



EL-MANARA

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"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men." - Luke 2:52

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PATRIARCH ABUNE PAULOSE OF ETHIOPIA ENTERS ETERNAL REST



Addis Ababa: His Holiness Abune Paulos, Patriarch and Catholicos of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Archbishop of Axum and Ichege of the See of Saint Teklehaimanot passed away last night in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He was 76 years old. Official

sources has confirmed the demise of the Patriarch .The Patriarch was seriously ill and was admitted to the Dejazmach Balcha Hospital in Addis Ababa. It has been reported that the Patriarch has been undergoing a medication for a long time. The body of the deceased Patriarch is presently at the Balcha Hospital. The date of funeral has not been confirmed yet.

May Lord have mercy upon the soul of His Holiness Patriarch Abune Paulose of Ethiopia.

TONY ABBOTT VISITS ST MARK'S COPTIC CHURCH, ARNCLIFFE

By JOHN NOUR



Photo by: George Iskander. From Left to Right : Rev. Fr. Augustinous, Mr. David Coleman, Craig Kelly MP, Senator Concetta Fierravanti Wells, Rev. Fr. Jonathan, John Flower Rockdale MP, Mrs. Margie Abbott, Hon. Tony Abbott opposition leader, Rev. Fr. Jacob Magdy, Mr. Scott Morrison, Mr. Mark Couré MP, Mr. Mark Speakman MP, Mr. John Nour

On Sun. 19th of Aug.2012 the Hon. Tony Abbott The leader of the Liberal opposition party of Australia visited St. Marks Coptic Church Arncliffe accompanied by his wife Mrs Margie Abbott.

Also attended the visit The Hon. Mr Scott Morrison (shadow Immigration and citizenship minister) and member for Cook, the Hon. Senator Concetta Fierravanti Wells (Shadow minister for Aging and Mental health), also Mr Craig Kelly MP for Hughes with his wife Vicki Kelly, also Mr David Coleman the

new Liberal candidate for banks.

Three state members of parliament from the NSW Government came to represent Barry O'Farrell (the premier of NSW): Mark Couré member for Oatley, Mark Speakman member for Cronulla and John Flowers member for Rockdale.

St. Mark Coptic church was over crowded with more than 3000 people that came to welcome the Hon. Leader of the opposition Mr Tony Abbott, his wife
(continued on page 3...)

HIS GRACE BISHOP YOUSTOS VISITED SYDNEY



His Grace Bishop Youstos visited Sydney on the 27th of July - 10th August. He blessed the congregation with Leading liturgies in many churches along with conducting vesper prayers. His Grace also attended many occasions and visted sick people. The purpose of his visted was to attended to the welfare of the monks of St Anthony's Monestry. Monks that are serving in the Sydney Diocese.

HIS GRACE BISHOP YOUNNES PASSES THROUGH SYDNEY FOR TWO DAYS

His Grace Bishop Younes visited Sydney from the 8th-10th, blessing us with vespers, midnight praises and a liturgy.

Known for his gift in uniting churches through praises, the Coptic Church at St Mary and St Mina's Cathedral in Bexley could be heard from the heavens as hundereds joined in one voice to pray



the midnight praises (Tasbeha).

11 Misra, 1728 AM
Friday 17th of August, 2012
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Bishop's Office

Condolences on the departure of His Holiness Abune Paulos I, Patriarch and Catholicos of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Archbishop of Axum and Ichege of the See of Saint Teklehaimano

In the name of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. *"Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful"* (Ps 116: 15). On behalf of the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions of the Coptic Orthodox Church, we offer to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church the most profound condolences and the deepest sympathy on the departure of **His Holiness Abune Paulos I, Patriarch and Catholicos of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Archbishop of Axum and Ichege of the See of Saint Teklehaimano.**

As His Holiness was a true Pontiff-the bridge between God and man, the good and merciful God, to whom His Holiness brought so many souls, will welcome him home; *"and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."* 2Peter 1:11

It is an extremely sad time for all of us, yet there is definitely a sense of relief that His Holiness is no longer suffering, and that His Holiness has gone to a better place into the hands of our Merciful God. *"And whom he justified, them he also glorified"* (Rom 8:30).

As The Chief Shepherd for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, His Holiness reigned with great dignity during a period of considerable change in international affairs giving his life to his church; caring for his people and defending their rights with wisdom and courage giving unforgettable example of leadership and service.

May God the Father of us all grant the Ethiopian Orthodox Church the solace and consolation and repose His Holiness's soul in the Paradise of Joy. *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us."* Romans 8:18

Sincerely in Christ,
Bishop Daniel
Coptic Orthodox Church
Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions

Bishop Daniel
With the Grace of God
Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions

THE LIFE OF DISCIPLESHIP

by HH POPE SHENOUDA III

How can we be true disciples? How do we make others true disciples? His Holiness examines these issues properly in an easy-to-read article.

