



# EL-MANARA

AN INITIATIVE OF THE MEDIA COMMITTEE - DIOCESE OF SYDNEY & AFFILIATED REGIONS

## COPTS' NEWS

*"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who lives but Christ lives in me." (Galatians 2:20).*



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**NEXT ISSUE:**

24<sup>th</sup> July 2016

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:**

18<sup>th</sup> July 2016

## BISHOPS ORDINATION SATURDAY, JUNE 11 2016





# WHAT IS LOVE?

by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III



Love is to be directed first to God

If we wish to understand love in its true scriptural foundations, we must set before us (and understand) the following truth:

Love should be directed to God, before anyone or anything else. This is what God revealed to us in the Book of Deuteronomy: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Dt 6:5).

So then, if this love to God is from the whole heart, is there any room left for any other love? How can we love anything else, if the whole heart is for God?! The only answer is that our love for everyone and everything is through our love for God.

When we have given the whole heart to God, within our love to God, we love everyone. That is why when asked about the greatest commandment, Christ replied, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:37-39).

Why did He say, "The second is like it"? Because it is through the love of God... It is part of it... It is not separate from the first commandment...

Hence, any love outside of the

love of God is a sinful love. What if this (second) love was greater than our love for God?! Our Lord answers us saying, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Mt 10:37).

Any love that is greater than the love of God, prefers a person or a thing more than God Himself. We can therefore label it as "A sinful love", because it interferes with the love of God. It is a love that is stronger than the love of God!!! Is that appropriate?!

second love through your love to God...

## Types of Love

There are many different types of love:

Natural love such as the love between parents and their children. That is why God resembled His love to us as the natural paternal love: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1)

Gained love such as the love of friends, relatives, associates, or

A relationship may involve a feeling of admiration. Admiration is different from love. You may admire a sports champion, but that does not mean you love him/her. You may admire an author. You like his thoughts and/or writing style, without having a personal relationship with the author. An intellectual relationship may develop (that ties your thoughts with his/her thoughts), but this is still not love. If this relationship evolved into love, it will be love for his/her ideas and/or style, but not his/her person.

Love is the meeting of two hearts, or the bonding of two hearts through the same feelings or emotions. In order for this to be a sacred love, these emotions should be within the sphere of the love of God; it should not contradict nor surpass it.

If love is one-sided only, there must be a problem (e.g. incompatibility), because love always gives birth to love [i.e. it will create a mutual feeling.] Love must be spiritual, wise and prudent, because there are certain kinds of "love" that cause trouble.

True love must be pure. Here, we can distinguish between love and desire (lust.) Love always wants to give, but desire always wants to take.

Desire is:

## Selfish

Does not care about the other person it "claims" to love (and may ruin him/her)

May imprison him/her in itself and limit his/her liberty to interact with others

May turn into a destructive jealousy

It really is NOT true love. True love is known to be giving, even to the point of self-sacrifice.

Look at yourself and your relationship with the opposite sex. Is it a relationship of love or lust?!



In this situation, the whole heart is not given to God (and hence breaks the first commandment). This "sinful love" becomes a "stranger" in your heart. A stranger never dwells in one place forever. If you want to love someone or something forever, make sure this love is through the love of God; i.e. fulfill the first commandment first, and then you will be able to include the

the love between an engaged or a married couple

Love may develop in stages. It may start out as collaboration, and then progress to assistantship or friendship. Collaboration is a relationship between two or more individuals unified by a joint objective or project, which may lead to a unified thought (mind), which may lead to friendship.





The gospel reading of today speaks about 7 main points:

**1. “Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute” :**

+ There was a man brought to the Lord who was blind and mute – that means, he neither saw or spoke. Symbolically, this represents that he was a person under Satan’s power – because he was not able to see or recognised Jesus to be his God and creator, and he was not able to speak to give thanks and praise to God.

+ This is because Satan blinds the eyes of faith, and closes up the lips of prayer.

**2. “And He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw” :**

+ But our beloved Lord “healed him”, and in this way, conquered the power of Satan.

+ When Satan’s power is broken in the soul, the effect is immediate - the eyes are opened to see God’s glory, and the lips are opened to praise Him.

+ The experience of this man is a lesson to us about the glory and fruits of repentance.

+ When we repent, we witness God’s mercy and therefore, we should praise Him with joyful lips.

+ This man was once the dwelling place of the devil, but the Lord transformed him to be a temple of the Holy Spirit.

+ Now that the eyes of his faith were opened, he was able to see and recognise Jesus Christ as being the Son of God, and now his mouth was open so that he could praise God, and acknowledge Him as being Lord and Saviour.

+ This miracle also symbolises the conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity. They were once sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. Their hearts were blind, and their mouths unable to confess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

+ But we read in this story: “one



was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute” - this man was brought to Christ by the disciples, and this action symbolises the way in which the disciples were the ones who also brought the Gentiles to Christianity.

+ When this man was healed by the Lord, he left behind all his unclean ways and mistakes. And now he was able to serve the Lord in a faithful way.

+ It is the same with us - it is only when we leave behind our bad habits and sins, through repentance, that we can offer an acceptable service to the Lord without contradiction and hypocrisy.

**3. “Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons” :**

• We then see the wickedness of the Pharisees. They knew the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, but they were jealous of Him, and so they said lies to the people, so that they can turn them away from having faith in the Lord.

• The Pharisees said that Jesus casts out devils by Satan. But this is a great contradiction – how can

**5. “And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges” :**

The Lord gave His disciples power to cast out unclean spirits, and therefore the “judges” in this verse refers to the disciples, for they are the ones who will sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

**6. “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you” :**

• In everything the Lord was doing, His divine presence was clearly shining through, even though people were blaming Him and speaking lies about Him.

• And in this case, we see the great love and personal touch that the Lord is trying to give them – He is not only telling them that the “Kingdom of God has come”, but He is telling them that “the kingdom of God has come UPON

YOU”. He is saying that each of them individually is important and special to God and His kingdom.

• And so the Lord sadly wonders – ‘All these wonderful things and blessings have come especially to you, so why are you refusing salvation?’

• May the eyes of our hearts be always open to see the glory of God, and may our lips always speak of the wonders and praises of God.

Glory be to God.

*Bishop Daniel*

Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions

**4. “If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?” :**

The devil’s kingdom is the kingdom on earth. It is a kingdom full of wars and divisions and destructions. Therefore we should follow that kingdom that can’t be divided – the heavenly and spiritual city of Jerusalem, which is the true house of God that no evil power can overcome or divide, because it is protected by God.

