



Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria

ST. MARY AND ST. MOSES COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Diocese of Mississauga and West of Canada



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Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt

**By: Metropolitan Yousef
Diocese of the Southern United States**

Our Lord Jesus Christ is unrivaled as the wisest man to ever walk upon the face of the earth. He walked with sorrow, love, grief, and happiness. Facing trials and tribulations, the Lord Jesus gave to His people wise words and actions that continue to give us guidance and encouragement two thousand years after His death. They speak to us today in the same manner as they spoke to people hundreds of years ago.



As we enter into TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF COPTIC CHRISTIANITY, I would like to reflect on the Lord Jesus' flight into Egypt, the establishment of the Christian Church, and the piety of our Coptic ancestors. As we examine our history and project our future, I hope you will find that as Copts, we are not separate individuals but ONE in the Lord Jesus Holy Name and that indeed we "believe in ONE holy, catholic, and apostolic church."

The visit of our Lord Jesus Christ to Egypt was a blessing to its people. Egypt was the only country visited by the Lord Jesus with the exception of Palestine. It provided reconciliation between the Egyptians and God following the Exodus plagues. The visit prepared the Egyptians for the dawning of Christianity, which would occur approximately forty years later at the hands of the apostle, St. Mark. The Holy Family sought shelter in Egypt until the death of King Herod. It is interesting to note that the Lord Jesus as a child did not use His power. He fled to Egypt although He had authority over Herod's soul. When an angel instructed St. Joseph to return to Palestine, the Holy Family left Egypt. This fulfilled what the Old Testament prophecy had foretold, "When Israel was a child, then I loved Him, and called my Son out of Egypt" (Hosea 11:1).

Indeed, the Holy Family prepared the way for Christianity in Egypt. An ancient Coptic legend says that as the Holy Child entered Heliopolis, "the noise of a rushing mighty wind was heard, the earth trembled, the idols crashed from their pedestals...." Apart from this legend, we are specifically told in Isaiah 19:1: "Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud and shall come into Egypt and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence and the

heart of Egypt shall meet in the midst of it." Egyptian conversion to Christianity two thousand years ago can be attributed to this historic visit of the Christ Child. Egypt was chosen by God as a place of refuge and truly the people abiding there were richly blessed.

"In that day shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar at the border there of to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and a witness unto the Lord of Hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppression and He shall send them a Savior and a Great One and He shall deliver them...whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless saying, BLESSED BE EGYPT, MY PEOPLE..." (Isaiah 19:19-25).

St. Mark, the founder of the Coptic faith, gave the Egyptians the distinction of having many "firsts" recorded in their history of achievements. According to tradition in all apostolic churches, St. Mark's home is well known as the first Christian Church in the world. St. John Chrysostom states that St. Mark was the first apostle to inscribe the liturgy in the form of a ritual, which was strictly followed in the celebration of the Eucharist. The liturgy would be memorized by his successors and later be written by Pope Cyril.

The first Gospel ever written was by St. Mark. It would prove to be the first attempt to present the entire "tradition" of the Lord Jesus into a continuous story. A large part of the Gospel of St. Mark was written while he was in Egypt. The Theological School of Alexandria, which dates to the beginning of Christianity, was also founded by this apostle. St Mark was the first of an unbroken chain of 117 patriarchs.

The history of Christian Egypt can also be held in high regard for its preservation of "tradition." Tradition in the apostolic age was the only source of Christian faith, doctrine, and worship. All of these were crucial in the formation and life of the early church. In the apostolic age the New Testament books were in existence but not yet officially canonized. St John the Beloved tells us, "that which was from the beginning WHICH WE HAVE HEARD, which WE HAVE SEEN with our eyes, which WE HAVE LOOKED UPON AND TOUCHED with our hands, concerning the Word of Life..." (John 1:1) comprises tradition.

In his Gospel, St. John further states, "HE WHO SAW IT has borne witness...his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth...that you also may believe" (John 19:35). St. Luke also pointed out that accounts of the events of the Lord Jesus' life "were delivered to us by those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the world" (Luke 1:2). Therefore, by His entry into Egypt and the tradition, which followed, the Copts were blessed with a strong foundation for the church, a foundation, which wars and rumors of wars, would not shake.