In your discipleship you do not learn from the words of your teachers, but from their behaviour and way of life. Even when they say nothing, you still absorb their way of living, by absorbing the good qualities, standards and patterns which they demonstrate in their life. The ear is not the only means of learning, the eye is too. There is the story of St Anba Sisoies who was so humble that he would not give any instruction to those who came wanting to be his pupils. When the fathers criticised him for not giving any guidance to a new brother whom they had sent to learn from him, he said to them: I am neither a leader nor a teacher. But if that young man wishes to learn something, then if there is anything that I can teach him, let him look at how I behave, and how I act, and let him do likewise, without my having to instruct him.

A case of learning from the example of someone's life, is that of the three brothers who visited Anba Antonious. Two of them asked him questions, while the third sat silent. When the saint asked the silent one why he had not asked about anything, the brother replied: It is enough for me just to look at your face, father.

Just looking at the face of the saint was enough for the brother to learn a lesson from him, even without that holy man saying a word to him. He saw how the saint spoke and answered and observed his gentle, kind and humble features... and he learned. As another example we have the occasion when Pope Theophilus visited the desert of Shiheet. The fathers said to St Anba Paphnuti: Say something to help the Pope. And he replied to them: If he has not been able to benefit from my silence, then it is unlikely that he will be helped by my words, either.

So in fact one should be a disciple of silence as much as of beneficial words. Perhaps one of the best examples of this is that of St Arsanious the Great, from whose silence many learned as disciples, and from whose good model of behaviour many profited more than from the words of other teachers. So a disciple now can learn from the lives of others, from the beautiful qualities that they exhibit. He can absorb their virtues without their actually giving him lessons in those virtues.

This is what St Anba Antonious did at the beginning of his monastic life. He used to learn from the life of the hermits by observing them. He was like a bee which sucks nectar from every flower. From one recluse he learned calmness, from another humility, and from a third silence, and from a fourth how to speak well.

What St Antonious did reminds me of another useful piece of teaching. In your discipleship do not try to be just like a carbon copy of one particular person. For there isn't a single human being in whom all the virtues are to be found. Also, what suits one person's particular character, may not suit yours at all. So just take from everyone those beautiful qualities in him which you admire. And take as much of those qualities as you feel is right for you and in whatever way suits your character, your mentality and situation.

This, then, is being a disciple of life, and part of that is being a disciple of the lives of the saints. St. Paul says about this: "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of <their> conduct." (Heb. 13:7).

The Bible presents us with practical examples of every type, just as history presents us with other examples of every branch of virtue, and of every different style of life, so that we can learn from them. The Lord Jesus Christ reproached the Jews with the example of the Queen of the South,

when He said to them: "The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon <is> here." (Matt. 12:42).

She was a surprising example of one who sought wisdom and knowledge, in other words, of discipleship. She learned from a man who had been given wisdom by God Himself, and who was the wisest of his generation. (1 Kings 3:12). Therefore, this queen became an example for us to copy. The Lord told parables and gave examples to His generation and to us, from which we can learn. There was, for instance, the humility of the Syro-Phoenician woman, when she said of herself and her daughter: "yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." (Mark 7:28).

And the Lord also gave us the example of the faith of the centurion, who said: "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed." (Matt. 8:8). Then the Lord said to those who were following Him: "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" (Matt. 8:10). This, then, was how the Lord provided the people with actual examples from those living around them, and who were good models for others to learn from.

The Lord Jesus also told them the parable of the widow who gave all that she had out of her poverty, (Mark 12:44) and that of the woman who poured a jar of expensive perfume over His head, at the house of Simon the Leper. And He said: "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." (Mark 14:9).

So there are examples from which you can learn not only in the lives of the saints who have passed over, but there are also living examples around you.



Perhaps you may find in those with whom you associate and mix, and in those who live in your generation, even if you haven't actually had any personal dealing with them, good examples from which you can pick up or absorb or imitate their virtues. We see in children an example of those who learn by imitation.

Children have not yet reached a level of intellectual maturity and understanding which will help them to learn about the world or comprehend advice, but they live as those around them live. They absorb life, religion and everything else around them by unquestioning acceptance, not by teaching. Just as you learn from people's virtues, you can also learn from their faults.

If you see something that is not right, and notice its awful consequences, and its repercussions on others, you can learn a lesson from it by making sure that you avoid that mistake in your own life. Or, like when the lion said, Who taught you wisdom, Mr Fox? and the fox replied: I learned it from the head of the wolf as it flew from its dead body!

