



Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria

ST. MARY AND ST. MOSES COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Mesra/ Nasi / Tut

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Under the auspices and guidance of H.G. Bishop Mina bishop of Mississauga, Vancouver and west of Canada

The Feast of Nayrouz

Bishop Angelos, UK

The Feast of Nayrouz is a Feast of new beginnings in which, as with the beginning of the calendar year, we assess our lives and we try to start again. New beginnings are always wonderful, whether it be that new page in your book that looks so crisp, or that New Year's resolution of going to the gym right at the beginning of the year. Either way, we like fresh starts.

Newness must not be a patchwork, but rather a complete start; something that it is begun in a way that gives it the ability to grow; a seedling that is planted and given the potential to develop into a beautiful fruitful tree that gives fruit to all. This is why our Lord, in the Gospel of St Matthew reminds us, that we “do not put unshrunk cloth on an old garment”, for if we have a patchwork life it can be easily torn apart and is not sustainable.

When we attempt to only partially change our lives we discover very quickly that the change is temporary. We have seen many patchwork changes over the past months and years, changes that desired to take part of the old, and merge it with the new.



Patchwork changes that did not intend to eradicate any sort of corruptive elements but merely desired to place in new elements alongside. We know that does not work. We have seen the failing of this method in our lives, and it is clearly apparent that it does not work. Newness, however, must be placed on a very firm foundation.

Again in the Gospel of St Matthew, chapter 7, our Lord warns us that a house built on sand, on moving ground and uncertain circumstances will most certainly fall, while a house built on a rock, firm and founded, will most definitely stand and can grow. So too, must we place our new beginnings on firm ground. Whether in our own personal lives, newly emerging democracies, ailing economies, or decisions made on a daily basis, that rock is important. What is the rock? It is not an illusion, it is not smoke and mirrors, nor people who say things but cannot deliver, and it is not those who make promises and then decide not to fulfil them. It is a Rock built on Truth.

Change cannot be cosmetic, newness cannot be superficial, because we have been told in the Gospel of St Matthew 25 that “if lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.” With that shaky ground comes lawlessness, and we have seen lawlessness in many ways: at a personal level, with the persecution of Christians not only in Egypt but throughout the world, but also with the persecution of those who desire new starts in life and are not given the opportunity. We have seen lawlessness with the burning of churches, dozens over a series of hours; with regimes that come and go, all of which are built on sand and are not built on the rock. That rock is that which makes us firm where we stand and confident where we step, and because we are here in this place, across from the Houses of Parliament, we are thankful to this nation’s government, that was not so quick to judge matters.

Many conversations regarding ‘coups’ and democratic processes, have led to decisions built on that rock; decisions that were taken one step at a time, leading to wisdom that builds, wisdom that is, as we have seen in recent days thinking about our own brethren in Syria, now leads the world. It is that rock of certainty that we must abide by.

Our Lord is that element in our lives into which we must be deeply rooted. St Paul reminds us not to be a patchwork garment, but to be in the newness of Christ by “putting on Christ”; by putting on His Faith and His life, as well as that which He guides and inspires us to. Through putting on Christ, we are also empowered to do those things that can only come from Him. We are empowered because we are not only those who are preached the Resurrection but are in fellowship of His suffering and so therefore are conformed to His death and victorious in that Resurrection. We are not

bystanders, and we are not passengers. We are part of that Resurrection, the Resurrection that was there for the whole world, and that calls us all to victory. That Resurrection is real in our lives every day, but to be part of that powerful act we most certainly, as we as a Church have experienced and live, must have fellowship in His sufferings.

There was a wonderful statement by the head of The Coptic Orthodox Church, Pope Tawadros, when he was asked what he thought would happen when these churches were burned down so horrifically, and he said 'if these are but a small sacrifice then this is a sacrifice we present.' We have lost buildings, but we within our tradition and within our heritage have lost millions who died for their Faith, and who continue to die for their Faith. The concept of martyrdom is not just one of the past, it is now, and it is lived until today, not just in Egypt, but also in places like Nigeria, Iran, and China. These individuals are martyrs not because they choose to cause destruction, but are martyrs in that their lives are taken because they will not give up what they believe.

This newness also brings with it, in its final step, the beauty that is reconciliation. Reconciliation is what the Incarnation was for, to reconcile the world, just as we too must be reconcilers. We are told in the second epistle to the Corinthians that all things have passed away, we must put aside all the old things and look forward to the new, to reconcile and to grow together in our homes, communities, countries, and with our faiths. We have no way forward but reconciliation.

