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NEXT ISSUE:
25th June 2017

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:
19th June 2017

HIS HOLINESS POPE TAWADROS II AND HIS GRACE BISHOP ANGAELOS MEETS QUEEN ELIZABETH II



His Holiness Pope Tawadros II and His Grace Bishop Angaelos meets Queen Elizabeth II during a private audience at Windsor Castle on May 9, 2017 in Windsor, United Kingdom. Pope Tawadros II, 118th Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark, is making his first pastoral visit to the United Kingdom.

POPE FRANCIS VISIT TO EGYPT



POPE TAWADROS II RECEIVED BY PATRIARCH KIRILL IN MOSCOW



COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH, DIOCESE OF SYDNEY
6TH SUNDAY OF THE HOLY PENTECOST

GOSPEL READING: JOHN 16:23-33

TRIUMPHANT JESUS GIVES US VICTORY



The Gospel reading of today teaches us that our beloved Triumphant Lord gives us victory. "Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me". (John 16:32)

"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

The word 'tribulation' means 'trials' or 'suffering' or 'struggles'. Suffering could be in many forms: physical pain, persecution, spiritual or physical battles, financial difficulties, or all these combined. Therefore, when Jesus said these words, He could foresee what suffering lay ahead for those who followed Him. He foresaw that under persecution, some "will be scattered" and "will leave Him alone". However, despite all this, He reassured them "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me... I have overcome the world".

- Tribulations are practical and necessary experiences to test the strength of our faith and our love of God. Therefore, each time we face a trial, we should reach out to God asking Him to help us and give us victory in our battles.

- Tribulations are part of our spiritual path, whereby they make us stronger in endurance and help the growth of our faith.

Tribulations occur on two levels: on a spiritual level and a social level.

1. The Spiritual level:

- The spiritual level is internal, and the trials occur

when the soul is in conflict with the desires of the body. Controlling the body is similar to entering through the narrow gate, and it involves a great deal of spiritual practices, such as prayer, Bible reading, fasting and metanoia.

- In the Bible we have many examples of people who entered through the narrow

a person who chose to enter through the narrow gate, in faith, is the Prophet Daniel: when he, "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies", and together with his friends, they ate only vegetables (Dan 1:8-12).

2. The Social level:



gate, confident that God will make them victorious. And there are also examples of those who did not enter through the narrow gate, because their faith was weak. For example, Adam and Eve did not enter through the narrow gate, because they preferred to follow their desires, and ate from the forbidden fruit. But a wonderful example of

- The second level in which we experience tribulations is on a social level. These tribulations are external trials which we face, either from people or events in the world around us.

- We read about many people who experienced social tribulations: for example, Virgin St Mary, the righteous Joseph,

St John the Beloved, St Paul the Apostle, and even St Athanasius, who defended the Orthodox faith so strongly, that they told him: "The whole world is against you Athanasius!".

- For us Christians, tribulations will always exist. But we must remember that where tribulations exist, our beloved Saviour also exists. If we have faith in God and endure our tribulations with patience and hope, then He will lead us to victory, and this is His promise to us in today's Gospel reading.

- We must trust God when we experience problems. And if we do, then no matter how severe the afflictions, we can always be at peace within ourselves, knowing that God will give us the victory.

- As an example, we read in the book of Acts that although St Peter was suffering many tribulations, he slept so peacefully when he was in prison, that when the angel came to save him, the angel had to hit him on his side to wake him up.

- We also read in Psalm 4 that King David, although he also had many tribulations, "lay down and slept".

- These two examples show us that external tribulations did not affect the inner peace of any of them, because they trusted God, and had patience, faith and hope that God would lead them to victory – and HE did.

Glory be to the Lord forever, Amen.

Bishop Daniel

Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions



Coptic Orthodox Church Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions

PAPAL VISIT 2017



CLOSING DATE FOR REGISTRATION

The membership sub-committee of the Diocese of Sydney would like to announce that **TODAY 28.05.2017** is the last date for registration to obtain a Church Membership Identity Card.

This card will be used to enter all functions held during the visit of HH Pope Tawadrous II to Sydney in August/September 2017, and will also be used in the future during Church functions.

Entrance to any function of HH Pope Tawadrous II will be controlled by professional security companies and there will be

no exceptions.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP SUB-COMMITTEE

Coptic Orthodox Church Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions

Papal Visit 2017

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

As previously announced every member of the congregation must register and get a Church Membership Card to be allowed entry to any function held during the visit of HH Pope Tawadrous II later this year.

There are 3 main stages in this process:

- 1) Registering your details either electronically or manually.
- 2) A Church Membership Card with your photo will be printed.
- 3) The Church membership card to be collected at your Church.

**Starting from 2/4/2017 both systems for registration will be open,
you need to complete your registration by 14/5/2017 to allow enough time for printing & distribution of the cards.**

ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

- 1) On your computer or smart mobile go to <https://www.hisvine.com/>
- 2) Enter all the information as requested.
- 3) Take a photo of yourself and every other member of your family as requested and submit application.
- 4) Site will be closed at 11:59 pm on Sunday 14/5/2017

MANUAL REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

- 1) Collect a form from your Church
- 2) Fill in the form as per your driver's license or passport
- 3) Attach a photo of yourself, your spouse and children under the age of 15.
- 4) Hand in your completed form to your Church Treasurer.
- 5) No forms will be accepted after 14/5/2017

For all enquiries please contact the treasurer at your Church



DIocese NEWS

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE DIOCESE OF SYDNEY & ITS AFFILIATED REGIONS TO KEEP THE BUILDING OF THE FORMER ST MARY CHURCH – SYDENHAM THAT WAS THE FIRST COPTIC CHURCH IN SYDNEY



1.- Introduction

1.1: On 4 August 2015 Marrickville City Council advised that it was decided to proceed with demolition of the building of the Former St Mary Church – Sydenham for safety reasons due to its location on planes path and for other reasons.

