not have any children.

When the Barbarians were killing the elder monks, Ziouss, the messenger's son saw angels crowning the martyrs, so he informed his father and they also were martyred with the elders.

A church was built in the monastery where their bodies were buried, Pope Theodosius I consecrated this church on 528 AD.

Pope Benjamin I the 38th Patriarch re-shrouded the bodies and buried them in the middle of the church on 5 Amsheer.

The church celebrates their martyrdom on 26 Tubah and transferring their bodies on 5 Amsheer.



❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf O strong saint
Abba Moses and John Kame the Priest that He
may forgive us our sins]**

St. Moses the Black:

He is the first martyr of the monks of Scetis wilderness. He was a slave, then a leader of a criminal gang, practicing all kinds of sins and impurities. He started looking for God to worship, so people advised him to go to the monks of Scetis. He met St. Isidorous the priest and became his disciple. He was baptised and became a monk, struggling in severe fasting and prayers. Pope Theofilus ordained him as a priest, and he became the spiritual father and guide to many monks. He built for them a monastery (St. Moses' Monastery) a few meters away from St. Mary's Monastery, El Baramous, which still exists there.

When the Barbarians started their attack on Scetis wilderness, he was the first monk to be killed. His holy relics are kept with those of St. Isidorous the priest in El Baramous Monastery.

The church celebrates his martyrdom on 24 Baouna.

Abba John Kama the priest:

Born in Kafr El Zayyat to an upright family. His parents forced him to get married, yet he agreed with his wife to live in celibacy.

After a while he yearned to live as a monk, so he took his wife to a convent, where she became a righteous nun, and



he headed to Scetis Wilderness. On his way, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and guided him to St. Macari Monastery, and he became a disciple to an elder monk called Derodi. Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him again and ordered him to head towards where his monastery exists today, where he built many cells for around 300 monks who gathered around him.. He also built a church on St. Mary's name. He tended his children as a good shepherd sacrificing himself for his flock.

He departed in the year 589 so his disciples buried him in the monastery.

When the monastery was destroyed (1413-1430), the monks transferred his relics to El Syrian Monastery. The relics are transferred in the church of the cave in winter, where the monks pray, and to El Syrian church in the summer.

On the first Saturday of the Advent fasting the monks take his relics to the church of the cave, while they take the relics to the church of El Syrian Monastery in Lazarus Saturday according to their service prayers in summer and winter.

This is the lovely tradition carried out whenever the relics are transferred from one church to the other:

1. On the eve of transferring the relics, the bell of the monastery rings 3 times, so the monks come



- preceded by the Abbot, to the church where the relics are kept.
2. They carry the relics and icons of St. Mary and other saints and head towards the other church in a wonderful procession while singing hymns and praises.
 3. In the church to where they are transferring the relics, they go around the altar 3 times, then in the church 3 times, then once again in the altar, then they come out and put it on the closet of the saint's body with a lit lantern in front of it.
 4. The Abbot then pours fragrant perfume on the veil in which the tube is wrapped. Then he offers incense.
 5. The Vesper prayers start.
 6. They spend the night in prayers and praises, and on the next day, after reading the Sinixarium, they go around the altar 3 times carrying the tube with the relics inside it.
 7. Then, they take the tube to the closet, take off the old veil, anoint it and put it inside the new veil offering incense. Then they finish the Holy Liturgy.

The church celebrates the departure of St. John Kama the priest on 25 Kiahk.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Pakhoum the Father of Kononia (Community) and Abba Theodore his disciple that He may forgive us our sins]**

**Pakhoum:**

A Coptic name meaning ‘the eagle’.

He is the great Abba Pakhoum, the Father of Kononia, one of the greatest pillars of monasticism. Born between 285-295 AD in Upper Egypt to pagan parents. At an early age it appeared that he was disgusted with idols and their worship. He joined the army when he was a youth. His tribe was going to fight the rebellion governor of Ethiopia. On their way, the military ship boarded on shore of the city of Esna in Qena, so the Christian citizens there came out with food, drink and covers to those soldiers cheerfully. St. Pakhoum asked ‘why are these people treating us so generously and they do not even know us, we are coming for war?’” He was told these are the teachings of their Lord Jesus Christ. As Pakhoum was searching for Truth and the better life, his heart was filled with love to Christianity, and he vowed to become a Christian if he returned safely to his country.

After being released from the army, he became a Christian on the year 324 AD when Bishop Serabion of Dandara baptised him.

He spent 3 years in serving the sick, helping the needy, comforting the grieved and doing all sorts of charity. When his heart was blazed with the love of Lord Jesus, he yearned to spend his entire life in praying and worshipping. He headed to St. Balamoun and became his disciple, then he was ordained as a monk. He stayed with St. Balamoun for 7 years. One day, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and ordered him to build a monastery for the Monasticism of Community. The angel also gave



him a copper board on which all the commandments and rules that the monks had to follow were written on it.

He disclosed this matter to his spiritual father Balamoun, so he walked with him till Tabanese to carry out the divine will and build the monastery. A short while later, St. Balamoun returned to his cell where he departed in peace.

The inhabitants of the surrounding countries heard about the virtues of St. Pakhoum, they started coming to him asking to be his disciples and children, so he accepted them. He used to teach them the basics of monastic life, being himself a role model for everyone. Quickly, the number of monks increased, so he built many other monasteries, appointing an abbot to each, while he was the head of all the Pakhomian Monasteries, for around 30 years.

Finally he fell sick, so he called his children, advised and strengthened them, appointed St. Patronius to succeed him in leadership and he departed in peace.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 14 Bshans.

St. Theodore:

He was the special disciple and close son to St. Pakhoum. Born in 323 in the city of Esna to a righteous rich family. He yearned to monasticism at an early age, so he went to a small monastery close to his country where he used to grow in virtues. When he heard about St. Pakhom and his community he kept praying heartily to join them. The



Lord responded to his pleadings and he became one of St. Pakhoum's disciples.

St. Pakhoum then chose him to be his special disciple because of his great humbleness and obedience, then he appointed him the Superintendent of Tabanese Monastery, Phabo Monastery and then he became the Supervisor for all monasteries, visiting the brethren and guiding them. He was characterised for his smiling face and gentleness, he was also loved and respected by everyone. Later, he accepted to be the General Abbot of the Kononia Monastery, but on condition that he be under the guidance of Abba Orisious.

When he fell sick, he called all the abbots asking them to forgive him, they all kept weeping, as well as Abba Orisious, then he departed in peace.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 2 Bashans.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Shenouda the Archimandrite and Abba Wissa his disciple that He may forgive us our sins]**

Shenouda:

A Coptic word which means 'the son of God'

Born in a village near Akhmim in Souhag in Upper Egypt. Before his birth, there were many revelations to distinguish people such as St. Athanasius the Apostolic and the Saint's parents. When he was around seven years old, he started going out with his father's shepherds, he used to give them his food, and he kept fasting the whole



day. The shepherds also noticed that his fingers were lightening while he was praying, as well as a sweet aroma.

At the age of nine, his father took him to his uncle Pigol, who was the Abbot of a monastery. He kept practicing fasting and prayer, as well as perfecting many other virtues and he was beloved by everyone. Then he spent 5 years in complete solitude in a cave near the monastery. When his uncle Pigol departed, they chose him to be the succeeding Abbot.

He built “The White Monastery” and issued strict rules for the monks. He was the Abbot of his monastery for 66 years and a father to 5000 monks and 1800 nuns.

He defended the true faith against different heresies. He also accompanied the Pope of Alexandria Pope Kyrollos IV, the Pillar of Religion, to attend the council of Ephesus on 431 AD and he rebuked Nestorius for his rotten heresy.

He loved the Coptic language, so he filtered it from all the Greek words. He wrote many sermons, and epistles. He departed in peace at the age of 120. He is the only saint whom the church celebrates his birthday on 7 Bashans, which denotes the extent of importance the church attends to this great Coptic saint who devoted his life to the church and defended its faith from all its heart.

The church celebrates his departure on 7 Abib.



St. Wissa:

His father was a rich pious man who used to help the poor and the needy, celebrating 3 feasts each Coptic month.

1. The feast of Archangel Michael on the 12th.
2. The feast of St. Mary on the 21st.
3. The feast of the Annunciation, Christmas and Resurrection on the 29th (of each Coptic month)

When Wissa was 5 years old, he started learning about the church books and the Holy Bible as well as attending the church regularly, and he was growing rapidly in grace and knowledge.

He prayed a lot to the Lord to become a monk. When his father knew his fervent desire, he took him to St. Shenouda the Archimandrite. While still on their way, the angel of the Lord appeared to St. Shenouda and informed him to accept Wissa, and that Wissa would be his obedient private disciple all the days of his life. Wissa was growing in virtues and following a righteous monastic life.

Later, Lord Jesus appeared to St. Shenouda and said, ***“Take Wissa as your private disciple. He will be your helper in disciplining the monastery.”*** The Lord used to support anything that Wissa did, exactly as Joseph the Righteous. St. Shenouda revealed to St. Wissa many of the secrets of his struggle, Lord Jesus also revealed Himself in revelations to St. Wissa.



One night, Lord Jesus appeared to St. Shenouda saying, *“Send your son Wissa with some monks to Abba Macari, the Bishop of Edko (near the monastery) to help him. The pagans had tied him up and his disciples and they are getting ready to offer them as a sacrifice to the idols.”*

St. Wissa and some monks went to the temple of the idols, but they found the doors locked. When they prayed to the Lord, the doors were opened immediately, so the pagans were frightened and they set the Bishop and his disciples free. Then they all prayed and fire came down from heaven and burnt the idols and their priests.

The Lord commended St. Shenouda before his departure to appoint St. Wissa as his successor, when St. Wissa refused, St. Shenouda informed him that it was the Lord's commandment.

He used to guide and strengthen the monks for 20 years as the Abbot, then he departed in peace on 4 Misra.

In the Museum of Napoli, in Italy, there are still some scripts written in Coptic including St. Wissa's articles and sermons. Another collection known as “The Collection of Karzoun” is kept in the British Museum, consisting of 11 complete and 3 incomplete letters, sent from St. Wissa to his disciples.

St. Wissa's departure date is not mentioned in the Sinixarium of the Coptic Church, thus the church doesn't



celebrate it, although he is a great saint who served the Coptic monasticism in honesty and sacrifice for many years.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Nofar, Abba Karas and our father Pavnotius that He may forgive us our sins]**

Nofar:

A Coptic word meaning “good”.

The Grace of God moved St. Pavnotius to enter deep into the inner wilderness to meet the hermit fathers and know their life and struggles. Among those whom he met was St. Abba Nofar the Hermit, so he told St. Pavnotius his story:

I was a youth monk living in the Barida Monastery, in El Menya, Upper Egypt with 140 monks. We were living in unity. One day I heard from the elder fathers about those who dwell as hermits in the inner wilderness and their wonderful virtues, so I asked the elders: ‘Is there anyone better than you?’ They said, ‘yes, the dwellers of the wilderness, because we live here together comforting each other, but they do not have anything of that sort. Hearing this, my heart was blazed up with the love of this life. At night, I took some bread and left the



monastery asking Lord Jesus to guide me to a place to live in. I walked on my way with an angel in front of me, until I found a saint who taught me how to live in the inner wilderness. Then I came to this place and found this palm tree, which gives 12 bunches of dates each year, one for each month, and I found this source of water to drink from. I have been here for 60 years and never seen a human being except for you.

St. Pavnotius and St. Abba Nofar spent the night praying and talking about the wonders of God. In the morning St. Pavnotius saw the face of Abba Nofar so bright and he was really scared, but Abba Nofar said “Do not be afraid, because the Lord has sent you to bury my body. I knew through the spirit that this is the day of my departure.” He knelt, prayed and reposed in peace, then St. Pevnotius buried him grieving for his departure.

St. Pevnotius wanted to live in the same place, but after the burial of Abba Nofar the palm tree fell over, the source of water dried up and the cave collapsed. This was according to God’s will so that St. Pavnotius might go back and tell about St. Abba Nofar’s story.

The church celebrates the commemoration of his departure on 16 Baouna, and the consecration of his church in Cairo in 16 Hatour.

**Karas or Kiras:**

A Greek word meaning Master or Sultan.

He is the brother of the Orthodox King Theodosius the Great. He abandoned the palace and headed towards the inner wilderness seeking the Lord Christ's mercy. He lived there for 57 years in great devoutness. Through the Divine guidance, St. Pemwa entered into the inner wilderness where he reached the cave of Abba Karas. When he knocked on the door, St. Karas called him by his name saying "Come in Pemwa, the priest of Scetis Wilderness". St. Karas then told St. Pemwa his story. He reposed his soul in peace the following day after St. Shenouda the Archimandrite's departure. St. Karas saw the angels carrying St. Shenouda's spirit and he informed St. Pemwa who was with him at that time. St. Pemwa shrouded St. Karas and buried him.

The church celebrates the commemoration of the departure of St. Karas the hermit on 8 Abib.

Pavnotius:

A word meaning 'specially for God'.

He was a great recluse in the wilderness of Upper Egypt living a holy life resembling the angels. He was also a source of blessing and salvation for many others. The Divine Grace moved him to enter into the inner wilderness, so he tolerated many sufferings for days and months, yet the angel of the Lord used to strengthen him. He saw many hermit fathers and wrote about their lives.

The church commemorates his departure on 15 Amsheer.

There are many saints called Pavnotius:

- 1. St. Pavnotius the Bishop and the Confessor:**
He was one of St. Anthony's children who tolerated numerous persecutions so he lost his right eye. He attended the Council of Nicea and was greatly honoured by king Constantine.
- 2. St. Pavnotius the Martyr:** He was a recluse near the city of Dandara in Upper Egypt, martyred by Irianous the Governor.
- 3. St. Pavnotius the Priest of Scetis Wilderness:**
He succeeded St. Macari the Great in pasturing the monks of Scetis wilderness. He was a great ascetic and expert reader in the holy books, memorising lots of them by heart. He was characterised by his wisdom and gentleness.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Samuel the Confessor, Yustus and Apollos his disciples that He may forgive us our sins]**

Samuel:

A Hebrew name meaning "who is given by God" or "He who is heard by God".

Born on 597 AD in Shebin El Kom, Egypt. His father was a saint priest called Silas and his mother Kesmiana. He refused to get married, so he distributed his wealth to the poor after the departure of his parents and went to Scetis Wilderness. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and led him to St. Agathon who ordained him as a monk. He advised him to practice humbleness, silence and the fear of God, always saying "forgive me".



St. Samuel lived an angelic monastic life, and after the departure of his spiritual father Anba Agathon, he was the leader of the brethren. The Lord granted him the gift of healing the sick, casting out demons and performing miracles and he was also ordained as a priest on St. Macari church in Scetis Wilderness.

When the heretic Thomson Lawon came to the wilderness with his heresy St. Samuel tore off the papal and threw it on the ground, and he excommunicated anyone who changed the true upright faith. The soldiers whipped St. Samuel harshly so he lost one of his eyes that's why he is called 'The Confessor', which means he was persecuted for the sake of Lord Jesus Christ, exactly the same as martyrs, yet they did not get martyred, although they were ready for martyrdom, thus the church place them straight after the martyrs.

The angel of the Lord appeared to him and asked him to go and live in Qalamoun Monastery (where his monastery exists today). There he also had numerous disciples. A year later the Barbarians attacked Scetis Wilderness and they took St. Samuel as a captive to their country. There, he met St. Jouannis the priest and they used to comfort each other and pray together. The Barbarians whom the saint was serving tied St. Samuel's foot to a prostitute's, trying to spoil his chastity, yet the girl was hit by leprosy. After a while, a Barbarian's wife fell sick to death, the saint prayed for her and she was healed, so the Barbarian set him free and apologised to him. St. Samuel returned to his monastery and completed the days of his life peacefully there.

The church celebrates the commemoration of his departure on 8 Kiahk. He departed at the age of 98, he spent 18 years before becoming a monk, 16 years as a monk in Scetis, 3½ years in Qalamoun Mountain, 6 months in Deknash Mountain, 3 years at the Barbarian captive and 57 years in Qalamoun Wilderness. At the time of his departure a sweet aroma of incense filled the place.

Yustus:

A Latin name which means 'just'.

He was one of the two close disciples of St. Samuel the Confessor, a Syrian born to a wealthy and righteous family in Antioch. After the departure of their parents Yustus and his sister Madrota, went to Egypt disguised as poor people in a ship, but the sailors were Barbarian pirates who separated Yustus and Madrota. Reaching Mariout, Yustus was sold as a slave to a man called Archilidus, whose son-in-law ordered Yustus to be hit harshly. His body was full of wounds, which later became badly infected and worms used to come out of his sores. He then fled to a shepherd, who treated him and looked after him. Archilidus then was very sick, so he went to the elders of Scetis Wilderness, where he met St. Samuel who advised him to go back to his country, and there he would meet a person carrying a jug of water. Drinking of this water would heal him. Yustus was the person with the jug, yet Archilidus did not recognise him. St. Yustus then left to Scetis Wilderness, yet on his way he served again as a slave for 5 years for a doctor called Qolta.



Archilidus wife got sick so he called Dr. Qolta, but the angel of the Lord appeared to Qolta, and told him that Yustus was the one to heal her, so Qolta sent messengers who took St. Yustus by force to Archilidus' house, he prayed on some water which the wife drank and was cured. There, they recognised him and he stayed for six months because they would not let him go back to Scetis Wilderness.

Finally, when they asked him to pray for her as she fell sick again he told them that she would not be healed unless they let him go back. They let him go with messengers, and reaching Scetis he prayed on some water, sent it with the messengers and she was healed.

The angel of the Lord appeared to St. Samuel in St. Macari Monastery, and told him about the arrival of the blessed Yustus, and that he would be his spiritual son. The angels also ordered St. Samuel to ordain him as a monk, and so it happened. Later, St. Yustus entered into the inner wilderness where he was severely tempted by devils.

The Barbarians captured St. Yustus and sold him as a slave to a cruel blacksmith, who treated him badly, beat and humiliated him. Finally he cut off his fingers and left him half-dead. St. Yustus got up in great pain and crawled until he reached a nearby cemetery where he dwelt there thanking God. The Lord sent an angel who healed St. Yustus and returned his fingers back to his hands.



Then he went to El Bahnasa Mountain in Upper Egypt and he lived there, being renounced for his virtues and performing miracles.

A slave maid accused him of sinning with her, and when she gave birth to her twins, the people put the twins in 2 baskets and hanged them on both shoulders of the saint, they made him go around the city while they insulted and hit him, then they threw him, with the infants outside the city, where he looked after them through a herd of deer which the Lord sent to him to get milk from, for the babes. St. Samuel was terribly grieved by the lost of St. Yustus, but the angel of the Lord told him where he was and so he went and met him happily. After completing his struggle he departed in peace on 11 Tubah, which corresponds with the Feast of the Epiphany.

Apollo:

A name of a famous god worshipped by the Romans.

Apollo was one of St. Samuel's close disciples who helped him in building St. Mary's church in St. Samuel's Monastery.

St. Samuel used to refer the hard problems to St. Apollo, because of his great wisdom and discern. When St. Samuel lived in soliloquy like Elijah the Prophet, he appointed St. Apollo the Superintendent of the Monastery supervising the brethren.

