

EL-MANARA

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

COPT'S 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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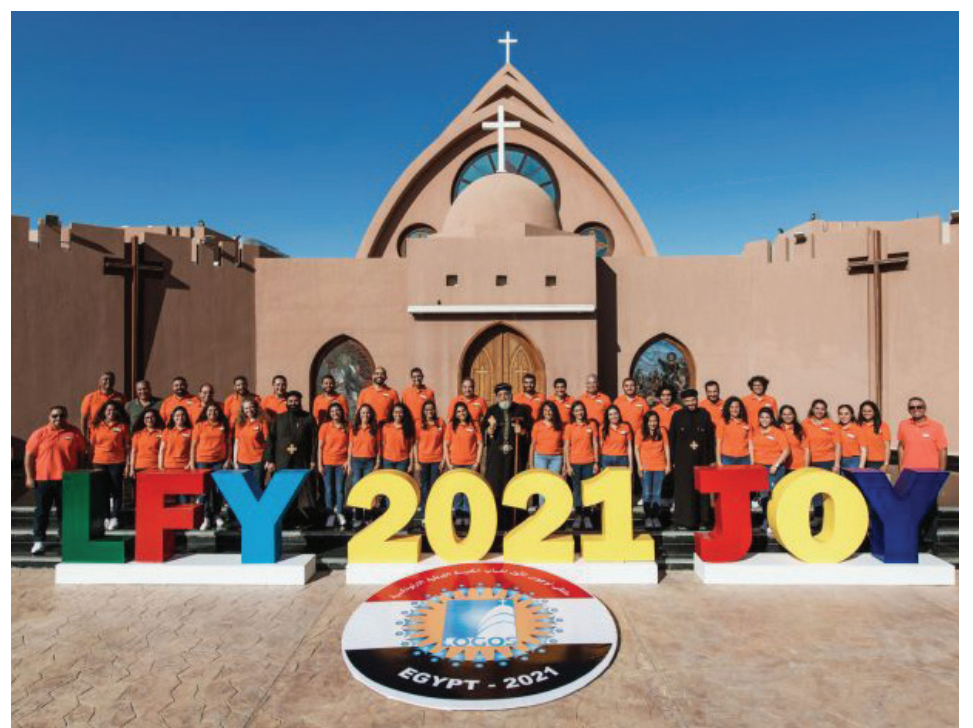


NEXT ISSUE:
19th September 2021
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:
13th September 2021



THE GREAT FEAST OF OUR BELOVED MOTHER ST MARY,

H.H. POPE TAWADROS II RECEIVES HIS ROYAL MAJESTY THE ONIRU OF IRULAND, NIGERIA



LOGOS FORUM FOR YOUTH OF COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH



ST MARY 'THE MOTHER OF LIGHT', 'THE MOTHER OF LIFE', 'THE MOTHER OF THE HOLY ONE'.

Grace, and she became the mother of the Lord, who is the Author of Grace...

In few days we will celebrate the great Feast of our beloved Mother St Mary, who was the most highly favoured one, and full of grace. And although we would need many days to speak about all the wonderful qualities of St Mary, tonight we shall mention just a few points of why St Mary was 'Highly Favoured'...

- This greeting which the angel said to St Mary is unique only to St Mary – there is no one else who was greeted with these words.
- Many times in the Old Testament, some prophets told the Daughter of Zion to rejoice greatly, because the Lord will deliver them. For example, in:
- Zephaniah 3:14-17... "Sing aloud O Daughter of Zion!... Rejoice, exalt with all your heart O Daughter of Jerusalem!... The Lord your God is in your midst"
- Zechariah 9:9... "Rejoice heart and soul, O Daughter of Zion! ...for I come and will dwell in the midst of you"
- All these were prophecies about St Mary, and now, the Angel Gabriel is telling the true Daughter of Zion - St Mary to rejoice, because her Lord and saviour will dwell within her, and she will be the Mother of God.
- This mystery of rejoicing is what all the hymns in our Church declare about St Mary... "Hail O Mary... Shere Maria..." etc. The word 'hail' or 'shere' means to 'rejoice'. But why was St Mary called 'Highly Favoured One'??

