

Mahragan El Keraza 2022



English Edition

Grades 9-12



“ Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

2 Corinthians 13:11



live in peace

Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. (Matt 24:42)



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“Live in Peace” **(2 Corinthians 13:11)**

Introduction:

By the grace of God, this is the slogan of St. Mark’s Mahragan el Keraza for the year 2022! The St. Mark’s Evangelism Festival Committee, which is composed of bishops, priests, and servants, met to choose the slogan of this year’s festival, which will be: “Live in Peace” (2 Corinthians 13:11). This year’s slogan is fitting in light of the fierce attack of an invisible enemy on humanity, the Coronavirus pandemic, and the great losses it caused to human health, the global economy, and all human activity. It ultimately led people to lose inner peace and reassurance.

High School Academic Core Subject - All participants must take the core subject test online according to the announced schedule (which is mandatory for participants in all competitions).

Part 1: Intro to Christian Peace

The meaning of “peace” lies in an artist’s rendition of a painting of a group of intertwined mountains. They lack an intrinsic beauty in all their formations, a gloomy and cloudy overcast sky, winds, storms, and unsettled weather. On one side of the mountains lies a waterfall, the force of the water rushes and falls from the mountain with great power. But one should note that the artist also illustrated a small branch of a wild bush growing along the side of the mountain. Above this wild branch, a bird is depicted nesting with its chicks, living in calmness despite the tumult of the rushing



waters and the intensity of their strength. “Peace” does not refer to a place devoid of worries, problems, or troubles. True peace is that which is found amidst storms, with stillness and tranquility. Just like the bird in the painting, this is “the perfect peace of God, which transcends all understanding.” The Bible says: **“live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”** (2 Corinthians 13:11).



I. Peace is a greeting that people exchange every day

1. The Virgin Mary began her words with “peace” when she visited Saint Elizabeth. “And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Luke 1:41). Can you see the great power such peace yields?!

2. Jesus Christ is the One Who said to His holy disciples: “My Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

(John 14:27). It is evident that this is a special gift.

It is His “peace”, His personal peace, which He gave us, thus Christ referred to this blessing as “My peace.” Our Lord Jesus Christ made it clear that His peace is different from that of the world, as He said, “not as the world gives do I give to you” (John 14:27).





3. **Our Lord Jesus Christ even instructs His disciples saying,** “But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’” (Luke 10:5).

4. Another important factor regarding peace is that it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...” (Galatians 5:22).

II. Christian Peace is different

1. Undoubtedly, the Christian peace differs from the “peace” granted and given by other human beings and the world. This is because Christian peace:

i. Rises above difficulties because Christian peace defies difficulties that may arise because of Satan, events, diseases, trials, sorrows and problems.

ii. Is unlimited because it stems from the infinite Lord Jesus. It is an endless peace which surpasses all understanding.

iii. Can be multiplied and spread to those around us because it is God **“Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:4)**

iv. Is steadfast for it is a peace that is firmly rooted in the depths of the heart, from which no one can take away. The Lord said to Mary, Lazarus’ sister, **“But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:42)**



Part 2: Understanding Christian Peace

1. Christ is the Prince of Peace

He is the **Prince of Peace**, the God of Peace, and the King of Peace. In the prophecy of Isaiah, it is written: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). This prophecy gave Him several titles, including: The Prince of Peace. Remember the chant that the angels proclaimed on the day of the birth of the Lord Christ? “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men!” (Luke 2:14).



a. He is called the Prince of Peace because He came to earth in peace and preached His message in a peaceful way. As He commanded His disciples, “And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.” (Matthew 10:12–13).

b. As a result, **Christianity also spread across the world in a peaceful way**, through the preaching of the Word. “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.” (Matthew 16:10). This signifies the pain, sufferings, and persecutions which our fathers the Apostles and Disciples would bear for the sake of Christ—whether it be from the Jews, Pagans or others. And as St. Augustine said: “The wolves ate the lambs, so the wolves turned into lambs!”

c. If the Lord Christ is blessing those who bestow peace saying, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 9:5), how awesome is the peace He capable of giving us since He is the Ultimate Peacemaker?

d. The Holy Bible says of Him: “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both



one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” (Ephesians 2:14–18).

2. Peace on a personal and individual level

Inner peace is contingent upon God’s work within man, for He is “to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:79), so that man may live in everlasting peace no matter what disturbances may occur around him. Man enjoys a threefold peace:

a. Peace with God: Peace had been cut off from the earth since the fall of our father Adam and our mother Eve where humans inherited the original sin. From there, division became manifest, and brothers arose against one another. Ultimately, Cain killed Abel and peace departed, confusion and animosity arose, and anguish was rampant. Enmity took root due to man’s fall into sin and deviation from the Divine commandment. Man



lived under the sentence of death. Job the Righteous cried bitterly saying, “Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both.” (Job 9:33). How can reconciliation take place where God the Holy, the Creator, and the Eternal is in heaven and man is on earth sinful, created, and carnal?!

i. With the coming of the Lord Christ, it was the real beginning of reconciliation and true peace. A true, steadfast, and sure peace. A peace that satisfied! For the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is a birth of peace and through it, peace has come upon the whole Earth.

ii. Peace with God is achieved through obedience to His commandments and walking in the way of virtue and righteousness. This is because the person who chooses to live in sin and depart from worship, prayer, fasting, and charity proves by his/her behavior that



he/she is in conflict with God, and with all the inhabitants of heaven.

iii. To salvage his/her situation and be at true peace with God, he/she must return to God with repentance and purity of heart, as “‘there is no peace,’ says the Lord, ‘for the wicked.’” (Isaiah 48:22).

b. Peace with the soul: We must have the inner peace of the heart. The person who desires peace between the soul and body turns away from all causes of disturbance, anxiety, and fear. This is made possible through the assurance that our life and future are in His Hands.

i. As the Apostle Paul says, “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” (Galatians 5:17). “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16).

ii. Note the word “in”, in the phrase, “Walk in the Spirit” and its relationship with the statement “you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh,” Why is this so? Because the natural result of spiritual behavior is gaining control over the body! Christianity is a positive and edifying religion that does not attempt to suppress the body in a negative and harmful way. Rather it suppresses the desires in the body in order to develop the soul. The body is then disciplined with little effort, as the person strives with fasting and proper asceticism to preserve his senses from which sin enters! Thus, both body and soul walk on one path to holiness, joy, and peace.

iii. The body accompanies the soul in vigils, fasting, prayers and prostrations, with great joy, as a sacrifice of love to God. As the soul subjugates the body, the body obeys the soul, striving with it in pursuit of the Kingdom.

iv. To gain peace with the soul one must turn away from fear, anxiety and things that cause disturbance, trusting that we are in His hands. It is said, “do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.” (Luke 12:29). Anxiety can be a sign of giving precedence to dangers rather than faith in the power of the Creator, the Infinite, the Unlimited, and All-Loving. He can defeat all these dangers or fears we may have. As it is written in Psalm 34:13, “depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.”

c. Peace with others: We frequently hear the Priest saying: “Peace be with



you all.” He says it at the beginning of every liturgical prayer and at the beginning of the litanies, repeating it many times in every liturgy, praying that peace be in the hearts of all. This is because if the people lose their peace, they lose an essential element of their life and their dealings with others.

i. If there is no peace in the soul, the smooth, joyful life enjoyed amongst a community will be disrupted and family/social relationships will inevitably be affected. Therefore, there must be inner peace which consumes the soul, so that the outer peace manifests itself in our relationships



with others. The Holy Bible commands: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:20–21).

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

iii. “Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.” (Matthew 18:15).

iv. St. John commands us also to make peace with one another, “He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” (1 John 2:9–11). Christianity is a religion of peace. It calls on humanity to, “live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:11).

v. Confucius, a famous Chinese philosopher in the fifth century B.C. taught his stu-



dents saying, “Whatever you do not want another to do to you, do not do to them.”

But

vii. The Lord commands us to love in a much different, positive manner saying, “therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12).

viii.

Peace with people is twofold: passive, and positive, which is to say, active. From a passive perspective, a person seeks to avoid conflict, clashes or quarrels with other people, and does not carry in his heart envy or hostility against anyone. As for the positive or active element, it is by cooperation, with love, providing goodness and service to all, being sensitive towards the feelings of everyone. St. Paul says, “but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13).



3. Peace at the level of the church, the community of believers

“God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved” (Psalm 46:5). This is God’s promise since the days of King David for those before him and those to come after him.

a. Because the Lord is in the “midst” of the church, He revives and protects her. Therefore, the Church, the body of Christ, will not be shaken, because the gates of Hell will not prevail against her, and the Lord is her guardian all her days, no matter the storms, hurricanes and pestilences.

b. During the Litany for the Peace of the Church, the Priest prays: “Remember, O Lord, the peace of your one only, holy, catholic, and apostolic Orthodox Church.” We pray it at the beginning of the short litanies, in the introduction to the long litanies, in the raising of evening and matins incense, and in every procession by the priest around the altar, offering incense and praying the litanies.

c. In the beginning of the liturgy, during the offering of The Lamb, the Priest prays: “Peace and the edification to the one, only, holy catholic and apostolic church of God,



Amen.”

d. We also remember the peace of the Church in the Litany for the Leaders. saying: “Speak in his heart of the peace of your one, only, holy, catholic and apostolic Church”

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Part 3: Christian Peace Comes in different forms

We've spoken about what peace is... but what does peace look like? How do we obtain peace?

I. The Peace of the Church

The peace of the Church was one of the most important goals of our fathers, the apostles, and the saints. The Church represents the kingdom of God on earth, which will extend into the heavenly kingdom. It is the home of faith where God dwells with people.

a. The peace and safety of the Church are the object of every one's prayer, it takes precedence over one's own needs. It is the center of our meditations in the Lord's Prayer, in which one prays, "Hallowed be Your Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done."

b. The prayer for the peace of the Church is a prayer which has survived many generations of believers, shepherds, parishes, clergy, and people. We pray for the peace of the Church even during the rite of ordination for the monks, who are cut off from the world.

c. It was wonderfully thoughtful of St. Paul, the greatest of the monks and anchorites, to ask St. Anthony about the peace of the Church. It is a prayer that we pray from the depths of our hearts. Not merely as a ritual, but with lively, ardent emotion.

d. The Church gives us peace and asks for our peace: "Oh, King of peace, grant us Your peace, establish for us Your peace for us and forgive us our sins." It is peace that we receive from Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The priest declares "Ereni Paci" (which means "peace be with all") while holding the cross because this peace, provided by the Church to her children, is a blessing from God.

II. Receiving Peace Also Comes in Different Forms

There are multiple ways to receive Christian Peace.

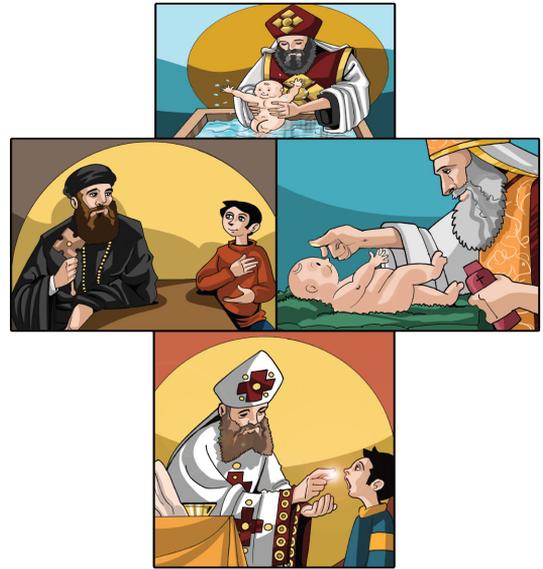
a. We receive peace during Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity. Baptism is the Sacrament in which one dies and is buried with Christ. "Therefore we were buried with



Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4).

b. We also receive peace during the rites of all the Holy Sacraments and the working of all good things for “faith without works is dead?” (James 2:20).

c. Peace can also be found when we have faith in Christ, our God and Savior. Faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Who was incarnate for our salvation brings tranquility and safety. He is the chief cornerstone, the Holy Bible tells us that “he who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:16). “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1).



