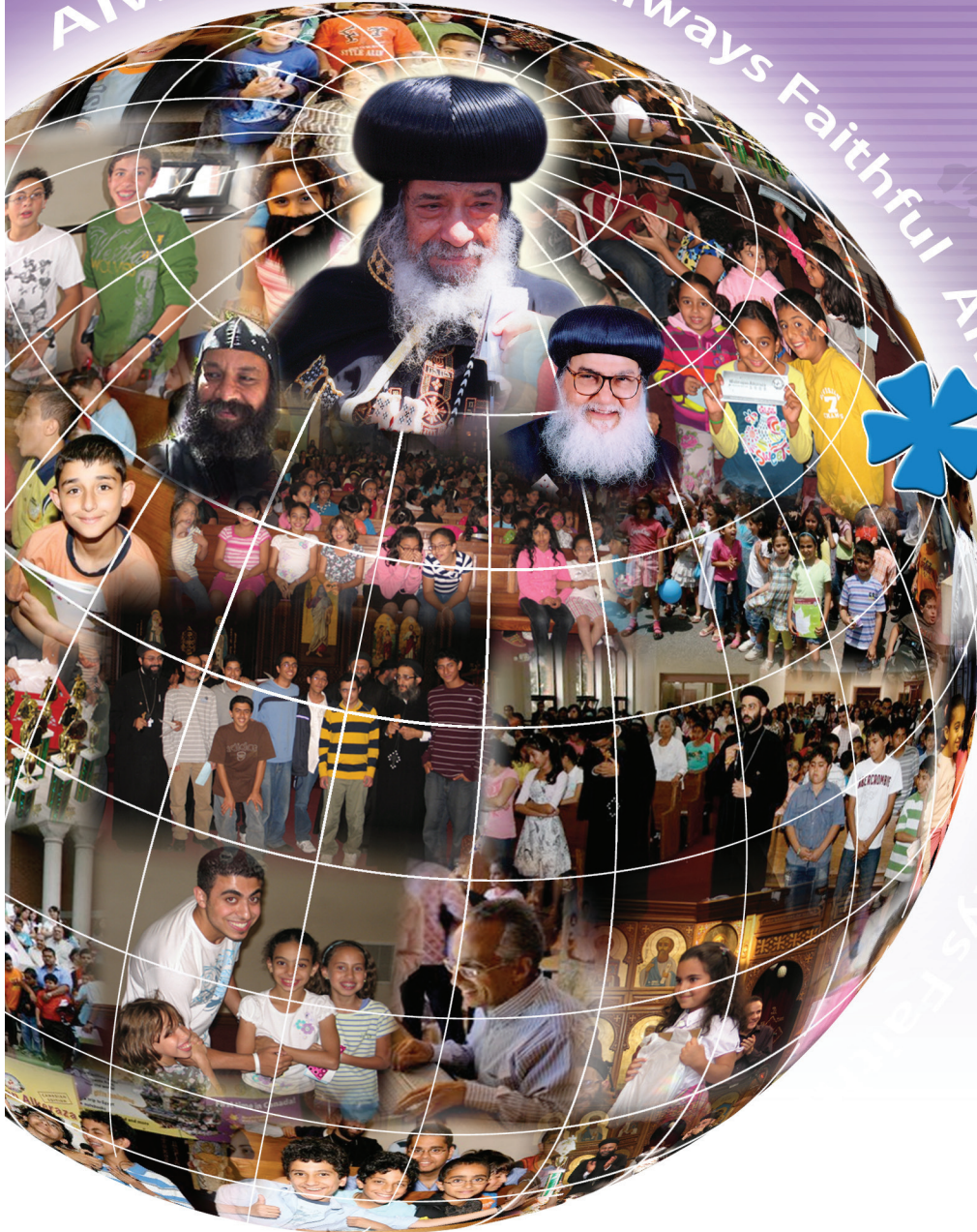




# \*✱ Mahragan Alkeraza

# 2010

Always Faithful Always Faithful Always Faithful Always Faithful Always Faithful



**English Edition**  
**Gr. 7 to Gr. 10**

English Edition





## **H.H. Pope Shenouda III**

### **Pope of Alexandria**



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# INTRODUCTION

## Mahragan Alkeraza 2010

Through the Grace of God, the prayers of H.H. Pope Shendouda III and the guidance and blessings of H.G. Bishop Moussa, Bishop of youth, we are pleased to invite you to take part in the world's largest Christian competition with over a million participants from all parts of the world.

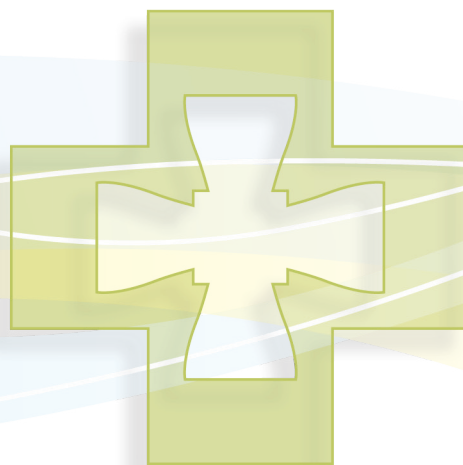
This year's Mahragan is promising to be another truly amazing experience for all participants. This event will include Coptic churches from all around the world.

Last year, around a million contestants participated in the Mahragan competitions, and about 106,000 participants from all age groups completed the final round of competition activities. This included participants from Egypt, Sudan, and the Lands of Immigration (who represented about 10% of the total number of participants). His Holiness Pope Shenouda III honoured all by handing out trophies to the first place winners of the Mahragan Alkeraza 2009.

His Holiness was pleased with the work done in this service thanking the bishops, priests and servants who were responsible for making it happen.

The Mahragan material was translated from Arabic to several languages including English, French, German etc. Children accounted for about 50% of all participants.

May the Lord use these activities for the glory of His Holy Name, in Egypt and abroad.





# Always Faithful



## **The following are some suggested dates:**

- Participants Registration Start Date: May 1st, 2010
- Expected Opening Ceremonies of the Mahragan: May 30th, 2010
- Participants Registration Closing Date: June 27th, 2010
- Expected Church-level Competitions: July - August, 2010
- Expected Regional-level Competitions: September 11th, 2010
- Expected National-Level Competitions: September 18th, 2010

## **Competition Rules**

The Mahragan competition this year consists of seven age group:

1. SK – Grade 2
2. Grades 3 & 4
3. Grades 5 & 6 (Same book as Gr. 3 & 4)
4. Grades 7 & 8
5. Grades 9 & 10 (Same book as Gr. 7 & 8)
6. Grades 11 - University / English Adults
7. Arabic Speaking adults

## **The Competitions will be conducted at three different levels:**

1. Church Level: This will be a team competition where each group will consist of 3 to 7 participants.
2. Regional Level: This will be a competition between the churches in each region. The top participants at the Church Level competitions will be invited to participate at the Regional Level.
3. National Level: This will be a competition between the regions. Top participants at the Regional Level competitions will be invited to participate at the National Level.

The spiritual competition, which is mandatory for all participants, includes 5 sections covering Bible, Dogmas and Church studies in addition to memorization.

Additionally, ten optional activities and sports competitions are also organized based on the age group of the participant. They are:

1. I am Seeking My Brothers
2. Research
3. Hymns & Tasbeha
4. Coptic Language





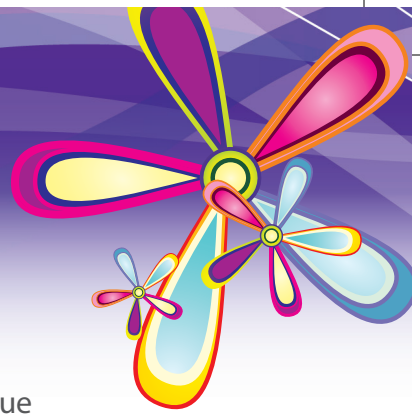
5. Drama & Mime
  6. Praise & Music
  7. Arts
  8. Creative Writing
  9. Multimedia & Technology
  10. Sports
- Participants may choose to join different groups for each of the different activities and sports competitions available for their age group, based on their interests.
  - Members of competing groups must be of the same age group.
  - The Regional Level competitions and National Level competitions will be held on the second and the third weekend of September respectively (timetable to be confirmed and published at a later date.)

Anba Moussa, General Bishop

✠  
My best wishes for a happy  
and fruitful Festival  
✠  
Bishop Moussa  
13 Feb 2010







### **In this book...**

I take a walk in the garden to ponder the beauty of nature, I have never felt its value and how unique it is, until one day when I discovered very special trees that I had never seen anywhere else. A spring in the midst of the garden is the source of nourishment for the plants, the trees and also for us to drink. I went to my father and older brothers to ask them about the story behind this garden, why it is special and what distinguishes it from all others, the secret behind the water that is the source of life for the trees and for us, and why the water never runs dry. This spring is a treasure, without it, life will cease in the garden (Christ blesses my talents). So I went down with my father and brothers to take a walk in the garden. They told me this garden is a blessing and an inheritance. Our fathers and forefathers passed it down from generation to generation. They took good care to maintain its beauty, and they defended it with their lives. They were faithful in keeping this inheritance until they passed it down to us, which is why we must also be faithful in taking good care of it and passing it down to the next generation, just like our forefathers. It deserves to be taken care of because it is one of a kind.

Look at that corner - what do you see? This is a winepress. It is beautiful, and the colour of the fruit of the vine it produces reminds us of the story of salvation, which is a long and narrow road, so you must be faithful in walking down that road in order to be able to drink from the fruit of the vine. And in another corner of the garden there is a wonderful plant that grows quickly, with no roots to the original trees that has been there for hundreds of years. It is unlike any of the other plants, and no one can eat from its fruits. This was a branch that strayed away from the mother church, and I wonder about its story. We will find out about it through studying the history of other denominations. In that same corner is a cedar tree that does not get shaken by any storm or moved by any wind. This tree is tall as though it praises its Creator, the tree of praise. In another part of the garden, there is a very strange tree. It has three stems, and inscribed on it are the words "the tree of faithfulness". It refers to the letter that St. Paul the apostle wrote to Philemon, the third epistle of Saint John and from the book of Acts chapter 16, which was written by Saint Luke. Uncle Kenonia, the gardener, is a true artist; he made the entire garden a beautiful piece of art. It has many different beautiful shapes, colours, and arrangements. He is truly faithful in his service.

Come along, my friends, to find out all the secrets behind the beauty of our garden, and what makes it so unique.





# 1. Always Faithful

"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); ... Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer... and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." Rev 2:9-10

This was the advice and the commandment that God gave the angel of the Church of Smyrna (Bishop of the Church of Smyrna).

St. Polycarp was the Bishop of Smyrna (known today as Izmir), a city on the west coast of Turkey. The letters to the "seven churches in Asia", at the beginning of the book of Revelation, include a letter to the church of Smyrna, describing it as a church undergoing persecution.

## Story of the Saint

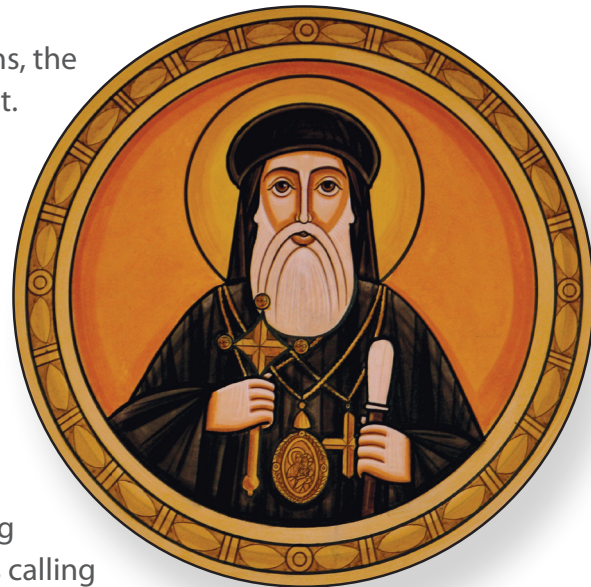
St. Polycarp is said to have been a disciple of St. John the Beloved and was instructed by him in the Christian faith. The name "Polycarp" is a Greek word which means "many fruits". In fact he was fruitful in all his good works. When he was forty years old, St. Polycarp became the bishop of Smyrna. He was a righteous bishop, a model of faith, a gifted teacher and a good shepherd, who led his flock with apostolic zeal.

St. Polycarp is recognized as one of the apostolic fathers and a strong defender of orthodoxy. He resisted Marcion's Heresy and refuted Gnostic heresies that were beginning to spread throughout the Christian church.

During the persecution time against the Christians, the pagans demanded that the governor search for St. Polycarp and kill him. When St. Polycarp heard the news about his death sentence, he did not want to leave but rather remain in the city. However, because of the persistent urging of his flock, he fled to a small village not far from Smyrna.

He devoted all his time there, day and night, to continuous prayer for all the people and churches throughout the world. While in prayer, he had a vision in which he saw his pillow burning with fire. From that, he understood that God was calling him for martyrdom and that he would be burned alive. Soon after the vision, the Roman soldiers found him and he was arrested.

St. Polycarp was condemned by the government and tried on the charge of being a Christian. When the governor urged him to save his life by denouncing Christ, he replied:





"Eighty-six years I have served Him and He never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"

St. Polycarp was sentenced to be burned at the stake for refusing to burn incense for the Roman Emperor.

As he waited for the fire to be lit, he knelt down, looked up to heaven, and said his last prayer; they lit the fire while he was praying and his face was glowing with grace, joy and gladness.

Thus, the beloved Bishop of Smyrna went on to join the triumphant Church in Paradise. May his blessing and prayers be with us all. Amen.



## **"I will give you the crown of life."**

Indeed, St. Polycarp entered paradise and his soul still rejoices in the presence of Jesus Christ, His angels and all the saints. In the Second Coming, he will rise in a luminous, spiritual, heavenly and glorious body.

**Luminous:** His new body is made of light.

**Spiritual:** His new body is anointed with divine holiness.

**Heavenly:** He will travel as a thunder bolt to heaven with Jesus Christ in His second coming.

**Glorious:** He will wear everlasting crowns in eternity.

### **THE MAIN CROWNS ARE:**

1. The Crown of Righteousness (Holiness): He will live in heaven with a spiritual body that shall no longer hunger, thirst or sin.
2. The Crown of Joy: As he hears the mighty voice saying, "Enter into the joy of your Lord".
3. The Crown of Fellowship: As he worships, praises and sings with angels and saints.
4. The Crown of Eternal life: There is no death, but rather joyful eternal life with God.

## **Faithfulness is the Way to be Crowned**

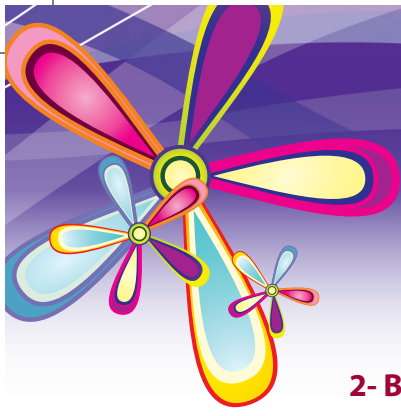
The faithful life of St. Polycarp led him to be crowned and receive eternal life. Our faithfulness will do the same for us. That is why Mahragan Alkeraza 2010's main theme, under the See of St. Mark, is "Always Faithful"

There are 5 areas to be observed in the faithful life:

### **1- Be faithful in your spiritual life:**

Each person should be faithful in his/her spiritual life with God and continue in Bible reading, praying, partaking of the Holy Communion, attending spiritual meetings and reading spiritual books.





## **2- Be faithful within your church:**

Submerge your life in the holy church by learning the Coptic language, hymns, following the Agpeya prayers, reading about the lives of saints, fasting, attending mass, Holy Pascha, Kiahk praises, etc.

## **3- Be faithful in your talents:**

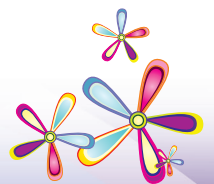
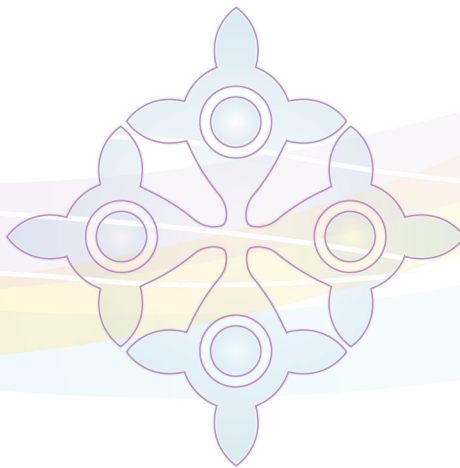
Be faithful in your time, education and different talents (such as arts, music, poetry, etc.). Above all, serve your friends, colleagues, the sick, the needy and the elderly. Utilize your energy towards sports, scouts, missionary work, etc.

## **4- Be faithful with your family:**

Be faithful in your relationship with your parents, siblings and relatives. Be sure to serve your family and tend to all their needs.

## **5- Be faithful in your relationships**

Be faithful in your social relationships at school, with your neighbours and friends. Remember that Christians should be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.





## 2. The Story of the Last Judge of Israel

### 1 Samuel 1-4

#### Introduction:

- First and Second Samuel were originally one book, the origin language of which was Hebrew. Later it was split into two books in the Septuagint translation. The books were written on scrolls and they had to be divided into two parts, each part was contained in one scroll. The Hebrew bible follows the same classification of the books as in the past.
- The word 'Samuel' means 'God hears' since God heard the prayer of Samuel's mother.
- Samuel the prophet wrote the first part of the book and the second part until the last days of his life, but Gad and Nathan completed the rest of the book after the departure of Samuel.
- God was the king and the ruler over the people. He would choose for them the leaders, prophets like Moses and judges like Gideon, Samson and Samuel. The people wanted to have a visible king to rule over them like all the other nations. Although they rejected God as a king and asked to have a human king, He did not leave His people and continued to care for them.
- The book of Samuel is considered the link between the end of the era of the judges (the last one being Samuel the prophet and Eli the priest) and the beginning of the era of kings (Saul being the first, followed by David the King).
- This book is mainly concerned with the virtue of prayer as it appears in many parts of the book. For instance, the book discusses how to honour the house of the Lord, how to keep it holy, and what they did there. It also describes how God used to punish those who disrespected His house at the time.



## Names and their meaning

**Samuel:** God hears (last judge, the author of the book, the first one to anoint kings over Israel).

**Elkanah:** God creates (he is Samuel's father, from the tribe of Levi).

**Hannah:** Grace or kindness (Samuel's mom, God gave her five children besides Samuel).

**Peninnah:** Pearl (the other wife of Elkanah).

**Belial:** Evil or without benefit (it was a name given to all those who did not fear God or man).

**Eli:** High (one of Israel's judges, he was a priest and his children disobeyed God's commandments).

## Important places

**Ramah:** the place where Samuel was born.

**Shiloh:** the place of the ark of covenant and the tabernacle.

## Part 1 - The Two Ladies from Ramah

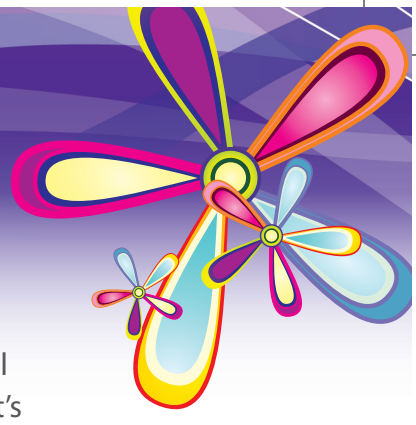
One of them was sitting down crying and refused to eat. She was barren and had no children. For this reason, the other woman would provoke and mock her for years. The lady wept and thought to herself, "Does the fact that I am unable to have any children give her the right to mock me every year?" This took place every year whenever she went up to the house of the Lord to worship and sacrifice in Shiloh.

