

2- The Resurrection and Information

Christ and the Internet

The World Wide Web, or the Internet, has spread all over the world and everyone, especially the young, now interact with it and spend a long time exploring it. We will doubtless see a continuous increase in the number of users, especially as the computer has become 'the language of the age' as a result of the important Egyptian project of providing a computer for every home on a comfortable installment plan.

Many questions are raised:

- 1- What are useful and harmful aspects of this web?
- 2- How can I distinguish the **useful (to benefit from them)** and the harmful aspects (**to avoid them**)?
- 3- How can I implement my choice of what is useful in the face of the overwhelming repeated and pressing temptations of its harmful aspects?
- 4- What is the role of Christ of the Resurrection, the living Christ, in helping me do that?
- 5- How can I possess the Risen Christ so He can help me in this important daily arena?

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Internet :

There is no doubt that the Internet has many advantages, but at the same time it also has numerous disadvantages. **In one of the youth conferences for high school students in the US**, I discussed this issue with them in order to learn their views on it.

The Advantages of the Internet :

- 1- **The flow of an enormous amount of information** : in all areas of knowledge: science, literature, art, culture, archeology, etc. such that an individual no longer needs to buy books or encyclopedias. He finds all the information he needs on any subject in the span of a few minutes by using a Search Engine.
- 2- **The propagation of the word of God**: the Holy Bible can be read all over the world without the effort of printing or shipping it, which costs vast sums of money and involves a tremendous effort. Anyone who wants to read any verse, any subject, or any book, will find this readily available; he can download the Bible onto his own computer or onto a CD. Many translations and versions, with commentaries on every word, are easily accessible.
- 3- **Learning about the elements of Christianity and Orthodoxy**: It is now possible through the Internet for a researcher to find a great many studies on the Bible, the Christian faith, and the Orthodox doctrine in different sources, for each church has its numerous websites on which it expounds its views and expresses its thought; it also announces its events and activities on the web.
- 4- **Daily communication among people** : It is now possible through electronic mail and through a comprehensive e-mail list of the members of a church, for the minister or servant to follow up on those he serves through daily messages. We already see this form of daily visiting, daily food, and spiritual comfort from the word of God or the sayings of the saints.
- 5- **Chat rooms or Pal talk**: These are used by some churches to keep in touch with their children every year. I was very happy to hear from some youth in Australia that they join the chat room of our church in Zuweila and others and listen to mass, sermons, and hymns. It is a marvelous educational tool that feeds our beloved ones all over the world. It can be heard and read by anyone

regardless of language or nationality so that they learn about our Coptic church and our Christian Orthodoxy.

- 6- **Various Internet electronic activities** : such as e-booking of plane tickets, e-trading and commerce, e-shopping, e-government, etc. These have become widespread and extensively used on a daily basis, so that people no longer need to move from one place to another, thus saving energy and time. This will reduce the crowding in the street and will make it easier for people to obtain their needs.
- 7- **Interactive television** : This will spread soon and is a combination of computer and television technology. An individual will be able to watch all that is on the Internet on television, which is easier and more enjoyable. He will be able to control what he watches, to choose certain programs and to delete others, or to choose a camera angle other than the one being shown. A viewer will be able to stop and watch advertisements of certain goods and obtain detailed information on them such as prices and so forth. He will be able to purchase the commodity and pay for it with his credit card, and then resume his viewing.

These are merely examples of the potential of the Internet in our lives. But what about its defects? A group of young Egyptians in the US said that it had a great many.

The Shortcomings of the Internet :

- 1- **Immoral films** : that arouse lust such as pornography of which there is an abundance on the Internet and which often impinge on the viewer of the useful programs, frequently against his will.
- 2- **Computer addiction** : Young people spend long hours every day either watching good programs, or

which is more dangerous, watching the harmful programs. This is a worldwide addiction and has been well documented. Young people need to be aware of this grave danger for it can have a nefarious influence on the formation of the psyche and personality of the young person.

- 3- **Problems with vision** : These result from being too close to the radiation that emanates from the computer screen.
- 4- **Health problems** : The young person is fixedly bent over the machine for long periods, which leads to problems in the spine, and weakening of the back muscles. The whole body suffers also because of a sedentary lifestyle and lack of exercise.
- 5- **Social problems**: They young person has no time for his **family**, friends, church, or society because of his addiction to the Internet that is on at all times of the day and night. The young person loses his friends and a husband loses his bond with his wife and children, all of which are serious matters.
- 6- **Hostile information** : On the Internet, there is a great deal of matter that attacks the Christian faith, whether objectively or subjectively. There are many heresies and deviant doctrines and many chat rooms that propagate them.
- 7- **Misuse** : A person could have a pain in his lower abdomen or on the right side. He goes to the Internet for advice and some sedatives are recommended that could be most dangerous to his health; the pain could be caused by a kidney stone, the colon, or the appendix and if the sedatives mask these, the results could be catastrophic for the appendix could rupture or the root cause become aggravated. A doctor needs to be consulted, and not on the Internet, in the case of a medical problem.

