



Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria

St. Mary and St. Moses Coptic Orthodox Church

Diocese of Mississauga and West of Canada

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

The Coptic New Year Nayrouz

H.E. Metropolitan Youssef
Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

“Blessed is God! In our time as well martyrs have come forth, and we have been made worthy to see people sacrificed for the Lord Christ, people who shed their holy blood to irrigate the entire Church. We have been made worthy to see people, advocates of piety, who are victorious, who are crowned.....and we now have these crowned ones among us.”

St John Chrysostom

Wishing everyone a blessed Coptic New Year!

The first day of the blessed month of Tute marks the beginning of the Coptic New Year and is the day set aside to celebrate the Feast of El-Nayrouz. On this feast day we honor those who stood and confessed their faith in the Word of God with firmness and commitment and with the totality of their lives.

The risen Lord sent His chosen disciples throughout the world with this message, “You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)” The disciples were the Lord’s WITNESSES. “MARTYRS” is the Greek word for “WITNESSES.” The early church thought of death as the complete and final act of witnessing. Thus, the term “martyr” has come to be defined as one who witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ by dying for His name.

During the first four centuries, the Coptic Orthodox Church produced an overwhelming number of martyrs whose steadfastness and perseverance was an inspiration to all Christian believers. Martyrdom was a fact of life for those who confessed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Egypt, known as “the land of the martyrs,” counted more martyrs in its midst than any other country in the world. Our early saints became legendary examples on how to be a faithful member of the Church. As early as May 8, 68 AD, St. Mark was slain on Monday following the glorious feast of Resurrection after being dragged from his feet by Roman soldiers all over Alexandria’s streets and passageways.

The Copts have been persecuted by almost every ruler of Egypt. Being abused, tortured and martyred under the Romans, Byzantines, and the Moslems has only instilled dedication and courage to believers to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Upon studying Coptic persecutions, many have asked, “Why did the early Christians have to suffer?” The suffering of the Christians can be addressed with four Biblical scriptures. First, Philippians 1:19-20 tells us Christians have to suffer to glorify God. “For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or death.”

Secondly, they had to suffer to prepare for the eternal Kingdom. “Which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which you also suffer. (II Thessalonians 1:5) Also Matthew 5:10-12 confirms this stating, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Finally, the saints had to suffer to be closer to God. “If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. (I Peter 4:14)

Those before us not only suffered, but they rejoiced in their sufferings. They prayed and endured their suffering in a steadfast way. They thanked God for their sufferings. We are told in Acts 5:40-41, “And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”

In remembrance of these great saints, the Copts adopted a calendar called the “Calendar of Martyrs.” This calendar truly honors the sacrifices of the Apostles, the disciples, and other saints of the early church. The Calendar of Martyrs sequences the years “in the year of the martyrs.” The calendar began its era on August 29, 284 AD in commemoration of those who died for their faith during the rule of Diocletian the Roman Emperor. Today, this calendar is still in use in our Coptic Liturgies and commemorates saints in all historical eras.

It has often been said that the “blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” All of the apostles were inhumanely tortured for their faith, and severely martyred. All but one. They died testifying of their faith in the Lord Jesus: of His Gospel, His life, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension.

I pray that we always hold dear those who suffered the dark ages of persecution. Always keep near to our hearts those Christians who dwelt on the earth but were not of the earth. Those who

sustained hardships, persecutions, and tribulations but continued to increased more and more. St. John Chrysostom passionately summarizes the death and dying of the fallen martyrs in this manner:

The death of martyrs is encouragement to the faithful, daring of the Church, confirmation of Christianity, destruction of death, proof of the Resurrection, mocking at demons, condemnation of the devil, teaching of true wisdom and a pious way of life, instillation of disdain for present material benefits and the path of striving for the good to come, comfort in the face of the misfortunes which befall us, an inducement to patience, instruction in courage, the root and fount and mother of all blessings.....The blood of martyrs nourishes the Church much much more than the moisture of dew brings gardens in bloom.”

The martyrs truly professed and declared their faith;

I BELIEVE. I BELIEVE. I BELIEVE UNTIL THE VERY LAST BREATH...

May the blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ and all the martyrs be with us in this upcoming New Year!

MARTYRDOM

By the Late His Eminence Metropolitan Arsanios

Metropolitan of Minya and Abu Qurqas

My beloved, martyrdom is the act of offering oneself. The Lord Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

Perhaps someone gives part of his wealth as tithes, or even gives all that he owns—like St. Anthony the Great, who left the entire world and went to live in the desert. But in martyrdom, a person gives his entire life, and this is far greater than anything else. One might give some of his time to God, as Sunday School servants, consecrated men and women, priests, or monks do. But in martyrdom, a person offers his whole lifetime, which is certainly much greater than all of this.