1. She was called 'Highly Favoured One', because she is holy, and she was Full of

✠By Divine grace, St Mary was perfect in spirit and in body, in order for her to receive the Lord. But she was still in need of salvation, and that's why she says in Luke 1:47... 'My spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour.'

✠This same Divine Grace sanctified her, so that she could become the True holy of holies, and the Second Heaven, for Christ to dwell in. And that's why she is called; 'The Mother of Light', 'The Mother of Life', 'The Mother of the Holy One'.

✠At the moment of incarnation, when St Mary was bearing the Son of God, who is the Author of Grace, she received a unique perfection.

✠Only she is Highly Favoured and Full of Grace, because no one else gained her grace – which is to be filled with the Author of Grace!

✠It is a great mystery, that our beloved Mother St Mary was:

- Clothed with Divine Grace, as if she was wearing a garment;
- Her soul was filled with Divine wisdom (which is evident in the prophetic song she said to Elizabeth);
- In her heart, she was married and consecrated to God;
- And so, in her womb, she contained He who cannot be contained!

For this, she was surely the 'Highly Favoured one!'

2. St Mary is called the 'Highly Favoured One', because she is our strongest intercessor...

- The Lord chose St Mary to be a superior member in the body of Christ, who responds to the needs of the other members.

- We do not feel the holiness of St Mary only from doctrine, but as a fruit of a personal relationship we have with her in our daily life.

- St Mary is higher than all the heavenly saints and angels. She is the closest one to her Son's heart, and therefore, her intercession is strong and effective.

- We see the extent of her powerful intercession in the Wedding of Cana at Galilee...

- She said to her Son, "They have no wine" (John 2:3). Of course, the Lord knew this, and He knows what our needs are, but He feels happy, when He sees the same feelings of love and request from His mother and His children.

• We notice that St Mary only said these words to Him once, and then she turned to the people and said, "Whatever He says to you, do it" (John 2:5). These words show 2 important points:

- It shows how much St Mary had confidence that her Son would answer her request, and that's why she only said the words once.
- It shows her role in intercession: she is directing our hearts to do the commandments of God, and that's why she says to us: 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'

► This is the only commandment St Mary ever gives us. But it is a powerful command because it includes every aspect of life –

► Whatever He says to you, do it... and you will have happy,

holy lives.

► Whatever He says to you, do it... and you will have peace with God and others

► Whatever He says to you, do it... and you will gain eternal life

3. St Mary was 'Highly Favoured', because through her union with God, she became a beautiful symbol of the holy Church...

At the Annunciation (ann-un-see-ation), the joy and the song of St Mary, were prophetic actions, which she did in the name of the whole Church. She was the one who heard the mysterious explanation of God's plan for the whole world, and so her rejoicing was done on behalf of all the church.

When St Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, it symbolised the missionary work that the church does throughout the world. St Mary is like the Church, which bears the Word of God, and must have the desire to proclaim the Word to all people.

When St Mary was present at the feet of Christ when He was on the cross, the Lord said to St John, 'Behold your mother'. These words show that she is the mother of all believers, just like the church is also our mother.

St Mary and the Church are both Mother and Virgin at the same time, because they both conceived, by the Holy Spirit, to give birth to the True Son.

St Augustine said: 'As Mary gave birth to Christ who is your Head, so the Church gives birth to you, who are the members. For the Church is both mother and virgin: mother, through love, and virgin, through incorruptible faith. The Church is the mother of many nations, who are one

body, just like the Virgin Mary, who is the mother of many, but also of the One!

St Augustine also said that: 'Before St Mary conceived the Word physically, she first conceived the Word in her heart'.

St Mary gave birth to the Incarnate Son, who gives life to the believers, in the same way that the Church is the mother of the believers, who get life through unity with the Incarnate Son.

Also, St Mary said about herself that she is 'the maidservant of the Lord' (Luke 1:38). In the same way, the Church is also 'the maidservant of the Lord', because it should be humble, and full of the grace of God, seeking to serve all people, and leading them to God.