Her husband dealt with her with compassion and said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why are you not eating? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" (1 Samuel 1:8)

Peninnah was the wife who bore children to Elkanah, but Hannah was his beloved wife, and that is why whenever he went to make an offering he would give a double portion on her behalf. The loving husband did not have any more words of comfort to offer because Hannah wanted to have a son to offer to God. She hoped that he would serve Him all his life and have a chance for Christ to come from her descendants. She was heart-broken, but she was spiritually strong. She stood up with strength and prayed with heart and tears and made a vow to God saying, "O Lord, of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head." (1 Samuel 1:11)







Eli, the priest noticed that her lips moved but her voice was not heard, and he thought she was drunk. He rebuked her: "How long will you be drunk?" (1 Samuel 1:14). Although Hannah was heart-broken, she did not complain about the priest's harsh words but calmly answered, "No my Lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now." (1 Samuel 1:15) Psalm 37:4 says "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." Hannah and her family went back to their home and she left her sorrow in the hands of God.

1. From the reading of the story of Hannah, 1 Samuel 1:1-19, how would you describe Hannah's character, using biblical reference? A weak personality? Strong faith? Bitter soul? Humble? Innocent? Lived a life of submission?
2. Eli, the priest, wronged Hannah when he assumed she was drunk and rebuked her. Do you agree with his behaviour? If so, why?
3. Why did Hannah insist on having a son? Use biblical references in your answer.

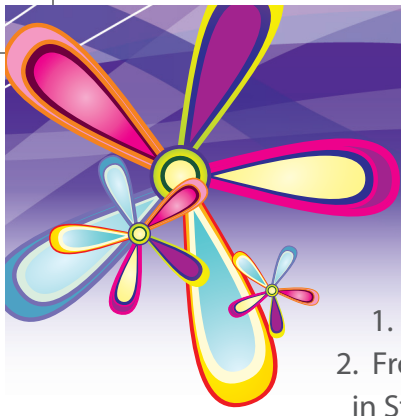
## Part 2 - Joy and Praises

Eli's prophecy came to pass, and after a year she became pregnant and gave birth to a son named Samuel. Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "Not until the child is weaned, then I will take him, that he may appear before the Lord and remain there forever." So Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the Lord establish His word." Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him. Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her to the house of the Lord in Shiloh with sacrifices. She went to Eli the priest and reminded him of herself and offered her son just like she vowed and left him to serve the Lord for the remainder of his life.

Before she went back to her house, she prayed in thanksgiving to God and said in her prayer a prophecy about the coming salvation of Christ. She said a prayer of thanksgiving similar to St. Mary's when she learned about the birth of Christ Himself.

Hannah started her praise with a declaration of joy, not only because of the birth of Samuel but also for the Lord Himself. This joy was a source of strength, which kept her from retaliating against those who mocked her for being barren and to witness the wonders of God. God didn't reward her with Samuel alone, but He gave her, through the Holy Spirit, to be the first one to speak about the Anointed Lord in the Old Testament.





1. From reading 1 Samuel 1:20, what does the word 'Samuel' mean?
2. From the praise of Hannah 1 Samuel 2:1-10, Samuel's mom, find three similar verses in St. Mary's praise; Luke 1:46-55
3. What are the sacrifices that Hannah offered to the Lord in Shiloh?

## Part 3 - The Sons of the Priest and the Son of Prayer

Compare Samuel, Hannah's son, to Hophni and Phinehas, the priest's sons. The first one was raised in the fear of God, so he was a source of blessings to himself, his family and his people. The priest's sons took advantage of their father's role as a priest to serve themselves and the Holy Bible calls them 'corrupt'. They were two priests but they did not know God. They neglected the rites and the life of purity, and so when a person is corrupt from the inside, he fails to care about anything.

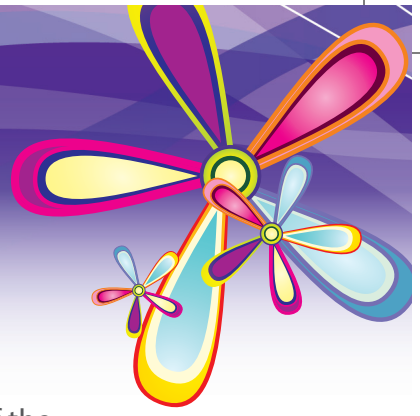
Samuel started his service to God in this atmosphere of corrupt priests. But Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod, which is a Levite's clothing. The ephod is a huge robe with a wide belt tied around the waist. His mother Hannah used to make him a little robe each year and bring it to him; this was the clothing of the priests and the prophets. This robe was handmade out of wool without a sewing machine. It was very long, reaching the ground. This robe that Hannah used to bring to her son yearly was a sign of renewing her love to her son, encouraging him to stay on the right path and not be corrupted by Eli's sons.

On the other hand, Eli the priest was not firm in disciplining his sons. Although he knew of all their sinful ways, he did not discipline them with any punishment. One day the Lord sent Eli a prophet to remind him of the honour that God gave to his family since Aaron's days, because he allowed them to be priests to serve in the holy temple. Also, the prophet declared the Lord's punishment to him and to his family. He gave him a bitter sign and told him that both his sons would die on the same day. This was another warning that God gave Eli to discipline his children and to be firm with them.

1. From 1 Samuel 2:11-36, what are the warnings that the prophet of God gave to Eli, the priest?
2. In that part, Samuel resembled the figure of Christ as a priest, and as a prophet. Provide the references to show that symbolism.
3. According to your understanding of the story of Eli and his sons, how should you honour the Lord your God?



## Part 4 - The Heavenly Call



There was a spiritual darkness, spiritual thirst and spiritual hunger for the word of the Lord. While Samuel was asleep in the temple, Eli was lying down. His eyes had begun to grow so weak that he could not see.

Firstly, Samuel was sleeping in the temple, the holy place, and his heart was awake with God's love, whereas Eli the priest was sleeping in his palace and his heart was far away from God, unable to see that he was spiritually blind. And before the lamp of God went out of the tabernacle of the Lord where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down, he heard a voice calling his name. Samuel ran to Eli the priest and said, "Here I am!" Since Samuel was used to serving everyone with obedience and joy. But Eli the priest told him, "I didn't call you." This happened three times where the young boy heard the same voice and three times he went to the priest. The last time Eli the priest told him, "Go sleep and if you hear this voice again say, 'Speak Lord for your servant hears.'" God called Samuel by his name, but Samuel did not recognize His voice without Eli's guidance. Samuel obeyed the priest and so he heard God's words. God told him, "Behold I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle." God told Samuel that he would destroy the house of Eli the priest.

The next morning Samuel opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel and asked him to tell him what the Lord said when He spoke to him. Samuel told Eli all that the Lord had said, and Eli said, "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him."

Years passed by and Samuel continued growing in the house of the Lord, serving Him faithfully, and the Lord gave him grace in the eyes of His people. God started appearing again in Shiloh after a period of time in which God's word had been rare and there had been no widespread revelation.

1. After reading the story of Samuel from chapter 3, give two examples where Samuel was faithful and provide references.
2. How should you respect the priest as a father and a guide who brings you closer to God? Give a biblical reference to support this idea.
3. When did the Lord start appearing again in Shiloh, and what is the spiritual meaning behind all this?







## Part 5 - The Sad Ending

Samuel grew up and started to serve the people. Eli the priest was the 13th judge of the Israelites.

When the Israelites went out to fight the Philistines, they camped beside Ebenezer without God's permission. As a result they were defeated by the Philistines and 4,000 men were killed. After the defeat, they returned to Shiloh without asking God's permission for the second time. They went to war again with the Philistines and took with them the ark of covenant. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, went with them and they were defeated, and 30,000 men died because they went without God's permission. The Philistines took the ark of covenant from them and killed Hophni and Phinehas.

Then a man of the tribe of Benjamin ran from the battle line the same day and came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head. When he arrived there, Eli was sitting by the wayside watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. When the man came into the city and told what had happened, the entire city cried out. When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What does the sound of this tumult mean?" The man came quickly and told Eli. Eli was 98 years old, and his eyes were so dim that he could not see. Then the man said to Eli, "I am he who came from the battle, and I fled today from the battle lines," and he asked him what happened to his sons. The messenger told him that there was a lot of bloodshed in the war and that his two sons were killed and the ark of God was captured. When Eli heard what happened to the ark, he fell backwards off the seat by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died.

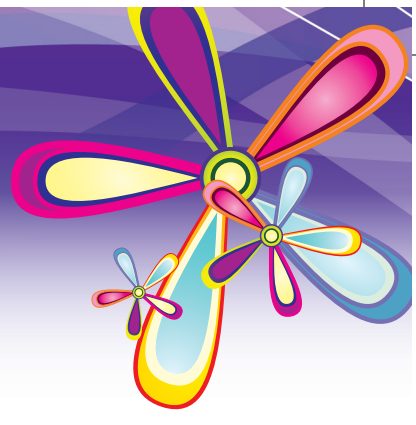
Now Eli's daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was pregnant and due to deliver. When she heard what happened to the ark of God, her husband and father in law, she bowed herself and gave birth for her labour pains came upon her.

And about the time of her death the woman who stood by her said to her: "Do not fear, for you have borne a son." But she didn't answer her, nor did she regard it, and she named the boy Ichabod saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God had been captured.

From this point on, Samuel became the next judge, the 14th and last judge over Israel.

1. From reading chapter 4, explain the meaning of taking the ark of God to war. Did it mean that:



- 
- a. The Israelites returned to God with all their hearts?
  - b. They did it out of routine worship?
  - c. They believed in the blessings of the ark?
2. Give another example from the previous readings of routine worship and provide a biblical reference?
  3. What does the word Ichabod mean?
    - a. The glory has departed
    - b. The most glory
  4. Why did the glory depart from Israel? Was it because the ark of God was taken or was it because the glory of God departed from Israel? Explain your answer.

## What can we learn from these 4 chapters?

### Chapter 1

1. Treat people without discrimination. Elkanah favoured his wife Hannah over Peninnah and that made her hate Hannah.
2. The solution to every problem is through prayer and supplication.
3. When we defend ourselves in order to reveal the truth, we should do so in humility and meekness just like Hannah did with Eli the priest.
4. Celebrating a feast should not be with drinking, like some families do when they celebrate.
5. Those who wait for the Lord will be rewarded like Hannah. This happened when she became the mother of one the greatest prophets of the Old Testament.
6. We should offer to God our best even if it is out of need, just like Hannah offered her only son to God.

### Chapter 2

1. Do not forget to give thanks to God for his blessings to you just like Hannah did when God gave her Samuel.
2. It is good for us to grow spiritually with God everyday just like Samuel did... "And the child Samuel grew in stature and in favour both with the Lord and men." (1 Samuel 2:26)
3. Do not be upset when your parents are firm with you. Sometimes it is their duty because if they are not firm with you, they are not being faithful with God in their responsibility towards you as parents, just like Eli was lacking in his discipline to his sons.

### Chapter 3

1. Staying in the house of the Lord will protect us from all corruption and sins of the world and keep us pure like Samuel because he was living in and serving the house of the Lord.
2. Be obedient and serve others, just like Samuel arose in the middle of the night when he



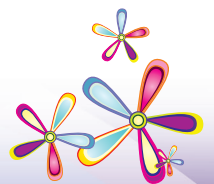
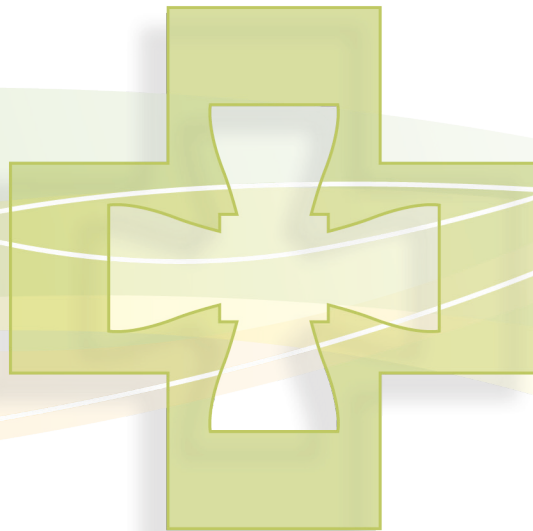


heard his name being called and listened to Eli the priest.

3. Ask for guidance and advice from our elders just like Samuel did with Eli.

#### **Chapter 4**

1. True worship is neither fake nor an outer appearance, but it is from the heart. He who prays to God and continues sinning without repentance is not sincere in his worship
2. Do not be deceived into thinking that attending church is sufficient to please God. You must strive to cleanse your heart from sin through repentance and only then can you have God in your heart.





### 3. Dialogue Across Barriers



**Announcer:** Dear viewers, welcome to a new episode of our program: Dialogue Across Barriers in which we cross the barriers of space and time together. In today's episode, we are coming to you from the heart of Rome, during the reign of Emperor Nero. The year is 62 -63 AD, approximately thirty years after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and His ascension to heaven. Our guest today was not jailed for a crime committed, but for preaching the gospel of Christ, with which he was entrusted. He is an ambassador in chains, and through the Holy Spirit, wrote fourteen letters in the Bible. Ladies and gentlemen, please help me welcome our guest, St. Paul the Apostle, as we begin our talk about his personal letter to Mr. Philemon.

St. Paul, I'd like to start with a personal question for you today: why are you in jail now?

**St. Paul:** Peace and blessings from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ to all the saints – ladies and gentlemen - in all the churches of Mahragan Alkeraza 2010. As a matter of fact this is my first imprisonment in Rome, and I am here in prison for preaching the gospel of Christ. I have asked for my case to be taken up to the highest courts of Caesar and that is because as a Roman citizen it is my right to have that done. In this first imprisonment in Rome, I wrote four messages that were later called "letters of the first families". They are: Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.

**Announcer:** We know that you had a purpose for every letter written, and that each focused on a particular topic. So the question is: what is your reason for writing the letter to Mr. Philemon and what is the theme?

**St. Paul:** This message was to my beloved brother Philemon and I wrote it because of a beloved son and a fugitive slave named Onesimus who had fled from his master Philemon. Of course you know that brother Philemon lived with his wife and his son Archippus in Colosse. I met with Onesimus in Rome after his fleeing from Philemon. I then wrote the letter to Philemon the beloved as a personal message, to ask him to accept Onesimus and pardon him. and my speech has been in the form of practical application of Christian principles, to forgive one another.

**Announcer:** St. Paul, we noticed that you wrote a very short letter and the language that you used was one of great humility. Was this meant so that Mr. Philemon would accept your request to pardon the slave Onesimus?





**St. Paul:** This was a very sensitive subject that had to be addressed delicately. I am talking about a person who is both a thief and a runaway slave, and I am asking Philemon not only to forgive him but also to return him to me once again, to stay with me and help me in the service.

**Announcer:** Is this also the reason you chose to deliver the message with Onesimus in person to Philemon himself?

**St. Paul:** There are several reasons:

**First:** Onesimus was a slave to Philemon until the letter was written and therefore, Philemon is the only one who can decide Onesimus' status according to the prevailing Roman law. At that time Roman law dictated that Onesimus had to return everything to Philemon who decides the fate of his slave.

**Second:** I wanted to give Philemon the complete freedom to decide the fate of the slave Onesimus without any interference from me. When I returned Onesimus to him it was thought that I was simply telling him the decision is yours alone.

**Third:** I wanted through this action, to make the slave and the master brothers in Christ Jesus, who set both free.

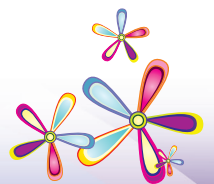
**Fourth:** I wanted Onesimus' repentance to be perfect, so he must face his master, apologize to him and ask for his forgiveness.

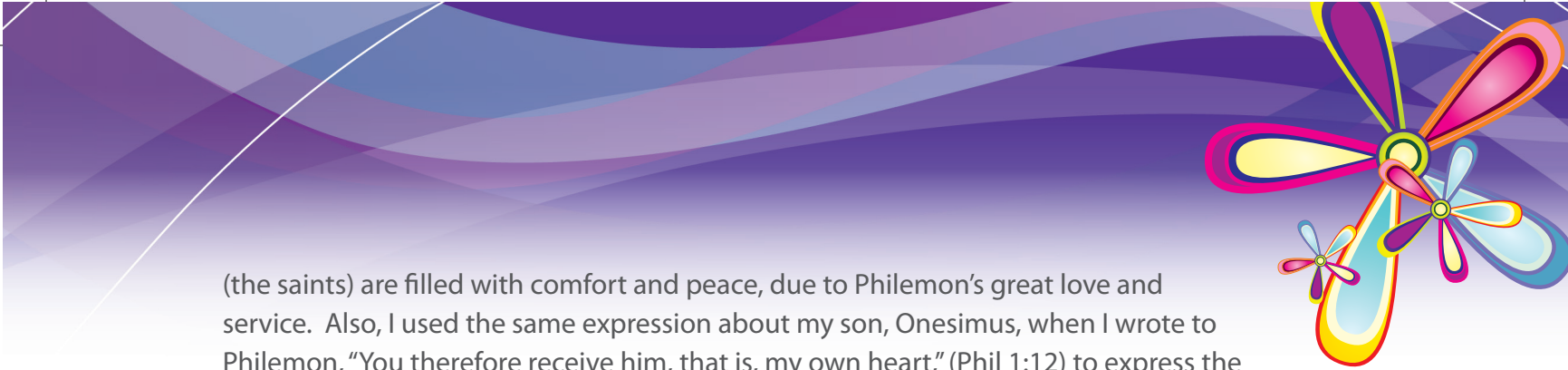
**Announcer:** In the letter to Mr. Philemon, you wrote: "Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say." (Phil 1:21). Why were you so confident that Philemon would accept your words and forgive Onesimus?

**St. Paul:** Philemon is a beloved brother and he and his family actively participated with us in service. Their home was like a small beautiful church. Also, the great love that Philemon had for all believers was a love that was witnessed by everyone, including Onesimus. All these reasons reassured me that Philemon would accept my request.

**Announcer:** In your letter to Philemon, you wrote, "For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother." (Phil 1:7). What do you mean by this expression?

**St. Paul:** This means that the inner feelings and emotions of the members of the church





(the saints) are filled with comfort and peace, due to Philemon's great love and service. Also, I used the same expression about my son, Onesimus, when I wrote to Philemon, "You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart," (Phil 1:12) to express the depth of my love for Onesimus.

**Announcer:** Do you consider this verse a request to Philemon to forgive Onesimus and accept him?

**St. Paul:** Certainly. Onesimus became my son in Christ while I was in prison, and if you read my letter to the end, you will notice that I ask Philemon, "Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord," (Phil 1:20) because we are all one church, one body, one spirit.

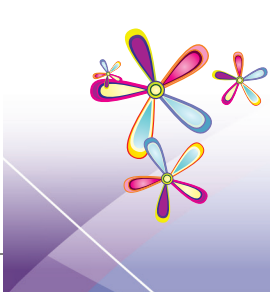
**Announcer:** There is a question that comes to mind; if Christianity does not encourage the slavery, why did you insist on returning Onesimus as a slave to his master, and not ask Philemon to give him his freedom?