And then there is that lovely proverb: I learned silence from the parrot, which means that when we see the disadvantages of talking too much, we learn a lesson about the superiority and benefit of keeping quiet, and how people have more respect for those who do not talk too much.

GOSPEL READING (MARK 3:22-35)

By HG BISHOP DANIEL

In the gospel reading of today, our beloved Lord wants to tell us how much He loves us and is willing to forgive us even our worst sins, if only we repent. By doing what the Lord advises us, the rewards are wonderful – He will accept us as His closest family, and for this reason, even our Lady St Mary, whose feast we are celebrating, tells us in John chapter 2: "Whatever He tells you, do it." This is the only instruction St Mary gave us, and it was enough because it includes every other commandment.

1. "And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has

Beelzebub" and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." So He called them to Him and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan?" Mark 3:22-23

- The scribes said these terrible words out of envy and spite. The devil has a kingdom, but this kingdom is in opposition to God, and he will never share Christ's interests. Instead, the Lord will conquer and break Satan.
- For what communion can there be between light and darkness? And Christ and Beelzebub? Christ will destroy the devil's kingdom, and his kingdom shall not stand.

- The aim of our beloved Lord is to conquer Satan and overthrow his kingdom of darkness and wickedness, and to set up a kingdom of light, holiness, and love.
- 2. "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house." Mark 3:27

This verse refers to the world that sat in darkness, and wickedness, and was in Satan's possession and under his power. This situation is described as a house that is in the possession and under the power of a strong man.



It is the same case with a person who is evil – Satan dwells within him and

TONY ABBOTT VISITS ST MARKS CHURCH, ARNCLIFFE



and the Hon Federal and State MP members of the Liberal Party. Security was tight with the federal police and state police. Mr John Nour and Mr Michael Lawadni welcomed Mr & Mrs

Leader Tony Abbott and thanked him for coming to visit the church on Sunday.

Mr John Nour spoke about the issues and problems concerning the Copts

Mr Abbott spoke about the Australian values upon which our society is built saying "we couldn't have a democracy without the Christian in-sight that every single human being is equal & we couldn't have our system of justice without the Gospel in-sight that 'we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us.'"



he will reinstate the humanitarian programme.

After the mass was finished Mr Abbott and the collation team went to the church playground where people met him and took photos with him and his wife. It was a great event that all politicians that came enjoyed it so much.

Mr Abbott spent more than two hours at St. Marks church Arncliffe. He thanked the people for their warm welcome and hospitality. Mr Tony Abbott promised that he will visit the congregation again. The Coptic community enjoyed the day so much.



Abbott and the guests when they arrived at 10.30am to the church. Father Yacoub Magdy, father Augstainos nada and father Jonathan welcomed the Hon.

in Egypt and an update on the events in Egypt. Mr Nour also mentioned the achievements of the Copts in Australia and the contribution they make to the Australian society.

Mr Tony Abbott (the opposition leader) said "this is my first visit to a Coptic church. I am so proud to be here and my wife and I are glad to be with you". He thanked the fathers and congregation for their prayers for them and for all Australia and asked them to pray for Ms Gillard as well as all politicians who need the people prayers. Mr Abbott promised to reinstate the Immigration humanitarian programme for the Copts and said "I promise you if I become Prime Minster I will reinstate this programme to allow more Coptic people to come to Australia to join their families". Mr Abbott also said "we will pressure the Egyptian Government to respect and treat the Copts of Egypt equally."



Mr Scott Morrison (shadow immigration & Citizenship Minister) talked about his support for what Mr Abbott promised and that if he is the new immigration



TONY ABBOTT VISITS ST MARKS CHURCH, ARNCLIFFE



"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col3:16)

Weekly Bible Fellowship (WBF) in Sydney CBD

Please Join us for a weekly Bible Fellowship in Sydney CBD.

When: Every Wednesday

Where: Pitt St Uniting Church 264 Pitt St Sydney

Time: 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Come and invite your friends.



COYA Annual Nayrouz Skit Competition

**"FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH
LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE"**

1 TIMOTHY 6:12

9th Sept. 2012

5:30PM Sunday Night

Hurstville Entertainment Centre
Macmahon St, Hurstville

Ethiopian athlete Meseret Defar provided one of the most emotional moments of the London 2012 Summer Olympic Games when she crossed the finish line in the 5000 meter race to win the gold.

She then pulled a picture of the Virgin Mary out from under her jersey, showed it to the cameras and held it up to her face in deep prayer.



FOCUS

spreading the word of Christ!

Make sure you attend FOCUS at your university. See times below!

WEEKLY MEETINGS

and SOCIAL EVENTS!
& other outings too!