We are a reality in each other's lives, and we are a beautiful reality. The diversity of who we are is a testimony to the creative sovereignty of God, and so we, in gracious obedience to that sovereignty, must be reconciled and accept one another on grounds that we heard in today's Gospel, in freedom for all, a freedom of Faith, religion, expression, and of life. We must move forward leaving that which is defiled behind if we are going to make a fresh start.

I want to conclude with a very powerful passage that I find inspires me, especially in light of events in Egypt, here in the United Kingdom, Syria, and throughout the world. When we are encouraged not to say what we believe, or not to live or proclaim our Faith, and told sometimes that we have no right to believe at all, we stand fast because we are empowered through reconciliation and through newness in our Lord Jesus Christ. St Paul reminds us in second Corinthians that "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed..."

This is who we are. This is the power we have; the image and likeness of God within each and every one of us that calls us to be true, to be faithful, and to be new in ourselves every day. In our repentance and reconciliation and in a beginning that will bring hope to many both victoriously and valiantly; with pride and assurance that we are not alone, but rather in the hands of a mighty and faithful God Who says that in the world we will "have tribulation", we are of "good cheer". Why Lord, why would we be of good cheer? Our Lord would respond, 'It is quite simple, be of good cheer, for I have overcome these tribulations, I have given you victory and reconciliation and I have given you a power that will be with you all the days of your life, until we once more are reconciled in the Kingdom that is prepared for you.'

Glory be to God forever, Amen

The Feast of The Cross

By Thrice blessed Pope Shenouda III

From book "the spiritual meaning of the Cross"

The Church celebrates the feast of the Cross on the 17th of Tout, (27th or 28th of September), the day of the apparition of the Cross to the Emperor Constantine, and on the 10th of Baramhat (19th of March), the day when the Empress Helen found the wood of the Holy Cross.



The Lord Christ and The Cross

The Lord invited to bear the Cross and said: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24) (Mark 8:34). And He said to the rich young man: "Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor... and come, take up the cross, and follow Me" (Mark 10:21).

He made the bearing of the Cross a condition for the discipleship to Him.

He said: "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27).

He Himself, during all the period of His Incarnation on earth, lived bearing the Cross.

Since His Nativity, Herod wanted to kill Him, and He ran away with His mother to Egypt. When He began His mission, He suffered the fatigue of the service, and had "nowhere to lay His head" (Luke 9:58). He lived a life of pain, so that Isaiah said about Him that He is: "A Man of sorrow and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). He was bitterly persecuted by the Jews. Once they "took up stones again to stone Him" (John 10:31). Another time they wanted to "throw Him down over the cliff" (Luke 4:29). As for their insults and their accusation of Him, they are very numerous. All these are crosses other than the Cross on which He was crucified.

Christian Life Is A Cross

In fact, Christian life is practically a journey to Golgotha; and Christianity without a cross is really not Christianity. Those who have received their good things on earth will have no share in the Kingdom, as the story of the rich man and Lazarus explains to us (Luke 16:25). We say that, as regards individuals, just as we say it as regards groups and churches also. For Christianity is a participation in the sufferings of Christ, as St Paul said: "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Philippians 3:10).

He said also about this participation in the sufferings: "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

So that if you want to live with Christ, you must be crucified with Christ, or you must be crucified for Him, and suffer for Him, even if that would lead to die for Him also.

The Cross and Its Glories

In Christianity, you suffer, you find pleasure in suffering, and you obtain crowns for your suffering, which is transformed into glory. Christianity is not a cross which you carry, and grumble and protest

in your complaint! No, but it is the love of the cross, the love of suffering and sacrifice and fatigue for the Lord and for the expansion of His kingdom. It was said about the Lord Christ: "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame"(Heb.12:2).

The apostle Saint Paul said: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake" (2 Cor. 12:10) And after having been scourged, the fathers apostles "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41) But about the glories of sufferings, the apostle says: "if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Rom. 8:17).

Therefore he said after that: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). And thus the apostle saint Peter said: "But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed" (1 Peter 3:14).

Hence sufferings are accompanied by blessings. The Lord Christ has mentioned them saying: "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5: 11-12).

Here we find that the sufferings for the Lord are associated with joy and jubilation and with the celestial reward. Truly: because after the cross, there is resurrection and ascension, and also sitting at the right side of the Father.

If Christianity were only a cross, without glories, people would have been tired, and as the apostle said: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Cor. 15:19). But Christians in their bearing of the cross, look at the eternal glories "while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are

temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

Therefore, with the external fatigue, there is peace and consolation.

Saint Stephan at the time of his martyrdom, saw the heavens opened, "and saw the glory of God" (Acts 7: 55,56). What joy had he at that time!