St. Apollo had a great intimacy with the Lord and his prayers were accepted. Once they had many visitors in



the monastery and there was not enough bread, so he prayed to the Lord, and then they found the stove full of fresh bread.

St. Apollo kept pasturing and guiding the brethren until he departed in peace, yet we do not know exactly the date of his departure.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Apollo and Abba Abib and Abba Pigmi that He may forgive us our sins]**

Abib:

A Hebrew name which means green wheat.

Abba Apollo:

Abba Apollo was born to a righteous Christian family in Upper Egypt. He was ordained as a monk with his friend Abib. They kept struggling together in God's commandments until St. Abib departed in peace on 25 Babah.

St. Macari the great sent a letter of condolences to St. Apollo about which St. Apollo knew with the spirit before its arrival. St. Apollo then left the Monastery and lived in a cave in the mountain worshipping God, and gradually, many monks and recluses started gathering around him, until he became the father and guide of hundreds.

The church celebrates the departure of St. Abib in 25 Babah and St. Apollo in 5 Amsheer.

**Pigmi:**

A Coptic name which means 'existing'.

He is the great St. Pigmi the hermit. When he was 10 years old, an angel appeared to him as a young lad and asked him to go and become a monk with the angel. Pigmi approved happily, then they met three elder monks, so the angel left Pigmi with them. He lived with the elder monks in total obedience and humbleness, growing in spirituality and stature. Seven years later he was ordained as a monk. They used to call him 'the son of peace' in the Scetis Wilderness, and so he lived with them for 24 years until the three elders departed in peace, one after the other, after giving their blessings to St. Pigmi.

St. Pigmi then entered into the inner wilderness, where he lived in soliloquy for 24 years, struggling in prayers and fasting, and once after a long fast, the angel of the Lord brought to him hot fresh bread and some water, which lasted with him for 7 years.

Later, Lord Jesus Himself appeared to St. Pigmi and ordered him to go back to his country and guide the people to the true path and perform miracles.

One day, an angel of the Lord carried him to Faran in Palestine because the citizens of this country deviated from the true faith, so he preached them and refuted all the heresies and wrong teachings.

He stayed there for 5 years then the angel took him back to his country.



At his last days, St. Shenouda the Archimandrite visited him, according to a vision about the greatness of St. Pigmi.

He departed in peace at the age of 70. The church celebrates his commemoration on 11 Kiahk.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Okein and Abba Aaron, Abahour and Abakis, that He may forgive us our sins]**

Okein:

Okein means ‘prayer’.

A great Egyptian saint born in Qolzom, near the Red Sea and a contemporary to St. Anthony. His job was diving into the deep sea, catching shells and pearls, selling them, and he used to give all the money to the poor. He also used to save the passengers of any ships that drowned as he was so skilled at swimming and knew all the secrets of the sea.

He kept doing this for 25 years, then he spent a few weeks in one of St. Pakhoum’s Monasteries in Upper Egypt. He then headed to Iraq with another 70 disciples. They lived in caves, then these caves turned into a monastery where the saint lived for 30 years, together with his 350 disciples, whom he used to preach and teach the life of devoutness and asceticism.



The Lord performed many miracles and wonders through St. Okein, which made many idolaters become Christians.

At the time of his departure, one of his disciples saw an angel coming to take St. Okrein's soul. The Monastery of St. Okrein still exists in Iraq under the supervision of the Syrian Orthodox.

Abba Aaron El Serougi of El Syrian Monastery:

Born in Iraq around 530 AD to righteous rich parents. When he was a youth he yearned to join the monastery, so one day while he was shepherding with his father's servants, he saw a monastery from afar. In the morning he asked the Abbot to accept him as a monk.

The Abbot prophesied through the Holy Spirit and said to the other monks 'Blessed are the parents of this youth, because he will lead many people to the kingdom of heaven'.

The shepherds went back and told St. Aaron's parents what had happened, so they went to the Monastery and tried to bring him back with them, but he refused. After spending 10 years in the Monastery he entered into the deep wilderness.

Six years later, he decided to go to Jerusalem and have the blessings of the holy places, together with a recluse called Gregory, yet the latter died on the way to Jerusalem, so St. Aaron went on by his own. During his



long trip, he used to perform miracles, cast demons and heal the sick in the places he passed by.

He built a monastery and many monks gathered around him, then he headed to Arminia Mountain, and there, he also was a father to a huge number of disciples. He healed the daughter of the king of Constantinople, so the king offered him money, material and workmen to renovate his monastery after it was ruined.

He departed in peace on the day of the Pentecost in the year 648 AD.

Abahour:

A Coptic word which means ‘the father of riches’.

At an early age he headed to the wilderness and became a disciple to a saint called Ghilnikos, who later ordained him as a monk.

After the departure of St. Ghilnikos, an angel of the Lord appeared to St. Abahour and offered him to go to Ansena to be a disciple to a righteous man called Joseph, then go to the “Mountain of the Pillar”, where he would be a father to a multitude of monks. The saint did so, he kept progressing in his spirituality to the extent that the wild beasts ate from his hand and befriended him. The Lord granted him the gift of healing the sick, and among those whom he healed was the Queen, the wife of King Theodosius the Great.



His monastery still exists on the top of the mountain on the western back of the River Nile, known as Sawada Monastery.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 4 Baouna.

Abakis:

A name which means the ‘adult’.

Born in El Menya, Upper Egypt, after the departure of his parent, he went to Abahour in the ‘Mountain of the Pillar’ where he became a monk. They called him ‘the patient’ because of his great patience and many struggles.

One day, our Saviour Lord Jesus, appeared to him, took him by the hand and showed him a spot to build a church and a monastery.

Finally, he went out with his disciple Zakamon and lived in ‘The Mountain of The Salt’ where he reposed in peace. His disciple took his body back to the monastery and buried it there.

Many miracles were performed out of St. Abakis’ body. This area was called ‘Menya of St. Abakis’ which is now the existing country of El Menya in Upper Egypt.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Barsouma, Ephram, John, Simon that He may forgive us our sins]

St. Barsouma the Syrian:

Barsouma means the ‘son of fasting’.



He is one of the great Syrian saints born in Samusat close to Ephurates River in the 4th century to a righteous family. A saint prophesied to his parents before his birth saying, ‘you will have a child who will be a saint and he will be greatly renown in the whole world’.

When he was a youth, he became a disciple to a recluse called Ibrahim, who taught him the life of monasticism and worship. He used to fast a lot that is why he as called Barsouma. He was a contemporary of St. Simon of the Pillar.

He resisted the heresy of Nastur and attended the Council at Ephesus, invited by King Theodosius Junior.

He kept struggling in his worships for 45 years and he is truly considered the teacher of monastic virtue and devoutness in Syria.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 9 Amsheer.

Mar Ephram the Syrian:

Ephram is a Hebrew word meaning ‘the doubled fruits’. One of the great saints in the Syrian Orthodox Church, even in the whole universal church. The church calls him ‘The Prophet of the Syrians’, ‘The sun of the Syrians’, ‘The Teacher’, ‘the violin of the Holy Trinity’.

Born to Christian parents in Iraq on the year 303 AD. When he was a youth, he was always accompanying St. Jacob the Bishop of Nasibein. He left Syria where he



used to preach the idolaters. Living in a cave in El Raha Mountain, he practiced fasting and prayer. Then a divine called commanded him to go to the city and refute the heresy, defending the upright Orthodox faith.

After a short while he returned back to his cave. He was so eloquent, knowledgeable, humble and gentle.

St. Gregory said about him: ‘He is like the angels who do not worry at all. He is a man of tears, exactly as breath is vital for living, tears never departed St. Ephram’s eyes’

He was also a poet and an author.

It is said that he came to Scetis Wilderness where he spent 8 years and there is a tree by his name that still exists in St. Mary’s Monastery, known as El Syrian Monastery.

He met St. Basilious the Great in Caesarea, and he wanted to ordain him as a priest, but when he refused, he ordained him as a deacon. He went back to El Raha, then to his cave in El Raha Mountain, until the great famine 272-273, where he used to go to the city and urge the rich people to donate money and help the poor and needy. He used to nurse the sick people of the famine by himself.

He departed in peace on 273 leaving behind a treasure of articles, letters and books of explanation for the Books of the Holy Bible and many others.



The church celebrates his commemoration on 15 Abib.

John the son of Ephnotia the Syrian:

He was one of the righteous noble monks of El Raha. His mother brought him up in God's fear, because his father died right before his birth. He joined St. Thomas Monastery in Sulucia, and because of his noble manners, gentleness and high education he became the Abbot. On the year 530 AD he established a Monastery in Tripoli, which became later a college of worship, philosophy, languages and theology, out of which the most famous scientists and theologians of Syria were graduated.

St. John left for Constantinople between 533-534 AD. He was eloquent in Greek and Syrian language and wrote an interpretation of the book of "The Song of Songs". He also organised some hymns about Lord Jesus' miracles, washing the Apostles feet, Christmas and Easter.

He died on 538 AD at the age of 55, on the 8th of November.

The Syrian Orthodox church still celebrates his commemoration.

St. Simoen of the Pillar (the Syrian):

Simeon: a Hebrew name meaning 'the listener' or 'the obedient'.

Born in 388 AD in Syria, and at the age of 16 he became a monk in a Monastery in Antioch. He gave all his wealth to the monastery and other monasteries as well.



He lived in the monastery for 10 years, then he went and lived on top of a high pillar, then in 7 years he built another 3 pillars, the tallest was 20 metres high. He used to pray, sleep and preach whoever came to him while on the pillar, and his disciples brought him whatever he needed. He also used to heal the sick and wounded.

Through his preaching, many idolaters became Christians. He had many writings and explanations of the Holy Bible.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 7 Misra.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Amonius, Apiphanious, Archilidus and Arsanius that He may forgive us our sins]**

Apiphanious:

Meaning 'the clear'.

Born to Jewish parents in Palestine, then he was baptised and became a Christian. He came to Egypt and learnt from its monks the true monastic life. He mastered 5 languages: Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Syrian and Coptic.

At Cyprus, he was elected their Archbishop because of his holiness and eloquence. He used to visit the poor and helped them in great generosity. He wrote many articles about devoutness and worship. Some of them are:

- ❖ Ignorance of what is written in the books is like falling into a steep deep hole.
- ❖ Do not love the belongings of this world so you will find rest on earth and in



eternity, also beware of the desires, thus the devil will not have any power upon you.

- ✠ Always remember the Name of God, thus the fights will decrease.

He departed in peace at the age of 96 on 403 AD. The church celebrates his departure on 17 Bashans and on 28 Bashans the arrival of his body to the island of Cyprus, where he was buried.

Amonious or Amoun:

Meaning 'the hidden'.

He is St. Amoun the Monk, the establisher of monasticism in Niteria Mountain, born at the end of the 3rd century to a famous noble rich Egyptian family. He lost his parents at an early age, so his uncle brought him up and forced him to get married, yet he agreed with his wife to live in virginity. They lived together for 18 years, hiding the truth of their relationship, spending their time happily in fasting and prayers.

Then, they decided to live a life of monasticism, so St. Amoun headed to Niteria Mountain on 325 AD, being the first one to dwell in this wilderness. He gathered around him a great number of monks who became his disciples. When St. Anthony visited St. Amoun, he suggested that he would go deeper in an area called Celia, for more isolation and soliloquy. Thus Niteria was for the novice and Celia for those higher in their spiritual level. One of his most famous virtues was great shyness,



a quality if lost by a human being he becomes like an animal and loses the beauty of his humanity.

He lived a very simple life, eating very little food, spending his day in meditation in theological matters, as well as guiding the brethren. The Lord granted him the gift of performing miracles. At the end of his life he visited St. Anthony the father of monks who told St. Amoun about the time of his departure, and after returning back to his residence, he departed in peace at the age of 62. St. Anthony from his place, saw the soul of St. Amoun ascending to the heaven with the angels' praises and rejoice.

Archilidus:

A Greek word which means 'the chief of pleadings'. Born to a noble Roman family, his father died when he was 12 and when he grew up he refused to get married, so his mother suggested that he would go to the king and occupy the position of his late father, she sent with him 2 lads and precious presents for the king. A big storm arose and the ship was wrecked on their way to the king, yet St. Archilidus kept clinging to a piece of wood until he reached the shore. There, he found a corpse of a dead man, so he kept crying remembering the vanity of the world. He prayed and asked Lord Jesus to guide him. Then he walked till he reached the Monastery of St. Romanos, he gave the Abbot the rest of his money, then he lived there for years in awe and worship. He vowed before God not to see a woman's face all the remaining days of his life.



His mother grieved a lot thinking that he died in the shipwreck, then she built a motel to host the travellers and strangers, and she lived in one of the rooms.

One day, she heard two merchants talking about a saint monk called Archilidus, so she knew that he was her son. She hurried to the monastery and asked to see him, yet the messenger told her what St. Archilidus informed him about his vow.

She kept trying to see him, yet in vain. Finally, the saint prayed to God to take his soul then he allowed her to enter. The Lord answered his pleading and he departed, so when his mother entered the room she found him dead. She wept bitterly and asked the Lord also to take her soul. The monks then buried both of them in one grave, as they couldn't separate them.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 14 Tubah.

Arsanius:

A Greek word which means 'beloved'.

He is the great St. Arsanius the tutor of the kings' children.

Born in Rome at the first half of the 4th century to a noble rich Christian family. He was chosen to be the best tutor suitable for teaching Prince Arkadius and Anorius, the sons of King Theodosius the Great. In his prayers, he always asked, "Teach me O Lord, the way of my salvation". One day, he heard a voice coming from heaven saying "Flee from the people and you'll be saved".



Immediately, he travelled to Alexandria, then to Scetis Wilderness, where he was ordained as a monk by St. Makari the Great.

He loved silence and meditation, so he lived in a far cell, praying, fasting, watching and weeping all the time.

After long suffering St. Arsanus departed in peace on the year 445 AD at the age of 95: 40 years before heading to the monastery, 40 years in Scetis Wilderness, 10 years in Turah Mountain, 3 years in Kanob near Alexandria, and the final 2 years in Turah Mountain where he was buried under the altar of his church in Turah Mountain.

The Lord had honoured him by performing many miracles through his body buried in the church.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 13 Bashans.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf my two masters the hermits Abba Abraam and Gawergy the He may forgive us our sins]**

Abraam:

A name which means the ‘noble’ or ‘honoured’ father. His father was a kind man who used to do lots of charity to the poor, he spent all his money when Egypt was suffering a famine, and his mother was an honourable righteous woman.



When Abraam decided to become a monk, his mother rejoiced and prayed to the Lord saying, “please Lord accept from me this sacrifice”. St. Abraam – according to God’s plan – went to the Mountain of Abba Orion (near Scetis), where he lived with a saint called Gawargious or Gawergy.

They became brothers in the Lord, and one day while praying together to know God’s will, St. John the Baptist appeared to them and informed them that it was God’s good will to dwell and pray together, encouraging each other to reach high spiritual virtues. They headed to St. Makari Monastery and lived under the guidance of St. John the priest until he departed in peace. St. Abraam then fell sick for 18 years, when he pleaded to the Lord, the same answer came to him as St. Paul ***“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”.*** (2Cor. 12:9)

So he tolerated in thanksgiving for a long time. Finally after partaking of the Holy Communion, some saints came from heaven to take his soul, among them was St. Makari the Great and St. John the priest his spiritual father. He departed at the age of 85, he spent 34 years before becoming a monk, 51 years in monasticism.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 9 Tubah.

Gawarg or Gawargious:

A Greek word which means a “farmer”. He is the friend of St. Abraam and his spiritual brother in monasticism



and discipleship. Born of Christian parents, he used to shepherd the sheep of his father, while fasting and praying all day. The Lord was strengthening him as he was growing in virtues. At the age of 14 he left the sheep with some shepherd friends and walked to the wilderness. On his way the devil appeared to him as an elder, and kept reminding him of his father who was grieved because of his departure, yet the saint realised the devil's tricks and answered from the Holy Bible as what Lord Jesus did in the temptations on the Mount "It is written ..."

Immediately, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and guided him to Scetis Wilderness, then to the Mountain of Abba Orion. There he lived with an elder saint and became his disciple. He gradually increased in his virtues, one of these was that he didn't taste any wine or eat any cooked food for 10 years. He used to spend the whole night reading the Holy Bible, and so, he memorised 14 books of the Holy Bible and the angels used to come, give him company and strengthen him.

Once, he desired to live in total isolation in the inner wilderness, but two saints appeared informing him that it wasn't according to God's will, so he returned back.

He then met St. Abraam and they both headed to St. Makari Monastery and became spiritual brothers under the guidance of St. John the priest of the wilderness.

When he wanted to go from his cell to St. Makari Monastery, he couldn't because of his weak health, yet,



in a minute he was taken in front of the gate of the Monastery.

He lived for 72 years, 14 as a layman and 58 as a monk.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 18 Bashans.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Athanasius The Apostolic, Severes and Discorous that He may forgive us our sins]**

Athanasius:

A Greek name which means ‘immortal’.

He is the 20th pope of Alexandria and the protector of the upright faith.

Born in Alexandria in 296 AD from pagan parents, his mother brought him up after the departure of his father. When he was a youth, he was baptised by the saint Pope Alexandrus.

St. Alexandrus noticed Athanasius’ courage and intelligence, so he took him as his disciple and made him join the Theological College. He then spent 3 years with St. Anthony, who taught him worship and devoutness.

Pope Alexandrus then ordained him as a deacon then Archdeacon, and took him to the Council at Nicea on 325 AD to refute the heresy of Arius. He was renowned for defending the upright faith and wording of the Creed, which is still used in all the Orthodox churches until now.



On 329 AD and before his departure, Pope Alexandrus commanded that Athanasius would be his successor. Knowing this, Athanasius fled to the desert as he considered himself unworthy, yet the people brought him back and the Pope laid his hands on him.

He kept resisting the Arians so he was exiled from his seat 5 times, yet he was stronger and more solid in defending the faith. Pope Athanasius spent 46 years in priesthood, most of them were in exile, persecution and many troubles. He just spent the last 5 years of his life in peace.

Once, the Arian King Constantinous put him in a ship without a captain or food or drink and left him in the middle of the sea to get rid of him, but the Divine Providence guarded him for 3 days, until he reached Alexandria where all the believers there received him in rejoice.

The church celebrates this miracle on 30 Tut.

The church calls him 'The Apostolic' in honour of his struggle to keep the upright faith, resembling the Apostles in their struggle in preaching, teaching and persecution.

It is true what St. Epronimus said about St. Athanasius [There was a time when the whole world was about to follow Arius had it not been for Athanasius].

He departed in peace on 373 AD.



The church celebrates his departure on 7 Bashans, and on the 10th of May 1973 Pope Shenouda III brought to Egypt part of his relics.

Severes:

A Greek word which means ‘the priest of this age’.

He is the great Mar Severus the Patriarch of Antioch, the strong defender of the Orthodox faith. Born at the end of the 4th century in Persia to pagan parents, taught in Lebanon and baptised in Tripoli, then became a monk in one of the monasteries there.

When the Pope of Antioch at that time departed, he was ordained as a Pope on 512 AD.

