



Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria

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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

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks;
for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus for you”.*

(I Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Metropolitan Youssef

Diocese of the Southern United States

On September 11, the Church celebrates the Coptic New Year, also known as the Feast of El Nayrouz. This is a time to rejoice, pray, and give thanks. But how can we truly rejoice, pray, and give thanks on this day, if we do not know the stories of our saints who were martyred for the love of our Lord.

This is why the Church follows the Coptic Calendar, also known as the “Calendar of Martyrs”, to remember all those who were willing to suffer for their faith in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. They did not hide their belief or runaway, instead they stood up happily and joyfully to the nonbelievers who killed them. Thus when we remember all these brave people, “We will rejoice rejoice in Your salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners!” (Psalm 20:5).



During the Divine Liturgy the story of saint of the day is read after the reading of the Acts. As we listen to their story, we witness their act and their determination for everyone to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Colossians 1:9). As you can see the Coptic Church is truly blessed to have so many heroes throughout her history and is filled with a rich and proud tradition. Thus I ask you

Mighty Angels to learn more about the Coptic Calendar and the stories of those who willingly and thankfully stood strong in their faith and understood the true victory of eternal salvation. “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57). This issue will focus on the events of the Coptic months in order to remember the brave heroes who kept the faith alive for us. May we all begin this new Coptic year rejoicing for the new beginning in our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for the true knowledge, and giving thanks for everything in His name.

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY CROSS

Carrying The Cross

by H E Metropolitan Serapion

Our Church celebrates two feasts for the Cross. One is on Paramhat 10th (March 19th), which always falls during Great Lent. The other is on Tout 17th (September 27th), which falls at the end of our celebrations of the Coptic New Year (The Feast of Nayrouz), and this latter Feast of the Cross is celebrated for three days.



Our celebration of the Cross is actually a celebration of Christ’s victory over Satan and conquering both sin and death. Also, in celebrating the Feast of the Cross, we are reminded that we are called to carry the Cross. As our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, we also must be crucified; we must have fellowship in the likeness of His death so we may enjoy the blessings of His resurrection, as St. Paul wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20)

Our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to carry the Cross. This calling is illustrated in the following sayings of our Lord: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow Me.” (Matt. 16:24). “And he who does not take his cross, and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.” (Matt. 10:38). “And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.” (Lk. 14:27) “Strive to enter through the narrow gate.” (Lk. 13:24). “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Matt. 13-14)

What Does It Mean to Carry the Cross?

1. Carrying the Cross is bearing suffering for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Carrying the Cross is partaking in Christ’s suffering. St. Peter considered that bearing suffering for the sake of Christ is the same as partaking in Christ’s sufferings; he wrote, “Beloved, do not

think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. 4:12) Those believers, who bear sufferings for the sake of Christ, partake of His sufferings. Therefore, St. Peter called them to rejoice and added, "If you are reproached for the Name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." (1 Pet. 4:14) But St. Peter also warns the believers not to consider all sufferings as partaking in Christ's sufferings. The person who bears suffering as a result of his own mistakes is not considered to be suffering for the sake of Christ or partaking in His sufferings; he wrote, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter." (1 Pet. 4:15-16)

2. Carrying the Cross in the form of spiritual struggles and self-control. The person who strives in his spiritual life to control his thoughts and senses, as well as struggles in the ascetic life of prayer, fasting, and prostrations (metanoias), is carrying the Cross of spiritual struggle. The early Church, especially in the first few centuries, experienced persecutions and presented thousands of martyrs. Then, the life of monasticism appeared, and thousands raced to struggle in the ascetic life by living in the wilderness and deserted places because of their great love for Christ our King. These ascetics, as they struggled in their spiritual life, presented a new and renewed form of martyrdom without shedding of blood.
3. Struggling in the service and seeking the salvation of all souls is another form of carrying the Cross.
4. Enduring with thanks the trials of illness and poverty is yet another form of carrying the Cross.

St. Paul Carrying the Cross:

The life of St. Paul presents to us a unique example of carrying the Cross in all its forms.

1. St. Paul suffered greatly for the sake of Christ. When our Lord called him, He said about him, "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." (Acts 9:16) St. Paul also talked about some of his sufferings when he wrote, "From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in cold and nakedness." (2 Cor.

11:24-27) In the end, St. Paul received the crown of martyrdom when he was beheaded during the reign of Nero.