Satan cast out Satan? And how can light be associated with darkness?





## 'I was a stranger and you invited me in'

Matthew 25:35

### A PUBLIC FORUM ON THE GLOBAL DISPLACED PERSONS CRISIS

- Tuesday 28 June 2016
- 6.30pm for 7 to 9pm
- St Stephen's Uniting Church
- 197 Macquarie Street Sydney
- Supper will follow

#### CONTACT

For further information please email  
smansour@ncca.org.au or phone  
(02) 8259 0819 / 0418 713 733

#### PANELISTS

**Ms Carmen Lazar OAM**, Community Settlement Services Assyrian Resource Centre, Assyrian Australian Association  
**Mr Chey Mattner**, Executive Officer, Australian Lutheran World Service  
**Lieut-Colonel Samuel Pho**, National Secretary, The Salvation Army  
**Mr Sarkis Mouradian**, Co-Convenor, Commission on the Middle East, NSW Ecumenical Council



You are invited to this special event organised and sponsored by the NSW Ecumenical Council featuring two outstanding keynote speakers and an expert panel ...

#### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**His Grace Bishop Angaelos** is a General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom and Moderator of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. In 2015, he received the honour of Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty The Queen, for 'Services to International Religious Freedom'.



**Rev Gregor Henderson AM** is a minister of the Uniting Church in Australia with long involvement in ecumenical action, international affairs, government relations and advocacy for social justice. Gregor was General Secretary of the Uniting Church from 1989 to 2000, then national President of the Uniting Church from 2006 to 2009.



NSW Ecumenical Council cordially invites you to a Public Forum

**Title: "I was a Stranger and you invited me in" (Matthew 25:35)**

**Date: Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

**Time: 6.30pm for 7.00pm to 9.00pm**

**Venue: St Stephens Uniting Church**

**Address: 197 Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW 2000.**

**His Grace Bishop Angaelos** is a General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom and Moderator of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Bishop Angaelos is an Ecumenist and active in ecumenical landscape in the United Kingdom and in the international arena. He works extensively to build bridges and promotes dialogue and unity between Churches, faiths and communities. In the United Kingdom, he has established and maintains constant contact with government, inter-religious and ecumenical bodies. Bishop Angaelos is a patron of a number of organisations and participates extensively in a number of ecumenical bodies in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland in many capacities as Chair, Co-Founding member, Co-Chair and as member.



Bishop Angaelos received the honour of Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty The Queen, for 'Services to International Religious Freedom' in 2015.

**Rev Gregor Henderson** is a minister of the Uniting Church with long involvement in ecumenical action, international affairs, government relations and advocacy for social justice.

Gregor was General Secretary of the Uniting Church from 1989 to 2000, then national President of the Uniting Church from 2006 to 2009.

He has wide ecumenical experience. He was a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches from 1998 to 2013 and a member of the Executive of the National Council of Churches in Australia from 1994 to 2009. He's also served on governing bodies of the Christian Conference of Asia, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the World Methodist Council.



Gregor is currently the Co-convenor of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network, Chair of the Ron Wilson Ecumenical Leadership Fund, Chair of the trustees of the John Flynn Foundation and a Director of the Major Issues and Theology Foundation.

In January 2015 Gregor was awarded an AM (Member of the Order of Australia), for services to the Uniting Church and for inter-faith initiatives.

A statement from the Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions about the stripping naked of a Christian woman and insulting her in the presence of more than 300 people in the village of El-Karam in Minya in Upper Egypt.



20 Bashans 1732AM  
Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> of May, 2016  
Our Ref: B.D.02.430.14.16  
No. of Pages: 2  
Bishop's Office



**A statement from the Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions**  
*"Happy are ye whenever they may reproach you, and may persecute, and may say any evil thing against you falsely for my sake." (Mathew 5:11)*

Egypt, our beloved country that was blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ with the Holy Family and where the heathens were destroyed when He arrived there, and where St. Mark the apostle preached the Christian faith and where the Christian Copts tolerated the persecution by the Romans followed by the Ottomans and others and who offered martyrs for the love of Egypt.

In modern times, the Christian Copts endured suffering in all aspects of life including intolerance, bigotry and oppression in their faith's worship. It was left in the hands of the security apparatus to control the whole Coptic file. The Christian Copts played a positive role in the glorious June revolution, but what has been offending us is that all our affairs were transferred to the customary councils in which the Salafis intervene to "solve problems," and as result they impose unjust and unfair conditions each time. Churches were destroyed; mass reprisals and forced displacement of entire Christian villages took place and many Copts were jailed under the pretext of offending religion. Despite all this there was no solution. Recently, the most painful situation occurred when a Christian woman was stripped of her clothes and insulted in the presence of more than 300 people in the village of El-Karam in Minya in Upper Egypt.

Such acts are unacceptable humanly, nationally and religiously; and before it offended us it hurt Egypt and its international stance.

We support the wise leadership of President Abdel Fattah Sisi in the operation of law and the Constitution and call for Azhar to shoulder its responsibility in the face of the deterioration of Egyptian religious thought and its descent into intolerance and abuse of the citizens of one nation.

**Blessing of the Lord be with everyone**

**Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions**

**May 28, 2016**

# The Art Of Iconography

A course run by St Luke's Iconography College



Course modules include:

- The art style of the Coptic Icon
- The painting style of the icon
- A historical account of the icon from the time of the Iron Age
- The meanings behind the icon
- The meanings and placement of the cross in the icon
- The meanings of colours in the icon
- The meanings of shapes in the icon
- The meanings of items pictured with the saints

Every Saturday starts Saturday 21/02/2015 at St Demiana & St Athanasius Coptic Church.

119 Highclere Ave, Punchbowl.

From 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Course is free of charge, however students are to supply their own materials.

For registration call Mr Alfred Kaldass on 0422 104 740 or Mrs Nelly Grace on 0404 739 140



“The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance” (Ps 112:6).  
“The memory of the righteous is blessed” (Prov 10:7).

The second commemoration of the departure to heaven of the beloved: **Mr Attia Mikhail Attia**

Father to Reverend Father Matthew Attia and wife Mervat Attia, husband to Mrs Marsel Attia; and father to Mr Rami Attia and wife Helen Attia, brother to Mary and husband Samy Kolta. The liturgy will be celebrated at St. George Church, Kensington on Sunday, 10th of July 2016, at 8:30am.



