

MAHRAGAN EL-KERAZA 2026

MORE THAN CONQUERORS



“Yet in all these things we are
more than conquerors
through Him who loved us”

(Romans 8:37)

English Edition
Grades 1-2



H.H. Pope Tawadros II

Pope of Alexandria &
Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark



H.G. Bishop David

Bishop of the Diocese of New York
and New England



The Rod of Moses

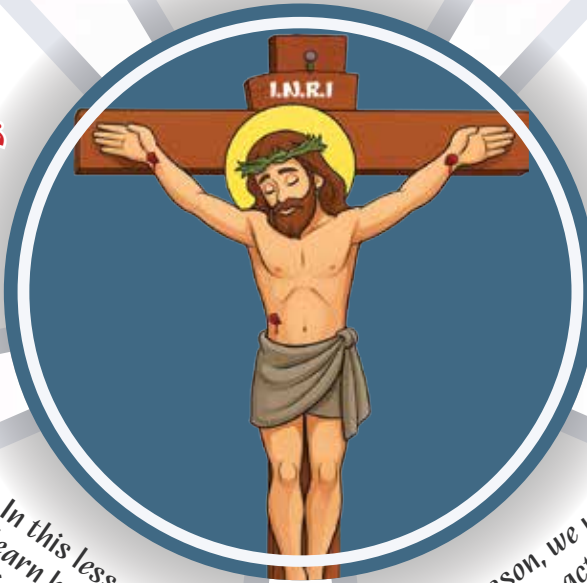
In this story we will learn about one of the symbols of the Cross in the Old Testament. We will learn the first anchor which is, **"The Cross is an Eternal Plan."**

Saint Paul the Peacemaker

In this lesson, we will learn how believing in the Lord Jesus makes us more like Him and in doing so, we become His image for everyone. And we will learn the fifth anchor which is, **"The Cross Leads me to Eternity."**

The Story of Our Salvation

In this lesson, we will learn God's plan to redeem us by His death on the Cross. This will teach us the second anchor which is **"Through the Cross, all Humanity was Saved."**



In this lesson, we will learn how the Cross was a living experience in the lives of our saints. From this story, we will learn about the fourth anchor which is, **"My Spiritual Fathers Lived by the Cross."**

Saint Theognosta

In this lesson, we will learn that we actually use the Cross in all the church's services. This will teach us the third anchor which is, **"The Cross in the Church."**

The Cross In Liturgical Prayer



Through the prayers of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II and the honorable bishops of the Coptic Orthodox Church, we present to you, "The Academic Competition!" Our friends, little angels, how are you? Our story this year is an exciting adventure with **Gedo Morcos** and his grandchildren, **Joseph** and **Abigail**, and **Uncle Pistavros**. In this journey, we will also meet **BiNo**, the new boat, and **Fanar**, the tall lighthouse. In this adventure, we will learn beautiful stories which will teach us how to live the verse;

"We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (Romans 8:37)

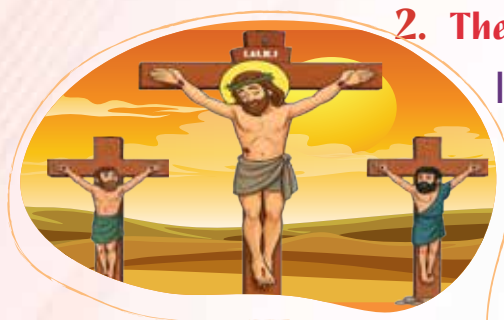
This is the theme verse for this year's **Mahragan El Keraza 2026**. We are so excited to have you join us this year and learn about beautiful stories with us!





This is the verse that inspires the theme for this year's Mahragan as we learn the following lessons:

1. The Rod of Moses: In this story we will learn about one of the symbols of the Cross in the Old Testament. we will learn the first anchor which is, **"The Cross is an Eternal Plan."**



2. The Story of Our Salvation: In this lesson, we will learn God's plan to redeem us by His death on the Cross. This will teach us the second anchor which is **"Through the Cross, all Humanity was Saved"**.

3. The Cross in Liturgical Prayer: In this lesson, we will learn that we actually use the Cross in all the church's services. This will teach us the third anchor which is, **"The Cross in the Church."**



4. Saint Theognosta: In this lesson, we will learn how the Cross was a living experience in the lives of our saints. From this story, we will learn about the fourth anchor which is, **"My Spiritual Fathers Lived by the Cross."**



5. Saint Paul the Peacemaker: In this lesson, we will learn how believing in the Lord Jesus makes us more like Him and in doing so, we become His image for everyone. And we will learn the fifth anchor which is, **"The Cross Leads me to Eternity."**

Let's get started...





As we got ready to celebrate Uncle Pistavros' birthday, his friend Gedo Morcos prepared a special gift. Do you want to know what it is?

Gedo Morcos: Wow! Look at you! You are a beautiful boat. I don't know what to name you! I will name you BiNo. Hello BiNo. I am Gedo Morcos.