He faced lots of persecutions in defending the Orthodox faith. King Yustinianous ordered to cut off his tongue, yet Queen Theodora, who was a righteous woman, asked him to escape. He refused to escape, yet in obedience to the Queen and for the sake of his congregation he fled to Egypt around 518 AD, where he used to go from one country to the other preaching and baptising.

The Lord performed many wonders through St. Severes until he departed in peace around 538Ad. His body was transferred to El Zogag Monastery in Alexandria.

The Coptic Orthodox Church honours this saint a lot, and his name is mentioned in the Holy Liturgy in the Absolution of the servants straight after the Preacher of Egypt St. Mark the Evangelist.



The church celebrates his coming to Egypt on 2 Babah, his departure on 14 Amsheer and transferring his body to El Zogag Monastery on 10 Kiahk.

Discorous:

A word meaning the ‘servant’.

St. Discorous the Confessor was the 25th Pope of Alexandria, he is the hero of Orthodoxy. He lived in the end of the 5th century and was a disciple to Pope Kyrellos I, the Pillar of Religion. After the departure of Pope Kyrellos, St. Discorous was ordained as a Pope during a very hard period because of the many heresies, especially that of Nastur.

He headed the Council at Ephesus on 449 AD. Again on the year 451AD he attended the Council at Chalcedony, together with Anba Makarious the Bishop of Faw, the miracle performer. When he opposed the heresy of the ‘two natures of God’ and kept a fast hold of the Orthodox faith, Queen Polsharia, the wife of King Markianous ordered to hit him harshly on his mouth and pluck out his beard. So, he collected the teeth which fell because of the strong hits and the hairs of his beard and sent them to his children in Alexandria saying “This is the fruit of my struggle for the sake of the true faith”.

He was then exiled to Ghaghra Island with Anba Makarious, until he departed and was buried there in the year 457 AD.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 7 Tut.



❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf Basilious, Gregory, and our Father Abba Kyrellos that He may forgive us our sins]

Basilious:

A Greek name which means king.

He is St. Basil the Great, the Archbishop of Cabaduk, one of Asia Minor Cities, born on 329 AD to a noble rich Christian family.

He studied in Constantinople, then Athens, being a companion to St. Gregory the Theologian. Then he returned to Caesarea and worked as a teacher of Literature where he excelled in this field because of his eloquence. His sister Makrina guided him to consecrate his life to the Lord, so he kept studying the Holy Bible, then was ordained as a deacon.

His Monasticism:

Basilious visited the monks of Egypt and Palestine and learned a lot about monasticism, then he became a monk, devoting himself in severe fasting and spiritual practices. Many ascetics gathered around him, so he became the founder of monasticism in the area of Asia Minor.

His service:

He was ordained as a priest on 364 AD, then an Archbishop after Anba Osabius on 370 AD defending the Orthodox faith against the Arian Heresy. St. Basilious was the greatest theologian and preacher during that time



after St. Athanasius the Apostolic. He wrote many theological and spiritual books.

His departure:

He became so weak because of his continuous service and illness, then he departed in peace on 379 AD and was buried in Caesarea.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 6 Tubah, also on 13 Tut the commemoration of the great miracle performed through him, when he released a youth and saved him from an oath which he had written to the devil.

Gregory:

A Greek name means ‘watchful’.

The most famous 3 saints with this name are:

1. Gregory the Theologian, also Gregory of Ninziny.
2. Gregory the Miracle Performer, the Bishop of Caesarea, so called because of the many wonders and miracles, which God performed through him. The church celebrates his commemoration on 21 Hatour.
3. Gregory the Arminian: the Pope of the Arminians who became a martyr without shedding of blood, and the church celebrates his commemoration on 19 Tut.

Here we will just talk about St. Gregory the Theologian: Born on 329 AD in Niazinza in the Asia Minor where his father was the Bishop of this city (in the early church, the bishop had to be married “*speaking lies in hypocrisy*,”



having their own conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:2), because getting married to one woman only at this age was considered the pinnacle of chastity, and monasticism or celibacy were not common then). His mother, Nouna, had a great spiritual influence on Gregory. He finished his studies at Cabaduk, then left to Palestine, Alexandria, then Athens where he met his friend Basilious, then he returned back to Niazinza at the age of 30. He lived in complete devoutness in the mountains, then was ordained as a priest against his will. He then went to Constantinople where he suffered a lot in resisting the Arian heresy.

Going back to his country, he published many books and resources. The church calls him the Theologian because of his many theological sermons, about the Holy Trinity and the Divinity of Master Christ.

He reposed in peace on 391 AD at the age of 63. The church celebrates his commemoration on 24 Tut.

Kyrellos:

A Greek word which means ‘the master of the congregation’.

He is the great saint Kyrellos I, the Pillar of Religion, the 24th Pope of Alexandria. He is the nephew of Pope Theofilus the 23rd Pope, who was looking after Kyrellos spiritually, so he made him join the Alexandria Theological College, then he sent him to the desert of Scetis where he was a disciple to St. Sarabioun.



Kyrellos was gifted with a sharp memory, so he was bale to memorise everything easily, as well as having a beautiful voice, so when he used to sing hymns, the believers enjoyed it a lot and wouldn't like him to end singing.

He left for Alexandria, where he was ordained as a priest, then as a Pope on 404 AD.

He sent many letters to Nastur refuting his cruel heresy (claiming that St. Mary should not be called the Mother of God, as Jesus Christ had 2 different natures).

Finally, when Nastur refused to listen, Pope Kyrellos headed the Council at Ephesus on 432 AD where they excommunicated Nastur of his priesthood rank. He departed in peace on 435 AD.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 3 Abib.

❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf the 318 assembled at Nicea that He may forgive us our sins]

The pure Apostles established the Councils and considered these Councils as the authorities for discussing different issues in the church. They held the first council on the year 51 or 52 AD, headed by St. James the Apostle, the Bishop of Jerusalem to discuss the issue of circumcision of the Gentiles (Acts 15:6-29)

Two kinds of Councils:

1. **Ecumenical:** Attended by Bishops, priest, deacons to have decisions about the heresies that took place at the early Christian Church. There are some conditions for calling for an Ecumenical Council.
 - a. To be held to refute a heresy or division in the church.
 - b. To be held according to an invitation from the Christian Emperor.
 - c. To be attended by most of the bishops of the Western and Eastern church.
 - d. To issue decisions and decrees which did not exist before.

2. **Local:** These are still carried on to discuss different issues in the local church, or to refuse specific decisions.

The Council at Nicea:

It was the first Ecumenical Council on 325 AD held at Nicea in Asia Minor, due to an invitation from Emperor Constantine the Great, because of the heresy of Arius, the Alexandrian, who claimed that Christ is created and not equal to the Father.

This council was attended by 318 Bishops headed by Hosius Bishop of Kortoba and the eldest among all the bishops.



The number 318 is a significant number in the Holy Bible, when the Pagan kings captivated Lot, Abraham's nephew, Abraham took 318 of his servants, attacked those kings, defeated them and released Lot and all his possessions. The Lord also saved the church from the cruel Arian heresy with those 318 bishops.

It is written in the Sinixarium on the 9th of Hatour that the Lord Christ blessed this council by His Presence, as written in Matt. 18:20, because many of the attendants when they counted the persons assembled, they ended up to be 319.

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❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Abba Hadid, Abba John, the great father Abba Barsoum and Abba Roweis that He may forgive us our sins]**

Abba Hadid the Priest:

Born at the beginning of the 14th century in an island called Singar to pious parents, his father was a fisherman. In a vision his mother saw an angel of light saying [The Lord will grant you a blessed son, he will lead the congregation of the Lord, you'll call him Hadid], and it was so.



He used to help his father in fishing, and when his virtues started to be renounced, he flew the vainglory and worked as a builder.

He gave all his money to the poor, then he flew again to a different village, where he also became a blessing to the whole village.

St. Mary appeared to him and prevented him from going into the desert, then he was ordained as a priest. The Lord granted him many gifts, one of which was healing the sick and casting out demons. He departed in peace on the year 1387 AD.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 3 Baramhat.

St. John:

He is the disciple of Abba Hadid the Priest, born in Cairo to righteous parents. At the age of 12 he wanted to become a monk, so he used to go to Shahrān Monastery in Helwan, Egypt where he met a saint called Ibrahim who was locking himself in his cell, and an ascetic saint called Simon the Short, so he became their disciple.

He stayed in Jerusalem for 3 years in St. John the Baptist Monastery, then came back to Egypt to see his sick mother, then he stayed in Shahrān Monastery in continuous fasting and prayers.

St. Andrew the Apostle used to appear to him and strengthen him.



He was ordained as a priest and became a means of salvation for many souls. He spent the rest of his life in Samanoud where he departed and was buried.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 15 Hatour.

Abba Barsoum the Naked:

Barsoum: A Syrian name which means the ‘son of fasting’.

Born in Egypt on 1257 AD of righteous rich Christian parents, his father was a minister in the government. When his parents departed, he gave all his possessions to the poor, and lived outside the city for 5 years in total devoutness, wearing only a tunic, which made him suffer the hot and cold weather.

He then lived for 9 years in a cell with a huge snake in St. Mercorious Abu Sefein Church in Old Cairo. When the saint saw the snake he signed it with the cross and prayed *“Moreover Job continued his discourse, and said” (Ps. 27:1)* also, *“You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra. The young lion and the serpent, you shall trample underfoot.” (Ps. 91:13)* The snake then turned into a tame one and lived with the saint in the cell, and the saint used to feed it.

The church suffered severe persecution at that time, so the saint was exposed to torture and imprisonment, yet he kept fasting, praying and pleading to the Lord to lift up His wrath and strengthen His church.



He lived in Shahran Monastery in Helwan for 16 years where many miracles were performed through him. He reposed in peace on 1317 AD at the age of 60, and he was buried in Shahran Monastery.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 5 Nesi.

The Great St. Abba Reweis.

Reweis: A name meaning small horse, for being humble, his real name Tigi means plant, also he was called Freig. Born in Gharbeya, Egypt and when he grew up he used to help his father as a farmer, and sometimes he sold salt, roving around with his little camel “Reweis”.

Anba Reweis lived a devout life as a stranger on earth, not living in a house, but going from one place to the other refusing any glory. So, when he was renounced for his piety as Freig, he changed his name to Roweis, then to Tigi Eflo which means “Tigi the Insane”.

He tolerated humiliation and torture, once he was beaten 400 times with a stick, then thrown in prison, yet he was blaming himself encouraging it to tolerate more.

He was a man of visions, and the Spirit used to take him to different places.

He loved St. Mary so much and went frequently to her church in ‘Haret Zeweila’, and ‘El Khandak Monastery’. He approached the Holy Communion in great awe and fear saying [No one is worthy of these Holy Sacraments



unless he is pure and chastise as St. Mary who deserved to carry Lord Jesus Christ in her womb.]

God opened his eyes so he could see the glory of God descending on the Sacraments while being in the altar. God also granted him the gift of knowing the secret lives of people, so he saved many from things about to happen to them, as well as the gift of healing the sick.

He reposed in peace on 18 October 1404 and was buried in El Khandak Monastery, and many miracles were performed from his tomb. This area was later called The Monastery of Anba Reweis, and now became the resident of the Pope of Alexandria, in addition to many other churches, huge library, the Theological college... etc.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 21 Babah.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf Anba Abraam the Hegumen, our father Abba Marcos that He may forgive us our sins]**

Anba Abraam the Hegumen:

He was a monk in St. Anthony's Monastery a contemporary to St. Marcos El Antony mentioned above, also to the Pope St. Mettaous the 1st, the 87th Pope of Alexandria. It is mentioned that when Pope Mettaous I visited St. Anthony Monastery, all the monks and priests came out with crosses, bibles, censers, candles to meet him, also Abba Marcos and Hegumen Abraam came out with palm branches and olive branches, that was on the year 1098 for martyrs, corresponding 1382 AD.



When Abba Marcos El Antony departed, St. Abraam shrouded and buried him, so it looks like this saint hegumen Abraam was the Abbot of St. Anthony's Monastery at this stage.

Abba Marcos El Antony:

One of the most famous monks of St. Anthony's Monastery, who lived for a while with Pope Mettaous I. Since his early childhood he used to fast for long hours, giving his food to the poor.

At the age of 23 he became a monk at St. Anthony's Monastery, then went to St. Paul's Monastery where he lived in great devoutness for 6 years, then he went back to St. Anthony's Monastery. He always warned his children saying, [Do not trust the body and give it its desire, because all temptations will attack you if your stomach is full].

He was once arrested by a Prince, after the soldiers ruined and stole the Monastery, hitting the monks and arresting them. On the way in the desert they were very tired and there was no water to drink. This saint prayed to God then it started raining heavily so they were comforted a lot.

He departed in peace on the year 1102 for martyrs corresponding 1386AD.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 8 Abib.



On the day of his departure, one of the monks saw hosts of angels descending from heaven and surrounding the monastery, then a beautiful lady carrying a baby also came, her light was stronger than the sun, she sat next to St. Marcos, accepted his pure soul then ascended to heaven in great joy.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf all the Cross bearers who had completed their struggle in the wilderness that He may forgive us our sins]**

“Cross Bearers” is a name given to all the monks and hermits who lived in the wilderness, in great devoutness giving up everything for the love of Lord Christ “*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*” (Rev. 12:11) following the footsteps of their Master, “*they were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskin and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.*” (Heb. 11:37-38)

Their clothes were characterised by the many crosses because of their belief in the strong power of the cross in defeating their enemies, the devils.

As it is impossible to mention all of them by his/her name, so the church specified this quarter for all of the cross bearers, in order to intercede and pray for us before the Throne of Grace.



❖ [Pray to the Lord on our behalf my Master king Constantine and Helen the Queen that He may forgive us our sins]

Constantine:

Constantine was born on 274 AD, and after the departure of his father Constantinus Chlorus the ruler over France, Spain and Britain, he became the Emperor of these countries on 306AD.

In the year 313 AD he met Licinius the Emperor of the Western regions in Milan, where they issued the 'Milan Decree' giving the Christians the freedom to practice Christian rites. In the year 323 he became the Emperor for both the West and the East, and he became a Christian towards the end of his days, becoming the first Christian Emperor.

He called for the Council at Nicea to refute the heresy of Arius, then Arius was excommunicated as a result of the council. The success of the council was totally referred to Emperor Constantine because of the comfortable atmosphere and the security offered to the attendants, as well as the freedom of discussion. He reposed in peace on 337 AD and was buried in the church of the Apostles in Constantinople.

The church celebrates his commemoration on 28 Baramhat.

Queen Helen:

Born to Christian pious parents, then got married to Constantinus Chlorus, and gave birth to Constantine the Great who became the first Christian Emperor.



During the reign of her son Constantine, she saw someone in a vision telling her [go to Jerusalem and look for the Glorious Cross and the holy places].

Her son Emperor Constantine sent a big number of servants and ministers with her to Jerusalem and a lot of money. She kept searching for the Glorious Cross until she found it, then she built many huge churches in Jerusalem.

The church celebrates the discovery of the Glorious Cross and consecrating the church in Jerusalem on 17 Tut and 10 Baramhat, also the consecration of the altars of the church of Resurrection on 16 Tut.

She departed on 327 AD at the age of 80. The church celebrates her commemoration on 9 Bashans.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf the wise virgins the brides of Christ that He may forgive us our sins]**

The commemoration of Saints mentioned some names of martyrs such as St. Demiana, Barbara, Yoliania, Sarah the sister of Behnam, Iraie the sister of Abadir, yet here in this quarter, the church mentions all the virgins, Christs' brides, who excelled men in some cases in their great love of Lord Jesus Christ.

As an example, St. Illareya, the daughter of King Zinon who left the palace and the luxurious life in it, put on men's clothes and headed to the wilderness, at the age of



18, she lived in a cave for 20 years and she was granted the gift of casting out demons. Also St. Mary the ascetic, who was the daughter of a rich noble man in Alexandria. When her father departed, she distributed all her wealth to the poor and needy, and joined a convent in Alexandria. She kept struggling for 15 years then she was granted to put on the Holy Eskeem, which is only given to those who are so perfect in their monastic struggle. Then she wore the sackcloth and locked herself in her cell for 22 years.

We can never count or mention all those brides of Jesus Christ, who gave up all their fortunes and pleasures of the vain world, because of their love to the Master Christ.

We ask for their prayers on our behalf before the throne of Grace.

❖ **[Pray to the Lord on our behalf all you saints of this day, each one in his/her name that He may forgive us our sins]**

Here, we ask for the prayers of all the saints of this day, whether they are angels, prophets, Apostles, martyrs, strugglers, as the church celebrates their commemoration by reading their lives in the Sinixarium ...

May the blessings of their prayers be with us all.
Amen.





DOXOLOGIES

Doxology:

A Greek word which means praise of glorification. Doxologies are said in the Praise, as well as the Raising of the Vesper and Morning Incense, after the Major Litanies, which follow the Thanksgiving Prayer.

Doxologies are praises for St. Mary, the Angels, the Apostles, the Martyrs, and the Saints. In them we praise the saint and mention some facts about his/her life, being a martyr, a confessor ... etc.

They end by asking the prayers of this saint on our behalf for Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us our sins. There are special doxologies for Major and Minor Lordly Feasts, the Feasts of the Cross, the month of Kiahk and the Holy Lent.

In those doxologies there is a mention of the incidents accompanying the celebration, for example, at Christmas we mention the birth of Lord Christ in Bethlehem from a Virgin, the Three Wise Men arrival...etc.

The Praise, Morning and Vesper Doxologies are said in the Watos tune, following the 5 tunes of singing throughout the year:

Joyful, Annual, Fasting, Palm and Kiahk tune.



Order of Midnight Praise Doxologies during annual days.

1. St. Mary's Doxology.
2. Any of the Heavenly Hosts corresponding that day, for example on the 12th of the Coptic month Archangel Michael's Doxology, on the 8th Hatour the Four Incorporeal Creatures... and so on.
3. Doxology for all the Heavenly Hosts together.
4. St. John the Baptist.
5. The Apostle Fathers.
6. St. Mark the Evangelist.
7. Any disciple or apostle in his commemoration day.
8. St. Stephen the First Martyr.
9. St. George the Prince of Martyrs.
10. A doxology for any martyrs on that day.
11. St. Anthony the Father of Monks.
12. A doxology for any saint on that day.
13. A concluding doxology for St. Mary (Shobi Entho)

Notice:

1. The Doxologies start and end with St. Mary.
2. There are fixed doxologies number 1,3,4,5,6,8,9,13,14 and others that vary according to the feast of angels, martyrs and saints.
3. This list is a sort of pattern and not a sharp cut order.
4. In the Major and Minor Lordly Feasts, El Nayrouz, The Cross, Kiahk, Jonah's Fasting, the Holy Lent and the Pentecost, the doxology of the feast should be said first, then, if there's enough time the annual doxologies could be said.





SECTION SIX

THE FOURTH CANTICAL

The fourth Haus consists of the last 3 Psalms; 148, 149 and 150.

In Psalm 148 the whole creation is praising its Creator, according to the Psalmist words, *“The Heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.”* (Ps. 19:1), *“Man goes out to his work and to his labour until the evening.”* (Ps. 104:23), *“They continue this day according to Your ordinances, for all are Your servants.”* (Ps. 119:91).

