

Mahragan Alkeraza 2013



Come
To ME

English Adults

Come to Me... Come to Me...



H.H. Pope Tawadros II
Pope of Alexandria &
Patriarch of the See of St. Mark

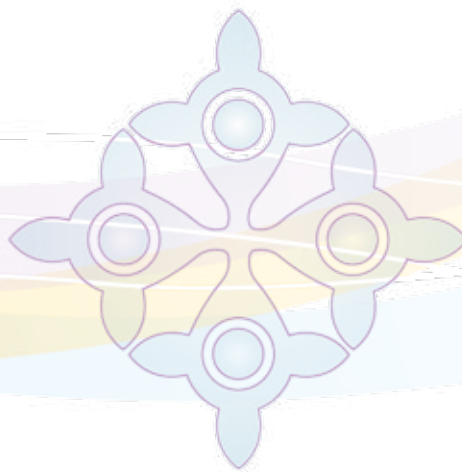


H.G. Bishop Mina
Bishop of Mississauga, Vancouver
and Western Canada

Come to Me...

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Come to Me... Come to Me...



INTRODUCTION

Mahragan Alkeraza 2013

As we celebrated the conclusion of last year's Mahragan with the distribution of the trophies for the first place winners, we were grateful for God's blessings. We were blessed in so many ways, as we had a chance to transform our lives through Christ. We were also blessed with a worldwide participation of 140 Churches representing more than 20 countries in the 2012 Mahragan Competition.

The theme for Mahragan 2013 is "Come to Me". This year, God is asking all of us to:

1. Come to Me
2. Abide in Me
3. Rejoice in Me

We hope all of you will participate in the Mahragan activities this year, and encourage everyone you know to join us in one of the greatest annual events, presented by our mother, the Coptic Orthodox Church.



Come to Me...

May God bless Mahragan Alkeraza this year and the efforts of all the participants and coordinators, through the prayers of our beloved father Pope Tawadros II.

✠ My best wishes for a happy
Festival
✠ Bishop Mousa



Come to Me... Come to Me...



Come to Me, Abide in Me, Rejoice in Me

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the key for solving all our problems, and the foundation of our joy and hope. As St. Paul says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Our Christ transcends place and time. He is always with us regardless of the situation. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You are with me" (Psalms 23:4). He will also help us overcome our adversaries. "If God is for us who can be against us" (Romans 8:31).

The theme for this year's Mahragan Alkeraza revolves around the following three topics:

1. Come to Me

- **Come unto Christ:** He tells us, "Come to Me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Here, the burden refers to our sins, problems and worries. Our Lord is the only hope of finding rest in all these situations.
- **Come to the Saviour:** Jesus Christ is the only One who can save us from our sins and the feeling of guilt that disturbs our life. "You shall call His name Jesus for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). He cleanses us with His Blood, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).
- **Come to Him who loves sinners:** When the Pharisees blamed Him of communing with sinners and publicans, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick, I did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). He loves everyone in spite of their sins and bad habits. We must trust in His love.
- **Come to Him who provides rest:** Jesus Christ is the only One who feels our afflictions



and our heavy burdens and feels our hurt. "In all their affliction, He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them" (Isaiah 63:9). Remember how God looked at the affliction of His people in the Old Testament and came down to save them by sending Moses the prophet. "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows" (Exodus 3:7).

- **Come to the source of goodness:** Mary, Martha's sister, chose to come to the true source of goodness and was praised by the Lord. "But few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42). Mary saw Jesus as the true treasure, and His Kingdom as the eternal inheritance. All earthly treasures, such as money and power, will one day vanish. "By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches" (Proverbs 24:4).