In Deuteronomy 33:13, we read about the blessing that was given by Moses: "Through God's blessing, his land shall remain his own, and be blessed

with the dew of heaven." These words are a prophecy about St Mary's holiness...

- She is the blessed land which received the Word of God coming down like heavenly dew.
- This prophecy also refers to the holiness of the Church because, the Church is also blessed by the Lord as a holy land. And the heavenly dew is the Lord Himself, who blesses the Church.

On this blessed day of the Assumption of St Mary's Body, let us ask the Queen of Heaven for her prayers and intercessions so that we may be able to fulfil the commandments of her beloved Son Jesus Christ.

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

H.H. POPE TAWADROS II RECEIVES HIS ROYAL MAJESTY THE ONIRU OF IRULAND, NIGERIA



This Tuesday afternoon at the Papal Residence in Cairo, H.H. Pope Tawadros II received His Royal Majesty Oba AbdulWasiu Gbolahan Lawal, the Oniru of Iru Kingdom (Nigeria), accompanied by his family, and who was keen on making his acquaintance with H.H. the Pope during his current visit to Egypt.

During the meeting, H.H. spoke of Egypt and its ancient history, as well as the history of the Coptic Orthodox Church. He thanked His Royal Majesty for his cooperation and support of the Coptic Church in establishing

a hospital in the city of Lagos in Iru Kingdom, to serve the people of Nigeria.

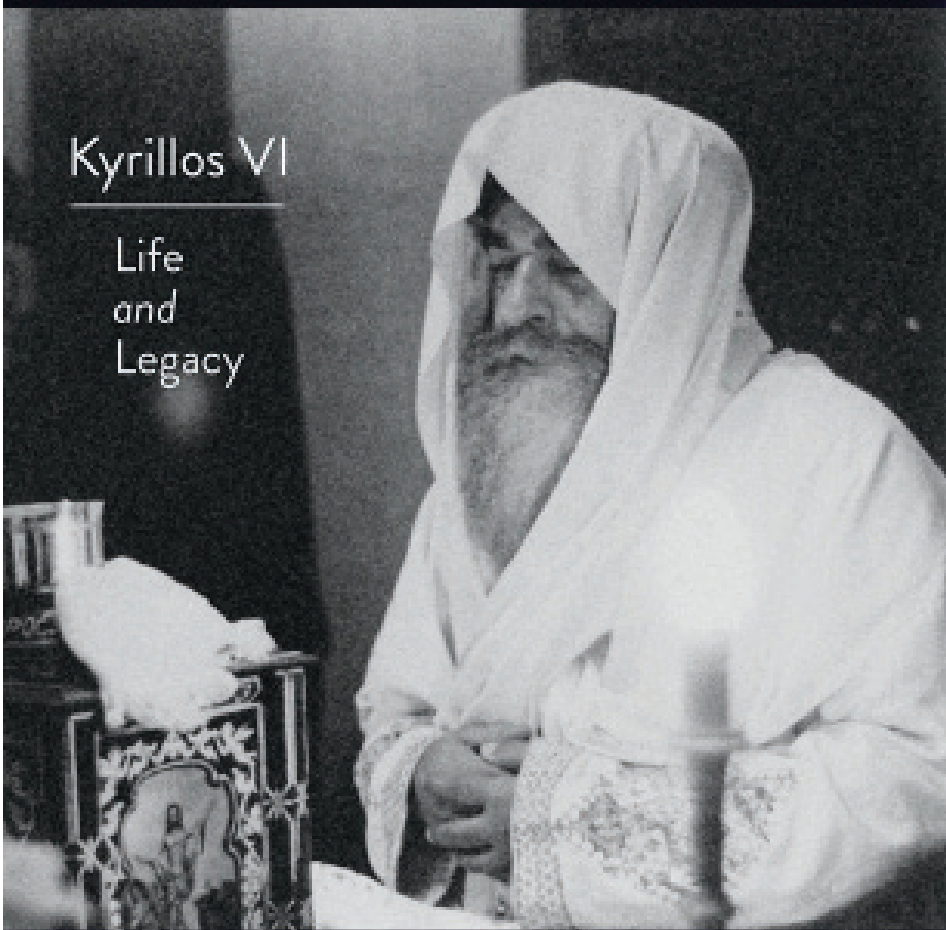
At the end of the visit, gifts were exchanged between H.H. and His Royal Majesty, and photographs were taken to commemorate the occasion.