How beautiful is the sun, the moon, the stars, the flowers, the animals and the whole creation.

In Psalms 149 and 150 the church is urging men – the noblest creation – to praise God, *“This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise.”* (Is. 43:21) also, *“Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.”* (Is. 43:7). The Psalmists is urging himself to praise the Lord without ceasing, *“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits;”* (Ps. 103:1-2)

God’s gifts to us are numerous. He created everything to serve man, the sun, the moon and the stars.



In Psalm 150, he says 'Praise the Lord' 10 times which denotes complete perfect praise.

There is another interpretation for number 10 saying that the Psalmist the 9 heavenly ranks to praise the Lord:

1. The Cherubim.
2. The Seraphim.
3. The Thrones.
4. The Lords.
5. The Principalities.
6. The Dominions.
7. The Powers.
8. The Archangels.
9. The Angels.

The 10th rank is that of the saints in human beings, because through Jesus Incarnation and Crucifixion, He restored to man his first, pure state created on God's image.





CHAPTER ONE

PSALM 148

“Praise the Lord, praise the Lord from the heavens Praise Him in the heights”:

As Moses started with the creation of heaven and earth, so did David the Psalmist, when he asks praise to start first from heaven, from above, where the angels are, *“Bless the Lord, you his angels, who excel in strength, who do his word, heeding the voice of his word. Bless the Lord, all you his hosts, you ministers of his, who do his pleasure.”* (Ps.103: 20-21), and where the numerous hosts are, *“Dominion and fear belong to Him; He makes peace in His high places.”* (Job 25:2), where there are planets, stars, sun, moon etc...

“Praise Him all His angels, Praise Him all His Hosts”:

The first most important job of the angels is to praise and glorify God without ceasing saying, **“Holy, Holy, Holy...”**

The Book of Revelation gave us many verses for the praise of the different heavenly hosts, some of which are:

1. *“The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: ‘Holy,*

holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” (Rev. 4:8)

2. *“the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ‘You are worthy, O Lord,’ to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created” (Rev. 4:10-11)*
3. The four living creatures and the twenty four elders participate in a new hymn *“and they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5:9-10)*
4. Thousands and myriads of angels join them *“saying with a loud voice: ‘worthy is the Lamb who is slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honour and glory and blessing!” (Rev. 5:12)*
5. *“And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: ‘Blessing and honour and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!’ Then the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’ and the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped Him who lives forever and ever.” (Rev. 5:13-14)*

6. *“All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying: ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honour and power and might, be to our God forever and ever’.” (Rev. 7:11-12)*
7. *And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying: ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come’, because You have taken Your great power and reigned.” (Rev. 11:16-17)*
8. *“And I heard the angel of the waters saying: ‘You are righteous O Lord,’ The One who is and who was and who is to be’, because You have judged these things.” (Rev. 16:5)*
9. *“And I heard another from the altar saying ‘Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments’.” (Rev. 16:7)*
10. *“After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honour and power belong to the Lord our God!’” (Rev. 19:1)*
11. *“And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God who sat on the throne, saying, ‘Amen! Alleluia!’” (Rev. 19:4)*
12. *“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thundering, saying,*



‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!’” (Rev. 19:6)

The heavenly hosts feel the pleasure of praising God, so, they want human beings to participate with them, thus it is written, ***“Then a voice came from the throne, saying, ‘Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!’” (Rev. 19:5)***

“Praise Him sun and moon, Praise Him all you stars of light”

The sun glorifies God with its rays that diffuse the darkness, calling the whole creation to wake up to praise and thank God, then following His commandments and pleasing Him through our deeds. The sun also denotes the ‘Sun of Righteousness’ who is Lord Christ, ***“But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.” (Mal. 4:2)*** also, ***“for the Lord is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly”. (Ps. 84:11)***

We cannot fix our eyes on the sun because of its strong brightness, here we remember the Transfiguration of Lord Jesus, ***“and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light”. (Matt. 17:2)*** It is also a symbol of the victorious saints, ***“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear; let him hear!” (Matt. 13:43)***



The sun glorified the Lord when it hid its light at the time of Jesus' crucifixion.

God placed the sun in a position to provide us with all our exact needs of light and heat, otherwise, we would have been freezing if we get less of the sun, and burning if we get more.

As for the moon, it gives beauty to the sky at night, which urges us to praise the Creator, as David the Psalmist says, ***“If I say, ‘surely the darkness shall fall on me,’ even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You”.*** (Ps. 139:11-12)

The astronomers state that the moon derives its rays from the light of the sun, it turns around the earth once every 28 days.

One of the advantages of the moon is the sea tide that helps the huge ships in sailing.

The Creator placed the moon in an appropriate position according to the needs of human beings, so if it was closer, the tide would be stronger thus causing disasters for ships and covering harbours with water. Thus, ***“It shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky”*** (Ps. 89:37), witnessing the greatness of our Creator.

As for the numerous stars and planets, they are a clear glorification and praise of the Eternal Almighty God.

Truly, what the Psalmist says, ***“Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away”***, (Ps 148:5-6) also ***“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made”*** (John 1:3), ***“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse”*** (Rom. 1:20)

David the Prophet and Job the Righteous discovered all the amazing facts of astronomy thousands of years before the astronomers, ***“He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.”*** (Ps. 147:4-5), ***“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork, day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge”*** (Ps. 19:1-2), ***“He made the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south; He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number”*** (Job 9:9-10)

Thus, we know the reason of teaching ‘Astronomy’ as a subject in the early Theological College of Alexandria, in order to be aware of the secrets of His world, and God’s power and wisdom in His Creation.

“Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens”

The Holy Bible says, *“Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth with all that is in it” (Deut. 10:14)*, also when Solomon the Prophet was consecrating the altar, he prayed to the Lord, *“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!” (1Kings 8:27)*

The heaven of heavens is the highest heaven, while the waters above the heavens are the rain falling from above.

The well-known heavens are:

First: The open atmosphere above us, where the birds fly and the clouds exist.

Second: The level higher than the first, where there are stars and planets.

Third: The spiritual heaven where angels and heavenly hosts exist, that which David meant by saying, *“The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all” (Ps. 103:19)*, also, *“For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven the Lord viewed the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to release those appointed to death” (Ps. 102:19-20)*



Although God is everywhere, yet we pray to Him “Our Father Who Art in Heaven” as a kind of honour and glorification for His Greatness.

This third heaven was the one mentioned by St. Paul, ***“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” (2Cor. 12:2-4)***

“Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and let it divide the waters from the waters.’ Thus God made the firmament, and divided the water which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.” (Gen. 1:6-8) The firmament, means the space surrounding earth containing the air, in preparation of creating the living creatures such as animals, plants, man, as air is essential for their living, the cycle of the wind and rain and so on. The upper layers of the firmament appear in the lovely blue colour which we call the sky, on the clouds which falls on the land as rain, watering plants and giving us all the goodness of the earth.

The waters of the rain has a great power to praise and glorify the Creator: God used it during the flood on the

wicked creation, He also prevented it, as a punishment to those who strayed and followed the Baal at Elyah's time *"And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab 'As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be dew nor rain these years, except at my word'."* (1 Kings 17:1). The drought lasted for 3 years and 6 months, the Bible witnessed, *"So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a sever famine in Samaria."* (1 Kings 18:2), which made the cruel Ahab leave his throne, going around the country and wandering as a poor shepherd looking for grass to feed his horses and cattle, *"So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself."* (1 Kings 18:6), *"And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit."* (James 5:18) God, in His Great Kindness, *"that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."* (Matt. 5:45), as a sign of His forgiveness and patience, so we praise and glorify His Holy Name, He is still *"Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness'."* (Acts 14:17)

"Let them praise the Name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. He has also established them forever and ever"

Also these creatures are called to praise the Lord, they are grateful to Him for their being, *"Who makes His*

angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire” (Ps. 140:4), “To Him who by wisdom made the heavens, for His mercy endures forever; To Him who laid out the earth above the waters, for His mercy endures forever; to Him who made great lights, for His mercy endures forever – the sun to rule by day, for His mercy endures forever; the moon and stars to rule by night, for His mercy endures forever” (Ps. 136:5-9), “He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the water in His thick clouds, yet the clouds are not broken under it” (Job 26:7-8), “The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all its fullness, You have founded them. The north and the south, You have created then; Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Your name” (Ps. 89:11-12).

The Lord said to Job rebuking him, *“Have you entered the treasury of snow, or have you seen the treasury of hail, which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? By what way is light diffused, or the east wind scattered over the earth? ‘Who has divided a channel for the overflowing water, or a path for the thunderbolt, to cause it to rain on a land where there is no one, a wilderness in which there is no man; to satisfy the desolate waste, and cause to spring froth the growth of tender grass? Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? From whose womb comes the ice? And the frost of heaven, who gives it birth?’” (Job 38:22-29)*

The Psalmist resembles those who abide in the Lord to the sun and moon, *“He shall cry to Me, ‘You are my*

Father; My God, and the rock of my salvation.’ Also I will make him My Firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.” (Ps. 89:26-27)

“He has made a decree which shall not pass away”

The Lord has fixed limits and borders for everything which they cannot surpass, lest disasters and calamities of nature would occur, *“You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.” (Ps. 104:6), “You have set a boundary that they may not pass over, that they may not return to cover the earth.” (Ps. 104:9), “You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them.” (Ps. 89:9), ““Do you not fear Me?” says the Lord, ‘Will you not tremble at My presence, who have placed the sand as the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass beyond it? And though its waves toss to and fro, yet they cannot prevail; though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it.” (Jer. 5:22)*

“Praise the Lord, “Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all the depths; fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word;” (Ps. 148:7-8)”

Here the Psalmist calls all the great and huge sea creatures to praise the Lord, through their wondrous way of living and strong power, which denotes the power of its Creator.



The sea creatures also refer to strong enemies who resist the children of God, yet God, with His great power defeats them, *“You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters. You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.”* (Ps. 74:13-14), also, *“The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, than the mighty waves of the sea.”* (Ps. 93:4) (The sea here symbolises the world)

The depths of the sea glorify the Lord through what they contain of wonderful sea creatures and fish, living in those deep waters, *“This great and wide sea, in which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great.”* (Ps. 104:25)

The Red Sea praised God when it obeyed the Divine Providence and was split, *“Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left”.* (Ex. 14:21-22) then, *“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen.’ And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea ;and when the morning appeared , the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the*



horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.” (Ex. 14:26-29)

If we want to see the Lord and His work and Mighty Hand in our life, we have to go to the depth in our spiritual life.

St. Peter the Apostle entered into the depth straight away after meeting Jesus, he offered his boat for Jesus to come into it, then he threw the nets into the deep according to the Lord’s words, thus he caught a huge number of fish, ***“When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ But Simon answered and said to Him, ‘Master, we have toiled all night, and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.’ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking”.*** (Luke 5:4-6)

The fire praises the Lord in obeying Him, like what happened with the Three Young Saints, the fire changed its nature and became cool, and this happened with so many martyrs.

The hail was an instrument of chastisement by the Lord, when it was one of the ten plagues on Pharaoh and his people, it will also be one of the final strikes on the world, ***“The first angel sounded; and hail and fire***



followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up” (Rev. 8:7)

The snow, clouds and stormy winds also glorify the Lord each in their own means of use.

“Mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars;” (Ps. 148:9)

The high strong stable mountains symbolise the protection of God to His children and His church, *“those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever.” (Ps. 125:1-2)*

✠ They also symbolise the Divine Justice, *“Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are a great deep; O Lord, You preserve man and beast.” (Ps. 36:6)* and help *“I will lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” (Ps. 121:1-2)*

✠ The vast wilderness symbolises the vast mercy of God. The mountain was the most preferable place for Lord Jesus, *“Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” (Luke 6:12)*

✠ Mountains also symbolise the saints and their strong faith, *“For He is coming to judge the earth.*

With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity.” (Ps. 98:9) “For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” (Is. 55:12)

✠ As for the trees, just the sound of it when pushed by the winds is a sort of praising and bowing to the Lord. The olive tree and the vine are of the most important trees mentioned in the Holy Bible. The olive oil is used in making the Holy Mayroun, also in the oil for anointing the sick, ***“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”(James 5:14)*** as the apostles used to do, ***“So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.” (Mark 6:12-13)*** It is also used in the lanterns which are lit before the relics of saints, ***“And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually.” (Ex. 27:20).***

✠ Olive branches are a symbol of peace, ***“Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had abated from the earth.” (Gen. 8:11),*** also the olive oil with which we fill in the lanterns is a sign of God’s peace which surpasses all limits, ***“For You are my lamp, O Lord; the Lord shall enlighten my darkness.” (2 Sam. 22:29),*** also a sign of spiritual joy, ***“To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them***



beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.” (Is. 61:3)

✠ The oil is also used for soothing the wounds, “*So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” (Luke 10:34)*

The olive tree branches were used in celebrating Lord Christ – The King of Peace – when He entered Jerusalem – The City of Peace – though it is not mentioned clearly, “*And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road” (Matt. 21:8)*, yet it is well known that they were olive tree branches because they were close to the Mount Olive where there are lots of olive trees, but as for the palm branches they were mentioned clearly, “*...took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out; ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!’.” (John 12:13)*

As for the vine, it has a special tone in the Holy Bible... When Isaac blessed his son Jacob, he said, “*Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine”.* (Gen. 27:28)

The wine is the juice of the grapes, and when Esau was angry, “*Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, ‘Indeed*

I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?” (Gen. 27:37) Sustaining with grain and wine is a spiritual symbol of Jesus’ Body, which is made of grain and His Blood made of the grape’s juice. So, partaking of Jesus’ Body and Blood supports and sustains us, giving us victory over the devil. It also makes us abide in Christ, The True Vine, ***“For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him” (John 6:55-56)*** ***“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you’” (John 6:53)***

When Jacob blessed his son Judah, of whose generation the Incarnate Jesus was born, he prophesied about the Great Mystery, ***“Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.” (Gen. 49:11-12)***

Moses also prophesied, ***“Curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock, with fat of lambs; and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the choicest wheat; and you drank wine, the blood of the grapes.” (Deut. 32:14)***

The greatest honour of the grapes is that its juice is used in the offertory, which is turned into our Lord’s Blood. During the era of persecution, one of the governors



ordered to cut off all the vine trees in order to stop Christians from carrying out the Holy Liturgy and the Holy Communion.

The vine also is a symbol of Jesus Christ Himself Who says, ***“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser;” ‘I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”*** (John 15:1,5) all the living branches spring out of Him, they get their juice for living from Him. Alas for those who do not partake of the Holy Communion, they wither quickly and fall! That is why Jesus says, ***“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bare fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”*** (John 15:4-6)

The vine also is a symbol of the church, the vine which Jesus watered with His Honoured Blood, it is the subject of His pleasure and rejoice, ***“In that day sing to her, a vineyard of red wine! I the Lord, keep it I water it every moment; lest any hurt it I keep it night and day”***(Is. 27:2-3). We remind the Lord always with this fact in the Holy Liturgy chanting; [O Lord of Host come back and look from heaven, look after this vine, repair and strengthen it, this which You have planted with your Right Hand...]



The grapes cling to each other in a bunch, yet if one of these grapes fall off the bunch, it dries up. So is the case with the believers gathering around the church their mother, feeding on her spiritual juice, i.e. Rites, teachings, Sacraments, books.... So they live and develop in their spiritual stature, ***“Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13)***

The palm tree is another tree glorifying the Lord, as people carried palm tree branches celebrating Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, ***“..took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out; Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!” (John 12:13)*** We also use it in Palm Sunday for wearing crosses and different staff, participating with the church in its rejoice on that great day.

The palm tree resembles the Christian person in that:

- ✘ **It is so tall**, as a Christian person should be tall and high in his spirituality and virtues.
- ✘ **Straight without bends**, as a believer should be straightforward in his heart and dealings with God and people.
- ✘ **Fruitful**, a Christian person should bear the Fruits of the Spirit ***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22)***
- ✘ **Gives sweet fruits**: the virtues of a believer should be sweet to whoever gets in contact or deals with him.



- ✠ **It takes years to grow**, a believer should be patient and keep struggling in his spiritual growth, *“By your patience possess your souls.” (Luke 21:19) “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1) “For you have need of endurance. So that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise” (Heb. 10:36) “But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:4)*
- ✠ **Always green**, a believer should always be green spiritually, never dried up of God’s love, *“He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water; that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper” (Ps. 1:3)*
- ✠ **Have strong roots**, its roots are so deep in the ground, nothing can shake it even the strongest winds. So should the believer be, strong in his love to God, rooted in the grace of the Holy Spirit, *“He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.” (Ps. 40:2) “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal; ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity’.” (2 Tim. 2:19) “... having been built on the foundation of the apostles and*

prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” (Eph. 2:20)

- ✠ **White from inside**, a palm tree is white from inside, that is why it gives new white clean branches, so should a believer be “... *let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*” (Heb. 10:22) The palm branch symbolizes the Christian persons’ pure heart.
- ✠ **Beasts cannot climb up it and eat its fruit**, also the believer should be watching and guarding his virtues lest the devil should come and snatch them, “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world*”, thus he will be left, “*Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked*” (Rev. 3:17)
- ✠ **Everything in it is useful**, nothing could be useless or thrown out of a palm tree: the dates to eat, the stalk for roofing in village houses, the leaves for weaving baskets, the stem if cut, is chopped into pieces, dried, used as roofs for houses in villages. The believer also should be useful to those around him, or anyone who resorts to him for help, “*Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.*” (2 Tim. 4:11) also, “... *who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me. I am*

sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart” (Philemon 11-12)

- ✠ **Forgiving**, if anyone throws a rock on a palm tree, it will give back some of its sweet dates, and so a Christian person should be forgiving those insulting or humiliating them, *“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44)*. David the Psalmist addresses the person who fears the Lord and who walks in His ways, *“when you eat the labour of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.” (Ps. 128:2-4)*. The trees that are heavy bearing fruits have branches always hanging downwards, because of the weight of the fruits they are bearing, but the trees that are without fruits have branches heading above, in pride and haughtiness. So is a believer who bears the fruits of the spirit, he is always humble, meek and gentle, never shouts or yells, not like a person who is void of the holy fruits, the Psalmist says, *“Therefore pride serves as their necklace; violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish. They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. (Ps. 73:6-9)*

The cedar tree also has many characteristics resembling a Christian person, high in length, strong in roots, have nice smell, beautiful, *“...rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God” (1 Peter 3:4)*, straight, as a believer, *“and Solomon said, ‘You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father; because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.’ (1 Kings 3:6) “As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them away with the workers of iniquity” (Ps. 125:5)*. The cedar tree also has plenty of leaves and branches like a Christian who has plenty of virtues and spiritual struggles, *“Indeed Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, with fine branches that shaded the forest, and of high stature; and its top was among the thick boughs. The waters made it grow; underground waters gave it height, with their rivers running around the place where it was planted, and sent out rivulets to all the trees of the field. Therefore its height was exalted above all the trees of the field; its boughs were multiplied, and its branches became long because of the abundance of water, as it sent them out. All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs; under its branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young; and in its shadow all great nations made their home. Thus it was beautiful in greatness and in the length of its branches, because its roots reached to*



abundant waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide it; the fir trees were not like its boughs, and the chestnut trees ere not like its branches; no tree in the garden of God was like it in beauty. I made it beautiful with a multitude of branches, so that all the trees of Eden envied it, that were in the garden of God.” (Ezekiel 31:3-9)

David the Psalmist says: *“The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.” (Ps. 92:12-15)*

Solomon the king used lots of cedar trees in building the Temple because of its strength

“Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl”

They are used by God as a means of chastisement, *“And the Lord spoke to Moses, ‘Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord; ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me. But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants’”. (Ex. 8:1-4), “So Aaron stretched out*

his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.”(Ex. 8:6)

When Pharaoh was still stubborn, *“So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians – which neither your fathers nor your fathers’ fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth to this day.’” And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.” (Ex. 10:3-6)* *“So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.” (Ex. 10:13-15)*



This plague Pharaoh considered as **death**, so he said, *“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in hast, and said, ‘I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that He may take away from me this death only.’”* (Ex. 10:16-17), so Moses prayed to God, *“And the Lord turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt”* (Ex. 10:19)

- ✠ The Lord used the serpents – which is a creeping thing – to chastise the children of Israel in the desert, *“Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water and our soul loathes this worthless bread’ So the Lord sent fiery serpents amongst the people and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, ‘We have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.’ So Moses made a*

bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent , he lived.” (Num. 21:4-9)

The Bronze serpent became a symbol of the cross of our Good Saviour, whoever is bitten by the old serpent i.e. Satan (Rev. 20:2) will be healed through Jesus’ Cross, ***“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:14-15)***

Although these creatures are harmful, yet we get some vaccines out of their venom.