2. Abide in Me

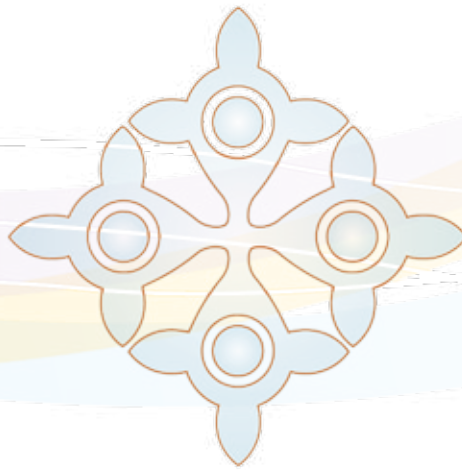
- **Abide in Christ:** We abide in Him through the sacraments of the Eucharist, Repentance and Confession, and through prayer and spiritual readings.
- **Abide in faith:** Renew our understanding of who Christ is, the essence of our faith and the truth of His divinity.
- **Abide in good deeds:** As St. James says, "Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works... Faith without works is dead" (James 2:18-20).
- **Abide in the way of salvation:** It is essential to care for the salvation of our souls as this is the greatest gift God entrusted us with. "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).
- **Abide in Orthodoxy:** Understand the meaning of Orthodoxy and its true teachings helps us abide in our Orthodox faith and the Church. Outreaching others is also very important.

Come to Me... Come to Me...



1. Rejoice in Me

- **Rejoice in Christ:** He is your Redeemer and Friend who will never forsake you.
- **Rejoice in His Love:** “Because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Romans 5:5). Showing our love through giving makes us joyful.
- **Rejoice in service:** Service is the expression of our love to Christ, who loved us and taught us how to love and serve everyone. There are many ways we can serve as mentioned in Romans 12, such as visiting the sick, taking care of orphanages, and visiting the elderly and the disabled.
- **Rejoice in others:** As in the story of St. Pishoy, Christ often shows Himself to us through others. He always gives us a chance to gain virtues and practice love and service. We must take advantage of those opportunities to build our community.
- **Rejoice in His eternal promise:** The Lord promised us His Kingdom but we must do all that we can to be ready for His second coming. We learn about His second coming in the Book of Revelation, 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15.



Come to Me...



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St. Paul's Epistle to The Philippians

Writer: St. Paul

- His Hebrew name means, "wanted" or "asked for".
- His name also means, "little".
- He was born in Tarsus and has a Roman citizenship.
- He was highly educated and spoke Greek, Hebrew and Armenian.
- He went to Jerusalem, and received his education under the feet of Gamaliel, a famous teacher of the Law (Acts 22:31).
- He lived as a Pharisee.
- He consented to St. Steven's death and guarded the clothes of the people who stoned him.
- He travelled to Jerusalem to persecute the Christians there, but on his way, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and guided him as to what he must do. He believed and was baptized by the hand of Ananias, the Bishop of Jerusalem, and was transformed from a persecutor of the Church to a defender of the faith.
- He wrote 14 Epistles.

Written to: The City of Philippi

- The name Philippi means "Horse" or "war lover".
- It was named after King Philip II (the Macedonian), the father of Alexander the Great.
- It was a Macedonian colony, part of the Roman Empire, that worshipped idols.
- Its people had the same duties and rights as the Roman people.

Date written:

- It was written around 63 AD at the end of the first exile of St. Paul in Rome. During this time, St. Paul wrote letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon.

St. Paul visited the city of Philippi in the year 52 AD where he established the first European Church. He went there after he saw a vision of a Macedonian man asking him to come over

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to Macedonia and help them (Acts 16:9). Many of the Philippian people believed, the first of whom was Lydia, the seller of royal clothing.

St. Paul and Silas were imprisoned there. They used this opportunity to preach to the jailer and his household. Their imprisonment was the result of a revolution against St. Paul, when he commanded the evil spirit to get out of a fortune-telling slave girl. When her owner realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them thinking that they were Jewish. When they realized that they were Romans, they set them free.

When the Philippians heard that St. Paul was sick and imprisoned, they sent Epaphroditus with gifts and to take care of St. Paul. Epaphroditus became very sick during his stay in Rome. The Philippians were saddened by the news. St. Paul shared their sadness and he sent a message to comfort them and also to thank them for their gifts and love. St. Paul only accepted money from the Philippians because he felt their true love and sincerity, but he taught himself to be satisfied with what he had even if it was little. The Philippians donated to Jerusalem as well (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). The epistle is recognition from St. Paul for the generous offerings of Macedonian Churches.