There is another joy, which the martyrs felt; it is that they had completed the days of their expatriation on earth and the moment of their encounter with the Lord approached. Some of them saw the crowns and the glories and some others had holy visions that consoled them. We do not separate the cross from its rejoicing and its glories: also, we do not separate it from the assistance and grace of God.

The Christian might carry a cross, but he does not carry it alone, and God does not leave him alone. There is a divine assistance that supports and upholds. It is that assistance which stood with the martyrs till they supported the sufferings, and which stands with the faithful in every tribulation. There is the encouraging expression of the Lord: "Do not be afraid for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you" (Acts 18: 9,10); "Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

"They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you", says the Lord, "to deliver you" (Jer. 1:19).

How To Bear Your Cross Practically

The cross is a sign of love, bestowal, sacrifice, and redemption, which you carry each time you are tired in view of the practice of these virtues.

1. Be confident that God does never forget the fatigue of charity, "and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Cor. 3:8) Train yourself to give: whatever you bestow and

support and sacrifice and train yourself to give from your necessities, as the blessed widow had done (Luke 21:4)

Get tired in your service, because it is as much as you get tired, so much your love will appear, and therefore your sacrifice.

2. The Cross is also a sign of sufferings and endurance: The sufferings which the Lord endured for us, whether the sufferings of the body, of which He said: "They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones" (Ps. 22: 16-17) or the sufferings of shame which He joyfully endured for us, that is He was rejoicing for our salvation.

Therefore the apostle said about Him: "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb: 12:2). How great is the endurance when it is joyfully done. That is a lesson for us.

3. You will bear a cross, if you crucify the flesh with its passions (Gal. 5:24).

You make efforts to crucify a craving or a guilty desire, and you conquer yourself. You crucify your thoughts each time they want to make you wandering. Likewise you restrain your senses, you bridle your tongue, you constrain yourself, and forbid your body to take food, enduring hunger, keeping away from every appetising food, and from every corporal pleasure and from the love of money.

4. You bear your cross in your self-denial, by taking the last place, by not seeking dignity, by your giving up your rights, by not taking your reward on earth, by preferring others to yourself in everything with love that "does not seek its own" (1 Cor. 13:5), by humility and renouncement, and by keeping away from praise and dignity.

5. You bear your cross by bearing the sins of others, because our Lord the Christ has done so. There is no objection that you would bear the guilt of another one and be punished for that instead of him; or that you bear the responsibilities of another one, and to carry them on instead of him. And as Saint Paul said to Philemon

about Onesimus: "But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. I, Paul, am writing with my own hand, I will repay" (Philemon 18-19) As much as you can, participate in the sufferings of others, and carry them in their place.

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

"Whose faiths follow, considering the outcome of their conversation?" Heb 13:7

SAINT Anba Barsoma the "Naked" (El-Erian)

Anba Barsoma the "Naked" (El-Erian) was born in Misre (Cairo). His father called El-Wageeh Moufdel, was the scribe of the Queen "Shagaret El-dor", and his mother was from the family of El-Taban. When his parents departed, his uncle took possession of all that they had left.

Barsoma did not quarrel with him but forsook the world and lived the life of the righteous hermits. He lived outside the city for five years suffering the harshness of the summer heat and the winter cold. He wore no clothing except a hairy sackcloth, following the example of the Saint Anba Paul (Anba Paula), the first hermit.

Then he shut himself in a cave inside the church of St. Marcurius Abu-Saifain for twenty years in ceaseless prayer and fasting, by day and night. There was a huge serpent in that cave. When he entered the cave and saw this serpent, he cried saying, "O my Lord Christ, the Son of the Living God, who gave us the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and every power of the enemy. You granted healing to the children of Israel, who were bitten by the serpents, when they looked to the brass serpent. Now I look to you, O You Who was hanged on the Cross, so that you might grant me power to be able to overcome this beast." Then he made the sign of the cross over himself, and moved toward the serpent saying, "You trampled the serpent and the snakes, and You tread upon the lion and the dragon.



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?" Then he said to the serpent, "O blessed one stand still in your place," and then he made the sign of the cross over it. He prayed to God and asked Him to remove the beastly nature from it. As he finished his prayer, the serpent changed its nature and became tame. The saint said to the serpent, "Henceforth, O blessed one, you shall not have power or might to harm any man, but you shall be subject and obedient to what I say to you." The serpent manifested signs of submission and obedience, and became with the saint as the lion was with Daniel, the prophet, in the den. Then he left the cave and lived on the roof of the church. He endured the summer heat and the winter cold, until his skin became dark from much worship and asceticism. He remained in this state for fifteen years. During his days, a great persecution befell the Christian nation. The churches were shut and the Christians were forced to wear blue turbans. As for this saint, the ruler seized him, severely smote him, then cast him in prison. When he was released, he went to the monastery of El-Shahran, where he lived on the roof of the church and he increased in his asceticism. He did not replace his white turban. The rulers of that time from princes, judges and others, visited him and saw his white turban, but no one dared to force him to wear a blue one for they knew that the power of God was with him. The saint continually asked and supplicated God to take his anger away from His people. Having completed his strife, he departed at a good old age, in the year 1033 A.M. He was then sixty years old, and was buried in the monastery of El-Shahran in Helwan and it was named by his name later.