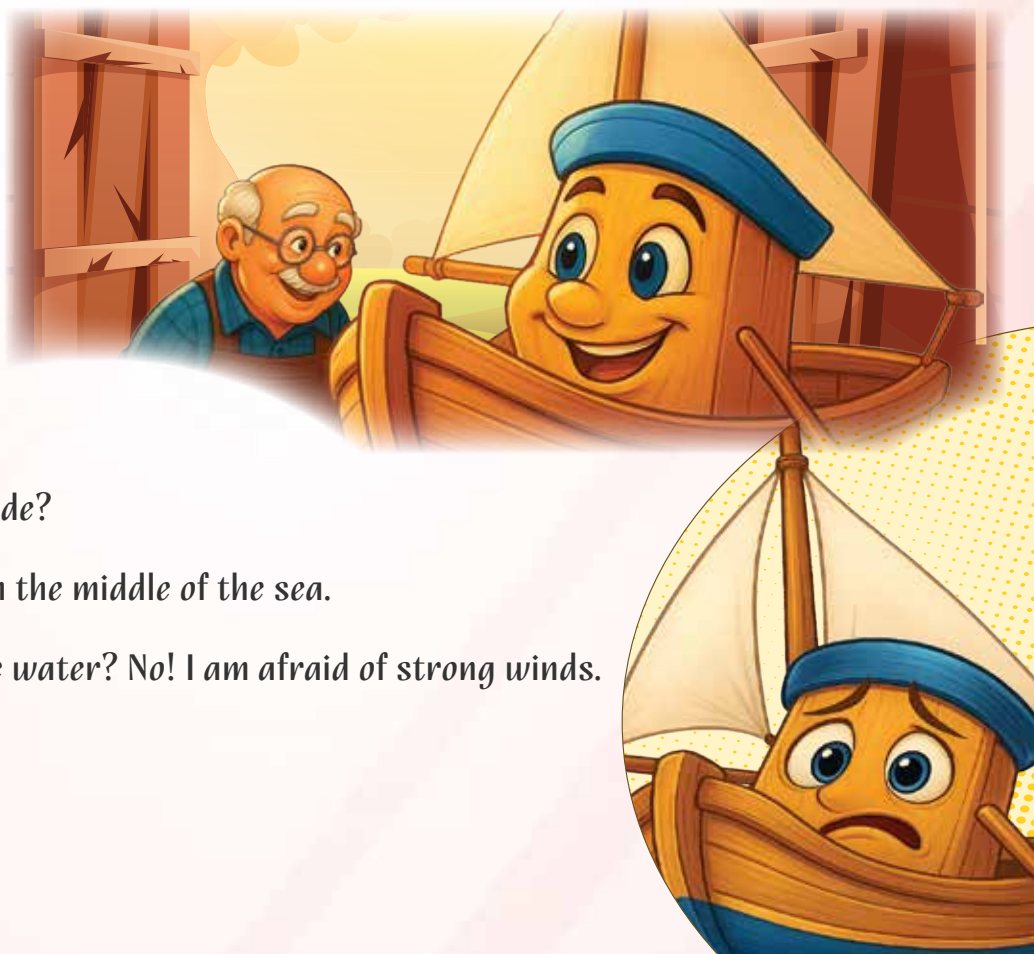
BiNo: That is a beautiful name. I like how I look, too. Thank you, Gedo Morcos.

Gedo Morcos: You are very important to me. You will be a gift for my best friend Pistavros. I told my grandchildren, Joseph and Abigail, to come to see you. We will take them for a ride when they get here.

BiNo: How will we go on the ride?

Gedo Morcos: We will ride in the middle of the sea.

BiNo: You mean I will go in the water? No! I am afraid of strong winds. What if the fish eat me?





Gedo Morcos: That is funny, BiNo. You are a boat- you are strong. Fish will not eat you. You are made to move in the water.

BiNo: What if the water dries up?! How will I swim?

Gedo Morcos: Don't worry. The water will not dry up. Besides, the sea will not split again and chase us as it did before.

BiNo: Really? Did the sea ever split? Can you tell me the story?



Gedo Morcos: I will tell you the story all the way from the beginning! Long ago, God wanted to prepare our minds for His coming that, **through His coming, He would save us.** To prepare us,



He started giving us many symbols in the Old Testament. These symbols helped us understand the meaning of redemption. **This redemption came true in the New Testament** when the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and died on the cross for our sakes. **One of the symbols of the Cross in the Old Testament is the Rod of Moses.**

BiNo: Symbols of the Cross? What does the word “symbol” mean?

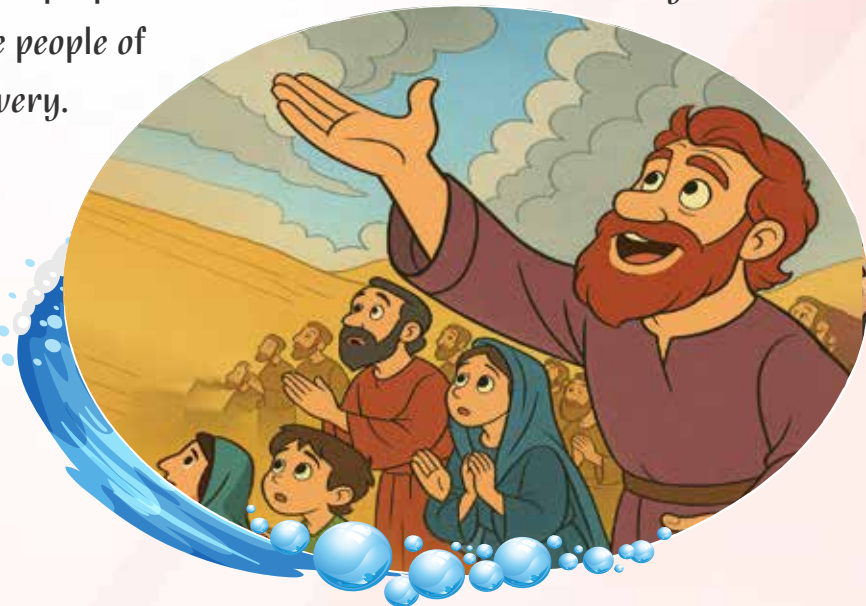
Gedo Morcos: A “symbol” is kind of like a sign! When we see it, it reminds us of something. You

will better understand it when you learn how the **Rod of Moses was a symbol of the Cross.** The story started when the people of Israel **left the land of Canaan** and came to live with Joseph in Egypt. They lived in the land of Goshen and stayed in Egypt for many years. At first, Pharaoh liked them. (The title “Pharaoh” was given to the king of Egypt). This continued until one day, when a new Pharaoh was chosen to rule over Egypt. This new Pharaoh did not like the people of Israel. He made them slaves. They were slaves

for a very long time- about **430 years.** The people of Israel prayed to God to save them from slavery.

BiNo: I wonder if God ever heard them?

Gedo Morcos: Yes, of course. God chose Moses to save His people from Pharaoh. One day, while Moses was tending his sheep, he saw a bush on fire.





God spoke to Moses from the burning bush. God said: **“I heard the cry of my people, and I will come down to save them and take them to a new land”**. “God also said to Moses **‘I will be with you.’**” God told Moses that He would do great things with **Moses’ rod**. God would save His people from the hand of Pharaoh and **He would bring them out of Egypt and bring them to a new land**.



And indeed, God performed many miracles through Moses in front of Pharaoh and all the Egyptians. When Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites leave Egypt, **God sent the ten plagues on the Egyptians only** and kept the people of Israel safe. At last, Pharaoh agreed to let them go. Pharaoh saw just how strong God really is. The people of Israel got ready to leave Egypt and start their trip to the Promise Land. God was with them the whole time during their trip. He watched over them and protected them from anything that might hurt them.

God kept them safe.

BiNo: Can you please tell us how God protected them in their journey?





Gedo Morcos: At the beginning of their journey, God sent them a **pillar of cloud** by day to show them the way to the new land. And He provided a **pillar of fire** to guide them at night. The people of Israel walked by day and by night. Nothing was able to stop them on their journey because God was taking care of them. But, when they arrived at the Red Sea, they faced a big problem. They didn't know how to cross **the Red Sea!** Suddenly, they saw Pharaoh, his chariots, and his soldiers chasing after them.