The word love was repeated 11 times in this epistle. It does not contain any blame or criticism, rather it is full of love towards children who have a specific place in the apostle's heart. He went to them after he saw a vision and instituted the first Church in Europe. Despite St. Paul's imprisonment, the epistle has a joyful tune as St. Paul learned to rejoice in the Lord always. Epaphroditus carried this letter to the Philippians to comfort them and to reassure them about St. Paul's health.

Chapter 1: Joy amidst tribulations

Verses 1-6

"Grace and peace" - The greeting of "grace" in Greek means, "I wish to have grace according to your need". The Jewish greeting of "peace" means, "the peace will come upon the hearer as a divine gift". Grace in Christianity is the blessing we received through the incarnation and redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest blessing we received is the Holy Spirit, and His greatest fruit being peace. St. Paul used this greeting because Jesus Christ came for all and in Him only, we obtain this free gift from the Father for our salvation as a proof for the work of salvation by reconciliation.



Verses 7-8

St. Paul carried Jesus' love for the Philippians and His desire for their salvation. St. Paul's heart became the righteous instrument of his love for them, which resembled Christ's love. It is the Holy Spirit Who puts this love in our hearts (Galatians 5:22). We must be careful with our emotions and feelings, because they can provoke negative actions, such as loving some people more than others, hatred due to problems and conflict with God in the presence of tribulations.

But the love that God puts in our hearts is more than our love for one person, it is the love for everyone, even our enemies, and this love is the reason for our joy

Verses 9-11

St. Paul experienced the love that God put in his heart and prayed that the Philippians be filled with this love. St. Paul's love for them was shown in his prayer that their love may increase that they attain salvation. Love is the fulfillment of the Law and the Gospel. It is the sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in us (Galatians 5:22). Without love, there is no salvation because we lost God's image. There is a strong relationship between love and knowledge. Therefore, we need to have a good relationship with God who will then give us the chance to know His glory (1 Corinthians 2:9-12). As our knowledge of God increases, our love for Him will also increase. As we discover who Christ is, our love for Him will also increase.

"To be able to discern in different situations" - Whoever is filled with knowledge and love will have discernment in variety of situations to determine what is best.

"Pure and blameless" - In the Greek translation, this means "Examined in the light and found blameless, so it will not cause anyone to stumble"

"Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ" - The saints cannot be found righteous by the Mosaic law or by nature, but by abiding in Christ united with Him to become a branch in the true vine. The branch cannot give fruit unless it is aiding in the vine. This cannot be obtained except by faith, baptism, and repentance. We will then abide in Christ and bear good fruit. There is no righteousness except by Christ's life in us (Galatians 2:20). Life in Christ has fruits that will appear in our lives, which will lead to God's glory. We should let people see our good works so they may glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Verse 12-14

"Furtherance of the Gospel" - Furtherance in Greek is a word, which could be used for describing a group of soldiers working to cut down trees in a forest to make a path for the army. St. Paul did the same with his service of strengthening and spreading of the Gospel.



"What has happened to me" – This refers to St. Paul's life in prison for about 2 years.

"Has really served" – Prison was not an obstacle for St. Paul's mission, but in fact strengthened his mission.

"My chains are clear to everybody" - It was clear that St. Paul's chains were not for any crime that he had committed but because of his love to Christ. Thus, he was not considered as an ordinary prisoner.

"Palace guard" - The palace guards are the guards of the empire. They lived in a residencies connected to the palace. St. Paul comforted the Philippians by telling them that his chains did not prevent his ministry. He preached Christ to every visitor who then knew Christ and spread the gospel not only in the palace but also outside. Most of the brethren when they saw St. Paul's courage were courageous themselves. They trusted in the Lord, preached without fear and endured the persecution. Christianity spread in Rome through the believers who preached the word.

St. Paul, in these verses tried to answer the Philippians in case they wondered why God allowed him to be in prison if his teachings were right. He explained that without the prison it would have been impossible for him to reach the palace, so God makes things work for the good.