1.2: The decision of demolition of the building of the Former St Mary Church – Sydenham was activated by Inter West Council (Marrickville Council) following the fire which happened in the building on the first week of May 2017.

1.3: Inter West Council executed demolition of the Building on the second week of May 2017.

1- On the 18th of April 2004, in the Meeting of the General Advisory Board (GAB), item 6.8 of the Agenda on the future use of the Former Coptic Church – Sydenham was discussed and the members of (GAB) rejected the idea of negotiation with Government to lease the building for 5 years (could be extended to 21 years) with a cost of restoration of Approximately \$400,000.00 to become Coptic Museum. They recommended instead having museum in our present Churches of the Diocese.

2- On the 7th of July 2004 a meeting was held between V. Rev. Fr. Tadros Simon, Mr Hosny Guirgis, Mr. Magdy Mikhael, Mr. Adel Halaka who met Mr. Morris Hanna, Mayour Marrickville Council, Ms Vicki Munor, Director and Ms Linda Livingstone.

The Council suggested to lease the top floor to the Coptic Church for 5 years for establishing a Coptic Pharaonic Museum and the Council stated clearly that it will not restore or fix the building at that stage.

The Committee felt that this project will cost the church above \$1.1M and the lease

period will not be beneficial for the church at all.

It was decided that the church refuses the offer and withdraw completely from this project.

3- On the 12th of August 2004 in the Hegomens' Meeting V. Rev. Fr Tadros Simon informed the meeting about the recommendation RE: the building in Sydenham and it was agreed that an Article be published in Spring of Love.

4- On the 8th of November 2006, a meeting was conducted between the Committee of the Project and the Mayor of Marrickville Council.

Due for several reasons, of which the cost of restoration which the church could not afford, it was decided the File of Former St Mary Church – Sydenham be closed.

5- On the 3rd of December 2008, HG Bishop Daniel wrote a letter to the Mayor of Marrickville City Council strongly advocating the restoration of Sydenham Church to be preserved for future generations of Copts in Australia and to be in possession of the Coptic Orthodox church.

6- On 16th of December 2008, HG Bishop Daniel sent a letter to HH Pope Shenouda III informing that the Government had put the church for tender with a cost of \$2.4 M for restoring the building and requested His Holiness prayers and advise.

7- On the 11 of January 2011 and due to the request of some of the congregation who decided to enter the tender and requested the Diocese to provide the Consolidated Financial Statement to the Council, HG Bishop Daniel referred the matter to the Finance Department and the Key persons in the Diocese seeking their advice.

The Vice-Chairman of the Finance Department, Mr. John Nakhla provided his recommendation stating that the tender clearly states the

repairs and restorations of the building would cost \$1.547M, however he is willing to accept the estimation of the Mr, George Hanna who put an amount of 300K for restoration under one condition to bring the confirmation of the Council; unfortunately Mr. Hanna was not able to provide acceptance & Confirmation of the council.

8- On June 2011, Mr. George Hanna sent the Diocese the Expression of Interest from Marrickville Council which states the Opinions of Probable Cost to be \$ 2,288.000.00.

HG Bishop Daniel again referred the matter to the Finance Department seeking their advice.

The Vice-Chairman of the Finance Department, Mr. John Nakhla provided his recommendation;

The documents sent show that the cost to which the diocese will be committed as a result of signing the letter is still \$2.2M.

9- Following a Meeting at Marrickville Council on 6th of August 2013, On 14 August 2013 HG Bishop Daniel sent a letter to Clr Victor Marciri Marrickville City Council asking that Sydenham Church to be restored and preserved for future generations of Copts in Australia. And submitted a letter from Commonwealth Bank dated 8th of August 2013 confirming that the Coptic Orthodox Church has the financial Capacity to meet all costs relating to the Refurbishment of St Mary Sydenham.

10- On 2nd of September 2013 Marrickville Council sent an E-mail requesting confirmation of some points. On 5th of September 2013 HG Bishop Daniel replied to them by E-mail confirming all the points they requested.

11- On 18 September 2013, The General Manager of the Council called to advise that the Council agreed to open the Expression of Interest again for the refurbishment of the Church building and to occupy it again.

12- On 27th of September 2013, HG Bishop Daniel presented the matter of St Mary Sydenham before the Spiritual Committee of the Diocese and they decided to participate in the Expression of Interest.

13- On 26 October 2013, I informed HH Pope Tawadros II in a phone call that the dead line for presenting the Expression of Interest on 13 of November 2013. HH replied "We need to take the Church back as it represents the history heritage of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Australia, and I recommend to establish a Coptic Museum in the Church".

14- On 25 October 2013 the Coptic Orthodox Church – Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions submitted the Proposal to carry out Consultancy & Engineering Services for St Mary Church, Sydenham.