These creatures have some specific characteristics which we can learn from:

The locusts are so wise and organised, ***“The locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks.” (Prov. 30:27)***

Frogs sing in chorus at sunset in an organised tune. Ants are wise and active, ***“Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest.” (Prov. 6:6-8), “There are four things which are little on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise.” (Prov. 30:24)***

The serpent is very wise, ***“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” (Matt. 10:16)*** The Apostle explains this, ***“For your obedience has become***



known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.” (Rom. 16:19), not the wisdom of the world, “This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.” (James 3:15) but wisdom in Christ, “We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonoured!” (1 Cor. 4:10) which is coming from above, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” (James 3:17)

- ✠ The turtle teaches us a lesson in patience and perseverance, though it is slow, yet it reaches its target, through constant organised walking. The most strange thing is that these creatures are not waiting for rewards or expecting to be judged, are still keeping their order, and performing the aims for which God had created them, but as for man, the crown and head of all the creation, created on the image of God, whom God created, ***“This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise.” (Is. 43:21)*** unfortunately he goes down below this great honour, and walks on the opposite way, so instead of praising he blasphemes, instead of glorifying God, he glorifies himself, instead of thanksgiving he murmurs, and so on.

We ask You dear Lord, to have mercy upon us, return us to our original honour, our first rite, that is of praising



and glorifying, as an important vital rank among the chorus of heaven. Amen.

“Kings of the earth and all people, Princes and all judges of the earth”

The Psalmist affirms that kings, princes and judges should also offer worship and praise to God. If they are godly and deal in God’s fear, then their counsellors and their congregations will be the same, thus peace and calmness will prevail over their countries. That is why the Apostle asks to have special prayers, *“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* (1 Tim. 2:1-4)

There are many examples of the righteous rulers in the Holy Bible, such as King David, who was a means of blessing to all of his generation, keeping the Law of God. He prepared the Tabernacle in Jerusalem in order to transfer the Ark of Covenant inside it, *“So David, the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the house of Obed-Edom with joy. And so it was, when God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams. David was clothed with a robe of fine lined, as were all*

the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music master with the singers, David also wore a linen ephod. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps. And it happened, as the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the City of David, that Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David whirling and playing music; and she despised him in her heart. So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord. Then he distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins.” (1 Chr. 15:25-29, 16:1-3) On that day, David sang this beautiful hymn:

*“Oh, give thanks to the Lord!
 Call upon His name;
 Make known His deeds among the peoples!
 Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
 Talk of all His wondrous works!
 Glory in His holy name;
 Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord!
 See the Lord and His strength;
 Seek His face evermore!
 Remember His marvellous works which He has
 done,
 His wonders, and the judgements of His mouth,*

*O seed of Israel His servant,
 You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!
 He is the Lord our God;
 His judgments are in all the earth.
 Remember His covenant forever;
 The word which He commanded, for a thousand
 generations,
 The covenant which He made with Abraham,
 And His oath to Isaac,
 And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
 To Israel for an everlasting covenant,
 Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
 As the allotment of your inheritance,"
 When you were few in number,
 Indeed very few, and strangers in it.
 When they went from one nation to another;
 And from one kingdom to another people,
 He permitted no man to do them wrong;
 Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes,
 Saying, "Do not touch My anointed ones,
 And do My prophets no harm"
 Sing to the Lord, all the earth;
 Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day
 to day.
 Declare His glory among the nations,
 His wonders among all peoples.
 For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised;
 He is also to be feared above all gods.
 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
 But the Lord made the heavens,
 Honour and majesty are before Him;
 Strength and gladness are in His place.*



*Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
Give to the Lord glory and strength.
Give to the Lord the glory due His name;
Bring an offering, and come before Him.
Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Tremble before Him, all the earth.
The world also is firmly established,
It shall not be moved.
Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
And let them say among the nations, "The Lord
reigns."
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
Let the field rejoice, and all that is in it,
Then the trees of the woods shall rejoice before the
Lord,
For He is coming to judge the earth.
Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever.
And say, 'Save us, O God of our salvation;
Gather us together; and deliver us from the
Gentiles,
To give thanks to Your holy name,
To triumph in Your praise."
Blessed be the Lord God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!*

*And all the people said, "Amen!" and praised the
Lord" (1 Chr. 16:8-36)*

He organised everything according to the Law of Israel,
"So he left Asaph and his brothers there before the ark

of the covenant of the lord to minister before the ark regularly, as every day's work required;" (1 Chr. 16:37), thus the faith and worship of the congregation flourished, during all the days of David the righteous king.

Solomon the king also was a pious king, "Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude." (1 Kings 8:5), "At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the Lord our God, seven days and seven more days – fourteen days. On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the good that the Lord had done for his servant David, and for Israel His people." (1 Kings 8: 65-66)

God was pleased because of this worship, so He appeared to Solomon and said, "And the Lord said to him; 'I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.'" (1 Kings 9:3)

Then the Lord kept advising Solomon, "Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and

My judgements, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, ‘You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel’.”

(1 Kings 9:4-5). On the other hand, we read about evil rulers, such as Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was the king of ten of Israel’s tribes, ***“And Jeroboam said in his heart, ‘Now the kingdom may return to the house of David; if these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.’ Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!’” (1 Kings 12:26-28)***

And so, for the sake of keeping the kingdom he deviated and mislead 10 tribes with him in worshipping the Baal, and consequently, the destruction of their souls because “Now this thing became a sin” (1 Kings 12:30). God never forgot this great sin, even after Jeroboam’s death, his name was always followed by this statement, “.... Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin” (1 Kings 22: 52)

Other evil kings were Ahab, at the time of Elijah the Prophet, and Manasseh who misled Judah and the people in Jerusalem and let them sin before the Lord....

Thus, the king's deviation leads to the destruction of the congregation, while from studying the church history we notice righteous kings such as King Constantine, King Theodosius the Great, King Zinon who was named "The Righteous King", "The Orthodox King" and "The King who loves Christ".... That is why the Psalmists advice the kings, ***"Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear; and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way. When His wrath is kindled but a little." Blessed are those who put their trust in Him.***" (Ps. 2:10-12)

When the chief of the Jews rejected the Lord Jesus, the congregation also did the same, although they were of simple hearts ready to accept Jesus as Lord and God. So, when the congregation watched Jesus' miracles and listened to the words of grace coming out of His Mouth, it is written, ***"And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, 'He is good', others said, 'No, on the contrary, He deceives the people'. However no one spoke openly to Him, in fear of the Jews."*** (John 7:12-13) Then when they saw Him speaking with authority, not like the Scribes they were wondering, ***"But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?"*** (John 7:26) and they were ready to follow Jesus if they had the answer to this question.

When the chief priests sent servants to arrest Jesus, they went and heard His words of grace, they also heard the comments of the congregation, ***"Therefore many from***

the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, ‘Truly this is the Prophet’. Others said, ‘This is the Christ’. But some said, ‘Will the Christ come out of Galilee?’” (John 7:40-41)

So, they came back to the chief priests and Pharisees amazed with what they heard from Jesus, His personality and His teachings, *“Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, ‘Why have you not brought Him?’ The officers answered, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’ Then the Pharisees answered them, ‘Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed’.” (John 7:45-49)*

When Nicodemus, the pious man started defending Jesus, they stopped him, *“They answered and said to him, ‘Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee’.” (John 7:52)*

The Psalmist’s call **“all the peoples”** to praise God and not only the Jewish nation, is a prophecy of the spread of Christianity, *“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’.” (Mark 16:15)* and the Apostles obeyed His commandment, *“And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen” (Mark 16:20)*

So most of the people of the world became Christians offering the Lord the adequate praise, as the Prophet



says, *“For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations.’ Says the Lord of hosts”*. (Malachi 1:11), also, *“Let the people praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Selah. Let the people praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.”* (Ps. 67-3:5) *“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!”* (Ps. 117)

We, as the Gentiles before, but Christians now through the grace of God, sing this Psalm in the Vesper Incense, also it is one of the deacon’s responses in the Holy Liturgy.

Both young men and maidens, old men and children

The Young Men:

The Psalmist advises the young men, *“Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name of the Lord.”* (Ps. 113:1), he repeats it twice to praise the Lord because he knows the strength and enthusiasm of youth. It is also of great benefit for them to praise the Lord in order to keep their thoughts and minds pure, glorifying His Name. Thus He will purify and sanctify their youth and make it fruitful and successful.

How beautiful for the youth to gather in church, ***“It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments.” (Ps. 133:2)***, also the Divine Banquet in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, ***“Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table.” (Ps. 128:3)*** This is the glorious future of the church, ***“Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons, whom You shall make princes in all the earth.” (Ps. 45:16)***

David the Psalmist draws the youth attention to the great potentials within them, if used for the glory of God, they will become a great blessing ***“Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate.” (Ps. 127:4-5)***, also ***“That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as pillars, sculptured in palace style;” (Ps. 144:12)***, because ***“The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendour of old men is their gray head.” (Prov. 20:29)***

Usually the youth ask how could I put my feet on the right path? The answer, ***“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.” (Ps. 119:9)*** i.e. to follow God’s commandments and apply them in their life.

Solomon the wise also says, ***“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’.” (Ecc. 12:1) also, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6)***

But if the young men neglect prayers, repentance and all other spiritual practices, they will get destroyed because they can depart at any moment as life and long age are not guaranteed.

Even if they make it to an old age, they will not have the same power and enthusiasm, because in the old age, ***“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’. While the sun and the light, the moon and the stars, are not darkened, and the clouds do not return after the rain; in the day when the keepers of the house tremble. And the strong men bow down, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look through the windows grow dim.” (Ecc. 12:1-3)*** which means the sight will be weak, the teeth will not be strong enough, if there’s any teeth left, the desire for spiritual struggle becomes less.

The Maidens:

It is written, ***“Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you.” (Song of Solomon 1:3)***
The Name of the Lord Jesus Christ is so sweet and



wonderful throughout all ages, this name attracts many maidens, preferring to live in virginity and in convents, considering Jesus their Only Beloved Groom. St. Paul the Apostle says, *“There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world – how she may please her husband.”* (1 Cor. 7:34) Some of these virgins even exceeded men in their devoutness and sacrifice, living in the wilderness and mountains, *“of whom the world was not worth. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth because of their great love to Christ the King.”* (Heb. 11:38).

The Lord Himself called them ‘the wise virgins’ and gave them a share to enter the wedding, *“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.”* (Matt. 25:10) and to enjoy life in His heavenly kingdom, because He could never forget their love towards Him, *“Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.’”* (Jer. 2:2)

Old Men:

Solomon the wise says, *“The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of*

righteousness.” (Prov. 16:31) A person walking in the path of God since his early age till his old age will be a great blessing to himself and to others:

To Himself, because he dealt wisely with his talents and made profit, he walked with the Lord all the days of his age, like Enoch and Noah, till he became God’s beloved friend. He has very strong relationship with God. The only thing left is to repose in peace in the Lord and join the host of saints in heaven.

To Others, because he is so experienced and can pass all his life experience to the youth, guiding them to the salvation of their souls, because *“Wisdom is with aged men; and with length of days, understanding.” (Job 12:12)*, and as the Psalmists says, *“To bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his elders wisdom.” (Ps. 105:22)*, also Solomon the wise says, *“Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.” (Prov. 23:22)*

We know about many elderly monks who reached high levels of contemplation and meditation because of their long relationship with God, in fasting, prayers, metanias. As an example is St. Makari the Great at his old age, he was taken all the time as one in a coma, keeping his mind all the time busy with the heaven. If anyone wanted to ask him for a spiritual guidance or consultation, he should shake him strongly so that he could come back and started talking.



God loves the prayers and praises of those experienced old elders, who touched His sweetness and were so close to Him, so the Psalmists says, ***“Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people, and praise Him in the company of the elders.”*** (Ps. 107:32)

Out of God’s love and mercy, He grants those elders some gifts during their life, such as teaching, guiding, discern, casting out demons or healing, ***“Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”*** (Ps. 92:13-15), that’s apart from the heavenly kingdom which they had acquired through their struggle all the years.

The elders also get experience in the fights and tricks of the devil, and they can guide and instruct the youth in this aspect.

Another virtue is that of patience and tolerance, in this they also give their experience to the youth, thus fulfilling the Prophets words, ***“Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, ‘Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you.’”*** (Is. 35:3-4)

The Apostle also commands us to honour the elders, ***“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of***

double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine.” (1 Tim. 5:17)

The Children:

The parent have to plant in their children the seeds of virtue and goodness since their childhood, looking after their spiritually, taking them to church regularly, ***“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Prov. 22:6)***, also being a good example for their children. We read in the Sinixarium about many saints, who were raised up in a righteous Christian family, such as St. Shenouda the Archimandrite, St. Abraam the recluse, the friend of Gorgi and many others.

We have many examples in the Holy Bible for children who were brought up in the church or the temple and they became pillars of light in the church.

Samuel the Prophet:

He was brought to the temple as a child, as his mother told Eli the priest, ***“Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord, ‘so they worshiped the Lord there.’ (1 Sam. 1:28) “But Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod. Moreover his mother used to make him a little robe, and bring it to him year by year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, ‘The Lord give you descendants from this woman for the loan that was given to the Lord’. Then they would go to their own home. And the Lord visited***

Hannah, so that she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile the child Samuel grew before the Lord. Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the woman who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So he said to them, ‘Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the Lord’s people transgress. If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?’ Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the Lord desired to kill them. And the child, Samuel grew in stature, and in favour both with the Lord and men.” (1 Sam. 2:18-26)

He deserved that the Lord be talking to him, “*Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel! And Samuel answered, ‘Speak, for Your servant hears.’ Then the Lord said to Samuel: ‘Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.’* (1 Sam. 3:10-14)

Samuel grew up in the temple where there was continuous worship and prayers without ceasing, and so he became a prophet and the last of Israel Judges, *“And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.”* (1 Sam: 7:15) also anointing the kings, *“Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: ‘Is it not because the Lord has anointed you commander over His inheritance.’”* (1 Sam. 10:1), *“Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.”* (1 Sam. 16:13)

St. Mary:

She was presented to the temple at the age of three, and she stayed there for around ten years, living in purity and worship. At her little age she deserved to be fed by angels, and to be chosen to carry the Incarnate God, Lord Jesus Christ.

Timothy the disciple of St. Paul the Apostle:

Although his father was a Greek idolater, yet his mother and grandmother, who were Jews, brought him up according to the Law, which St. Paul praised, *“when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.”* (2 Tim. 1:5) he advised him, *“But you must continue in the things which you have heard and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through*



faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 3:14-15) also, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” (1 Tim. 4:12-13)

Timothy was the first bishop ordained for Ephesus.

“Let them praise the Name of the Lord, for His Name alone is exalted.”

Here the Psalmist is asking all the previous earthly creatures to praise the Name of the Lord all at once, assuring non-reluctance or stopping from praise. This verse is said louder than all the previous ones.

The Name of the Lord is the only Name exalted, because *“For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens” (Ps. 96:5), “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands” (Ps. 115:4), but our God “But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.” (Ps. 115:3), “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.” (Ps. 145:3) “The Lord is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, Who dwells on high Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth?” (Ps. 113:4-6)*

“His glory is above the earth and heaven, and He has exalted the horn of His people”. Thanksgiving to God should be offered by every human being, every creature



on earth and in heaven. The Psalmist repeats ‘give thanks to the Lord’ many times as in Psalm 136 and that is because “His mercy endures forever”.

The Psalmist himself gives an example of the thanksgiving, *“I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvellous works.”* (Ps. 9:1) *“We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks! For Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near.”* (Ps. 75:1) *“I will praise You with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praises to You. I will worship towards Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your loving kindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name.”* (Ps. 138:1-2)

We have to thank God at all times otherwise we become ungrateful, *“Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’ So when He saw them, He said to them, ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests.’ And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, ‘Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?’”* (Luke 17:11-18)

Due to the importance of thanksgiving, the Apostle commands us, ***“in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thess. 5:18)*** ***“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.” (1 Thess. 2:13)***

The church starts all its services with the Lords Prayer followed by the Thanksgiving Prayer, because there are lots of things that we ought to thank God for, just as an example; The free salvation, His Holy Body and Blood, the church and all Its Sacraments, the Holy Bible, health, gifts... in general. ***“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, not to trust in uncertain riches but in the Living God, who give us richly all things to enjoy.” (1 Tim. 6:17)***

The Apostle afflicted those who do not give glory and thanksgiving to God, ***“because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools.” (Rom. 1:21-22)***

In offering God continuous praise and thanksgiving we resemble the heavenly hosts, ***“Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the***

throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever; and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ‘You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.’ (Rev. 4:9-11)

One of the blessings of giving thanks to God is that ‘He exalts the horn of His people’, which means He gives them victory over their enemies, the seen and unseen, because horns are a sign of strength and victory as horns do not grow in animals until they have completely developed.

“The praise of all his saints, of the children of Israel, a people near to Him, Praise the Lord”

The Lord is the subject matter of praise for the saints, as Moses taught his people, ***“You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast and take oaths in His name. He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.” (Deut. 10:20-21)***, also in Jeremiah, ***“Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; Save me, and I shall be saved, for You are my praise.” (Jer. 17:14)***

So the righteous are proud of praising and worshipping God, coming closer to Him, keeping His commandments, ***“But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all Your works.” (Ps. 73:28)*** ***“Let the saints be***



joyful in glory; let them sing aloud on their beds.” (Ps. 149:5)

It is a great honour to be related to ‘Christ’, calling ourselves ‘Christians’, in the Old Testament, the Only God our Lord was, *“He will choose our inheritance for us, the excellence of Jacob whom He loved. Selah.” (Ps. 47:4) “My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad.” (Ps. 34:2)*

The Apostle commands us to be proud of the Lord, *“that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’” (1 Cor. 1:31)* also, *“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal. 6:14)*





CHAPTER TWO

PSALM 149

“Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints”

The Psalmist urges all the believers to praise the Lord a new praise daily, as Jeremiah the Prophet says, *“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness.”* (Lam.3: 22,23)

We accept everything from the Hand of the Lord every morning with thanksgiving, *“what shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.”* (Ps. 116: 12-13), also, *“Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful. Praise the Lord with the harp; make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; play skilfully with a shout of joy.”* (Ps. 33:1-3)

The new song our daily extemporary prayers according to the situation, whether we are sad, happy, in need, in trouble... etc.