Verses 15-17

"Envy and strife" - Some Jews who became Christians wanted the Gentiles to follow the rules of the Law of Moses before they became Christians. They were angry at St. Paul because he neglected the rites of the Law. St. Paul faced them and tried hard to straighten their teachings. Now that St. Paul was in prison, those people with bad intentions began to attack St. Paul's teachings for their own glory. They thought that this will weaken St. Paul, adding more trouble to his imprisonment such that this may stop his ministry.

"Selfish ambitions" – Refers to working for their own benefit.

"Goodwill" - Refers to those who preached with joy and love for the glory of Christ.

Verses 18-20

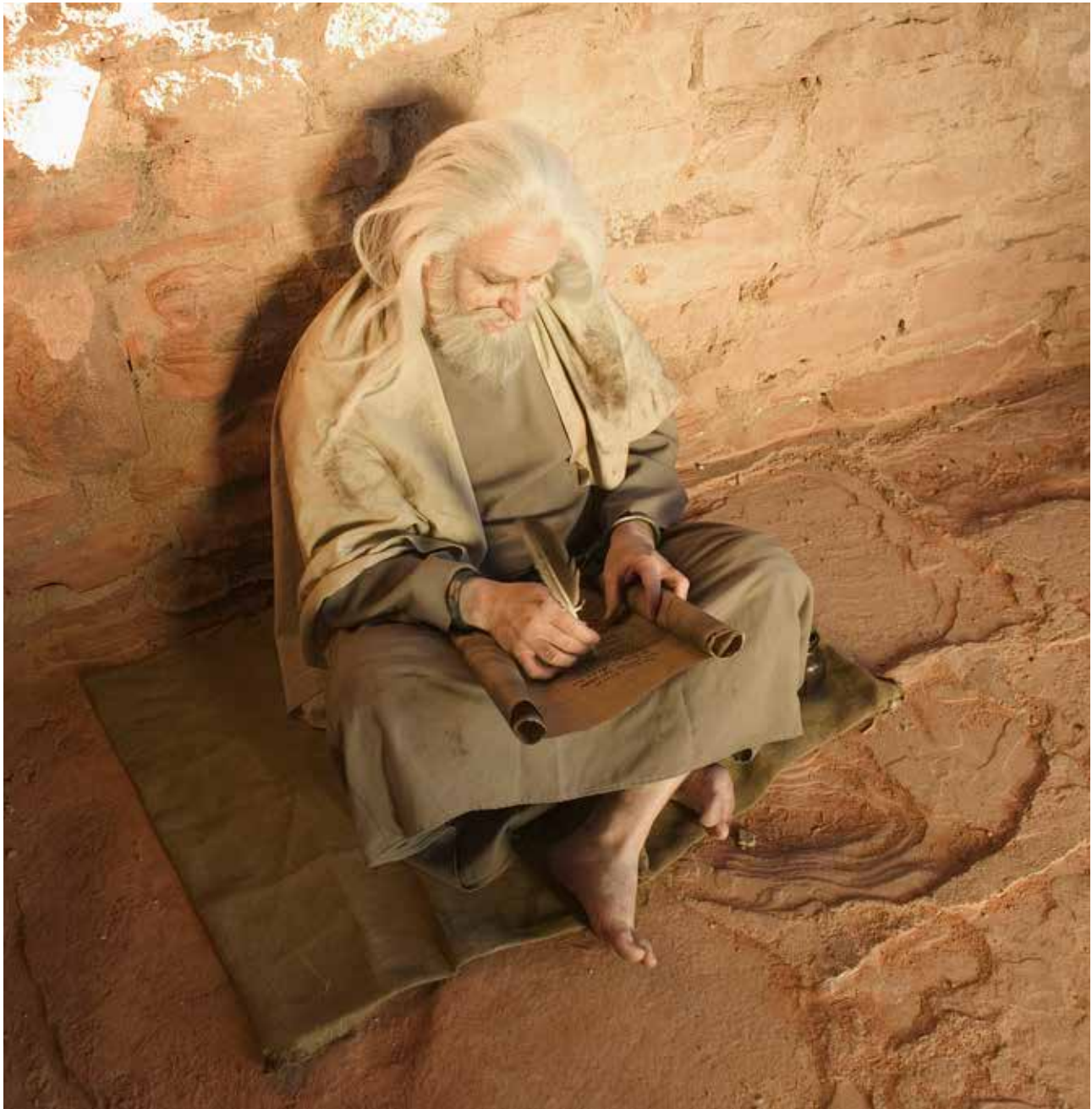
"Whether in pretense or in truth" – Refers to whether the motive is their own glory or the glory of Christ.