Our beloved Coptic Church has had many illustrious sons. St. Antony, St. Athanasius, St Clement, St. Cyril, Scholar Origen, and St. Pachomius to name only a few. It is well known to be the motherland for monasticism. The Coptic Church has survived the struggles of theological debates. Tragedies and persecutions with martyrdom as the end result have not weakened the Church. All of the courageousness and long suffering of its people has led to its further religious expansion in Egypt and from Egypt into the world.

A Coptic scholar once wrote, "The Coptic Church is like a historical museum; the old and the new are to be found side by side, for the antiquity of the culture leads to their being simply juxtaposed with no thought of the dialectical relationship between the two. Thus as the twentieth century ended, Copts old and new, modernizers and traditionalists agreed to interact and place their loyalty to Christianity as it was in the beginning."

As to present day exploration of the Coptic faithful, many pillars have been added to the foundation established by the Lord Jesus' entry into Egypt. Sunday School programs are progressive and the attendance is high, social

service programs in Egypt and the lands of Immigration have broadened in their outreach, education is stressed as a prerequisite in our church leaders, and publications and journals are at the highest level yet.

In the United States we have a School of Theology in Jersey City and a monastery in the desert of southern California. The Orthodox Church has been blessed with increasing numbers of churches and retreat centers. We continue to have churches being built and churches awaiting priests. Our beloved Pope Shenouda III is the gift of God to the Coptic Church in this century. Certainly, we have much to be thankful for and ongoing challenges before us.

For two thousand years the Coptic Church has kept the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, beginning in a period where tradition largely dictated church worship to recorded history in books with research to prove the history. With the increasing number of Coptic immigrants to other countries, such as our own, the Church of Alexandria has been opened up to the outside world. The spirit of tradition and rite has successfully been transferred and cherished by the faithful.

We can only speculate about the future while keeping the past endeared to us. The church must continue to witness for the Lord Jesus. Its members must carry the LIVING TRADITION to the universe. There are no boundaries for the steadfast and faithful. We must follow our ancestors footsteps, carry the Lamp after our early Fathers, and proclaim the ONE God!" It is our responsibility to fulfill the words of the Lord, "but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The year 2000 is indeed a blessed, historical year for our Church! The entry of the Holy Family into Egypt and the celebration of two thousand years of Christianity bring much happiness and joy to our hearts. With this feast must also come a realization that life cannot only be understood by looking backward, but it must be lived by looking forward.

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

Our heritage is great and our destiny is unimaginable. Let us pray that the Lord our God will give us the true faith and courage that will continue to bring honor to HIS CHURCH AND WE WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER.

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

By: Thrice blessed H.H. Pope Shenouda III

The Glorified Lord Christ lived with them in His body until He rose to Heaven then promised them the Holy Spirit to stay with them forever, the Spirit of truth, the Comforter. So what should we know about the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit, therefore it existed since ever. We read about it in the first verses of the Genesis Book. The divine response says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." (Gen 1:1, 2).

And Isaiah talks about the Holy Spirit and gives Him names in his saying: "The Spirit of the LORD... The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge



and of the fear of the LORD.” (Is 11:2).

And we add to that in the third Hour Prayer (Terce) of every day and say: “a spirit of prophecy and chastity, a spirit of holiness, justice and authority” and call Him by saying: “O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who is present in all places and fills all, the treasury of good things and the Life-Giver”.

And the Lord says about Him in the St John’s Gospel “the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father” (Jn 15:26). And the doctrine of being proceeded from the Father was mentioned by the Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in the Faith Creed. Yet our brothers, the Catholics add to it “Filioque” meaning “and from the Son”. And this is opposing to the Holy Trinity Doctrine. In assimilating the Holy Trinity to Fire we say: “Fire brings forth heat; and light proceeds from it” and we do not say that the light proceeds from heat! But the light and the heat both come from the origin, which is the fire and not one from the other.

The Holy Spirit used to work in the Old Testament as well.