BiNo: I thought Pharaoh was the one who let them go! Why is he chasing them now?

Gedo Morcos: Pharaoh changed his mind. He wanted to bring them back to Egypt. Pharaoh took his soldiers and his chariots, and he **followed the people of Israel.** The people of Israel were very scared, but Moses was confident and told them:





“Do not be afraid. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” (Exodus 14:13)

BiNo: That must have been so scary. **The sea was in front of them and Pharaoh was behind them.** I wonder what God did to save them?

Gedo Morcos: God spoke to Moses and told him: **“Lift up your rod and stretch your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.”** God protected them and moved the pillar of cloud that used to go before them go behind them. It separated them from Pharaoh’s army, to give them enough time to cross the Red Sea safely. Pharaoh’s army was delayed behind them. **“So that the one did not come near the other all that night.” (Exodus 14:20)**





Moses did exactly what God told him to do and stretched his hands over the sea.



God sent a strong wind and split the sea into two halves! To the people of Israel, the sea became a tall wall on their right side and a tall wall on their left side, and in the middle the land was dry to walk on.

The people of Israel started to walk all night and Pharaoh and his soldiers followed them to try to catch them. When Pharaoh and his soldiers arrived at the middle of the sea, **Moses and all the people of Israel had already arrived at**

the other side of the sea. God told Moses to stretch his hand again over the sea to close it as it was before. And, indeed, the sea returned just as it was before and **Pharaoh and his soldiers drowned** with all their chariots. God saved His people from Pharaoh's hand.

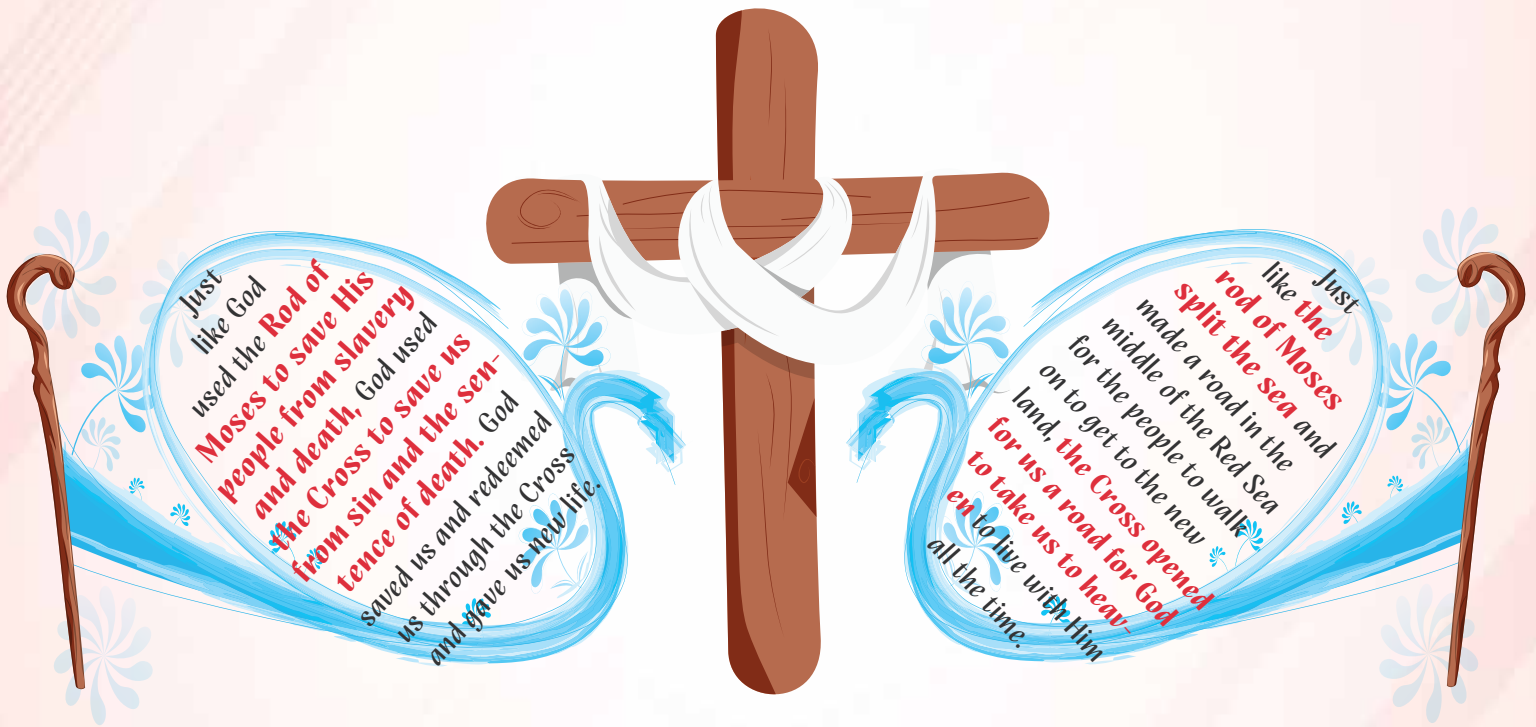


Moses and the people of Israel praised God



and they all rejoiced because God saved them.

This is how the rod of Moses was one of the many symbols of the Cross in the Old Testament. The rod of Moses reminds us of the Cross of the Lord Jesus because:



BiNo: Wow! How wonderful is God? He can do anything to save His children!

Gedo Morcos: True, BiNo. **Our God is the God of the impossible.**



A little later, Joseph and Abigail arrived at Gedo Morcos' house. They met BiNo the boat. They were excited to go on a trip with BiNo out on the sea. Soon, they were in the middle of the



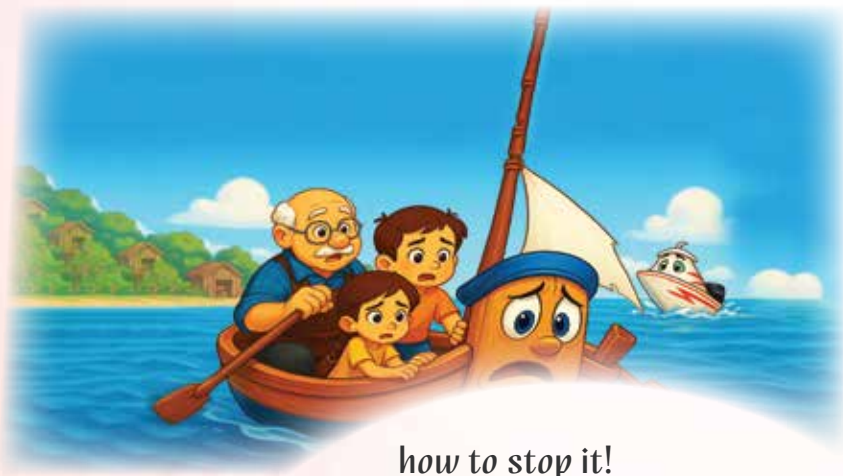
sea...