The meeting was attended by H.G. Bishop Boules the General Bishop of Evangelism & Mission in Africa, who has a loving and affectionate relationship with the Oniru of "Iru".

A Silent Patriarch

Kyrillos VI

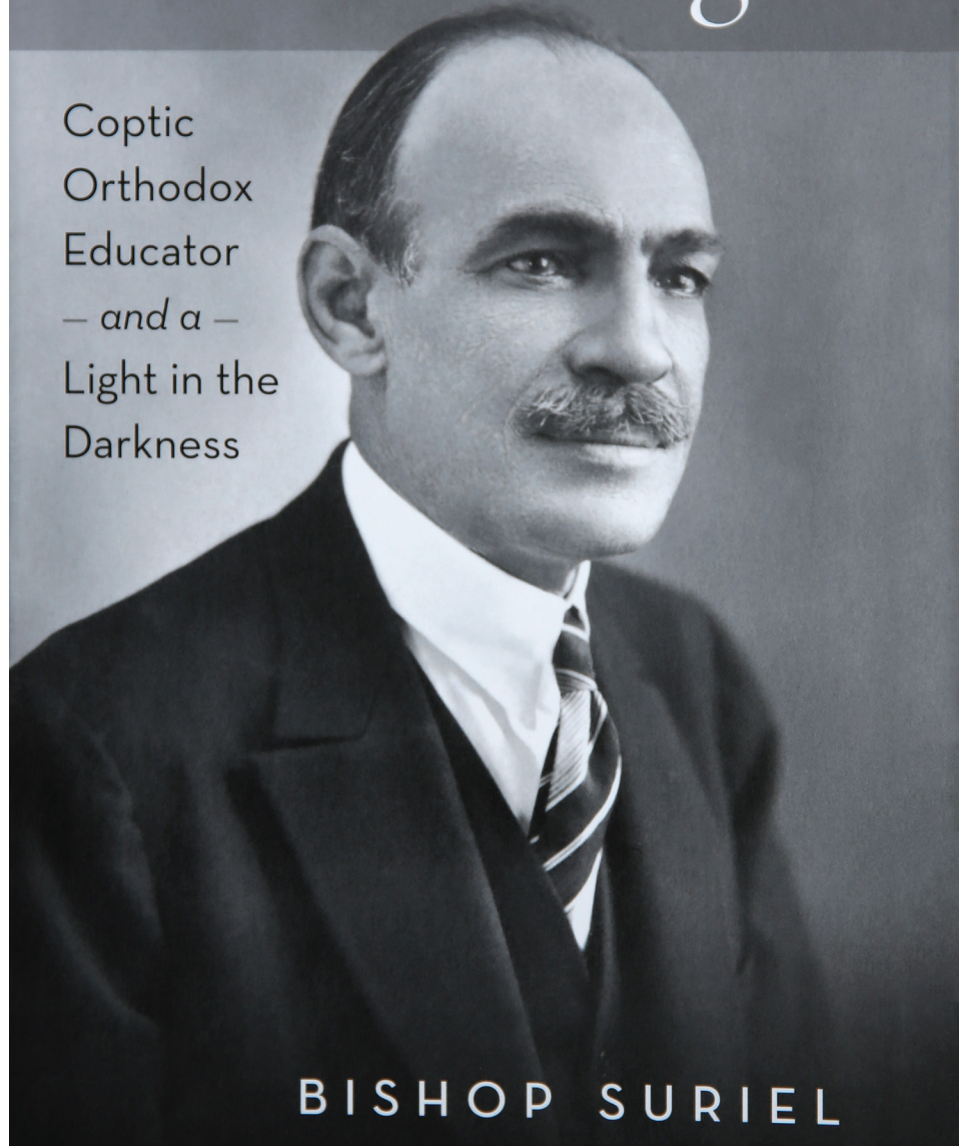
Life
and
Legacy



DANIEL FANOUS

Habib Girgis

Coptic
Orthodox
Educator
— and a —
Light in the
Darkness



BISHOP SURIEL

THE ADORATION OF ST. MARY

by: Bishop Youssef

As Biblical history has recorded, St. Mary is the central figure in the two Gospel accounts of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. The "Mother of God" is seldom mentioned in the New Testament outside of the birth narratives in the opening chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke. The name of St. Mary is mentioned only once in the Holy Gospel of St. Mark and the Holy Book of Acts. The Blessed Virgin is never explicitly named in the New Testament Letters. The name of St. Mary is only "referred to" in two episodes written by St. John in his Holy Gospel.

Why then has St. Mary carried a name that has long been remembered as the JOY OF GENERATIONS? It is through her enduring example of obedient faith, strong will, and spiritual purity that we come to understand why she is REJOICED OF ANGELS. It is through the Lord Jesus Christ's love for His mother and her complete trust in Him that we are capable of realizing the true meaning of, "Honor thy father and thy mother." With these thoughts in our hearts, let's explore the inspiring, heavenly nature of the Blessed St. Mary.

Despite the Virgin's few Biblical references, we learn that she experienced many emotional peaks and valleys within her sixty years of life. We are told of many hardships the Blessed Mary faced in her lifetime-- the possibility of a divorce, a long, long journey to Bethlehem while great with a child, giving birth to her Son in a shelter for animals, placing her newborn child in an animal's feeding trough for His first bed, angelic warning that King Herod the Great wanted to kill her infant, and finally watching her only Son being taunted and crucified on a cross.

St. Mary also experienced many joys in her life. Among them were: shepherds proclaiming the angelic hosts' announcement of the Messiah's birth; two aged and devout prophets in the Temple exalting her Son; wise men from the distant East kneeling down to worship the baby Jesus; and witnessing our Lord Jesus Christ's first miracle at the Wedding Feast. We further know that St. Mary was present at the Day of Pentecost and filled with the Living Flame.

There is no known documentation that alludes to St. Mary as being depressed, of her complaining due to the challenges present in her life, nor to boastfulness as having given birth to the Son of God. Rather St. Luke gives us insight into St. Mary's quietness, of strength and character. He writes, "St. Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