In the story of Samson we read that “the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan” (Judges 13:25). And we also read that after Saul was anointed as king that “the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied” (1 S 10:10). This also happened when David was anointed by Prophet Samuel to be king “the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam 16:13). And the way the Holy Spirit came upon both Saul and David was through the Anointing Oil that the Lord ordered them to prepare in Exodus Book (Ex 30:22-31). And Aaron was anointed as a high priest when Moses poured from this holy anointing oil on Aaron’s head and anointed him (Lv 8:12), as we say in the psalm “It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments.” (Ps 133:2). And with this anointing oil the tent of meeting along with the altars and the utensils were anointed and became holy (Ex 40, Lev 8). With this anointing oil also kings and prophets were anointed (1 Kings 19). And as a result, to the anointing, the Holy Spirit comes upon them and so comes His gifts as well.

And we read in prophet Joel the Lord’s saying: “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.” (Joel 2:28)

And this is what happened on the fiftieth day (the Day of Pentecost), as St Peter the Apostle explained this verse from Prophet Joel’s Book (Ac 2:16, 17)

The Holy Spirit also could be transferred from one person to another.

This happened to the seventy elders on the days of Prophet Moses when the Lord said to him: “Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel. Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them” (Nm 11:16, 17). And here the bible says: “Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied” (Nm 11:25)

We notice that before Moses, when Joseph the Righteous interpreted the Pharaoh’s dream, “Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?”” (Gen 41:38). And here was the Holy Spirit’s gift interpreting dreams, i.e., the Spirit of knowledge.

Also there is another work for God’s Spirit in every art, so as to what the tent of meeting needed “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship.” (Ex 31:1- 5)

Here we see that the Holy Spirit works even in the talent of workmanship that is given to some even in jewelry and carving woods.

Among the most important characteristics of the Holy Spirit is that it is Who spoke in the prophets.

This is a statement in the content of the Faith Creed. This means that the Holy Spirit is the source of the divine response of the Holy books. the Holy Spirit was the source of all what the prophets and apostles said in the holy books.

In this St Peter the Apostle said in his second epistle “for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 P 1:21)

Nowadays, In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is given through three ways:

The Holy Anointing, Laying Priests' Hands and The Holy Breath.

As for The Holy Breath, it was written in St John's Gospel that our Lord Jesus, after His Resurrection, when He appeared to His disciples, the saints, in the upper room, He told them "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (Jn 20:21-23)

In the ordination of the bishop or the priest we breathe in his face and say "Accept the Holy Spirit", so he opens his mouth to accept the holy breath and says with the psalm "I opened my mouth and accepted myself a spirit".

As for Laying Hands, the Holy Spirit in the time of our fathers the apostles was given through the apostles laying hands. This was mentioned in giving the Holy Spirit to the People of Samaria. The Apostles Synod in Jerusalem sent them St Peter and St John "Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." (Ac 8:14-17) and the same was done to the People of Ephesus "And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them" (Ac 19:7). Same applied to the Priesthood Sacrament, St Paul the Apostle said to his disciple Timothy "I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands." (2 Tim 1:6)

The Holy Anointing was also known in the apostolic age. St John the Apostle says about that: "But you have an anointing from the Holy One..." (1 Jn 2:20) "... But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you." (1 Jn 2:27)

We, in anointing children after baptism: we anoint them with the Holy Chrism (Myron) and lay hands on them and breathe in their faces. And say to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit."

With the Holy Anointing Sacrament, we become temples for the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit dwells in us. St Paul the Apostle talks about that in his first epistle to Corinthians and says: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Co 3:16), and "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you" (1 Co 6:19). Then every one of should remember that on the day he was anointed with the Holy Chrism (Myron) that he became a temple for the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit became dwelling in him.

The Holy Spirit works in priesthood and priesthood is granted through the Holy Spirit. It has the power of forgiving sins. But someone may say: How is that? And no one can forgive sins except God alone! We say: Yes, the Holy Spirit that is in the priest is one who forgives sins. As we say in the Holy Liturgy "be absolved by my mouth through the Holy Spirit," so it is the Holy Spirit that forgives sins. And this forgiveness comes from the priest's mouth. And the absolution that the priest gives through the absolution prayer in which he says: may God absolve you, may God pardon you, may God forgive you. And the Holy Spirit is present also in all the Church Sacraments. He also is present in all the Holy Synod decisions. In the first decision that came from the Synod in Jerusalem on the days of our fathers the apostles, they said: "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us." (Ac 15:28)

The Holy Spirit works in the Service too. The Church fathers, the apostles did not start the service until the Holy Spirit came upon them and the Lord's promise saying: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me" (Ac 1:8) was fulfilled in them. The Holy Spirit was the One choosing the servants, like when He said: "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Ac 13:2, 4). And it was Him who directed the servants in their paths and worked in them and using them.