- UNSW Thurs 11am - 12pm
- USYD Tues 1pm - 2pm
- MACQ Thurs 2pm - 3pm
- UWS (Bank) Wed 1pm - 2pm
- CSU (Orange) Tues 8pm - 9pm
- UWS (Parra) Tues 1pm - 2pm
- ACU/NOTRE DAME Wed 1pm - 2pm
- UWS (Pen & C-Town) Thurs 1pm - 2pm
- UTS Wed 1pm - 2pm
- JCU Fri 7pm - 8pm

Our Mission

FOCUS aims to encourage and equip students to have a personal relationship with Christ. We strive to establish a Christian Orthodox identity on campus and provide a forum for Christian spiritual fellowship.

FOCUS aims to provide the word of God to all students at university, regardless of their faith.

Support your university!

BRAZIL SERVICE TRIP

2 JAN 2013

WHEN: 2 JAN - 25 JAN 2013
COST: \$4,400 (APPROX)

REGISTER
Please contact Ben Bassem Marcos via facebook or call him on 0402392697 for further details. Spots are limited and there is an application process so be quick!

ST MARK FESTIVAL 2012 TIMETABLE

Date	Event	Place
Sun 5 th Aug 2012	Opening Ceremony	Whitlam Centre
Sat 18 th Aug 2012	Theory Exams	Archangel Michael &
Fri 24 th Aug 2012	Supplementary Exam	TBA
Sun 26 th Aug 2012	Choir and Musical (Primary School)	Granville Town Hall
Sat 1 st Sept 2012	Swimming Competition	Holsworthy Swimming Pool
Sat 8 th Sept 2012	Hymns Competition	St Mark College, Wattlegrove
Sat 22 nd Sept 2012	Basketball Competition	Sutherland Stadium
Sun 23 rd Sept 2012	Theatrical Performances and Poetry	Granville Town Hall
Sat 6 th Oct 2012	Soccer Competition (High School & Over)	Castle Hill Indoor Stadium
Sun 7 th Oct 2012	Choir and Musical Competitions	Granville Town Hall
Sat 13 th Oct 2012	Athletics Carnival	Blacktown Olympic Park
Sun 14 th Oct 2012	Table Tennis Competition	Hurstville Stadium
Sat 20 th Oct 2012	Soccer Competition (Primary)	Silverwater Indoor Sports
Sun 21 st Oct 2012	Volleyball Competition	St Abu Sefin Church
Sat 3 rd Nov 2012	Chess Competition	St Mark's Church Arncliffe
Sat 10 th Nov 2012	Coptic Language, Memorisation and Scouts Theory Test For Year 12 Students	St Abraam Church, Long Point
Sun 25 th Nov 2012	Closing Ceremony	Whitlam Centre

One Year Anniversary

Since Sara Joseph has passed away, our lives

has been so sad and filled with lots of pain and grief. Since you have gone, your pictures have been placed all over the house to remind us of you and the beautiful memories you have left us with. We the Joseph Family would like to thank Sarah's school for providing so much care to Sarah's mother Ibtesam Joseph.



"God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, for the former things have passed away." Rev 21:4

The 40th memorial mass for Hossam Farag will be held on Saturday 1st September 2012 at St Mary & St Mina's Cathedral, Bexley followed by lunch. The family wishes to thank the Bishops, Priests, clergymen & friends for all your prayers, love and support.



D.O.B – 04 January 1994
D.O.D. – 04 September 2011.

**THE AMAZING
RACE
COPTIC YOUTH**

Date : Saturday September 1st 2012
Time : 10:30 AM
Cost : \$10 Per person
Where : Museum of Contemporary Art
Circular Quay

Register at:
tinyurl.com/stmaryamazingrace
Registration Closes:
8:00 PM, Thursday August 30th

**OLD
YOUTH
CONVENTION**
29th of Sept - 1st of Oct 2012

**MY
SON
GIVE
ME
YOUR
HEART**
PROV 23:26

THE GREAT DEBATE
INTER-CHURCHES DEBATING COMPETITION

*"When wisdom enters your heart,
And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,
Discretion will preserve you;
Understanding will keep you"*
- Proverbs 2:10-11

To register your Church team, email
coya.debate@gmail.com by 20th July 2012

- Only one team per Church
- Each team must have 4 contestants
- There will be 7 sessions throughout the year
- The topics and schedule will be finalised and released after teams have been confirmed

For more information please visit:
<http://www.coyasydney.org/>
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/coyasydney/>

Christian Music Competition

Rules:
Use a text from the ancient fathers and compose contemporary music for it

Theme:
Life and Virtues of St Shenouda

Dates:
1st Sept - Last day for sending entry forms.
1st Oct - Last day for submitting the recording