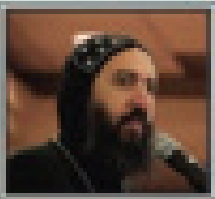
# Australian Christian Values Checklist

## 2 July 2016 Federal Election

This summary of the positions of major parties on issues of concern to Christians is provided as a service to the Christian community. In the 2011 Census 61% of Australians identified themselves as Christian. On many welfare and social justice issues the party policies are very similar. Our aim is to deal with the moral and ethical issues that are rarely, if ever, discussed publically in an election campaign but which are important issues that affect the very foundation of our society. We deal with other issues on our website. The team that compiles the checklist make independent assessments and are not members of any political party. This checklist has been compiled after an exhaustive search of party websites, voting history and public statements. Space has not permitted the inclusion of other minor parties. Positions are often difficult to summarise in a format of this kind, and parties have not always made definitive statements. Therefore a '?' indicates in some instances a conscience vote, or a less than conclusive opinion on the party's position on some of the issues. Tick equals YES X equals NO

Christian Values Checklist	CDP	DLP	Family First	Rise Up Australia	Australian Liberty Alliance	National	Liberal	Labor	Greens
1. Continue to open parliament each day with Christian prayer									
2. Protect marriage & the future of our children - reject 'homosexual marriage'									
3. Support a plebiscite on marriage									
4. Oppose 'Safe Schools Coalition' – teaching radical gender & sexual ideology									
5. Keep liberty - allow religious bodies the freedom to choose their employees									
6. Protect free speech - oppose vilification laws for sexuality & gender identity									
7. Restore free speech - amend S18C to remove 'offend and insult'									
8. Support traditional family values and teach our Christian heritage in schools									
9. Support equitable funding for Christian and Private schools									
10. Continued funding of school chaplaincy program to support our children									
11. Help children - support presumption of equal parenting after divorce									
12. Children need Mum & Dad - no overseas adoption by homosexual couples									
13. Protect vulnerable people - euthanasia to remain illegal									
14. Life is precious - oppose overseas aid for abortion									
15. Oppose Medicare funding for gender selected abortion									
16. Increased funding for drug harm prevention & abstinence based programs									
17. Extend States ban on X-rated pornography to ACT & NT									
18. Protect children – default 'clean feed' internet by ISPs to filter out porn									
19. Stop the deaths of refugees at sea - support legitimate orderly immigration									
20. Humanitarian refugees – give priority for persecuted Christian minorities									
21. Support greater care and stewardship of God's environment									

**FIRST EDITION:** Released 3 June 2016 as public domain web information. Published by the Australian Christian Values Institute [www.christianvalues.org.au](http://www.christianvalues.org.au) in association with the following organisations: Salt Shakers, National Alliance of Christian Leaders, Australian Family Association, Christian Federation, Endeavour Forum, NSW Right to Life, CultureWatch, National Marriage Coalition, Prayer Chapel Ministries, Choices of Life, Australian Indigenous Christian Ministries, Coalition Against Drugs, Cherish Life and Australian Federation for the Family. This checklist must not be altered in any way or reproduced with party political material and the name and address of printer must be included. Every attempt has been made to fairly and honestly represent the positions of all the political parties concerned. We welcome any documented corrections. Any enquiries should be directed to Australian Christian Values Institute [www.christianvalues.org.au](http://www.christianvalues.org.au) PO Box 378, UNANDERRA NSW 2506 - Authorised by Warwick Marsh A1/227 Cordeaux Road, Mount Kembla NSW 2526



# H.G BISHOP ANGAELOS

General Bishop in the United Kingdom  
Program June 2016

24/6 8.30pm  
Friday What is God's Peace & How can I experience it?  
Youth Meeting @ St Mary, Ancliffe

25/6 9am - 2pm  
Saturday How can I seek peace in my dealings with others?  
Holy Liturgy / Youth Day @ Pope Kyrios VI & St Habib Coptic Monastery

8pm  
Obstacles to feeling God's peace?  
Youth Lounge @ St Mary & St Mina, Bexley

26/6 6.30pm  
Sunday How do I deal with troubles peacefully?  
Salt & Light youth meeting @ St Anthony & St Paul, Gillingford

"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)





**PROGRAMME FOR THE VISIT OF  
HIS GRACE BISHOP YOSTOS  
BISHOP & ABBOT OF ST ANTONIOUS MONASTERY RED - SEA  
Tuesday 5/7/2016 –Tuesday 26/7/2016**



Date	AM	Service	PM	Service
Tuesday 5th July 2016	07:45	Arrival to Sydney by EK 418		
Friday 8th July 2016	9:00	Holy Mass Anba Abraam Church - Long Point	7:30	Vespers St. George Church - Kensington
Saturday 9th. July 2016	8:00	Holy Mass St. Mary, St. Bakhomios & St. Shenouda Church - Kirrawee	7:30	Vespers St. Antonious & St. Paul Church Guildford
Sunday 10th July 2016	9:00	Holy Mass St. Mary & St. Sidhom Bishay Church - Dural		
Tuesday 12th July 2016	8:00	Holy Mass Feast of the Apostles The Apostles & St Abanoub Church – Blacktown		
Wednesday 13th July 2016	9:00	Holy Mass St Mary & St Mina Cathedral- Bexley		
Friday 15th July 2016	9:00	Holy Mass St. Demiana & St. Athanasius Church - Punchbowl		Visit to St Shenouda the Archimandrite Monastery - Putty
Saturday 16th July 2016	9:00	Holy Mass Consecration of 2 New Monks St Shenouda the Archimandrite Monastery- Putty		
Sunday 17th July 2016	9:00	Holy Mass St Shenouda the Archimandrite Monastery		
Tuesday 19th July 2016	8:30	Holy Mass St Mark Church- Arncliffe		
Wednesday 20th July 2016	9:00	Holy Mass Archangel Michael & St Bishoy Church - Mt Druitt		
Thursday 21st July 2016	9:00AM	Holy Mass St Mary & St Mercurius (Abou Sefein) Church- Rhodes	12:00 – 3:00	Priests' Meeting
Tuesday 26th July 2016			9:10	Departure to Cairo by EK 413



**Program of the Visit of His Grace Bishop Angaelos  
General Bishop in the United Kingdom  
24th of June To 30TH OF June 2016**



Date	AM	Service	PM	Service
Friday 24/06/2016			7:15	Arrival of HG Bishop Angaelos by Malaysia Airlines MH141
			8:30	Youth Meeting At St Mark Arncliffe
Saturday 25/06/2016	9:00 to 2pm	H. Mass / Youth Day Pope Kyrillos VI & St Habib Girgis Monterey	2 to 4	Youth Priest symposium Pope Kyrillos VI & St Habib Girgis Monterey
			8:00	Youth Lounge St Mary & St Mina Bexley
Sunday 26/06/2016	9:00	H. Mass/Servants Meeting St Mary & St Mina Bexley	6:30	Salt and Light youth meeting St Anthony & St Paul Guildford
Monday 27/06/2016		Melbourne		
Tuesday 28/06/2016	11:00	NSWCC	6:30	Public Forum at St Stephens Uniting Church 197 Macquarie St, Sydney
Wednesday 29/06/2016		Private Appointments		
Thursday 30/06/2016			11:50 1:50	Farewell at the airport Flight Out by Malaysia Airlines MH122





*St Shenouda Feast Celebration  
And The New Monks Consecration  
At St Shenouda Monastery-Sydney.*



(Sat & Sun:16 & 17 July 2016).

