



# Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria

## ST. MARY AND ST. MOSES COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH Diocese of Mississauga and West of Canada



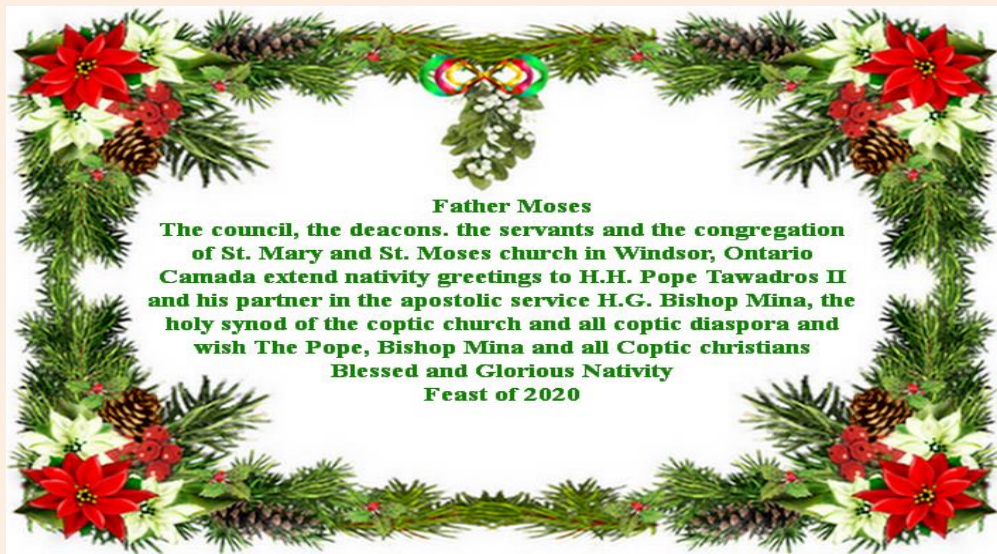
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Kiahk / Toba

| Issue 85 |

January 2023

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



**Father Moses**  
The council, the deacons, the servants and the congregation  
of St. Mary and St. Moses church in Windsor, Ontario  
Canada extend nativity greetings to H.H. Pope Tawadros II  
and his partner in the apostolic service H.G. Bishop Mina, the  
holy synod of the coptic church and all coptic diaspora and  
wish The Pope, Bishop Mina and all Coptic Christians  
Blessed and Glorious Nativity  
Feast of 2020

### *The Feast of the Nativity*

**Bishop Angaelos General Bishop of the Coptic  
Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom**

The feast of the Nativity, one of the major feasts in the Coptic Orthodox Church, is a time at which the faithful gather to commemorate the receiving of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, and His gift of salvation to all humanity. Though for many this season becomes overshadowed by frantic preparation for a number of gatherings and festivities, for the Coptic Orthodox faithful there is a variety of deeply rooted traditional practices



that enable all, regardless of age or circumstance, to fully engage in the true meaning and significance of the Virgin Birth.

As the largest Christian denomination in the Middle East, the Coptic Orthodox Church dates back to the first century, founded by St Mark the Apostle and writer of the second Gospel. The Middle East was a place of refuge for our Lord in His childhood, and it is poignant to realize during this season that the birthplace of Christianity is now a place most in need of the hope of the Nativity, being more commonly identified as a region overtaken by conflict.

Having said that, however, the Coptic Orthodox Church, among other Christian denominations within Egypt and the Middle East, continues to testify to the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, providing a source of light and hope for all despite the various challenges faced.

Along with other Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches, the feast of the Nativity is celebrated on January 7 every year, differing from the western celebration on December 25. This difference is due to the use of the Julian calendar in Coptic Orthodox practice, as opposed to the Gregorian calendar used by the western Church, this day always coincides with the 29th day of the Coptic month of Kiahk. Regardless of this distinction, however, the core of the celebration is fundamentally the same, serving as a joyous reminder to the arrival of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour to all who accept Him into their lives.