15- On 13 November 2013 The Coptic Orthodox Church NSW Property Trust submitted the Expression of Interest (EOI) to Marikville Council

16- On 21 March 2014 The Council Agreed to provide the Coptic Orthodox Church an Agreement of Lease with Standard Terms

17- On 7th of April 2014 Marrickville Council advised of the Conditions for the Lease of St Mary Church – Sydenham

18- On 23 April 2015 HG Bishop Daniel and Engineer Hany Ghaly, responsible for

refurbishment of St Mary Sydenham and Mr. John Nour, Head of Public Affairs met with Minister of Multiculturalism, Hon. John Ajaka. The Minister promised to assist the Coptic Church.

19- On Monday 27 April 2015 HG Bishop Daniel together with Rev. Fr Youssef Fanous and Engineer Hany Ghaly, responsible for refurbishment of St Mary Sydenham and Mr. John Nour, Head of Public Affairs met with Mayor of Marrickville Council and member of Parliament Hon. Mark Curie. The Mayor promised to assist the Church.

20- On May 8, 2015, Engineer Hany Ghaly, sent to HG Bishop Daniel his comments on the request of the Council to Lease the Building with Conditions.

21- On the 11th of May a Questionnaire was distributed to all the Reverend Fathers the Priests of the Diocese requesting their opinion in view of the Conditions of the Council namely:

21.1 : Council has indicated that the maximum term of a lease it is able to enter into is 30 years under the Local Government Act.

21.2: The Church to agree that

it will make available meeting rooms and associated facilities for local community uses. These will be booked through the Church itself based on nominal fees to promote access. These could include playgroups etc ...

22- On 16 May 2015 the results of the Questionnaire was that 35 Priest out of 35 (unanimously) rejected the conditions of the Council and it was decided to retrieve the Submission of the Church for the refurbishment of St Mary Sydenham.

23- On 22nd of May 2015 a letter was sent to Marrickville Council advising that the Diocese of Sydney wishes to withdraw the Expression Of Interest submission and not to pursue further this matter.

24- On 4 August 2015, HG Bishop Daniel and Reverend Fr Youssef Fanous and Mina Hanna attended the Meeting of Marrickville council for taking the voting, to keep St Mary Church, Sydenham or to demolish it. HG Bishop Daniel requested the Council to cancel the conditions so as to allow the Diocese to refurbish the Church. The Result of the voting was to demolish the Church.

25- On 2nd of November 2015 a Meeting was attended

at Marrickville City Council and Clr Edmond Attalla on behalf of the Diocese requested that all conditions of the Council to be waived and the building to be leased for 99 years instead of 30 years. The Council refused. The Council added that the estimate according to the Council for the Refurbishment of the Church is \$5 Million Dollars excluding authorities and consultants fees. The Council indicated not further negotiation and the file is closed and demolition of the old church is imminent.

26- On 2nd of November 2015 a Media release was issued from the Diocese & Public Affairs Council with this meaning.

27- On 6 December 2015 another Media Release was issued from the Diocese of Sydney indicating that the Diocese has done everything within its power with Marrickville Council to preserve the Sydenham Site.

28- On 6 of December a Prayer Vigil was held on the Site of St Mary Church – Sydenham

29- On 15 December 2015 HG Bishop Daniel sent a letter to the Premier of NSW, the Hon Mike Baird MP requesting him to stop the demolition of the Church and allow the Diocese

the refurbishment of the Church.

30- On 17 December HG Bishop Daniel received a reply from the Premier of NSW that he has forwarded the matter to the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Assistant Minister for Planning.

31- On 24 December 2015, HG Bishop Daniel received a Media Release from Hon. Mark Speakman, Minister for Environment, Minister for Heritage, Assistant Minister for Planning made an Interim Heritage Order (IHO) giving Eight Months to allow experts assess the site's potential state heritage significance.

32- On 3 May 2017 the Inter West Council advised that it was decided to proceed with demolition

We pray to our Lord Jesus Christ to have mercy on us with the intercession of St Mary the Mother of God and the Prayers of the father of fathers His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, may the Lord keep his life for us for many years to come.

Glory be to the Lord forever, Amen.

Bishop Daniel

Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions

A STATEMENT FROM THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH, DIOCESE OF SYDNEY AND AFFILIATED REGIONS ABOUT THE BUILDING THAT WAS THE FIRST COPTIC CHURCH IN SYDNEY

1- This church was bought from a Christian denomination in Sydenham suburb and was used as a church under the name of St Mary and St Mina Church. His Holiness Pope Shenouda III visited this Church in 1989 on His Holiness first visit to Australia, but His Holiness didn't inaugurate the Church for Ritual reasons.

2- Sydenham Church was located in aeroplanes path which caused many problems and noise for the congregation which pushed the Australian Government to make an offer to purchase all the estates on this path including the Church.

3- All the Priests, the Council

of the Church and the Board of NSW Churches under His Holiness Pope Shenouda III and his Deputy His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoy accepted the selling offer provided they offer a place with permission of building another church with the same name (St Mary & St Mina).

4- With the intercession of St Mary and St Mina and through the prayers of His Holiness, we received an offer for an excellent location in Bexely suburb with existing school and a rewarding financial compensation. The Cathedral of St Mary and St Mina was then built and His Holiness inaugurated this church together with our Coptic St Mary School. Everyone rejoiced for the work

of Our Lord.

5- Since that time, June 2001, the old building in Sydenham was no longer a church and no longer owned by us but owned by the Australian government.

6- At that time we did not have a Diocese and HG Bishop Daniel was not yet ordained as a Bishop.