Saturday 16/7/2016.	Feast of St. Shenouda. (Actual Day: Thursday 14/7/2016).	
7:00 am	8:00 am	The Prayers of Matin.
8:00 am	9:30 am	The Consecration of the 2 new Monks.
9:30 am	12:30 pm	The Holy Liturgy (Giving Presents after Mass).
12.30 pm	3.00 pm	Lunch.
3:00 pm	4:00 pm	The Procession around The Monastery.
4:00 pm	5:00 pm	Rest Time.
5:00 pm	6:00 pm	Vesper Prayers.
11:00 pm	3:00 am (Sun).	Vigils, Hymns, Midnight Praises.
Sunday 17/7/2016.	Feast of St. Shenouda cont. (Actual Day: Thursday 14/7/2016).	
3:00 am	5:00 am	The first Holy Liturgy.
9:00 am	12:00 pm	S second Holy Liturgy (Giving of Presents after Mass).
12:00 pm	2:00 pm	Lunch.
2.00 pm	3.00 pm	Procession around the Monastery.
3:00 pm	5:00 pm	Rest Time.
5:00 pm	6:00 pm	Sunset prayers at the Church.



PROGRAMME FOR THE VISIT OF  
HIS GRACE BISHOP PAULA BISHOP OF TANTA  
Saturday 2nd of July – Tuesday 19th of July 2016



Date	AM	Service	PM	Service
Saturday 2/07/2016			7:15	Arrival of HG Bishop Paula by SQ211
Sunday 3/07/2016	9:00	Holy Mass St. Mark Church - Arncliffe		
Monday 4/07/2016	11:00	Regional Clerical Council St Demiana & St Athansius Church -Punchbowl		
Tuesday 5/07/2016	11:00	Regional Clerical Council St Demiana & St Athansius Church -Punchbowl		
Wednesday 6/07/2016	9:00	Holy Mass St. Demiana & St. Athanasius Church - Punchbowl		
Friday 8/07/2016	YCF - Young Coptic Families Conference Wollongong Surf Leisure Resort			
Saturday 9/07/2016				
Tuesday 12/07/2016	7:00	Holy Mass St. Antonious & St. Paul Church – Guildford	7:00	Vespers St George & Prince Tadros Church – Liverpool
Wednesday 13/07/2016	9:00	Holy Mass Anba Abraam Church – Long Point		
Friday 15/07/2016	9:00	Holy Mass St. George Church - Kensington		
Saturday 16/07/2016	9:00	Holy Liturgy Archangel Michael & St. Bishoy Church – Mount Druitt	8:00	Travel to Melbourne by Virgin 88
Tuesday 19/07/2016			3:00	Travel to Cairo



# PENTECOST AND THE GIFT OF UNITY

by Fr. Moses Samaan



This weekend, our Mother, the Holy Church, guides us in the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost, the feast on which the Holy Spirit descended like tongues of fire upon the Holy Apostles and other disciples of our Lord in the Upper Room. The scene is described beautifully in the Book of Acts:

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the

Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1–4)

Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of this passage is the unity of our Lord’s followers before and after the descent of the Holy Spirit. They are described as being “all in one accord in one place.” The place, of course, was the very place in which our Lord instituted the Mystical Supper, the Upper Room, which is clearly a symbol of the Church. Thus, our Savior’s followers strove to live in one accord and were united in the Church before the Holy Spirit descended upon them.

When the Holy Spirit descended

upon them, that unity between them was strengthened and sanctified into something even more wonderful. Hundreds of years earlier, the Holy Spirit inspired the Holy Prophet-King David to prophesy about what would happen:

Behold now, what is so good or so joyous as for brethren to dwell together in unity? It is like the oil of myrrh upon the head, which runneth down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron, which runneth down to the fringe of his raiment. It is like the dew of Aeron, which cometh down upon the mountains of Sion. For there the Lord commanded the blessing, life for evermore (Ps 132, LXX)

When brethren dwell together in unity, it is like the oil of myrrh – a symbol of the Holy Spirit – on the head of Aaron, freely flowing down his beard and priestly raiment. The beautiful visual of this smooth ointment flowing freely brings our minds to the free and abundant gifts of the Holy Spirit, which the Holy Apostles received as they dwelt together in unity. We read that “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). The fact that the Holy Apostles began to speak in different languages simultaneously emphasizes their unity. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, they were able to transcend the



different languages that divided mankind into different races and nations. Because they strove to be united, the Holy Spirit blessed their unity and granted them grace to further unite the world through their active preaching and ministry throughout the world. As St. Irenaeus of Lyon put it, "With one accord in all languages, they uttered praise to God, the Spirit bringing distant tribes to unity and offering to the Father the firstfruits of all nations."

This message of unity is especially important for us living in a world that exalts individualism and self-determination. We oftentimes find it difficult to overcome our sense of self and yield to the will of someone else for the sake of unity. The Holy Apostles certainly could have adopted that way of life after our Lord's Ascension. Each of them had amazing personal experiences with our Savior and received treasures of wisdom from Him. They could have gone their own ways after His Ascension and preached the Gospel in their own way. But they didn't. Instead, we find them united and living in one accord while waiting for the descent of the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit came upon them, He took the small measure of unity for which they struggled and magnified it into something far greater. They were given the grace to unite the world by their preaching. How else could a fisherman like the Holy Apostle Peter convert 3,000 souls in one day after a simple sermon? He was given this gift to unite those souls in the faith because he first strove to maintain the unity with his brethren and live in one accord with them. For this reason, the Holy Apostle Paul exhorts us,

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of

all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Eph 4:1-6). The unity of the Holy Apostles on Pentecost is a powerful contrast to an event we encounter earlier in human history, the building of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. In both Pentecost and Babel, we see a project to unite all of mankind through the unity of language.