III. Peace in the World

Peace is an important element for people’s lives. Without peace a society cannot be stable, grow, nor progress, and no one could be calm. Peace is the desire of nations and peoples to work quietly. Without it, the world would be a jungle.

a. It is God’s desire that we have peace, “for thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river.” (Isaiah 66:12). We also know this because God has granted us his peace saying, “My peace I leave with you My peace I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled.” (John 14:27).

b. It is important to note that The Lord Himself is the One Who spoke this verse, He Who is Almighty, Who can do all things and Who is full of compassion. Peace is a gift from God, the Creator, the most Loving, of Whom it was said, “He is our peace” (Ephesians 2:14).



c. Christian peace is above all circumstances, it is found even in tribulations & wars because our confidence is in our Redeemer, the High Tower to whom the righteous run for refuge and are safe. (Proverbs 18:10). It is a peace that is ‘despite of’ (situations), not one ‘because of’ (circumstances)!!!

d. Peace is the desire and the need of the whole world. The modern man, while rich, is still disturbed about daily problems and afraid for the future — in both those things that are apparent to him and those that are not. Fear also results from war and rumors of war. To top it all off, the whole world today is in fear because of the pandemic. But we are confident that despite what happened in the past, happens in the present, or will happen in the future, we have a mighty, loving, and wise God.

e. The importance of peace is clear in many areas of our lives. The world celebrates the International Day for Tolerance on November 16th of every year. This began in 1996 by The United Nations General Assembly. The celebration of this day aims to spread the culture of tolerance, love, and peace, and to teach it to children in schools. September 21st also marks The International Day of Peace, on this day wars and attacks stop.

f. Therefore, let us build on these things. Encourage dialogue, peaceful coexistence, spread tolerance, and confront extremism and its negative effects. May this be an opportunity to stop the shedding of innocent blood, to end wars, conflicts, and cultural & moral decline.

g. How do we make peace with our brethren? By taking care of the hungry, the distressed, the neglected, and the persecuted. By extending a helping hand to the physically or mentally disabled, by seeing for the blind! We can also make peace by providing care for the sick, naked, and imprisoned. This is how we find His peace in the world.



IV. Peace in Our Daily Lives

To see His peace in our daily lives we must let go of our anxieties and fears. There are those who lose their peace and reassurance due to fear of disease, epidemics, microbes, viruses, air & water pollution, the possibility of infection, the unknown future, and the pressures and struggles of life.

a. In all of this, they forget God's preserving grace, which gives us peace and reassurance. Doubt exacerbates man's anxiety, therefore when one loses inner peace one cannot find rest nor have stability. Sin also makes one lose peace.

b. For us to live in His peace and contentment we must:

- ✦ Realize that there is a great God Who rules and manages the universe. He is the secret of life and existence. We must believe in His protection and care. He cares for us more than we care for ourselves for "the LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore." (Psalm 121:8).
- ✦ Understand that He is the Controller of all. The Lord is The Almighty, He can do all things, and in His power, He can save us from all our troubles, He can solve all our problems. He is more powerful than all the forces of evil that may fight against us for He is "Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." (Ephesians 3:20).
- ✦ Be reassured that our lives are in the hands of God, not in the hands of people. God is a lover of mankind, Who does not wish the death of a sinner but that he should return to Him and live. We must put our faith in this so that we may gain comfort and peace in our hearts. Thus, we say with David the prophet "The Lord





is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid” (Psalm 27:1). “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Psalm 118:6). “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me.” (Psalm 23:4).

c. Let us pray and resort to God Almighty, saying: “take away from the whole world: death, Inflation, pestilence, destruction, the sword of the enemies, the conspiracy of devils, the fight of evil doers, the deception of the wicked and the injustice of the ruler.”

d. We have confidence and hope that we will rejoice with Moses the prophet saying, “the plague was stopped.” (Numbers 16:48) and with St. Paul saying, “Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:11).



The First Epistle of Saint Peter the Apostle

The First Epistle of St. Peter teaches us how to follow Him and be in Him, ask yourself, is this a way to obtain peace? How does this relate to the message “Live in Peace?”

I. Chapter One

a. The Apostolic Greeting Verses 1–2: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” (1 Peter 1:1–2).

a. The apostle Saint Peter directs his message to the baptized Jews who are scattered in Asia Minor and to all the believers scattered in the world, who suffer persecutions because of their Christianity. He sends them the love of the Holy Trinity: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Who works in the believers granting them His grace and peace.

i. Encourage all those you meet with the gracious act of our God that their hearts may rejoice and that they may always think of the Lord and lean upon Him.





b. Rejoice in Salvation Verses 3–8: “Blessed be the God and Father of our

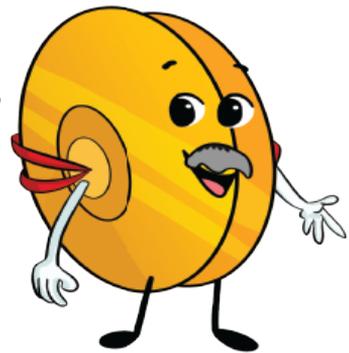


Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 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 1:3–8)

a. The word “blessed” means praise and giving of thanks to God Who has presented us who are unworthy with His mercy and His amazing salvation. The word blessed is a Hebrew word which means to speak words of goodness about a person.

b. Verse 4: St. Peter identifies the spiritual inheritance as having specific features stating, **“to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.” (1 Peter 1:4).**

i. Question for discussion: What are the features of inheritance?



c. Verses 5–8: **“Who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 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 1:5–8).**

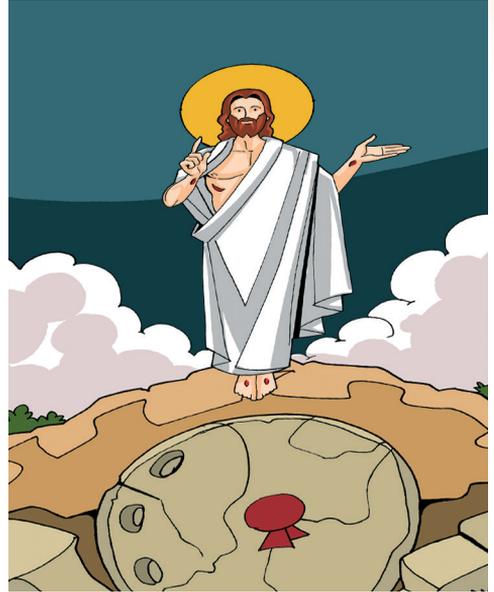


i. We must strive, with confidence that the power of God is guarding us, so that we do not lose this inheritance prepared for us.

1. Question for discussion: How do we understand the fact that the Lord allows for temptations for his children?

a. Answer: He has a certain purpose—that His children may be purified and cleansed.

d. Verse 7: “That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:7).



i. The fire in verse 7 is a purifying fire. God never allows for anyone to fall into temptation unless one can bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13). The presence of God in the midst of sorrows gives comfort to the sorrowful. This verse shows us how to share in Christ’s sufferings and carry the cross with the Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified for us.

ii. When we share in His pain and in His joy during our lives here on earth with faith and love in our Lord Jesus Christ; we will know that He is with us. Thus, we can bear all things for His sake. Our hearts rejoice when we understand that He is with us even though we don’t see Him with our eyes. This hope is strengthened because we see His works in us. This gives us great a joy beyond earthly expression because of the guarantee that we will receive eternal joy in heaven.

iii. “May be found to praise, honor, and glory” (1 Peter 1:7). Our way of life reveals the quality of our faith. He who believes in the heavenly inheritance, how can he wrestle over earthly things?! God allows trials to be purify us to allow us to become worthy of the heavenly “glory” as we behold God and reflect His glory and His light. Not only do we behold Him, but we are united with Him, then we will have a glorified and enlightened body.

c. Salvation is the goal of the prophets: Verses 9–12: “Receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. Of this salvation the prophets have inquired



and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.” (1 Peter 1:9–12).

a. Salvation does not just entail eternal life in heaven after death, but it entails the attaining of a new, heavenly creation here on earth; a better life here that prepares us for eternal life. Our teacher St. Peter the Apostle says receiving this happens in the Church through the Holy Sacraments which are the means of grace.

b. The Coptic understanding of “the salvation of your souls” is that the salvation which the Lord completed on the cross is the source of our Holy Sacraments for which the holy prophets searched and prophesied in the Old Testament.

c. These prophecies came from “the spirit of Christ who was in them” (1 Peter 1:11) this is the Holy Spirit Who revealed to the prophets the life of Christ, His sufferings, His death, and His resurrection. They didn’t know the exact timing of this salvation. Even Daniel the Prophet, to whom was proclaimed the time of salvation, did not fully comprehend the greatness of this salvation.

d. There are many prophecies about the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ:

- i. Isaiah 53
- ii. Daniel 9:27

e. There are also many prophecies about the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and His ascension to heaven:

- i. Psalms 16:8–11
- ii. Isaiah 38:11–12





f. The prophets understood that their prophecies would be fulfilled after many years and that they would not see the salvation with their human eyes. We, however, have been enlightened by this good news through the epistle of the apostles and have received the salvation which the angels also wished to behold.

g. Therefore, the prophets were servants of the salvation through their prophecies and we, of the New Testament, have received the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the salvation from your sins and the grace you have received by becoming one with the Lord Jesus Christ be your goal! Do not delay it while you achieve other goals but remind yourself daily that this is your eternal goal.

d. Our role in salvation Verses 13–17: “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.” (1 Peter 13–17).

a. Our teacher St. Peter the Apostle instructed on how we reach the path of salvation saying, “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:13).

i. “Therefore gird up” – This is a strongly instructive phrase. St. Peter uses such strong language to convey the importance and glories of the salvation. It is a call to action, we have a role to play in the salvation given all of its glories and great importance.

ii. “The loins of your minds” – Keep your thoughts away from evil and be courageous with the words of Christ, struggle in the way of the Kingdom.

iii. “Be sober” – St. Peter tells us to practice wakefulness and vigilance in spiritual life and be ready to meet our Holy Bridegroom

iv. “The grace that is to be brought to you” – St. Peter refers to the com-



plete salvation which we will receive in the heavenly Kingdom at the revelation of Jesus Christ on Judgement Day when the Lord will reward the righteous.

b. Repentance: St. Peter tells us that we should act “as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance.” (1 Peter 1:14). The faithful are the children of God. Therefore, they must be obedient to his commandments and repent their past evil which was committed while they were far from God.

c. Holiness: St. Peter calls us to holiness stating, “as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:14–16). The Lord calls us to sanctify and dedicate our hearts to Him, through our good behavior, imitating the Holy Christ. It is written, “For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy.” (Leviticus 44:11).

d. Walk in the fear of God: “And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.” (1 Peter 1:17). God is our Father, who loved us to the end. As He is God, the Just Judge, we must fear Him and walk the days of our estrangement in holiness, leaving all that defiles us. The fear of the Lord preserves us from every sin.

i. Remember you will meet God, the Just Judge. Let this sentiment guide you to repent and keep you away from every evil that defiles you. Live in holiness and be comforted in every decision you make.





e. The greatness of this salvation: Verses 18–25: “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 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. Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever. “Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.” (1 Peter 1: 18–25).

a. What is St. Peter referring to in these verses?