7- Since the arrival of HG Bishop Daniel in October 2002 and when he learnt about the story of the old building, he started to contact the local Council and convened meetings to discuss possibility of using the building by the Coptic congregation. All these efforts which continued for years ended with conditions

that the local Council did not accept.

8- Following that some of the church members tried to enlist the building as a Heritage and exerted intensive efforts with the Australian Government and the Parliament but the Local Council insisted on its stance and no agreement could be reached. Unfortunately, the Council announced its decision to demolish the building this week.

*V Rev Fr Tadros Simon
Vicar General of the Diocese
Coptic Orthodox Church – Diocese
of Sydney & Affiliated Regions*



ST DEMIANA'S FOUNDATION STONE FOR THE NEW BUILDING



On Sunday May 14th at St Demiana & St Athanasius' Coptic Orthodox Church Punchbowl, His Grace Bishop Daniel, the Bishop of Sydney & Affiliated Regions, joined the congregation and clergy in glorifying the feast of St Demiana & St Athanasius. It was a blessing, as the congregation celebrated by praying the liturgy with His Grace. His Grace

ordained many new deacons to the Church, with the new deacons receiving certificates and presents. May God bless the Church and allow it to grow through His Love.

After the liturgy, His Grace Bishop Daniel blessed and prayed on the foundation stone of the NEW Sunday School and Youth Building. By the Grace of God, the Church has just

managed to finish the main structural part of the new building. The Church still needs to finish the building's interior!

The Church is faced with the ongoing problem of catering for the congregation with very little space. Thus, a dedicated English space with

Sunday school/Youth meeting facilities and underground parking came into the plan.

Through the Grace of God, and the hard work of the congregation, the construction has been funded thus far.

There is still much work to be done before The building is complete. If you wish to help the youth and the children of the Church to have a space to grow through Christ, please consider a small donation.



POPE FRANCIS VISIT TO EGYPT



To His Holiness Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria

1. We Francis, the Bishop of Rome and Pope of the Catholic Church, Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the Chair of St. Mark. We thank God in the Holy Spirit, because it gave us the happy opportunity to meet again once, and exchange hugs brotherly and Ntjadded together again in common prayer. We glorify Ali for the bonds of brotherhood and friendship between the Chair of St. Peter and the Chair of St. Mark. That favor our presence here together in Egypt, is a sign of the solidity of our relationship, which is growing year after year in the convergence of faith and love of Jesus Christ, our Lord. We give thanks to God for our beloved Egypt, "the homeland who lives in us." As he used to say His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, and "blessed people" (cf. Isaiah 25:19). Bhoudarth ancient Pharaonic heritage and the Greek and Roman, Coptic and Islamic tradition and attendance, said that Egypt is the place where the Holy Family found refuge, a land of martyrs and the saints.

22. The bonds of deep friendship and brotherhood, which we have, find their roots in the full company of our Churches gathered in the first centuries, which have been expressed in different ways through the first ecumenical

councils, the beginning of the Council of Nicaea in 325, and the contribution of the deacon brave, one of the Fathers of St. Church Athanasius, who earned the title of "protector of the faith." It has been expressed about this company through prayer and liturgical practices similar, and the same honor the martyrs and the saints, and the growth of monastic life and dissemination of such following the example of St. Anthony the Great, known as Papy monks.

The company's experience complete this, which preceded the time of separation, carrying a special meaning in the current effort to restore the full company. The majority of relationships collected in the first centuries, the Catholic Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church, has continued to this day, despite divisions have also revived recently. This encourages us to intensify our joint efforts to persevere in the search for visible unity in diversity, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

33. We recall with gratitude the historic meeting, which took place since the forty-four years ago between our predecessors Pope Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III, embrace peace and friendship, after several decades in which the bonds could not mutual affection that expresses itself because of the divergence that has arisen between us. The joint

statement, which was signed on May 10, 1973, the cornerstone of our journey ecumenism. The starting point was the form of the establishment of a committee of dialogue between our Churches Theological, which gave many fruitful results and opened the way for a broader dialogue between the Catholic Church and all the families of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. In that statement Knestana approved in line with the apostolic tradition, they proclaim "with faith in one God and the triune" and "the divinity of the only Son of God The God of the right of proportion to his divinity, and the human right of proportion to his humanity. " It was also the recognition that "the divine life has been given to us through the seven sacraments, and feed them," and that "we honor the Virgin Mary, Mother of the true Light, the Mother of God."

4. we evoke also deeply grateful to our meeting in Rome brotherly on 10 May 2013, and set on 100 May as a day in which every year deepen the friendship and brotherhood, which gathered our Churches. The spirit of the convergence of this renewable, has allowed us to realize once again that the ligament which unites us has our Lord one of the squalid day of our baptism. Thanks to baptism, in fact, become members of the body of Christ, the one who is the Church (cf. Corinthians 13:12). This common heritage is the

basis of our common march toward full communion, while we grow in love and reconciliation.

55. We are aware that our way is still long ahead of us, but we evoke the large amount which has been achieved so far already. We remember in particular the meeting between Pope Shenouda III and St. John Paul II, who as a visitor came to Egypt during the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 and we are determined to follow Khtoathma motivated by the love of Christ, the Good Shepherd, and conviction full that unity grow as we walk together. To draw our strength from God, the full source of the company and love.

66. This love finds its expression in the deepest common prayer. When Christians pray together, they realize that what brings them together is much greater than what divides them. The unity of our longing for is inspired by the prayer of Christ: "Everyone to be one" (John 21:17). Flanamq our shared roots in our faith in the Apostolic sole through common prayer, searching for common translations "to pray the Lord," and by reaching a common date for the feast of the Resurrection.