2. St. Paul carried the Cross in his spiritual struggles; he wrote, “But I discipline my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached others, I myself should become disqualified.” (1 Cor. 9:27). Towards the end of his life, he wrote, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.” (2 Tim. 4:7-8)
3. St. Paul also carried the Cross of Service. He was the great evangelist who traveled land and sea, preaching the name of Christ in many countries. The Book of Acts mentions many of his journeys and how he suffered in his missionary work. He said about his own preaching ministry the following, “So that from Jerusalem and round about Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” (Rom. 15:19). St. Paul also carried the Cross of pastoral care when he cared for all the churches he established. His epistles to the churches in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Colossi, and Thessalonica witness to this fact. He also said that in addition to bearing sufferings and tribulations for the sake of Christ, “besides the other things, what comes upon me daily, my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?” (2 Cor. 11:28-29)
4. St. Paul carried the Cross of illness. He described this Cross as “a thorn in the flesh”. He wrote, “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.” (2 Cor. 12:7) St. Paul pleaded with the Lord to lift this Cross from him, but the Lord told him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor. 12:9), and he accepted this Cross joyfully.

Carrying the Cross with Joy:

It is not sufficient that we carry the Cross, but we must follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who carried the Cross with pleasure, as St. Paul wrote, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2). St. Paul himself endured the Cross in all its forms and wrote, “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Cor. 12:9-10)

We ask our Lord, who joyfully carried the Cross for our sakes, to grant us the endurance to carry, with pleasure, the Cross behind Him that we may have fellowship with Him and can say with St.

Paul, “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” (Phil. 3:10)

Rites:

rites for the Feast of Nayrouz

by Subdeacon Magdy Fanous, Translated and edited by Youth from the Diocese of Mississauga, Vancouver and Western Canada

The Feast of Nayrouz is celebrated on the 1st day of the month of Tute (September 11th) every year and continues until the 16th day of the month of Tute. All the prayers from the 1st to the 16th day of the Month of Tute are prayed in the joyful tune.

Raising of Evening Incense (Vespers)

Raising of Evening Incense (Vespers) begins with the prayers of the Eleventh Hour (Vespers) and Twelfth Hour (Compline) of the Agpeya (Book of Hours). If prayed in the monastery or convent, the Prayer of the Veil is also said.

Following the prayers of the Agpeya, Vespers Praises begin with the hymn **Μεθνος τηρου**, followed by the Fourth Cantic. The Psalm Adam for the Nayrouz (said on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday) or Psalm Watos for the Nayrouz (said on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday) are prayed depending on the day of the week followed by the Psalm and Theotokia of the day. The Explanation (Lobsh) of the Theotokia is then chanted in the joyful tune followed by the Adam or Watos Conclusion of the Theotokia; again, this depends on the day.

Offering of Evening Incense (Vespers) are then prayed. The bishop or priest begins with opening the veil of the sanctuary with **Ελεησον ημας**, ‘Our Father’ and the ‘Thanksgiving Prayer’. The Verse of Cymbals and Doxologies are chanted in the joyful tune, with the addition of the verses of cymbals and the doxology pertaining to the Feast of the Nayrouz. The Psalm Chant is chanted in the joyful tune and is followed by the Psalm Response for the Feast of Nayrouz. The Gospel is then read and is followed by the Gospel Response for the Feast of Nayrouz. The Offering of Evening Incense (Vespers) is then prayed in a joyful tune as is customary. The prayer is then concluded with the Concluding Canon for the Feast of Nayrouz.

Raising of Morning Incense (Matins)

The prayer of the First Hour (Prime) is prayed followed by the Morning Doxology and the Conclusion of the Adam Theotokia. Then the bishop or priest opens the veil of the sanctuary and begins the prayers of the Raising of Morning Incense (Matins) with **Ελεησον ημας**, ‘Our Father’, and the ‘Thanksgiving Prayer’. The Verse of Cymbals and Doxologies are prayed in the joyful

tune, with the addition of the verses of cymbals and the doxology pertaining to the Feast of the Nayrouz. The Psalm Chant is chanted in the joyful tune and is followed by the Psalm Response for the Feast of Nayrouz. The Gospel is then read and is followed by the Gospel Response for the Feast of Nayrouz. The Raising of Morning Incense (Matins) is then prayed in a joyful tune as is customary. The prayer is then concluded with the Concluding Canon for the Feast of Nayrouz.