As part of their preparatory and ascetic practice Coptic Orthodox Christians, both in Egypt and around the world, begin to prepare for the feast of the Nativity with a dedicated fast 43 days prior. Fasting is a principal foundation in the life of the Church, and of the 365 days of the year Copts fast for more than 210. Of the 43 days of the Advent fast, 40 signify the period of time that Moses waited to receive the word of God in the form of the Ten Commandments, and three commemorates those days fasted by Christians in Egypt which led to the miraculous moving of Muqattam mountain. Likewise, Coptic Christians fast in preparation to receive the Word of God.

Hymnology is also a core element in the Church, and is used to celebrate the various seasons in the Church calendar. The feast of the Nativity falls at the end of the Coptic month of Kiahk, and throughout this month, all liturgical and worship hymnology is focused on the birth of our Lord

Jesus Christ. Liturgical script is seasonal, used to focus on the holy virginal Birth and the good news of the arrival of Our Lord. There are also extended praise and worship sessions with seasonal hymnology which focus on God's deliverance in the Old Testament with stories such as Moses's crossing of the Red Sea and the three young men in the book of Daniel who were delivered from the fiery furnace. Hymnology, along with other spiritual components, seeks to help worshippers focus on the deliverance of salvation through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

For the Coptic Orthodox community in the United Kingdom during this season, and alongside traditional hymnology, carol services are also incorporated into the calendar as a means of modern-day worship, merging ancient practices with the contemporary. All the praise and worship sessions during this month are often considered as the most joyous and widely celebrated among Copts. Churches are often at full capacity and the praise sessions extend until the early hours of the morning concluding with the Eucharistic Liturgy.

The days of preparation, spent in liturgical practice and worship sessions, draw to a close with the climax of the feast of the Nativity itself, which is celebrated with a midnight Eucharistic Liturgy on the evening of January 6. Family and friends congregate around the Eucharist, the most tangible manifestation of our Lord's sacrifice to, and love for, mankind to fully appreciate and receive the Word Himself.

The liturgical service is then followed by a fellowship meal where the faithful break their fast and continue to rejoice in the Nativity in a spirit of joy and love.

As we celebrate these festive days, and approach this joyous feast, let us remember our brethren in the Middle East, acknowledging that for many millions of Christians in the region, these days commemorate the Birth of the Incarnate Word, who is still the source of the hope and courage with which they live till today. Let us also remember all those who are in need of the love and hope that the Nativity brings, seeking to be a window into the heart of God, who gave Himself to us all so that we can in turn share that love and spirit of reconciliation with all who we encounter.

## ***THE LORD'S HUMILITY IN BAPTISM***

*From the book of feast of Epiphany for the thrice blessed Pope Shenouda*

***He was baptized instead of the human kind in entering the baptism***

The baptism of John was the baptism of repentance. The Lord Christ was not in need of repentance. Why then was He baptized?

***of repentance....***

Likewise, He fasted instead of us, while He was not in need of fasting, just as He was dead instead of us, while He was not deserving death.....

All this was in order to offer to the father a perfect image of the human kind, and to pay the price of our sins. Likewise, He presented Himself to baptism, in order "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 4:15), so that nobody convicts Him of sin .... in order to be submissive to the Law, before everybody, although He is above the Law.....

***Thus, He walked with the crowds, as one of them, presenting Himself to the baptism of repentance.***

What is this humility, which the Lord offers to us?! When John apologized saying: "I need to be baptized by You", the Lord replied: "Permit it to be so now"....

In the same manner He permitted to His mother who is exemplar in her purity, who gave birth to Him from the Holy Spirit without stain, to present herself "when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed ..... to present Him to the Lord" (Luke 22:2), while she absolutely was not in need of days of purification.