In Babel, the unity that was being sought was a unity pursued by men for the sake of their own glory. The inhabitants of Babel said to each other in their common language, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Gen 11:4). Their goal, then, was to make a name for themselves. Their whole project came from their arrogance and desire to have power and fame.

On the Day of Pentecost, however, the Holy Apostles use their common language, not to speak of themselves, but rather, to speak about the mighty acts of God. This is an important contrast between them: the people of Babel used their common language to build a monument to themselves whereas the Holy Apostles on Pentecost used their common language to build a monument to God. St. Cyril of Jerusalem commented on this contrast, saying, "In Babel, that former confusion of tongues, there was a division of purpose, for their intention was evil; on Pentecost, there was a restoration and union of minds, since the object of the Disciples' zeal was pious." St. Augustine puts it simply, saying, "Through proud men the languages were divided; through the humble apostles, they were reunited."

This powerful contrast between the confusion of tongues at Babel and the uniting of tongues on Pentecost teaches us that there are two ways in which we can be united. We can be united according to the flesh as the people of Babel were, or we can be united according to the Spirit, as the Holy Apostles were.

To be united according to the

Spirit is to become decentered from ourselves and recentered on God. It is to go from a life in which we care primarily about ourselves and our needs to Christocentric life, a life that has Christ at its center. The reason the Holy Apostles were united in the Spirit on Pentecost is because they underwent this transformation in their lives. Before Pentecost, we find them seeking their own glory as they debated with each other who was the greatest among them and which of them would sit at the right- and left-hand of our Lord Jesus Christ. After Pentecost, however, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them and shifted their focus away from themselves and towards Christ, we are told that they formed a "community...of one heart and mind." The new language they spoke was the language of humility. Because they humbled themselves, they were united through the power of the Holy Spirit. The lesson for us is that, when we humble ourselves, we will increase in the measure of the Holy Spirit. And when we have the Holy Spirit, we will have unity, because the Holy Spirit does not simply bring unity from an external source. Instead, He is unity and He makes unity. He is the bond of unity that exists within the Church. One of the best images of this fact is the analogy of the soul and body used by St. Augustine. He teaches us that, what the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the Church, which is the Body of Christ. Just as the soul animates and keeps together the human body, so also does the Holy Spirit give life and unite the Church. This is because the Holy Spirit Himself is unity.

We see this concept come to life in the Holy Apostles. In terms of their personalities and backgrounds, they were as different as any twelve men could be. The Gospel makes it clear that our Lord Jesus Christ did not choose them because of the compatibility of their personalities. Throughout the Gospel, we see each of them acting in radically different ways. Nonetheless, today, on Pentecost, they were bound together in a community of

love through the Holy Spirit. This community was not based on mutual compatibility or common interests, but rather, the community was centered on Christ and united in the Holy Spirit.

It is the same with us today. We are not a church because similarly minded people came together; we are a church because God made a community out of us through His Holy Spirit. We see that the Church is not an institution, but rather, it is a miracle and a mystery. For centuries, the Holy Spirit was given only to prophets, kings, and judges, but now, anyone with faith may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit through the Church, irrespective of whether you are a fisherman or tax collector, Jew or Gentile, male or female, young or old.

As we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost and the strong emphasis on unity through the Holy Spirit, it is my hope that we will all examine our lives and meditate on what it means to be united. Let us avoid being united by our own desires according to what we think is best, like the builders of the Tower of Babel. Instead, let us be united by first being humble. As St. Paul tells us, we must "preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." We know that Satan and his demons constantly strive to divide us. Our job is to recognize this and constantly fight to maintain the unity among us. Think of the example of a spider weaving a beautiful web. As soon as the web tears, the spider will rush to fix the tear by whatever means possible so that the web always remains beautiful and functional. This is what we have to do in our relationships and as a church. If we find a division — a tear, so to speak — among us, we must rush to fix it by whatever means possible. St. Paul teaches us that the best way to preserve unity is through the bond of peace. This essentially means that, when any division arises, we must be quick to make peace between both sides as quickly as possible. If we bring peace first, the unity will come.





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ABN 16 160 441 770  
PO Box 757, Rose Bay NSW 2029  
Suite 3/345 Kingsway, CARINGBAH NSW 2229  
M 0431 290 470  
E info@stmauriceagedcare.com.au

"ST Maurice Aged Care service (SMAC) was blessed by the recent visit of Fr Dawoud Lamie to its Coptic section within Ark nursing home at Bankstown.

The board members would like to express their gratitude to Fr Dawoud as well as our beloved Fr Abdelmessieh for attending on the day.

We would like to thank Fr Jonathan for his great support during the recent interview with CYC (Coptic Youth Channel).

We also would like to express our sincere gratitude to ALL our beloved Rev Fathers who share the roster for The Holy Liturgy on Mondays at the facility.

Please remember ST Maurice Aged Care service in your prayers.

Your support is critical for this service to continue.

If you need more information regarding SMAC or how to donate, please visit our website: stmauriceagedcare.com.au



St Maurice Aged Care Ltd is a registered not-for-profit organisation with full tax concessions.  
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(ACN 168 959 966 / ABN 29 168 959 966)

P.O.BOX 574 ST MARYS NSW 1790 TEL: 61-2-0410 285 118 FAX: 61-2-9833 9299

EMAIL ADDRESS: - "stmarknubianfoundation@gmail.com"

(For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men) "1 Peter 2:15"

"A good man deals graciously and lends; He will guide his affairs with discretion" (Psalm 112:5)



As we are approaching towards the end of the financial year, and the seasonal lodgement of the annual tax return forms; we would like to provide you with the names and mobile phones numbers of our beloved volunteers who are holding Tax Deductible Receipts as follows: -

Name	Church	Mobile
i) Romani Sami Fakhouri	St. Antoni & Abba Paula	0422856359
ii) Yousif Botrous Yousif	Archangel Michael & St. Pishoi	0403089264
iii) Mona Girgis	St. George Church Liverpool	0401582774
iv) Salwa Ghali	Holy Apostles and St. Abanoub	0431445669
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**"All Donations are Tax deductible"**

**St. Mark Nubian Foundation Board of Directors:-**

Fr. Youssef Fanous (Director & Presiding Member), Fr. Pishoi Botrous (Director & Vice President), Mobarak Alera (Director & Liaison Officer), and Emile Girgis (Director and Secretary & Treasurer)

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We serve at Parramatta and City, and current kitchen is based at Guildford. If you need more information, or you know someone that may be able to assist please contact us on [info@cocos.org.au](mailto:info@cocos.org.au) or 0408110442.