First Prize: \$1000
Second Prize: \$500
Third Prize: \$200
All Participant: \$50

Sing To The Lord a new song
Visit the monastery's website to download more information and application form
Competition is sponsored by St Shenouda monastery, Sydney, Australia
www.stshenoudamonastery.org.au

Condolences on the departure of Dr. Samia Guirgis
Wife of Mr. Hosny Guirgis

Devoted wife to Hosny. Beloved mother to Natalie and Andrew and mother-in-law to Colin. Adored grandmother to Bethany, Oliver and Abigail. Treasured sister to Wadie, Sami, Soheir and Sanaa and sister-in-law to Mary, Mona, Emile, Reda, Tako, Nikki and Sameh, and wonderful friend to many.

Samia was a brilliant engineer, the first woman in Australia to achieve a PhD in civil engineering and to get the 2012 John Connell Gold Medal for excellence in her field. She balanced a spectacular career with her role as wife, mother and friend, all of which she approached with dedication, love and humility. She was a kind and generous friend to everyone she met. She will be deeply and greatly missed by us all.

The funeral was held at St. George Church, Kensington on Monday 13th of August 2012.



St. Maurice Aged Care Committee

Email: info@stmauriceagedcare.com.au | Phone: 0431 290 470

PO Box 757, ROSE BAY NSW 2029

Letter to the Coptic community in Sydney

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

The purpose of this announcement is to advise that with the Grace of God the St Maurice Aged Care Committee which is in charge of the development of Aged Care facilities in Sydney will soon become officially registered as a non-profit company limited in order to satisfy new government requirements and to limit liabilities.

The company board directors are: Prof. Abd Elmassih Malak (Director of Health), Dr Farag Gobran, Mr Saad Sefein, Mrs Tako Tadros, Mr Hammam Awad, Mr Anthony Hanna, Mr Ramy Mikhael, Cr Morris Hanna, and Dr Assad Malek.

The formalisation process will take place in the near future and a new Bank Account will be opened in the name of St Maurice Aged Care. The C.O.P.T.S. Inc. organisation will continue to support the Aged Care services project and your donations can continue using the existing St Maurice Aged Care National Australia Bank: A/c: 114946179 BSB 082184.

We recognise the growing need to provide facilities and services to our Coptic community senior citizens in a culturally sensitive manner. This helps reduce alienation at end of life stages and promotes familiarity and greater engagement by persons affected with complex cognitive issues or memory decline. Our vision is to finally develop a robust infrastructure that will address the many needs of our seniors.

In coming months we will be providing you with progress reports associated with the development of this project. Also you will be able to join our facebook site for immediate updates.

We take this opportunity to thank you for your donations, and support, and look forward to your continuing contributions, which are vital to the success of St Maurice age care facility/s.

God Bless

On Behalf of St Maurice Aged Care Members

Farag Gobran
Chairman of St Maurice Aged Care
info@stmauriceagedcare.com.au
P.O. BOX 757
Rose Bay NSW 2029

THE INTERCESSION OF THE VIRGIN MARY

By: Fr. Matthew the Poor (Matta El-Maskeen)

When the Virgin intercedes for our aid, healing, or repentance, she draws us into the realm of her relationship with Christ. In Orthodoxy, intercession raises us to the level of the intercessor, bringing us into the presence of Christ, then the mediator disappears. This is to say that intercession is a communion with Christ by grace; the Virgin grants us all the powers granted to her so that so that we might come before Christ. We then stand before Him as the Virgin, that is, in the spirit and grace of purity and holiness granted to us in her. This is what Paul did with all his might: "I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband" (2 Co. 11:2).

Firstly, we take from the Virgin the courage that derives from her purity and the audacity that derives from her motherhood and her unique love for Christ. All these things are considered to have been granted to her for our sake, and she, in her great confidence before God, is able to transfer them to us, just as a stronger member in the body grants its strength to a weaker one.

Second, this kind of intercession removes all the barriers between us and Christ. We approach Him unhindered and unimpeded by our weakness, to take from Him help or a particular request or healing or repentance. It is only this that can truly be called intercession. The interceding servant must be prepared to put himself in the place or situation of the servant for whom he intercedes, and must even be prepared to give all he has to make up for the deficiency of his fellow servant.

But intercession can only take place if one is able to step forward in the spirit of the intercessor and be prepared to take or borrow those qualities which make him able to intercede. Otherwise there can be no intercession. The Virgin demonstrates for us the first quality, the essential character required for us to meet with God. Those who deny the role of the Virgin in the incarnation or in intercession, or who deny the importance of purity, do so only in theory, for in practice it is impossible to deny or eliminate them. As far as the incarnation is concerned, God could only be incarnate in purity. As far as intercession is concerned, it

is equally impossible for God to reveal Himself or act outside the realm of purity. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt. 5:8).