Due to St. Mary's obedient and positive response to the Annunciation, our salvation through her Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, became possible. Through her will and faith, she voluntarily

submitted to the will of God. As stated in the book, St. Mary in the Orthodox Concept, "Her freely willed agreement with the Divine Plan announced by the angel was a fundamental and necessary condition of the union of God and man in Christ. The Incarnation was not only the work of the Father, of His power and His spirit; it was also the work of the will and faith of the Virgin." Therefore when our Orthodox Church honors the "Mother of God" it is not just because God chose her but also because she herself chose submission to the will of God. St. Mary said, "I am the handmaiden of the Lord, let it be according to Your word" (Luke 1:35-38). Along with her obedient faith and strong will, St. Mary was also profoundly perceptive. Although she was young at the time of the Lord Christ's birth, the Blessed Virgin Mary was deeply aware of her "low estate" which had been elevated by a blessing from God that all generations would henceforth come to recognize and remember. The humble, quiet, Mother of Emmanuel intertwined her own personal experience with her belief that God was now helping "His servant Israel" since He had "scattered the proud" and "put down the mighty" while He exalted "those of a low degree" and "filled the hungry with good things" (Luke 1:48, 51-53). Therefore we are able to recognize the free grace of God because St. Mary played an active role in conceiving Jesus Christ. The Divine Incarnation was realized because she perceptively and faithfully accepted obedience.

The Blessed Mary's virginity can and should be viewed as far more than a physical state. Her virginity should also be thought of as a special state of inner, spiritual holiness or purity. Spiritual purity is a total consecration to God and permanent union with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. It represents virginity of heart and soul, which Christians can receive by acceptance of the Holy Spirit into their lives. St. Athanasius describes St. Mary's spiritual purity:

"She was a lady wise and filled with the love of God. She had a harmonious disposition and a love for good works. She remained continually at home, living a retired life and imitating a honeybee. Her speech was calm and her voice was low. She generously distributed to the poor what was left over from the works of her hands. She prayed solitarily to God for two things; not to let a bad thought take root in her heart and to grow neither bold nor hard of heart."