***The Lord Christ was not a sinner to present Himself to the baptism of repentance, but He was a bearer of sins. He has borne all the sins of the world.***

"Now this is the testimony of John" who baptized Him" (John 1:19....). Christ has borne the sins of the world, and descended with them to the baptism; likewise, He has borne these sins upon the Cross, and erased them with His blood .... "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).



The Lord Christ, although He was Righteous without sin, and defied the Jews later on saying to them: "Which of you convicts me of sin?" (John 8:46) ..... yet He accomplished the rite of the baptism of repentance. He did not omit this spiritual act to which the repented crowds presented themselves. We have found Him walking like the rest of the people who were sinners, and advancing toward the baptism of repentance.

All of them were baptized confessing their sins. But He was baptized bearing the sins of all the people.

He did this, lest a fault would be caught, or a defect would be counted, against Him. And also in order "to fulfill all righteousness".

*Also, in order "to fulfill all righteousness", His mother the Holy Virgin Mary acted with the same humility.*

It was mentioned in the story of her entry with Him to the temple:

[Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord: "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons"]. (Luke 2: 22-24).

It is astonishing that this expression is said about the Holy Virgin: "when the days of her purification.....were completed" ...!! The Holy Spirit had sanctified her womb during the holy pregnancy; and she conceived without the stain of the original sin; and was absolutely not at all in need of purification ..... but, in order "to fulfill all righteousness", she submitted to the commandment of the law, while she was not in need of that.

Verily there are matters which the human being is not compelled to do, but he does them in order not to scandalize others and in order to fulfill all righteousness....

*Also because of the humility of the Lord, He obtained the baptism at the hands of John.*

The greatest High Priest, who grants priesthood, obtained the baptism from one of his priests, from one of his sons.... from a person who had confessed saying to Him: "I need to be baptized by You" (Matt. 3:14); and likewise, had confessed saying: "whose sandal strap I am not worthy to lose"....

*The priesthood of the Lord Christ is of Melchisedek, and the priesthood of John is of Aaron.*

It is well known that the priesthood of Melchisedek is greater than the priesthood of Aaron, as our teacher the apostle saint Paul explained in (Hebrews 7). Likewise, Melchisedek blessed our father Abraham in whose loins Aaron was (Hebrews 7). Nevertheless, with all humility, He who was "a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4), presented Himself to obtain the baptism at the hands of one of the sons of Aaron!

*In this, there is also some veneration from His part to the priesthood in His time.*

Likewise, when He healed the leper, He said to him: "go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them" (Matt. 8:4).

*Verily the Baptism's story is full of numerous examples of humility.*

Also because of the Lord's humility, after all the glorious matters that appeared during His baptism, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the testimony of John ..... after all this "He went up on a mountain", in order to be tempted by Satan, and permitted Satan to tempt Him, in all audacity,

or more accurately speaking, in all pride ..... and the Lord replied to him in all quietness, and defeated Satan with His humility .....

*Also because of the humility of the Lord, He submitted to the Law in age as well as in baptism.*

He waited till He reached the age of thirty according to the Law; while it was so easy for Him to begin many years before that, He who at the age of twelve, amazed the old teachers, "and all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers" (Luke 2:47) ..... But He waited till the age of thirty, and waited till He was baptized, and till He passed a period of solitude upon the mountain .....and then He began working .....

*Christ humbled Himself from the beginning of His mission, in order to reply to the sin of the first Adam.*

The first Adam responded to the incitement to become like God (Gen 3:5). That was undoubtedly a kind of pride. Then the Lord Christ the Son of God came, "taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7), walking in humility, in His

birth in a manger representing poverty (Luke 2: 7), and also in His baptism at the hands of John who was in need to be baptized by Him .....

*John the Baptist who baptized Him, was humble.....*

although he was great, and the Lord Himself had attested of his greatness, and also the angel of the Lord.