Asking for the Holy Spirit is a point of our daily prayer of the Third Hour (Terce). We ask it to come upon us and purify us from all defilement of body and spirit. And we cry to God saying: Your Holy Spirit, O Lord, do not take away from us.

It is part of our freedom to accept the Holy Spirit, work with Him, and go into the "Holy Spirit Partaking". And we are also free to reject and quench the Spirit and fight the Spirit. And the most serious thing is to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, meaning to reject it completely all through the life. But how beautiful is the bible's saying: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Ro 8:14)

Here I would like to warn those who are deceived and think that every spirit that leads them is God's Spirit!! The apostle says: "do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 Jn 4:1)

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

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

The most honored Layman Ibrahim El-Gohary

He was born in the eighteenth century, and his parents were poor. His father's name was Yousef El-Gohary whose trade was making clothing in Kalube. They taught him writing and arithmetic, and he excelled in them. He used to transcribe the religion books, and distribute them to the church at his own expense. He brought the books to Pope John (Youhanna) the Eighteenth, and 107th patriarch of Alexandria Who was enthroned from 1486-1512 A.M. (1769-1796 A.D.) The many books presented to the church by Ibrahim El-Gohary got the attention of the pope, together with the high cost of transcribing the books and binding them. The pope asked Ibrahim about his resource, and Ibrahim revealed to them his zealously and his godly life. The pope blessed him saying: “may the lord uplift your name and bless your work, and keep your memory forever.” The relation between Ibrahim El-Gohary and the pope became stronger from that time. When he started to work, Ibrahim was a scribe to one of the mamalik- The pope mediated with Moalem Rizk the chief scribe, and he took him as his private scribe. He continued in his position until the end of Ali Beck El-Kebir when Mohammed Abu- El-Daheb became the governor, and Ibrahim El-Gohary became the chief scribe of all of Egypt, a position which is equal to prime minister today.



Ibrahim El-Gohary became more humble, generous, and charitable. He attracted to him the hearts of all the people. Ibrahim then married a righteous woman who shared with him his good nature and character. She helped him in his charitable deeds, and encouraged him to build and maintain churches. A son was born to them whom they called Joseph, and a daughter whom they called Demiana. They lived in a place called "Kantaret-ElDekka". When his son grew up, his father prepared for him a private home furnished with the best of furniture, and prepared for his wedding day. But God chose that his son be with him before his marriage, and Ibrahim was greatly grieved. He then closed the home, and it remained closed. The death of his son was the most shocking event in his life, but his desire to help the widows, the orphans and the poor intensely increased. Everyone was so astonished for his endurance, patience, and his great control over his disappointment. When his wife resented the will of God, St. Anthony the great

appeared to her in a dream, and comforted her saying, "you must know that god loved your son, and he took him in his youth, and he loves his father for a reason, to keep his name pure, for the popularity of his father might have caused his son to shame him and ruin his reputation. this is a reward from God to your husband for his godliness and his righteousness. Be comforted, and continue in your good deeds." St. Anthony also appeared to Ibrahim El-Gohary, and he comforted him and strengthened his faith. When his wife rose up, and told her husband about her dream, he told her that he also saw the same dream that same night. They surrendered their will to god, and they changed their mourning clothes, and put on regular clothes. Their hearts were filled with comfort, and continued in their good and charitable deeds. Their Daughter Demiana also died shortly afterwards and she was a young virgin.