The least impurity, even if it be only a passing thought, is enough to hide the face of God, for impurity is darkness and is the work of the devil. It is therefore impossible for one to enter into the presence of God in prayer or meditation if there exists the least inclination to impurity in one's heart, mind, or body. This state of purity can only be attained by intention of the mind in fervent prayer, and by clinging to grace through the blood of Christ. This will immediately procure from God the gift of holiness and the grace of purity for the mind and body.

Intercession requires a personal presence; the Virgin presents himself in the purity before Christ, on our behalf and within the sphere of our experience. In so doing she opens up before us a door that can lead to the spirit of purity and the awakening of a sense of holiness. "The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets" (1 Cor. 14:32).

The Virgin Mary represents a



human experience that succeeded in plumbing the depths of union with God through a supreme purity that became hers through the Word. She took purity from God and He took from her a body. The Virgin thus became a pattern of union with God, and it remains true that the only quality required for an intercessor is that he surrender what he has.

Blessed is the Virgin, and blessed are those who bless her.

CHILDREN IN CHURCH

By: Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

As a general rule, children like attending Church, and this instinctive attraction to and interest in Church services is the foundation on which we must build our religious education. When parents worry that children will get tired & bored because services are long and are sorry for them, they usually subconsciously express their concern not for their children but for themselves. Children penetrate more easily than do adults into the world of ritual, of liturgical symbolism. They feel and appreciate the atmosphere of our Church services. The experience of Holiness, the sense of encounter with Someone Who is beyond daily life, that *mysterium tremendum* that is at the root of all religion and is the core of our services is more accessible to our children than it is to us.



"Unless you become as little children," these words apply to the receptivity, the open-mindedness, the naturalness, which we lose when we grow out of childhood. How many men have devoted their lives to the service of God and consecrated themselves to the Church because from childhood they have kept their love for the house of worship and the joy of liturgical experience! Therefore, the first duty of parents and educators is to "suffer little children and forbid them not" (Matt. 19:14) to attend Church. It is in Church before every place else that children must hear the word of God. In a classroom the word is difficult to understand, it remains abstract, but in church it is in its own element. In childhood we have the capacity to understand, not intellectually, but with our whole being, that there is no greater joy on earth than to be in Church, to participate in Church services, to breathe the fragrance of the Kingdom of Heaven, which is "the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit."

Church attendance should be complemented from the earliest days of childhood by the home atmosphere, which precedes and prolongs the mood of the Church.

Let us take Sunday morning. How can a child sense the holiness of that morning and of that which he will see in Church if the home is full of the blare of radio and TV, the parents are smoking and read-

ing the papers, and there reigns a generally profane atmosphere? Church attendance should be preceded by a sense of being gathered in, a quiet, a certain solemnity. The lighting of vigil lights before the icons, the reading of the Scripture lessons, clean and fresh clothes, the festively tidied-up rooms – so frequently parents do not realize how all these things shape the religious consciousness of the child, make an imprint which no later tribulations will ever efface. On the eve and on the day of Sundays and Church feasts, during Lent, on the days when we prepare ourselves for Confession and Communion, the home must reflect the Church, must be illuminated by the light that we bring back from worship. And now let us speak of the school.

It seems self-evident to me that to organize so-called "Sunday School" lessons during Divine Liturgy is in deep contradiction with the spirit of Orthodoxy. The Sunday Liturgy is a joyful gathering of the Church community, and the child must know and experience this long before he is able to understand the deep meaning of this gathering. It seems to me that the choice of Sunday for church school is not a very good one.

Sunday is primarily a liturgical day; therefore, it should be Church-centered and Liturgy-centered. It would be far better to have church school on Saturdays before the



Vigil or Vespers service. The argument that parents cannot and will not bring children to church twice a week is merely admitting indolence and sinful negligence of what is important to our children. Saturday evening is the beginning of Sunday and should be liturgically sanctified just as much as Sunday morning.

Why, in all Orthodox churches the world over Vespers or the Vigil is served on the eve of Feasts and Sundays. There is no reason why we too cannot arrange our church life according to principle: School—Vespers—Liturgy, where School would be for children the essential preparation and introduction to the Day of the Lord, His resurrection.

rules his life.

But...

- The aim of the Lord's gospel was to spoil the devil's house, which as a strong man, he kept in the world; and the Lord wanted to turn the people from darkness to light, and from sin to holiness, and from a temporary life to an everlasting life, and from the power of Satan to a loving God (Acts 26:18).
- So, in order to carry out this aim, the Lord bound the strong man, (who is Satan), and cast him out, and encouraged all believers to hope that, whatever power Satan might have over people, Christ by His grace would break it: He will bind Satan and destroy him.
- When nations were converted from worshipping idols to worshipping the living God, and some of the worst sinners were sanctified and justified and became the best of saints, then Christ spoiled and plundered the devil's house, and He will continue to do so.