## **SAINT OF THE MONTH:**

*“Whose faiths follow, considering the outcome of their conversation?” Heb 13:7*

### **ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST**



St. John, the evangelist, and apostle who was the son of Zebedee, departed. St. John Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth) said that St. John the Evangelist was originally a disciple of St. John the Baptist. He was the brother of St. James the Elder, who was killed by Herod by the sword. The Lord called him with his brother "Boanerges" (Mark 3:17), that is "sons of thunder," for their strong zeal and great faith. He was also the disciple whom Jesus loved. The lot fell on him to go to Asia. The people of this area were stiff-necked, so he prayed to Christ to be with him. He went to Ephesus, accompanied by his disciple Prochorus. They embarked on a ship, but the ship was wrecked on the way and every one of the passengers clung to a plank of the ship's wood. The waves washed out Prochorus to an island, but St. John remained among the waves of the sea for several days, until the waves carried him, by the will of God, to the same island where his disciple Prochorus was. When they met together, they offered thanks to God for taking care of them.

From there, St. John went to the city of Ephesus where he preached the word of salvation. Its people did not accept his message at first, until a day when an only child fell in the furnace of a public bath managed by the child's mother. They took him in haste out of the fire, but he was dead and his mother wept bitterly. At this time, St. John went to the child, prayed fervently to God, made the sign of the Cross over him, breathed in the child's face, and life came back to him right away. His mother rejoiced and she kissed the feet of the Apostle and tears of joy were in her eyes. From this time on, the people of the city came to hear his teachings and many of them believed and were baptized by St. John. This made the priests of the idols resent him and they tried to kill him several times but they could not, for the Lord protects all His chosen ones. After a great effort and many hardships, St. John led them to the knowledge of God and

ordained bishops and priests for them. From there, he went to other places in Asia (Minor) and converted many of its people to the Faith of Christ. This saint lived 90 years, and they used to carry him to the gatherings of the believers. Because of his old age, he only gave them very short sermons saying, "My children, love one another." He wrote the gospel known after him, and the Book of Revelation which he had seen on the island of Patmos, which is full of divine mysteries. He also wrote the three epistles known by his name.

He was with the Lord Jesus Christ at the Transfiguration. He leaned (reclined) on the chest of our Lord at the Last Supper. He asked the Lord, "Who is he that shall betray you?" He was standing near the Cross with the Virgin St. Mary and the Lord said to his mother, "Behold your Son," and to John, "Behold your mother." He was the disciple about whom Peter asked the Lord, "And this one, what of him?" The Lord said to Peter, "If it be that I wish him to be here until I come, what is that to you?" When St. John felt that he was about to depart from this world, he summoned the people and administered to them the Body and the Blood of the Lord. He preached and commanded them to be steadfast in their faith. He then departed from the City of Ephesus for a short distance. He commanded his disciple and others with him to dig there a pit for him. He went down in it, raised his hands and prayed and then bade them farewell. He commanded them to return to the city and to confirm the brethren in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and said to them, "I am innocent of your blood, for I did not leave any command of God that I haven't taught you, and now, let it be known that you will never see my face again, and God will reward everyone according to his deeds." When he said that, they kissed his hand and his feet, and they left him and returned to the city. When the people knew what had happened, they went out to where the saint was, and they found that he had departed. They wept and were deeply sad. They talked about his miracles and marveled about his meekness. In spite of the fact that he did not die by the sword, as the rest of the apostles did, he was equal to them in the heavenly glories, for his virginity and his holiness.

*May his prayers and blessings be with us all, and Glory be to God forever. Amen.*

### **Question and Answer:**

**Question**

**I heard a critic suggesting that, when He was creating the world, God needed Christ, so that the creation could take place, and that it says: "Through Him (ie. Jesus Christ, being the Word) All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." (John 1:3). Did God need Jesus Christ when it came to saving the world? And if this is so, does it not mean that God is not omnipotent?**

**Answer**

**By HH Pope Shenouda III**



If God had needed anyone else to do these things, He could hardly be considered Almighty!! But He is far beyond needing anyone else. In the creation, everything was created at God's word, through the Word or Logos, who is God's mental power speaking for Him, or the speech of God expressing His Wisdom. All this was so, long before the incarnation, and before the creation of Adam and Eve and the entire world.