Ibrahim El-Gohary remained in his office until a coup occurred which forced Ibrahim Beck and Murad Beck together with Ibrahim El-Gohary to flee to upper Egypt. The new Governor Hasan Qubtan persecuted the Copts and forbade them to ride horses with saddles, and forbade them to use Muslims as servants in their homes, and did not allow them to buy slaves. The Copts responded by hiding in their homes and not leaving for many days. He also ordered to have an account of the endowments that Ibrahim El-Gohary's wife hid herself in a Muslim home to which her had made great favors. But some of those who did not honor his favors, betrayed him by telling his wife was hiding. the governor forced her to tell him about the places they hid their possessions, and they confiscated all the silver and gold utensils and their horses' saddles, and sold them for low prices. Some also Guided the governor to the house of his son which was looked after his death, and they also confiscated all its contents of furniture, and took them many days to sell them for they were plenty. The governor was called back to Istanbul, and Ibrahim Beck and Mourad Beck returned to Cairo on August 7, 1791 A.D. and Ibrahim El-Gohary returned to his former position, but he did not continue for more than four years, and he was loved by everyone. The people called Ibrahim El-Gohary the "The Sultan of the Copts" as it is indicated on the iconostasis of one of the churches in the monastery of St. Paula in the eastern desert, and also in the "Katamares" kept in the same monastery.

The famous historian El-Gabarty said about him: "He had made Egypt great by his capability which endured for long time. He was one of the great world statesmen with a great decisive mind. He treated everyone according to their abilities, and did things that attracted the hearts and the love of the people to him. In Ramadan, he used to send gifts to prominent and non-prominent Muslims. In his days, many churches and monasteries were built and maintained, and many

endowments of the best of land were given, with the necessary provisions and salaries. Anba Yousab the bishop of Girga and Ekhmim said about him: "He was one of the great people of his day, who was God-loving, giving all his possessions to the poor, and caring about the construction of churches. He loved all people of different religions, making peace with all, filling all the needs of everyone without prejudice." His religious work is as follows: Ibrahim El-Gohary was famous for his love of the construction of churches and monasteries, and repairing what was destroyed by the evil hands. Because of his influential position in the government, and his great favor to the Muslim rulers, he was able to issue regulations (Fatawi) to permit Copts to rebuild the destroyed churches and monasteries. He also donated many endowments of good land and money for the reconstruction, that amounted to 238 endowments as documented in the patriarchate. He was also popular for the trans-scrubbing of rare books, and giving them as gifts to the churches and monasteries. He was the first to build St. Mark cathedral in El-Azbakiya. The Copts were not allowed to build new churches or to repair the old ones, unless they get permission from the government, which were rarely granted.

One of the princesses came from Istanbul (Estonia) on a pilgrimage to Mecca passing by Egypt, Ibrahim El-Gohary made everything possible to her comfort during her stay, and offered her many gifts. She wanted to reward him, and he asked her to get an order from the Sultan (Faraman) to permit the construction of a church in El-Azbakiya where he lived, and asked her about some other things needed by the Copts. The Sultan issued the permit, but he died before the construction of the church, and his brother Girgis El-Gohary completed it. In order that the time of prayers be maintained in the church of the Virgin in Haret-Zoweila, he built a small church after the name of St. Mercurius (Abu-Saifain) beside it. This allowed him and the government Christian employees to attend the services and return to their work as the government allowed. He also prepared the materials for the oil of Chrism (Myroun) from his own money, and his brother Girgis carried them to the Pope. In 1499 A.M. (1783 A.D.), Ibrahim El-Gohary built all the northern wall of St. Antonios monastery, and built a water wheel. He built before that the southern and the western walls in 1498 A.M. The wall is known until today as El-Gohary's wall. He also renovated the building of the church of the Virgin in Haret El-Roum in 1508 A.M. (1792 A.D.). He also built the church of Abu Saifain in the monastery of St. Paula in the Eastern desert, and in the monastery of El-Baramouse, he built the church of St. Apollo and St. Abib (The church was demolished in 1881 A.D. to enlarge the church of St. John). He also built palaces to the Lady Virgin in El-Baramouse and the Syrian monastery. He

also built an extension to the southern end of the monastery of El-Baramouse, with a wall around it, and the extension was about 2400 square meter.