i. By “aimless conduct” St. Peter refers to the old life in which people lived distant from God. Even true repentance did not qualify them to await the Lord Jesus Christ.

ii. By “received by tradition from your fathers” St. Peter refers to those things which they had learned from their fathers, the Jews.

iii. By “as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” St. Peter refers to the Jewish law that a lamb without blemish was to be offered. This is symbolic of our Lord Jesus Christ Who was sacrificed for us on the cross. He is the Holy God, the Word of God Incarnate, who resembled us in all things except for sin alone.

b. St. Peter makes clear the awesomeness of the salvation which the faithful receive in the Church. This salvation saved us from slavery to sin and the old life, in which we were distant from God. This we received, not by paying with anything of material worth like gold or silver, but by that which is priceless, the Blood of Christ which the sacrifices of the Old Testament symbolized. The precious Blood of Christ far supersedes

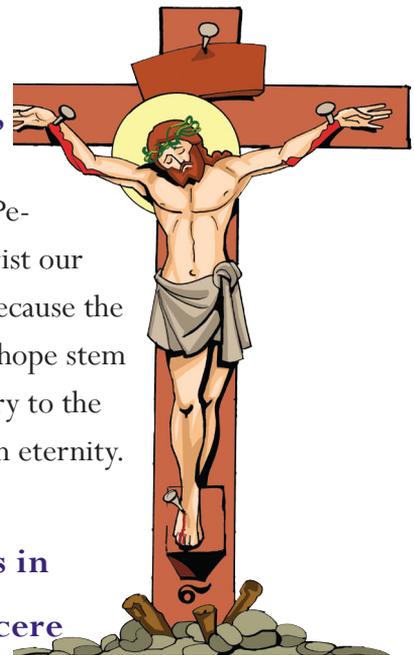


that of the Old Testament sacrifice. He was The Lamb without blemish, the Holy Redeemer Who purchased us with His Holy Blood on the cross

c. “He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:20). St. Peter tells us that Christ was “foreordained” to bring us this salvation. Our salvation was known to the eternal knowledge of God before He created the world. He knows that man will sin and needs redemption, and with His love He was ready for this.

d. The laws of the Old Testament symbolize and indicate this Salvation. It is declared in the fullness of time through the precious blood of Christ, Who saves all who believe in Him.

e. “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 1:20). St. Peter tells us to depend on Christ for our faith because Christ our Redeemer strengthens and preserves our faith in God. Because the salvation of Christ fulfilled the prophecies, our faith and hope stem from the power of His resurrection and Ascension in glory to the heavens that He may prepare a place for us; our hope is in eternity.



f. “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.” (1 Peter 1:22). Since we have such a great salvation, we must take heed to obey the commandments of Christ. His commandments are true.



This obedience is through the Holy Spirit Who purifies our hearts from all sin. Once we are cleansed from sin, then we will be able to love one another fervently from the heart.

g. “Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.” (1

Peter 1:23). The faithful must remember that he is born again through the mystery of baptism. Baptism renews us and cleanses us from the first birth which does not take away sin and leads to eternal condemnation. This second birth (Baptism) prepares us to receive salvation and is fulfilled in eternal bliss. The Holy Bible likens the first birth to a plant that will die because the body will deteriorate in the dirt, but the second birth is a spiritual birth which prepares us for the heavenly Kingdom. Through baptism we become children of God, we live through Him, in Him and with Him for “to live is Christ.” (Philippians 1:21).

h. Because “all flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away.” (1 Pe-

ter 1:24). The life of man on earth is like an herb, it lasts for a few months, then falls and dries up. This is also why man’s life, with all its material glories, will end in death. No matter how great the glory of life on earth, it, like a beautiful flower, will wither, fall to the ground, and die.

i. “But the word of the Lord endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.” (1 Peter 1:25). The gospel which we have received is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos, Who gives us the life which endures forever. Because Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, so is His Word, for He is The Word.

j. Look to the grace of knowing Christ and everything that you receive from Him in the Church. Pay attention to your prayers and repent your sins, that you may enjoy the blessings of salvation throughout your days on earth, until it is completed in heaven.



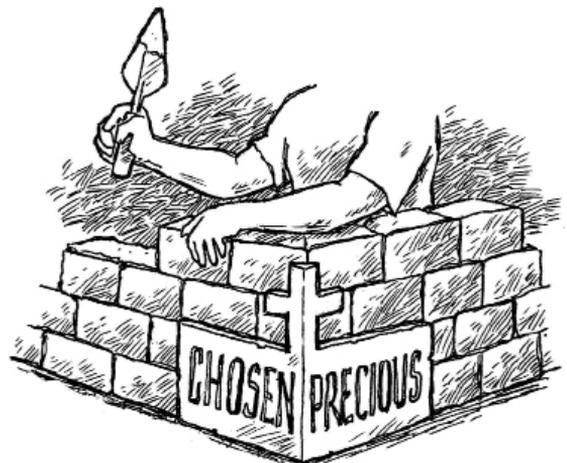
II. Chapter Two

a. *Renewing Ourselves in Him* Verses 1-8: “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,” and “A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense. “They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.” (1 Peter 2:1–8).

a. Reread this verse: “If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Coming to Him as to a living stone.” (1 Peter 2:4). What is it to taste the graciousness of the Lord? Those who have lived with Christ and have experienced this truth are witness that He is indeed sweet. Those who enjoy life with Him and refuse the pleasures of this earthly life experience those pleasures of the heavenly one.

b. When you come to Him you will discover that He is the chief cornerstone. He is not only good, but reliable as God the Powerful.

Christ aids us in all our tribulations despite coming to earth to be rejected and crucified. He is the ONE chosen by God, precious to the Father, Holy and Righteous. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not only Beloved; He is the Al-





mighty and sweet to live with. Christ is He Who can do all things. He is our Powerful God during times of tribulations and stress, the Chief Cornerstone, Who is not shaken, Whom believers can lean on and find safety.

c. “You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house.” (1 Peter 2:5). Stones alone are not useful but together they become a house where the Holy Spirit dwells. This Cornerstone, which is Christ is special. He attracts hardened stones and changes them into live ones that the house may be a live house.

i. Ask your servant: “what is the story behind the chief cornerstone?”

d. “The chief cornerstone” as discussed above is one that brings other stones together. He united the Old Testament with the New Testament and the Jews with the Gentiles. Therefore, David the Prophet said of Him “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.” (Psalm 118:22), also the Lord Jesus Christ said this of Himself, “Have you not read This scripture: “The stone which the builders have rejected has become the chief cornerstone.” (Mark 12:10). He is a living stone on which we can depend. Those who believe in Him will never be put to shame in this world or in eternal life.

b. Characteristics of The Believers

Verse 9: “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9).

a. St. Peter tells us that through believing in Our Lord Jesus Christ we are granted blessings that become essential characteristics of who we are. Those include being part of:

- i. The Chosen Generation
- ii. The Royal Priesthood
- iii. A Holy Nation





iv. His Own Special People

c. Through Salvation we become the People of God Verse 10: “Who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” (1 Peter 2:10).

a. Now after God has given us the honors and mercy that are explained in verse 9, St. Peter goes on to tell us the significance of these titles. Becoming the people of God means becoming pilgrims and sojourners on earth. We are not living in our homeland but are guests in a strange house (either in our bodies or in the world). In crucifying our whims and desires we establish the fact that we are pilgrims and sojourners on earth. This is what it means to be the “people of God.”

b. Those who crucify the flesh with its desires and passions obtain the victorious life of Christ. We use fasting and prayer to aid us in crucifying the flesh. In addition to fasting and prayer we must also disperse any thought sin. Never converse with the devil, nor contemplate sin or desire it in any form, as Eve did with Satan. This was the reason for her fall!

d. St. Peter’s Steps to a successful Way Verses 11–17: “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.” (1 Peter 2:11–17).

a. Saint Peter the Apostle mentioned some things we must follow in our way. Write them down.

b. St. Peter tells us about the steps to take to be successful in our spiritual life, namely he tells us to “abstain from fleshly lusts” and conduct ourselves honorably. What



does this mean?

c. “Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:12). Throughout the generations, Christianity has been wrongfully subject to suffering. If the Nile in Egypt was low, they blamed the Christians, whenever a plague or an earthquake occurred they would throw the Christians to the lions. They even accused Christians of performing magic. Despite this, they will glorify God in the day of visitation—the day in which the Lord will open their eyes to the truth. Through observing your good works, people will come to Christ. God, through their faith, will be glorified!

d. “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance” (1 Peter 2:13). Here our teacher St. Peter the Apostle refutes the zealous Jews who called for obedience to the rulers appointed by God, such as the old kings of Israel. They revolted against the Romans because the Roman ruler had come about in a human manner. Nevertheless, the Roman ruler’s authority is from God as God is the One Who permitted his rule, for this is the will of God.

e. “By doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” (1 Peter 2:15). This further emphasizes the effect our good works have on others. Christian behavior and morals put to shame the pagans who forsook their relatives infected with the plague, while the Christians served them. The pagans forsook the wounded during war, while the Christians took to serving them speedily.





f. “As free yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice” (1 Peter 2:16). Being free in God doesn’t mean rebellion against the rulers nor does it mean chaos and disobedience to the laws. True freedom is freedom from desires, true freedom is controlling the flesh, true freedom is internal freedom where the believer does not live as a slave to lusts, but lives as a slave to God, slavery to God emancipates us. The Lord Jesus Christ redeemed us and purchased us with His Precious Blood. Thus, we have become free, and, in our freedom, we continue with Him as slaves to God. We must be witnesses to this through our good works towards our Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to “honor all people” (1 Peter 2:17). Let no one think that honor belongs only to rulers and those in power, but all people— the poor, the simple; we must honor all for whom Christ died.

g. “Love the brotherhood” (1 Peter 2:17). Love is a Christian virtue there’s no Christianity without love.

h. “Fear God” (1 Peter 2:17). This is a holy fear, one that shows reverence towards God. As we spiritually grow this fear and reverence towards God will grow.

e. Submission Grows Faith Verse 18: “Servants be submissive to your masters with all fear not only to the good and gentle but also to the harsh.” (1 Peter 2:18).

a. Many servants believed in Christianity in ancient times. However, Christianity never called for rebellion against class systems. Servants must not think that their faith in Jesus Christ gives them the right to rebel against their masters. The apostles were called servants, yet they called on servants to obey their masters. Many masters believed in the Lord Jesus Christ because of the good behavior of their servants.

i. Our teacher St. Peter mentions some actions to take here, try to connect the action verb with the commandment.

f. A Calling to Endure Verses 19–21: “For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because



Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.” (1 Peter 2:19–21).

a. “For this is commendable if because of conscience toward God one endures grief suffering wrongfully” (1 Peter 2:20). Servants were beaten regularly under Roman rule. But if we’re beaten for doing something wrong, how shall we receive glory? Those who are beaten and suffer for doing good “because of conscience toward God”— meaning because one knows God and has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are commendable before God and acceptable to Him.

b. “For to this you were called” (1 Peter 2:21). As Christians, you were called to endure like the Lord Jesus Christ, this endurance occurs when you allow yourself to suffer, to be patient, and not to live for the world but for the Lord Jesus Christ. Keep Him always before your eyes as an example to follow.

g. Glory in Suffering Verses 21–25: “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; 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; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” (1 Peter 2:21–25).

a. In verses 19–22 there is a word that was repeated multiple times, discuss this with your servant.

b. If you suffer with Christ, you will also be glorified with Him. He who dies with Christ will not return to sin and it (sin) will no longer have dominion over his flesh. If we truly believe that all things work together for good, we will come to understand this. If God allows us to suffer, it is because He is perfecting us.

c. The holy Apostle is telling us Christians that the Holy, Pure, Righteous Christ did not deserve any of the pains and passions, He suffered to heal us. So how can we refuse tribulations if we understand that by suffering, we will have fellowship with the passions of Christ and we will have glorified Him?

d. There are verses in the holy Bible that have the same message as the verses found



in 1 Peter 2:11–23:

i. “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22).

ii. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16).

iii. “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.” (Romans 13:1).

iv. “Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.” (Psalm 34:14)

v. “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36).

vi. “Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart as to Christ.” (Ephesians 6:5).

vii. “And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also glorified together.” (Romans 8:17).

viii. “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 it’s shears is silent, So He opened not His mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7).