We must understand that martyrdom is the highest offering of love. The martyr is a person who loved God so much that he gave his entire life for Him, loved the Kingdom of God and heaven, and longed to go there. This is why martyrdom is a sacrifice of love.

Martyrdom, my beloved, is not only tied to giving and love—it is also connected to detachment. A martyr is someone who has renounced the whole world and has no desire for anything in it.

In this way, he becomes ready to leave the world without regret for anything. For if his heart still held any love for the world, that love would have drawn him away from martyrdom. Martyrdom, my beloved, is also connected—before anything else—to faith. Holding firmly to the faith was the first motivation for martyrdom.



By faith, I mean two things:

First, faith in God and in the true doctrine, which led the martyrs to confess the name of the Lord and die for His sake.

Second, faith in life after death—that their death was only a temporary stage after which they would immediately meet God and live with Him forever.

With this faith, our teacher St. Paul the Apostle said, "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." With faith in life after death, the whole Church could encourage her children to embrace martyrdom, for at the very moment their heads were struck off, they would meet the Lord Jesus Christ. As we say in our prayers, "There is no death for Your servants but only a departure."

DAILY MARTYRDOM IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE

George Daoud

The Coptic Church is known as "*the Church of the Martyrs*", so that it counts its years by the **Calendar of the Martyrs**.

When the era of persecution lessened, the spirit of martyrdom did not disappear. It continued in another form. The Desert Fathers became *living martyrs*, offering themselves daily through what the Church calls the **martyrdom of the will**.

St. Paul captures this spirit in his words: "*I die daily*" (1 Corinthians 15:31). Every Christian is called not only to confess Christ with the lips, but also to sacrifice **self-will** for His sake.

Today, let us sit at the feet of the Desert Fathers and learn how to live this daily martyrdom.

Biblical Foundation

- In Gethsemane, the Lord prayed: "*Not My will, but Yours be done*" (Luke 22:42). This is the supreme example of martyrdom of the will.
- St. Paul exhorts us: "*Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service*" (Romans 12:1).
- Again, he says: "*It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*" (Galatians 2:20).

This is why our Fathers left treasures, honors, and their families, fleeing into the desert to offer not just their bodies, but their will and their entire life to Christ.

1. Martyrdom of the Will – Through Self-Denial

Martyrdom of the will means denying one's desires, ambitions, and comfort in order to submit fully to God's will.

- **Abba Anthony:**
At the age of 20, he left his great wealth and entered the desert. He endured loneliness,

temptations, and the fierce attacks of demons. His daily martyrdom was not through blood, but by defeating the ego through prayer, fasting, and perseverance.

Lesson: Daily martyrdom is the lifelong battle against passions and desires.

- **Abba Arsenius:**

Once tutor to the Roman princes, he abandoned wealth and honor to embrace silence, fasting, and hardship in the desert. He endured all without complaint, relying completely on God.

Lesson: Daily martyrdom is patient endurance and hidden self-denial.

2. Obedience as Greater than Blood Martyrdom

The Fathers teach that obedience is a deeper form of dying to self than ascetic labor without discernment.

- **Abba John the Dwarf:**

In obedience to his elder Abba Pemua, he watered a dry stick for three years until it miraculously blossomed. Abba Pemua then said, *“Taste and see how sweet is the fruit of obedience.”*

Lesson: Obedience is the daily crucifixion of self-will.

One Father said: *“If a man does violence to his own will and obeys another in the Lord, this is greater than if he had given his body to be burned.”*

- Killing the self-will is a deeper martyrdom than physical death.

3. Endurance as White Martyrdom

The Lord said: *“By your endurance you will gain your lives”* (Luke 21:19).

The Fathers considered patient endurance in trials as daily martyrdom. Every insult, every hardship, and every temptation endured with thanksgiving becomes a crown.

4. Humility as the Path of Martyrdom

- **Abba Macarius:**

Known for his extreme humility, he endured false accusations silently, without anger or defense. His holiness was revealed not in words but in patience. He taught:

“If you want to be perfect, become like a dead man. A dead man does not argue, does not complain, and is not disturbed by what people say about him.”

Lesson: True daily martyrdom is dying to pride and ego.

5. Daily Dying with Christ

The Fathers often returned to St. Paul's words: "*I die daily*" (1 Corinthians 15:31).

For them, this meant:

- Mortifying the passions.
- Crucifying the ego.
- Living a life of constant repentance.

6. Spiritual Applications

How can we live this daily martyrdom today?