**St. Paul:** The letter to Philemon contains Christian principles that do not agree with the principle of slavery. I speak of Philemon and Onesimus without partiality in Christ who set both of them free from the slavery of sin. When I spoke on behalf of Onesimus, I did so as though he was my son, and when I spoke to Philemon I said, "Receive him as you would me." (Phil 1:17). Both of them are one in Christ, but there is a very important issue that I would like to clarify: Christianity does not encourage people in society to rebel in order to improve their status, or force anyone to change. Rather, its purpose is to show that by love and humility one can change an action willingly.

**Announcer:** Our beloved St. Paul, when you spoke about Onesimus you referred to him as "my son", "my own heart", "my beloved brother", and one "who I consider as myself". What did you mean by these traits?

**St. Paul:** I consider Onesimus as my son because he repented and he accepted Christ through my teaching in prison. He is my own heart because I loved him from the depth of my heart as my own son, and he became a living member in the body of Christ (the church). He is my beloved brother because I see everyone who is in Christ as my own brother. And he is as myself because we are all children in Christ.

**Announcer:** We have a live call on the air. Hello, go ahead sir; you are live with us.



**Onesimus:** Greetings to you and my beloved Father, Paul. I am Onesimus, the fleeing slave. I wanted to come on air to say thank you to my father St. Paul to whom I owe





much. He freed me from the slavery of sin, led me to repentance and to know Christ, although I was a slave, thief, and fleeing from my master.

**Announcer:** Dear Onesimus, please tell us about your feelings as you were writing the letter for St. Paul in which you were to send yourself to your master, Philemon.

**Onesimus:** I can only say one thing; I did not get to see Christ face to face on earth, but I saw him through St. Paul, in all that he did with me from the very first time I met him in Rome.

**Announcer:** By which situation were you touched the most?

**Onesimus:** I will never forget the wonderful moment in which St. Paul took the pen away from my hand and wrote in the letter, "I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay - not to mention that you owe me even your own self besides." (Phil 1:19) He signed that I am a free Roman man, and he was willing to vouch for a fleeing slave as myself. Not only that, but he also vouched to be responsible to return to Philemon all his belongings and all the money I stole from him.

**Announcer:** Dear Onesimus stay with me on the line. St. Paul, I want to ask you specifically about this verse, "I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay - not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides." (Phil 1:19). What did you mean by the debt that Philemon owes you?

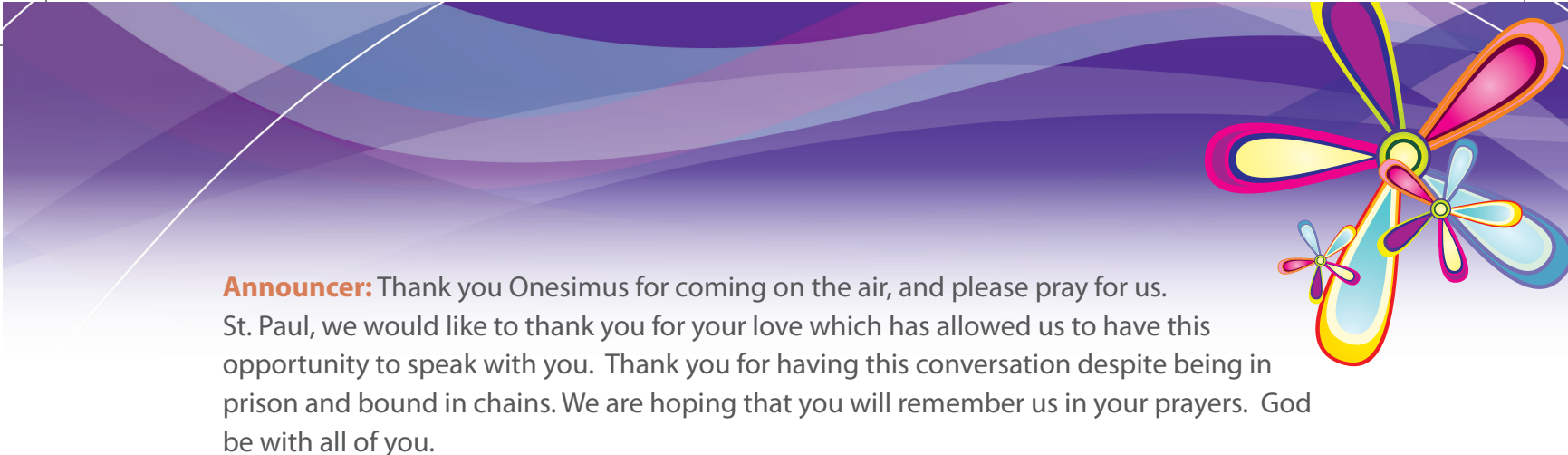
**St. Paul:** What Philemon owes me is not a materialistic debt, but he is indebted to me as Onesimus is for coming to the knowledge of Christ, and I myself am indebted to Christ for granting me the forgiveness of sins when He died on the cross for us.

**Announcer:** Dear Onesimus, are you still with us on the line? I have a final question for you: how did you face Philemon when you went to give him the letter?

**Onesimus:** I don't think there are words to describe the confrontation; it is the love that filled my master's heart that controlled the confrontation. I now have received my freedom and I am in Colosse awaiting the return of St. Paul.

**St. Paul:** Thank you my beloved son, Onesimus, and do not forget to prepare the house for me. I am hoping that through your prayers, the time of my imprisonment will end soon and I will come back to you very shortly.

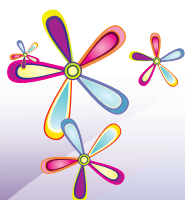
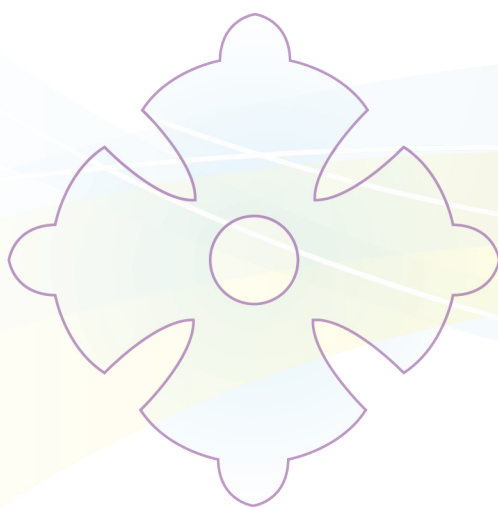




**Announcer:** Thank you Onesimus for coming on the air, and please pray for us. St. Paul, we would like to thank you for your love which has allowed us to have this opportunity to speak with you. Thank you for having this conversation despite being in prison and bound in chains. We are hoping that you will remember us in your prayers. God be with all of you.

Our dear viewers, this concludes our conversation with St. Paul from his first imprisonment in Rome, and brings us to the end of today's episode of "Dialogue Across Barriers". We go back to our studios, Mahragan Alkeraza 2010.

We are now in the year 2010, and we can say that St. Paul's letter to Philemon was a personal letter that was not meant to be read in the church. St. Onesimus insisted, however, that it be read in the churches to proclaim in front of the whole world his true repentance and Philemon's good works towards him, as well as his conversion to Christianity through St. Paul.



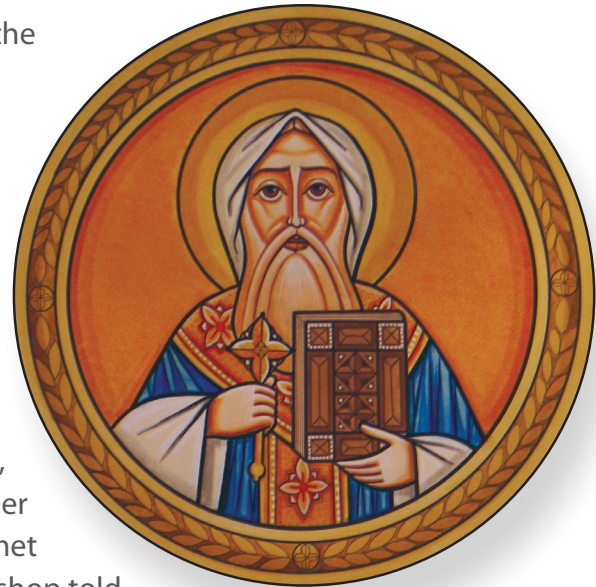


## 4. Faithful Servants

### Catholicism

The third epistle of John was written by Saint John the beloved, and it consists of just one chapter. It was written from the city of Ephesus to Gaius, one of the servants whom Saint John appointed to the service.

Saint John the beloved was an example for those who are faithful in service. The church history tells us that Saint John led one of the youth to the Christian faith and repentance and gave him to the bishop to take care of him. This youth, however, returned to his old sinful ways and became the leader of a gang. Saint John came back after a while and met with the bishop and asked about this youth. The bishop told him bitterly that this youth was now the leader of a gang. Saint John was really old at this point. Yet he rode on his own horse and went towards the mountain to look for him. On his way there, he bumped into thieves who took him to their leader who was none other than the youth Saint John was looking for. The youth recognized Saint John, so he fled away from him. Saint John ran after him screaming, "Stop my son, have mercy on my old age." When the youth stopped, Saint John talked with him. The youth repented and went back to the right way, living with God.



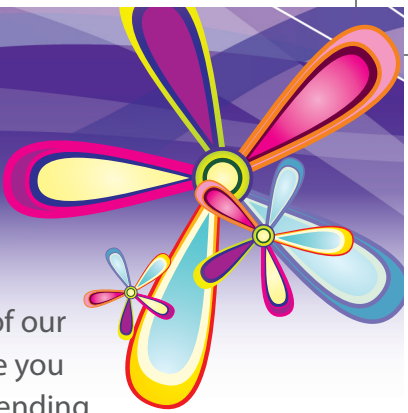
### The reason for the letter

During the apostles' time, the church used to send the evangelists to preach the gospel to many places. When the evangelists had no money, the church used to ask the servants in those countries to host these evangelists without cost and take care of them for the gospel's sake.

### Gaius

Gaius was a faithful servant whom Saint John loved a lot because of his faithfulness and because he used to welcome all the evangelists with love and helped them out with all their needs. Saint John sent him a letter to thank him and encouraged him to continue this service and wished him success in everything he did.





My dear brothers and sisters, are you successful in everything you do as children of our Lord Jesus Christ? Are you faithful in your studies, achieving the best you can? Are you faithful in your spiritual life, making sure you are regularly fasting, praying and attending the liturgy? Are you faithful in your relationship with your family members at home, serving everyone with love and energy? Saint John told Gaius not to learn from him but to learn from those that are faithful and filled with goodness. You have in front of you many good and bad examples; who are you going to follow?

### **The faithful man**

His faithfulness will spread among everyone and everyone will be happy with him, so my dear brothers and sisters, are you one of those faithful people?

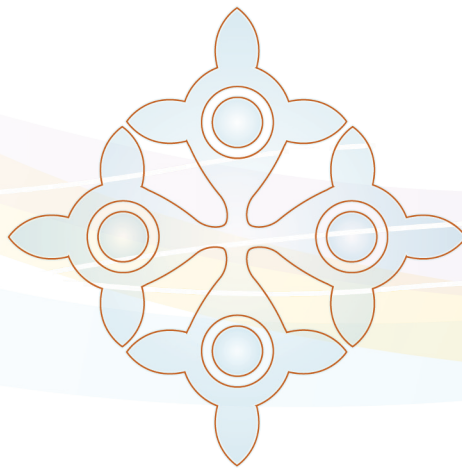
### **Diotrephes**

Saint John mentioned Diotrephes, of whom he had asked the same service as that of Gaius. Diotrephes, however, was not faithful in the service and did not welcome the evangelists because he was proud and made many false excuses to justify his lack of service.

### **Demetrius**

Demetrius was just like Gaius in his faithfulness. All those who dealt with him would testify of that and Saint John heard many good things about Demetrius from all those he served.

*Therefore, everyone who lives faithfully and serves with love will have the love of those he serves and will have good things said about him.*





## 5. Witnessing Behind Bars

### Book of Acts 16:19-34

**Announcer:** Our dear viewers, from the Mahragan Alkeraza channel 2010, we would like to welcome you to our program 'Dialogue Across Barriers'. There, we will meet our beloved Saint Paul, prisoner of the Lord.

This dialogue took place many decades ago, shortly after the council of Jerusalem in 50 AD, wherein a certain heresy was discussed. In order for the Gentiles to be Christians, the heresy claimed that they must become Jews first, get circumcised and follow the Law of Moses. We are now in the prison of a very important city, whose geographical location is good for trade because it is the only route between Europe and Asia. This city is one of the colonies directly under the rule of the Roman Empire. It had the same rules that were applied to the city of Rome (the capital of the Roman Empire).

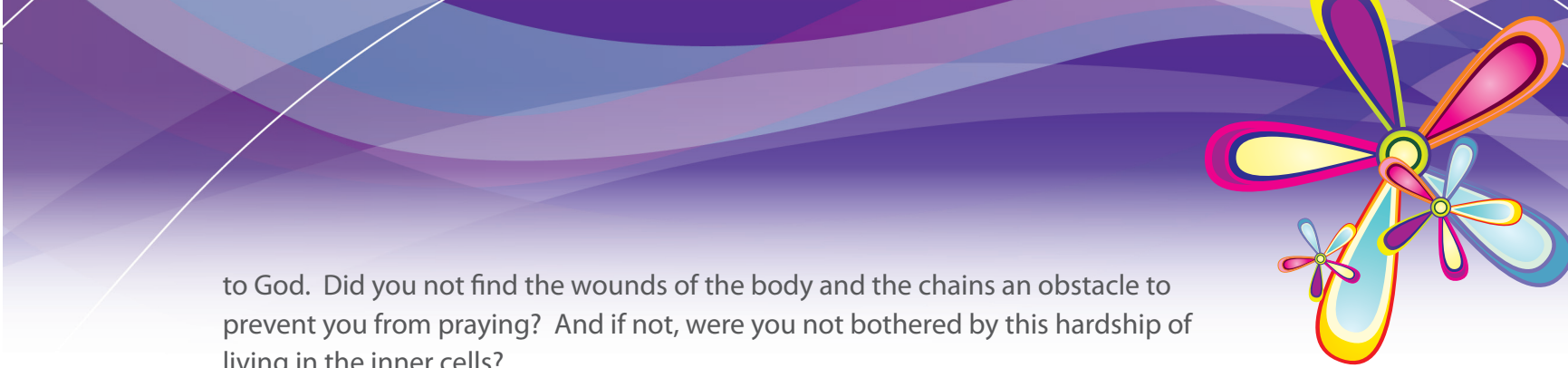
Ladies and gentlemen, we come to you live from Philippi to watch the second dialogue with our guest today. Please welcome Saint Paul today on our program (Dialogues Across Barriers).

The peace of Christ be with you and with all the saintly youth who are participating in Mahragan Alkeraza, grace and peace from our God, our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our beloved Saint Paul, I will start by asking the same question I always ask you: what crime did you commit this time to be imprisoned?

**Saint Paul:** Silas and I are in prison because we freed the slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She used to make a lot of money for her owners. So when we rebuked that spirit in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the owners got upset at us and filed a complaint against us because they now lost their source of income. The slave girl used magic and sorcery to predict the future, but she was no longer able to do that after we rebuked the spirit. The owners conspired to set people against us, claiming we were confusing the people with strange teachings which they didn't want to accept or follow. The magistrates commanded that we be stripped and beaten and then imprisoned in the inner cell, and they fastened our feet in the stocks, as you can see.

**Announcer:** Some prisoners informed us that you and Silas were praying and singing hymns



to God. Did you not find the wounds of the body and the chains an obstacle to prevent you from praying? And if not, were you not bothered by this hardship of living in the inner cells?

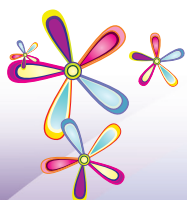
**Saint Paul:** Yes my body was wounded with many injuries because of the beatings I received and because of these heavy chains. But, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” (Romans 8:35-36) Truly Silas and I were joyful with our suffering for Christ’s sake. We expressed this joy through prayer and praises, which became a pleasant smelling aroma, prevailing over any hardships we endured in prison. Prayer gave us wings to soar over these chains.

**Announcer:** Once the violent earthquake took place, the foundations of the prison were shaken and the prison doors flew open and everyone’s chain became loose. At that point why didn’t you and Silas escape since what happened was clearly a sign from God to escape from this prison and save yourselves?

**Saint Paul:** It never occurred to us to escape because being faithful means we have to follow the authorities and the law even if we are accused unjustly. Had we escaped, the prison guard would have been punished and killed. According to Roman tradition, if the prison guard fails to keep his prisoners, he would be immediately persecuted without any trial. That is why it was our duty and obligation to keep this man’s life safe, even if it meant we had to stay in prison longer.

**Announcer:** Saint Paul, we now understand why you and Silas did not escape, but we find it strange that the other prisoners did not escape. Can you give us an explanation for the prisoners’ strange actions?

**Saint Paul:** The Lord who opened the doors of the prison and loosed the chains is the same God who kept the prisoners inside their open cells so as to preserve the life of their guards. The God who took care of Silas and me is the same God who takes care of the prison guards





who don't believe in Him, and He takes care of every soul He created. It is also a possibility that these prisoners were so touched by the spiritual atmosphere they found in prison that they decided it was more desirable to stay in prison in that atmosphere than to go and be free without that spiritual atmosphere.

**Announcer:** Did you expect that the prison guard would believe in Christ?

**Saint Paul:** I am always praying for the salvation of every soul I meet, whether that soul is free or enslaved, prisoner or guard keeper. I now pray that you may also have the same chance to love and know Christ the way I did. And I also pray that all the people may know the truth and that the truth shall set them free. I prayed a lot for the prison guard and I thank God that He answered my prayers and opened the guard's eyes so that he might believe. Not only did he believe, but he was completely transformed to a new man; he became compassionate, merciful, and very kind.

**Announcer:** How did the prison guard feel when he saw that none of the prisoners escaped although they could have?

**Saint Paul:** He felt that his life was indebted to Christ who saved him from death. His eyes were opened and he asked me what he could do to be saved. He became more humble and compassionate and washed our wounds. He took us home and his whole family was converted and baptized.