Divine Liturgy

The prayers of the Third (Terce) and Sixth (Sext) Hours only are prayed. The Offering of the Lamb is then prayed, the oblation is chosen by the serving bishop or priest, followed by the Procession of the Lamb. The hymn Ὡς ἡμεῖς ὁρῶμεν is chanted. Following the Absolution of the Servants, the hymn Ὡς ἡμεῖς ὁρῶμεν is chanted followed by the Hymn of the Intercessions (Hiten). The Pauline and Catholic epistles are then read followed by the chanting of the Praxis Response for the Feast of Nayrouz, prior to the reading of the Praxis (Acts of the Apostles). The Synaxarium is then read and is followed by the Hymn of the Trisagon (Ἀχλὺς ὁ θεός) and the Litany of the Gospel. After the Litany of the Gospel, the Psalm is chanted in the Singary Tune followed by the Psalm Response for the Feast of Nayrouz. The Gospel is then read. Following the Gospel, the Gospel Response of the Feast of Nayrouz is chanted. The Divine Liturgy is then prayed as usual.

The following hymns may be chanted during the Liturgy:

- The Adam Aspasmos (Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἐν τῷ ἁμαρτίᾳ) maybe chanted following the Prayer of Reconciliation
- The Watos Aspasmos (Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἐν τῷ ἁμαρτίᾳ) maybe chanted following the Anaphora.

The Fraction of the Feast of Nayrouz is prayed. During communion, Psalm 150 is chanted in the joyful tune with the refrain for the Feast of the Nayrouz. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, before the final blessing and dismissal, the Concluding Canon for the Feast of Nayrouz is chanted.

AUDIO SERMONS

THE HOLY FEAST OF THE CROSS (SHORT)

By: Fr Mina Dimitri

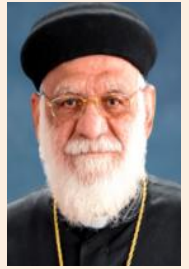
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEILZ5KOZmQ>



FEAST OF NAYROUZ

by Fr. Mikhail Mikhail

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iuv5eBX8UI>



SAINT OF THE MONTH:

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

ST. ABAKRAGOUN

St. Abakragoun, who was from El-Batanoon, was martyred. He was formerly a thief. Two young men plotted with him to steal. They went to the cell of a monk, and they found him keeping a vigil, praying. They waited until he had finished his prayer and had lain down. Nevertheless, he remained standing praying until they became weary and troubled. At dawn, the old monk went out to the thieves, and when they saw him they bowed down before him, and cast down their swords. He preached to them, taught them, and they became monks under his direction. St. Abakragoun fought a very great fight, and devoted himself to the ascetic life. The old monk prophesied to him that he would receive the crown of martyrdom for the Name of Christ, and his saying was fulfilled later on. Six years latter the devil incited persecution against the church, St. Abakragoun bid his spiritual father farewell and took his blessings. He went to Nakios, and confessed the Name of the Lord Christ before the governor, who was appointed by Maximianus Caesar. The governor tortured him much and then took him to Alexandria. Then he was tortured by hanging him on the mast of the ship five times, and each time the ropes broke. Then they placed him in a sack made of hide, and threw him into the sea



The angel of the Lord brought him out of the water, and commanded him to go to Samanoud. On his way he passed by the city of El-Benwan, and its people recognized him. They brought to him everyone who had an infirmity and they were healed by his prayers. When he arrived at Samanoud, God wrought on his hand's many signs. He raised, by his prayers, the daughter of Justus the Vizier from the dead. Justus, his wife, and all his soldiers, believed, and they all received the crown of martyrdom, and they were numbered, nine hundred thirty-five men. As for St. Abakragoun, they sent him back to Alexandria. After they tortured him with different kinds of tortures, they cut off his head, and he received the crown of martyrdom. The angel of the Lord appeared to a priest from the city of Menuf, told him about the place of the body of the saint, and the priest went and took it. After the end of the time of persecution, they built a church in his name in the city of El-Batanoon, and placed his body in it

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

Sayings of the Fathers:

- ❖ Let us beseech the martyrs and implore them to intercede for us, for they have great authority to intercede before the Divine Throne.
..... *Fr Athanasius Fahmy George*
- ❖ Martyrs do not fear death, for they know that they do not die but pass on to eternal life with those they loved.
..... *Saint Cyprian*
- ❖ The Cross is a strong wall and an irresistible weapon, the cornerstone of the rich and the wealth of the poor, the protector of the oppressed and the weapon of those under attack, the deterrent of desires and the foundation of virtue.
..... *St John Chrysostom*
- ❖ The Cross is the gate of glory, and through it the gates of Heaven, which were closed because of the first sin, were opened.
..... *St Cyril the Great*

Question and Answer:

H. E. Metropolitan Youssef - USA

Question

If death is the punishment for sin, and the Lord has lifted this punishment from us through the sacrifice on the cross, then why do we still die?"

