



Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria

ST. MARY AND ST. MOSES COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Diocese of Mississauga and West of Canada



1334 Benjamin Avenue. Windsor, Ontario Canada. N8X 4M9

Tel: (519) 252 – 7366

Fax: (519)252 - 5936

www.windsorcopts.com

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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

By Fr. Tadros Malaty

The Coptic New Year is the very first calendar ever known by man on planet earth! It goes back 4241 BC. The word "Nayrouz" is of Coptic origin. The stem is niaro-oo meaning: "the rivers." The suffix "ouz" is Greek, thus, the word "Niarrouz." Mid-September is usually where the waters of the Nile River rise, so the prayers are lifted to God for the rising of the waters of the rivers for irrigation and ask for His blessings at the beginning (crown) of the Coptic Calendar year. When the Persian ruled Egypt from 525-405 BC, they adopted the word and incorporated it in their language and took it to mean "the beginning of their Persian year," and called it "Nayrouz." The word "Nayrouz" in Persian, means "the new year." On celebrating this feast three things are stirred in our minds.



- Honoring the millions of martyrs who sacrificed their lives as sacrifices of love for our Lord who sacrificed Himself on our behalf.
- Joyfully celebrating the beginning of the Coptic New Year.

- Expressing of our flamed eager for the last advent of Christ. Through the last two weeks before the feast the readings of the liturgies of the Eucharist concentrate of the Parousia of Christ.

I asked myself; What is the relation between honoring the martyrs, the celebration of the new year and the Parousia of the Lord?

The Opened Gates of Paradise

As I started to speak to our kids in the Church about El-Nayrouz I asked, ?Is there a sun in the Paradise??

Truly the Sun of Righteousness, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the ever shining Sun. There is no place for sunset in Paradise; there is no night, no days, no weeks, no months, no seasons, and no years. But we attain a unique day without night, an everlasting day. In it we receive the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness that reflects on our souls and our risen bodies.

Through the celebration of the Feast of Nayrouz, we start a new Coptic year. At the same time we declare our eagerness to share with the martyrs, a new Day which they attain in Paradise. They have the experience of brightness, through which the brightness of the glory of Christ shines on them; they have no need of a sun nor a moon. There is no room for various seasons, nor of night and day. They are not in need of food. In the Feast of El-Nayrouz we are longing for the eternal life.

In the feast of El-Nayrouz we behold the opened gates of Paradise. We see our Christ coming to carry us on the clouds, together with those who already entered the Paradise. All of us will enjoy the divine throne in heaven.

O Lord, grant us to celebrate El-Nayrouz, so that we may ask for a blessed year for all mankind. And that every believer has the experience of Your marvelous Day.

Thus, all will enjoy the brightness of Your glory. Yes, Come quickly O Lord Jesus. Our hearts are enflamed with Your love. Our hearts ask for none except You.

Let me, O God, celebrate the Feast of El-Nayrouz unceasingly. Let me experience this joyful gospel, the gospel of everlasting unity with You.

Wondrous is the Son who paid the price of my trip to Your divine bosoms, and Your Holy Spirit who forms me to become a heavenly bride, carrying me as if with the wings of a dove that heaven

may celebrate my wedding!

I see You my beloved Christ, coming to me personally, you have chosen me to share in Your glory, You offered Yourself, a joyful sacrifice of love.

Grant me to become an icon of You, with a big heart, full of love to all humans, that, I may become a source of joy to everyone. You're dwelling in me, O Holy Spirit renews my nature, he transforms my dark tomb into a holy sanctuary, he converts my darkness into exceeding brightness!

Grant me with all my brethren, to fly and be with You in heaven!

Let me celebrate the feast of the martyrs as fit, that I may practice witnessing for You. Change my life to be full of joy with You, even at the moments of my daily repentance.

You see me my Lord rejoicing in You, and You become delighted in me. The heavenly angels see me coming to You, and they welcome me. They receive me with exceeding joy to join them in praising You.

The sinners see me full of joy, and they get filled with hope. They see me rejoicing, and they join me in my continuous repentance.

The prophets and the apostles and all the martyrs see me. And they praise You for letting me accompany them in Your kingdom!

What a wonderful thing, you delight in me, and so do all Your creation, in heaven and on earth!

But the devil runs away in front of me as he sees Your divine joy enlightens me and shines upon my face!