III. Chapter Three

a. Commandments to wives Verses 1–6: “Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— 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. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.” (1 Peter 3:1–6).



a. Christianity came calling for love, and some women thought that this meant they can be freed from their husbands. Take note: Roman law gave men authority over their wives to use them as slaves. St. Peter here tells us that Christianity teaches the wife to obey her husband. Obedience compels the husband to love his wife, and a husband’s love compels his wife to obedience. Through this, peace will be established between husband and wife.

b. In ancient times, if a woman came to believe while her husband remained a pagan, St. Peter advised that through the practice of Christian morals, the husband will be drawn onto Christianity. We’re not just called to preach with words, but we must preach through our behavior and good deeds.

c. Dressing up, makeup, and jewelry are certainly not forbidden. What is forbidden is to do those things to be the center of attention or when those things become central in our lives. Each one of us must obey God, not man. We must find favor with God not men. Therefore, the Apostle calls us unto adorning our inner self and our hearts. When we focus on our internal holiness, we acquire a spirit of meekness and humility.



Those who conduct their lives in such a way live in peace and in their meekness, patiently endure all tribulations.

d. St. Peter gives us the example of Sarah. He reminds us of her good qualities—she was submissive to God hoping to please Him. She was submissive to her husband, calling him Lord. Likewise, wives must be submissive to their own husbands. In following Sarah’s example wives become daughters of the Lord and desire to do every good work. “If you do good and are not afraid with any terror” you will know that we are under His wing and will not be afraid of any human being not even the devil. This is because we are empowered by the love of Christ and the brethren.

e. St. Clement of Rome says, “**let us teach our women what is righteous** that they may become pure persons then we will honor them when they are truly humble.”

b. Commandment for husbands Verse 7: “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7).

a. After our teacher the Apostle Peter gave women advice, **he began to give advice to husbands to live with their wives with understanding;** in righteous behavior which is built on righteous understanding.

b. St. Peter likens **women to the weaker vessel** that their husbands may have compassion on them. They are vessels because they carry children.

c. St. Peter asks men to **honor their wives** as they will inherit the Kingdom of heaven along with them.

d. Ask yourself, what does St. Peter mean when he says “**their prayers may not be hindered.**” (1 Peter 3:7). Any small sin or misunderstanding displays lack of love and harshness in dealing with one another. This will hinder us from our prayers





i. When is this excerpt read in the church? Choose 1:

- During the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.
- When we remember female martyrs.
- When we remember virgin Saints



ii. Match the proper verse from 1 Peter with the following quotes from the Fathers:

“If you wish to be beautiful put on honesty, compassion, be cloaked with purity empty yourself of pride. All of these are more precious than gold and with these you’ll become beautiful to look upon.” St. John Chrysostom



c. St. Peter’s concluding remarks verses 8–17: “Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tender-hearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. For “He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.” But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.” (1Peter 3:8–17).

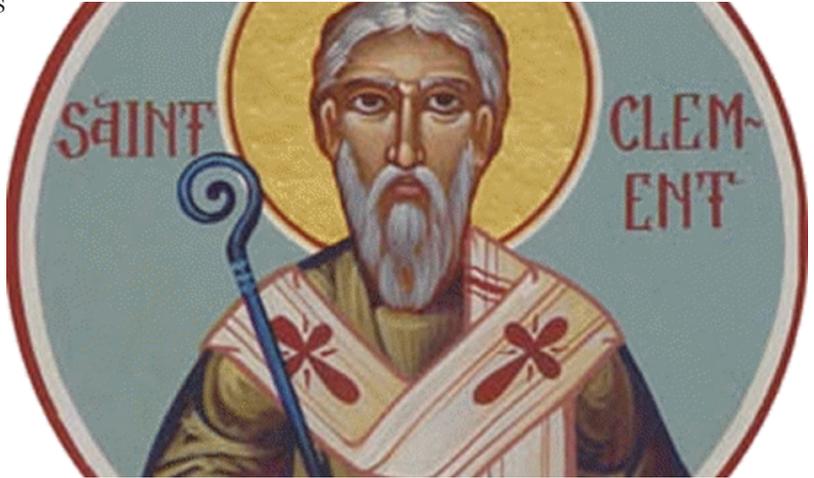
a. When St. Peter tell us “**Finally, all of you be of one mind.**” (1 Peter 3:8).



the Apostle's goal is not only for the spouses to be united in opinion, but for the whole Church. As we all walk in the way of the Lord, Satan and those who follow him provoke, curse, and plot against us. When we are of one mind, their insults will not harm us, nor will they withhold blessings from us.

b. **'Blessed'** is a word we use to describe those who are righteous, as the Holy Bible says, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse."

(Romans 12:14). When we bless the Lord, we praise Him and thank Him. When



God blesses someone, He does not do so through words, but by granting him spiritual and material goodness.

c. When St. Peter refers to **"He who loves life"** (1 Peter 3:10) he means he who loves eternal life, the one who strives & does not lose heart until he takes hold of it.

d. St. Peter tells us that those who do so **"see good days"** (1 Peter 3:10) here on earth. In order to see those good days, our teacher St. Peter says, "let him restrain his tongue from speaking evil." (1 Peter 3:10). This means no swearing, lying, slander, gossip, or deceit. We must give our back to evil.

e. Avoiding sin alone however is passive and not enough. We must actively **"do good"** & **"seek peace"** (1 Peter 3:11) —that is, strive to live in peace with people. Remember that although no person can harm us, man harms himself by doing evil. God allows some sufferings to purify us, these trials and tribulations are for our benefit and blessing.

f. St. Peter then tells us to **"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts"** (1 Peter 3:15). How do we do this? When His commandments and commands become supreme, our hearts become holy with His fear and reverence.



g. Our teacher St. Peter emphasizes that the act of sanctifying the Lord God should be **“In your hearts”** (1 Peter 3:15). It is important that the respect and fear we feel for God be from within the heart, and not outward or superficial. This is accomplished by:

- i. Trusting in His promises**
- ii. Believing in His wisdom**
- iii. Not objecting to His judgments**
- iv. Submitting to Him**
- v. Believing in His strength and justice in His chastening**
- vi. Enduring pain with patience**
- vii. Glorifying Him amid trials**
- viii. Carrying out His commandments.**

h. Whoever walks in this way is **holy to the Lord in his heart.**

i. St. Peter then calls us to **“Be ready”** (1 Peter 3:16) and sanctify the Lord in our hearts. If your life is not holy, then preaching will do nothing. Through a holy life you obtain the peace that appears during tribulation. We must “be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you.” (1 Peter 3:16). When we are asked about our faith in the Lord Christ, we must defend He Who was crucified for us and redeemed us with His Precious Blood. Our hope is in Him; thus, we must reply “with meekness and fear.” (1 Peter 3:16).

d. We Do These Things to Be Like Christ Verse 18–22: “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for 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, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 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, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.” (1 Peter 3:18–22).

a. If God’s children bear trials for the sake of doing good and having peace with everyone, they obtain Christ. This is because we become like Him who suffered even though



he was innocent so He may save us from eternal condemnation and death. (Numbers 18:22).

b. Christ died in the flesh on the Cross and arose on third day as He said so that He may give life to all who believe in Him. This means that enduring physical and emotional pain and tribulation becomes a means of life and spiritual growth. Christ's suffering is a calling to endure as Christ endured. Being like Christ in this manner brings earthly and eternal blessings. Thus, pain and suffering bring us closer to God, as the Lord Christ died on the cross.

e. Verses 18–22 and the Doctrine:

a. When the Lord Christ died on the cross, His soul was separated from His body, but His divinity remained united with both. When Christ rose on the third day, His divinity united with the human soul and went to Hades to proclaim to the believers of the Old Testament that redemption was complete and to bring them with Him to Paradise.

b. After Christ rose from the dead, He appeared to many, ascended to the heavens, and sat at the right hand of God. He returned to the glory and power which He has had for eternity and had temporarily relinquished by appearing in the body and enduring sufferings to redeem us. He is in His heavenly glory, praised and served by all the angels of their different ranks.

c. Baptism is crucial for salvation: the ark is a symbol of baptism that saves us spiritually, as Noah and his sons were saved while they are inside the ark. Likewise, we are all saved from eternal death when we die of our sins by immersion in the water of baptism. Baptism is death and resurrection with Christ, immersion in water is like a tomb for us, and rising out of the water is resurrection.

i. How does the text (1 Peter 18:3–22) confirm these doctrinal facts of faith?

1. For our salvation He was incarnate from the Holy Spirit, and from the Virgin Mary.
2. He became man and was crucified for us during the reign of Pontius Pilate.
3. He rose from the dead on the third day, as in Scriptures. He ascended to the heavens, and sat at the right hand of His Father, and comes in His glory, to judge the living



and the dead, whose Kingdom has no end... We confess one baptism for the remission of sins.

d. Which church sacraments were mentioned in this text?





IV. Chapter Four

A. Sufferings, denying desires and lusts Verse 1–4: “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.” (1 Peter 4:1–4).



a. Look at verse one, “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,” (1 Peter 4:1). Our teacher, St. Peter the Apostle, calls us to prepare ourselves to endure sufferings for the sake of Christ, in our strife and life in general. This has two meanings. The first is regarding pain unto death. To elaborate, if Christ Himself suffered, why should I not bear any pain that He would allow?!

b. The second meaning is crucifying the passions so we would be as dead, not seeking the pleasures of this world. When St. Peter tells us that “He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.” (1 Peter 4:1). He refers to he who has confirmed in his heart that he died with Christ. This means crucifying his passions, lusts, and asking for help from the Holy Spirit to carry out the sentence of death every day and every hour. When we do this, we find that although this body is alive, its lusts have no authority over us. “That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.” (1 Peter 4:2). “For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles” (1 Peter 4:3).

B. Earthly Sufferings Verses 5–10: “They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason the gospel was preached also



to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4:5–11).

c. The Apostle comforts sufferers with the news that God will punish the blasphemers and sinners, for the end of all things is at hand. God judges the living and the dead and this is the outcome for the evils of sinners and the sufferings of the righteous.

d. “For this reason, the gospel was preached also to those who are dead.” (1 Peter 4:6)— dead in sin. Those who have heard the Gospel and believe are those who are alive. Believers, are judged by evildoers, who blasphemed God—this what is meant by “that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” (1 Peter 4:6).

e. St. Peter tells us then to go beyond passive endurance, but to do good actively “as each one has received a gift” (1 Peter 4:10). There is no one who has no talent. Each person has a job and God gives him the talent (the weight) to complete His work. The talents may be:

- i. Money
- ii. Health
- iii. Science
- iv. Powerful Positions



- v. Preaching
- vi. Management
- vii. Service
- viii. Blessing in the eyes of others

f. God gives and distributes talents according to our salvation, and the edification of the church as the body of Christ. It does not mean that one is less than another or that God does not love him. Rather, what he receives is exactly what he needs to redeem himself successfully perform his role for which he was created.

g. Talents are a blessing bestowed upon the children of God. We do not choose our talents but are granted them according to His wisdom and according to each of our needs. Thus, it is said, “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.” (Ephesians 4:7).

h. God gives us talents for the glory of His name, and not to be proud of them. We were originally created for the glory of His Holy Name and should think of every work we do for the glory of God’s name.

i. How do we Glorify Him in our works? By portraying the image of Christ in us by using our talents faithfully and being a light to the world. This shows people God and glorifies Him. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16).

j. Pain & Glory Verse 12–19: “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer,



or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator." (1 Peter 4:12–19).

a. The Lord has already informed us that the world will hate us, and we will have trouble in the world. As they did to the Lord of glory, so they will do to His children. Do not be alarmed but remember His promises to us:

- i. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33).
- ii. "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen." (Matthew 28:20).

k. God takes advantage of these pains for our purification.