Joseph: Watch out, BiNo! I see a boat coming towards us. Be careful!



BiNo: Ouch! My oar broke! My sail fell apart! What did you do, speedy boat?

Speedy Boat: I am sorry! I didn't mean to hurt you. My motor is too fast. I don't know



how to stop it!

Gedo Morcos: Don't worry, children. I will try to row using the broken oar. I





will row from side to side until we get to the shore.

BiNo: If you do that, you will get tired, Gedo, and your arms might get hurt.

Joseph: That is true, Gedo. Another boat might hit us again. I have an idea! We can leave BiNo here and find another boat.

Abigail: You can build another boat, Gedo.

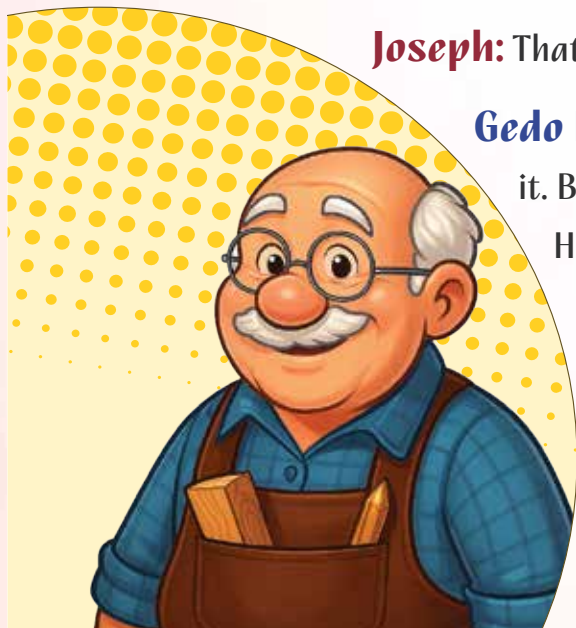
Since you built BiNo, you can make a new one.

Gedo Morcos: How can I leave BiNo if I love it? I built it with my own hands. I don't want you to worry. Once we arrive safely, I will fix all of the broken parts. Even better, I will make it as good as new. I created it and I am the only one who can fix it. I will bring it back to its original condition.

Joseph: That sounds like a lot of work. Why would you do that, Gedo?

Gedo Morcos: Because I love BiNo and I will do anything to save it. By the way, God is the one who taught us that since the day He created us.

Abigail: How is that?





Gedo Morcos: Let me explain the story of how great God's love is for us. I will tell you the story from the beginning.

When God created Adam and Eve, He created them in His most precious image. They enjoyed everything God created for them. However, they disobeyed God and ate from the tree that God told them not to eat from. Because of their sin:



Adam, Eve, and their children received the sentence of death. That means that they were separated from God. Just like when the electricity goes out, the light bulb can't give light.

Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden. We all inherited sin and all its consequences. Nothing would work to help bring them back again.

Their nature became corrupted. It is like when someone eats spoiled food. He will need to take medicine, or he will die.

Abigail: This means...





God loves us so much that He created us in His image and likeness.



When we disobeyed His word, we **got the sentence of death**, and we were separated from God.



Sin made our nature corrupt. Now we need someone to bring us back to our original image and renew our nature.



Since we are Adam and Eve's children, we inherited everything from them. **We inherited sin and its consequences.**



Abigail: How can we solve this problem?

Gedo Morcos: Someone had to die instead of us, take away the consequence of sin, and redeem us. He is the only one that can lift the punishment from us and bring us back to our original image. That is why the Savior must be ...

A man – able to die but without sin

God came down to our earth. **He took a body from our Mother Saint Mary.** A body like ours. He was like us in everything except for sin.

Creator:

Since **He is God the Creator,** He is the only one who can bring us back to our original image. Our nature was corrupted and we needed someone to **renew our nature.**

Unlimited

Because **God is unlimited,** He is the only one who can redeem everyone. **From Adam to the last person on earth.**

Can Defeat Death

He rose from dead by Himself. Since He is God, no one else raised Him; He rose by His own power and redeemed us.

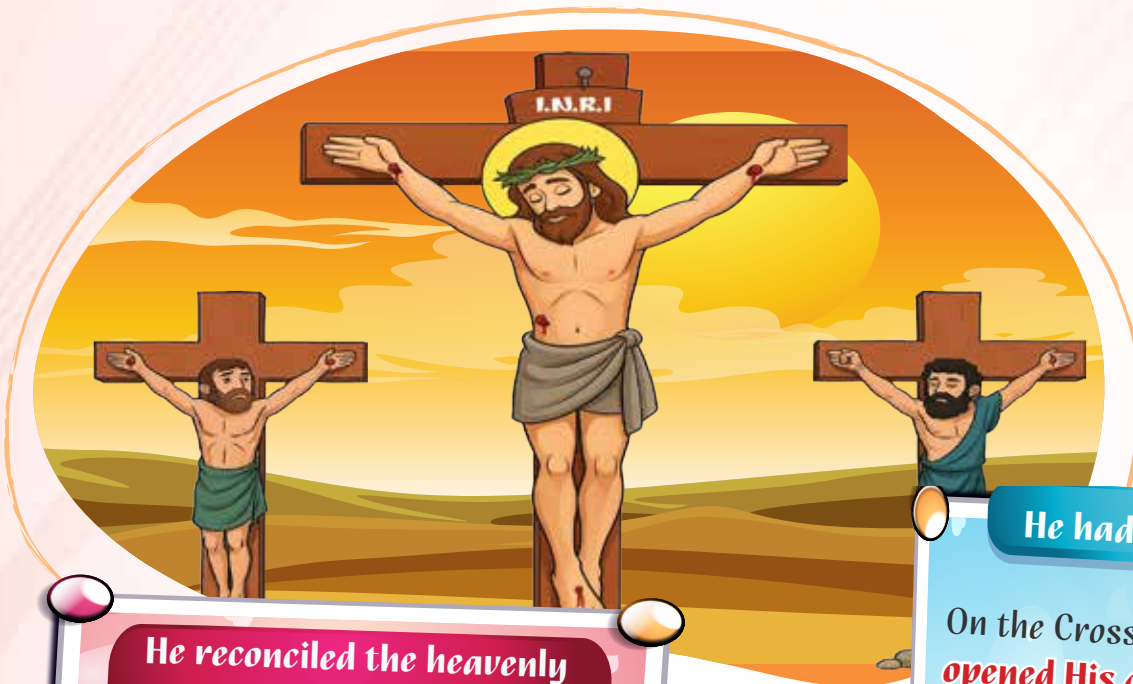
That is why we say joyfully...