St. Ambrose reinforces this description of St. Mary emphasizing that she was humble, silent, moderate in speech and unsullied in reputation. She was devout and faithful in reading the Scripture. He further states she was modest and had great respect for others.

We must not close the subject of St.

Mary's virginity without declaring her perpetual virginity. St. Mary did not cease to be a virgin in giving birth to the Lord Christ. She continued as a virgin even after giving birth to the Savior. Her perpetual virginity can be attested to the documented early second century Apocryphal writings. "The Ascension of Isaiah" (Charles, 1900, p. 74-76) states "her womb was found the same as before she had conceived." According to the "Odes of Solomon" (Odes of Solomon 19:8), "she travailed and brought forth a son without incurring pain." The "Protoevangelium of James" reveals that a woman called "Salome" made trial of St. Mary's virginity soon after birth. (Protoevangelium of James, 18-20) Early patristic thought concurs with these documents and further purports that St. Mary did not have any children save the Lord Christ.

"Brothers of Jesus" (Mark 6:33 and Matthew 13: 55-56) was not a referral to actual brothers of Jesus. Brothers in this context simply meant close relatives, cousins. Abraham called his brother's son, Lot, his brother (Genesis 13:8). Laban used the same term for his son-in-law (Genesis 29:15). If the Lord Jesus had actual brothers why were they not included in the escape to Egypt? Why when the Book of Luke 2: 41-52 tells the story of Jesus in the temple (twelve years after Jesus birth), does the Holy Family consist of only three? St. Matthew refers to Jesus as the heir of Joseph, the son of David. If there were older brothers (previous sons of Joseph from another marriage) would Jesus have been the rightful heir? Wouldn't the Lord Jesus Christ have left His mother in their home and not entrusted her to the care of St. John?

St. Jerome's viewpoint is the "brothers of Jesus" were the sons of St. Mary of Clopas. St. Mary of Clopas was the wife of Alphaeus and the sister of Virgin Mary (John 19:25). Cousins could definitely be called "brothers." Some locations in Upper Egypt continue with this tradition until today.

Finally, and of great significance, we know that the Lord Jesus Christ held His mother in high esteem. It is written that He was not particular about the kind of place in which He would be born, or the clothes which He would wear, nor the food He would eat, but He was definitely particular about the virgin who was to be His mother.

On more than one occasion, Jesus stressed the importance of the command, "honor your father and mother." An example of His carrying out this command can be found within the first miracle He performed. According to the fourth Holy Gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ worked His first miraculous sign at a marriage feast in the town of Cana in Galilee. This wedding event is described only by

St. John who tells of St. Mary being in attendance. At the wedding feast the wine has all been consumed before the feast had concluded. Fearing that the host of the party might be humiliated before their guests, she instinctively turned to her Son and requested that he "do something." In spite of His reservations, He did as His mother requested.

St. Mary clearly and undeniably trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. When she requested that He "do something," she did not repeat her request. Out of assurance and confidence she told the servants, "Do whatever He tells you."

In performing this miracle, Jesus teaches us many lessons. He honored His mother and saved a humble Galilean family from humiliation. Also by manifesting His Divine Glory only to a few (the Lord's mother, His disciples, and some of the servants) He has continued to wait for "His Hour" thus also honoring the Heavenly Father.

Honoring His mother was supremely manifested at His Crucifixion. As He was dying, He tenderly and lovingly committed St. Mary to the care of St. John. As St. Mary was standing near His cross, she was entrusted to "the disciple whom He loved" (John 19:26). If the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, honored St. Mary, so should we. Obedient faith, strong will, and utter purity are just a few of the terms, which describe the heavenly nature of St. Mary's, a humble handmaid of the Lord that has become the Mother of many and of the One. The richness and beauty of her nature cannot be fully described nor realized. St. Mary was not a priest, she did not teach, nor did she baptize anyone. She did not instruct the disciples. Yet the Blessed Mary was a sacred shrine chosen worthy of the Kingdom.