May his prayers be with us. Amen.

Question and Answer:

Question

Why did Christ have to die on the cross and not some other way??

Answer

Death on the cross was considered shameful, so the Lord chose the kind of death that was the most shameful and most horrible at that time. This is why Paul says in Hebrews 12:2 that the Lord, "endured the cross, scorning its shame." So there was humiliation on the cross, and because of this Paul said: "Let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach." (Heb. 13.13), for the cross was considered a disgrace. In the Old Testament, the cross was considered a curse, and it was said that whoever was hung upon a cross was accursed. The Lord intended by His crucifixion to bear all the curses which could fall on mankind, which the Law indicated (Deut. 28), so that He could give us a blessing, and so that there should be no more curses in the future. 85 The cross was considered "foolishness" by the Jews (1 Cor. 1:18), so Christ chose this disgrace and changed the cross into a sign of strength. Crucifixion on the cross was also one of the most painful ways to die, since it tore the tissues of the body in a most excruciating way, besides draining the body of its fluids through bleeding. So by His crucifixion Christ suffered the worst pains that mankind could ever be crushed by. Crucifixion was a manner of death in which the person who was to die was literally raised above the earth, so Jesus could say that after He had been 'raised' above the earth He would draw all men to Himself. Just as the Lord Christ was raised on the cross, so was He raised in glory in His ascension. By His crucifixion He has also raised us with Him, from the level of dust and earth. In His death Christ stretched out His arms to all mankind, in a gesture of His acceptance. of all people

VERSE OF THE MONTH:

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.. Philippians 1:21

Sayings of the Fathers:

- ❖ Some people give some of their money, others give all their money but the greatest who gives his life with love; As our good Savior said: There is no greater love than this, that someone lay down his life for his loved ones (John 13:15).....Pope Shenouda
- ❖ The Cross uprooted us from the depths of evil and elevated us to the summit of virtue. St. John Chrysostom do not be upset, for you are not wiser than God.....St. John Chrysostom
- ❖ The knowledge of the Cross is concealed in the sufferings of the Cross.St. Gregory the Great

THE CHURCH COMMEMORATES THIS MONTH “SYNAXARIUM”

- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Agabius and his sister Thecla (26 Mesrah)1 September
- ❖ Commemoration of annunciation, nativity and resurrection (29 Mesra)4 September
- ❖ Departure of St. Malachi (30 Mesra)..... 5 September
- ❖ Departure of Titus the Apostle (2 Nasi)7 September

- ❖ *Commemoration of Archi Angel Raphael (3 Nasi)*
.....8 September
- ❖ *Feast of El-Nayrouz (Beginning of the blessed
Coptic Year) (1 Tut)*11 September
- ❖ *Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist (2 Tut)*12 September
- ❖ *Departure Of Saints Agathon, Peter, John,
Ammon and Ammona and their Mother Rebecca
(7 Tut).....*17 September
- ❖ *Departure of St. Moses the profit 1485 BC (8 Tut)*18 September
- ❖ *Martyrdom of St. Wasilides (11 Tut)*19 September
- ❖ *Commemoration of the honorable Archangel
Michael (12 Tut)*22 September

- ❖ *Commemoration of the miracle made by St.
Basilus, Bishop of Caesarea of Cappadocia (13 Tut)....*23 September
- ❖ *Commemoration of the Consecration of the
Sanctuaries of the resurrection (16 Tut).....*26 September
- ❖ *Feast Day of the Appearance of the Honorable
Cross (17 Tut)*27 September
- ❖ *Second day of the Feast of the Appearance of the
Honorable Cross (18 Tut)*28 September
- ❖ *Third day of the Feast of the Appearance of the
Honorable Cross (19 Tut)*29 September
- ❖
- ❖ *Departure of St. Theopesti (20 Tut)*30 September

CHURCH SERVICES SCHEDULE:

PLEASE, CHECK CHURCH WEBSITE IN THE FIRST PAGE.

YOUTUBE SERVICE STREAMING ADDRESS:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_MI2B3NKLi1Y8P3nQR5Amw/live