77. While stepping toward the blessed day when we will meet together finally we will gather around the table of the Lord Eucharistic itself, already since we can now cooperate in many fields and show, concretely, the

depth of richness that already unites us. Fbasttaatna together to offer a joint certificate for core values, such as the sanctity and dignity of human life and the sanctity of the sacrament of marriage and the family, and respect towards the whole of creation which has been entrusted to us by God. Faced with many contemporary challenges, such as secularism and globalization of indifference, we are invited to give a common answer based on the values of the Gospel and the treasures of the special traditions of each of our Churches. In this regard, we are excited to begin a study more depth to the Eastern Fathers of the Church and the Latin, and promote fruitful exchanges in the pastoral life, especially in Christian education and in the exchange of spiritual riches among the monastic academies and groups devoted.

88. The common Christian is a reconciliation Our testimonies sign of hope and full of grace of the Egyptian society and its institutions, and the seed planted to give the fruits of justice and

peace. While we believe that all human beings have created the image of God, we strive to serenity and harmony through peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims, which will see God's desire for the unity and harmony of the entire human family, and in the equal dignity of all human beings. We share the concern for the well-being of Egypt and its future. All members of the community right and duty to participate fully in the life of the nation, enjoying full citizenship and cooperation and equals in building their homeland. In religious freedom, which includes freedom of conscience, rooted in the dignity of the person, it is the foundation stone for the rest of freedoms. It is a sacred right and is not negotiable.

99. To intensify our prayers continued for all Christians of Egypt and the whole world, especially in the Middle East. Vabrat tragic and blood shed for our brothers the oppressed who were killed solely because of which they are Christians reminds us more than ever, the

ecumenism of martyrs unite us and encourage us to walk on the path of peace and reconciliation, as St. Paul wrote: "If you hurt member suffered with other members" (1 Corinthians 26: 12).

100. If in the mystery of Jesus, who died and rose from the dead love for human beings, is the center of the heart of our journey towards full communion. The martyrs, once again, are the ones who Arushdonna. Just as the blood of the martyrs was the first church in the seed of new Christians Let now also, nowadays the blood of many martyrs, the seed of unity among all the disciples of Christ, and the sign Adat and peace to the world company.

111. obedience to the work of the Holy Spirit, which sanctified the Church and keeps them through the ages, and led to the attainment of full unity - which Christ prayed for.

We are today, Pope Francis and Pope Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria in order to rejoice the heart of our Lord Jesus, as

well as the hearts of our sons and daughters in the faith, we declare, and mutually, we strive in favor of a clear conscience about not re-sacrament of baptism, which was granted in each of our Churches to anyone who wants to join other Church, we recognize this obedience to the Bible and the faith of the three ecumenical councils held in Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus.

We ask God the Father to lead us, in times and ways selected by the Holy Spirit, towards the achievement of full unity in the body of Christ's secret.

122. Let us if guided by the teachings of the Apostle Paul and his example, who wrote: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, one body and one Spirit, also called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in you all "(Ephesians 3: 4-6).

ADVICE TO WOMEN FROM ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN

by Fr. Moses Samaan

In 384 A.D., our father among the saints, the Holy Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzus) composed the following 111-line poem to Olympiatha, a young bride, on the occasion of her crowning and marriage to Nevrihios, an illustrious youth and official of the imperial city.

Although the saint wrote this poem as advice to a young bride, it can be received as advice for all faithful women.

My daughter,

For your wedding, I, your spiritual father Gregory, offer you this poem as a gift. And I consider it to be the best possible advice a father could offer to his beloved daughter.

Listen to me Olympiatha: I know that you desire to be a true Christian. As such, be aware that a true Christian must not only be one but she must also appear accordingly. This is why I ask you

to pay special attention towards your personal appearance. You must be simple! Gold, attached to precious stones, does not add any value to women of your stature. This is even more so with make-up. It is very improper for you to alter your face, which represents an image of God, for the sole purpose of attraction and admiration by others. Know that this constitutes vanity that is unbecoming of a young lady of your character. I therefore ask that you overcome the feminine vanity that is abundant among young ladies of our time and remain simple in your appearance. The expensive and fancy dresses must remain for those women that have no desire for the life beyond and do not know what the meaning of spiritual struggle and attainment of virtues is all about; this type of woman cannot possibly comprehend the spiritual radiance and brilliance of a life in Christ. You have aimed towards greater goals and for

a higher purpose for your life. These goals demands your full and undivided attentiveness and care.

First of all, you must respect and love God and immediately after Him you must respect and love your husband in the same manner as our Lord and Savior and in accordance with the instructions of our Holy Gospel. I thus ask you, how is it possible for a woman to love her husband in this manner if she has not met, has not respected and has not loved Her Lord and Creator in this same manner?

In your marriage, fondness, affection and love must be strong and persistent for him whom God has selected to be your life partner. This man is now the eye of your life and the delight of your heart. And if you ever perceive that your husband possibly loves you more than you love him, do not take advantage of his feeling by

attempting to gain the upper hand in your marriage. That is plainly wrong as it is totally against the writings of the Holy Gospel!

You must respect him and love him unconditionally, as you love God. Be aware that you are a woman and you have an important and great purpose and destiny; however, your purpose and destiny is different than that of your husband who must be the head of your household. Set aside the silliness of equality among the sexes, that some of your contemporaries preach, and attempt to comprehend the obligations of marriage. In the realization of these obligations you will discover the great patience and endurance that is necessary to fulfill your family duties; it is in this manner that you will also discover the great strength that you as a woman possess.