Through her motherhood we discover the nature of her Son as the Incarnate Son of God. The Blessed Virgin's life attests to God's redeeming deed and through her life's example we can examine man's role in attaining the heavenly life. Our spiritual love to St. Mary is second only to that of the Savior Jesus Christ.

Truly we adore St. Mary. She was wise and filled with the love of God. Her faith and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ was unsurpassed. Her purity in conduct was that befitting Heaven. May we follow her example of consecration to God and direct our hearts, minds, souls, and senses toward the Holy Spirit in preparation for the eternal wedding feast.

"O Virgin Mary, Mother of God, holy and faithful advocate of the human race, intercede for us with Christ whom you mothered, that He may grant us forgiveness of sins."



St Cyril's

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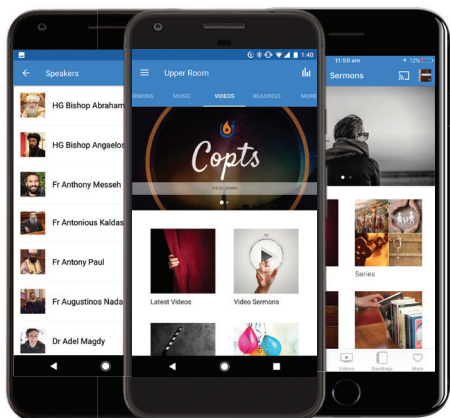
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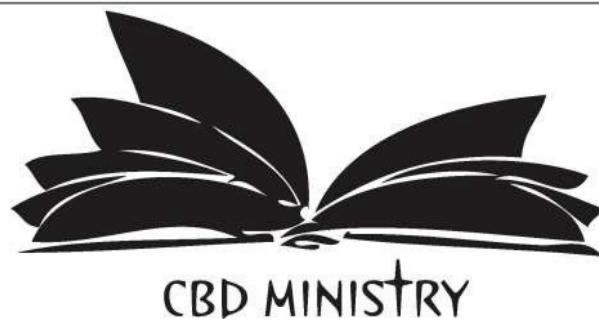


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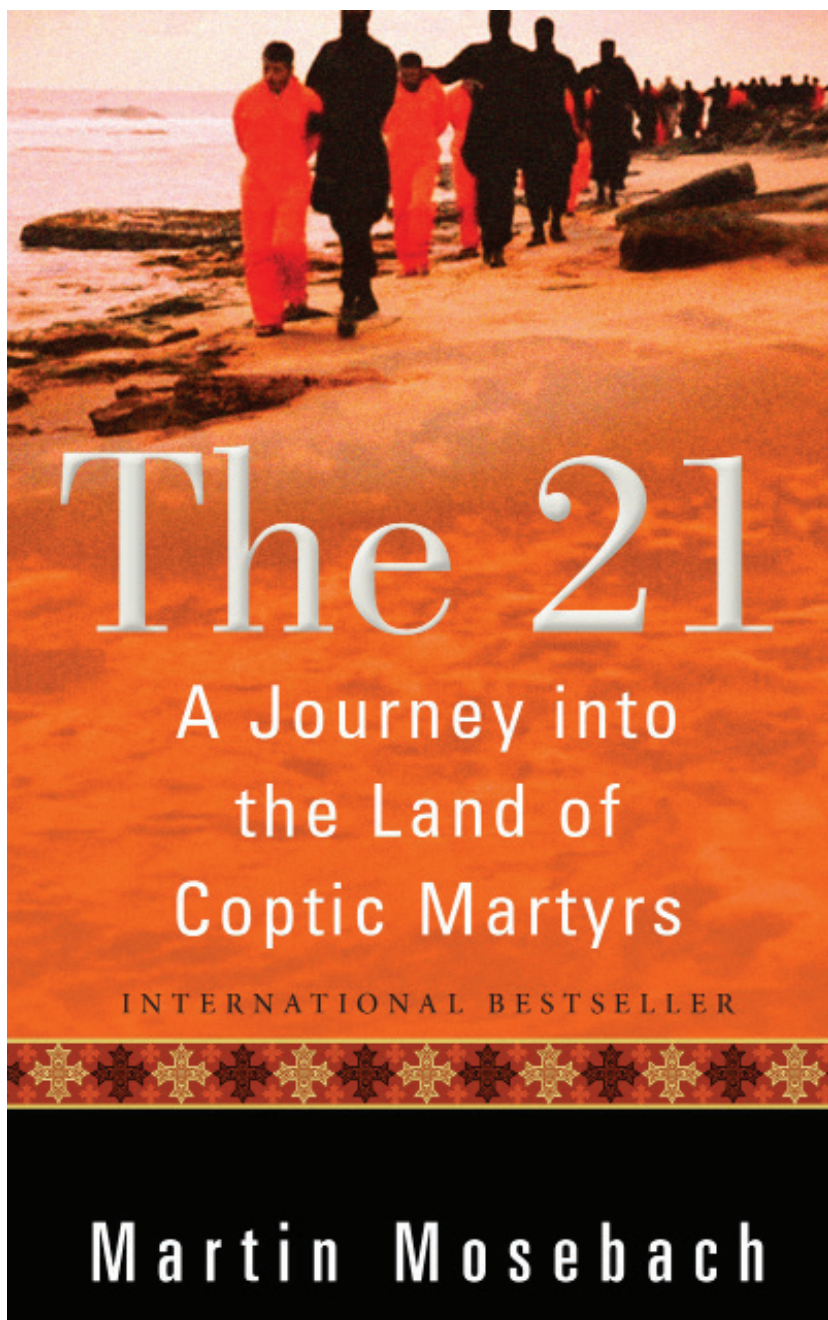
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MORE INFO