"In this I rejoice" – St. Paul rejoices because either way the word of the gospel is spreading.

"My deliverance" - St. Paul's mission was the spreading of the gospel; God preserved his life until that moment for that reason. St. Paul rejoiced because his goal was fulfilled.

"Continue to rejoice" - St. Paul rejoiced in prison regardless of his condition.

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Verses 21-26

"To live is Christ" - When a person lives with honesty in Christ and does not seek to enjoy the worldly pleasures, their life will be filled with Christ and they will grow in a deeper relationship with Christ. As Christ said, "Whoever finds his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39).

For many, life is focused on enjoying the world and all that is in it; money, lusts, etc... Those people are afraid from death as they consider it as the ultimate sadness because it will separate them from what they enjoy. This is in contrast to the Christian view that death is not the end of life but instead the beginning of a new life.

"Fruitful labor" - This is a Greek expression meaning, "the labor is considerable", that is a life that is fruitful for the glory of Christ. St. Paul's life and labor was for God's glory. Death will also be a gain, as he will be freed from his trouble and live the life of glory with Christ.

"Torn between two" - Both life and death are good and have their benefits. Whatever God chooses for him, he will be content: life to bring more glory to God, or death, which will unite him with his Savior.

Verses 27-30

"Not terrified by your adversaries" - These words were said to horses that were troubled when they encounter something that frightens them. There is no reason to be terrified because God's grace is able to keep His children "Whoever touches you touches the apple of my eye" (Zach 2:8).

Chapter 2: Joy in serving

Verses 1-4

"If there is any consolation in Christ" - the word consolation is translated to encouragement and refers to encouraging others in times of tribulations. St. Paul sees that the best way of encouraging others is by talking about Christ. This changes the attention of the one who is suffering, reminding him/her that they are a partner of Christ's sufferings and thus will be a partner in His glory. If humans are able to comfort each other, it is obvious how much more Christ will help and support His children and send the Holy Spirit to assist.

"If any comfort of love" - This comfort is consolation and relief of the saddened hearts. This should be done with love, not as a forced duty. There is no way to comfort people except by



showing them love.

"Fellowship with the Spirit"- Fellowship will be perfect if we all submit to the Holy Spirit, who unites together.

"If any affection and mercy"- This refers to those who have a compassionate heart. Whatever is taken from Christ must be given to everyone. Just as Christ loves and shows compassion, all must do the same. The Holy Spirit will change our nature to make it like that of Christ's nature.

"Being of one accord, of one mind"- This can only be achieved if the person is filled with the Holy Spirit.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition as vain conceit"-The reason for division can often be envy or partiality, which will lead to hatred or seeking personal glory. Each person will see themselves as better than others. St. Paul addressed these divisions when he heard of them (Philippians 4:2).

"Vain conceit"-This is when a person is filled with pride or with the gifts that God has given to them.

"Let each esteem others better than himself".

Finally it is important not to focus on personal needs but rather to take care of others with empathy.

Verses 5-11

A Christian mind should be the same as that of Christ's. St. Paul explains through Christ's incarnation and salvation that there is no better example of humility for Christians to follow. Through learning from Christ's example of humility, they can make their mind similar to that of Christ.

"Being" in Greek means to exist or to be continuous. Christ is God in essence before and after the incarnation. This is similar to humans; humans remain human and do not change.