“... You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.” (Psalm 31:5)



This way, the **image of the Lord Jesus on the Cross** is the most beautiful picture. This picture shows how great God's love is for us. This is the best image to show God's love to us because God...



He reconciled the heavenly and the earthly

The Lord Jesus Christ was hung on the Cross, which was placed on a very high mountain, the Mount of Golgotha. Everyone saw Him when He was hung between heaven and earth. He showed everyone that through His redemption, He brought us back to live with Him in heaven.

He had His arms opened

On the Cross, **the Lord Jesus opened His arms** to tell everyone **"Come to Me..."** My arms are open wide for you. Whoever comes to Me and follows My commandments, will be hidden in My bosom.

He bore suffering

On the Cross, **the Lord Jesus endured all pain.** He suffered and died on the Cross to redeem us. This shows us how great God's love is for us.



Very early Sunday morning, Christ rose from the dead while **the tomb was shut**. After His resurrection, **Archangel Michael** came down from heaven and moved the stone from the entrance of the tomb so that all people would know that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, defeated death and redeemed us.

To show that we accept Him, we must...

Believe in the Lord Jesus and **get baptized** and receive the sacrament of **Chrismation** in the name of the Holy Trinity. Then we partake of the **Holy Body and the Precious Blood** of the Lord Jesus.

When we sin, we **repent and confess**. We do good deeds to please God's heart. This is the story of our salvation and God's redemption of us.

Abigail: Now I understand what you meant when you did all this to save BiNo.





BiNo: We have been riding for so long now. When are we going to arrive?

Gedo Morcos: Don't worry, BiNo. We are almost there. When you see Fanar, then you'll know we arrived.

BiNo: Who is Fanar? Is he a boat like me?

Abigail: No, silly. Fanar is the lighthouse



in Uncle Pistavros' dock.

BiNo: What is a lighthouse?

Joseph: A lighthouse is like a tall tower.

It has a bright light at the top of it. It guides the boats in the sea to the shore. When I see the lighthouse, I remember the church's tall tower. The cross on top of the tower guides everyone to the house of God.





The Cross in the Church

is not for decoration. **The Cross is our source of power, love and pride.** That is why you will see the Cross everywhere in the Church. The Bible says:

BiNo: Why is there a cross on the top of the tower? I think there should be a bright light instead.

Joseph: That would be so funny. The cross on the top of the tower has an important job. Let me explain. The Cross in the church



Memory Verse

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14)



On the Top of the Church's Tower

Here, the Cross shows everyone that **the Church is following the Lord Jesus** who was crucified on the Cross. The Church listens to Him and follows the commandments of **the crucified Christ.**

In the Sacraments of the Church

Abouna uses the Cross while praying the **seven sacraments**. He **blesses the people** with the sign of the Cross.



BiNo: All the sacraments? I am not sure what you mean.

Joseph: I will explain. **The Lord Jesus Christ founded all seven Sacraments of the Church.**

Through the sacraments of the Church, we receive many blessings when we practice in them. **In each one of the seven sacraments we use the Cross.** I will show you how we use the Cross in each sacrament.

1. The Sacrament of Baptism:

Abouna **signs the water with the sign of the Cross** to sanctify the water. This is the water in which the baby will be immersed three times **“In the name of the Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit”**. This is how the baptized person gets his sin forgiven and becomes Christian, **a child of God.**





2. The Sacrament of Chrismation:

After the Sacrament of Baptism, the baptized person receives the **Sacrament of Chrismation**. In this sacrament, Abouna anoints the baptized with the **Holy Myron Oil 36 times on every part of their body. Each anointing is in the shape of the Cross**. This way, the whole body is sanctified and they become a child of God. **The Holy Spirit dwells in them.**



When we do anything wrong that can separate us from God, the Church gives us a special sacrament which is:

3. The Sacrament of Repentance and Confession:

When **someone makes a bad choice** and does something that makes God unhappy, they **repent** which means that they realized they did something wrong. They should ask God to forgive them and to help them not to do it again.



He also **confesses to God in the presence of Abouna** and tells him what he did wrong. When someone repents and confesses, **he cleans his heart and makes it ready for God to come and dwell in him.** The Sacrament of Chrismation also prepares us for the next sacrament which is...

4. The Sacrament of Eucharist (Communion)



The Cross is present in every step of holy liturgy. For example, it is so exciting to **hold the Cross up high** and go around the altar three times with Abouna. I also stand behind Abouna holding the **Gospel** along with the Cross. I say, **“Pray for the holy gospel.”**



During the liturgy, Abouna prays over the bread and wine. The Holy Spirit turns them into the Holy Body and the Precious Blood. When we take communion at the end of the liturgy, **He dwells in us and we become one with Him.**





BiNo: These are only four sacraments out of the seven. Can you please tell me about the other three?
How does Abouna use his cross in them?

Joseph: The remaining sacraments are:

5. The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

When **someone gets sick**, Abouna visits him and prays the prayer of the Unction of the Sick over him. At the end of the prayer, Abouna anoints him with **oil in the shape of the Cross**. This way the sick person feels better, and his heart is filled with peace. In the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick, Abouna prays over a bowl of oil. Inside the bowl are **seven cotton wicks** in the shape of the Cross. **Abouna prays seven prayers** and at the beginning of each prayer, he lights one of the seven wicks.





6. The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

In this sacrament, Abouna prays for the bride and bridegroom and **places the Cross on them to bless** them and **calls upon the Holy Spirit** to make them one body. God unites them together and makes their home a **holy church** where they can live with God.



7. The Sacrament of Priesthood

Without the Sacrament of Priesthood, we cannot practice any of the other sacraments. In this sacrament, **the pope or the bishop puts the Cross on the head of the person** and ordain him as a priest. **God gives the priest a special authority to perform all the other six sacraments.** The priest's job is to take care of his people with love. If someone gets sick, Abouna visits him. If someone is sad, Abouna helps him.





Now do you see how beautiful our Coptic Orthodox Church is? In each of the seven sacraments, the Cross is used. This shows us how important the Cross is and how it helps us with everything we need.

