



Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria

St. Mary and St. Moses Coptic Orthodox Church

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

PERSONAL TRAITS FROM THE LIFE OF THE VIRGIN

H.H. Pope Tawadros – Al-keraza

Our Mother the Virgin is full of virtues, but today I want to speak to you about something very small that I personally feel with our mother the Virgin. This noble human model enjoyed *inner peace*.

Our Mother the Virgin Mary is a wonderful example of a human being who possesses inner peace. I will read to you one verse from the Song of Songs:

"Who is she that looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and awesome as an army with banners?" (Song of Songs 6:10)

These words describe the bride, the Church of Christ, but they also especially describe the many graces found in the person of our mother the Virgin. These qualities can clearly be seen in her life. Although little is mentioned about her in the Bible, we see her "looking forth as the morning" in the Annunciation.

In the scene of the Annunciation, she appears as the morning light. The first time we encounter the Virgin Mary is when the angel comes to her. We all know the dialogue that took place between the angel and the Virgin. Yet we see in her **inner peace** because she lived in **faith and contentment with God**.

If you want to feel inner peace, live your faith and be content with God.

In her conversation with the angel, the words she heard were strange to her ears—beyond her age



and experience. Yet she asked modestly, and the angel answered her clearly. Then she said, **"Behold the maidservant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."**

She received inner peace from her complete faith and contentment with God. There is no other way—only through faith.

If you do not have faith, you will not feel peace. But the Virgin, though young, received the annunciation without being troubled, and she spoke with the angel, ending the conversation in peace.

Beloved, if you want to live in this inner peace, live your faith and your contentment with God in this life.

Even in the 21st century, when material concerns occupy everyone, faith remains the primary source of inner peace just as we see in our mother the Virgin.

Fair as the moon

The second scene in the life of the Virgin is the **Wedding at Cana of Galilee**, where she was *fair as the moon*.

To this day, we describe the moon as one of the most beautiful things, and when we admire someone, we say they're like the moon. In the same way, our mother the Virgin at the wedding in Cana was beautiful like the moon. In fact, we could say that **she was the moon of that wedding**, not the bride or the groom whose names were not even mentioned in Scripture.

The Virgin went to the Lord Christ and said only three words:

"They have no wine." In the Bible, *wine* symbolizes *joy*. So, it was as if she was saying: *They have no joy*. The hospitality drink of that time had run out.

With complete inner peace, she whispered those three words in the Lord's ear: *"They have no wine."*

She was prophetically referring to the **joy of salvation**.

The Lord responded:

"Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

He meant the hour of salvation.

Then we hear the Virgin speak her beautiful words to the servants:

"Whatever He says to you, do it."

This became the **shortest sermon recorded in the Bible**.

In this scene, our mother the Virgin gained her inner peace from **serving others**, from her love that moved her to help those at the wedding. She tried to solve the problem of the wine running out in a gentle, quiet way.

Your peace lies in your **faith**, and also in your **loving service to others**.

Clear as the sun

The third scene is where she is *clear as the sun*.

At the time of Christ's crucifixion, the physical sun was darkened. But the sun *shone* through the presence of **our mother the Virgin Mary** standing by the cross.

Jesus gave her to John and said: **"Behold your son."** And to John: **"Behold your mother."**

At the time of the crucifixion, the Virgin said the words we pray in the Agpeya (Book of Hours):

"The world rejoices in receiving salvation, but my heart burns as I behold Your crucifixion, which You endured for the sake of all, O my Son and my God."

We didn't hear her speak much, but we sensed her **inner groaning**. She was not disturbed.

The "burning heart" mentioned is a **heart full of mercy**. If your heart is hard, you will never feel peace.

Our Mother the Virgin had a **merciful heart**.

With that merciful heart, she said: *"My heart burns as I behold Your crucifixion."*

A burning heart is one that feels for others, that has compassion.

If your heart is hard—even if you speak loudly or give orders—you will not know peace.

Inner peace comes from a heart full of mercy, overflowing with acts of compassion.

Awesome as an army with banners

The fourth image: *Awesome as an army with banners*.

When the Lord Christ was a child of twelve years old in the temple, the Virgin Mary searched for Him among the elders and all those in the temple. Although she heard many things, she said nothing.

Instead, it was said about her: **"His mother kept all these things in her heart."** (Luke 2:51). We live in an age where everyone talks constantly, but **those who talk too much cannot feel inner peace**.