In summary, he built and maintained many churches and monasteries. He took care of the monks, and offered many offerings, candles, oil, veils, and church books to all the churches of Egypt. He also distributed charities among the poor and the needy everywhere, and gave them food and clothing. He gave special attention to widows and the orphans who had no one to help them, and provided monthly provisions for all their needs. His deeds were made known in his funeral eulogy by Pope Youannis, the 107th. Patriarch. He departed to his eternal home on Monday the 25th. of Bashans, 1511 A.M. (May 31st., 1795 A.D.) everyone grieved his departure including the governor Ibrahim Beck who walked in his funeral procession to honor him as he had honored him before his death. Pope Youannis eulogized him for his great love to him. He was buried in the private tomb that he built for himself beside the church of St. George in Old Cairo which had an oil lamp that was lit day and night. He died without leaving a posterity, but his memory lives forever. The society for the revival of the Coptic churches in Cairo took action to renovate his tomb in Old Cairo, and it has become a tourist attraction to all those who have heard about Ibrahim and his brother Girgis El-Gohary.

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

Question and Answer:

For: His Grace Bishop Youssef:

Question

WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S VIEWPOINT CONCERNING HOMOSEXUALS AND HOMOSEXUALITY?

Answer

Homosexuality is a sin condemned by God in the Old and New Testaments. Homosexuality was condemned from the time of Sodom where apparent homosexual activity among men was widespread in this city. The Old Testament considers homosexuality a sin deserving capital punishment. ***"If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them"*** (Lev 20:13).

In the New Testament St. Paul says, ***"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor***

idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9). In the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans (Rom 1:24-32), St. Paul also judges it as unnatural. Homosexuals are included elsewhere among the immoral people who, St. Paul says, deserve judgment by God (1 Tim 1:10). There is no example in all of the New Testament of approval, acceptance, or even tolerance of homosexuality.

It is not approved scientifically that the homosexuals are born with that feeling; but at one point of their life, they feel an exclusive psychosexual attraction toward members of the same sex. Our Coptic Orthodox Church does not condemn people but condemn their acts and would minister to homosexuals who wish to be freed from this inclination.

VERSE OF THE MONTH:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb 1:11

Sayings of the Fathers:

- ❖ If God is a single entity with one living, speaking essence, and life and speech are emanating from the One essence. So, Pronunciation must be born and life emanating from the one essence.....Late Bishop Anba Gregorios
- ❖ As the Lord put on the body, leaving behind all principality and power, so Christians put on the Holy Spirit, and are at rest.....St. Macarius the great
- ❖ Through the Holy Spirit comes our restoration to paradise, our ascension into the kingdom of heaven, our return to the adoption of sons, our liberty to call God our Father, our being made partakers of the grace of Christ, our being called children of light, our sharing in eternal glory, and, in a word, our being brought into a state of all “fulness of blessing..... St Basil the great

THE CHURCH COMMEMORATES THIS MONTH “SYNAXARIUM”

- ❖ Commemoration of the entry of Lord Christ to Egypt (24 Bashans)1 June
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Thomas the apostle (26 Bashans)3 June
- ❖ Departure of Lazarus the beloved of the Lord
Bishop of Cyprus” (27 Bashans)4 June
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Abe-Fam the solider and consecration of
his church (1 Baounah) 8 June
- ❖ Departure of St. Abram bishop of Fayoum (3 Baounah)10 June
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Abaskhiroun the solider (7 Baounah) 14 June
- ❖ Commemoration of closing of the Pagan Temples and opening
of churches by emperor Constantine the great (10 Baounah) 17 June
- ❖ Commemoration of honorable archangel Michael (12 Baounah)19 June
- ❖ Commemoration of honorable archangel Gabriel the announcer
(13 Baounah)20 June
- ❖ Commemoration of the consecration of St. Mina church in
Maryut and appearance of his relics (15 Baounah)22 June
- ❖ Departure of St. Nofer the Anchorite (16 Baounah)23 June
- ❖ Return of the relics of St. Mark to the new St. Mark Cathedral
(17 Baounah)24 June
- ❖ Commemoration of the pure and holy virgin Mary (21 Baounah)28 June

CHURCH SERVICES SCHEDULE:

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YOUTUBE SERVICE STREAMING ADDRESS:

www.youtube.com/channel/UC_MI2B3NKLi1Y8P3nQR5Amw/live