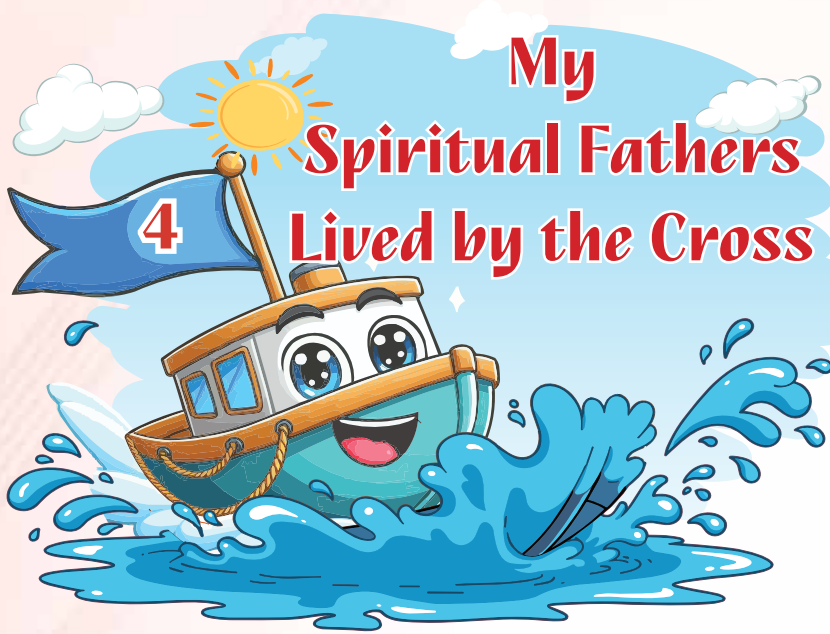
Gedo Morcos: That was such a nice conversation. I heard everything and I am so proud of you. And just like the Cross is used in all seven sacraments, we have to use it everywhere as well. We do the sign of the Cross **before we eat or sleep**. We do the sign of the Cross **when we feel afraid or stressed**. We do the sign of the Cross when we pray. Each time we do the sign of the Cross, **we show our faith that the Lord Jesus is with us** all the time.

Gedo Morcos was able to bring BiNo to the lighthouse across from Uncle Pistavros' house.

Fanar: Gedo Morcos, Abigail, Joseph, I miss you guys so much. Good to see you. Who is this beautiful boat?

Gedo Morcos introduced BiNo to Uncle Pistavros...





Fanar: Nice to meet you, BiNo. You look like a strong, clever boat. You were able to bring everyone to the shore safely.



words. I am so happy to meet you. Abigail and Joseph told me many stories about you.

Gedo Morcos: BiNo, stay here with Fanar and I will go put some tools together to fix your broken parts. I will be right back.

Joseph: And I will go tell Uncle Pistavros that we have arrived.

Abigail: Wait for me, Joseph, I will come with you. Fanar, take care of BiNo while we are gone.

BiNo told Fanar what happened to him and how his parts got broken.





BiNo: You know what, Fanar. Even though it was hard to see some parts of me broken into pieces, I was happy that this happened to me. Do you want to know why?

Fanar: Why?

BiNo: I was happy when parts of me broke because it showed me how much Gedo Morcos loves me and cares about me.

Fanar: Uncle Pistavros always tells me stories about the saints and how they struggled with difficulties. He also tells

me how their struggles always turned into something good for them. I can tell you one of these stories.



Saint Theognosta (Synexarium Tout 17)

Fanar: Our story is about a saint whose name is **Theognosta**. Theognosta was a nun in a convent near **Rome**. One day,

messengers of the king of **Raha** City in Syria were on their way home from visiting Rome, when they met Theognosta, the nun. She was walking alone outside of the convent. Soldiers kidnapped Theognosta and took her to be a servant for **the Queen of Raha**.



BiNo: Oh no! What did Theognosta do? '

Fanar: Since Theognosta is God's daughter, she was confident in God's promises as the verse says...



"...So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear,..." (Zechariah 8:13)



This is why when Theognosta was in the palace she was happy and thankful. She always thanked God while she was doing her chores around the palace. Even though she was serving the queen, her heart was filled with peace even when she was going through hard times. She was away from her convent and away from her friends, but God made the queen love her so much.

Theognosta became the leader all the other servants in the palace. She prayed all the time while she was busy doing her work. She read the Bible and fasted every day just like she was praying

and fasting when she was in the convent. God gave

Theognosta the gift of performing many miracles and wonders.

BiNo: Can you please tell me one of these miracles?





Fanar: One day, **the son of the king was sick.** All the doctors tried to help him feel better, but they couldn't. The queen asked the guards to get **Theognosta to pray for him.** The queen knew that Theognosta prayed to God all the time. The queen also believed that if Theognosta prayed for the little prince, he would feel better right away.



Theognosta asked God to heal the little prince so everyone in the palace would believe in Him. And indeed, once Theognosta prayed for the prince, **God listened to her and the prince felt better right away.** Everyone was surprised at what happened.

The king tried to reward Theognosta. He told her that she is not a slave anymore. He gave her a house to live in by herself just like she asked. Theognosta spent her time praying and asking God to help all the people around her to love Him and believe in Him.

God performed another miracle through her hands. After the little prince was healed, his mother, **the queen, got very sick. The queen asked Theognosta to pray for her** so God would make her



feel better. Theognosta prayed to God and asked Him to heal the queen. **God listened to Saint Theognosta and healed the queen.**

Then the queen told the king that they should **believe in the God whom Theognosta worships.**

The king agreed but he was afraid the people would get mad at him for believing in God. However, God made the king announce his faith to everyone.

BiNo: How? What happened?

Fanar: One day **the king went hunting** with some of his men. Suddenly, a dark cloud appeared in the sky and covered them, and it became very windy. **They became very scared when they realized they had lost their way home.**

The king remembered how **Saint Theognosta always prayed to her Lord Jesus Christ** and how she crossed herself with **the sign of the Cross** and God gave her a special strength.

The king cried out and asked the Lord Jesus to save him and his men.

The king saw a bright large Cross in the sky. That bright Cross moved in front of them until they arrived at their hometown. When they entered the town, everyone was waiting for them because they were worried; it had taken them a very long time to get back home. The king told them all what happened and **how God saved them from danger.** Everyone was happy to hear how God saved them and glorified God.

BiNo: What a nice miracle! I wonder if Saint Theognosta heard about this miracle!



Fanar: The king called Saint Theognosta and **asked her to tell them more about the Lord Jesus.** Saint Theognosta was so happy to tell them everything she knew about the Lord Jesus. She suggested that the king of Raha ask the king of Rome (where she was from) to **send them a priest to baptize them.**

The king of Rome sent them a monk priest. Later, **the monk priest became the bishop** and continued to teach the people about the Lord Jesus.