You must surely be aware of how easily anger overtakes

men. They cannot maintain and they often appear as wild lions. It is at this exact moment that a woman must remain stronger and display her superiority. You must play the role of the lion-tamer. What does a lion-tamer do when the beast starts roaring? He becomes even calmer than usual and through kindness and persistence he overcomes his wrath. He speaks to him kindly, in a soft but firm voice, he caresses it, he attends to it, he pets it and little by little calmness is restored.

You must never criticize, scold or become derogatory towards your husband for something that he has erred. Likewise, you must avoid any contempt towards any inaction or indecision by your husband, even when the outcome is not favorable or something that you greatly desire or consider proper. Be aware that demons are always around attempting to penetrate your household, and break up the couple's harmonious spiritual cohabitation.

You must share everything, joys and sorrows alike. The Holy Mystery of Marriage has indeed made all common to both of you. This is equally important towards the daily obligations and duties as they apply to running the household; it is the only way that a strong foundation will be built for your marriage. Let both of you provide your views and opinions; in the end, however, allow your husband to have the final say.

When you observe your husband to be sorrowful, share in his sorrow and provide him the needed relief; the support of the person closest to you in moments of sorrow and despair is of great value and relief. Immediately, however, let your facial expressions become calm, clear and collected; let peace prevail upon your demeanor and forego the temptation of any thoughts of despair. The wife is the calm harbor for the sea wave-stricken husband.

Your presence within your home is irreplaceable; you must accordingly love your home with all the cares and concern of a dedicated housekeeper. You

must view it and consider it as your kingdom and you should be judicious about how often you exit its entrance. Let your husband take care of many of the outside cares and obligations while you concentrate towards those within the home.

Be extremely careful with whom you associate and the company that you keep. Be especially careful of the social gatherings that you may be participating in. Do not allow yourself to enter entertainment centers of questionable background; these represent extreme danger towards your purity and the sanctity of your marriage. These types of social interactions remove the instinct of shame, eyes cross with eyes, and once shame is not there to guard from any impropriety, the demons are able to exercise their influence and give rise to evils of unspeakable magnitude.

On the other hand, social interactions with friends of substance and of firmly grounded spiritual state must be pursued. In this manner, words of value get implanted within you and you either benefit from them or are able to confront and resolve any weaknesses that you may recognize. Concurrently, you are able to cultivate social interests and get to know people who will benefit your household's spiritual state.

Do not be anxious to keep company or even appear in public and in the company of others for no reason. You should instead dedicate your precious time in the company of your wiser and more prudent relatives, priests, and seriously-minded people, young and old alike.

Stay away from conceited and ostentatious women whose mind is pre-occupied with external appearances and social circles, all for the purpose of vainglory and public display. This should be the same for any men that you consider respectful and spiritual but whom your husband has not allowed to enter your home, irrespective of how highly you may regard them. For is there anything more precious for you than your good husband whom

you love so dearly?

Your thoughts must aim high but you must never behave as intolerable or snobbish.

I applaud women that are known by only a few men. Do not run towards worldly feasts and celebrations, even when those are for weddings or birthdays. It is around those types of gatherings that the passions of the flesh are aroused with the many dances, the drinking, the laughter and the false joys that are capable of deceiving and misleading even the pure and the wise. Always remember that purity is extremely fragile—it is like bee wax exposed to the rays of the sun. It would be prudent to limit and at times avoid the worldly feasts, even within the confines of your own home. If we were capable of controlling the desires and many appetites of the stomach we would be well served in our struggles against the many passions of our flesh; we would be in a position to conquer them instead of being subdued by them.

Keep your face calm and collected and do not alter it with extreme laughter or with grimaces of dismay, anger or disappointment towards others. Your ears should be decorated not with pearls but instead with the sounds of proper language and with locks for all the improprieties that may enter your nous through them. Thus, whether they are open or closed your sense of hearing will remain pure.

As far as your eyes, they are the ones that display the contents of your soul. Let them be the source of blush and virgin purity that pours below your eye lashes. This way, your presence and eyesight will invoke modesty, decency and the shame of innocence to all that lay their eyes upon you, perhaps even your husband! It is best and for many reasons that you keep your eyes closed or indifferent to the events around you and you should make it a habit to always maintain your sight low.

And now for your tongue. Your husband will always be your enemy for as long as your tongue

is uncontrolled, even if you are to be blessed with thousands of other talents. A foolish tongue often endangers even the most innocent of people. It is preferred to maintain quiet, even in cases that you are correct. This is because you risk the expression of an unintended improper word or characterization. No matter how greatly you desire to say a lot, it is best that you limit your words and instead choose your presence to be a quiet one.

Be attentive even of the manner that you walk; it matters greatly towards a prudent presence.

And now pay close attention and be mindful of the following advice: You must never exemplify or maintain an uncontrollable desire for the flesh. Persuade your husband to respect the holy days of the Church and the fasting periods. This is because God's laws are of much greater importance than the image of God. Be mindful that the institution of marriage was established by the Son of God to aid His creation so that a balance is maintained, as some depart this world while others arrive.

If you have benefited from this old man through some spiritual words of value I ask that you keep these words and advice guarded well within the depths of your soul. In this manner, through everything that you have benefitted and through the grace of your moral stature, you will be capable of healing your excellent husband and well known politician from the evils of vainglory and pride that constantly surround him.