Since God was able to create everything through His own intellect or wisdom, or by His, word, He could not have needed to create anyone else in order to help Him. The phrase 'God created the world' or 'the intellect of God created the world' or 'God created the world through His intellect', all point to one and the same meaning. God and His mind are one being, and the same goes for salvation.

**It is God who has saved the world, without needing anyone else's help to do so.**

If someone other than God had saved the world, salvation would not be boundless enough to redeem all people in every age from all their sins.

**The real problem, though, for the person who makes this criticism is the incarnation.**

The incarnation is a long subject, which we don't have time for here. In any case, it is not a matter for criticism.

That critic whom you mentioned, is trying to make out that God needed someone else to help in His plans, and that needing someone else would suggest that God was not Almighty. The answer to this, however, is that God never needed anyone else, either when it came to the creation, or the salvation of mankind. It is God who created everything, and He who redeemed all.

### **VERSE OF THE MONTH:**

For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior,  
who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11

### **Sayings of the Fathers:**

- ❖ God has become a righteous man who intercedes for sinners before God (the Father).  
*St. Ephraim the Syrian*
- ❖ I am amazed at him because he is laid in a manger while he manages the sea and the land.  
*St. Severus of Antioch*
- ❖ He The Lord did not come to make a display. He came to heal and to teach suffering men.

*St. Athanasius*

## **THE CHURCH COMMEMORATES THIS MONTH “SYNAXARIUM”**

- ❖ *Birth of St. Takla-Haymanot, the Ethiopian (24 Kiahk).....2 January*
- ❖ *Glorious Feast of Birth of our Lord (29 Kiahk) ..... 7 January*
- ❖ *Martyrdom of St. Stephen the Archdeacon (1 Tubah) ..... 9 January*
- ❖ *Departure of St. Theonas, the Sixteenth Pope  
Of Alexandria (2 Tubah) ..... 10 January*
- ❖ *Of the slain of Bethlehem by the order of King Herod  
(3 Tubah).....11 January*
- ❖ *Departure of St. John the Evangelist and Theologian  
(4 Tubah) .....12 January*
- ❖ *Commemoration of the Circumcision of the Lord Christ  
(6 Tubah).....14 January*
- ❖ *Departure of St. Andronicus the thirty-seventh Pope  
Of Alexandria (8 Tubah) .....16 January*
- ❖ *Consecration of St. Macarius church (8 Tubah) .....16 January*
- ❖ *Holy Epiphany of our Lord, God and Saviour (11 Tubah).19 January*
- ❖ *Commemoration of the honorable Archangel  
Michael (12 Tubah) .....20 January*
- ❖ *Commemoration of the miracle at Cana of Galilee  
(13 Tubah).....21 January*
- ❖ *Martyrdom of St. Demiana (13 Tubah)..... 21 January*
- ❖ *Martyrdom of Anba Behna (Bahnou) and  
Anba Klog (Bagoug) the priest (20 Tubah) .....28 January*
- ❖ *Commemoration of departure of the virgin Mary  
the mother of God (21 Tuba) .....29 January*
- ❖ *Departure of St. Anthony the start of Wilderness and  
father of all monks (23 Tubah) .....30 January*
- ❖ *Martyrdom of St. timothy the apostle (23 Tubah) .....31 January*

### **CHURCH SERVICES SCHEDULE:**

PLEASE, CHECK CHURCH WEBSITE IN THE FIRST PAGE.

### **YOUTUBE SERVICE STREAMING ADDRESS:**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_MI2B3NKLi1Y8P3nQR5Amw/live](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_MI2B3NKLi1Y8P3nQR5Amw/live)