Gold and silver are purified in a crucible with fire to separate base metals from the precious metal to increase their luster. Similarly, these pains separate the bad base instincts from the good, allowing us to be glorified in Him.



l. When St. Peter says,

"beloved, do not think it

strange" (1 Peter 4:12) he means that we should not be surprised by the fact that Satan is in constant conflict with the Church. He is against the children of God, but thanks to God who makes all things work together for our good, these afflictions that the enemy of good raises against us work for our salvation.

m. No one rejoices in pain. But when the Apostle commands us to rejoice, he does so in confidence that pain is fellowship with Christ, Who suffered for



us, died, rose and was glorified. Therefore, if we suffer, we become partakers of Christ in the suffering and in the end, we will be glorified with Him. We rejoice in faith that we have a share in glory. We also rejoice because God gives to the sufferer and that God is making a way to heaven through pain. Through tribulations we are perfected. Whoever has this faith and confidence in God's love will have constant joy on the day of meeting Christ in His second coming.

n. St. Peter tells us that “if you are reproached for the name of Christ” (1 Peter 4:14) and not for a sin you have committed, then you are blessed. The secret of the beatification is that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of glory, dwells in the sufferer to support him in his suffering, comforting, and glorifying him!

o. It is important to highlight the distinction between suffering while innocent and suffering for a bad act that one has com-



mitted. A person is ashamed when he is punished because of a crime of or an act of evil that he has committed. But if he endures suffering as a “Christian”, for the sake of the Lord Christ, then he is not ashamed, but rather glorifies God, as He has counted him worthy despite the fact that no one is worthy of this honor.



p. St. Peter tells us in verse seventeen “for the time has come

for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17). This is considered a prophecy about the destruction of the Jewish temple by the Romans. The Apostle felt, in the spirit of the prophecy, that the Divine command for the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple of the Jews occurred because they rejected Christ, crucified Him, and rejected the call of His disciples.

q. So why do you fear suffering? The Lord assured us: “A single hair of our heads does not fall without the permission of our heavenly Father.” (Luke 18:21). He is the “Beneficent One” as the Church calls Him in her prayers. Let us then entrust Him with our lives; He only allows for tribulations as He sees fit for our good. As the clay in the hand of the potter goes into the oven (the oven of tribulation), let us go into the oven. It is enough for us to look upon the face of the Great Potter, Who never leaves us. And knows the temperature and time required to change us to glory.



V. Chapter Five

a. St. Peter's Advice Verse 1–4: “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” (1 Peter 5:1–4).

b. Here, our teacher St. Peter gives advice to elders. Elders refers to “bishops” or “priests” according to Greek term “Presbyters” (Acts 17:20, 28). Our teacher St. Peter the Apostle speaks as “a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ.” Note the humility of his speech, he speaks as their fellow, not their master, as he suffers with them and understands what they’re going through.

c. The terms “overseer” here means the bishops because they oversee. The title bishop translates to mean overseer.

d. Elders are asked to heed this advice “not by compulsion but willingly.” (1 Peter 5:2). St. Peter warns not to count their service as a heavy burden to which they are bound, but with joy, not for dishonorable gain, but with contentment. It is important that they remember that they serve their heavenly Father.

e. St. Peter continues his headings, referring to

them as Shepherds of Christ's flock. He draws their attention to the fact that their people are God's and warns to avoid dishonest profit and love of praise, fame, and self. In this, St. Peter points out responsibilities the title “elder” including:





i. Taking care of God's children as they are stewards of the service. Elders must be faithful before Him in their care for His people.

ii. Serving by choice. Shepherds are asked to be vigilant, watch over, and take care of the people. This must not be viewed as a burden they are forced to carry. But rather, elders strive to take care of everyone freely and with love.

iii. Offering Selfless Service. Elders must not have material ambitions through the service, they must serve for the sake of God with love and enthusiasm.

iv. Being Servants to all. Shepherds must not take advantage of their position to dominate the affairs of the church, or use them according to their own desires, but rather they must wisely listen to the opinions of those who help them and fulfill the needs of their people.

v. Acting as a role model so that servants and the people can imitate them.

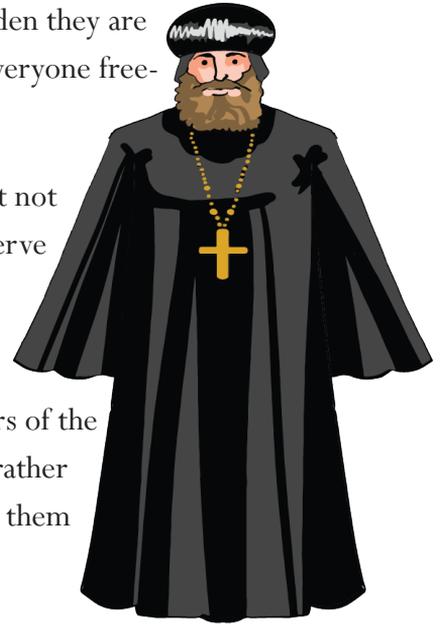
1. Read the text: What is the behavior required of the shepherd? What are his characteristics?

2. Read the text: How is a good shepherd rewarded?

f. Our teacher encourages & exhorts the shepherds to be faithful in

their service, for which they will be rewarded in eternity when the Lord Christ, the Chief Shepherd, the Just Judge, the Prince of Life, appears to reward each one according to his works. Then, He will bestow upon them eternal crowns instead of earthly ones.

i. What is the punishment for not carrying out the commandment? What is the reward for carrying out the commandments? (Cite the reference)





ii. 1 Peter 5:5-9 The Commandment for Young People: Likewise you younger people, _____. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and _____, for “God resists the _____, But gives grace to the _____.”⁶ Therefore _____ of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting _____ Him, for He _____ for you. Be _____, be vigilant; because your adversary _____ walks about like a _____, seeking whom he may devour. _____ him, steadfast _____, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

1. How are the faithful rewarded? How about the unfaithful?

g. Commandments for young people Verses 5-11: “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. 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. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 5:5-11).

h. St. Peter here tells us to ensure we carry about habits to help us in our way. This includes:

i. Humility & Submission: He calls us to: love, cooperate and humbly submit to one another. God bestows grace to the humble, and He rejects and resists the arrogant. To act in humility is to accept the chastisement of the Lord, and what is going on in your life without complaining. Whoever believes he deserves better in his life is proud. However, he

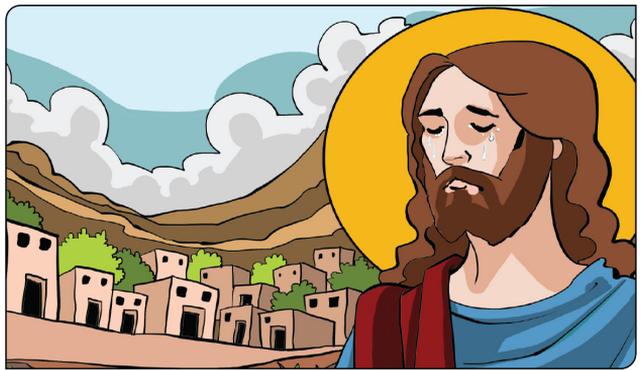


who humbles himself, understanding that he does not deserve anything, God will raise up. Confidence in God's love and power allows us to put all our problems and needs before Him.

j. Dependence on God: Trust that God suffices all our needs and solves our problems. Those who worry in every tribulation grieve God and insult Him. They are the same individuals who doubt His sincerity and love. Whoever casts his anxiety on God will live in peace, no matter what his afflictions are because he trusts in the love of his God.

k. Spiritual Awareness: St. Peter

calls us to pay attention and be in constant spiritual vigilance. The devil takes advantage of any opportunity to make us fall into sin. St. Peter likens him to a lion because of his ferocity. However, he is unable to offend us and has no authority over us unless we surrender to him of our own volition. He deceives, but he does not force anyone, as he has no authority over us, so he roars.



l. How to Handle Spiritual Struggle: The Holy Bible mentions events that confirm that Satan has no power over us at all, (Matthew 8:28–43, Job 1:12). God, Who calls us to His eternal glory would never present His calling without the possibility of advancement in it. He will “perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” (1 Peter 5:10). We must be faithful in exercising our senses, in the spiritual struggle, and in holding on to our faith, no matter how weak we are or the number of our sins. Satan fights all people in the world, but the believers are distinguished by the grace of God that supports them.

m. Our teacher St. Peter the Apostle encourages fulfilling the commandments by reminding us of the heavenly glories which God, Who has power and dominion over all creatures forever has prepared for us.



n. The Conclusion of the Epistle verses 12–14: “ By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.” (1 Peter 5:12–14).

a. St. Peter references Silvanus who is the same as Silas (Acts 15;22). He accompanied St. Paul in his second missionary journey, wrote 1st and 2nd Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 2:1) and served with St. Timothy in Ephesus (2 Corinthians 1:19). He also accompanied St. Mark in Egypt and wrote this Epistle for St. Peter as he was proficient in Greek. St. Peter describes him as a faithful servant for his commitment and endurance of the responsibility of the service.





The Divinity of Christ in the Liturgy

Everything St. Peter advises in his Epistle and our entire faith rests on the fact that Christ was fully human and fully God. The Divinity of Christ allowed Him to resurrect for our salvation and through this salvation we receive His graces and blessings, such as peace. This belief is the heart of our faith, and that is evidenced by how central this is within our doctrine and prayers. Particularly, the Liturgy.

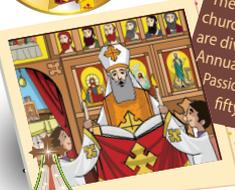
1. What are the Liturgies?

a. We can find liturgies mentioned throughout the Holy Bible (Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:24–25, Matthew 28:19, Matthew 6:9–13, Matthew 19:6–13, 1 Corinthians 11:43, Hebrews 6:2–3). Using these parts of the scripture, our Fathers the Apostles, as well as our Church Fathers formulated the holy prayers used in Church during the 7 Holy Sacraments. We now have many holy prayers, rich with spiritual meaning and true doctrine.

b. We have multiple liturgical books including

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| i. The Kholagy | ii. The Psalmody |
| iii. The Agpeya | iv. The Pascha Book |
| v. The Book of the Liturgy of the Water | vi. The Book of the Kneeling Prayers |
| vii. The Book of Funeral Prayers | viii. The Book of Baptism |
| ix. The Book of Holy Matrimony | x. The Katamaris |
| xi. The Antiphonary (Difnar) | |



Katamaros

The Daily Readings in the church services. The books are divided among 4 parts: Annual – Holy Great Lent – Passion Week – and Sacred fifty days after Easter.

The Liturgy Book



This book contains the prayers of the Divine Liturgies of Saints Basil, Gregory, and Cyril. Also the prayers of Rising Incense of Matin and Vesper.



Agpeya

This Book is also called, the Book of Hours. It has 7 prayers; 1st Hour, 3rd Hour, 6th Hour, 9th Hour, 11th Hour, 12th Hour, Veil, and Midnight



The Pascha Book

This Book has all the readings and prayers of the Holy Passion Week



The Psalmody

This Book has all praises. Matins, Vesper and Midnight. The Annual Psalmody: Has praises for all year round. The Kiahk Psalmody: Has praises for the Month of Kiahk only.