This is my gift and heirloom that I offer to you. And if you desire my blessing, I pray that you become a vineyard of descendants, with many children, and many children from these children, so that our God may be glorified by more of us, for it is for Him that we are born and to Him that we should aim our earthly paths.

Your spiritual father,

+ Gregory
Patriarch of Constantinople



St. Mark Nubian Foundation
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P.O.BOX 574 ST MARYS NSW 1790 TEL: 61-2-0410 285 118 FAX: 61-2-9833 9299
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(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)

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IF YOU LOVE ME, SPEAK UP

by Fr. Moses Samaan

Recently, I had the blessing of attending a college youth meeting in which they were discussing the sanctity of marriage in Church and society. Not surprisingly, the issue of same-sex marriage came up and the servant asked the youth, "If you were invited to the same-sex wedding of a close friend, would you attend?" Quite surprisingly (at least to me), a couple of Orthodox Christian youth indicated that they would indeed attend out of a sense of love and friendship. For them, to not attend was to essentially end the relationship, because their friends would immediately disown them if they did not attend. Sensing some tension between this view and the Christian Church's unequivocal rejection of same-sex relationships and marriage, one youth bravely offered that he would go only after he made it clear to his friend that he does not support same-sex marriage, but is only going out of friendship.

While the youth who said they would attend a same-sex wedding were a clear minority that day, I'm sure there are many youth who may feel the same way or have even been put in this exact situation. For this reason, it's a good time to meditate on what our Lord Jesus Christ would have done and what the mind of the Church is on such matters.

At the very outset, I commend the youth who said they would attend a same-sex wedding for the sake of their friend, even though (as we shall see) I absolutely disagree with their choice. No one can deny the love in their hearts for their friends and for those who struggle with same-sex attraction. When they reasoned that going to a same-sex wedding was the right choice, it was not necessarily because they agreed with the lifestyle, but rather, because they wanted to express a Christlike love towards their friends.

I commend them for their love, but sadly, their way of expressing

that love reflects a distortion of love that is easily identified in modern society. Today, love is equated with unrestrained acceptance. People are taught to be tolerant of others even when they engage in behaviors that lead to spiritual death (such as same-sex relationships).

But that is not a Christian love. The Holy John Chrysostomos summed it up nicely when he said, "Show me a Christian who is not concerned about the salvation of his neighbor and I will show you no Christian." In other words, Christian love compels us to admonish others for the sake of their salvation. It stems from our general duty to care for others. If we heard, for example, that someone was physically sick, wouldn't we be eager to call and ask about them? Or better yet, to visit them and speak a compassionate word? If we are this sensitive to one another's physical sicknesses, how much more sensitive should we be towards one another's spiritual sicknesses, which, after all, are much more dangerous and life threatening?

When a person tells us they are living in sin, we cannot simply pretend everything is okay and turn a blind eye. Instead, we must find a way to accept the person while making clear we don't accept the sin just as our Lord Jesus Christ did when He told both the paralytic and the sinful woman, "Sin no more" (Jn 5:14, 8:11).

Throughout the Holy Scripture, we are reminded of our duty to admonish one another. In his prophetic book, the Holy Prophet Daniel said, "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever" (Da 12:3). What a beautiful promise found here in the OT! "Those who turn many to righteousness" will shine like the stars forever and ever. Later, in the NT, the Holy Apostle John teaches us, "If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and

He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death" (1 Jn 5:16). Where is the focus in this verse? It is on the man who sees his brother committing sin and works to remedy it. This is love, brothers and sisters, not simply to see sin and ignore it. Consider what the Holy Apostle James says on exactly this topic in the final verse of his epistle:

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins (Jas 5:19-20). This passage teaches us clearly that we have an obligation as Christians to admonish sinners. In his Sermons on Leviticus, Origen of Alexandria wrote, "A man who converts others will have his own sins forgiven." If you look at the verse carefully, you will see that the soul saved from death is the soul of the sinner, but the one whose multitude of sins are covered is the person doing the admonishing. This is the beautiful promise God makes to all of us. If we admonish others, we might save a soul from death and cover a multitude of our own sins.

There are many ways to admonish others. If possible, we can speak with them directly, and so long as it is done in love and humility, they will listen. When it's impossible to speak directly, there are nonverbal ways of admonishing others. For example, if a person tells us about a particular sin for which he is not repentant, we might respond by looking away with a pained expression in order to send a clear message that we are not okay with this. Another

example would be to apologize and not attend an event at which a the person plans to commit a sin, like a same-sex wedding.



The nonverbal communication can be anything that relays the message that we are in pain and anguish over this person's sin.

Regardless of whether we admonish others verbally or non-verbally, our disposition must be loving and humble with absolutely no contempt or judgment. In the end, we are all sinners; even if we admonish another person in one matter, we ourselves need to be admonished in many other matters. People today oftentimes refuse to accept correction, because they feel the correcting person has a "holier than thou" attitude. He approaches the sinner from a sense of superiority, which immediately causes the sinner to become defensive. This is not, however, the proper way of admonishing sinners. Any admonishment must be done with the understanding that the admonishing person is more of a sinner than the person he is admonishing. Otherwise, it simply does not work.

What if we try to admonish someone, but are not successful? The Holy Hilary of Arles teaches

us, "Someone who preaches to sinners in order to convert them will save his soul, even if the people he preaches to are not actually converted." How beautiful is this promise! Our sins will be covered if only we try to admonish sinners; success is not necessarily required for the reward.