"In the form of God"-As mentioned previously, humans will remain human no matter how they look outwardly. Similarly, the nature of Christ does not change with the incarnation. He is God who appeared in the flesh.

"Robbery"-Our Lord did not consider it robbery to be equal with God because He is God. He humbled himself and took the form of a bondservant (2 Corinthians 8:9).

"He made Himself nothing"-Through His incarnation, the glory of His divinity was hidden. This was so that the human race can draw near Him, so He can lift them up. He completed

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in His Body the work of redemption. If He had appeared in His glory, they would have recognized Him and would not have crucified Him (1 Corinthians 2:8).

The incarnation and crucifixion did not change His nature as God, but added humanity to His divinity. For this reason water and blood came out of His side as a sign of unity of His divinity with His humanity.

"The form of a bondservant"- Jesus took the human nature and became like us in everything except sin.

"In the likeness of man"- Jesus Christ became man with full humanity but not like any ordinary man, as He was without sin and still maintained His full divinity.

"God exalted Him" This refers to Christ's humanity because He humbled Himself and He was obedient. God exalted His humanity. Our Lord Jesus Christ has the authority to lay down His life and to take it again (John 10:17-18). This verse is also has a message to all Christians informing them that anyone who humbles themselves like Christ will be exalted and glorified with Him.

"Giving Him a name that is above every name" God the father revealed who is Christ, that He is God. The name Jesus means "Jehovah saves". Even just the name of Christ is powerful and torments or terrifies the devil; His name is a powerful and has become a praise. Everybody in heaven and in earth confesses this, giving thanks and worshipping Him.

Verses 12-13

"It is God who works in you to will" In verse 12 St Paul talked about the responsibility that each person has toward their own salvation. St. Paul encourages that the work should not be done by ourselves but God who works within us. If St. Paul had said "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" then it would have been very scary for us. It is impossible for us in our weakness to work out our own salvation. Instead, St. Paul talked about the heavenly gifts given to man in order to be saved, so God is working with us, helping us to reach our goal, which is salvation.

"And to do" God is only One who gives help and support in situations. Without Him nothing is possible see John 15:5.

Thus salvation is shared work between both the Holy Spirit and man. These verses comfort the Philippians that should St. Paul or any other apostles depart, it is God who works in His people.



Verse 14-15

"Complaining" Complaint come out from the bitterness of the heart, when there is no compassion for one another. It stems from a lack of love, from not trusting God and from disbelieving that all things work together for that which is good for us. That is why the church teaches to always give thanks and to avoid complaining.

"Disputing" This is generally caused by pride and not being flexible or willing to hear others, eventually leading to disputes.

"Blameless" To be blameless is to be without fault or defect. To be blameless in front of God we have to be in Christ see Colossians 1:22.

"Harmless" This refers to the person who always looks toward God and is honest in all that he does.

"Crooked" Which means dishonest in their dealings.

"Perverse" A distortion of truth.

"Shine like stars" The light that resembles the holiness which comes from our Lord Jesus. We are the light of the world, see Matthew 5:14. We receive our light from Christ the sun of righteousness and the true light, see John 8:12. The children of God must strive to be like God, see Ephesians 5:1. We became children of God through our baptism and we must continue in faith to perform good deeds such that people can glorify our Father Who is in heaven.

Verse 16-26

"Rejoice with me" The apostle is rejoicing in his suffering, as a way of showing that suffering is a gift from God for the sake of Christ, see Philippians 1:29. This is what makes St Paul rejoice, to suffer for the sake of Christ who loves him. He is imitating Christ and sharing in His cross. It is an invitation to all the Philippians to be like him. St. Paul wanted to send Timothy to Philippi to reassure them and tell them about his news, although he needed Timothy during his imprisonment. This was because there was no one similar to Timothy in Rome who could be matched in reliable and love for them just like how St. Paul loved them.

"No one like-minded" St. Paul is essentially saying that Timothy thinks like him. Timothy is humble, loving, and dedicated in his service. The Philippians knew Timothy well.