**Announcer:** What is Silas's and your current status?

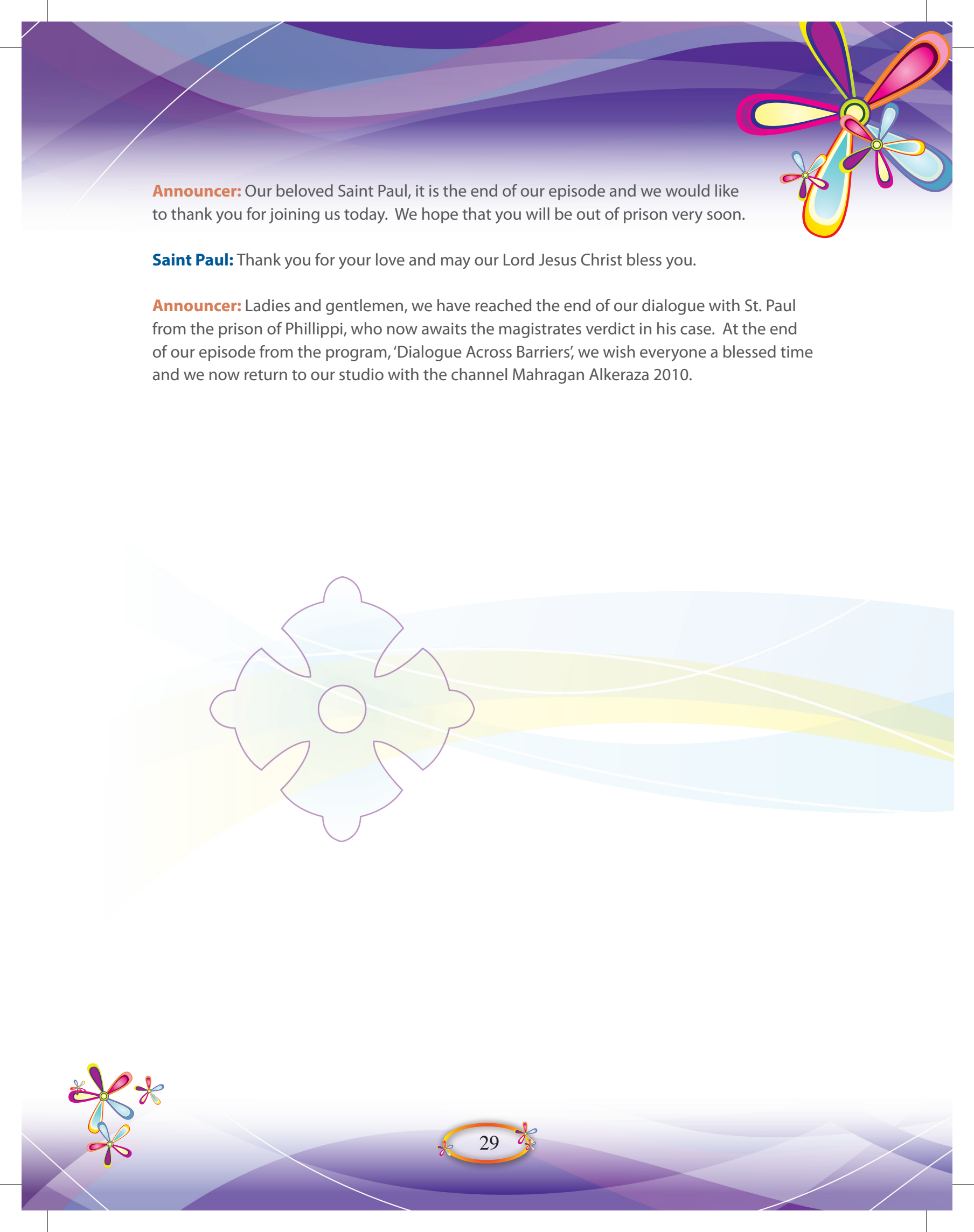
**Saint Paul:** We are still imprisoned and await to hear the magistrates' decision regarding our status. I plan on using the fact that I am a Roman citizen as a defence so that no one is allowed to beat us as slaves. I will ask for my civil rights as a Roman citizen.

**Announcer:** By defending yourself as such, are you not escaping from sharing in the sufferings of Christ?

**Saint Paul:** I would like to point out that I am only requesting my civil rights after having endured all sufferings, mockery and imprisonment for Christ's sake. Also, this request is very important in order to help me witness for Christ in Ludacia and Achaia without facing any persecutions, trials or imprisonment, which would delay our service, since they cannot go against the Roman rules.



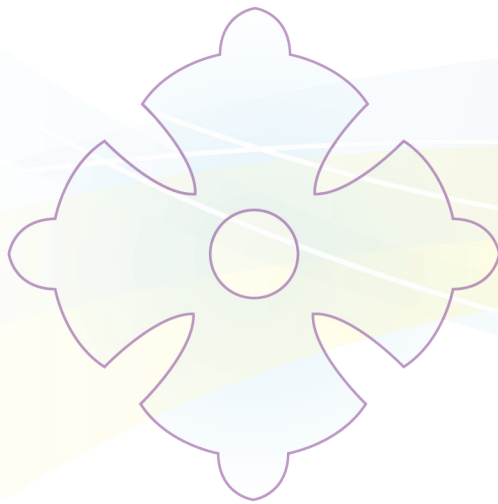




**Announcer:** Our beloved Saint Paul, it is the end of our episode and we would like to thank you for joining us today. We hope that you will be out of prison very soon.

**Saint Paul:** Thank you for your love and may our Lord Jesus Christ bless you.

**Announcer:** Ladies and gentlemen, we have reached the end of our dialogue with St. Paul from the prison of Phillippi, who now awaits the magistrates verdict in his case. At the end of our episode from the program, 'Dialogue Across Barriers', we wish everyone a blessed time and we now return to our studio with the channel Mahragan Alkeraza 2010.





## 6. The Goal

With you live on the air from the stadium in Anba Abraam's Monastery in Fayoum, Egypt, where the final playoffs for the Mahragan el Karaza 2010 for the soccer tournament is taking place. We have with us here the team's coach; Captain Amin, with whom I had the following conversation:

**Announcer:** Welcome, Captain Amin. What is the reason for your success, and for choosing your team?

**Amin:** This is because of my faithfulness in both my spiritual life and my work, and my faithfulness in my relationship with society, and I know my duties towards God, and to the people, and to the society that I live in. The Holy Bible tells us of God's love to the faithful, even to the point that it brings the faithful closer to him and allows them to dwell with him; "My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, That they may dwell with me" Psalm 101:6. Faithfulness gives you inner peace and confidence. It pushes the faithful person to achieve success but lying and cheating achieves nothing and causes people to lose respect for you and won't feel the value of success. For example, does the player Maradona feel happiness when he scores a goal with his hand when the referee is not watching? Of course not, but he regrets it and apologizes. And so, this bad action left a bad mark on this talented player.

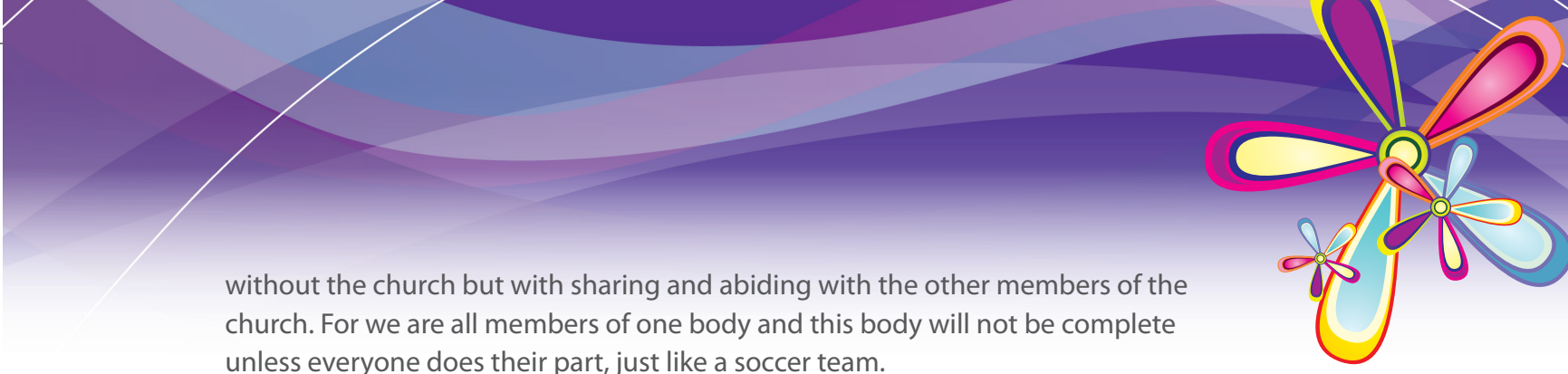
**Announcer:** Do you have other reasons for your success?

**Amin:** The Goal. The main goal is the Kingdom of Heaven, but the secondary goals are academic success, continuous training with great effort, and following the instructions of the coach. This is like the person who wants to live a successful spiritual life with the Lord Jesus must train in spiritual practices, under spiritual guidance of their father of confession and spiritual guide. This training is strengthened by the power of God within us; "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13)

**Announcer:** You as a forward offense player, if you need a friend or player to help you win, what are the qualifications of that friend?

**Amin:** He should be faithful in his playing habits, and is not selfish when he sees me in a better scoring position. He moves with me and finds open spaces in the field to help me in scoring. I should be not only be cooperative for the forward player only but also with the rest of the team. Just as it occurs in the spiritual life, a person cannot gain the Kingdom of Heaven





without the church but with sharing and abiding with the other members of the church. For we are all members of one body and this body will not be complete unless everyone does their part, just like a soccer team.

Therefore, a faithful person cares for others as he cares for himself. He cares for their salvation as he ensures the salvation of his soul. It is not enough for him not to hurt anyone, but directs his effort into doing good for others. He is like a candle that shines its light to everyone around him, a tree that gives shade for all that seek it for shelter, and is a benefactor of good works and the pursuer of peace with all.

**Announcer:** You were a famous player, how do you deal with the opposite gender?

**Amin:** You have to keep the relationship between you as brothers and sisters, and stay as a group setting, and avoid being one-on-one; and as for teasing, this is a description of the youth who just want attention, and so they seek it with inappropriate behaviour that is not acceptable to the respectable youth who treat the girls as their sisters. Also, when the girl treats a boy respectfully, she forces him to respect her and see her as a precious jewel. The faithful man keeps the people's secrets and doesn't share with anyone, and doesn't try to reveal any weaknesses, but is careful to conceal them. And if he sees someone who needs help, he doesn't fall short of helping him, but he will be a help to those that are helpless, and a light to those walking in darkness.

**Announcer:** I know there are 4 W's and an H everyone must follow with his relationship with the other gender.

**Amin:** Yes --What, When, Why, Where and How. When you ask yourself these questions and answer honestly, you will know if there is a healthy relationship with the other gender or not.

1. How you meet with them? – by phone, chat, visit (either family friend or relative)
2. Why you meet them? – for a convincing reason such as they are asking for help in school, or just because you want to meet them, and you use needing help as an excuse? Is there no one of your gender to help you?
3. Where do you meet them? – in a crowd with people, alone, in a secret place, or in front of many people, and with parents' consent or not?
4. When do you speak with them? – when you are alone, late and your parents are asleep, or anytime?
5. What do you say? – flattering words, spiritual discussion, or current and social affairs?

There is no need for relationships with the opposite gender that is not in a group and hidden from others because it is a waste of time, does not build the person, and the Lord is not happy with it. It might be harmful and may lead to many problems.

The game is done, and there is cheering, and the team played cooperatively altogether. We





met the players Maher Hakim, the best player in tournament.

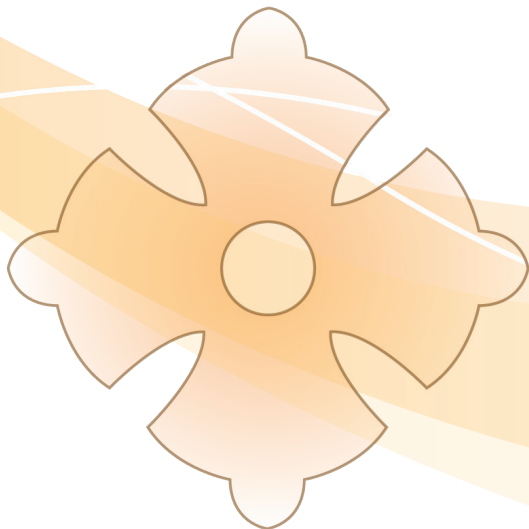
**Announcer:** Congratulations. Can you tell me what happened during half-time?

**Maher:** During this time, we took the advice and received instruction from the coach regarding the process of the game, just as we follow the instruction of our father of confession, because he has a lot of spiritual and practical experience.

**Announcer:** We saw some player displaying bad sportsmanship.

**Maher:** This is wrong, we must express our opinion in a respectful manner. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us this example when they struck His cheek and He replied in a proper manner: "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why do you strike Me?" (John 18:23). Also, this would lead to the player getting a red card which would be a loss for the team. This is because he who hurts someone is the one who loses most. To be faithful to others is to share in their sadness as well as their joy, it is to visit the sick, comfort those who need it, give advice to those who require it, and to share in solving problems to those in trouble- if he is capable of doing so. And he has a big loving heart for all, respects the young and old, and does not rebuke those that have fallen, but helps them up.

**Announcer:** Thank you everyone, and we'll see you in the next game, and God bless you.





## 7. The Story of Salvation



*The bell rang at the end of the school day. Peter and Emad started gathering their books so that they could go home. Emad noticed a picture of the crucified Christ among Peter's books, so the following dialogue took place:*

**Emad:** Tell me Peter, logically speaking, can this crucified man really be God?

**Peter:** Yes, my friend, we believe that Christ is God who was incarnate and crucified for us.

**Emad:** I want to learn a lot about Christ. Is He God? Was He incarnate? Is this possible, my friend, for God to be crucified? And why was He incarnate, leaving His throne in heaven?

**Peter** (smiling): Emad, are you faithful in attending the liturgy and Sunday school every week? I think if you were regular in your attendance, you would never doubt and ask these questions. The truth, my friend, is that this is a long story, and I am willing to tell it to you if you don't mind.

**Emad:** Of course I don't mind. Actually, I am very excited to hear all about it.

*They walked together, and Peter started telling Emad the story.*

**Peter:** You know, Emad before God created man, He created the heavens and the earth and prepared it with plants and trees and different kinds of birds and animals . And on the sixth day, after everything else was ready, God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on earth." (Genesis 1:26)

**Emad:** Hold on, Peter. We know that God is a spirit, so how can you say that He created man in His image?

**Peter:** God didn't create man in His image in the sense of appearance and looks, but He made him special among all the creatures by giving him a mind, to know and believe in God. He gave him heart and emotions, to love God and his brothers and sisters. An eternal spirit, to





share eternal life with God. Free will, to choose his own path. That is what is meant by the image of God. It is to live in love because God is love, to have knowledge because God is full of knowledge, and to be pure because God is the Holy of holies.

God wants man to live by all these virtues through his free will and his own choices. And for that reason, God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden.

**Emad:** That's strange. Isn't this tree the reason for the fall of Adam?

**Peter:** The gift here is man's free will and free choice. When God asked Adam not to eat from the tree, He didn't force him but rather gave him total freedom in choosing to obey or disobey His commands. If he chooses to obey he will enjoy eternal life with God. If he chooses to disobey he will be punished. The Lord commanded, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17). Unfortunately, man abused his freedom and fell because he obeyed Satan. God loved Adam and Eve very much, and He wanted them to show their love through their obedience to Him using their complete free will and own decisions.


**Emad:** Don't you think that death is too much of a cruel punishment in comparison to the sin they committed. Why didn't God just kick them out of paradise?

**Peter:** First of all, sin within itself is separation from God, because He is full of Holiness and without sin, and He is the source of life, so whoever separates from God by sinning, the consequence is death. There are many kinds of death. There is spiritual death, which means separation from God and from living with Him. There is moral death, separation from God and the ensuing corruption of humanity. There is physical death, the end of life for man and his return to dust from which he was made. "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air" (Genesis). Finally, there is eternal death, which is eternal damnation. Secondly, this sin was against God who is Holy and eternal, so the punishment had to be eternal. When one wrongs a normal person, it's not the same as wronging a great person. So imagine wronging God!

**Emad:** Didn't you say a little while ago that God is love? So then why didn't God just forgive man?

**Peter:** Just like God is complete in His love and mercy, He is complete in His justice. His justice here is that whoever sins must die because the consequence of sin is death (Romans 6:23). If God forgives man this will not solve the problem since his nature has been corrupted by sin. For example, a father told his son not to drink from a certain bottle because it was





poisonous, but this boy disobeyed his dad and drank from it. On his deathbed, he asked his father to forgive him for his disobedience, which the father did. But this did not stop the poison from spreading throughout the boy's body, and the father had to rescue him from the poison in his body.

**Emad:** Then why didn't God let Adam die and create another man?

**Peter:** Firstly, this goes against God's love and mercy. Although Adam ate of his own free will, the devil tempted him. Secondly, Adam's death would contradict with the Lord's glory; how could God allow the devil to be victorious over Adam and for him to die? This would mean that the devil was victorious over God, and this would be the destiny of every man created henceforth, and this is impossible.

**Emad:** Fine, so Adam sinned and the penalty was death, but why must his children suffer the consequences of his actions?

**Peter:** Like I told you before, my friend, the consequence of Adam's sin is the corruption of mankind which we inherited from Adam. And man fell into a chain of sins because of this corrupted nature. As it is written in the Bible, "They have all turned aside they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no not one." (Romans 3:12). We say in the Divine Liturgy there is no one without sin, even if his life was for one single day on earth. Sin and Satan now have dominion over man.

**Emad:** Okay, what I understood from what you said is that there are two consequences of death: first, the rule of sin is on all mankind. Second, mankind is corrupted because of sin, but God does not want man to die because He loves Him. So what's the solution?

**Peter:** Simply, the solution is for one to redeem mankind, that is to say to die by His free will on man's behalf, just as the Bible said: "And without the shedding of blood there is no remission." (Hebrew 9:22).

**Emad:** That's easy, then. Man must offer a sacrifice just like they used to do in the Old Testament and the problem is solved.

**Peter** (smiling): You were right to say that in the Old Testament, the Jews used to offer the sacrifices, and this they learned from God Himself, when He made for Adam and Eve tunics of skin to cover them. By this, man learned that he cannot ask for God's forgiveness except through the sacrifice of blood. "They used to bring sacrifices to the altar and place their hand





on the sacrifice, confess their sins and the sacrifice would die on behalf of its owner. But of course, this sacrifice and all the sacrifices on earth would not be sufficient to redeem man from his sin towards God because this sin was directed to God who is infinite. So the conditions of these sacrifices weren't satisfactory to the conditions required of a redeemer to redeem mankind from sin.

**Emad:** What are these conditions?

**Peter:** The redeemer must be a man, because it was man who sinned, so it can't be an animal or an angel. The redeemer must die, because the consequence of sin is death. The redeemer must be without sin, because if he is a sinner, then he also is in need of a redeemer, so it is not possible for a sinner to redeem another sinner. The redeemer must be infinite, because Adam's sin was directed to God who is infinite, and so its punishment is also infinite; redemption must include all of mankind, from Adam to the end of all ages. The redeemer must be the creator, so that He can renew mankind once again and return it to its first image before sin reigned over it.

**Emad:** So who is qualified with all these conditions?

**Peter:** The last three conditions do not apply to anyone except for God alone because He is the creator, without sin, and eternal. For the first two rules to apply to Him, He had to be incarnate and die. Through this, God would accept death. He died for the sake of the salvation of the world and destroyed the dominion of sin over mankind, renewed the nature of man once again, and declared His wonderful love for mankind.

**Emad:** This is what I don't understand: how can God, who is great and Holy, accept to take the form of a weak human body?

**Peter:** Firstly, you need to know that the incarnation of God does not conflict with His nature, because man was God's best creation, he was created in His image, and after God created him, He found everything to be very good. "Then God saw everything that He made, and indeed it was very good." (Genesis 1:31). Also, incarnation does not conflict with God's holiness, because when the sun's rays fall on the garbage it purifies it without the sun getting defiled or dirty, and likewise when God was incarnate, He purified our corrupted nature, without His nature being defiled, because His holiness is eternal. Secondly, incarnation is a sign of God's love for mankind because God desired to live in us and unite with us, to teach us the path of eternal life and protect us from the devil. That is why it was possible for God to come down to us, but not possible for us to rise to Him. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). The Bible also says, "And without controversy great is the mystery





of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh.” (1 Timothy 3:16).