Day after day, more people believed in the Lord Jesus, and **Saint Theognosta continued to teach more people about Him.** Many girls believed because of her and wanted to live with her. **They built a convent** outside the city and they lived in it with Saint Theognosta. After a short time, Saint Theognosta got sick and she departed to Heaven on the **17th day of the Coptic month of Tout** which is the **same day as the Feast of the Cross.**

BiNo: The story of **Saint Theognosta** is such a wonderful story. Now I understand how **hard times in someone's life can turn into a great blessing.**

While Fanar and BiNo were talking, Gedo Morcos arrived and started fixing the BiNo's broken parts and made him as good as new.





The Cross Leads me to Eternity

Everyone started to prepare for Uncle Pistavros' birthday celebration. Gedo Morcos and Uncle Pistavros invited friends to the party. Meanwhile, Joseph and Abigail started to prepare the place for the party. Fanar introduced BiNo to his friends the boats. They started calling the boats to invite them to the party.

Fanar: Hello, Tow Boat, we are excited to invite you to Uncle Pistavros' birthday party. Don't be late!
Hello, Carrier Boat, can't wait to see you at the party, hurry up!

Fanar: I think we have invited all the boats we know. The only one left to invite is Speedy Boat. I can call him quickly.

BiNo: Speedy Boat?! No, I am mad at him. I will never forget what he did to me. I don't want him to attend the birthday party.

Fanar: I thought Speedy Boat apologized for what he did. Besides, he told you that he didn't mean to hurt you.





BiNo: That is true, but I can't forgive him.

Since Fanar was friends with both BiNo and Speedy, he wanted to do everything he could to convince both boats to come to Uncle Pistavros' birthday party.

Fanar: Hello, Joseph. I need your help. BiNo is upset with Speedy since he broke his wooden sail. Honestly, I strongly believe that Speedy is a good person and that he didn't mean to hurt BiNo. How can we get them to become friends again?

Joseph: I have an idea! We can do the

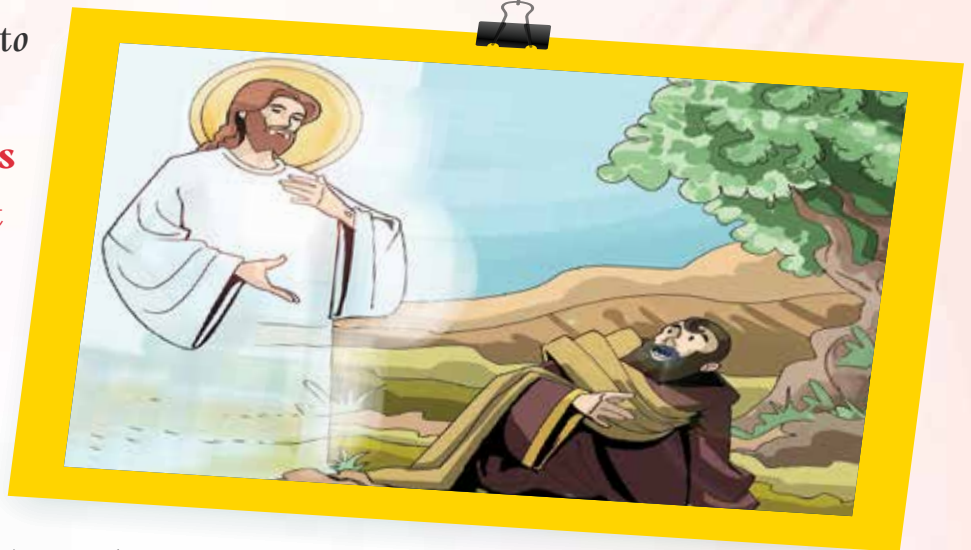
same thing St. Paul did. Saint Paul had to encourage Onesimus and Philemon to become friends again. I will tell you the story.



Joseph: Saint Paul the Apostle was born in **Tarsus**. He was a **Roman citizen**. Saint Paul was also **a Jew**. He had two names; **Saul** and **Paul**. When he was younger, **Saint Paul persecuted (hurt) Christians**. He thought he was making God happy every time he hurt a Christian person.



One day, Saint Paul was on his way to **Damascus** to persecute and arrest some Christians, and our **Lord Jesus** appeared to him. Since then, **Saint Paul's heart changed**. Instead of persecuting Christians, **he loved the Lord Jesus** and wanted to tell the whole world how sweet the Lord Jesus is.



Saint Paul wrote **fourteen epistles** (letters)

in the New Testament. One of his fourteen epistles is the **Epistle**

to his disciple Philemon. This epistle teaches us how to **forgive when someone hurts us** and how to be **peacemakers with everyone**.

Fanar: Can you please tell me more about this epistle?

Joseph: Saint Paul had a friend named **Philemon**. Philemon had a servant named **Onesimus**. Onesimus was

very strong and smart. The name Onesimus means beneficial. Unfortunately, one day Onesimus robbed his master's house. He stole Philemon's money and ran away to Rome.

In Rome, God managed to have **Onesimus meet Saint Paul**. Onesimus told Saint Paul what had





happened and how he had stolen Philemon's money. Saint **Paul told Onesimus about the** Lord Jesus and how He came to earth and was crucified to redeem us from our sins. Saint Paul also taught Onesimus how the Lord Jesus taught us **to be kind and live in peace**

with all people around us. He taught us how to **forgive and accept when someone does something wrong** to hurt us, **once they repent and confess.**

Fanar: I wonder if Onesimus listened to what Saint Paul told him and repented?



Joseph: He did! After Onesimus heard what Saint Paul

told him, he learned how much God loves us.