Our Mother the Virgin found peace in **keeping all these things in her heart**, not on her lips.

Her words were few, her speech simple and gentle. In that moment, she said nothing, didn't comment on anything. She just **kept all these things in her heart**—which means she preserved them **in a spirit of prayer**, because she was a praying person.

Because of this, she lived in **perfect inner peace**.

So, beloved ones, if you want the Virgin to appear in your hearts, acquire this virtue—the virtue of inner peace, your inner calm, your inner joy.

Just seeing the image of the Virgin Mary fills us with peace.

If you want to enjoy inner peace, remember these words: **“Who is she that looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and awesome as an army with banners?”**

We see all of this in our mother the Virgin. She lives in inner peace through her **faith, love, service, compassionate spirit**, and her **spirit of prayer**, which led her to keep all things in her heart.

The appearance of the Virgin Mary is a **historical event** that we have lived through. Many of the older generation have seen it and witnessed it—and we pass this on to each new generation.

We saw Pope Shenouda speaking on the 40th anniversary of her apparition. We saw also the saintly Pope Kyrillos during whose papacy the Virgin appeared. We saw bishops and patriarchs who lived and testified to these appearances.

All of these beautiful events in our lives are passed down from generation to generation.

And we must all feel this faithful intercessor—**our mother the Virgin Mary**, who intercedes for our race, because she is the pride of our race.

Let us learn from her the **virtue of inner peace**.

And today, as you attend this vespers service amidst much joy, ask God—today and every day in the Divine Liturgy—to grant you the **virtue of inner peace**, that you may truly be a **child of this great saint, our mother the Virgin Mary**.

VIRTUES IN THE LIFE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Fr. Hegomen Ephraim El-Anba Bishoy

Humility in the Life of the Virgin Mary

Humility is a trait loved by both God and people.

“For the power of the Lord is great, and He is glorified by the humble” (Sirach 3:21).

“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6).

Despite the favor and honor that the Virgin Mary received from God—

“The angel came to her and said, ‘Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you! Blessed are you among women... You will conceive and give birth to a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His Kingdom will never end.’ Then Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I do not know a man?’ And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God’” (Luke 1:28, 31–35).

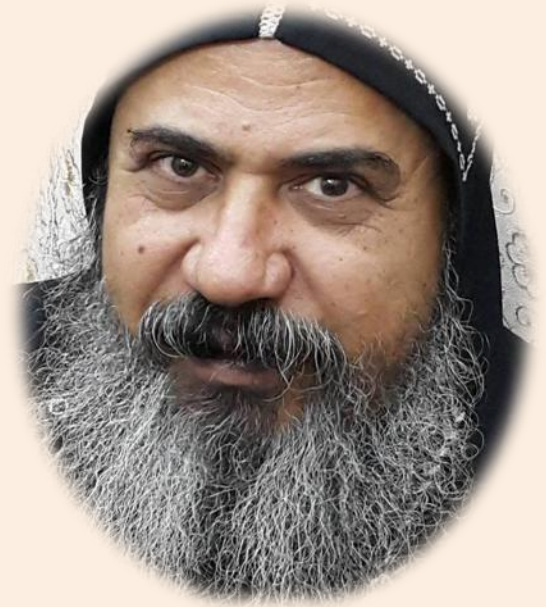
Even after this great honor, she humbly responded to the angel: “Then Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the handmaiden of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her” (Luke 1:38).

And after the angel told her about Elizabeth's pregnancy, she arose quickly to serve her. When they met, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to her:

“Why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”

And the Virgin praised God, saying:

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden; for behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name” (Luke 1:46–49).



The Virgin endured, with humility, both honor and the suspicion of some, showing astonishing humility and complete submission to God's will—from her childhood until the end of her life on earth—in the silence of the righteous:

“But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).

Faith and Prayer

The Virgin Mary’s faith appeared in many events of her life. It was unprecedented for a virgin unmarried woman to bear a child, but Mary had strong faith. She answered the angel, “Let it be to me according to your word”—so much so that Elizabeth blessed her for her faith:

“Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord” (Luke 1:45).

The Virgin had deep faith and a prayer life that reflected her strong relationship with God and the Scriptures. Her beautiful hymn after visiting Elizabeth was composed entirely of verses from the Old Testament:

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name. His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever” (Luke 1:46–55).