Also, it is the praying of the Agpia, reading the Holy Bible, the praise

The new song is also the prayers of the New Testament, where we praise and thank our Lord and Saviour Jesus



Christ for the salvation He offered to us through the Cross. One of the most wonderful praises is that of the Passion Week.

To You is the Power and Glory and Blessings as the Palmist says, *“The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.”* (Ps. 118:15) *“Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.”* (Ps. 119:54)

In these places God is dwelling, *“And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.’”* (Rev. 21:3)

Jesus Himself says, *“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’”* (John 14:23)

“Let Israel rejoice in their Maker, Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King”

The new spiritual Israel is the holy church, for Christ chose us and bought us with His Pure Blood. The church of the New Testament replaced that of the Old Testament on the day of the Pentecost, after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, the founders of the church. So the church should rejoice in this Great Creator Who offered it eternal life. Lord Jesus Himself promised us with this

rejoice, *“Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.” (John 16:22) “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.” (Matt. 5:11)*, the Apostle also commands us, *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice.” (Phil. 4:4)*

Let our rejoice be only in the Lord, not in the world which leads to our spiritual loss.

The children of Zion are also the congregation of the New Testament church, Zion means, ‘the high hill’, and the Christian Church is high in relation to Jesus Christ, its King and Saviour, also concerning its noble teachings and pure Orthodox doctrine. St. Paul found great pleasure in calling himself ‘Paul a servant and a prisoner of Jesus Christ’. We have to rejoice in being the children of Christ the King, crowning Him as the King in our hearts, where He dwells and grants us peace, forgiveness and salvation, thus we will, *“whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.” (1 Peter 1:8)*, also, *“Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!” (Ps. 32:11)*

The Jews refused Christ as their King, *“But they cried out, ‘Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’” (John 19:15)*, so in this it is written, *“He came to His*



own, and His own did not receive Him.” (John 1:11), but as for us, we accepted Him and crowned Him in our hearts, “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Tim. 1:17)

“Let them praise His Name with the dance, Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp”

The musical instruments were allowed to be used in the Jewish temples to control the tune. Yet, the Angelic Liturgy is void of any instruments, because the voices of the angels are pure, sweet and clear. So if the chorus singing and praising inside the church are all in harmony, there is no need for instruments, yet we use the cymbals and triangles in some Coptic tunes because they are just percussion instruments and not musical instruments. Praising the Lord *‘on an instrument on ten strings’* (Ps. 92:3) means our praising should be with all the 5 senses both of the soul and the body.

The Five Senses of the Soul:

1. Cognitive:

We should always be thinking of God’s power and mercy, depending completely on Him, love Him from all our hearts, also thinking of the glory of heaven, doing good deeds, not hurting others, as well as not thinking of our bodies, which leads to adultery.



2. **Remembering:**

To remember our sins so we repent, not to remember other people's sins or those who are doing bad things to us.

3. **Imagining:**

Imagine we can see God, and fear His Presence, the honour of virtue and the pleasure of the heavenly kingdom.

4. **Discerning:**

To discern between useful and useless, truth and false, good and evil, purity and impurity, good books and bad books, etc.

5. **Delude:**

We have to stop deluding that there is no God, lest we should be like, "*The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good.*" (Ps. 14:1), also stop deluding that our prayers are useless, there is no hope, there is no heaven or hell... because this will lead to our destruction.

The Five Senses of the Body:

1. **Sight:**

To look at the needy and help them, to look at the Holy Bible and spiritual books and study them. Meditate in the beautiful creation and the Greatness of the Creator, to refrain from looking and yearning at other peoples possessions. Not to look at bodies and faces for fear of adultery.

2. **Hearing:**

Listening to God's words, our rulers, dealing with people, enjoying hymns. Refrain from listening to murmuring or worldly satanic songs.

3. **Smell:**

To enjoy smelling incense so that we are nourished spiritually, to refrain from smelling delicious food, or perfumes.

4. **Taste:**

We should not taste forbidden drinks or food, not to use the tongue in lying, swearing, judging... This sense is created to taste the allowed food in chastity and content, to talk honestly and in respect, to pray and praise.

5. **Touch:**

Not to touch our bodies for the sake of impurity, not to steal, accept bribes, kill...etc.

“For the Lord takes pleasure in His people, He will beautify the humble with salvation”

The Lord is pleased with His people who keep His commandments, *“He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.” (Ps. 147:10-11)* *“As for the saints who are on the earth, ‘They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.’” (Ps. 16:3), “Rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men.” (Prov. 8:31)*

Thus, we can know the amount of the Lord's pleasure with His righteous children.

The Psalmist chose the humble saying that the Lord beautify them with salvation, also, ***“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’” (James 4:6) “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 14:11) “He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly.” (Luke 1: 51-52)***

The Lord Himself gave us an example of humbleness through His Incarnation, simple life, tolerance until death, thus, ***“who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” (1 Peter 1:21), “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:9-11)***

As this is a very important virtue, the Lord Jesus says, ***“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matt: 11:29)*** A humble meek person will find rest in this world because he lives in love and peace



with everyone, also in eternal life he will get crowned for his struggle and tolerance.

“Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud on their beds”:

The saints rejoice and are proud of the glory given to them by God, becoming His children and partakers of the Divine Nature, heirs of the heavenly kingdom, thus they always rejoice, ***“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Phil. 4:4)*** This rejoice never departs them even on their beds, they are confident that God is guarding them, ***“His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.” (Song of Songs 8:3)*** also, ***“I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.” (Ps. 4:8)*** They do not spend the whole night in sleep, but rather wake up at midnight and praise the Lord, ***“At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You, because of Your righteous judgements.” (Ps. 119:62)*** ***“My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word. Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; O Lord, revive me according to Your justice.” (Ps. 119:148-149)***

The children of God never murmur or complain even if they fall sick, they know that everything is for their spiritual benefit, as St. Paul says, ***“Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ, but we do all things, beloved, for your edification.” (2 Cor. 12:19)*** St. Stephen the first martyr



was rejoicing while they were stoning him, his face shone like an angel.

“Let the high praise of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand”:

The high praises of the Lord are the songs in their mouths always, *“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”* (Is. 62:6-7)

They praise the Lord because, *“The Lord is great in Zion and He is high above all the peoples, Let them praise Your great and awesome name He is holy.”* (Ps. 99:2-3) *“The Lord is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens.”* (Ps. 113:4)

The two-edged sword in their hands is the word of God, using it to declare the truth, *“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* (Heb: 4:12) also the word of God is, *“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;”* (Eph. 6:17)

The reason for resembling God’s word to a two-edged sword is that it declares the truth on one hand and refutes the false allegations on the other hand.



St. John saw the Lord Jesus in Revelation, *“and in the midst of the seven lampstands. One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many water; He had in His right hand seven stars; out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.”* (Rev. 1:13-16)

God explains the power of the word of God in the souls saying, *“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”* (Is. 55:10-11) also in refuting evil, *“‘Is not My word like a fire?’ says the Lord, ‘and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?’”* (Jer. 23:29)

“To execute vengeance on the nations; and punishments on the people”:

This applies more to the Apostle fathers who preached the nations and turned their worship to Lord Jesus. They executed the idols and attracted many to Christianity.

Their sermons gave forth fruits, and many churches were established.

As an example, St. Peter rebuking Simeon the sorcerer, *“But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.’”(Acts. 8:20-23)*

St. Paul also rebuking Elymas the sorcerer, *“and said, ‘O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time,’ and immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.” (Acts 13:10-12)*

When the people of Lystra wanted to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas, they stopped and preached them, *“and saying, ‘Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God; who made the heaven, the*

earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness’.” (Acts. 14:15-17) “*Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription; TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you; God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘for we are also His offspring’. Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent’.*” (Acts 17:22-30)

When the word of God spread effectively in Ephesus, *“And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totalled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”* (Acts 19:18-19)

The Apostles handed their successors the authority of preaching and rebuking, to straighten any obliquity, *“Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”* (Titus 2:15) The Bishop should be *“holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”* (Titus 1:19) and the true word is that of the Holy Bible, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

The saints does not execute vengeance on the wicked and rebuke them with words, but they do so also through their prayers, because *“The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.”* (Prov. 15:29)

Their prayers are capable of destroying fortresses and every teaching against God. In Revelation St. John says, *“And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Then another*



angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.” (Rev. 8:2-5)

- ✠ The prayers of Elijah the Prophet made fire fall from heaven and consume the burnt offering, destroying the worship of the Baal and Ahab the wicked king and then, it was easy for Elijah to kill all the prophets of Baal at the Brook Kishon. (1 Kings 18)

We have many examples in the Bible for the power of the prayers of the righteous person.

“To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron”

Since olden times there has always been a fight between the men of God and the wicked kings and rulers, but we thank God that He always gives victory to His Saints.

- ✠ When Abram knew that Lot his nephew was captured by the people of Sodom, *“Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and*

went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.” (Gen. 14:14-16) and he deserved to be blessed by Melchizedek. “And he blessed him and said ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most high, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand’. And he gave him a tithe of all.” (Gen. 14:19-20)

Also, when Abram went to Egypt with Sarai ‘his wife’, *“The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh’s house.” (Gen. 12:15), then, “But the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. And Pharaoh called Abram and said, ‘What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, ‘She is my sister?’ I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way’. So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him, and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.” (Gen. 12:17-20)*

The same happened when Abraham went to Gerar, *“Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, ‘She is my sister’. And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and*

said to him, ‘Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man’s wife’ But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, ‘Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she, even she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this’. And God said to him in a dream, ‘Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. Now therefore, restore the man’s wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.’ So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid.” (Gen: 20:2-8)

Abimelech was so scared, “And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, ‘What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done’. Then Abimelech said to Abraham, ‘What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?’ And Abraham said, ‘Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will kill me on account of my wife. But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father’s house, that I said to her, ‘This is your kindness that you should do for me in every



place , wherever we go, say of me, ‘He is my brother’. Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and he restored Sarah his wife to him. And Abimelech said, “see my land is before you, dwell where it pleases you.’ Then to Sarah he said, ‘Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver, indeed this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody.’ Thus she was rebuked. So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his female servants. Then they bore children for the Lord had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife.” (Gen. 20:9-18)

Abimelech learnt a good lesson, so when Isaac went to Gerar, “*So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, ‘He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death’.*” (Gen. 26:11) Truly, the words of the Psalm is fulfilled, “*He permitted no one to do them wrong; Yes, he rebuked kings for their sakes, saying, ‘Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm’.*” (Ps. 105:14-15)

- ✠ God said to Moses, “*So the Lord said to Moses, ‘See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.’*” (Ex. 7:1) The plagues came one after the other, on Pharaoh and his people, so, “*Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, ‘Entreat the Lord that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the Lord’.*” (Ex. 8:8), then



“So Pharaoh said, ‘I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me’.” (Ex. 8:28), “For if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them” (Ex. 9:2) “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, ‘I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only’.” (Ex. 10:16-17) “Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, ‘Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the Lord as you have said. Also take your flocks and your herds as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also’. And the Egyptians urged the peoples that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, ‘We shall all be dead’.” (Ex. 12:31-33)

- ✠ The Lord used to support Joshua the son of Nun strongly, he was able to kill more than 30 kings, take their lands and belongings and give portions to his people.
- ✠ Elijah the prophet informed Ahab the evil king with all the horrible warnings that God was passing on, ***“You shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: Have you murdered and also taken possession?’ And you shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord ‘In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your***



blood, even yours''. So Ahab said to Elijah, 'Have you found me, O my enemy?' And he answered, 'I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and made Israel sin. And concerning Jezebel the Lord also spoke, saying, 'the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field'." (1 Kings 21:19-24)

When Ahab heard this, *"So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning." (1 Kings 21:27)*

- ✠ Jeremiah the Prophet also rebuked the obliquity of kings, through God's words, *"and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle. Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other*

gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents (they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind), therefore behold, the days are coming”, says the Lord, “that this place shall no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hands of those who seek their lives; their corpses I will give as meat for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. I will make this city desolate and a hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues. And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the desperation with which their enemies and those who seek their lives shall drive them to despair”.” (Jer. 19:3-9) Also, “Thus says the Lord: “Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates! Thus says the Lord: “execute judgement and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to



the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. For if you indeed do this thing, then shall enter the gates of this house, riding on horses and in chariots, accompanied by servants and people, kings who sit on the throne of David. But if you will not hear these words, I swear by Myself,” says the Lord, “that this house shall become a desolation”.” (Jer. 22:1-5)

- ✠ Daniel the Prophet also did not fear Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon, but he interpreted his dream clearly, *“Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him, “do not destroy the wise men of Babylon, take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation.” Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, “I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.” The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?” Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, ‘The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king.” (Dan. 2:24-27) then, “So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his*



house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.” (Dan. 2:16-18)

- ✠ John the Baptist scared Herod the king who wanted to marry his brother’s wife, *“Because John had said to Herod, ‘It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife’.” (Mark 6:18)* So Herod put John in prison, but did not kill him, *“for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.” (Mark 6:20)* *“And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.” (Matt. 14:5)* He could not have dared to kill him except for the oaths that he said while fully drunk.

- ✠ The Apostles stood firmly before kings and governors, preaching openly the Word of God without fear. It is written about St. Paul, *“Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call you’.” (Acts 24:25)* also, *““King Agrippa, so you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.” “And Paul said, ‘I would pray to God that not only you,*



but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains’.” (Acts 26:27,29)

- ✠ The Orthodox Popes defended the faith in the same way, following the footprints of the Apostles. We see St. Athanasius the Apostolic rejecting the Arian heresy bravely, also St. Basil the Great, St. John Chrysostom ...etc. There are hundreds and thousands of examples of saints and martyrs who rebuked kings and rulers for their wrong attitude against the doctrine of Christianity and against God's word.

**They have been executed by God's written judgment.
This honour was given to all his saints.**

All what we have mentioned above is not done through the saint's own power or might, but it is God's orders, written and judged by Him. God gave His saints and martyrs this authority and courage, thus what they have suffered was a crown of glory which entitled them to enter the Heavenly Kingdom.





CHAPTER THREE

PSALM 150

This is one of the most wonderful Psalms of Praise, filling the whole earth with praises to God, where the word ‘Praise’ is repeated 10 times, to Him Who Sacrificed Himself for our sake.

The church also chants this Psalm during the Holy Communion all year round, in all occasions, because that is the time of rejoice and praise, exactly as what the kind father did when his lost son came back, *“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring a fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again he was lost and is found’. And they began to be merry.” (Luke 15:22-24)* The Psalmist says, *“For His anger is but for a moment, His favour is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” (Ps. 30:5)*, in the morning during the Holy Communion.

The book of Psalms is a symbol of a Christian person’s life: memorising God’s words day and night, gaining forgiveness and cover for his sins, coming closer to God to get filled with the Spring of Living Water, then offering thanksgiving and praise to God.



✠ “Praise God in His Sanctuary”

This means to praise Him where He declares His Glory and grants His Grace. We are created on God’s image, we praise Him when we see His image in His saints, He incarnated and became Man for our sake, He is dwelling within us through His Holy Spirit. He gave us a share in the Heavenly Kingdom. Thus our hearts and mouths are pouring praise and thanksgiving to Him. St. Paul the Apostle says, *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”* (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

We praise Him in the Church, His House and the House of Angels, because the Lord had promised us, *“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”* (Matt. 18:20)

✠ Praise Him in His Mighty Firmament

Praise the Great Mighty God, Who created the firmament, the unlimited space. Praise Him for the accurate law followed by all the planets and stars in harmony, *“Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel; My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God”? (Is. 40:27) “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” (Ps. 19:1) “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,*



even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” (Rom. 1:20)

✠ **Praise Him for His Mighty Acts**

The might of God is unlimited, *“Then Jacob said to Joseph; ‘God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me.’ (Gen. 48:3) ‘Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.’ (Jer. 32:17) ‘You show loving kindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them – the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts. You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of me, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.’ (Jer. 32:18-19) ‘But Jesus looked at them and said to them, ‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible’.” (Matt. 19:26) “for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring’.” (Acts 17:28)*

Thus, we ought to praise and glorify Him for His Mighty Power and Acts. Although we are weak and dust, yet He, because of His Love and Tenderness, He accepted us and says, *“Rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men.” (Prov. 8:31)*

✠ **Praise Him according to His Excellent Greatness**



“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.” (Ps. 145:3) “For the Lord is the great God, and the great King above all gods.” (Ps. 95:3) “Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understating is infinite.” (Ps. 147:5)

The Psalmist is exceedingly amazed with the greatness of God, ***“Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God? You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples.” (Ps. 77:13-14), also “For You are great, and do wondrous things; You alone are God.” (Ps. 86:10)***

So, who can give the Lord the adequate praise? He says. ***“For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations,’ Says the Lord of hosts.” (Mal. 1:11)***

Let us praise the Lord with all our might and weak capabilities, and He, in His Great Love, would not ask more than our utmost struggle to offer Him praise.

***“Praise him with the sound of trumpet;
Praise him with the lute and harp;
Praise him with the timbrel and dance;
Praise him with stringed instruments and flutes;
Praise him with loud cymbals;
Praise him with his sounding cymbals” (Ps.150: 3-5)***



All these musical instruments were used in praising the Lord during the morning and evening services in the Old Testament Sanctuary. As for the New Testament, we have been transferred from death to life, it had changed, we sing instead the tunes depending on the beautiful human chorus, which reveals human emotions towards God and His Love.

The most enjoyable music in God's Ears is that of strong emotions consecrated for God. Let's Praise the Lord with:

- ✠ Joy and sacred love.
- ✠ Strong faith.
- ✠ Total trust in Jesus Christ.
- ✠ Repentance and reconciliation.
- ✠ Strong desire to have Him as our share.
- ✠ Respect and fulfilment of His commandments.
- ✠ Humbleness and thanksgiving.
- ✠ Obedience to the church our Mother.
- ✠ Hope in the heavenly kingdom.

✠ **Let everything that has breath praise the Lord**

The Psalmist calls, *“All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died.”* (Gen. 7:22) to praise the Lord, each according to his abilities and way. St. John heard, *“And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying ‘Blessing and honour and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!’”* (Rev. 5:13)



Let our praise be with every breath we breathe, repeating with the Saturday Psalms: [with every breath which I breathe I praise Your Holy Name, from morning till night daily I praise Your Holy Name. We are never tired or bored of Your praise, as long as we are alive we praise You, as long as we exist we glorify You].

“Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, Now and forevermore. Amen”

“Glory be to our God. Alleluia”

This verse is repeated once in Coptic and once in Greek for assurance.

The last verse said in Coptic has a long wonderful tune.