He learned about **God's open arms to accept him and everyone when they repent.** Onesimus learned that **God is ready to accept anyone who repents and confesses** his sins no matter how big their sin is. **Onesimus wanted to fix his mistake and offer repentance.**

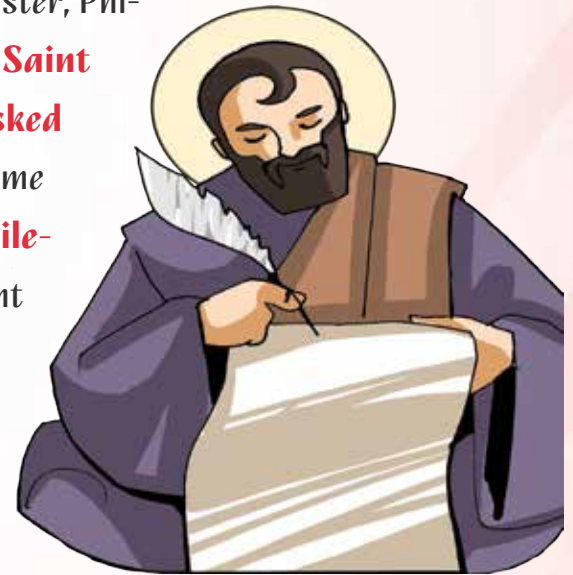




Onesimus believed in the Lord Jesus, confessed his sins, was baptized, and became a new person. The same way the Lord Jesus changed Saint Paul's heart, Onesimus' heart was also changed when Saint Paul told him about the Lord Jesus. **Onesimus changed from being a runaway servant to becoming a good and profitable servant.** Saint Paul helped Onesimus return to his master, Phi-

lemon. Saint Paul asked

Philemon to forgive Onesimus because he repented and became profitable to Saint Paul and to Philemon. **Saint Paul asked Philemon to treat Onesimus as a brother** and not a servant. Saint



Paul promised to return the money that Onesimus had stolen back to Philemon. Saint Paul was confident that **Philemon would listen to him and accept Onesimus** as he had asked him.



Onesimus became an example of a **repentant man** who benefited himself and the whole church.

Later, **Onesimus became the Bishop of Berea**. Onesimus was martyred **on the 21st day of Amshir**.

One thing that helped Onesimus become a bishop and a martyr after he was a servant and a thief was that God allowed him to meet Saint Paul. **Saint Paul was kind to**

Onesimus, taught him about God's love, and

His open arms, ready to accept sinners when they repent. That way Saint Paul did exactly what the

verse says:



“Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.” (Psalms 34:14)

Fanar: What a beautiful story. I think I know now what to do.

Everyone came together to celebrate Uncle Pistavros' birthday. When all the boats made it to the party, everyone gave Uncle Pistavros birthday presents. Speedy came sprinting to the party right before they blew out the candle. He walked over to BiNo and said...

Speedy: BiNo, I am deeply sorry for what I have done. I didn't mean to hurt you. I really wish we could become friends again. Would you accept this small gift from me?



BiNo: Is this for me?

Speedy: Do you like it?

BiNo: Wow! A new oar! Thank you so much, Speedy.

Speedy: I am so happy you liked the gift. Honestly, this was Fanar's idea.

Everyone cheered for Fanar for being a peacemaker. Fanar thanked them and told them that he got this idea when he heard the story of Saint Paul and how he was a peacemaker between Philemon and Onesimus. He called Speedy and convinced him to apologize to BiNo. Speedy was convinced and they came up with the idea of getting BiNo a new oar. They asked Gedo Morcos to make a new oar for BiNo. When BiNo heard what Speedy and Fanar did for him, he was happy and thanked Fanar for all he had done to make peace between him and Speedy.

Everyone waited for their turn to get a piece of Uncle Pistavros' birthday cake. They all lived in peace together.



Memorization Psalm 50



Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy; and according to the multitude of Your compassions blot out my iniquity. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I am conscious of my iniquity; and my sin is at all times before me.

Against You only I have sinned, and done evil before You, that You might be just in Your sayings, and might overcome when You are judged. For, behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins my mother conceived me.

For, behold, You have loved the truth; You have manifested to me the hidden and unrevealed things of Your wisdom. You shall sprinkle me with Your hyssop, and I shall be purified. You shall wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. You shall make me to hear gladness and joy; the humbled bones shall rejoice.

Turn away Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit in my inward parts. Do not cast me away from Your face; and do not remove Your Holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a directing spirit. Then I shall teach the transgressors Your ways; and the ungodly men shall turn to You.

Deliver me from blood, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall rejoice in Your righteousness. O Lord, You shall open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise. For if You desired sacrifice, I would have given it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and humbled heart God shall not despise.

Do good, O Lord, in Your good pleasure to Zion; and let the walls of Jerusalem be built. Then You shall be pleased with sacrifices of righteousness, offering, and burnt sacrifices: then they shall offer calves upon Your altar. ALLELUIA.





Memorization THE TRISAGION



Holy God, Holy
Mighty, Holy Immor-
tal, Who was born of
the Virgin, have mercy
upon us.

Holy God, Holy
Mighty, Holy Immortal, Who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us.
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, Who rose from the dead and ascended
into the heavens, have mercy upon us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever and unto
the ages of the ages. Amen.

O Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Holy Trin-
ity, have mercy on us.

O Lord, forgive us our sins. O Lord, forgive us our iniquities. O Lord, forgive us our
trespasses.

O Lord, visit the sick of Your people, heal them for the sake of Your holy name.

Our fathers and brethren who have fallen asleep, O Lord, repose their souls.

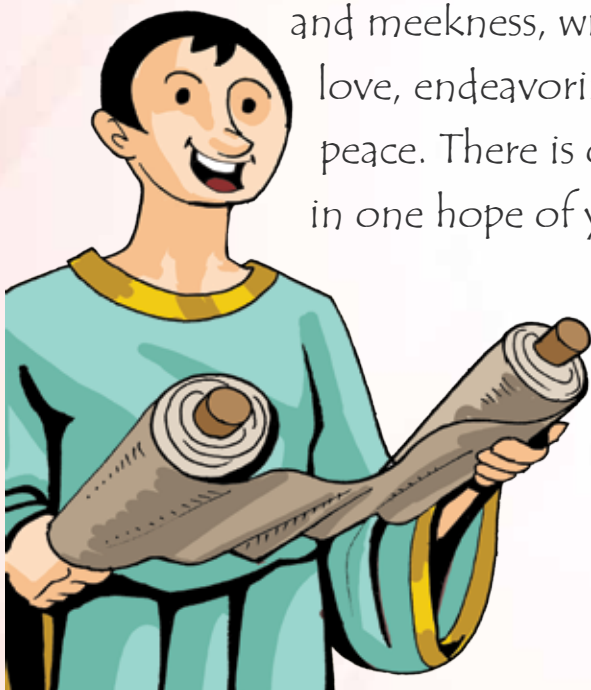
O You Who are without sin, Lord, have mercy on us. O You Who are without sin,
Lord, help us and receive our supplications. For Yours is the glory, the dominion,
and triple holiness. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord bless. Amen.



Memorization The Pauline Epistle

The Pauline Epistle
from the epistle of Saint
Paul to the Ephesians :
I, therefore, the prison-
er of the Lord, beseech
you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness

and meekness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism.





**WE ARE
MORE THAN
CONQUERORS**

**THROUGH
HIM**

**WHO
LOVED US**



ROMANS 8:37

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