**Emad:** How did this incarnation take place?

**Peter:** God (divinity), who was in the womb of a virgin (humanity), took from her a body without sin. He became a man with a spirit, body and soul just like us, except without sin.

**Emad:** So this was about incarnation. How about redemption?

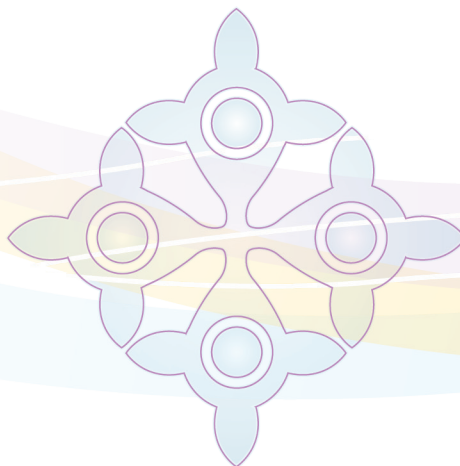
**Peter:** Salvation and redemption were completed when Christ died on the cross, was put in the tomb and rose from the dead on the third day.

**Emad:** Died? Does God die?

**Peter:** Of course not, but remember that divinity became united with humanity, and this humanity (the body) is what died on the cross. So the spirit was separated from the body that was buried in the tomb, as we say in the ninth hour of the Agpeya: “O you who tasted death in the flesh”.

*Emad went silent thinking about what his friend Peter had told him.*

**Emad:** Thank you very much my friend. You explained to me many things I couldn’t understand. It is very important for me to go to Sunday school because it will explain to me a lot about my Christianity, my faith, and I will start attending regularly from next week. I am hoping to continue this very interesting conversation another time.





## 8. The “Tasbeha”

The word “tasbeha” is a title given to several prayers and praises that are sung before the raising of incense, as a part of the preparation for the Divine Liturgy.

### **The goal of this study is to know:**

1. The importance of praises
2. Praises found in the Old and New Testament
3. Different hymns and tunes of the “tasbeha”
4. The books and the terminology used in “tasbeha”
5. The sequence of the “tasbeha”

### **The importance of praises:**

1. It is the work of angels and saints before the heavenly throne “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” Psalm 19:1 and we are the struggling church sharing with the victorious church in heaven in this work because we are all one body in Christ.
2. It has strong power to change bad desires and to sanctify the thoughts and the senses.
3. It is a way to hand down the right and perfect dogma from generation to generation.
4. It is a way to fight and overcome the devil

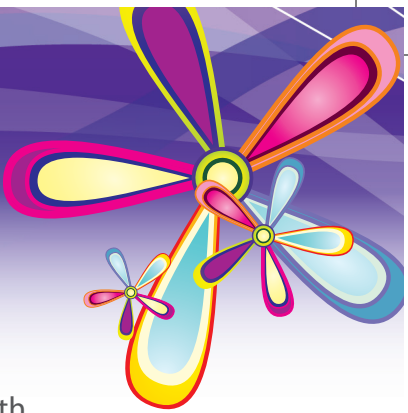
### **Praises found in the Old Testament**

1. The praise of Moses and the Israelites after crossing the Red Sea.
2. The Psalms of David
3. The praise of the three young men
4. The praise of the prophets and kings (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Elijah, Hezekiah, Habakkuk, Daniel, Azariah, Manasseh, and Jonah). These praises are sung during the night of Apocalypse

### **Praises in the New Testament**

1. The Lord Jesus Himself was praising with His disciples Thursday eve as the bible mentions “And when they had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives.” Matthew 26:30



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2. After the ascension of our Lord, the disciples gathered for praises and for breaking of the bread in the upper room "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people."  
Acts 2:46-47
  3. The praise of St. Paul and Silas while in the prison of Philippi, "but at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."  
Acts 16:25

### Different hymns and tunes of the "tasbeha"

1. **The Kiahk tune:** this tune is used during the month of Kiahk all the way till the Nativity Baramoun.
2. **The joyful tune :**
  - a. All the major and minor feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ except Great Thursday
  - b. From the Nayrouz feast (Tout 1st) until the feast of the Cross eve (Tout 16)
  - c. From Nativity (Kiahk 29) until the feast of Circumcision (Toba 6)
  - d. From the feast of Epiphany (Toba 11) until the feast of the wedding of Cana of Galilee (Toba 13)
  - e. The monthly remembrance of the feasts of Annunciation, Nativity, and Resurrection (29th of Every Coptic Month except during the month of Toba and Amshir)
3. **The fast tune:**
  - a. The Nineveh Fast
  - b. The Great lent
4. **Palm Sunday Tune:**
  - a. Palm Sunday Feast
  - b. The feasts of the Cross (Tout 17-19, Baramaht 10)
  - c. The celebration of the angels, martyrs, and saints
5. **The sad tune:**
  - a. During Holy week
  - b. During funerals
6. **The annual tune:** (used during the year with the exception of what is mentioned above)

### The terminology of the "tasbeha"

1. **Watus:** a Coptic word that means the bush, it is the tune used on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
2. **Adam:** a Coptic word that means Adam, it is the tune used on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays.





**3. Hoss:** a Coptic word that means Praise. In the “tasbeha” we have four Hosses, beside the long Hoss. Hosses are praises taken from Bible passages.

**4. Lobsh:** a Coptic word that means explanation, it is sung after the 1st and 2nd Hoss and some of the Theotokias

**5. Doxology:** a Greek word that means glorification, it is said for the saints after the Commemoration of the Saints.

**6. Epsali:** a Greek word that means song, it is sung before the Theotokia. There is a special Epsali for each day of the week as well as for the feasts and different occasions. It is sung in Watus or Adam tune depending on the day it falls on.

**7. Theotokia:** are praises for the Mother of God Saint Mary, it comes from the Greek word “Theotokos” which means Mother of God. It is sung after the Epsali in Watus or Adam tune.

### The church books used in “tasbeha”

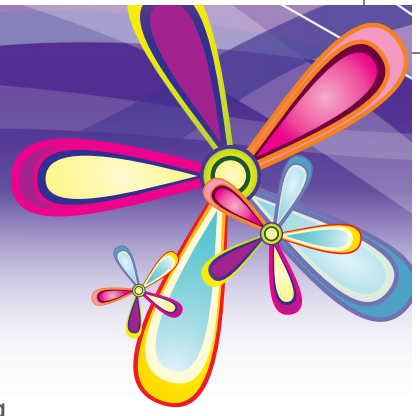
- 1. The Psalmody:** a book that contains the “tasbeha” prayers. There are two types of Psalmodies
  - a. Annual Psalmody**
  - b. Kiahk Psalmody:** which include Kiahk tasbeha
- 2. Annual Epsali:** a book that contains the different Epsalies for the feasts of our Lord and the feasts of the saints.
- 3. The Epsali of the feasts and the fasts:** for all occasions in the Coptic year.
- 4. Defnar:** a book that contains the stories of the saints of each day and a praise for each one of them.
- 5. The Agpeya:** a book of prayers that contains the psalms that are prayed before the “tasbeha”.

### The segments of the “tasbeha” and their sequence

- 1. Ten Theno:** It is the first part of the midnight praise (Arise O children of the light let us praise the Lord of Hosts). In this praise the church calls all to arise from sleep and laziness to praise our Saviour who granted us life







**2. Ten nav:** (a praise for the resurrection) it is the second part after “Ten Theno”. The church encourages us to awake from our sleep, puts in front of us the resurrected Lord to enlighten our lives while we are still on earth. This part is sung during the Holy fifty days and the Sundays until the last Sunday of Hatour.

**3. The 1st Hoss:** (Exodus 15), it is the praise of Moses and his sister Miriam after they crossed the Red Sea and were saved from Pharaoh’s slavery in Egypt. It is a song of victory. The church puts it in the beginning of the “tasbeha” because Pharaoh and his soldiers symbolize the devil, and as Moses saved his people by crossing the Red Sea, the Lord Jesus Christ saved us by His cross. We crossed from death to life through Baptism, which is the first sacrament and the key to heaven and eternal life.

**4. The 2nd Hoss:** (Psalm 135), it has 28 verses with the following chorus repeated each time (je pef nai shop sha eneh). This resembles the 28 generations from David the prophet to Jesus Christ mentioned in the Gospel of St. Matthew chapter one. It is as if David the prophet is asking every generation to implore God’s mercy until the second coming of our Lord. The joy of salvation and victory is transformed to a praise and thanksgiving for the new life and freedom that was given to us and the grace to be called children of God.

**5. The 3rd Hoss:** (Daniel 3- Apocrypha), after Satan was defeated by the cross, he does not stop to fight God’s children. And as he tried to burn the three young men in the fiery furnace, he continues to try to burn us with the fire of his temptation. As the Lord saved the three young men, He is able to save us from Satan, gives us victory and helps us to see the light of His salvation.

**6. The Epsali of the three young men (Aripsalin):** we sing to the one Who was crucified, buried and rose. It is a song with verses written in the alphabetical order of the Greek alphabet. It reminds us of the work of God with the three young men in the furnace and it is said after the 3rd Hoss.

**7. The praise of the 3 young men (Ten o eh en sok ):** it is sung after Aripsalin and it is a part of Azariah’s prayer (one of the three young men) who prayed by himself in the furnace and it is mentioned in Daniel 3:24-25 (Apocrypha). It is said after the 3rd Hoss and before the Commemoration of the Saints.

**8. The Commemoration of the Saints:** it is a praise for the saints, who by the power of the Lord conquered the devil became our role models, hence we ask for their prayers and intercessions on our behalf before the Lord to help us until we join them in the Victorious Church.





**9. The Doxology:** it is a praise for St. Mary, the angels and the saints. We honour and bless them and we ask for their prayers on our behalf. The doxologies are also sung during the raising of incense. We have special ones for the fasts and the feasts, those are sung before the doxology of St. Mary and the other doxologies.

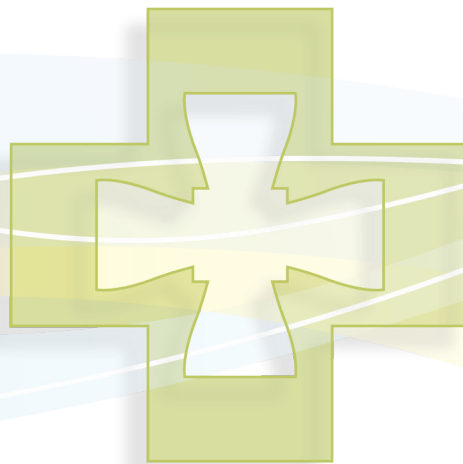
**10. The 4th Hoss:** (Psalm 148, 149, 150), Psalm 148 is a praise offered by all the creation to the Great Creator- in Psalm 149, 150 we invite all the creation to praise and glorify God.

**11. The Epsali:** it is a praise for the Lord Jesus Christ. In it we repeat the name of the Lord Jesus many times for He is a strong tower who protects us against the evil. Everyone who mentions the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is holding a sword in his hand against Satan. Each verse begins with a letter in the alphabetical order of the Coptic Alphabet. The Epsali for the fasts and the feasts are sung before the Epsali of the day and their tunes vary according to the church occasion as previously explained.

**12. The Theotokia:** It is a praise that comes after the Epsali to honour St. Mary and the mystery of incarnation. We remember the prophecies about the incarnation and the symbols of St. Mary (the Mother of God). There are 7 theotokias sung in the tune of Watus or Adam.

**13. The conclusion of the theotokia:** it is a praise that brings out in us the feelings of repentance and the confidence in God's mercy.

**14. The prayers of (Efnoti nai nan):** is a praise asking for the Lord's mercy (41 Kyria lyson).



## 9. Comparative Theology



Three friends met during a break, and after sitting to talk, as they often did, John asked his friends this question:

**John:** Why do we have different denominations? Mina, you are Orthodox, Nader is Evangelical and I am Catholic. Are we not all Christians?! Are we not all one?

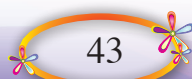
**Nader:** Of course we are all Christians, John, and we are one and there is no difference between us except in the title. I think that this was only due to differences in some of the formalities of prayer and worship and in what is called the Orthodox rites. Isn't that right, Mina?

**Mina:** I agree with you, we are all Christians, and recognize that Christ, our God, came for our salvation. But there are clear differences between us in the faith, not only in the form of prayer and worship, but also in our beliefs.

**John:** Differences in faith!! Where did these differences stem from? And how were such denominations formed, and when did this all happen?

**Mina:** You know what? I remember reading about this in comparative theology! The Church of the New Testament was one: one faith, one body composed of members who are believers, and its head is the Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ. The church remained one in its faith until 451 AD, the date of the council of the bishops and patriarchs in the city of Chalcedon. In this meeting the one church was divided into two groups. One group believed that the nature of Christ is one nature, which was a result of the unity of His humanity and His Divinity. This belief belonged to the Eastern churches led by the Coptic church of Alexandria. The other group, the Western churches led by the Church of Rome, believed that Christ had two natures and so the outcome of that council was a split between the two groups regarding the nature of Christ. Since that day, there has been Chalcedonian churches (those who believe in the council of Chalcedon) under the leadership of the church of Rome and non-Chalcedonian churches led by the Coptic church of Alexandria.

In the eleventh century there was a split between the Western churches. The resulting churches are called the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Churches who followed Constantinople. In the sixteenth century, Martin Luther protested against the Catholic Church, and this was called "the Protestant reformation", and it was launched in





Germany, where he objected to some of the teachings of the Catholic Church. His followers were called the protesters, and then came the name "Protestant". Within the Protestant Church, there are now many divisions, and to this day the divisions continue, creating more protestant denominations.

Orthodoxy is a Greek word meaning "true faith", and this name has been used for nearly 14 centuries. For all this time, the church has kept the faith that has been handed down from Our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles. As we receive this inheritance, we have to preserve it faithfully to hand it over to the generations that come after us, until Our Lord Jesus Christ receives His church, which He bought with His own blood.

Catholic is a Greek word meaning "universal" because it brought together all the Western churches, and this has been used since the eleventh century.

Protestantism means "the protest" or "opposition".

<b>Dogma</b>	<b>Orthodox</b>	<b>Catholic</b>	<b>Protestant</b>
<b>Baptism</b>	A sacrament in which the baptized receives the grace of the new birth and it is the gate to all the other sacraments. It is done through immersion using water.	It is a holy sacrament but mostly is carried out through sprinkling or pouring.	It is not a holy sacrament but is a symbol that can either be done through sprinkling or immersion. They believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
<b>Acts 2:38</b>			
<b>Chrismation</b>	A sacrament by which the grace of the Holy Spirit is delivered through the anointing of oil in 36 anointments across the body.	A sacrament similar to the Orthodox Church but is carried out at between the ages of 7-12 and is called Confirmation.	They do not believe in it.







2 Corinthians 1: 21 and 22			
<b>Confession</b>	It is a sacrament where the believers receive the absolution from their sins if they have repented.	It is a sacrament administered with a barrier between the priest and the confessor.	They only confess to God while some denominations have confession in front of the church.
John 22:20-23			
<b>Communion</b>	True Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ after the Holy Spirit transforms the bread and wine into the Holy Body and Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. We cannot use anything for communion except the Korban. There also cannot be more than one mass on the same altar except after nine hours just like the rules put by the church for those who will partake of the Holy Communion.	They believe in the transubstantiation into the body and blood. Since the 11th century they have been using the wafer, however, they do not allow the congregation to partake of the Holy Blood. They also allow having more than one mass on the same altar and there is no abstinence prior to the partaking of the sacrament.	They believe that there is no change that takes place but instead it is just a symbolic ritual.





**John 6:54**

<b>Intercession</b>	We believe in the intercession of Jesus Christ for us in front of the Father and we also believe in the intercession of the saints on our behalf in front of Jesus Christ and we honour them through icons and preserve their relics. We also have them as our role models.	Same ideology as the Orthodox except they use statues to honour them. Statues are not preferred by the Orthodox.	They only believe in Jesus Christ's intercession and deny the saints' intercessions completely.
<b>The Holy Spirit</b>	We believe in the Holy Spirit who comes forth from the Father.	They believe that the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father and the Son.	They believe that the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father and the Son.
<b>Traditions</b>	We believe in the holy traditions of the apostles.	They believe in the same traditions as the Orthodox with the addition of their church laws and Western church fathers teachings and internal councils.	They do not believe in any church traditions hence they are sometimes called evangelical.



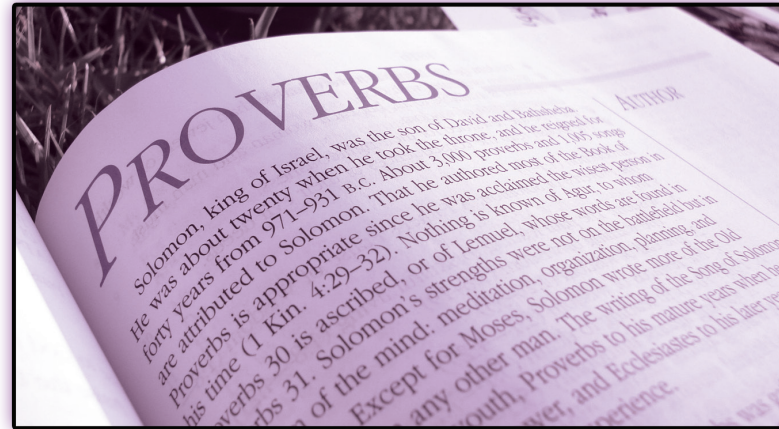


<b>The Second coming</b>	A second coming for all and with it is the end of the world.	Same as Orthodox.	The second coming is done in stages. The first stage is when Jesus will come on earth and rule it for 1000 years; then there will be the final judgment.
<b>Final judgment</b>	Eternal condemnation for the sinners and the non-repentant.	They have purgatory where the believers suffer for the sins they committed so that they get purified and enter into paradise.	Like the Orthodox.
<b>The Holy Virgin Mary</b>	She inherited the first sin like all humanity and needed the salvation given through Jesus Christ. But She is the Mother of God and her glory exceeds the angels. We also believe in her everlasting virginity and Jesus Christ was her only child.	She was born without inheriting the first sin and did not need the salvation through Jesus Christ. They glorify her close to the point of worship and that is not accepted by the Orthodox. They also believe in her everlasting virginity.	They deny the title, 'Mother of God' and her intercession. Finally they deny her everlasting virginity and do not give her due respect.





# Memorization



Note: it is not required to memorize the verses in this part but just to understand them.