How Can I Make Choices and Implement Them?

When surfing the Internet, we need to adopt the principle of **selecting and rejecting**. This is a Biblical principle; *“Test all things; hold fast what is good.” (1Thess. 5:21)* Young people need to be able to discriminate between the fat and the lean, what builds up and what destroys. Most importantly, after discriminating, they need to have the ability to exercise their good choices and the strength to withstand the destructive.

Christ, the Lord of glory, the Christ of the Resurrection, appears here to give us :

- 1- The capacity to discriminate and **distinguish wrong from right**.
- 2- The ability **to carry out the right** and to eschew the wrong.

The risen Christ is the only path to **discrimination and victory**.

1- Distinguishing between right and wrong :

It is the Lord who opens our eyes and illuminates our minds to discriminate between right and wrong.

- 1 *“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” (Eph. 1:17,18)*
- 1 *“And this I pray that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you*

may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.” (Phil. 1:9,10)

- 1 *“But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.. But we have the mind of Christ.” (1Cor. 2:15,16)*

This means that the man whose heart is filled with the love of Christ is enlightened and can discern right from wrong, for he has the mind of Christ and moves under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, of whom the Lord Jesus said, *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth,... for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” (Jn. 16:13,14)*

St. John says, *“But the anointing (the Holy Chrism, Mayroun) which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you, but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.” (1Jn. 2:27)*

The Lord does not only grant us the gift of discernment, but also :

2- The Ability to Carry Out the Right:

The man who is filled with the love of Christ can, through the power of the Lord within him and through the Christ who indwells him, implement the wise choices he makes and can overcome the wrong. **St. Paul tells us :**

- 1 *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14)*
- 1 *“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” (Rom. 8:37)*

- 1 ***“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4:13)***
- 1 ***“My grace is sufficient for you; for My strength is made perfect in weakness... For when I am weak (in myself), then I am strong (through the grace of Christ).” (2Cor. 12:9,10)***
- 1 ***“A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb.” (Pr. 27:7)***

Thus, the young Christian believer who is full of grace and the love of the Lord is able to loath the poisonous honeycomb that is offered by the Internet, television, immoral films, and corrupt publications. He can, with the grace of Christ, defeat all these and defeat the one behind all this, the devil, who ***“walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (1Pet. 5:8)***

Christ of the Resurrection and the Internet :

Christ of the Resurrection has three traits :

- 1- **He is Christ the God** who is omnipotent and can do all things.
 - 2- **He is the living Christ** who left an empty tomb.
 - 3- **He is the indwelling Christ** who lives in the hearts of His children. How happy they are to have Christ, a Lord, Master, Savior and King of life.
- 1 **He is the omnipotent God** : who overcame death and crushed Satan, who opened the doors of paradise and set the righteous free from Satan’s dominion. He declared Himself alive many times and in many places and to many of His disciples. He gave us the sacrifice of the Eucharist as an extension of His glorious crucifixion. He gave to those on earth the praise of the cherubim and gave His followers the

ability to defeat death and the devil, the power to work miracles, the power of intercession and prayer, and the power of glorious appearances.

- 1 **He is the living Christ** : as confessed by all religions. He died to redeem us, but His divinity, united with His humanity, raised His body from the dead so that He rose while the tomb was still closed, a luminous spiritual body. He appeared to His disciples who touched Him and felt Him and who ate with Him because He wanted to confirm His resurrection. He gave His risen body temporary tangible dimensions during the forty days after the resurrection, and then reverted to His spiritual, luminous, heavenly, glorified body. He promised that He will ***“transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body” (Phil. 3:21)*** on the Judgment Day at His Second Coming.

He is Christ who dwells within us and who said :

- 1 ***“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” (Jn. 6:56)***
- 1 ***“I in them and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.” (Jn. 17:23)***
- 1 ***“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.” (Eph. 3:17)***
- 1 ***“Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? - unless indeed you are disqualified.” (2Cor. 13:5)***
- 1 ***“By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us His Spirit.” (1Jn. 4:13)***

It is known that the indwelling of Christ in us does not mean a union of persons; otherwise, we would be gods. Rather it means His dwelling through divine gifts and capabilities and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It

resembles air entering our lungs without, however, converting us into air.

Thus, the omnipotent living indwelling Christ can enable us to gain victory over all the temptations and harmful uses of the Internet and chat rooms; He is the best supervisor, helper, and support.

**He is the glory of the resurrection in our lives,
Christ lives in our hearts and so we have discernment,
And follow Him on straight paths.**