Glory is to You, the source of joy and victory. Grant me O Lord that I may celebrate the feast of the martyrs all my life, that, I may witness to Your joyful gospel, that, I may always be in touch with Your tremendous fatherly love. I see You anticipating with longing for me too.

REPENTANCE

By Thrice Blessed Pope Shenouda

As sin is separation from God, repentance then is returning to God. "GOD says: "Return to me, and I will return to you" (Mal 3:7). When the prodigal son repented, he returned to his father

(Luke 15:18-20). True repentance is a human longing to the origin from which it was taken. It is the desire of a heart that stayed away from God, and felt that it cannot go any further away.



For as sin is disputing with God, **so repentance is reconciliation with God.** * This is what our teacher Saint Paul stated about his apostolic work, saying: "Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading by us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God" but through it God returns and dwells in the human heart transforming it to a heaven. As for those non-repentant, how can God dwell in their hearts while the sin is dwelling therein? The Bible says, "What communion has light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14). · Repentance is also a spiritual awakening. * The sinful person is unaware of his state. The Bible says to him: "that now it is high time to awake out of sleep" (Rom 13:11). By this context, repentance is **the return of a person to himself.** Or the return of ones self to its original sensitivity, the return of the heart to its fervor and the return of the conscience to its work. It is justly said about the prodigal son in his repentance: "He came to himself" (Luke 15:17). He then came back to his alertness, to his correct thinking and to his spiritual understanding. ·

For as sin is regarded as spiritual death, just as the Bible says about sinners that they are: “dead in trespasses” (Eph 2:5), **then repentance is transfer from death to life** according to the expression of St. John the Evangelist (1 John 3:14). St. Paul the apostle says about this: “Awake, you who sleep; *Arise from the dead*, and Christ will give you light” (Eph 5:14). St. James the apostle confirms the same meaning by saying: “he who turns a sinner from the ‘error’ of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:20). Repentance is resurrection for the spirit, because the death of the spirit is separation of the spirit from God, just as St. Augustine said:

‘Repentance is a new pure heart, which God gives to the sinners to love Him with’. It is a divine act performed by God inside the person, according to His divine promise which says, “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, I will cleanse you from all your filthiness.... I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.... and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgements and do them” (Ezek 36:25-27).

Repentance is freedom from the slavery of sin and the devil

It is also from the most sinful habits and from running after lusts. It is impossible for us to partake of this freedom without the work of the Lord in us. Therefore, the Bible says: “If the son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). It is true freedom because: “whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34). We receive this freedom if by repentance, we stand firm in the truth - and not through vanity. “And the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). ·

Repentance then, is forsaking sin because of the love of God and the love of righteousness. Not all forsaking of sin is considered repentance. Other reasons are

fear, embarrassment, inability, preoccupation (with the remainder of its love in the heart) or as a result of unsuitable situations are not considered repentance. As for true repentance, it is the discarding of sin practically, mentally and from the heart, out of love for God, His commandments and His kingdom and the repentant's care for his eternity. ·

True repentance is forsaking sin without return.

THUS, have been the stories of the saints whom have repented, for example: St. Augustine, St. Moses the Black, St. Mary the Egyptian, Pelagia, Thais and Sarah. Repentance was in the lives of all of these and others, it is a turning point towards God, continued throughout life without return to sin. This reminds us of the sayings of St. Shishoy: 'I do not remember that the devil has tempted me into the same sin twice'. It is possible that the first sin was as a result of ignorance, negligence, weakness and unawareness of the tricks of the devil or a lack of cautiousness. But, after repentance and awakening, there is precision in life and caution of sin. As for the one who discards sin and returns to it, therefore sometimes leaving it and sometimes returning.... he has not yet repented. This is only an attempt towards repentance.... every time the sinner arises, sin drags him lower. If his freedom is struck down, he will not repent. ·

Repentance is a cry from the conscience and a revolution against the past. It is repulsion from sin, great regret and rejection of the old state with embarrassment and shame. It is therefore said about repentance that it is 'a daring judge.

Repentance is a complete change in the person's life, not a temporary emotion. It is a real and fundamental change felt by the person, as well as everyone that deals with him. His thoughts change, so also do his principles and values, his outlook on life

and his manner of speech, his habits and dealings with people, and most importantly, his dealings with God. The person also changes from within with a heart refusing the former loved sins. The love of God enters his heart and he becomes spiritually revived, a state of spiritual ecstasy which makes it very true to say that.