3. "Assuredly I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"
Mark 3:28-29

Here our beloved Lord is saying to us that, no matter how bad our sins are, God will forgive everything if we truly repent, because the Lord is merciful and that's why we read in Isaiah: "Even though your sins are like scarlet and crimson, they shall be as white as snow" (1:18).

The Lord will forgive the sin of blasphemy against God's name, because we find, for example, that St Paul obtained mercy, even though he was a blasphemer of God's name (1 Timothy 1:13). The Lord will even forgive the sin of blasphemy against the Son, because we find that when He was being crucified, many who reviled Him, afterwards repented and found mercy.

But the only exception of forgiveness is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, because:

- It is a complete rejection of the Holy Spirit - sinners cut themselves off from faith and repentance. They reject the comfort and gifts of the Holy Spirit and so therefore they will never come to know Christ.

"Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."
Mark 3:34-35

- These precious words of the Lord are very special, because who are we for God to call us by such affectionate names? It reminds us of the Beloved in the Song of Solomon who called out to his lazy and neglectful spouse: "Open for me my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one" (Songs 5:2).
- In those days, the expression 'my sister' or 'my brother' was used between husbands and wives, and it described the closest and most intimate love. Of course, we are not perfect, but because the Lord has pure, loving eyes, He sees all of us as being beautiful.

- In the same way, the Lord is calling us by these intimate expressions of "My brother and My sister and mother", to show His deep love for us. He is the bridegroom and we the church are His bride.
- However, our beloved Lord tells us that this honour is based upon us doing the will of God. For this reason, we should not only be 'hearers' of the word of God, but we must do the work as well. In this way, we will share with the saints in this honour.
- This is a good reason why we should also honour those who fear the Lord, and choose them to be our closest friends, because it is to our benefit to have fellowship with those people who have fellowship with God.

Glory be to God.

Bishop Daniel
Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox
Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated
Regions

DON'T ADORN THE CHURCH BUT IGNORE THE POOR

St. John Chrysostom

Do you want to honor Christ's body? Then do not scorn him in his nakedness, nor honor him here in the church with silken garments while neglecting him outside where he is cold and naked. For he who said: This is my body, and made it so by his words, also said: "You saw me hungry and did not feed me, and inasmuch as you did not do it for one of these, the least of my brothers, you did not do it for me." (Mat 25:34ff) What we do here in the church requires a pure heart, not special garments; what we do outside requires great dedication.

Let us learn, therefore, to be men of wisdom and to honor Christ as he desires. For a person being honoured finds greatest pleasure in the honor he desires, not in the honor we think best. Peter thought he was honoring Christ when he refused to let him wash his feet; but what Peter wanted was not truly an honour, quite the opposite! Give him the honour prescribed in his law by giving your

riches to the poor. For God does not want golden vessels but golden hearts.

Now, in saying this I am not forbidding you to make such gifts; I am only demanding that along with such gifts and before them you give alms. He accepts the former, but he is much more pleased with the latter. In the former, only the giver profits; in the latter, the recipient does too. A gift to the church may be taken as a form of ostentation, but an alms is pure kindness. Of what use is it to weigh down Christ's table with golden cups, when he himself is dying of hunger? First, fill him when he is hungry; then use the means you have left to adorn his table. Will you have a golden cup made but not give a cup of water? What is the use of providing the table with cloths woven of gold thread, and not providing Christ himself with the clothes he needs? What profit is there in that? Tell me: If you were to see him lacking the necessary food but were to leave him in that state and

merely surround his table with gold would he be grateful to you or rather would he not be angry? What if you were to see him clad in worn-out rags and stiff from the cold, and were to forget about clothing him and instead were to set up golden columns for him, saying that you were doing it in his honour? Would he not think he was being mocked and greatly insulted?

Apply this also to Christ when he comes along the roads as a pilgrim, looking for shelter. You do not take him in as your guest, but you decorate floor and walls and the capitals of the pillars. You provide silver chains for the lamps, but you cannot bear even to look at him as he lies chained in prison. Once again, I am not forbidding you to supply



these adornments; I am urging you to provide these other things as well, and indeed to provide them first. No one has ever been accused for not providing ornaments, but for those who neglect their neighbour a hell awaits with an inextinguishable fire and torment in the company of the demons. Do not, therefore, adorn the church and ignore your afflicted brother, for he is the most precious temple of all.