Answer

Death currently is not a punishment.

In the prayer for the departed, we say, "For there is no death for Your servants, but a transition." That is why the Apostle said, in amazement, "O Death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

Death is a golden bridge to a better life.

It moves us from a mortal life to an everlasting one. It moves us from fellowship with sinful human beings to fellowship with the angels and saints. It moves us from earth to Paradise. More than that, it brings us into life with Christ. That is why the Apostle said, "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:23).

Death is also the means by which we lay aside this corruptible physical body. In this way, it becomes the first step toward the glories of the Church that will come afterward, when we are raised with a glorified body—a luminous, spiritual, heavenly body—as the Apostle explains in 1 Corinthians 15.

He says, “This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality... It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:43–53).

Therefore, through death we are freed from material existence and its burdens. So death is not a punishment.

If God did not allow us to die, it would mean that we would remain enslaved to matter and corruption. We would remain on earth instead of going to heaven—and, moreover, this world would not be large enough to accommodate everyone.

Did the Lord Jesus Christ, on the cross, offer Himself as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, including original (ancestral) sin?

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Question

The Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the

A circular icon with a rainbow gradient, containing the word "Answer" in a stylized font.

Answer

whole world. As our teacher, St. John the Apostle, said: “If anyone sins, we have

an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1, 2).

He is an atoning sacrifice for the original sin committed by our first parents. He is also an atoning sacrifice for the sins of all people throughout all ages, to the end of the ages. We receive the blessing of atonement for original sin in the Sacrament of Baptism, and the blessing of atonement for our actual sins in the Sacrament of Repentance.

All these sins are accounted for by the blood of Christ, which forgives and blots them out, as the divine inspiration says in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

Therefore, if a person believes and is baptized as an adult, the original sin and all actual sins committed before Baptism are forgiven in Baptism, provided there is repentance.

Thus, St. Peter the Apostle said on the Day of Pentecost to the Jews who believed: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38).

As for the sins a person commits after Baptism, they are forgiven in the Sacrament of Repentance.

A whisper in your ear:

- ❖ On this feast, let us ask God to grant us steadfast hearts, so that we may carry our cross with joy and proclaim the name of Christ through our actions before our words, as the Lord said: “And you shall be witnesses to Me...” (Acts 1:8).
- ❖ Bearing witness to the name of Christ does not mean only that a person dies for his faith, but that he bears witness to Christ through his life: in his love, patience, forgiveness, and steadfastness in the truth. Everyone who lives according to the Gospel of Christ is a witness to His name.
- ❖ May the Cross of Christ be a light in our hearts, and may our lives be a testimony to His love.
- ❖ On the Feast of the Cross, we lift our eyes to the wood of love upon which Christ revealed the greatest act of self-giving. The Cross was not the end of suffering, but the beginning of resurrection and victory.
- ❖ Put God first, and He will set everything else in order for you.
- ❖ Do not delay repentance, for time is never guaranteed.
- ❖ Guard your tongue; it has the power to build up or tear down.

VERSE OF THE MONTH

*And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8*

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 Peemen the Hermit (4 El- Nasi)9 September
- ❖ Coptic new year (Feast of El-Nayrouz) (1 Tout)11 September
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist (2 Tout)12 September
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Sofia (5 Tout).....15 September
- ❖ Martyrdom of St. Agathon, Peter, John, Ammon, Ammona and
their mother St. Rebecca (7 Tout)17 September
- ❖ Departure of St Moses the profit 1485 BC (8 Tout)18 September
- ❖ Commemoration of the honorable Archangel Michael (12 Tout)22 September
- ❖ Of the third general Council at Ephesus for trying Nestor the Archbishop
of Constantinople (12 Tout) 22 September
- ❖ Commemoration of the miracle made by St. Basilus, Bishop of Caesarea
of Cappadocia (13 Tout)23 September
- ❖ Transfer of the body of St. Stephen the archdeacon and protomartyr
(15 Tout).....25 September
- ❖ Commemoration of the consecration of the Sanctuaries of the
Resurrection by Pope Athanasius (16 Tout)26 September
- ❖ Feast of the appearance of the holy Cross for 3 days (17 Tout)27September

CHURCH SERVICES SCHEDULE:

Please check church website in the first page

YOUTUBE SERVICE STREAMING ADDRESS:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_Ml2B3NKLl1Y8P3nQR5Amw/video