- **Obedience:** Submitting to God's commandments, the Church, and spiritual guidance even when it contradicts personal desires.
- **Humility:** Accepting wrongs, insults, or loss of reputation without revenge.
- **Self-denial:** Choosing prayer, fasting, and service over comfort and ease.
- **Forgiveness:** Crucifying the will that seeks revenge, and instead choosing to love as Christ loved.

Conclusion

Daily martyrdom is not about suffering for the sake of pain, but about transforming every trial into an offering of love for Christ.

It is the hidden witness of the heart that proclaims with St. Paul: "*For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain*" (Philippians 1:21).

The Desert Fathers carried the same spirit as the martyrs, not by shedding blood, but by shedding self-will through obedience, humility, endurance, and love.

Let us also take up this spirit: crucifying our pride, obeying God's will, and enduring our trials with patience until the day we meet Christ face to face.

Rites:

THE MYSTERY OF CONFESSION

by H.G. Bishop Mettaous

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.

FURTHER REMARKS ON THE INCENSE CIRCUIT

A lovely old tradition which is still occasionally followed today sees the priest place his hand on each individual's head while he is incensing among the congregation.

The reason for doing this is threefold. Firstly, it is to give them blessings; secondly, to recognise the attending

congregation and understand their spiritual standing during the mass; and thirdly, to receive a brief confession from those who might have trespassed after their last confession. Today it is left up to each individual to pray the following short prayer while the priest is touring with the incense, saying, "Lord Jesus Christ, forgive me my sins of which I am aware, and those of which I am unaware".

AUDIO SERMONS

COPTIC NEW YEAR

Fr. Anthony Messeh

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itE-S98AV_0

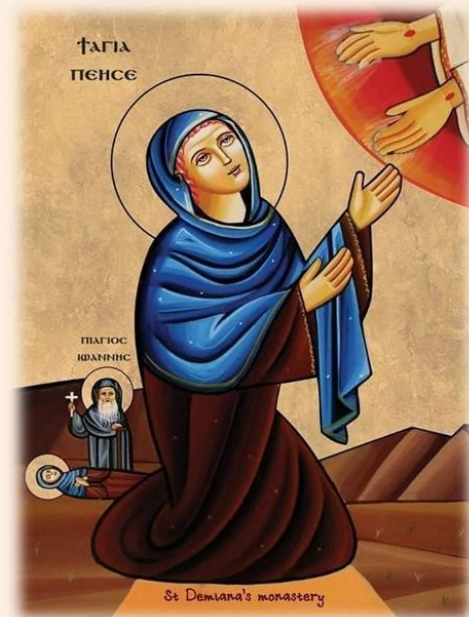


SAINT OF THE MONTH:

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

ST. PAESA

She was born in Menouf, to pious and rich parents. When her parents died, she turned her house into a shelter for the poor and the sojourner. She accepted everyone that came to her fulfilling their every need until she ran out of money. Evil people gathered around her, and turned her mind to the ungodly way. She turned her home into a house of prostitution. When this news reached the elders of Shiheet, they sorrowed for her with great sorrow. The elders called upon St. John, the Short, and asked him to go to her, as an act of mercy, and to aid her in saving her soul, in turn for the good that she had done for them. The saint obeyed the elders and asked them to support him with their prayers. When St. John came to where she lived, he asked her maid to announce his presence. When the maid informed her, Pa'esa adorned herself, and called him in. As he was walking, he was saying, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil. For thou art with me." (Psalms. 23:4) When he sat down, he looked to her and said, "Why did you belittle the Lord Christ, and do this evil deed?" She trembled, and her heart was melting from the words of the Saint who bent his head and started weeping. She asked him, "Why do you weep?" He answered, "Because I see the devils playing on your face, and therefore I weep for you." She asked him, "Is there any repentance for me?" He replied, "Yes, but not in this place." She said to him, "Take me wherever you wish." Then he took her to one of the convents close by the wilderness of Shiheet. On their way it became dark. St. John told her to sleep in one place, while he slept far away from her. When he stood up to pray the midnight prayer, he saw a pillar of light coming down from heaven to earth, and the angels of God were carrying the Soul of Pa'esa. When he approached her, he found that she had departed. Then he knelt down and prayed fervently, with tears, asking God to reveal to him concerning her fate. He heard a voice saying, "Her repentance was accepted in the moment that she repented." After the saint had buried her, he returned to the Elders and told them what had happened. They all glorified the Lord who accepts the repentants and forgive their sins.



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

Sayings of the Fathers:

❖ on enduring the struggles of faith: "We and not just martyrs will be witnesses to Christ. They are called martyrs because they endured everything to speak the truth when told to reject the faith. So we must not be overcome when our passions tell us we are to reject Him

St. John Chrysostom

❖ Martyrdom is a testimony of love for God, for there is nothing greater than for a person to lay down his life for his Beloved.