- ✠ In the month of Kiahk, there is a well-known response after each quarter of this Psalm: [It is adequate to praise and glorify our God. Praise the Lord our God for the Psalm is good]





SECTION SEVEN

CHAPTER ONE

The Epsaly of the Day

Epsaly: A Greek word which means hymn.

The tune of the Epsaly changes twice a week. On Sunday, Monday and Tuesday it has a short tune called “Adaam”, On Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday the tune is longer, called “Watos”.

It all changes in different occasions like Kiahk tune, annual tune.. etc.

The Organisation of the Epsalys Spiritually:

Each day has its own Epsaly, where the Name of Lord Jesus Christ is repeated many times, in concentrated prayers and pleadings. These Epsalys started in the Egyptian wilderness prayed by the monks there, then it spread throughout the East.

The simple prayers were given to the monks who were illiterate, so they were a source of comfort and blessing to the monks.

Out of the experiences of our fathers, discovering the great power in the Name of Lord Jesus Christ in purifying the heart and mind of the worldly matters.
“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous



run to it and are safe.” (Prov. 18:10) “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

It is very well known in the Holy Bible that the Name of Jesus is related to salvation, *“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:21)*

One of the saints who experienced the power, pleasures and inner peace for repeating the Blessed Name of Jesus was the Russian pilgrim, who used to say it with every breath for years, until he reposed, as the Apostle says, *“pray without ceasing” (1 The. 5:17)* This is a very simple easy way to keep repeating the Name of the Lord all day long, ‘O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner’.

Every Epsaly of the 7 Epsalys of the week concentrate on Jesus’ name:

The Saturday Epsaly:

“The mention of Your Holy Name
Gives joy to our souls
O my Lord Jesus Christ my Good Saviour.
With every breath that I take I will praise Your
Holy Name
O my Lord Jesus Christ my Good Saviour.”



We notice that this wonderful response ‘O my Lord Jesus Christ, my Good Saviour’, is repeated as a short prayer.

The Sunday Epsaly:

“Seven Times every day, I will praise Your
Holy Name
My Lord Jesus help me.
All the creation, glorifies Your Holy Name
My Lord Jesus help me”

We notice the repetition of ‘My Lord Jesus help me’, for the sake of the hearty prayer of repeating the Glorious Name of Jesus Christ.

The Monday Epsaly:

“Everyone who says my Lord Jesus Christ, is linked to a sword, casting down the enemy. Gather all, of my senses, to praise and glorify my Lord Jesus.
Let the name of the Lord abide within us, so that He may shine upon our inner being”.

The Tuesday Epsaly:

“Your Holy Name O my Lord Jesus, upheld and delivered them (the saints) in all their sufferings.
When they uttered it, their minds were enlightened, and their hearts ascended to the heights”.



The Wednesday Epsaly:

“When we love the Name of Salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have mercy toward each other, we fulfil all the Law.

If we are needy, for the money of this world, and we have nothing, to offer as alms.

Yet we truly have the precious pearl of great price, which is the Sweet Name full of Glory, of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Thursday Epsaly:

“O my Lord Jesus Christ, Who is born of the Father, before all ages, have mercy upon us according to Your great mercy.

O my Lord Jesus Christ, Who was born of the Virgin, in Bethlehem of Judea, save us and have mercy upon us.”

We notice the repetition of the Name of Jesus Christ.

The Friday Epsaly:

“Our Lord Jesus Christ gave a sign to His servants, who do fear Him, to shut the mouths of lions.

Blessed is the man who forsake this life and its vain pleasures, that are full of suffering, that kill the soul.”





That's how the saints loved the Wonderful Name of Lord Jesus Christ. They repeated It all the time in meditation and contemplation, until It filled their lives and hearts.

Someone said, [The soldiers surrounding Your Saint Agnatiuous, the beholder of God, noticed that he never ceased from saying Your Holy Name till his last breath. When asked about the reason, he answered 'My God Jesus is living in my heart, His Name is there, His Love is there.'

When thrown to the beasts, they devoured his whole body except his heart. When they opened his heart, they found Your Name written in luminous letters inside it].

Feasts and Special Occasion Epsalys:

These are the Psalys for the Lordly Major and Minor Feasts, St. Mary's Feasts, Archangel Michael, the Apostles, Martyrs, Saints and other occasions.

They concentrate on the subject they are dealing with, for example, in the Christmas Psaly the verse "Who was born in Bethlehem" is repeated, the Resurrection Psaly "Christ has Risen form the dead" ... etc.

So, the church is using praise to live its faith and doctrine through it, even the rhyme and tune are suitable for each occasion.





CHAPTER TWO

EPSALYS FOR DIFFERENT FEASTS AND OCCASIONS

El Nayrouz Feast

It is the Feast of Martyrs or the beginning of the New Coptic Year, 1st Tut. Joyful tunes are used from 1st Tut until 16th Tut. It has two Epsalys: “Watos” and “Adaam”.

The Feast of the Glorious Cross

The church celebrates the Glorious Cross each year on 10 Baramhat and 17 Tut.

Joyful tunes for the Epsalys, but Palm Sunday tune for the Saint’s Commemoration, Doxology, Gospel response, Etc.

It has two Epsalys: Watos and Adaam.

The Month of Kiahk

From the beginning of the Advent fasting till the end of the month of Hatour the church follows the annual rite, then from the beginning of Kiahk, it is the Kiah rite getting ready for the Christmas, joining night and day praise known as Seven and Four, i.e. seven Theotokeyas of the weekdays, and four Hauses of praise. In the



monasteries, the praise and readings of each day are carried out daily, but in most of the churches, they just read the Psalms and praises, together with the Theotokias and Hymns on Sunday Eve (Saturday Vespers), and some churches do the praise on 3 nights: Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday ending up with the Holy Liturgy.

Vesper Praise during the Month of Kiahk

1. The Psalms (Ninth Hour, Sunset, Before Sleeping and Veil Prayer just in monasteries)
2. Niethenos Tiro Tune.
3. The Fourth Hymn.
4. Watos Psalm of the Eve of Sunday of Kiahk.
5. Arabic Watos Psalm.
6. First Part of Saturday Theotokia.
7. First Part of Greek Exposition for Moalem Sarkis.
8. First Part of Coptic Exposition.
9. First Part of Arabic Praise of Moalem Abul Saad.
10. First Part of Arabic Exposition of Moalem Gabriel.
11. First Part of the sayings of Pope Marcos.
This order keeps going on until the end of the Saturday Theotokia.
12. The First and Second Sherene of Saturday.
13. Introduction of Watos Exposition (It consists of a long tune said before the Sanctuary's door while carrying a lit candle)
14. The Exposition (written in the Kiahk Psalmody, 4 expositions for the 4 Sundays in Kiahk).



Note: If there is no 4th Sunday in Kiahk, so the last Sunday in Hatour is considered the 1st Sunday in Kiahk.

15. Openchois for conclusion.

16. Raising of Vesper Incense as usual, praying the Kiahk Doxologies in the Kiahk tune.



The Order of Sunday Eve Praise During the Month of Kiahk

In the monasteries, the monks do the daily praise regularly all year along, thus, on Sunday Eve they just read the Sunday readings only. It takes them from 8p.m. until Sunday dawn to finish it, then Raising of Morning Incense, then the Holy Liturgy which finishes around 7 a.m.

Some churches do the same in their spiritual vigils. The prayers start with the 3 service of Midnight prayers, then the Praise in the following order:

- ✠ Tin Thino (the 1st part in tune)
- ✠ The Big 'Alli' in tune.
- ✠ The Big Haus for Kiahk (the 1st part in tune) is said in Coptic and Arabic
- ✠ An Arabic Praise (Holy God Holy...)
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic, on the 1st Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic, on the 1st Haus
- ✠ The 1st Haus
- ✠ The Lobsh of the 1st Haus (another Lobsh for Kiahk could be said on the 1st Haus)



- ✠ An Arabic Praise on the 1st Haus (The Lord told Moses)
- ✠ Exposition on the 1st Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic on the 2nd Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic on the 2nd Haus
- ✠ The 2nd Haus
- ✠ The Lobsh of the 2nd Haus (another Lobsh for Kiahk could be said on the 2nd Haus)
- ✠ An Arabic Praise on the 2nd Haus
- ✠ Adaam Exposition on the 2nd Haus
- ✠ Psaly Adam Coptic on the 3rd Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic on the 3rd Haus
- ✠ The 3rd Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Watos for the Three young Saints
- ✠ A Greek Praise for the Three Young Saints (Tinin)
- ✠ Watos Coptic Praise for the Three Young Saints (the 3rd Haus Lobsh)
- ✠ Exposition on the 3rd Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic for the Commemoration of Saints
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic for the Commemoration of Saints (another Arabic Psaly could be said on the commemoration)
- ✠ The Commemoration of Saints
- ✠ Kiahk Doxologies
- ✠ An Exposition on the Commemoration of Saints
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic for the 4th Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic for the 4th Haus
- ✠ The 4th Haus
- ✠ Exposition on the 4th Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic on 'Aikoti'
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic on 'Aikoti'



- ✘ 'Aikoti' Psaly said in the Kiahk tune
- ✘ Epsaly Adaam Coptic on 1st 'Simoty' (The beginning of Sunday Theotokeya)
- ✘ Epsaly Adaam Arabic on 1st 'Simoty'
- ✘ 'Lipon' tune
- ✘ 1st part of Sunday Theotokeya – first explanation in Coptic (each part has 2 explanations – Coptic and Greek, one of them or both could be said)
- ✘ First Explanation in Arabic, then a chapter from the Gospel (the congregation should stand up)
- ✘ 2nd Part of Theotokeya
- ✘ Second Explanation in Coptic
- ✘ Second Explanation in Arabic then the Gospel
- ✘ 3rd part of Theotokeya then the Gospel
- ✘ 3rd explanation in Coptic then the Gospel
- ✘ 3rd explanation in Arabic then the Gospel
- ✘ 4th Part of Theotokeya then the Gospel
- ✘ 4th explanation in Coptic then the Gospel
- ✘ 4th explanation in Arabic then the Gospel
- ✘ 5th Part of Theotokeya then the Gospel
- ✘ 5th explanation in Coptic then the Gospel
- ✘ 5th explanation in Arabic then the Gospel
- ✘ 6th Part of Theotokeya then the Gospel
- ✘ 6th explanation in Coptic then the Gospel
- ✘ 6th explanation in Arabic then the Gospel
- ✘ Adam Exposition of 1st 'Simoty'
- ✘ Epsaly Adaam Coptic on the 7th Part of Theotokeya (2nd Simoty)
- ✘ Epsaly Adaam Arabic on the 7th Part of Theotokeya
- ✘ 7th Part of Theotokeya (in tune)
- ✘ Adaam exposition on the 7th part of Theotokeya



- ✠ 7th explanation in Coptic
- ✠ 7th explanation in Arabic
- ✠ Arabic Praise for St. Mary
- ✠ 8th part of Theotokeya
- ✠ 8th explanation in Coptic
- ✠ An exposition on the 8th part of Theotokeya
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic on the 9th part of Theotokeya
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic on the 9th part of Theotokeya
- ✠ 9th part of Theotokeya
- ✠ 9th explanation in Coptic
- ✠ 9th explanation in Arabic (a Praise)
- ✠ An exposition on the 9th part of Theotokeya
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic on the last part of Theotokeya (Ti Oy En Hikanous)
- ✠ Arabic Praise on (Ti Oy En Hikanous)
- ✠ The rest of Theotokeya
- ✠ The Workers Exposition (said by the Priest)
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic in conclusion
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic in conclusion (your Mercies O my God)
- ✠ The Conclusion
- ✠ An Exposition on the Conclusion
- ✠ The Praise of Angels then the exposition of the Praise of Angels
- ✠ A Litany consists of 3 parts (like the parts of the Agpeya hours) said by the Priest
- ✠ We honour you Mother of light
- ✠ Truly We Believe
- ✠ Amen Kyrielayson ...
- ✠ The Midnight Absolution said by the priest
- ✠ Morning Prayer Raising of incense, the Holy Liturgy



Vigils of Week Days During The Month of Kiahk

The Vigils of the week days during the month of Kiahk have different rites than Sunday Eve Vigils, their order is as follows:

- ✠ Tin Thino (the 1st Part in tune)
- ✠ The Big ‘Alli’ in tune.
- ✠ The Big Haus for Kiahk (the 1st Part in tune) It is said in Coptic and Arabic
- ✠ An Arabic Praise (Holy God Holy ...)
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic, on the 1st Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic, on the 1st Haus
- ✠ The 1st Haus
- ✠ The Lobsh of the 1st Haus (another Lobsh for Kiahk could be said on the 1st Haus)
- ✠ An Arabic Praise on the 1st Haus (The Lord told Moses)
- ✠ Exposition on the 1st Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic on the 7th Part of Sunday Theotokeya (Sherene Maria, Simoty)
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic on the 7th Part of Sunday Theotokeya
- ✠ 7th Part of Sunday Theotokeya
- ✠ Adaam exposition on the 7th Part
- ✠ 7th exposition in Coptic
- ✠ 7th exposition in Arabic
- ✠ Arabic praise for St. Mary
- ✠ 8th Part of Sunday Theotokeya



- ✠ 8th explanation in Coptic
- ✠ An exposition on the 8th Part
- ✠ Epsaly Adam Coptic on the 9th Part
- ✠ Psaly Adaam Arabic on the 9th Part
- ✠ 9th Part of Sunday Theotokeya
- ✠ 9th explanation in Coptic
- ✠ Arabic Praise (explanation) on the 9th Part
- ✠ Exposition on the 9th Part
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Coptic on the 2nd Haus
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam Arabic on the 2nd Haus
- ✠ The Second Haus

Then they say the Epsaly of the day in Coptic and Arabic whether it is Tuesday or Thursday.

- ✠ Theotokeya of the day in Coptic and Arabic.
- ✠ The Lobsh and exposition of the Theotokeya of the day.
- ✠ The Conclusion: If it is an Adaam day, the Adam conclusion is said from the Coptic Epsaly till the end as written in the Vigils of Sunday Eve. If it is a Watos day they follow the procedure of conclusion as written in the Psalmody

- ✠ The Creed
- ✠ Amen Kyrialyson
- ✠ The priest reads the Midnight Absolution





The Daily Praise in the Month of Kiahk

1. The Midnight Prayer with its 3 services
2. The Praise as usual:
 - ✠ Tin Theno tune (the 1st Haus and its Lobsh (explanation))
 - ✠ Parts 7, 8, 9 from Sunday Theotokeya
 - ✠ The 2nd Haus and its Lobsh
 - ✠ The 3rd Haus
 - ✠ The Three Young Saints Epsaly
 - ✠ Greek Praise Ti Neen
 - ✠ The 3rd Haus Lobsh (Tin Owe Enthok) in Kiahk Tune
 - ✠ The Commemoration in Kiahk Tune
 - ✠ Doxologies of Kiahk suitable for the saints
 - ✠ St. Mary Doxology 'Shobi Entho'
 - ✠ The 4th Haus
 - ✠ The Epsaly of the day of Kiahk, one in Coptic and one in Arabic
 - ✠ The Theotokeya of the day (Coptic and Arabic)
 - ✠ The Lobsh of the day
 - ✠ The Defnar
 - ✠ The conclusion of Adaam or Watos Theotokeya (according to the day)
 - ✠ The Creed and Liturgy

The priest prays the Midnight Absolution, then Morning Prayer and Raising of Incense.





The Vesper Prayer on other days Than Saturday during the Month of Kiahk

- ✠ The Psalms
- ✠ Ti Ethnos Tiro Tune
- ✠ The 4th Haus
- ✠ The Epsaly of the day in Coptic (Watos or Adaam)
- ✠ The Theotokeya of the day in full, without any Greek parts in the middle, then an explanation
- ✠ The Lobsh of the day
- ✠ The exposition of the day from the Psalmody of Kiahk
- ✠ The Conclusion (Watos or Adaam)
- ✠ Raising of Vesper Incense as usual

The Nativity Paramoun

- ✠ The Paramoun rite is always annual
- ✠ There are 7 Epsalys to be said in the Nativity and Epiphany Paramoun
- ✠ If the Paramoun is only one day, these 7 Epsalys are prayed
- ✠ If the Paramoun is 2 days: On the first day the Epsaly corresponding with that day is prayed, the same order applies if the Paramoun is 3 days.

The Order of Epsalys

1. Epsaly on the 1st Haus
2. Epsaly on Sherene Maria



3. Epsaly on the 2nd Haus
4. Epsaly on the 3rd Haus
5. The Commemoration and Doxologies
6. Epsaly on the 4th Haus
7. The Thazakeya

After each Haus, the appropriate exposition is read.

The Epiphany Paramoun

- ✠ Its rite is an annual one like Nativity.
- ✠ It has only 2 Epsalys: Adaam and Watos.
- ✠ If it falls on an Adaam day, the Adaam Epsaly is said, if a Watos day, the Watos Epsaly is said.

Vesper of Nativity and Epiphany Feasts

The Paramoun of Nativity and Epiphany Feasts is dealt with as the Holy Lent, so we can pray the Psalms in the Paramoun Liturgy up until ‘Prayer Before Sleeping’ (in the monasteries, the Veil Prayer is added). If the Psalms are read only up until the 9th hour, so, they should read the rest as mentioned above in the Vesper Raising of Incense.

- ✠ The Epsaly appropriate for the feast is said before the Theotokeya of the day.
- ✠ The rest of the Praise is prayed as usual, in addition to the exposition of the feast.

The Midnight Prayer of Nativity

The Psalms of Midnight Prayer are not read, but rather the Big Haus of Nativity is said in Coptic and Arabic,



then the Praise. As an example, if the feast falls on a Thursday, so the Epsaly of Friday is said first on the 1st Haus tune then the Sunday Epsaly on Sherene Maria tune then the Saturday Epsaly on the 2nd Haus tune, then Monday Epsaly on the 3rd Haus tune, then the Tuesday Epsaly on the Commemoration and Doxologies, then Wednesday Epsaly on the 46th Haus, then Thursday Epsaly, That is the Feast on its Tazakeya.

✠ An exposition should be read after the Psaly

After the praise, the priest reads the Midnight Absolution of the Priests, then the Morning Incense without Psalms.

If Christmas Day falls on 28 Kiahk on a Tuesday thus Wednesday 29 Kiahk is a non-fasting day, because 29 Kiahk is the original date for Christmas.