"For all sake their own" With the increase of persecution the love of many decreased, they became less careful regarding their salvation and their honesty toward the Lord Jesus.

"As soon as I see how it goes with me" St. Paul was saying that as soon as he knew his



situation regarding the imprisonment, martyrdom or release, Timothy would go to tell them the news. This is regardless of the situation be it death or freedom.

"I trust the Lord" St. Paul felt that he would be set free, and that was what ended up happening as Nero ended up setting him free that time.

"I considered it necessary" St. Paul knew their feelings when they heard about Epaphroditus' illness. Epaphroditus was commissioned to go to St. Paul carrying the Philippians' gifts for him. He was sent to serve St. Paul while in the prison. So, when he got sick St. Paul was moved, he called Epaphroditus "my brother" in baptism, "fellow worker" in the mission and the service and "fellow soldier" against the power of darkness. Through this we can see St. Paul's love and how he prefers to put others before himself. Although he was in need of Epaphroditus who was serving him, he sent him back to the Philippians.

Verses 27-30

"Sorrow upon sorrow" St. Paul would have had excessive sorrow over had Epaphroditus died from his sickness. This shows the love of St. Paul to all to the Philippians and to his disciple. This also shows that Christianity does not ignore human feelings.

"Hold such men in esteem" St. Paul tells the Philippians to welcome Epaphroditus in the Lord with great joy and honor and not to blame Epaphroditus for leaving him while he was still in prison. So St. Paul told the Philippians about Epaphroditus' service and to accept him in the Lord because of his love and how he exposed himself for many dangers.

"Came to close death" Referring to Epaphroditus risking his life for St. Paul's service in the prison. Possibly this is because there may have been some danger from the prison guards or because of his illness.

"To supply what was lacking in your service toward me" St. Paul refers to the help that the Philippians could not give to St. Paul because of the distance between Philippi and Rome. Epaphroditus helped St. Paul and he did what the Philippians could not.