St. Irenaeus

❖ Martyrdom is the pinnacle of love, for there is no greater love than for a person to die for the Lord."

St. John Chrysostom

❖ The martyr is not killed, but rather sown as a seed for eternal life

St. Augustine

Question and Answer:

Question

By: H. E. Metropolitan Youssef

How did Christ that loves peace and is the prince of peace say " Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. "For I have come to set a man against his father " (Matt. 10:34-35)?

Answer

He meant the sword that befell the believers (Christians) because of their faith. In fact the start of Christianity incited the sword of the Roman empire, the Jews and the pagan philosophers against the believers. The saying of the Lord "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service." (John 16:2) was fulfilled. The martyrdom era which lasted till the reign of Constantine is a proof for that. There was also the division that happened between the members of the family because of the faith of some members while the others remained unbelievers.

For example, a son would believe in Christianity, so his father opposed him; or a daughter believed then her mother antagonized her. This way the division finds its way to the family between those who accepted the faith and those family members who opposed it, as the Bible said "Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." (Luke 12:53). Often the believer was faced with a tense pressure, even fight from his household members to forsake his faith. Therefore, the Lord continued his warning "and 'a

man's enemies will be those of his own household.' mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves "He who loves father or son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." (Matt.10:36-37). He spoke about the sword against the faith not the sword in the public relations. Therefore, His saying "I did not come to bring peace but a sword" was directly followed by His saying "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 10:33) The sword can be an element in establishing and applying the. spiritual Christian ethics. A division can occur between a religious girl and her mother about the subject of decency in clothing and make up. The same division can occur between a son and his father about the subject of serving the church or devoting one's life to serving the Lord or about health and fasting, or many other sides of Christian behavior and in all that, "A man's foes will be those of his own household..." Of the normal relation between people, the Lord said in the sermon on the mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matt. 5:9). The Lord Christ was called "Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6). When the angels announced His birth, they said "Peace on earth" (Luke 2:14). He said to His disciples "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27). The Bible says " Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (James 3:18), and "The fruit of the Spirit is love, Joy, peace. (Gal. 5:22).

A whisper in your ear

- ❖ Loyalty is very precious, so do not expect it from someone cheap.
- ❖ Everything in life is temporary.
- ❖ People talk about you in three cases: when they do not have what you have, when they cannot be like you, and when they cannot reach you.
- ❖ God honored you with your mind, so do not insult yourself with your actions.
- ❖ Our problems are temporary, but our God is eternal.

VERSE OF THE MONTH

He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him

1 John 2:10

THE CHURCH COMMEMORATES THIS MONTH “SYNAXARIUM

- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Moses (Moisees) and his sister Sarah (26 Misra)1 September
- ❖ Martyrdom of Saints Benjamin and his sister Eudexia (27 Misra)2 September
- ❖ Commemoration of the Annunciation, Nativity, and Resurrection (29 Misra)...4 September
- ❖ Departure of St. Eutychus (1 EL_Nasi)6 September
- ❖ Departure of St. Titus, the Apostle (2 EL_Nasi) 7 September
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Andrianus (3 EL_Nasi) 8 September
- ❖ Departure of St. Peimen, the Hermit (4 El-Nasi)9 September
- ❖ Feast of El-Nayrouz (Beginning of the Blessed Coptic Year) (1 Tute)11 September
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Daysa the Soldier (2 Tute)12 September
- ❖ Saint Theodora, the Repentant (3 Tute)13 September
- ❖ Departure of St Dioscorus the Twenty-Fifth Pope of Alexandria (7 Tute)17 September
- ❖ Departure of Moses the Prophet (8 Tute)18 September
- ❖ Commemoration of the honorable Archangel Michael (12 Tute)22 September
- ❖ Commemoration of the Miracle made by St. Basilus, Bishop
of Caesarea of Cappadocia (13 Tute) 23 September
- ❖ Commemoration of St Leontius (15 Tute) 25 September
- ❖ Transfer of the Relics of St. Chrysostom (of the Golden Mouth) (16 Tute) 26 September
- ❖ First day of feast of the Appearance of the Honorable Cross (17 Tute) 27 September
- ❖ Second day of feast of the Appearance of the Honorable Cross (18 Tute)28 September
- ❖ Third day of feast of the Appearance of the Honorable Cross (19 Tute)29 September
- ❖ Departure of Pope Athanasius the Second, the Twenty-Eighth
Patriarch of the See of St. Mark (20 Tute)30 September

CHURCH SERVICES SCHEDULE:

Please check church website in the first page

YOUTUBE SERVICE STREAMING ADDRESS:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_MI2B38NKLtY8P3nQR5Amw/video