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## THE FIRST COPTIC CHURCH IN SYDENHAM

By : Dr . Magdy Shehata

When HH the Late Pope Shenouda III became the Patriarch of the Coptic Church , there were only 7 churches in the diaspora including 2 in Australia , 2 in the USA and one in Europe . Today there are more than 300 churches all over the diaspora. St Marys and St Minas Church in Sydenham , Sydney , was the first Coptic Orthodox Church in Australia . And I am sure that every Copt in Sydney has many good memories in this first church . I was privileged to serve and be a member of the church's committee for many years and continue to serve when the church was located to Bexley .

As the Church was directly under the flight path of Sydney airport , the Australian government has decided to demolish most of the buildings in the area after paying compensation . Then the church was re-located to Bexley where a large cathedral and a Coptic school were built . Since then ( 2001 ) , many opinions and suggestions revolved around the Sydenham church included

turning the church to Coptic museum or a social Christian club or keeping it as a historical church . Fifteen years has passed and the building had become unstable which had led the government to take the decision to demolish the church.

Many of the youth and the beloved church's congregation held an event in the original location at Sydenham where many clergy and Australian politicians have attended in support of the church and to make a stand against the demolition order . Credit must go to many of the Australian politicians who attended . The demolition order was put on hold till August 2016 where a final decision will be made. The two scenarios are either the church will be seen as of no historical value and hence it will be demolished or it will be



regarded as a historical site and kept . In the case of second scenario , there are some questions that need to be studied very carefully . Will the church be converted to a museum as previously was suggested ? or will it be a social Christian club ? Who will manage the project ? Who will pay for the re-building

? What is His Holiness' opinion regarding this issue ? Psalm 69:9 " Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up " . These are questions that are in the minds of many of the congregation that love the first Coptic Church in Sydney and I am one of them and want the best interest for it .

### ST MARY & POPE KYRILLOS 6<sup>th</sup> COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH DIOCESE OF SYDNEY & ITS AFFILIATED REGIONS – AUSTRALIA

With the Grace of God and Through the Intercessions of Our Patron Saints the Mother of God St Mary & Pope Kyrillos 6<sup>th</sup> and the prayers and Blessing of HH Pope Tawadros II and HG Bishop Daniel, we have now obtained council approval DA for the building of our new church.

Accordingly, we are in need of your spiritual support and your continuous prayers for our church, as well as financial support to build the house of the Lord.

If you would like to take the blessing of sharing in the building of our church, the church's tax-deductible account details are:

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# THE LENGTH OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY

by Fr. Moses Samaan



The Gospel reading of the Fifth Sunday of the Great Holy Fast, known as the Sunday of the Paralytic, begins with this simple statement: "After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem" (Jn 5:1).

It is, *prima facie*, a simple statement that one can easily pass over, but it deserves our attention, for we learn from it more than the obvious fact that our Lord went to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish feasts.

In fact, this statement teaches us about the length of our Lord's public ministry. Many of us undoubtedly have heard the assertion that our Lord began His ministry at around the age of 30 and offered Himself as a life-giving sacrifice at around the age of 33 for a total period of approximately three years. Where does this assertion come from? It's not written plainly in the Gospel. The answer is that it comes from the exegesis of the Early Church Fathers and writers who studied the Gospel according to John. They interpreted these references to our Lord attending "a feast of the Jews" as referring specifically to the Feast of Passover. The patristic consensus is largely in supportive of this interpretation, but it is worth noting that the Holy John Chrysostomos thought

the feast here in John 5:1 was the Feast of Pentecost. In any event, assuming one accepts the larger patristic consensus, the Gospel according to John reveals that our Lord attended four Passovers after He began His public ministry:

"Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." (Jn 2:13).

"After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." (Jn 5:1).

"Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near." (Jn 6:4).

"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." (Jn 13:1).

The last reference from John 13, of course, refers to that fateful Passover in which our Savior would offer Himself as "the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). As the Holy Apostle declared, "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Co 5:7).

In his work *Against Heresies*, the Holy Irenaeus of Lyons discusses this timeline in more depth:

It is very surprising how they claim to have found the depths of God and have not searched the Gospels to see how often after his baptism the Lord went up to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover according to the custom of the Jews from every country to assemble every year at this time in Jerusalem and there celebrate the feast of the Passover. The first time he went up to the feast of the Passover was after he had made wine out of water in Cana of Galilee. Of that occasion this was written: For many believed in him, when they saw his signs which he did. That is what John, the disciple of the Lord, recorded. After withdrawing himself, he is found in Samaria, where, too, he disputed with the Samaritan woman and healed the centurion's son, who was absent, by just a word. Go, he said: Your son will live. After that he went up to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover the second time At that time he healed the paralytic who had been lying beside the pool for thirty-eight years. He commanded him to rise and take up his bed and go home. Again he departed to the other side of Lake Tiberias, where, when a large crowd had followed him, he satisfied that entire multitude with five loaves of bread; and twelve baskets of

fragments were left over. Next, when he had raised Lazarus from the dead, and the Pharisees were in ambush plotting against him, he withdrew to the city of Ephraim. Then it is written that six days before the day of the Passover he came to Bethany. From Bethany he went up to Jerusalem and ate the pasch and suffered on the following day.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, we see that the Early Church was guided by the chronology of the Gospel according to John in determining the length of our Lord's public ministry. From the time He was baptized in the Jordan River (which the Holy Church commemorates every January) until the time He attended the first Feast of the Passover (typically around March/April), there was a gap of almost six months. Afterwards, one year passed until the second Feast of the Passover in John 5, followed by another year until the third Feast of the Passover in John 6. Finally, another year passed before our Lord attended the fourth Feast of the Passover at which He offered Himself as a life-giving sacrifice.

Our Lord's presence at these four Passover feasts supports the common understanding of His public ministry lasting about three-and-a-half years.



# OVERCOMING YOUR EGO

by Fr. Matthew the Poor

## The First Counsel

Never rely on your own wisdom or might or on human strength in any of your works. Otherwise, your mind will become dim and your insight blurred, thus blocking the way for grace to enter you and show you the way of God. You will thus be led astray from truth and fall into the enemy's trap. At the end, you will be enslaved to your own ego and to the desires of other people, "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!" (Is.5.21).