**Compline prayer:** Psalm 129, 133, 147, the Gospel, litanies and conclusion.

## 1. The Psalms

### **Psalm 129: Out of the depths**

#### **Meaning of words:**

Mark my iniquities: count my iniquities

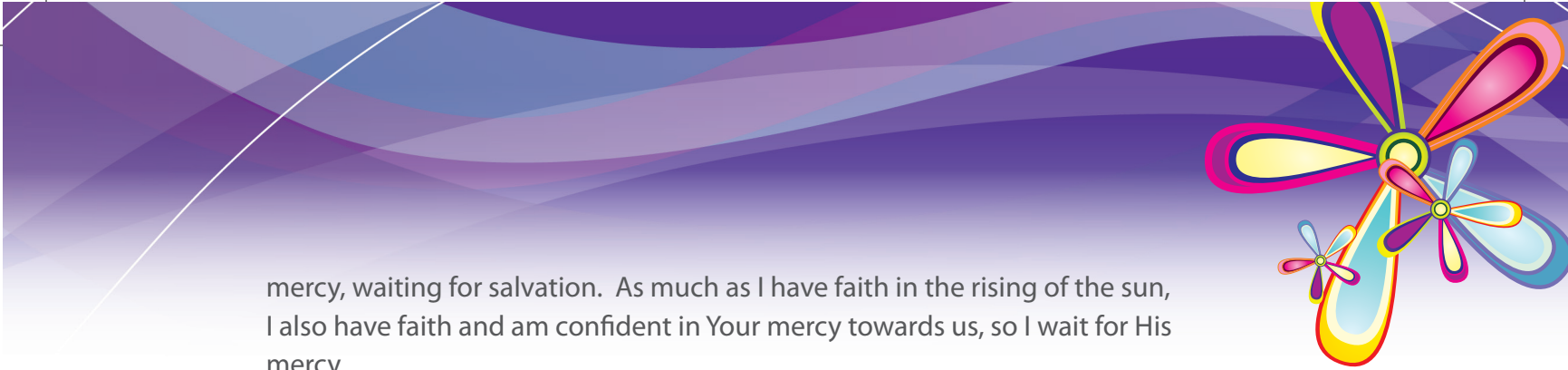
Watch for the morning: the rising of the sun

#### **Explanation of the Psalm of Ascent:**

1. It is particular to the feast of the first fruits, which was a feast of joy. The Levites used to say these Psalms while they were standing on the fifteenth step of the altar. David, the prophet, asks the Lord in this Psalm for His mercy and forgiveness. His strong feelings towards God, and the fact that He inclines His ear to our prayers. It is a clear confession of his sins as well as faith in God to forgive him.
2. David tells God if He was to count all of our sins against us, we would be doomed, and when we stand before Him, we would not find any justification to offer for our sins. But because He is merciful, we trust that He will not judge us for the multitude of our sins.
3. From the rising of the sun to its setting down I remember you O Lord and ask for Your







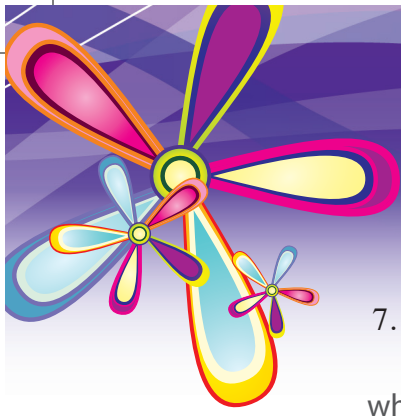
mercy, waiting for salvation. As much as I have faith in the rising of the sun, I also have faith and am confident in Your mercy towards us, so I wait for His mercy.

4. God's people waited confidently for Christ's salvation. He came to save man from the sins into which he fell willingly.
5. Therefore, through baptism, confession and communion, we overcome sin, trample Satan and enjoy the salvation of God.

### **Psalm 133: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together**

1. This Psalm was written when the Israelites were returning back from exile to Jerusalem to encourage them to unite. It is an invitation for everyone who is part of a group to share in love with one another as so long as this group lives in obedience to God's commandments.
2. "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)
3. Those who dwell together are not necessarily brothers but if they are united in spirit, soul, mind and heart then they will be like the oil running down on the beard of Aaron.
4. They used this oil to pour it on the head of the priest to anoint him and it would pour down on his beard and run down on his garments. This oil is the work of the Holy Spirit and Aaron's head resembles good thinking. The beard resembles words of wisdom and understanding and also refers to consecration. The edge of his garments refers to the spread of wisdom. The people in whom the Holy Spirit works are nourished by God's words (the words of wisdom and understanding). They consecrate their time in what is good and beneficial. They show their good relationship with one another and their good example to people just like a sweet smelling aroma fills a room.
5. "It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountain of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing life forever more." (Psalm 133:3)
6. The dew satisfies the thirst of the plants and the soil. Similarly, the brothers who are united by God's love strengthen one another and help the spiritually weak and encourage them to live with God.

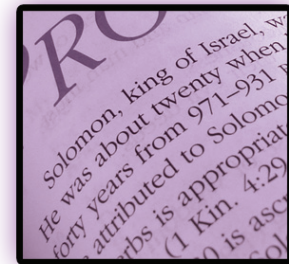





7. Hermon is a mountain located beside the Jordan River, and the dew of Hermon resembles baptism. A Christian person who has tasted the goodness of God, when he deals with his brother makes him happy so he can also taste the goodness of God. This verse refers to the apostles' work which touched the hearts of the people and so it bore good fruit.

### **Psalm 147: Praise the Lord O Jerusalem**

1. It as an invitation for the Jews who returned from exile to Jerusalem to praise God and glorify His name by rebuilding the temple of God, whose gates were destroyed.
2. Jerusalem resembles the church, which praises the Lord through her children. It is also like mankind who rejoices with spiritual songs because God dwells in it. "For He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your children within you." Psalm 147: 13 The kings with their soldiers who fought against the faith of Christ cannot enter the church and shake its faith because the Lord dwelt among His people, so that the gates of Hades could not overcome it. Likewise, the man who loves God and keeps His commandments, the Lord strengthens the door of his heart and soul, blesses his senses so that no evil thought can enter. God blesses the virtues and multiplies them (blessed are your children within you).
3. "He makes peace in your borders, and fills you with the finest of wheat" Psalm 147:14
4. "He would have fed them also with the finest of wheat; and with honey from the rock I would have satisfied you" Psalm 81:16. God has given peace to His church even during the time of tribulation and gives peace to every soul who depends on Him and lives for Him. God has filled His children with His Body and Blood and fills the soul with the beauty of living with Him.
5. "He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs very swiftly." Psalm 147:15
6. "He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost likes ashes." Psalm 147:16 Ice gives us the impression of extreme cold, while wool gives us the impression of warmth. Those who are sinners (tax collectors, and adulterers) are very cold in their spiritual life. As for the fog it hides the light so that it becomes dark, and those are the sinners whose lives became filled with darkness. God removed that darkness and turned it into ashes just like when the people of Nineveh repented and put on sackcloth.



- 
7. The hail resembles those whose hearts are far away from God, but God melts their hearts with His love so that their hearts are now softened.
  8. Therefore we thank God that He did not leave us to live in this cold but turned it into warmth. Had He not done that, "Who can stand before His cold?" Psalm 147:17
  9. "He sends out His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow and the waters flow." Psalm 147:18
  10. God's word is strong and effective such that it is able to melt the snow, cause the wind to blow so that we turn from being spiritually barren to being spiritually zealous, from the life of sin to the life of purity, and from having a hardened heart to loving God and His creation.

## 2. The Gospel, Luke 2:25-32

The church chose this passage to pray in the Compline prayer because it talks about the end of the life of Simeon the elder: "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace", which he said as he held the baby Christ when Christ's parents went to the temple after forty days of His birth to offer sacrifices for Him as per Moses' law. Simeon died that same day. On Amsheer 8th, the church celebrates the feast of the Lord's entrance into the temple and the departure of Simeon the elder. Therefore, we must be ready through good deeds because we cannot say to God, "Lord now let your servant depart in peace" unless we are prepared and living in repentance.

We end the day through sleep and this reminds us of the end of life. Simeon said, "For my eyes have seen your salvation". What does that mean? The Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ whom Simeon held in his hands as a baby. Christ completed this salvation when He died on the cross and was buried in the tomb as one who is sleeping, and He resurrected on Sunday, the third day.

## 3. Litanies of the Compline prayer

### *The first part*

After the end of the world there will be judgment. Everybody will tremble before God because of their sins and they will be judged. On judgment day, there will be no chance for repentance, and man will not be able to praise God after death because he will become dust. Man will not be able to remember God because he is dead. He will not be able to thank God because of his evil deeds as he waits in Hades.





### ***The second part***

If this life was everlasting and this world eternal then we would have an excuse for our evil deeds, but this world is not eternal therefore everyone will stand before the judge, so how will we defend ourselves?

The evil deeds are when the body is negligent to virtues, therefore there is neither fasting nor prayer; laziness and carelessness are the reasons we are afraid when we stand before God on judgment day. This is why man must abandon his laziness, and ask for God's mercies, beating on his breast, regretting his sins like the publican.

### ***The third part***

We ask Saint Mary, the mother of God, our intercessor, to help us be watchful in prayer and praising and wake up from the slumber of sleep before it is too late. She is the compassionate mother of Christ the King, the giver of life and the Saviour of our souls.

### **4. Absolution: O Lord all things that we have sinned**

We ask for forgiveness for our sins which we committed all day willingly or unwillingly, and we ask for a peaceful night so that God may send us a guardian angel to protect us from all evil and all temptation through the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ to whom is glory power and dominion, forever.





# Activities



I am seeking my brothers

Research

Hymns & Tasbeha

Coptic Language

Drama & Mime

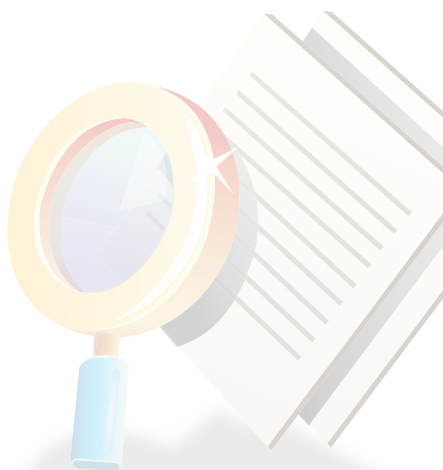
Praise & Music

Arts

Creative Writing

Multimedia & Technology

Sports



# "I am seeking my brothers"



If each one of us could bring four people with him to church, how many would we be?  
We would become an even larger family in one church.  
Here are two different situations; which one would you choose?

1 <sup>st</sup> situation	2 <sup>nd</sup> situation
God asked the older brother: "where is your brother" and he answered: "I do not know, am I my brother's keeper?" Gen 4:9	A man asked the younger brother: "what are you seeking" so he said "I am seeking my brothers." Gen 37: 16

How would you respond in a similar situation? There is no doubt that the younger brother's answer in the 2nd situation sounds better. Joseph, the "younger brother" did not like to stay at home by himself, so he went out to seek his brothers. He walked down many roads and lost his way, but at the end he found them.

We ask that you not join the Mahragan by yourself this year, but rather "seek your brothers", including those who do not attend church regularly as well as people in your school, and those in your neighbourhood who perhaps do not receive much attention from anyone.

1. You can pay them a quick visit, give them a phone call, send them an email or text message, etc... Bring them with you to the church and introduce them to Abouna or your servant who will welcome them into our community and help them participate in the different activities offered in the Mahragan. This is a form of outreach and it can be very effective in drawing people closer to our Lord Jesus Christ and the church.
2. Ask your servant to fill out the required form and send it to us by July 1st (you can acquire the form from one of the Mahragan servants).

There will be a certificate of recognition for each participant and special gifts to the participant(s) who bring as many people as they can to the Mahragan.





# RESEARCH

## **Description:**

The Research Competition is a forum for participants to share their research, exchange ideas, and improve their communication skills while competing for prizes at the Mahragan.

## **Guidelines:**

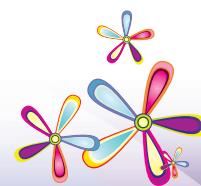
1. Choose one of the topics below and make sure to relate it to the theme of the Mahragan 2010 "Always Faithful"
  - a. Daniel The Prophet
  - b. Why The Incarnation?
  - c. The Cross
  - d. Baptism
  - e. Eucharist
  - f. The First Four Commandments
  - g. St. Mark The Apostle
  - h. St. Athanasius The Apostolic
  - i. Isaiah The Prophet
  - j. Josiah The King
  - k. Queen Helen
  - l. Saint Marina
  - m. The Journey of The Holy Family
  - n. The Council of Constantinople
  - o. The Exodus Journey of The Israelites
  - p. The Human Body is A Gift From God
  - q. Salvation in The Coptic Orthodox Tradition
  - r. Historical Figures and Their Positive Impact on Humanity
  - s. The History of Copts in Egypt
  - t. The Pros and Cons of Facebook
  - u. A research topic of your choice that is original and ties with the theme: "Always Faithful"
2. The research paper should be no less than 1250 words and no more than 1700 words long.
3. The participant(s) may work individually or in groups of no more than 3.





4. All research papers must be the student's original work. Plagiarism is strictly prohibited. A bibliography also needs to be included at the end of the paper.
5. The research papers that are selected to compete nationally will require oral presentations and a discussion of the topic. At that final level, the competitors will need to provide the judging panel with three copies of the original research.
6. Participants will make use of the presentation of the research to defend the evaluation categories of the written material (refer to the Evaluation Criteria below).

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Organization</b>	Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings.	Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs.	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well constructed.	The information appears to be disorganized.
<b>Amount of Information</b>	All aspects of the selected topic are addressed.	Most aspects of the selected topic are addressed.	Several aspects of the selected topic are addressed.	Few aspects of the selected topic are addressed.
<b>Quality of Information</b>	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.





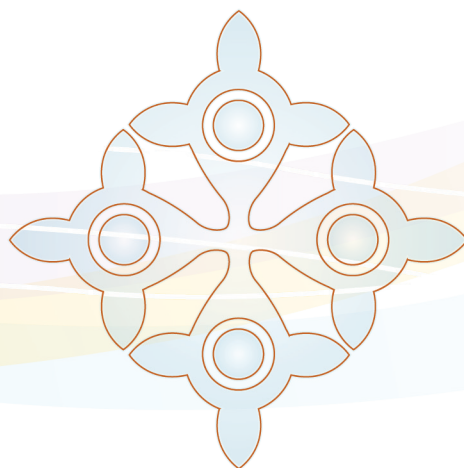
<b>Paragraph Construction</b>	All paragraphs include introductory sentence, explanations or details, and concluding sentence.	Most paragraphs include introductory sentence, explanations or details, and concluding sentence.	Paragraphs include related information but were typically not constructed well.	Paragraphing structure was not clear and sentences were not typically related within the paragraphs.
<b>Diagrams &amp; Illustrations</b>	Diagrams and illustrations are neat, accurate and add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Diagrams and illustrations are accurate and add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Diagrams and illustrations are neat and accurate and sometimes add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Diagrams and illustrations are not accurate OR do not add to the reader's understanding of the topic.
<b>Mechanics</b>	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	A few grammatical spelling, or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.



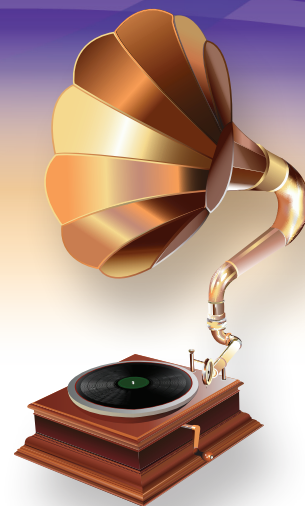


<b>Sources</b>	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but a few are not in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but many are not in the desired format.	Some sources are not accurately documented.
<b>Neatness</b>	Work is neatly done.	Work has one or two areas that are sloppy.	Work has three or four areas that are sloppy.	Work is Illegible.

**Points Earned:** \_\_\_\_\_ **÷ 32 possible points x 100 = Grade:**



# HYMNS & TASBEHA



## Description:

This competition is intended to encourage the participants to learn the beautiful hymns of our church, gaining some insight into our church's heritage.

There are 2 levels in this competition: Level 1, Level 2. The material to be studied for the competition is included below.

## Level 1

### 1- The Verses of the Cymbals

They are verses prayed with the cymbals after the thanksgiving prayer during the Raising of the Incense of matins and vespers. It has two introductions: One of them is in the Adam tune (on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday); the other one is in the Watos tune (on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday). After the introduction, we continue with verses to hail St. Mary, the angels, the martyrs, and then the saints. All these verses are considered salutations to the saints.

ΤΕΝΟΥΣΤ ΕΜΕΦΙΩΤ ΝΕΜ  
ΠΨΗΡΙ: ΝΕΜ ΠΙΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΕΘΥ:  
†ΤΡΙΑΣ ΕΘΥ: ΝΟΜΟΘΥCΙΟC.

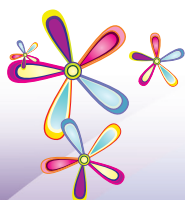
We worship the Father and  
the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
the holy and co-essential,  
Trinity.

Tenousht emefiot nem  
epsheeri: nem pipnevma  
ethouab: ti etrias ethouab:  
enomosos

ΧΕΡΕ ΤΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ: ΠΗΙ ΝΤΕ  
ΝΙΑΣΤΕΛΟC: ΧΕΡΕ †ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟC:  
ΕΤΑΣΜΕC ΠΕΝCΩΤΗΡ.

Hail to the Church, the house  
of the angels, hail to the  
Virgin, who gave birth to our  
Savior.

Shere tikeleseya: epi ent  
niangelos: shere tiparthenos:  
etasmes pensoteer





## 2- The First Doxology of the Epiphany Feast

The Doxologies, including this one, are all prayed before the Orthodox Creed during the Raising of the Incense of Matins and Vespers after the Trisagion.

The word "Doxology" is driven from the Greek word "Doxa" which means glory and the word "Doxology" means (glorification). They are poetic verses of praise to glorify Jesus Christ in the Feasts of the Lord or to praise and glorify St. Mary, the heavenly hosts, St. John the Baptist, the apostles, the martyrs, and the saints in their feasts.

This hymn emphasizes the incarnation "For God came and was baptized, for our sins".

Τότε ῥων ἀφμὸς ἡράσῃ: οὐοῦ  
πενλάς θεν οὐθεληλ: χε  
πενός Ἰησὺς Πῦς: ἀφβίωμς  
ζιτεν Ἰωάννης.

Then our mouths are filled  
with joy, and our tongues  
with rejoicing, for our Lord  
Jesus Christ, was baptized by  
John.

Tote ron afmoh enrashi:  
ouoh penlac khenouthleel:  
je penchoice isous pikrhistos:  
afchi-oms hiten Yoannees

+ Ἀληθὺς ἔφε νέμ ἑκὰσι:  
μερ ἐβόλθεν πεκταίο: ὦ Πός  
φα ἱχίς ἐτάμασι: νέμ  
πρωβῶ ἡρεψτοῦχο.

+ Truly heaven and earth,  
are filled with Your honor, O  
Lord with the mighty hand,  
and the arm of salvation.

Aleethos etfe nem epkahi:  
meh evol khen pektaio: o  
epchoice fat jig etmahiL nem  
pishobsh enreftougo

Χε Πός ἀφὶ οὐοῦ ἀφβίωμς:  
εῖθε νεννοβὶ ἄνον ζων:  
ἀψτοῦχον ἀψωτ ἄμων: θεν  
οὔνιωτ ἄμετψενζητ.

For God came and was  
baptized, for our sins, He  
delivered and saved us, with  
great compassion.

Je epchoice afi ouoh afchi-  
oms: ethve nennovi ana hon:  
aftougon afcoti emmon:  
khen ounishti  
emmetshenheet.

+ Δαυὶδ ἄμωρ τενηητ  
ἄφοορ: εῖρεκχω ἄπταιο  
ἄπαιωαι: χε πῶρωρ ἄΠός  
ζιχεν νιμωορ: Φτ ἡτε πωορ  
ἀψερθαραβαι.

+ Come today David to our  
midst, so you may speak of  
the honor of this feast, saying  
"The voice of the God of  
glory, thunders upon the  
waters."