Antiphony

This Book also called the "Difnar" has poem-like text about the saints of the day. It is very similar to the Synaxarion but is recited in a unique tune.





c. These are a treasure handed down from our saintly Fathers in our Holy Coptic Orthodox Church. Within these books is the understanding and spirituality of the Fathers, their prayer, and spiritual life.

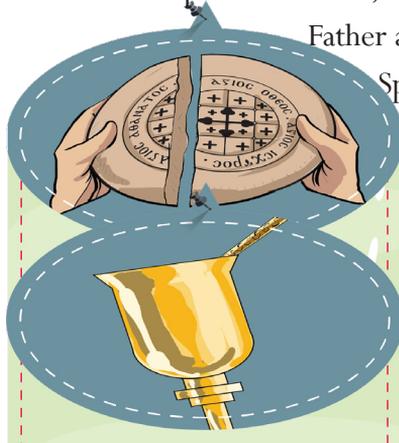
d. How were these written? These books were mainly formulated from the Holy Bible, Biblical explanations, verses from the Psalms, and praises. The Kholagy cites the Biblical verses used. Our Fathers the Apostles, followed by our Church Fathers, were extremely careful to instill true doctrine in formulating the prayers used during the liturgies. Thus, doctrine became prayer, not just a philosophy. When we pray, we declare our understanding of the true doctrine.

2. The Divinity of our Lord Christ in the Divine Liturgy:

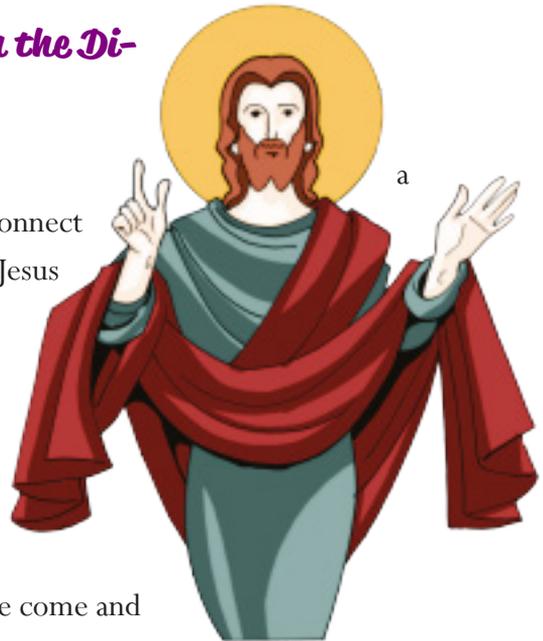
a. The liturgies declare true doctrine in simplified manner. Through them we believe, connect with, and understand the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

i. Using the following material, write down your understanding of the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1. “We worship You O Christ, with Your Good Father and the Holy Spirit for you have come and saved us”



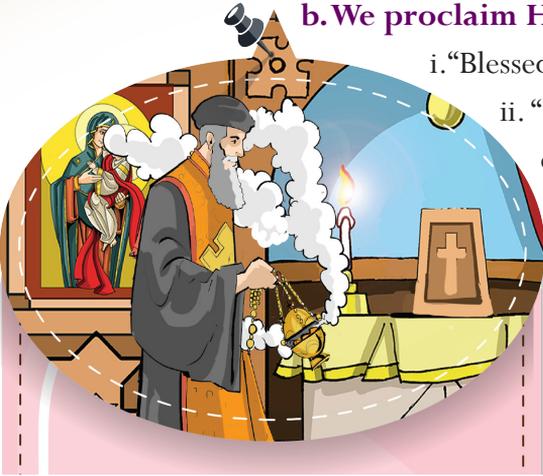
2. “Through the grace love and compassion for mankind of Your Only Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ word, to whom is do all glory honor and dominion and worship with You and the Holy Spirit who is of 1 essence with you now and forever on to the age of all ages Amen”



a



b. We proclaim His divinity in the 5 Consecrations:



- i. "Blessed is God the Father the Almighty Amen"
- ii. "Blessed is His only begotten son Jesus Christ our Lord Amen"
- iii. "Blessed is the Holy Spirit the Comforter Amen"
- iv. "Glory and honor, honor and glory to the Holy Trinity the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit"



c. Expressions confirming our faith that

Jesus Christ is God:

i. During the raising of incense in vespers, the priest prays saying, "O Christ our God, the great, awesome, and true, the Only Begotten Son and Logos of God the Father . . . we ask you our Master, receive our prayers to Yourself."



ii. During the incense circuit our father the priest says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever, One Hypostasis we worship Him and glorify Him."

iii. After the incense circuit the priest returns to the sanctuary and addresses the Lord Jesus Christ saying, "O Lord Who accepted the confession of the thief while on the Holy Cross accept the confessions of your people, forgive their sins for the sake of Your Holy Name which called upon us". We also refer to Christ as, "Our Master Lord Jesus Christ, our God" at the beginning of the Litany of the Gospel and repeat multi-



ple times during many of our prayers.

iv. “Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit now and forever and onto the age of all ages Amen.” This is a constant refrain sung during liturgy and Agpeya prayers, by which we declare that the glory of the Son is the same as that of the Father and the Holy Spirit.



v. During all our liturgies we recite the Creed in which we declare, “And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all Ages. Light of Light, True God of True God, Begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father, through Whom all things were made.

vi. During the Prayer of Reconciliation of the Basilian liturgy, we declare that the incarnation of Christ is the manifestation of “Your Only Begotten Son our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ” this title is repeated in all our prayers.

vii. During The Fraction we say, “Thus now and at all times your Holy Name is exalted and glorified in all things precious and blessed.” This portion is addressed to the Father during the Basilian & Cyrillian liturgies and addressed to the Son in the Gregorian liturgy, proving the equality of the Father and the Son. The Basilian and Cyrillian liturgies are concluded by the expression, “with Jesus Christ your Only Begotten Son and the Holy Spirit”. The Gregorian liturgy is concluded, “with your Good Father and the Holy Spirit.”

viii. The entire Gregorian liturgy addresses God the Son. It is replete with expressions declaring the divinity of the Son of God. Just praying to Him declares our faith in the fact that He is God.

ix. The priest prays during the confession saying about His Holy Body, “He made it one with his Divinity without mingling, without confusion and without alteration. His Divinity



parted not from his humanity for a single moment nor a twinkling of an eye”

x. One of the most important expressions in the Gregorian liturgy is: “He who exists and was existent, the ever eternal, the immortal, the heavenly and the seated, the creator and the partner with the Father” “the unlimited, as you are God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God...”

xi. All the prayers throughout the journey of the entire liturgy confirm that Jesus Christ is The Creator, He Who gives the commandments, and the Savior. And that by His divinity He fills the entire universe. Thus, we address Him saying, “The One, Only, true, God, the Lover of Mankind, ineffable, invisible, infinite, without beginning, everlasting, timeless, immeasurable, incomprehensible, unchangeable, Creator of all, Savior of everyone...” “You are He Who exists at all times. You came to us upon the earth, You came to the womb of the Virgin.

xii. When we discuss the creation, we pray with our father the priest saying, “You created me as a human being as You are the Lover of Mankind. You created me before my existence, you placed the heavens as a roof over my head. You are the one who made me...”

xiii. We address the Son as God saying, “for You are the merciful God... return us o God, the God of our salvation. He who does more than we ask or think. O God Who gave Himself up for our salvation. ... O God the Son, the Only Begotten, Who is in the bosom of the Father, O Lord, bless us.”

xiv. Through these and other texts it is evident that we believe and confess that Jesus Christ is our Good God, the Creator, the Almighty, the Redeemer and Savior Who we worship and to whom we bow down in prostration, Whose Second Coming we await, and Who we love to serve.



A Balanced Man

Balanced in life through discernment:

a. In our daily lives we are exposed to many different events. We must learn how to deal with each one of them. The virtue that helps us deal with all things is discernment.

1. What are some of the situations that our youth are exposed to? Do Christian youth handle these situations the same as non-Christian youth?

2. The virtue of discernment is that by which all the other virtues are measured.

3. What is discernment?

ii. Discernment is choosing our words properly

iii. Discernment is patience and scrutiny, studying every situation carefully, looking at the big picture, choosing the right time to speak and speaking properly, it is in care and love, edifying the individual and the community.

iv. For “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Corinthians 6:12).

Discernment:
Seeking God's
guidance
in our lives



Saint Anba Pachomius the Archimandrite

As we spoke of Discernment as it is a grace from God that aids us in living a peaceful life. When we allow Him to guide us in the Spirit, we make good choices and “see good days.” (1 Peter 3:10). This is Discernment; here we will discuss St. Anba Pachomius who was endowed with this very grace!

1. St. Anba Pachomius’s Life:

a. St. Anba Pachomius is an influential figure in the history of our great Coptic Orthodox Church. The great saint acquired balance in all virtues of his life.

b. While Saint Anthony the Great was the father of monks and the first leader of the monastic movement in the world and served as a mentor to many leaders of the monastic movement as well as those who lived in separate caves around him in Egypt and abroad. Saint Pachomius is considered the father of the cenobitic monasticism (Koinonia), which is to say the monastic life in a community. He is the first father to build a monastery with a monastic group that lives the life of communion, worship, and work.

c. He was born in Upper Egypt to pagan parents around 292 A.D. and from childhood he was a lover of chastity and purity. Dissatisfied with pagan worship, St. Anba Pachomius refused to participate in their feasts.

d. One time his parents took him to offer a sacrifice to the demons in the river, when the priest of the idol saw him, he shouted: “remove the enemy of the gods from here that their wrath may not come upon us.” This troubled his parents greatly.

e. Discussion question: Was it clear in the upbringing of Anba Pachomius that he possessed the virtue of discretion and the distinction between what is beneficial for him and what is harmful?

f. When he was young, he would bring food to the shepherds and spend the night with them. One of them had two beautiful daughters. When one of the girls asked him to lie with her, he answered: “Do not make me commit this act of defilement!” And he ran away to his home.





2. How he Accepted Christianity:

a. St. Anba Pachomius enlisted in the army and set out with his colleagues to quell a revolt against the emperor. On the way, they rested in the city of Latopolis (Esna). Everyone was exhausted and the people of the city came offering food and drink joyously and generously. When St. Anba Pachomius asked why they were so generous, they told him that they were following the commandments of their God, the God of heaven and earth. They were commanded by God to love everyone, and so they obeyed.

b. The next morning, St. Pachomius decided to walk the streets of the city to understand the strange behavior of its people. He stood in front of the court and upon entering he saw the judge standing in confusion between two men. The first insisted that the treasure he found on the land was not his property because he bought the land without knowledge of the treasure. The second insisted that the treasure was no longer his, as he has sold the land with everything in it.

c. St. Pachomius was astonished, he was accustomed to people complaining and defending their rights. But in this Christian city “Esna”, everyone insisted on giving to others, not taking from them. What are these people?! Are they celestial humans? Or maybe they are earthly angels?! Pachomius rejoiced and promised to live the rest of his life like this, uniting his heart with God, the Lover of Mankind.



3. With St. Palamon:

a. The whole village loved St. Pachomius, but his heart was burning towards devotion and worship. The heart that longs for monasticism yearns to leave everyone to stick to the One, the Lord Jesus. So, when he heard about a saint monk who lived in the wilderness next to the village named “Palamon” he asked him to accept him as his disciple.

b. This saint showed him the difficulty of monastic life and asked him to return to the village and test himself by performing certain exercises. These challenges did not prevail against the steadfastness



of St. Pachomius’ heart toward monasticism, especially since St. Pachomius was endowed with obedience, severe asceticism, and love of worship.