## The Second Counsel

Beware of thinking highly of yourself. Never feel that without you the world would stop. For your self would seem great and grand in your own eyes. Know instead that God can use another to do the work better than you. He can make the weak mighty and the mighty weak, the wise foolish and the foolish wise. Everything good and useful in you is from God and not from you. If you do not hand it over to God and with conviction attribute it to him, he will tear it away from you. If you boast of your intelligence or virtue, God will leave them to you as merely human gifts. They will then turn into corruption, loss, and damage.

## The Third Counsel

Your ego might hate submitting to God. It might escape surrendering to him. In the meantime, you would be making much of your own power – attributing your intelligence, virtue, and success to yourself. In this case, God will deliver you to continual discipline; discipline after discipline, tribulation after tribulation, until you succumb and surrender in brokenness. But if you reject discipline and cannot stand tribulation, God will forsake you forever.

## The Fourth Counsel

Take heed then and open your ears: Either count yourself

as nothing in word and deed and make up your mind to surrender yourself to God with all your might – and you will then gladly be released from your ego by the grace of God; or, you will be delivered to discipline until you are set free from your ego in spite of yourself. So if you wish to opt for the easier way, take that of voluntary submission. Count yourself from now on as nothing, and follow the path of grace wherever the Spirit may wish to lead you.

## The Fifth Counsel

Know for certain that submission to God and total surrender to his will and divine plan are a free gift of grace. It thus demands, besides prayer and supplication, a trusting faith to receive this gift. This should be coupled with a longing springing from one's heart that God may not deliver us to discipline for our folly, nor abandon us to our own wisdom. For this reason, we should have an extremely resolute will to renounce our own self at all times and in all works. This should not be done ostentatiously before people but within our conscience. Blessed is the man who can discover his own weakness and ignorance and confess them before God to the last day of his life.

## The Sixth Counsel

If you fall under discipline, know for sure that this is a great profit, for God chastises the soul that has forgotten its weakness and has been puffed up by its talents and success. This is carried on until it realizes its weakness, especially when God does not provide in tribulation a way to escape. He besieges the soul



from all sides and embitters it with inward and outward humiliation, whether by sin or by scandal, until it abhors itself, curses its own intelligence, and disowns its counsel. Finally, it surrenders itself to God, feeling crushed and lowly. At such a time, it becomes easy for man to hate himself. He even wishes to be hated by everybody. This is the way of true humility. It leads to total surrender to divine plan. It ends up with freeing one's soul from the tyranny of the ego, with its deception, its stubbornness, and its vanity.

## The Seventh Counsel

If you wish to free your soul by the shortest and simplest way, sit down every day under the discipline of grace. Examine your thoughts, movements,

intentions, purposes, words, and deeds in the light of God's word. It is then that you shall discover the corruption of the ego, its imposture, slyness, deception, vanity, and lack of chastity. If you persist in doing this regularly in contrition, you will manage to sever yourself from your false and devilish ego. You will then be able to overpower it bit by bit until you can deny it altogether, hate it, and break jail from its tyranny. You will at last discover the catastrophe into which your ego has led you for obeying it, finding peace in its shelter, boasting of it, and seeking its respect.

The moment you realize at the bottom of your heart that you are nothing and that God is everything, then the truth shall have set you free.





#### Beds are filling fast

Prior to admission for respite or permanent care you will need to arrange an assessment by the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). Once this assessment has been completed you will receive a copy of the Aged Care Client Record (ACCR) which advises you what level of care is required. You will need the ACCR to complete the Ark Health Care Application for Admission form for respite care or for a permanent place at one of our facilities.

For a permanent place at Ark Health Care Bankstown you will also be required to complete a Request for a Combined Assets and Income Assessment Form (SA457) from the Department of Human Services. Alternatively, you can download this form using the following link: <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/spw/customer/forms/resources/sa457-1502en.pdf>

Once you have prepared the two documents mentioned above, you may ring Ark Health Care on (02) 9791 9609 between the hours of 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, or email [bankstown@arkhc.com](mailto:bankstown@arkhc.com) to make an appointment to view the facility, discuss the options available for admission.

#### Sydney's 1st Coptic Aged Care Facility!

Saint Maurice Aged Care Ltd and Ark Health Care Bankstown are excited to announce a partnership to provide professional care services to the frail aged of the Coptic Christian Community in a residential care facility situated in Bankstown.

Ark Health Care creates a homely environment whilst catering for the individual needs of all our residents. We provide a comprehensive culturally specific lifestyle program, working with each resident to find activities and interests that suit them, and a priest will be providing regular services and pastoral care to our residents.

## FIRST COPTIC AGED CARE FACILITY IN SYDNEY

If you haven't already caught wind of the fabulous news, you will be glad to know that Saint Maurice Aged Care Ltd and Ark Health Care have announce a partnership to provide professional care services to the frail aged of the Coptic Christian Community in a residential care facility situated in Bankstown.

The Coptic floor is now open and residents have been accommodated. In fact, we had our first Liturgy on Monday August 10 conducted by Father Abdelmessih, Father Youssef and Father Samuel.

If you are interested in serving the elderly this this for you!!

Serving the elderly is a complex proposition. There is almost no end to the variety of ways in which you can help older people live full lives. You don't need any special skills or degrees to improve the life of an elderly person, just compassion and understanding.

There are two ways to serve the residents at Ark Health Care

Bankstown:

1. Become a regular Ark Volunteer. This will require you to attend a two hour orientation program and source a police check. If you would like to become a regular Ark Volunteer, please contact Ark on (02) 9791 9609 between the hours of 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, or email [bankstown@arkhc.com](mailto:bankstown@arkhc.com).

2. Supervised Visitation Sessions are available for servants who prefer to serve on a casual basis. As this does not require a police check or orientation, these visitations are conducted in the common area only, at the following times:

a) Tuesdays 10am-12pm

b) Thursdays 2pm-4pm

Although St Maurice and Ark are grateful for your time & effort, general visitors who are not a friend or family member, are advised to comply with one of the two volunteer options mentioned.



Saint Maurice Aged Care Ltd

## Beds are filling fast



Saint Maurice Aged Care Ltd and Ark Health Care Bankstown are excited to announce a partnership to provide professional care services to the frail aged of the Coptic Christian Community in a residential care facility situated in Bankstown.