The Order of Nativity and Epiphany Epsalys According to the Feast on the Day of the Week

The Feast falling in the day of the Week		Epsaly on the 1 st Haus	Epsaly of Sherene Maria	Epsaly on the 2 nd Haus	Epsaly on the 3 rd Haus	Epsaly on the commemoration of Saints and Doxologies	Epsaly on the Fourth Haus	Epsaly on Theotokeya of the day of the feast
Monday	The Psaly of → is read	Tuesday	Sunday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Monday
Tuesday	“	Wednesday	“	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Monday	Tuesday
Wednesday	“	Thursday	“	Friday	Saturday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Thursday	“	Friday	“	Saturday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Friday	“	Saturday	“	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Saturday	“	Monday	“	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sunday	“	Monday	Not said because it will be said in the Tezakeya	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday on	Friday on the commemoration and doxologies	Saturday on the 4 th Haus then Epsaly of the feast on Sunday



The Midnight Prayer in Epiphany

- ✠ After Raising of Vesper Incense, they do not leave the Church, but start the praise in front of the icon of St. John the Baptist, while the Laqqan is getting prepared in the 3rd Chorus of the church, to be properly washed and filled with water, because this water should attend the whole Midnight Praise from the very beginning.
- ✠ After the praise of St. John the Baptist the priests and deacons with candles walk towards the Laqqan praying the beginning of Midnight Prayer ‘O rise up, children of Light....’ Or the tune of ‘Hos Epchois’ (which is the introduction of the Big Haus of the Feast)
- ✠ The Praise is read on the water (on the same order of the Major Lordly Feasts)
- ✠ After the Praise, the priest reads the Midnight Absolution of Priests.
- ✠ Then the priest and the deacons head towards the Sanctuary, where he signs the garments (tunias) with the cross and they wear them.
- ✠ Then they go back to the 3rd Chorus where the Laqqan is placed, starting the Laqqan Prayers as written in ‘The Book of Laqqan and Worship’ 1957 edition pg 4-47.
- ✠ After finishing the Laqqan prayers, the priest signs the cross with a cloth dipped in the Laqqan water



on the congregations' forehead, the priest goes to the sanctuary starting the Morning Incense, then Holy Liturgy without Psalms.

- ✠ The Church celebrates the Epiphany Feast for 3 days from 11-13 Tubah (the Feast of the Wedding at Cana of Galilee). The prayers are in the joyful tune, and there is no abstaining fasting on those days.
- ✠ In the monasteries, they pray the Morning Psalms until the Veil Psalms on the Sunset Prayer at the end of the Feast Day (Christmas and Epiphany).

The Circumcision Feast (6 Tubah)

It has two Epsalys (Watos and Adaam) written in the Book of Epsalys.

- ✠ It has one Doxology.
- ✠ During the period which falls between Christmas Day and Circumcision (29 Kiahk – 6 Tubah), the prayers are in the joyful tune. The Holy Liturgies carried after the 3rd and 6th hour prayers. Wednesday and Friday fasting on those days end up straight after the liturgy, eating just fasting food without abstaining because they are joyful days.
- ✠ During the period which falls between the Circumcision and Epiphany, the prayers are in the annual tune, Wednesday and Friday fasting till the 9th hour, according to the laws of the church.
- ✠ The rite of Circumcision Feast (6 Tubah) is the same like that of the Feast of the Entry of Jesus Christ to the Temple (8 Amsheer), on the 40th day



after His Blessed Birth. The same readings are read: after the reading of the Gospel in Coptic and Arabic, the Bible is wrapped in a silk cloth, the priest carries it, as Simon the elder did when he carried Lord Jesus, then he goes in a procession with the deacons around the Sanctuary and the church while singing (The Honourable of the Nations). The priest then stops in front of the Sanctuary door, while the deacons and congregation kneel then have the blessing of the Bible.

The Feast of the Wedding at Cana of Galilee (13 Tubah)

- ✠ It has two Epsalys (Watos and Adaam).
- ✠ It has one Doxology.

The feast of the Entry of Lord Jesus Christ into the Temple (8 Amsheer)

- ✠ It falls after 40 days of Christmas, its tune is joyful
- ✠ It has no Epsalys, but the correspondent day Epsaly is said (out of the 2 Epsalys mentioned before in the Circumcision Feast).
- ✠ It has one Doxology.

The Feast of the Glorious Cross (10 Baramhat)

It rites exactly the same as that of the Feast of the Glorious Cross on 17 Tut.



The Feast of the Glorious Annunciation (29 Baramhat)

It is the first of the Major Lordly feasts.

- ✠ If it falls on the Friday end of Lent or Lazarus Saturday or Palm Sunday or during the Passion week till the 2nd day of Easter (i.e. Easter Monday), it is not celebrated. If it falls on any other day of the Holy Lent, its readings are read and the prayers are in the joyful tune.
- ✠ It has two Epsalys.
- ✠ It has one Doxology.

Jonah's Fasting

- ✠ Its rite as that of the weekdays of Lent (not that of Saturday's and Sunday's of Lent)
- ✠ The two Epsalys of the Holy Lent are said in their annual tune as followed in Lent.
- ✠ It has one Doxology.
- ✠ The Thursday of ending Jonah's fasting rite is in the annual tune.

The Praise of Sunday Vespers In the Holy Lent

1. The Psalms (Ninth, Sunset, Before Sleeping and in monasteries the Veil Prayer is added).
2. Ni ethnos Tiro tune.
3. The Fourth Haus.
4. Epsaly Watos of the Holy Lent.



5. The First Part of Saturday Theotokeya, then the first praise of the praises of the Holy Lent Vespers. This order keeps going on until the end of the 9th part. Its response is always:
 “Blessed are the merciful on the
 poor for they shall obtain mercy.
 Christ will have mercy on them on
 Judgement Day and dwell with His
 Spirit in them.”
6. The Saturday Sherene: both the first and second in Fasting tune.
7. The Watos Exposition written in the Book of “The Feast of the Cross and Palm Sunday Processions, the Lent Exposition and Pentecost”.
8. Conclusion with Openchois.
9. The priest starts raising Vesper Incense.

Midnight Praise on Sundays of the Holy Lent

1. Midnight Prayer with its 3 services.
2. The Big Haus of the Holy Lent.
3. Epsaly Adaam on the 1st Haus.
4. The 1st Haus.
5. Epsaly Adaam on the 2nd Haus.
6. The 2nd Haus.
7. Epsaly Adaam on the 3rd Haus.
8. The 3rd Haus.
9. Epsaly Watos on the commemoration.
10. The Commemoration of Saints.
11. Epsaly Watos on Doxologies.
12. Doxologies.



13. Epsaly Adaam on the 4th Haus.
14. The 4th Haus.
15. Epsaly Adaam on Sunday Tezakeya.
16. Sunday Tezakeya (1st seven parts).
17. Epsaly Watos on Shashf en thoby.
18. The rest of Tezakeya.
19. Adaam Exposition (each Sunday of the Holy Lent has its own exposition).
20. Conclusion of Tezakeya Adaam Niknai o Panooti.
21. We honour you Mother of Light, truly we believe in One God, them Amen. Keryellayson in the know tune.
22. The priest reads the Midnight Absolution of Priests.

The Rite of Praise of the Friday Concluding the Holy Lent

- ✠ Midnight Praise of the Friday concluding the Holy Lent is like that of the Sunday Vespers of the Holy Lent, so the Big Haus is said, then the Epsalys of the 4 Hauses, the Commemoration of Saints then the Doxologies.
- ✠ The tune of “Blessed are the merciful on the poor ...” is used in the Commemoration, Doxologies, Lobsh, the Prexis and Gospel responses and during the Holy Communion. This tune is the one used in the Sundays of the Holy Lent, not the weekdays. The Epsaly Watos of the Holy Lent is said before the Friday Theotokeya.



- ✠ 'Meghalo' tune is said, the Prexis, the Sinixarium as followed in the Sundays of the Holy Lent.
- ✠ The Sacrament of Anointing the sick is held (a General Qandil) for all the believers before the Holy Liturgy.

Lazarus Saturday Praise

1. Its rite is annual.
2. There is special Epsaly for Lazarus Saturday also a Doxology, then what is appropriate of the annual doxologies is said.
3. It has an exposition said before the conclusion.

Palm Sunday Eve

It is one of the Major Lordly Feasts, it falls on the 7th Sunday of the Holy Lent.

1. Psalms (Ninth, Sunset, Before sleeping, the Veil prayer is added in monasteries).
2. Niethnos Tiro tune.
3. The Fourth Haus.
4. A Epsaly for Palm Sunday in joyful tune.

Note: there are 3 ways of chanting the Epsalys and not 5 (annual-Kiahk - joyful). In the Holy Lent, the Epsalys are said in the annual tune, in Palm Sunday and the Feast of the Cross, it is said in the joyful tune.

5. Saturday Tezakeya.



6. Saturday Sheres the 1st and 2nd in Palm Sunday tune.
7. The Exposition.
8. The conclusion Openchois.
9. The Vesper Incense in the joyful tune where the Litany of the reposed is said.

Midnight Praise in Palm Sunday

1. The Midnight Prayer with its 3 services.
2. The Big Haus of Palm Sunday.
3. Epsaly Adaam on the 1st Haus.
4. The 1st Haus and its Lobsh with tunes.
5. Epsaly Adaam on the 2nd Haus.
6. The 2nd Haus and its Lobsh with tunes.
7. Epsaly Adaam on the 3rd Haus.
8. The 3rd Haus, Arepsalin tune and the Lobsh.
9. Epsaly Watos on the commemoration.
10. The Commemoration of Saints.
11. Doxologies. There are 3 doxologies for Palm Sunday.
12. Epsaly Adaam on the 4th Haus.
13. The 4th Haus.
14. Epsaly Adaam joyful tune on Sunday.
Theotokeya in Palm Sunday.
15. Sunday Theotokeya then Ipkoty Psaly in joyful tunes.
16. The Exposition.
17. The Conclusion: Niknai o Panoti.
18. We honour You ... Truly we believe in one God
...



19. Amen Keryaleyson ...

20. The priest reads the Midnight Absolution.

Order of Vigil of Easter Saturday

At the end of Good Friday after the burial and reading the 150 Psalms the congregation departs the church, each drinks a sip of vinegar in commemoration of what the Lord Jesus did, *“After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit” (John 19:28-30)*

They have a little rest at home then come back to church, the priests put on their liturgical garments and the candles are lit. Then, the senior priest uncovers his head, reads Psalm 151 in Coptic and Arabic facing the east saying ‘Alleluia’ in its known tune.

While reading the Psalm in Arabic, the Book of Psalms is wrapped in a white silk cloth, the senior priest carries it standing at the Sanctuary door, the candles are lit and at the end of the Psalm they sing ‘Marin Ouna Evol’ (that is the Lobsh of the 2nd Haus) in its usual tune, while going around the church. Then they sit where they will read the praises with the lit candles in the middle, the senior priest starts reading Moses the Prophet’s 1st Praise in Coptic and Arabic.



The Praises are:

1. Moses Praise ... (the 1st Haus). Then the 1st Haus Lobsh with the cymbals.
2. The 2nd Praise of Moses the Prophet (Deut 32:1-43)
3. Hannah, Samuel the Prophet's mother's praise (1 Kings 2:1-11)
4. Habakkuk the Prophet's Praise (Hab. 3:2-19)
5. Jonah the Prophet's Praise (Jonah 2:2-10)
6. Ezekiel the king of Judah's Praise (Is. 38:10-20)
7. Manasseh the King's Praise (El Dalal Book pg 228)
8. Isaiah the Prophet's 1st Praise (Is. 26:9-20)
9. Isaiah the Prophet's 2nd Praise (Is. 25:1-12)
10. Isaiah the King's 3rd Praise (Is. 26:1-9)
11. Jeremiah the Prophet's Praise (Jer. 5:16-22)
12. Baroukh the Prophet's Praise (Bar. 2:11-16)
13. Elijah the Prophet's Praise (1 Kings 18:36-39)
14. David the Prophet's Praise (3 Kings 29:10-13) and (1 Chron. 29:10-13)
15. Solomon the King's Praise (1 Kings 8:22-30)
16. David the Prophet's Praise (Dan. 9:4-19)
17. Daniel the Prophet's vision for the Three Young Saints, (the rest of Daniel's Book 3:122)
18. Azaria's Praise, (the rest of Daniel's Book Chapter 3)
19. The Three Young Saint's Praise (the rest of Daniel's Book Chapter 3)
20. Epsaly Watos for the Three Young Saints with its know tune for Moalem Sarkis.
21. Greek tune Tenin.



22. The rest of the Three Young Saints (chapter 3:24-30)
23. St. Mary's Praise (Luke 1:46-55)
24. Zechariah the Priest's Praise (Luke 1:68-79)
25. Simon the Priest's Praise (Luke 2: 29-32)
26. The story of Sousannah the daughter of Slukia the wife of Joachim the Jew, and the vision of Daniel the Prophet concerning her story (known as the story of Susannah the Chaste)

✠ Then they sing Ten oh Enthok with the cymbals in its annual tune while going around the church 3 times in a procession until they go in front of the Sanctuary. They start the Morning Prayer, decorate the church, lit the lanterns, the priest says Eleyson Imas, the Thanksgiving Prayer and Raising of Morning Incense.

Then, the priests and deacons enter the Sanctuary singing Ten-oo osht, which is the First Part of the Morning Doxology, Have Mercy upon me, the Litany of the Sick, and by its end Pi oyni enta Efmi until Niknay Oh Panoti, then the Litany of the Departed.

Then the Epsaly Watos for Easter Saturday Eve in its annual tune.

- ✠ An Arabic praise for Easter Saturday in the annual tune.
- ✠ Saturday Theotokeya.



- ✠ Saturday 1st and 2nd Sheres in annual tune.

Then they finish the prayers as written in the Passion Week Book including Epucalypsus Prayer.

The Order of Easter Sunday Eve

- ✠ The Priests and congregation gather in the church, start reading the Gospel of St. John.
- ✠ They read the prophecies in Coptic and Arabic, if they were not read during the Holy Communion of Easter Saturday Liturgy.
- ✠ They pray the Midnight Prayer.
- ✠ The Bible is wrapped up in a white cloth, the senior priest carries it, they go in a procession around the church, while singing with cymbals ‘Tin thino’ tune, until they come to the 1st Chorus of the church, then Psalm 50.
- ✠ Then the Praise of Resurrection Tennav.
- ✠ The Resurrection Big Haus.
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam on the 1st Haus in joyful tune.
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam on the 2nd Haus.
- ✠ The 2nd Haus.
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam on the 3rd Haus.
- ✠ The 3rd Haus and the Three Young Saints Epsaly.
- ✠ Epsaly Watos on the Commemoration.
- ✠ The Commemoration to be said simplified, then the Doxologies.
- ✠ Epsaly Adam on the 4th Haus.
- ✠ The 4th Haus.
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam on Sunday Theotokeya.
- ✠ Conclusion with ‘Lypon’ tune.



- ✠ Sunday Theotokeya of Resurrection until 'Nim Ghar'.
- ✠ The Resurrection Exposition.
- ✠ Conclusion in 'Niknai Oh Panoti'.
- ✠ We honour You ... Truly we believe ... Amen Keryelayson.
- ✠ The priest reads the Midnight Absolution of Priests.
- ✠ Raising of Morning Incense.

Order of Vesper of Easter Monday

The aim here is to remember the appearance of Lord Jesus to His disciples after His Resurrection.

- ✠ On the Eve of Easter Monday, they gather in the church, like the disciples gathering in the Upper Room.
- ✠ Pchois Nay ..., Zoksapatri ..., Our Father ..., Psalm 50.
- ✠ The Psalms of the hours are not prayed.
- ✠ Ni Ethnos Tiro Tune.
- ✠ The 4th Haus.
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam.
- ✠ Sunday Theotokeya from Ran Nivin Et Chosi until the end.
- ✠ Nim Ghar Khin Ninoti tune of Resurrection.
- ✠ Easter Monday Eve Exposition.
- ✠ Conclusion in Niknai O Panoti.
- ✠ Raising of Vesper Incense.



Easter Monday Midnight Praise

- ✠ The usual praise in a joyful tune.
- ✠ Reading the Epsaly Adaam corresponding with that day.

Thomas Sunday Eve Vesper (The New Sunday)

There is an Epsaly Watos for this Vesper, then the rest of the Vesper as usual.

Thomas Sunday Midnight Praise

- ✠ The Praise in joyful tune.
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam for that day to be said.
- ✠ Doxology for that day to be said.
- ✠ An exposition.

Ascension Feast

It always falls on a Thursday called Ascension Thursday.

- ✠ Epsaly Watos for this day.
- ✠ Two Epsaly Adaam and Watos for the period between the Ascension Feast and the Pentecost.
- ✠ A Doxology for that day.
- ✠ The rest of the Praise as usual.



The Pentecost Eve Vesper

- ✠ Epsaly Watos for this day.
- ✠ The rest of the Praise in usual joyful tune.

Midnight Praise of Pentecost Sunday

- ✠ Epsaly Adaam for Midnight Praise.
- ✠ Two Epsalys for the Feast of the Pentecost.
- ✠ An Exposition for the Feast of the Pentecost.
- ✠ The rest of the Praise in joyful tune according to the rite of the Major Lordly feasts.

The Praise said before the Worship Prayer (El Sagda) in Sunday noon

- ✠ The Agpeya Prayers of the 6th, 9th, Sunset, 12th hour (and the veil prayer in monasteries)
- ✠ Ni Ethnos Tiro tune.
- ✠ The 4th Haus.
- ✠ Epsaly Adaam for the Pentecost.
- ✠ Sunday Epsaly Ekoti Enthok ending in the Lipon tune.
- ✠ Sunday Theotokeya in full.
- ✠ Conclusion in Niknay Oh Panoti.
- ✠ They start with the Three Prayers of the Worship Prayer (El Sagda).

The Apostles' Fasting

- ✠ Its rite is in the usual annual tune.



- ✠ It has 2 Epsalys: Adaam and Watos.

The Feast of Lord Jesus' Entry into the Land of Egypt (24 Bashans)

- ✠ It has two Epsalys: Adam and Watos.
- ✠ A Doxology.
- ✠ The rest of the Praise is in the usual joyful tune.

The Feast of Transfiguration (13 Misra)

These feasts follow the annual rite, except the Major and Minor Lordly Feasts.

They have their own Epsalys, such as:

- ✠ St. John the Baptist.
- ✠ St. Mark the Apostle.
- ✠ Archangel Michael.
- ✠ St. Makarious the Great.
- ✠ St. Mary's departure.
- ✠ St. Anthony the Father of Monks.

General Comments on Wpsalys:

Epsalys either serve the Name of Lord Jesus, such as those of the annual Epsalys of the week, or an occasion or feast such as the Major and Minor Lordly Feasts Epsaly. As for the Epsalys of St. Mary, the Angels, the Apostles, the Martyrs and Saints it serves both: glorifying the Lord and praising the saint we are celebrating.



- ✠ In the occasions that have special Epsalys, such as the Lordly feasts, the different fasting, etc., these Epsalys should be said. It is also appropriate to say the Epsaly of that day after the Epsaly of the occasion, following the same tune.

According to the rite, the Vesper prayers follow the tune of the next day. As an example, in the Vesper of the Entry of Lord Jesus into the Land of Egypt, which is a Lordly Feast, we use the joyful tune, but there are some readings in which we use the rite of the day of Vesper, these readings are:

- ✠ The Epsaly: In the Vespers of annual Sundays, the Epsaly Watos ‘Sotim’ is said for St. Mary, then the Saturday Epsaly in its Watos tune, except the Epsalys for the feasts and fasting, it follows the rite of the next day (i.e. the Epsaly of the fast is said). For example, if the Vesper of St. Mark’s feast is on a Tuesday the Epsaly Adaam for St. Mark is said in the Vesper, but next morning on the feast day, which is Wednesday, the Epsaly Watos of St. Mark is said.
- ✠ Theotokeya.
- ✠ Lobsh.
- ✠ Conclusion of Theotokeya.