At the cross, the Virgin Mother stood in faith, contemplating the fulfillment of salvation, while the sword of sorrow pierced her heart, just as Simeon had foretold when Jesus was forty days old. She used to say:

"The world rejoices in receiving salvation, but my inner being burns as I behold Your crucifixion, which You endure patiently, O my Son and my God."

Her faith also appeared in her obedience and surrender:

She served in the Temple as a child.

She obeyed when sent to live in the house of Joseph the Carpenter by the order of the elders, since she was orphaned.

She went to Egypt with Joseph in obedience to the divine command.

She obeyed Jesus Christ's instruction to live under the care of St. John the Beloved.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S QUALITIES

H. H. Pope Shenouda III

a- Always put in your heart that God is a doer of benevolence, so that you can strengthen your faith with His care and protection. Always tell yourself "All things work together for good to those who love God." (Rom. 8:28). Have confidence that everything God does is benevolent, and that everything He allows to happen will no doubt lead to good whatever seems to be the matter, as we have discussed this issue before here on st-takla.org in other sections. God showed benevolence to Joseph when he was sold as a slave and thrown into prison without any charges. All these distresses were in God's plan for the good of Joseph, and for the good of the whole region. This is what Joseph told his brothers who sold him "So now it was not you who sent me here, but God." (Gen. 45:8), "You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day." (Gen. 50:20).

b- Have confidence that God is a father and that He is the Living One. No doubt, He treats His children with tenderness and gives them good gifts. God said in His fatherly tenderness, that He engraved us on the palms of His hands (Is 49:16). Even if a mother forgot her child, He won't forget us (Is 49: 15). In His fatherhood He gives us all that we need without asking.

c- What also strengthens the faith is to have confidence in God's ability to do anything. He loves and wants benevolences for you. He has the ability to do all, in spite of the fact that the matter would seem difficult.

When our Father Abraham raised his hand with the knife to sacrifice his only son Isaac, he had faith that God is loving and He inevitably wanted benevolence from all this. According to God's promise Abraham had full faith that he will have as many descendants from Isaac as the stars of the sky.

He even had faith that if Isaac died, then God was able to raise him from the dead and to fulfil His promise. "That God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." (Heb. 11:19). He is "A father of many nations in the presence of Him whom he believed--God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did." (Rom. 4:17).

Moses entered the Red Sea and crossed it having faith in God's ability to do anything and Joshua entered the Jordan river and also crossed it; each one of them with his people.

d- Have confidence in the God's judgment, and that all His planning is for good, even if you don't understand the depth of His judgment.

If you believe in God's judgment, you will live in peace and accept everything with satisfaction. But if your human mind doesn't have confidence in God's judgement you will live in murmur, complaints and psychological weakness. In all that happens to you say to Him; "I have confidence Lord in Your judgement and in Your good planning. And if my understanding is not paralysed, no

doubt, I will know later what You meant, just as Joseph did.” Have confidence, that God is a doer of benevolence, that He is a loving father, that He is wise in His planning, that He wants good for you and that He is able. All these things deepen your faith and grant you peace of heart.

Rites:

GLORY AND HONOUR, HONOUR AND GLORY TO

This mystery is also called The Mystery of the Return, as the priest says it after he returns from the Incense Tour. Here he raises incense over the altar while saying the Mystery of the Congregation’s Confession, saying, “O God, as You accepted the repentance of the thief on Your right while on the cross, accept the confession of Your people. Forgive all their sins for the sake of Your Holy Name which is called upon us, and according to Your mercy and not on account of our sins.” In this prayer the priest asks God to accept the confessions and repentance of his people, just as He accepted the confession and repentance of the thief at Golgotha. He also asks the Lord that He may prepare the congregation to partake of His Mysterious Dinner. He then goes once around the altar, raising incense, before departing via the sanctuary’s main door. Standing before the sanctuary door the priest again raises incense in the four directions (as he has done previously) then offers incense to the Holy Bible and the senior clergymen.

Having done this, the priest then hangs the censer in its place. It is preferable to follow the authentic Coptic tradition of hanging the censer by its chain in the centre of the Sanctuary’s entrance, as was done in the ancient Coptic churches. This ascending incense gives comfort to the spirit and soul of the congregation through its sweet fragrance, as it represents the prayers that are rising to the Throne of Grace which the Angel offers to the Divine Glory, as in the quote, “***And another Angel came and stood at the Altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the Throne. And the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the Angel before God***” (Rev. 8:3-4).