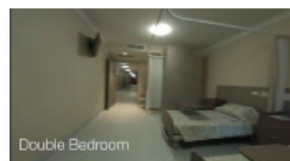
Ark Health Care creates a homely environment whilst catering for the individual needs of all our residents. We provide a comprehensive culturally specific lifestyle program, working with each resident to find activities and interests that suit them, and a priest will be providing regular services and pastoral care to our residents.

If you are interested in acquiring a position at Ark Health Care, please book a personal tour by calling (02) 9791 9609 between the hours of 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, or email [bankstown@arkhc.com](mailto:bankstown@arkhc.com).

Prior to admission for respite or permanent care you will need to arrange an assessment by the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). Once this assessment has been completed you will receive a copy of the Aged Care Client Record (ACCR) which advises you what level of care is required. You will need the ACCR to complete the Ark Health Care 'Application for Admission' form for respite care or for a permanent place at one of our facilities.

For a permanent place at an Ark Health Care Bankstown you will also require a Request for a Combined Assets and Income Assessment Form (SA457) from the Department of Human Services. Alternatively, you can download this form using the following link:

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/spw/customer/forms/resources/sa457-1502en.pdf>



Double Bedroom



Exterior

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1A Hibson Street, Bankstown, NSW 2200  
Tel: 02 9791 9609 Email: [bankstown@arkhc.com](mailto:bankstown@arkhc.com)  
ABN: 99 125 505 697



Saint Maurice Aged Care Ltd

## Positions Vacant



**If you are a professional, caring person with compassion for people and enthusiasm to deliver exceptional care, we want to hear from you!**

Saint Maurice Aged Care Ltd and Ark Health Care Bankstown are excited to announce a partnership to provide care and services to the frail aged of the Coptic Christian Community in a residential care facility situated in Bankstown.

We are seeking committed people from the Coptic Christian Community to fill the following positions:

1. Registered Nurses
2. Personal carers – Certificate III or IV in Aged Care
3. Hospitality staff – experience in Kitchen hand duties and Cleaning

To enquire about these positions please call (02) 9791 9609 between the hours of 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, or email [bankstown@arkhc.com](mailto:bankstown@arkhc.com).

All applications must include:

- Application For Employment Form.
- Cover letter
- Resume
- Certificates
- Police Check (AFP)

Don't forget to mention that you have been referred by the Coptic Community.

Ark Healthcare Bankstown  
1A Hibson Street, Bankstown, NSW 2200  
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## THE HOLY THEOTOKOS AS THE LIVING TEMPLE

by Fr. Moses Samaan

Last Sunday, faithful in the Coptic Orthodox Church celebrated with great joy the Feast of the Entry of the Holy Theotokos Mary into the temple. Although this event is not mentioned in the Holy Scripture, it is firmly rooted in the Holy Tradition of the Church, especially from a book known as the Protoevangelium of James, which offers details concerning the early life of the Holy Theotokos.

When the Holy Theotokos was only three-years-old, her parents fulfilled the vow they made to the Lord and presented her in the temple adorned with fine, embroidered clothing as they chanted sacred songs, reflecting the prophecy of the Psalmist,

...In embroidered clothing: virgins shall be brought to the King after her: her fellows shall be brought to Thee. They shall be brought with gladness and exultation: they shall be led into the King's temple (Ps 44:14-15 LXX).

The High Priest of the Temple — who some say was none other than the Holy Zacharias, the husband of Anna's niece, Elisabeth, and the future father of the Holy Forerunner John the Baptist — met her at the bottom of the steps leading to the altar. In the Jewish temple, which was built on a mountain, there were 15 high steps that led up to the altar, which only the High Priest and priests could enter. As they ascended each step, they recited Psalms 119-133, which are accordingly called the

"Psalms of Ascent" or the "Song of Ascents." They represent different stages or degrees in the spiritual growth of a person. For this reason, the priests recited these 15 psalms as they ascended the steps to the altar.

When the three-year-old Virgin was placed on the first step, it initially seemed as though there was no way for her to make it up the 15 steps. However, by the grace of God, the holy infant quickly ascended the 15 steps to the altar. The High Priest, amazed at the holiness of the child, led her into the Holy of Holies, which was the holiest part of the altar that the High Priest could enter only once a year to offer sacrifice. Theophylactos, Patriarch of Bulgaria, commented,

At that time, the High Priest was in ecstasy, filled with the Spirit of God, and understood that the maiden was the dwelling place of divine grace and more worthy than he to stand always before God's countenance. He remembered that the Law commended the Ark be placed in the Holy of Holies and straightway perceived that this ordinance pertained to the maiden.

Everyone who witnessed this marveled that the High Priest would take this young child to the Holy of Holies.

The entrance of the Holy Theotokos into the temple and the Holy of Holies carries great spiritual significance. She entered the Temple so that she

might herself become a living temple of God. Heretofore, Jews believed that God dwelt only in the temple made with hands, but in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the dwelling place of God was the Holy Theotokos, the temple not made with hands. It wasn't that our Lord simply needed a human body and therefore chose any random woman; He chose the one who chose Him with all her heart, soul, and entire being. As He spoke in the Holy Gospel, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (Jn 14:23). This is precisely what He did in a marvelous way with the Holy Theotokos. Indeed, Holy Tradition teaches us that she spent her days in the temple reading the Holy Scripture, occupied in prayer, and advancing in her love towards God.

The Holy Theotokos was therefore presented in the temple so that she herself might become the "Holy of Holies," the living altar and temple of the Incarnate Logos Whom she carried in her womb for nine months. It was not a rite of passage for her, but rather for the temple at Jerusalem. She who is the Living Temple sanctified the temple made with stone. Her entrance thus marked the end of the physical temple in Jerusalem, which was considered to be the only dwelling place of God on earth, and the beginning of all mankind bearing God through our Lord's



Incarnation. The result is that we, too, can be made dwelling places and temples of the Living God, as the Holy Apostle reminds us that we are "being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Eph 2:22).

Let us meditate on the humbling mercy and compassion of God Who condescends and permits us, despite our many sins and weaknesses, to be dwelling places for Him. We should remember this especially when we approach to partake of the Holy Body and Precious of our Lord in the Mystery of the Eucharist. What God offers us is a free gift and grace, but it requires a response and cooperation on our part, as well. We must live according to this gift and grace, and strive to bear God in our actions and hearts: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (Jn 14:23).

"Return to your rest, O my Soul"

Comemoration of Raafat Hana will be on Sunday 24/07/2016 in Holy Mass at St Abanoub Church in Blacktown.

We miss you.

Your Wife, Daughter, Sister.

Attachments area

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