Egocentricity of Orthodox Christians

Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople

What have we done? What have we done? Christ has left us. We have driven him away. Our hatreds, our pride, our pharisaical self-sufficiency have driven out the Spirit of the Gospel. And Christ has gone. Christ has gone. Oh, how satisfied we are with ourselves! We are the pure, we possess the truth, and we condemn others!

But life and history go on. They are knocking at the doors of the Church, and putting ultimate questions to us. Everything

is changing. The scientific revolution is advancing, it is modifying and not only man's environment, but man himself. Not that science and technology necessarily build a world without God, as is sometimes said. But they force man, and they will force him more and more to ask where all this is going, what is the meaning of it all, what is the meaning of his own life.

What is most lacking among men of the Church is the Spirit of Christ: humility,

selflessness, an open welcome, the capacity of seeing the best in others. We are afraid, we want to hang on to what is over and done with, because we're used to it. We want to be right over against the others, and under a language of conventional humility we hide the spirit of pride and power. We carry on apart from life. We have made the Church into an organization, just like all the other ones.

We have put all our energy into setting it up,

and now we put all our energy into keeping it going. And it works more or less; rather less than more, but it works. Only it works like a machine, and not like life!





Fundraiser Dinner

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." II Corinthians 9:7



Date: Sunday, October 28, 2012

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: The Epping Club, 45 Rawson Street, Epping, NSW 2121

Ticket Price: \$100.00

Any donation you wish to give, can also be made on the night



St. Shenouda Monastery working for YOU

Reconnect with God and Orthodoxy



The Cathedral:

The Cathedral is designed according to Coptic Architecture which contains three Holy Altars as well as Baptism Fonts for both adults & infants.



How you can help:

Contributions are NON-TAX DEDUCTABLE and can be made to:

Coptic Orthodox St. Shenouda Monastery Limited
Westpac Bank: BSB: 032-274, Acc No: 26-4333 OR

Become a member and make monthly donations created especially for this project.



Service Centre:

Will include:

- Dining area
- Book Shop
- Canteen
- Offices
- Lounge area
- Rest rooms
- Outdoor court areas
- Other facilities

Why is the Monastery raising funds?

The Monastery has always been a source of Blessing and Benefit to all those who visit.

Today, as the number of visitors increase, the Monastery finds a great need to develop larger facilities.

These are designed to help continue to serve the ever growing congregation as St Shenouda Monastery holds large events and special feast days on a regular basis.

The Monastery is an integral part to the community of greater Putty and Singleton and has always warmly welcomed and delighted visitors of all origins.

This project will be a great addition to our blessed Churches in Australia, and will serve the many generations to come.

St. Shenouda Monastery working for you

Reconnect with God and Orthodoxy



What is Included on the Night?

The night will include special presentations from the blessed Monks, Priests and Abbot of St. Shenouda Monastery, H.G Bishop Anba Daniel. The night will include a detailed presentation on the Monastery's plans for the New Cathedral and Buildings.

You will also be enjoying a delicious three-course meal; also, throughout the night a silent auction with a variety of beautiful items will be proceeding.

"...that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly." Matthew 6:4

Silent Auction:

The silent auction will be taking place on the night to help raise funds for the Monastery's new project and is the perfect way to donate. The silent auction will be on going throughout the night and will close at 9:30 PM.

How the Auction Works:

- Each Silent Auction item has a unique number on the item and on the corresponding bid sheet.
- To place a silent auction bid, print your name and phone number, along with your bid amount, in the line following the highest current bid. Please print clearly.
- Minimum bids and bid increases will be indicated at the top of each bid sheet and must be respected.
- All new bids must be higher than the previous bid by at least a minimum of \$10.00 as indicated at the top of the bid sheet.
- All winning bids can be paid for before the end of the event by cash, cheque or credit card.
- The auction will close promptly at 9:30 PM. No further bidding will be permitted after that time.
- The highest valid bid on each bidding sheet at closing time, will win.

Happy Bidding!



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St. Shenouda Monastery is the central hub for many church camps, family day-visits and youth retreats. They receive many visitors from all regions of Australia and around the world, both from Coptic and non-Coptic backgrounds.

During these Visitations and Retreats, People come in search of Peace, Tranquillity and a Quiet-time spent with God.



For further information, please contact either:

Samuel Mikhael: 0416 061 601 OR

Charlene Mikhael: 0426 250 611

Please send donations to:

Account Name:

St Mary & St Anthony's Monastery
BSB: 064 000 **Acc Number:** 12900826
Commonwealth Bank
Swift Code: CTBAAU2S



**St Mary & St Anthony
Coptic Orthodox Monastery**
QLD, Australia



Please note: This is tax deductible.

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