The priest worships the Lord before the altar, then stands to its right side until the end of the Doxologies and the Creed.

AUDIO SERMONS

MARRIAGE AND KEEPING CHRIST AS A CENTER OF RELATIONSHIP

Father Moses Samuel Samaan – Los Angeles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzYkr4dhu0k&t=212s>

SAINT OF THE MONTH:

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

ST. JOSEPH, THE CARPENTER

St. Joseph, the carpenter, who was worthy to be called the father of Christ in the flesh, departed at a good old age. The Holy Gospel bore witness that he was a righteous man, and God chose him to be betrothed to the all-pure, our lady, the Virgin St. Mary. When he finished his course, his strife, his toil in the journey together with the Lord and the Virgin Lady from Bethlehem to the land of Egypt, and the tribulations that befell him from the Jews, he departed in peace. When the time came for him to depart from this world, to the world of the living, the Lord Christ was present at his departure, and laid His hand upon his eyes. He extended his arms, and delivered up his soul, and was buried in the tomb of his father Jacob. All the days of his life were one hundred and eleven years; forty years before his marriage, fifty-two years married, and nineteen years a widow. His departure was in the sixteenth year of the advent of the Lord Christ.

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

Sayings of the Fathers:

- ❖ Prayer is a great weapon, an unailing treasure, an everlasting wealth, a calm harbor, and a stillness without turmoil

St. John Chrysostom



- ❖ The great work is for a person to confess his sin before God and to expect the trial until his last breath. *St. Anthony the Great*
- ❖ Never despair.. Rather say: Help me, O Lord. I am the wretched one, for I am not able to stand before them, and God helps you. *St. Isaac The Syrian*

Question and Answer:

Question

By: *H. E. Metropolitan Youssef*

What is your suggestion if someone, a really close friend, is on and off in his relation with me to a point that is really confusing me

Answer

The best thing in this situation is to talk openly to this person and ask exactly what is going on and why the change of mood every now and then. It is good to be friends with everyone and to try to keep a friendship; but if this friendship is not for building and is causing you such confusion and anxiety, then perhaps it is time to accept the fact that you would be just fine without this friendship. Friendship should bring joy, peace and love. A true friend is someone you talk with at ease without pretense and feel happy to be with when they are around.

A whisper in your ear

Fr. Ephraim Anba Bishoy

- ❖ Three things cannot be hidden: the Word, poverty, and love.
- ❖ He who bows his head in prayer will not bow his back in hardships.
- ❖ The highest form of self-esteem is silence, and silence is often more eloquent than words.
- ❖ I have never failed; I either win or learn.
- ❖ At the beginning of any relationship, emotions appear and at its end, morals emerge.

VERSE OF THE MONTH

**For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed**
Luke 1 : 48

THE CHURCH COMMEMORATES THIS MONTH “SYNAXARIUM

- ❖ Departure of St. Palamon, the Father of the Monks (25 Abib)1 August
- ❖ Departure of St. Timothy, the 22nd Pope of Alexandria (26 Abib) 2 August
- ❖ Martyrdom of Saints Mercurius and Ephraim (30 Abib)6 August
- ❖ The beginning of the Virgin Mary's fast (1 Mesra)7 August
- ❖ Departure of St. Pa'esa (Athanasia) (2 Mesra)8 August
- ❖ Departure of St. John the Soldier (5 Mesra)11 August
- ❖ Annunciation of St. Joachim with the Birth of the Virgin Mary (7 Mesra)13 August
- ❖ Martyrdom of the Saints Lazarus, Salomi, His Wife and their Children
(8 Mesra)14 August
- ❖ Departure of St. Moisis, Bishop of Ousem (11 Mesra)17 August
- ❖ Commemoration of the honorable Archangel Michael (12 Mesra)18 August
- ❖ Feast of Transfiguration of Our Lord on Mount Tabor (13 Mesra)19 August
- ❖ Commemoration of the Great Sign, the Lord had Manifested During
the Papacy of St. Theophilus (14 Mesra)20 August
- ❖ Feast of Assumption of the Body of the Pure Virgin St. Mary (16 Mesra)22 August
- ❖ Departure of St. Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople (18 Mesra)24 August
- ❖ Commemoration of the Holy and Pure Virgin Mary (21 Mesra)27 August
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Hadid (22 Mesra)28 August

CHURCH SERVICES SCHEDULE:

Please check church website in the first page

YOUTUBE SERVICE STREAMING ADDRESS:

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