4. The Establishment of Monastic Community:

a. St. Pachomius rejoiced at the life of seclusion and in God’s work in him through his spiritual father Anba Palamon. Yet his heart yearned for those who loved monasticism but were unable to practice this austere life of seclusion. He often prayed about this.

b. One day, as he was collecting firewood, an angel appeared to him asking him to establish a monastery there. He gave him a tablet with the basic structure of the system of a monastic company, which would facilitate monastic life.

c. He informed Anba Palamon of what had happened. The father was very happy and blessed the project. Despite his old age, he did not object to the establishment of a new order for monasticism and went with him to Tabansi to help him establish the monastery, then left to his cave.

d. They met every year, sometimes in the monastery and at other times in the cave, but Anba Palamon did not live long after that.

e. St. Pachomius founded his first monastery around the year 318 A.D., in Tabansi near Bago or Babu. God gave him grace before the eyes of many and allowed him to establish about ten monasteries in the region. The number of monks in this first monastery alone



was about 1,500.

f. His older brother John joined him in the monastic community and worked with him eagerly to establish this system.

g. His sister also came to him. He encouraged her to take part in this communal monastic life and established a monastery for her in the opposite direction of the Nile, which included about 300 nuns under her leadership.

5. Fundamental Elements of this System:

a. Even the leaders of seclusion were impressed by this system. St. Anthony praised St. Pachomius for his work and considered his success a gift from God.

b. God preserved the biography of St. Pachomius and the system of monastic community, which has reached us in more than one language and dialect such as Coptic, Baheri, Sa'idi, and Greek.

c. His system was established as a popular movement, but St. Pachomius refused to obtain a priestly degree. When he found out that Pope

Athanasius would ordain him a priest during his visit he fled, and the Pope had to reassure him that he would not extend his hand to ordain him, but to seek his blessing.

d. Indeed, when the Pope returned from Aswan, the saint greeted him with great joy. He was a great example of a monk, not seeking any priestly degrees or glories.

e. The Pachomian system is suitable for many. As far as fasting is concerned, the monks eat twice a day.

i. They practice collective, repeated prayers.

ii. They perform work that suits their talents, or abilities, such as farming, carpentry, weaving, cooking, building, transcribing...

iii. Each group has a leader to manage their work and spiritual life. Work became





an essential element in the monastic life. Many monasteries were opened for groups other than Egyptians who followed this method, such as the Greeks and Romans. Each group of them had a leader managing their worship and work lives.

iv. St. Pachomius also allowed many who were lovers of seclusion to join the communities and he often met with them.

6. Qualities of St. Pachomius:

a. St. Pachomius was and is known for his strong leadership qualities.

b. He carefully overlooked the affairs of thousands who gathered unto monasticism in a loving and firm manner. He was very concerned for the spiritual growth and salvation of every soul.

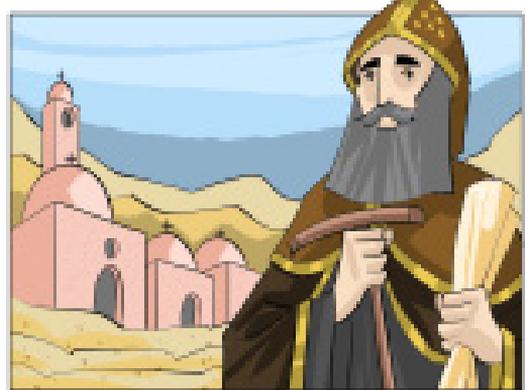
c. The saint was known for his meekness and humility. When some brothers asked him what his favorite sight was, he replied that he admired the sight of a meek and gentle brother in whom Christ dwells.

d. One time Satan appeared to him in the form of Christ, saying: “Rejoice, Pachomius, I have come to visit you.” In humility, he announced that he wished to see the Lord Christ in eternal life, and not with the physical eye; immediately Satan vanished in smoke.

e. Despite his outstanding kindness, love for his children, and long-suffering with them, he was also resolute.

f. One day, when St. Anba Pachomius went to visit one of the monasteries, he asked the housekeeper to prepare cooked food for the brothers there. However, the brother did not do that.

When the saint returned to the monastery, one of the brothers complained to him that the housekeeper had not served them cooked food for a long time. The saint replied that he would take care of them himself. He summoned the cook and asked him why he had not prepared the cooked food. He replied that he cooked the food in the beginning, but everyone





refrained from eating, so he stopped cooking and occupied his time by making baskets. The saint then asked him to bring all the baskets he made and in front of all the others, he ordered the baskets to be burned. St. Anba Pachomius explained to them the necessity of obedience and taught that it was better for the monastery to lose the food that the monks wouldn't eat than for the monastery to lose a brother who stumbled due to being deprived of cooked food.



7. Sayings of St. Pachomius:

Read the sayings of Anba Pachomius, then divide them into three groups: My relationship with my God, My relationship with others, my relationship with myself

- a. "Now, my children, I want to give you some advice so that you all may keep it, for salvation:"
 - i. "Never allow your heart to stop remembering God, not even for a little while, if you do the enemies who seek to hunt you will overcome you."
 - ii. "Do not postpone repentance, lest the messengers surprise you and take you while unprepared; you will be in great distress."
 - iii. "Obey your father, love learning, and love those who admonish you in the fear of the Lord. Be obedient as Isaac was obedient to his father; as the sheep led to the slaughter."
 - iv. "Be very careful to keep your body pure. Keep the integrity of your heart with all diligence. If you're able to do this, you will see your God."
 - v. "Fight to death all evil thoughts, that the Lord Jesus Christ may grant you the promises that He has given to the saints."
 - vi. "Strengthen your heart as a lion, crying out with St. Paul 'Who shall separate me from the love of Christ.'"
 - vii. "Do not allow thoughts of self-praise, nor despise others. this is very abominable in the sight of God."
 - viii. "Do not despise anyone nor judge anyone even if you see someone fallen in the depths of sin, because judgement comes from a heart full of arrogance and pride."
 - ix. "Establish peace between yourself and all, that God may dwell in your heart."



- x. “Those who are humble perceive others as better than themselves.”
- xi. “Continue to fast, pray without ceasing and be patient during calamities until the Lord lifts them.”
- xii. “Oh, my son, if you put your trust in God, He will become a refuge for you, and save you from all your hardships.”
- xiii. “Be patient and persevere, because the saints were patient and attained promises.”
- xiv. “If people reject you and slander you, do not grieve, because your Lord was called a deceiver and Beelzebub, one possessed by a devil, yet He did not grumble.”
- xv. “If people honor you, let your heart not rejoice, but grieve, because Paul and Barnabas, when people honored them, tore their clothes, and Peter and the rest of the apostles, when they were slandered and flogged, rejoiced, because they were considered worthy to be insulted for the sake of His Name.”
- xvi. “Strive in your youth that you may rejoice in your old age.”
- xvii. “Do not let your heart go into captivity with strangers, lest it be said to you: Because you did not trust the Lord, live now in the land of slavery.”
- xviii. “You will not share the gifts with the saints unless you first tire your body by participating in their works.”

8. His Departure:

- a. When an epidemic broke out in Upper Egypt, many monks were infected. St. Pachomius served the sick and departed because of this epidemic in 348 A.D.
- b. The Coptic Orthodox Church celebrates him on the 14th of Bashans (14th of May according to the Western Calendar).



9. His Influence on the World:

a. The life of monastic community established by St. Pachomius attracted the hearts of many leaders in the East and West. Many applied it in full or in part such as St. Basil the Great, St. John Cassian, the Caesarians Fathers, The Bishop of Arles, his successor Aurelius, and Father Benedict. Father Benedict, who is known as the father of monasticism of the West, borrowed a great deal from the Pachomian system.

10. How can I obtain discernment?

a. St. Pachomius was blessed with discernment; how do we too obtain it? We must understand that discernment is a gift from God. We may obtain it through prayers, struggles and reading of the Holy Bible. When we live with God, this grace is granted to us.

b. Sources of discernment:

i. Abiding in Christ.

ii. Imitating the saints and associating with the wise. We learn wisdom when we are around wisdom. The Holy Scriptures tell us: “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed” (Proverbs 13:20). One of the roles of the Father of Confession is to guide us by the Holy Spirit in our spiritual life. When we listen to his wisdom in the Spirit, we too gain wisdom in the Spirit.

iii. One of the tenants of hearing the voice of God is not acting according to our personal preference but obeying the voice of the Lord according to the faith and the doctrine of our holy Coptic Orthodox Church, which she has received from our fathers the holy apostles of the Lord. Our faith is “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” (Jude 1:3).



My Relationships

In our earthly journey we form relationships. These relationships have a great effect on our future; they also affect our eternity! For example, St. Anba Pachomius' relationships with Christ and with Anba Palamon were essential for his many good works!

A. The 3 categories of relationships:

- a. My relationship with thoughts.
- b. My relationship people.
- c. My relationship with things.

B. My relationship with thoughts

a. What is thought? Thought is the establishment of one's direction and way of walking in life. A person who prioritizes living with God; makes it his life strategy. Thought is very critical in one's life because thought dictates the plans for their whole life which ultimately leads to eternity.

i. Thought is the beginning of action and habit: The actions we think about are those we want to implement. When a person thinks of a thought, his will moves which leads to implementation. This relationship between thoughts and actions shows that thought is the basis for action and forming habits.

ii. Thought controls relationships: As long as thoughts control feelings, feelings also control relationships, as well as behavior. Human thought is very important and influential in life.

iii. Thought is an expression of the heart: The importance of thought is not only in how it effects actions, but also how it effects expression of feelings. Thoughts proceed out of the heart. "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 his mouth speaks." (Luke 5:45).



iv. The foundation of thoughts is the heart. In the Coptic language the word “Ⲭⲏⲧ” means heart and thought at the same time, so there is a close connection between thought and feeling. A heart filled with the love of our Lord brings about thoughts in a positive, sacred manner.





b. The importance of thought: Anything one does begins with a thought.

i. For a person to pray, this is a thought. If one wants to forgive, then this is a thought. All wars begin in thought. Errors and virtues begin with a thought. All life is thoughts. The basis of the fall of humanity began in thought. Therefore, thoughts are the basis of actions, the source of behavior and the beginning of any sin. Lust is based on a thought. Anger, Greed, and the love of money all begin with thoughts.

1. So, examine yourself: What is the outcome of the thoughts that are inside you?

c. Thoughts are the basis of the essence of man:

i. If our thoughts are sanctified, our actions and senses will be sanctified. The basis of all actions are thoughts which makes thoughts extremely important. When our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to live in virtue, He focused first on our thoughts. For example, He said “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28).