Daveed emou tenmeeti  
emfoou: ethrekgo emeptaio  
empaishai: je epekroou  
emepchoice hijen nimoou:  
Efnouti ente epoou  
aferkharavai







Ἡσαΐας ἀψυοῖτ' ἐροῖ: καὶ  
 πῆρῳοῦ ὑπετωῦ ἐβόλ: δι  
 νιψαφεῖ δὲν οὐότνοφ: ἐπιβιος  
 εἰτσηκ ἐβόλ.

Isaiah has said, "The voice of  
 one crying out, with joy in the  
 wilderness, make straight His  
 paths."

Isaias afmoute erofL je  
 epekhroou empetsho evol: hi  
 nishafev khen ouounof:  
 epivios etjeek evol

+ Φιομ ἀφναῖ οὐοῦ ἀφωτ: ἀ  
 πιλορδανης κοτῆ ἐφάβοῦ: οὔ  
 πετωοπ φιομ κα ἀκφωτ:  
 ματαχροκ δινα ἡτεκβίςμοῦ.

+ The sea has seen and fled,  
 and the Jordan turned away  
 backwards, O sea why have  
 you fled, stand firm that you  
 may be blessed.

Efiom efnav ouoh affot a  
 piIorzanees kotf efahou: ou  
 petshop efiom je akfot:  
 matagrok hina  
 entekchiezmou

Ἦπε ἀφναῖ ἡκα νιμωοῦ:  
 ἐπιΔημιοτρτος ἡρεφωοῦ:  
 ἀφερβοῖτ' οὐοῦ ἀφταβωοῦ: ἡκα  
 οὔψθορτερ νευ οὔτωμτ.

Behold the waters have seen,  
 the Creator and Maker of all,  
 and became agitated and  
 confused, worried an amazed.

Eepe avnac enje nimooou:  
 epizeemiorghos enrefsont:  
 averhoti ouoh aftahoou: enje  
 oueshterter nem outmot

+ Ραψι νιτωοῦ νευ  
 νικαλαμφοῦ: πιαδῶψην  
 νευ νιψενσιφ: ἐβόλ δα ἡτη  
 ὑπσο ὑπΟτρο: φηέταφθαμιο  
 ἡνινιφ.

+ Rejoice O mountains and  
 hills, thickets and all cedars,  
 before the face of the King,  
 who created all souls.

Rashi nitoou nem  
 nikalamfoou: piaahesh-sheen  
 nem nishencifi: evol kha ethi  
 emepho emepouro: fee-  
 etafthamio en-ninifi

Ἢοταβ Ποc οὐοῦ Ἢοταβ:  
 Ἢοταβ Ποc Ἰηc Πχc: πῶοῦ  
 ἑφρωαῖ ναφ νευ Πεφιωτ: νευ  
 πιΠνευμα ὑπαρακλήτον.

Holy O Lord and holy, holy O  
 Lord Jesus Christ, glory be to  
 You and Your Father, and the  
 Spirit of comfort.

Ekouab epchoice ouwoh  
 Ekouab: ekouab efershav naf  
 nem pefiot: nem piepnevma  
 emparakleeton

+ Εῶβε φαι τενοὶ ἡραμαό: δὲν  
 νάτῃον εἰτσηκ ἐβόλ: δὲν  
 οὔναβτ' τεφερψαλιν: ενχω  
 ὑμοc κα ἀλληλοῖα.

+ Therefore we are wealthy,  
 with perfect gifts, and we  
 sing with faith, saying  
 Alleluia.

Ethve fai tenoi enramaoou:  
 khen na-eghathon etjeek  
 evol: khen ounahti  
 tenerepsalin: engo emmos je  
 allelouia





Ἀλληλοῦια ἁλ: ἀλληλοῦια  
ἁλ: Ἰης Πχς πΰηρι ὠφ†:  
αϥβίωυς ζεν πιλορδανης.

+ Φαι ἔρε πιῶντ ἐρῖρεπι ναϥ:  
νευ Πεϥιωτ ἰὰσαθος: νευ  
πιΠνευμα εῶν: ιςχεν †νοτ  
νευ ψα ἔνεζ.

+ Alleluia Alleluia, Alleluia  
Alleluia, Jesus Christ the Son  
of God, was baptized in the  
Jordan.

+ This is He who is worthy of  
glory, with His good Father,  
and the Holy Spirit, both now  
and forever.

Allelouia allelouia: allelouia  
allelouia: Isous Pikhristous  
epsheeri Emefnouti afchioms  
khen pi-yorzanis.

Fai ere pioou ereprepi naf:  
nem pefiot enaghathos: nem  
piepnevma ethouab: yisjen  
teenou nem sha eneh.

### 3- Ἀπενβοῖς Al-Mehayar for the Nativity Feast

Al-Mehayar always start with the word ``Ἀπενβοῖς`` which means "Our Lord" or the word ``Παβοῖς`` which means "My Lord". The Words in this hymn are modified according to the season it's sung in. Sometimes, it is called ASPASMOS "Megalou" and the singers pray the "Trisagion" hymn right after it.

Ἀπενος Ἰης Πχς: φηέτας  
μαϥ ἰξε †παρθενος: ζεν  
Βηθλεεμ ἰτε †λορδεα: κατα  
νίςμη ὠπροφητικον

ΝιΧεροβιμ νευ νιCεραφιμ:  
νιασσελος νευ  
νιαρχηασσελος: νιςτρατια  
νευ νιεζογcia: νιῶρονος  
νιμετος νιζου.

Εγωψ ἐβολ εγχω ὠμος: γε  
ογῶντ ὠφ† ζεν νηέτβοσι:  
νευ ογζιρηνη ειζεν πικαζι:  
νευ ογ†μα† ζεν νιρωι.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, was  
born of the Virgin, in  
Bethlehem of Judea,  
according to the prophetic  
sayings.

The Cherubim and the  
Seraphim, the angels and the  
archangels, the principalities  
and the authorities, the  
thrones and the powers.

Proclaiming and saying,  
"Glory to God in the highest,  
peace on earth, and goodwill  
toward men."

Apen-shois Esos Pi-ekhrestos  
fee-etaz masf enje ti-parthe-  
nos, khen Veth-leem ente ti-  
Iouze-a, kata ni-esmee emip-  
ro-phi-tikon.

Ni-She-robim nem ni-  
Seraphim, ni-angelos nem ni-  
arshi-angelos, ni-sete-rateia  
nem ni-e-exso-seia, ni-eth-  
ronos ni-met chois ni-gom.

Evhos evol evgo emmos je oo-  
o-oo Emif-nouti khenni-etit-  
shoisee, nem oo-heri-ni hejen  
pi-kahee, nem oo-ti-mati  
khenni-roumi.





## **Level 2**

### **1. ΤΕΝΟΥΩΥΤ the hymn of blessings**

It is named the hymn of the Holy Trinity and it's prayed after the Raising of the Incense during matins in the annual days and before the Agpeya hours during the liturgy. In it, we offer praise and worship the Holy Trinity: The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.

ΑΠΙΝΑΥ ΨΩΠΙ can be prayed after it or instead of it during fasting days.

It is also prayed before reading the Book of Revelations during Apocalypse Night.

ΤΕΝΟΥΩΥΤ ἈΦΙΩΤ ἈΠΙΟΥΙΝΙ: ΝΕΥ ΠΕΥΨΗΡΙ  
ἈΜΟΝΟΣΕΝΗΣ: ΝΕΥ ΠΙΠΝΕΥΜΑ ἈΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΤΟΝ:  
†Τριας ΝΟΜΟΟΥΣΙΟΣ.

We worship the Father of light, and His only-begotten Son, and the Spirit the Paraclete, the co-essential Trinity.

### **2. Ταΐωορη**

It's a hymn for St. Mary, prayed during the liturgy after the absolution on non-fasting days, on the feasts of our Lord, during the joyful fifty days and during the general fasts, except during the Lent, the Nineveh fast, and on Wednesday and Fridays. On those days, Teeshouri is prayed instead.

Taishori also has a long tune that is used during the sixth hour of Good Friday.

Ταΐωορη ἡΝΟΥΒ ἡΚΑΘΑΡΟΣ ΕΤΨΑΙ ΘΑ  
ΠΑΡΩΜΑΤΑ: ΕΤΨΕΝ ΝΕΝΣΙΧ ἡΔΑΡΩΝ ΠΙΟΥΗΒ  
ΕΨΤΑΛΕ ΟΥΤΘΟΙΝΟΥΤΙ ΕΨΩΩΙ ΕΞΕΝ ΠΙΜΑ  
ἡΕΡΨΩΟΥΨΙ.

This is the censer of pure gold bearing the aroma, in the hands of Aaron the priest, offering up incense on the altar.





### 3. Psalm 150

Psalm 150 was written by David, and in it we praise and glorify God in His sanctuary, for his majesty, and encourage everyone to glorify Him. It consists of five verses only but the word "praise" is repeated 10 times in it. So, we have to sing this psalm with enthusiasm just like the Levites and the singers in the Old Testament did. They taught people how to praise God with the musical instruments; and so we in the New Testaments should also give praise to Him who loved us and died for us.

Δοξα ci Κυριε Δοξα ci.

Glory to You O Lord, glory to You.

Αλληλουια.

Alleluia.

Ὡς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οὐρανῷ τῷ κυρίῳ ᾠδῶσι.

Praise God in all His saints.

+ Ὡς ἐν ὁρμῇ τῷ οὐρανῷ ᾠδῶσι τῷ κυρίῳ.

+ Praise Him in the firmament of His power.

Ὡς ἐν ὁρμῇ τῷ οὐρανῷ ᾠδῶσι τῷ κυρίῳ.

Praise Him for His mighty acts.

+ Ὡς ἐν ὁρμῇ κατὰ πλῆθος ᾠδῶσι τῷ κυρίῳ.

+ Praise Him according to the multitudes of His greatness.

Ὡς ἐν ὁρμῇ τῷ οὐρανῷ ᾠδῶσι τῷ κυρίῳ.

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet.

+ Ὡς ἐν ὁρμῇ τῷ οὐρανῷ ᾠδῶσι τῷ κυρίῳ.

+ Praise Him with psaltery and harp.

Ὡς ἐν ὁρμῇ τῷ οὐρανῷ ᾠδῶσι τῷ κυρίῳ.

Praise Him with timbrel and chorus.

+ Ὡς ἐν ὁρμῇ τῷ οὐρανῷ ᾠδῶσι τῷ κυρίῳ.

+ Praise Him with strings and organs.

Ὡς ἐν ὁρμῇ τῷ οὐρανῷ ᾠδῶσι τῷ κυρίῳ.

Praise Him with pleasant sounding cymbals.

+ Ὡς ἐν ὁρμῇ τῷ οὐρανῷ ᾠδῶσι τῷ κυρίῳ.

+ Praise Him upon the cymbals of joy.

Πᾶσι τοῖς πνεύματι τῷ κυρίῳ ᾠδῶσι τῷ κυρίῳ.

Let every thing that has breath praise the name of the Lord our God.







+ Δοξα Πατρι κε Υιὼ κε ἁγίῳ Πνευματι.

+ Glory be to the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Κε νυν κε ἀϊ κε ις τοῦς ἐὼνας τῶν ἐὼνων ἁμην.

Now and forever and unto the age of all ages Amen.

+ Ἀλληλοῦα ᾄλ: Δοξα ci ο Θεος ἡμων.

+ Alleluia, Alleluia, glory be to our God.

Ἀλληλοῦα ᾄλ: πῶον φα πενθοῦτ πε.

Alleluia, Alleluia, glory be to our God.

+ Ἰηc Πχc πῶηρι ᾠΦ† cωτεμ ἐρον οτοc ναι ναν.

+ O Jesus Christ, the Son of God, hear us and have mercy upon us.

#### Psalm 150 Response - Nativity

Ἀλληλοῦα ᾄλ ᾄλ ᾄλ.

Allelulia. Allelulia. Allelulia. Allelulia.

Ἰηc Πχc πῶηρι ᾠΦ†: ατμαcφ δεν Βηθλεεμ.

Jesus Christ the Son of God, was born in Bethlehem.

#### 4. Ἡπαρθενoc

It is a Greek hymn prayed before Agios, after the Praxis reading, during the nativity feast. This hymn is about the birth of Christ from St. Mary and the visit from the shepherds and the Magi (the wisemen). And it's one of the hymns that the Coptic church added to her hymns from the Greek church during the time of Pope Cyril the Fourth.

Ἡπαρθενoc cμμερον τον ἵπεροῦcιον τικτι: κε ἥcητο cπηλεον τω απροcιτω ἵροcαcι: αcτελι μετα πιμενων Δοξολοcοῦcι: μαcι Δε μετα αcτεροc ὀΔιποροῦcι: Δι ἡμαc cαρ εcενηνηθ: πεΔιον νεον: ὀπροεωνων θεoc.

Today, the virgin bears Him who is transcendent, and the earth presents the cave to Him who is beyond reach. Angels, along with shepherds glorify Him. The Magi make their way to Him by a star. For a new child has been born for us, the God before all ages.\*

Δῖνι ναc ἡcανΔωρον: οττοcβ νεμ οτλιβανoc νεμ οτγλ: ενεpγῶνοc νεμ ἵcεπι: ετοcωγτ ᾠμοcφ.

They presented unto Him gifts, gold frankincense and myrrh, praising with the rest, worshipping Him.





ΑΛΛΗΛΟΥΙΑ ΑΛ ΑΛ: ΙΗΣ ΧΡΣ ΠΩΗΡΙ ΩΦΤ:  
ΑΣΜΑCΥ ΝΧΕ ΤΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ: ΘΕΝ ΒΗΘΛΕΕΜ ΝΤΕ  
ΤΙΟΥΔΕΑ ΚΑΤΑ ΝΙCΜΗ ΑΠΡΟΦΗΤΚΟΝ.

Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia, Jesus Christ the Son of  
God was born of the Virgin, in Bethlehem of  
Judea according to the prophetic sayings.

### Competition guidelines:

#### Level 1 and 2

- 1- The church can participate in either one or both levels.
- 2- No team will be allowed to participate in more than one level.
- 3- No participant is allowed to perform with more than one team.
- 4- Each team should not be less than 5 participants.
- 5- All of the hymns must be recited in Coptic.
- 6- **Level 2** participants are expected to recite the hymns from mind, with no external help.

### Evaluation Criteria:

For each hymn, in any level:

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1- Hymn introduction/ description        | 10% |
| 2- Accuracy of memorization              | 30% |
| 3- Consistency in speed and rhythm       | 20% |
| 4- Proper articulation and pronunciation | 20% |
| 5- Spirituality of the performance       | 20% |



# Coptic Language



## Description:

This competition is intended to encourage the participants to learn the original language of our church, gaining some insight into our church's heritage. The goal of this competition is to have the participants i) know how to read and write all the letters in the Coptic alphabet; ii) memorize the Lord's prayer in Coptic and iii) memorize the psalm responses for different occasions with the meaning of the words.

## Competition Guidelines:

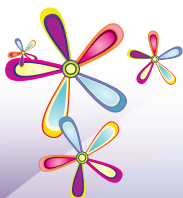
The participation in this competition is individual. The material to be studied for the competition is included below.

### 1- The Lord' Prayer (Ⲭⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ)

Ⲭⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲧ ⲃⲉⲛ ⲛⲓⲫⲏⲟⲩ : ⲙⲁⲣⲉϥⲧⲟⲩⲃⲟ ⲛⲥⲉ ⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ ⲙⲁⲣⲉϥⲓ  
ⲛⲥⲉ ⲧⲉⲕⲙⲉⲧⲟⲩⲣⲟ: ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲗⲛⲁⲕ ⲙⲁⲣⲉϥⲱⲡⲓ ⲙ̀ⲫⲣⲏⲧ ⲃⲉⲛ ⲧ̀ⲫⲉ ⲛⲉⲙ  
ⲑⲓⲗⲉⲛ ⲡⲓⲕⲁⲑⲓ: ⲡⲉⲛⲱⲓⲕ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲣⲁϥⲧ ⲙ̀ⲏⲓⲕ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲙ̀ⲫⲟⲟⲩ: ⲟⲩⲟⲗ ⲭⲁ  
ⲛⲏⲉⲧⲉⲣⲟⲛ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̀ⲫⲣⲏⲧ ⲑⲱⲛ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲭⲱ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲏⲏⲉⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲟⲛ  
ⲛⲧⲁⲛ ⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲟⲗ ⲙ̀ⲡⲉⲣⲉⲛⲧⲉⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲓⲣⲁϥⲙⲟⲥ: ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲛⲁⲑⲙⲉⲛ  
ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲑⲁ ⲡⲓⲡⲉⲧⲑⲱⲟⲩ: ⲃⲉⲛ ⲡⲓⲭⲣⲏϥⲧⲟⲥ Ⲓⲏϥⲟⲩⲥ ⲡⲉⲛⲃⲟⲓⲥ ⲭⲉ ⲑⲱⲕ  
ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲉⲧⲟⲩⲣⲟ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲧⲭⲟⲙ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲱⲟⲩ ⲱⲁ ⲉⲛⲉⲗ ⲁⲙⲏⲛ

### 2a- Psalm responses for different occasions

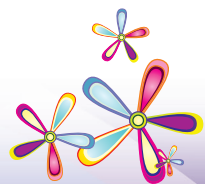
Occasion	Psalm Response
Nativity	ⲁⲗⲗⲏⲗⲟⲩⲁ ⲁⲗ: Ⲓⲏϥⲟⲩⲥ ⲡⲓⲭⲣⲏϥⲧⲟⲥ ⲡⲱⲡⲓ ⲙ̀ⲫⲣⲏⲟⲩⲧ ⲁϥⲙⲁϥⲕ ⲛⲥⲉ ⲧⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲃⲉⲛ ⲃⲏⲑⲗⲉⲉⲙ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧⲓⲟⲩⲗⲉⲁ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲛⲓϥⲙⲏ ⲙ̀ⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲓⲕⲟⲛ: ⲁⲗ ⲁⲗ
Entering the temple	ⲁⲗⲗⲏⲗⲟⲩⲁ ⲁⲗ: Ⲓⲏϥⲟⲩⲥ ⲡⲓⲭⲣⲏϥⲧⲟⲥ ⲡⲱⲡⲓ ⲙ̀ⲫⲣⲏⲟⲩⲧ ⲁϥⲱⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲓⲣⲉⲫⲉⲓ: ⲁⲗ ⲁⲗ



Epiphany	ἈΛΛΗΛΟΥΙΑ ᾠ: ἰησοῦς πῖχριστος πῶηρι ὠφνοῦτ αϥβῖωμς ῥεν πιλορδανης: ᾠ ᾠ
Annunciation	ἈΛΛΗΛΟΥΙΑ ᾠ: ἰησοῦς πῖχριστος πῶηρι ὠφνοῦτ αϥβῖκαρζ ἔβολῥεν †παρθενος: ᾠ ᾠ
Resurrection	ἈΛΛΗΛΟΥΙΑ ᾠ: ἰησοῦς πῖχριστος ποῦρο ἵτε πῶοῦ αϥτωνϥ ἔβολ ῥεν νηεθωωοῦτ ῥεν πιέζοοῦ ὠμαρ ωομτ: ᾠ ᾠ
The Lord's entry to Egypt	ἈΛΛΗΛΟΥΙΑ ᾠ: ἰησοῦς πῖχριστος πῶηρι ὠφνοῦτ αϥῖ ἔδοῦν ἔπκαρζ ἵχημ: ᾠ ᾠ
Ascension	ἈΛΛΗΛΟΥΙΑ ᾠ: ἰησοῦς πῖχριστος αϥτωνϥ ἔβολ ῥεν νηεθωωοῦτ οτορ αϥωεναϥ ἔπῶωι ἐνιφνοῦ αϥεμςι ϥαοῦιναμ ὠπεϥιωτ: ᾠ ᾠ

## 2b- Meaning of the words

Word	Meaning	Pronunciation
Ἰησοῦς	Jesus	Esous
Πῖχριστος	Christ	Piekhrestos
Πῶηρι	The Son	Epshiri
ὠφνοῦτ	God	Efnoti
Ἀσμαςϥ	Was born	Asmasf
†παρθενος	The virgin	Tiparthenos
ῥεν	In	Khen
Βηθλεεμ	Bethlehem	Bethele-em
Αϥωε ἔδοῦν	Entered	Afshe ekhon
Προφητικον	The prophetic	Eprophetikon
Πῖςμ	The voices	Niesmi
†ιοῦδα	The Judea	Tiyouzi-a
Πιερφει	The temple	Bee erfe
Αϥβωμς	Was baptized	Aftshi oms







ΠΙΟΡΔΑΝΗΣ	The Jordan	Bi yourzanees
ΠΟΥΡΟ	The king	Epouro
ΜΤΕ ΠΩΟΥ	Of the glory	Ente Ep-o-ou
ΑΥΤΩΝΥ	Rose	Aftonf
ΕΒΟΛ ΞΕΝ	From	Evol khen
ΝΗΕΘΜΩΟΥΤ	The dead	Ni es mo oot
ΠΙΕΖΟΥ	The day	Pi eho-oo
ΜΑΖΩΟΥΤ	The third	Mah-shomt
ΑΥΒΙΣΑΡΖ	Was incarnated	Esous
ΑΥΙ	He came	Af ie
ΠΚΑΖΙ	The land	Ep kahe
ΧΗΜΙ	Egypt	Kemee
ΟΟΥΟ	And	Oo- oh
ΑΥΨΕΝΑΥ	Ascended	Afsheenaf
ΕΠΨΩΙ	Upward	E – epshoi
ΝΙΦΗΟΥΙ	The heavens	Ni pfi oo oi
ΑΥΞΕΜΙ	He sat	Af hemsee
ΣΑΟΥΙΝΑΜ	Right side	Sa oo wi nam
ΠΕΦΙΩΤ	His father	Pefiot

### Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation for this competition will be carried out in a written test format (Please, note that all Coptic words will be written in Coptic letters only).