Repentance is the exchange of one lust for another.

It is the lust to live with God, instead of sinful and bodily lust. Apart from the negative side which is forsaking sin and its love, repentance has also a positive side which leads the person to the love of God, His kingdom and His ways. It is a warm feeling, making the person desire a pure life.

(CONTINUED)

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

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

St. Bartholomew

The holy Apostle Bartholomew, one of the twelve disciples. to this Apostle fell the lot that he was to go to the oasis (the great oasis, Al-Khargah). He and Peter went together. There he proceeded and preached to the people. He called them to the knowledge of God, after performing before them signs and wonders that amazed their minds. He had originally entered the city with Peter, who sold him as a slave. He worked in the vineyards of a rich man and whenever he trimmed the vine branches, they immediately bore fruit. It happened that the son of the governor of that city died, and Bartholomew the Apostle raised him up from the dead. Then all the people believed and he strengthened them in the



knowledge of God. After that, our Lord Jesus Christ commanded him to go to the land of the Berbers and sent St. Andrew, his disciple, to help him.

The people of that city were exceedingly wicked, and would not accept any of the signs or wonders the disciples performed. Yet the two disciples continued to preach and teach them until they entered the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, they appointed priests over them, built churches for them, and after that they departed. St. Bartholomew left for the cities on the Mediterranean coast, where the inhabitants knew not God, and preached unto them and converted them to the knowledge of God and the belief in our Lord Jesus Christ. He taught them to perform the works which were worthy of Christianity and commanded them to be pure and chaste. When King Agrippa heard of him, he was exceedingly enraged and commanded his servants to put him in a hair sack, to fill the sack with sand, and cast it into the sea. And so were consummated the struggle and martyrdom of St. Bartholomew.

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

Amen.

Question and Answer:



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



By His Eminence metropolitan Youssef:

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:

And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Matt 10:38

Sayings of the Fathers:

- ❖ Prayer is the source and foundation of innumerable blessings. It is very powerful. Prayer is an introduction to bring joy..... Saint John Chrysostom
- ❖ Do you want to acquire permanent prayer? Strive hard in prayer, and when the Lord sees your zeal, determination, and quest in prayer, He will give it to you..... Abba Makarios the Great
- ❖ The few minutes we stand before prayer have an impact on the spirit of prayer, and we must not neglect them.....Father John Kronstadt

THE CHURCH COMMEMORATES THIS MONTH “SYNAXARIUM”

- ❖ Commemoration) of Patriarchs; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (28 Misra)3 September
- ❖ Commemoration of Annunciation, Christmas and resurrection Feasts
(29 Misra)4 September
- ❖ Departure of St. Malachi the last profit of the Old Testament (30 Misra)5 September
- ❖ Commemoration of Archangel Raphael (3 El-Nasi)8 September
- ❖ Departure of St Poimen the Hermit (4 El- Nasi) 9 September
- ❖ Coptic new year (Feast of El-Nayrouz) (1 Tout)12 September
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist (2 Tout)13 September
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Sofia (5 Tout).....16 September
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Agathon, Peter, John, Ammon, Ammona and
their mother St. Rebecca (7 Tout)18 September
- ❖ Departure of St Moses the profit 1485 BC (8 Tout)19 September
- ❖ Commemoration of the honorable Archangel Michael (12 Tout)23 September
- ❖ Of the third general Council at Ephesus for trying Nestor the Archbishop
of Constantinople (12 Tout) 23 September
- ❖ Commemoration of the miracle made by St. Basilius, Bishop of Caesarea
of Cappadocia (13 Tout)24 September
- ❖ Transfer of the body of St. Stephen the archdeacon and protomartyr
(15Tout)26 September
- ❖ Commemoration of the consecration of the Sanctuaries of the
Resurrection by Pope Athanasius (16 Tout)27 September
- ❖ Feast of the appearance of the holy Cross for 3 days (17 Tout)28 September

CHURCH SERVICES SCHEDULE:

PLEASE, CHECK CHURCH WEBSITE IN THE FIRST PAGE.

YOUTUBE SERVICE STREAMING ADDRESS:

www.youtube.com/channel/UC_MI2B3NKLi1Y8P3nQR5Amw/live