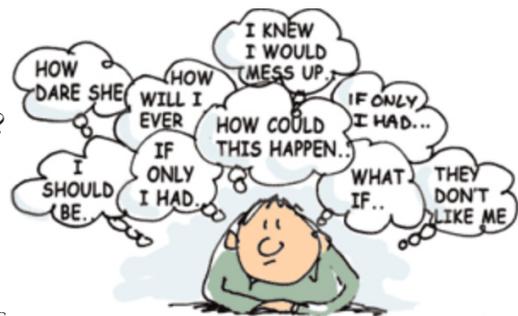
ii. The enemy of all good is very deceptive. When he implants a thought, he implants it deceitfully causing one to accept it and change his behavior. Thoughts require vigilance, do not wait for a thought to turn into action without knowing it. There is a famous proverb that says: “Sow thought, and you reap action. Sow action, reap a habit, sow habits, reap a destiny.”

d. Empty thoughts:

Discuss with your servant: What is the difference between thought warfare and fallenness? Can thoughts be deceived?

i. Sometimes our thoughts are empty meaning they lack goal or ambition!

ii. Empty thoughts allow the enemy of good to deceive them and use them to sow evil and dominate. Therefore, your mind must be saturated with purpose and interests.





iii. Each of us must have a goal. We must fill our minds with what builds us up and sanctifies our thoughts. One way to do this is by constructive reading. As the fathers said: “Much reading improves the mind.”

e. Methods of thinking:

i. There are many ways of thinking. Here we will focus on two methods: positive thinking and negative thinking.

f. What are negative thoughts

i. Negative thoughts include a pessimistic outlook and presenting situations in an exaggerated, pessimistic manor. They are a result of experiences in one’s home, school, and or work environment. These negative thoughts will increase if one lacks confidence.

g. What are positive & negative convictions?

i. Fifty years ago, there was a belief among athletes that a person could not run a mile in less than four minutes, and that anyone who tried to do so would have a heart attack. One of the athletes asked, ‘has someone tried and had a heart attack?’ the response was ‘no.’ So, he started training until he broke the record. Initially the world thought he was crazy or that his stopwatch was incorrect but after they saw him, they believed it. That year more than 100 people were able to break that record. Negative conviction was a hindrance to anyone trying to break that record, but when this negative thought was refuted, they were able to innovate.



1. Discuss the causes of negative thoughts:

2. Examples of negative thought: I’m not intelligent, I’m a failure, there is no sense in trying, I can’t do anything, this always happens to me, I will fail, nobody loves me...

3. From your perspective: What are the causes of negative thinking? Discuss with



your servant.

4. A true story: One time Condoleezza Rice was asked to leave a ‘white’ restaurant. Her mother said to her “maybe you can’t have a meal at a white restaurant, but you can go on to become president of the United States.” She went on to become the national security adviser under President Bush then U.S. Secretary of State!

h. Biblical examples of negative and positive thoughts:



- i. Read the Book of Numbers chapter 13, figure out who had negative thoughts.
- ii. Read the gospel according to Saint Luke chapter 15 to understand what a positive attitude entails and how to live in positivity.

Examples of positive thoughts and encouragement in the Bible:

“Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life.” (Isaiah 43:4).

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.” (Psalm 42:5).

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7).





7. How can you acquire the mind of Christ?

The mind of Christ is a mind of perfect, eternal wisdom, peace, and positivity. How do we attain this or seek to become like Him in this way?

i. Allowing grace to work in you through prayer: Those who keep their eyes on the eyes of Christ and are in constant fellowship with Him will obtain the mind of Christ. It is very dangerous for one to live alone, there must be a ‘hotline’ between Christ and man. This is achieved through continuous prayer. When we are in constant communication with Christ, He will attend quickly to our needs having known and understood our feelings. This is one way to obtain the mind of Christ.

ii. The Holy Bible: Another way is through the Holy Bible. Our Teacher David the Prophet proclaims to The Lord “I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.” (Psalm 119:14). Similarly, St. Paul tells the Colossians in his Epistle to “let the word of God dwell in you richly.” (Colossians 3:16). Where do we find the testimonies of The Lord? Where do we dwell in His Word? We find Him in His Word and can achieve this by befriending the Holy Bible, its promises, commandments, personalities, and Spiritual readings. As the Fathers say, “much reading adorns the mind.”



iii. Daily accountability: We must strive to put ourselves under God’s searching light every day, “and see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:24). Examining oneself daily in the presence of Christ is another way of obtaining the mind of Christ.

iv. Confession: Give your father of confession a chance to explain to you your faults, that you may correct and seek the perfect mind of Christ.



C. My relationship with other people

Ask your servant: **how can I manage my relationships and behavior that my future may be bright and that I may obtain eternal life?** How can I have good relationships with all people, that none may be offended by me and that I may not be hurt by anyone?

a. My relationship with my friends:

i. Initiate loving relationships, don't wait for others to begin loving you! Be the initiator! Honoring others leads to wonderful relationships.

ii. How you choose your current friends will dictate your life in the future.

The Holy Bible assures us saying, "He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed." (Proverbs 13:20).

iii. The Holy Bible often mentions friends. Some of those friendships led to success (1 Samuel 19). Some, however, led to utter failure (1 Kings 12).

iv. Friendship is a relationship between people who like each other and enjoy each other's company. Friends are like minded so it is important that when choosing a friend, you must:

1. Choose someone close to you in age, culture, and societal orientation.
2. Search for people who like what you like and have similar goals as yourself.
3. Do not refuse your parents' perspective regarding your friends and choices.
4. Obey God by letting go of friendships that don't lead to godliness. Your friend must lead you on to eternal life.
5. Understand the saying "show me who your friends are, and I'll tell you who you are." Your choice in company speaks volumes of your priorities and values.





6. Be careful of dependency in relationships.

- i. Ask your servant about dependency.
- ii. From your point of view what are some of the characteristics of a successful friendship?

7. Strive for an even relationship, when only one gives, he or she will eventually go bankrupt. This is one type of dependency. During the Jewish holiday of Purim people used to exchange gifts (Esther 19:9). Giving must be exchanged between friends. The term “exchange” implies action from both parties.

8. Ensure that the friendship will endure hardships: friends need each other more during hard times, when choosing your friendships the relationship can withstand hard times. (Job 2:11–13).

9. Understand that there are degrees of friendship: one of the mistakes we make is trying to become close to everyone to the same degree and open up to everyone. Even though our Lord Jesus Christ had 12 apostles, only one used to lay his head on His bosom.

10. Understand that there are conditions for friendship: a friend must not cause harm, delay spiritual growth, or negatively affect our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to cut off the hand that causes us to sin, (Mark 9:43). What he means by that is to cut off the relationships that cause us to sin.

11. Be aware of friendship with those of the same gender: since friendship means the opening of oneself and one’s emotions to the other, friends must be of the same gender. Friendship between people of the opposite sex leads to inappropriate emotional ties. When the Lord led the people out of Egypt, He commanded Moses saying, “let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor” (Exodus 11:2).





12. Deal wisely with friendships with non believers: Non-believers have morals and thoughts that are different from the commandments of our Lord. Friends have a great influence on us, they change the way we think and affect our decisions. The Holy Bible teaches us, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” (2 Corinthians 6:14). We love everyone, but we must not be affected by everyone’s ideology.

13. What would you do under the following circumstances?

- i. If your friend begins to make bad jokes and swear?
- ii. If you’re fasting on Friday and your friends decide to go to Kentucky Fried Chicken?
- iii. If one of your friends asks you to go to a dance party?
- iv. If your friend asks you to wear clothes that are revealing?



14. Discuss chat rooms and Internet friendships with your servant.

15. Read: Sirach 19:7–10, 13-18; Sirach 22:25–27; Sirach 27:24; Sirach 7:20. **Learn from the Book of Sirach the principles of friendship**, your servant should help you with this.

D. My Relationship With Things:

a. The Holy Bible has set principles to teach us how to relate to things. Read: 1 Corinthians 6:12, 1 Corinthians 10:23

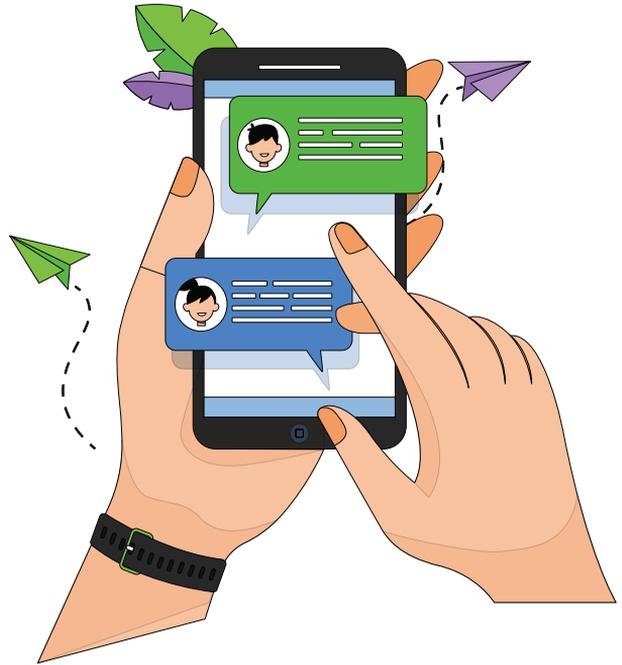
- i. “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.” (1 Corinthians 6:12).
- ii. “All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” (1 Corinthians 6:12).
- iii. “All things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.” (1 Corinthians 10:23).
- iv. In St. Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians, he states that while nothing is unlawful, not all things are good for us. Thus, we should see that which is good for us, physically mentally and spiritually and avoid that which is not edifying.





When we are granted the blessing of God's peace, it is through His work in us. Seeking to "Live in Peace" (2 Corinthians 13:11) comes through being familiar with what peace is, the forms of peace and how to attain said peace. This is by following His commandments, allowing yourself to be guided by the wisdom of our fathers like St. Peter, and by following the examples of the saints, like Anba Pachomius. Through this we achieve peace and tranquility amongst the harshest battles whether they be in relationships, actions, or thoughts.

May the Lord grant us a spiritually fulfilling and edifying Mahragan, filled with peace that we may become living, fruitful branches in Christ's vineyard. And may the Lord fill our hearts with goodness that we may live for Him and be a witness unto His Holy Name all the days of our lives through the prayers of our beloved shepherd His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, and the venerable bishops, priests, and servants of the Church.





Memorization

PSALM 140 (AGPEYA)

O Lord, I have cried to You, hear me. Attend to the voice of my supplication when I cry to You. Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice. O Lord, set a watch on my mouth and a strong door for my lips. Do not incline my heart to words of evil, to employ excuses for sins with men who work iniquity; and I shall not agree with their choices. The righteous shall chasten me with mercy, and reprove me: but do not let the oil of the sinner anoint my head: for yet my prayer also is in their pleasures.

Their mighty ones have been swallowed up near the rock: they shall hear my words, for they are delightful. As a lump of earth, they are broken upon the ground, their bones have been scattered at Hades. For my eyes are to You, O Lord: O Lord, I have hoped in You; do not take away my soul. Keep me from the snare which they have set for me, and from the stumbling blocks of those who work iniquity. Sinners shall fall by their own net: I am alone until iniquity passes by. ALLELUIA.



Memorization

THE COMPLINE PRAYER

The Holy Gospel According To

St. Luke (Ch. 2: 25-32)

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 Christ the Lord. 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 for the revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."

Glory to God forever. Amen.





O pure Virgin, overshadow your servant with your instant help, and keep the waves of evil thoughts away from me, and raise up my ailing soul for prayer and vigil, for it has gone into a deep sleep. For you are a capable, compassionate and helpful mother, the bearer of the Fountain of Life, my King and my God, Jesus Christ, my hope.

Absolution of the 12th Hour

Lord, all our sins which we committed against You in this day, whether in deeds or in words or in thoughts or through all senses, please remit and forgive us, for the sake of Your holy name, as You are Good and Lover of mankind. God, grant us a peaceful night and a sleep free from all anxiety. And send us an angel of peace to protect us from every evil, and every affliction, and every temptation of the enemy; through the Grace, compassion and love of mankind of Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom is due, with You and with the Holy Spirit, the Life-Giver Who is of one essence with You, all glory, honor and dominion, now and forever and unto the ages of all ages. Amen.



Through the grace of God and under the auspices of His Grace Bishop David, Bishop of the Diocese of New York and New England and the current Papal Exarch of the Archdiocese of North America for H.H. Pope Tawadros II, this Mahragan book was translated and formatted by the blessed servants of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of New York and New England. All material was translated from the Arabic Language to the English Language.



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