# DRAMA & MIME

## **Description:**

This competition is intended to foster good ethical, social and Christian values through the presentation of drama and/or mime performances.

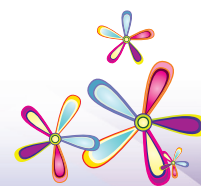
## **Competition Guidelines:**

1. The competition must be in one of the following stage production forms: full play, skit, operetta or mime.
2. The production should be drawn from our church spirit, its values and traditions.
3. In the evaluation of the productions, emphasis will be placed on: innovation, effectiveness and positive messages.
4. The story line should not be in the form of a sermon or a lesson.
5. All production effects such as music, light, sound effects, props etc...should be used in moderation.
6. The use of flammable materials is prohibited during the production.
7. The production should not exceed 30 minutes.

## **Evaluation Criteria:**

Evaluation of the production will be based on the following aspects, as follows:

Script	20
Acting	25
Direction	25
Sets	10
Costume and props	5
Lighting	5
Makeup	5
Music	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>





# Praise & Music

## **Description:**

Praising God is not just a group activity. The teachings and traditions of our church fathers clearly show how praise is considered directed prayers to heaven, and how God's presence could be felt during prayer and true praise which comes from the heart.

## **Competition Guidelines & Evaluating Criteria:**

The Praise and Music contest will be divided into 3 competitions: Choir, Solo or Instrumental.

### **Choir Performance:**

1. Teams should consist of 5 people or more.
2. Teams are encouraged to include the "Always Faithful" theme in their performances, and are required to present the Mahragan anthem at the beginning of their presentation.
3. A pamphlet must be prepared and 5 copies are to be presented to the judges on the performance day. The pamphlet should include the following: Church name, Team / Group name, Age(s) and all of the song's lyrics.
4. The choir performance must not exceed 15 minutes.
5. Each performance can include one of the old heritage songs (3 minutes only, regardless of its original length). Teams can select a few lines of the song(s) to stay within the timeframe. Each performance can have 3 additional short songs for a maximum of 15 minutes in total.
6. Lyrics must be chosen carefully to ensure that the song reflects our church's beliefs, values and traditions.
7. All teams are required to present in harmony and unity reflecting a prayerful spirit throughout all performances.
8. Sound equipment problems will not result in any mark deductions. The choir should continue to perform and present normally.
9. The choir performance can be in the form of a Cantata, group of songs which are linked together to form one topic or to tell a story.

### **Solo Performance:**

1. This is a separate competition and does not form part of the choir competition.
2. In a solo performance a single contestant is required to present part of a song with or without music. This is different from a solo performance within a choir.





3. It is possible to present a duet (a couple of singers) only if they are presenting in unison, and not a dialogue.
4. The solo performance must not exceed 3 minutes.

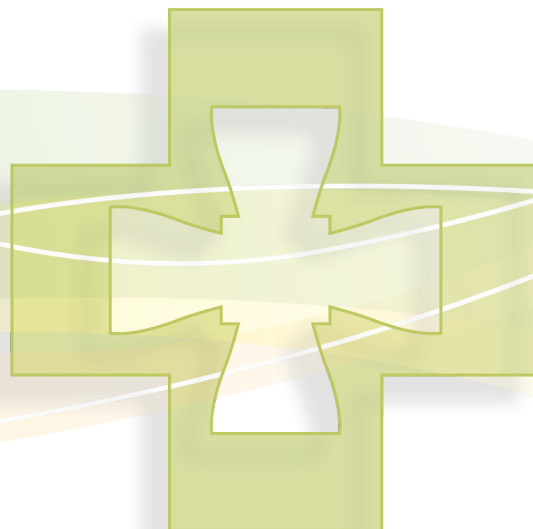
***Playing musical instruments:***

1. Participants may choose to do a solo performance on a specific musical instrument, perform within a group, or write a musical composition.
2. The Musical Instrument performance must not exceed 3 minutes.
3. The musical piece maybe selected from a heritage song, hymn or new song.
4. Avoid presenting heavy style / wild dancing music that is inconsistent with the spirit of our church or the atmosphere of praise which this musical exercise is meant to create.

***Evaluation Criteria:***

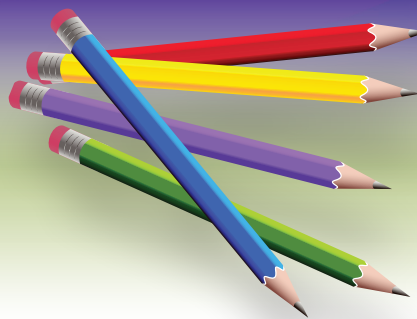
The evaluation will be based on 3 main criteria:

1. Main Message and Purpose (30%)
2. Performance (40%)
3. Music Tunes and voices (30%)





# Arts




## **Description:**

This competition is intended to foster artistic creativity within a Christian context while competing with fellow Mahragan participants.

## **Competition Guidelines:**

1. Choose one of the projects below and make sure to relate it to the theme of the Mahragan 2010 "Always Faithful"
  - a. Dry Media: Any two dimensional work, including but not limited to drawing, done with dry media such as pencil, pastel, conte crayon, charcoal, crayon, etc. or combination done on paper or other flat surfaces.
  - b. Oil/Acrylic Painting: Any oil based or synthetic based (such as acrylic or alkyd) painting done on a two-dimensional surface such as canvas or hardboard.
  - c. Photography: Any image created by the use of camera, whether film or digital. Images must be printed on paper no smaller than 8x10 inches.
  - d. Sculpture/Carving: Two or three dimensional sculptural work created by carving or modeling. May be figurative or non-figurative.
  - e. Wet Media Painting: Any water based media such as transparent watercolor, opaque watercolor, water based tempera or any combination of these done on a two-dimensional surface. Includes acrylic thinned down to the consistency of watercolor done on paper.
  - f. Woodwork: Wood pieces formed by the use of mechanical aids such as saws, sanders, etc. This includes furniture, musical instruments, tools, toys, etc. whether functional or decorative.
  - g. Handcraft: Any handmade item with artistic emphasis that does not fit into any other category.
2. All art projects must be the original work of the presenter and should reflect his or her creative ability and cannot include any printed or copied images from books, magazines, catalogues, newspapers, the internet etc...
3. The participant(s) may work individually or in groups of no more than 3.
4. Only one project is to be presented by the same participant or group.
5. All works must be done by the competitors without any assistance from the servants.
6. At the final presentation, all works must be clearly labeled with the name(s) of the





competitor(s), their grade, church name, and a brief explanation of the project.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

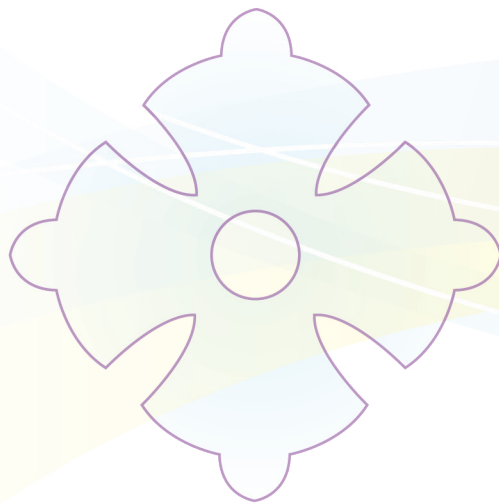
Evaluation of the production will be based on the following aspects, as follows:

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Elements &amp; Principles of Design Demonstrate that concepts are understood.</b>	Planned carefully. Made several sketches, and showed an awareness of the elements and principles of design. Chose colour scheme carefully; used space effectively.	Artwork shows that the participant applied the principles of design while using one or more elements effectively. The space is filled adequately.	Participant did the assignment satisfactorily, yet shows lack of planning and little evidence that an overall composition was planned.	Assignment was completed and turned in, but showed little evidence of any understanding of the elements and principles of art. There is no evidence of planning.
<b>Creativity/ Originality Inventiveness, expression of ideas and imagination.</b>	Participant generated innovative ideas, tried unusual combinations or changes on several ideas; made connections to previous knowledge. Demonstrated outstanding problem-solving skills.	Participant generated good ideas but may have based his/ her work on someone else's idea. Made decisions after referring to one source; solved problem in logical way.	Participant generated one idea and carried it out adequately, but lacked originality. Substituted symbols for personal observation; might have copied work or ideas.	Participant fulfilled the assignment, but gave no evidence of trying anything unusual.



<b>Craftsmanship/ Skill Neatness, precision, care.</b>	Artwork was beautifully and patiently done; it was as good as hard work could make it.	With a little more effort, the work could have been outstanding; lacks the finishing craftsmanship and neatness.	Participant showed average craftsmanship; adequate, but not as good as it could have been; a bit careless.	Participant showed below-average craftsmanship; lack of pride in finished artwork.
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Points Earned: \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 12 possible points x 100 = Grade



# Creative Writing



## **Description:**

The creative writing competition includes two categories: Poetry and Short Story.

Poetry is a rhymed or unrhymed verse of not more than 16 lines which develop a central theme or image. A short story is a fictional piece of no more than 2000 words which utilize setting, plot, and characterization to reveal an implied theme.

## **Competition Guidelines:**

1. At the final stage of the competition, submit two copies of your work. Each copy must contain a plain, undecorated title page clearly indicating your church, your name and telephone number, and the title of your work.
2. No participant is allowed to submit more than three entries per competition. Submissions from the previous year should not be resubmitted.
3. Do not plagiarize.
4. Outstanding work may be featured on the Coptic Orthodox Youth Media (CYC) channel, or the festival's web site and magazine.

## **Evaluation Criteria:**

### **Criteria for evaluating poetry**

1. Idea and purpose – **10%**
  - The idea has to be serious and must have a purpose.
2. Creativity and Choice of words – **10%**
  - New way of treating an issue
3. Clarity and Brevity – **10%**
  - The vocabulary must be clear and easily understood. Use of archaic language should be avoided.
4. Rhythm – **20%**
  - Creates musical echo appropriate to the intention of the poem
5. Use of figurative language – **10%**
  - Using allegorical or metaphorical language to illustrate the main idea.
6. Grammar and composition – **10%**







- Vary your syntax
- 7. Efficiency in producing the desired effect upon the reader – **10%**
  - No unnecessary phrasing
  - Don't use words just to fill out the missing rhythm
- 8. The overall effect of the poem – **20%**

### ***Criteria for evaluating stories***

1. Idea and purpose – 10%
  - The idea has to be serious and must have a purpose.
2. Creativity and Choice of words – 10%
  - New way of treating an issue
3. Clarity and Brevity – 10%
  - The vocabulary must be clear and easily understood. Use of archaic language should be avoided.
4. Arrangement & Flow of Sentences – 20%
  - Creates natural flow of events, or creative arrangement of events that inspire interest or intrigue
5. Use of figurative language – 10%
  - Using allegorical or metaphorical language to illustrate the main idea.
6. Grammar and composition – 10%
  - Vary your syntax
7. Efficiency in producing the desired effect upon the reader – 10%
  - No unnecessary phrasing
8. The overall effect of the story – 20%



# MULTIMEDIA & TECHNOLOGY

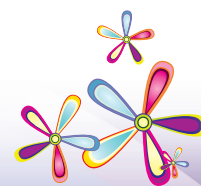


## **Description:**

This competition is intended to foster the creativity and technical ability of the participants and to utilize the latest technology in serving God in a Christian competitive context.

## **Competition Guidelines:**

1. Choose one of the projects below and make sure to relate it to the theme of the Mahragan 2010 "Always Faithful"
  - a. Graphics: Create 5 computer images to emphasize one of the jewels of the "always Faithful". Suggested programs: Twisted Brush, Gimp or Photoshop
  - b. Web Design: Design a 10 page website. The website should include images and music and all pages should be related. Suggested programs: Front page, Dreamweaver or WebDwarf
  - c. Multimedia: Create a presentation that includes videos, pictures and your comments. Less than 20 minutes. Suggested programs: Windows Movie maker or Powerpoint or;
  - d. Create an Autorun CD Containing songs, videos, hymns, data, pictures and games and include references. Suggested program: Right Autorun Pro
  - e. Computer Game: Create any Christian computer game. Suggested programs: Game Maker 8 or Sandbox 3D Game Maker.
  - f. Marketing Demo: Design a logo, 3 posters, and one brochure related to the 5 Always faithful pillars.
2. All projects must be the original work of the participant and should reflect his or her creative ability without the help of family or servants.
3. The participant(s) may work individually or in groups of no more than 3.
4. Only one project is to be presented by the same participant or group.
5. At the final submission, the project must be handed on a CD and cannot be submitted by email.
6. All resources used should be consistent with our Orthodox beliefs, whether images, movies, songs or data. All references should be included.
7. During the final presentation, the competitor must bring his/her own laptop ready to run the multimedia for marking.
8. Any programs equivalent to the suggested programs may be used.



### Evaluation Criteria:

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Topic/Content</b>	Covers topic completely and in depth. Includes properly cited sources and complete information. Encourages readers to know more.	Includes essential information with most sources properly cited. Includes enough elaboration to give readers an understanding of the topic.	Includes some essential information with few citations and few facts.	Includes little essential information and one or two facts.
<b>Technical Capability</b>	Includes at least 5 or more graphics or 5 or more animations and several advanced features, such as video.	Includes at least 3 or more graphics or 3 or more animations and several advanced features, such as video.	Includes fewer than 3 graphics or 3 animations and several advanced features, such as video.	Includes fewer than 3 graphics or 3 animations and no advanced features, such as video.
<b>Mechanics</b>	Grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization are correct. No errors in the text.	Includes 3-5 grammatical errors, misspellings, punctuation errors, etc.	Includes 5-9 grammatical errors, misspellings, punctuation errors, etc.	Includes more than 10 grammatical errors, misspellings, punctuation errors, etc.
<b>Oral Presentation Skills</b>	Communicates ideas with enthusiasm, proper voice projection, appropriate language, and clear delivery	Communicates ideas with proper voice projection. Adequate preparation and delivery.	Some difficulty communicating ideas, due to voice projection, lack of preparation, or incomplete work	Great difficulty communicating ideas. Poor voice projection. Little preparation or incomplete work.

Points Earned: \_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 16 possible points x 100 = Grade:



# SPORTS



## *Description:*

The sports competitions emphasize sportsmanship, teambuilding skills and fun. It can be an enjoyable way to get to know and spend time with different church members. Other objectives of this competition include encouraging participation in the Mahragan and creating opportunities to develop and discover talent.

Remember, **winning is about so much more than the final score.**

## *Competition Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria:*

### **General:**

1. All players should only compete in their respective age groups and respective sex group (i.e. boys will compete with boys and girls with girls).
2. Each church can participate with one to three teams for each sport at the Regional level.
3. A form will be provided for each competition to be completed by each team providing the names of all the team members and their school year.
4. The player who demonstrates non-Christian behaviour (i.e., becomes verbally abusive towards others, or uses inappropriate signs, etc.) will be dismissed from the competition and his or her team will complete that game with one less teammate.
5. If a player is penalized during a game he or she will not be permitted to play the next game.
6. The referees' decisions are final and should not be disputed. In the case of a valid objection a formal complaint should be presented to the central committee.
7. Any team who is not punctual, or does not demonstrate Christian behaviour will automatically be disqualified.
8. The competitions will be organised on a league basis with semi-finals and finals, for each sport.

### **Soccer**

1. Each team consists of 4 players with 2 optional substitutes.
2. Each game will run for 10 minutes on each half, with an intermission of no more than 2 minutes.
3. If the two teams tie in the game, then penalty shots will be played.







4. Substitutions will be allowed at any time during the game, but only two substitutions are allowed per game.

## **Volleyball**

1. Each team consists of 6 players with 2 optional substitutes.
2. Games will be played up to 3 sets of 15 points for each set; the team that wins 2 sets is the winner.
3. If in a set the teams tie at a score of 14 then it's a deuce. The winning team must win by 2 points.
4. Players within each team must rotate positions in a clockwise manner each time it is their turn to serve the ball.

## **Basketball**

1. Each team consists of 5 players with 2 optional substitutes.
2. Each game will run for 10 minutes on each half, with an intermission of no more than 2 minutes.
3. If the two teams tie at the end of the game, there will be an overtime of 5 minutes and the team that scores the most points wins.
4. Substitution will be allowed at any time during the game.

## **Table Tennis**

1. Each team consists of 3 players and 1 optional substitute.
2. Each team will play a "singles" game followed by a "doubles" game. Should there be a tie, another singles game will be played.
3. Each game will consist of 3 sets. The winner of 2 sets (for the singles or the doubles) wins the game.
4. No player is allowed to play more than one "singles" game.
5. The team winning 2 out of 3 games is the winner.
6. Each team is allowed only one time-out.

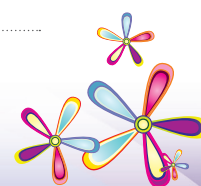
## **Chess**

1. Each team can consist of 2 or 3 players and 1 optional substitute.
2. The team that wins 2 out of 3 games is the winner.
3. Each player should only play one game. The only exception is when the team consists of only 2 players; in this case the player who plays the first game can play the third game if required.





Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.







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