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St. Mark Nubian Foundation

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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"

(Luke 36:6)

"A good man deals graciously and lends; He will guide his affairs with discretion"

(Psalm 112:5)

As we are getting closer to the Holy Passion Week, Crucifixion and commemoration of His Resurrection; we kindly urge you to remember our orphaned children who live in outskirts of Khartoum and are looked after by our church over there. It is the perfect time now, whereby in Lent our church always reminds us about the deed of mercy and to remember and help our needy brethren in both the Sudan as well as South Sudan and have mercy on them.

For your continuous and generous support, kindly forward your donation to:-

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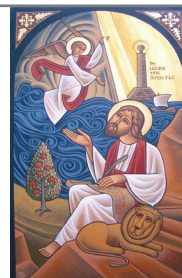
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COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH
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ARE YOU PLANNING TO GET MARRIED IN THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH DIOCESE OF SYDNEY?

+ God bless
Bishop Daniel
17/8/2017

TO PREPARE FOR YOUR CIVIL AND CHURCH MARRIAGE, YOU NEED THE FOLLOWING

1

INTEND OF MARRIAGE FORM

You need to sign an 'intend of marriage form' at least 31 days before your marriage.

The form will be provided by the marriage celebrant priest.

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

2

You need to have an engagement report signed by you & your future partner at least 6 weeks before your marriage.

The report will also be signed by the priest who did the engagement for you.

5

MEET FR. HANNA GAD

Take forms mentioned in points 2 & 4 and see Fr. Hanna Gad (0414 282 413). You will receive a marriage permit and a church marriage certificate to give to your marriage celebrant priest.

3

PRE-MARRIAGE COURSE

You and your partner need to attend a pre-marriage course at least 6 months before your wedding.

You can register for the course at sydneyfamilycouncil.org.au/pre-marriage/

Call or SMS Fr. Morris (0411770500) for other arrangements

LETTER FROM CONFESSION FATHER

4

You need a signed letter from your confession father to acknowledge that he will follow you up through your marriage. The letter sample is also on sydneyfamilycouncil.org.au and go to forms.

IF YOU NEED TO CLARIFY ANY OF THE ABOVE PLEASE EMAIL: SECRETARY@SYDNEYFAMILYCOUNCIL.ORG.AU

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