From all of this, we learn that admonishing one another is a Christian duty and responsibility. We all need to regularly admonish one another, because this is how we encourage each

other to mature in the faith. If any one of you was weak and falling into temptation, wouldn't you want your brothers and sisters to love you enough to speak to you about it? Or would you want them to be indifferent and leave you alone? Just as we want this done to us, we should do it to others. This is one of the many things that binds us together as the Church, the Body of Christ. Our salvation cannot be accomplished individually, but rather, it must be accomplished through koinonia, through the fellowship brought about by

mutual admonition.

So, what should a person do if their close friend invites them to a same-sex wedding? If it were me, I would tell my friend that, although I love him dearly and want every joy for him, I simply cannot agree with this lifestyle, because my first love is for God.¹ If he is open to understanding my viewpoint more, I would share the good news of the Gospel and speak about the life of holiness to which God has called all mankind. If he is not open to my viewpoint and quickly

labels me a bigot or as one who is intolerant, I would remind him that my love for him has not changed and that I will always be there for him in anything that does not contradict my loyalty towards God. If that friend chooses to abandon me, it will be because of his intolerance, not mine. As for me, I will be content in the blessings God promises to those who show love by admonishing others in all love and humility.

HOMILY 67 ON JOHN 14:1-3

by St. Augustine

Let not your heart be troubled: I believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (Jn 14:1-3). We must lift ourselves up, my brethren, to God with greater intentness, that as the words of the holy Gospel have now sounded in our ears, we may also in whatever sort be able to take them in with the mind. For the Lord Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me." So that they might not as men fear death, and therefore be troubled, He consoles them, assuring them that He is also God. "Believe," says He, "in God, and believe in Me." For it follows, that if you believe in God, you ought also to believe in Me: which would not follow, if Christ were not God. Believe in God, and believe in Him to Whom it is nature, not robbery, to be equal with God: for He emptied Himself, yet not losing the form of God, but taking the form of a servant. You fear death for this form of a servant: let not your heart be troubled; the form of God shall raise that to life again.

But what is this that follows, "In My Father's house are many mansions," but, that they were also afraid for themselves? Wherefore it was meet to be said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled." For which of them would not be afraid, when to

Peter, the more confident and forward, it was said, "The cock shall not crow until you have denied Me three times?" As if then they must perish from Him, with good reason were they troubled: but when they are told, "In the house of My Father are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, that I go to prepare a place for you," they are refreshed from their perturbation, assured and confident that even after perils of temptations they shall dwell where Christ is, with God. For albeit one be stronger than another, one wiser than another, one more righteous than another, one holier than another; in the Father's house are many mansions; none of them shall be estranged from that house; where there shall be a mansion for each according to his deserving. True, they all equally receive that penny which the Householder commands to be given to all them which have wrought in the vineyard; in that, making no distinction who have labored less and who more: by which penny of course is signified eternal life, where none lives more than other, because living hath no diverse measure in eternity. But the many mansions signify the diverse dignities of merits in the one life eternal. For there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars: for one star differs from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead. As the stars, the saints have allotted unto them diverse mansions of diverse glory: as those in the firmament, so they in the kingdom; but as

touching the one penny, none is separated from the kingdom: and so shall God be all in all, that, since God is love, by love it shall come to pass, that what they severally have shall be common to all. For so is each one himself the haver, when he loves in the other what himself hath not. So shall there not be any invidiousness of unequal glory, since the unity of charity shall reign in all.

Therefore they are to be rejected from a Christian heart, who imagine that this saying of the many mansions means, that without the kingdom of heaven there will be some condition wherein may dwell the blessed innocents who have departed this life without baptism, seeing that without it they shall not be able to enter into the kingdom of heaven. This faith is not faith, because it is not the true and catholic faith. What? ye foolish people and blinded with carnal imaginations, whereas ye would deserve to be reprobated, if ye should separate from the kingdom of heaven the mansion, I do not say of Peter or of Paul or of any of the Apostles, but of any soever baptized little one, do ye not think ye deserve to be reprobated, that ye separate therefrom the House of God the Father? For the Lord saith not, In the whole world, or, In the whole creation, or, In the Life or Bliss everlasting, are many mansions, but, In My Father's house are many mansions. Is not this the house where we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? Is not this the house, of which

we sing to the Lord, Blessed are they that dwell in Thine house; for ever and ever they shall praise Thee? And will ye then dare to separate from the kingdom of heaven, not the house of any baptized brother, but the house of God the Father Himself, to Whom all we the brethren say, Our Father, Which art in heaven; or dare so to divide it, that some of its mansions shall be in the kingdom of heaven, others out of the kingdom of heaven? God forbid! forbid it, that they who wish to dwell in the kingdom of heaven, should wish to dwell with you in this foolishness; forbid it, I say, that whereas every house of reigning sons cannot be elsewhere than in the kingdom, of the royal house itself there should be some part not in the kingdom.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. O Lord Jesus, how goest Thou to prepare a place, if already there are many mansions in Thy Father's house, where Thine shall dwell with Thee? Or, if Thou receivest them to Thyself, how comest Thou again, Who goest not hence? These things, my beloved, if we shall essay to expound briefly, as much as seems enough for to-day's discourse, being crowded they will surely not be cleared up, and the very brevity will be fresh obscurity: therefore let us defer this debt, to pay it you at a more convenient season, as the Father of our household shall bestow the ability.