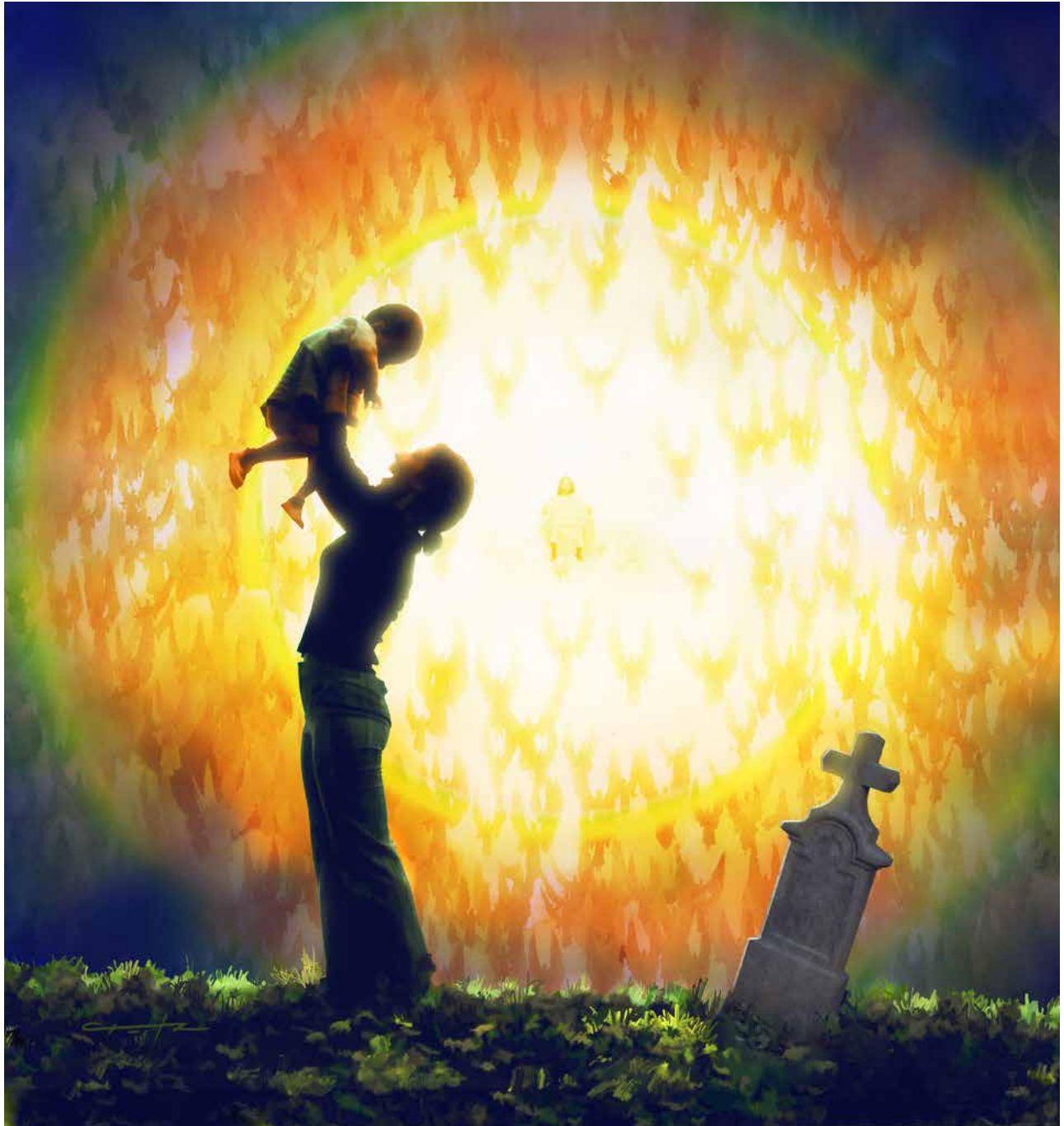
Chapter 3: Joy in the Lord

Verses 1-4

"Finally" - In the Greek translation finally refers to "What is left", implying that the previous topic has ended. The final topic is about the Jewish teaching regarding the importance of the circumcision for salvation. The apostle did not want this teaching literally subjected to the Gentiles as it is a heavy burden. He also wanted to help those who were enforcing it strictly from following what is wrong.

"Beware" - Means to watch out, to be careful or to open your eyes.

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"Dogs, the evil dowers" - The Greek and the Jewish people used these words as words of criticism and reproach. St. Paul used these words to blame the false teachers who held fast to the Jewish teaching thus depriving them from grace in the gospel of salvation. They considered Christianity a sect of Judaism and taught that for the Gentiles to enter Christianity it has to be through Judaism.

"Mutilation" – This refers to those who cut parts from their bodies. It describes the false teaching that instead of the spiritual circumcision the Gentiles require physical circumcision as a way of salvation.

"For we are the circumcision" – St. Paul calls the people who enforce circumcision dogs and mutilators. These people had cut themselves from the church of Christ and the spiritual circumcision through the work of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul is essentially asking what is better, to cut off part of the flesh or the Holy Spirit kills the love of sin that is in us?

"Who worship God in the Spirit" - This worship is shared by all those who believe in Christ either Jew or Gentile, they all became God's people.

"Rejoice in Christ" - God's people rejoice in Christ and not in the works of the flesh like circumcision or being the children of Abraham.

"No confidence in the flesh" - In the Christian understanding, salvation is beyond our capability and it is the work of God for the human being. The Jews imagine that salvation is a natural work of man toward God; that is why they talk about human deeds like circumcision, the Law and rituals. St. Paul wanted to warn us from the false teachers, so that we worship God in Spirit submitting to the Holy Spirit and we rejoice in Christ.

Verses 5-6

These verses explain the meaning of the righteousness that is in the body. St. Paul boasts about his own attributes that he is circumcised, a Jew, from the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew, and a Pharisee. All these were considered gain in the eyes of the Jews however St. Paul considered them as a loss because they did not benefit him in any way with respect to his relation with Jesus.

"The excellence of the knowledge of Christ" - When we compare the knowledge of Christ with any other knowledge, it becomes obvious that the knowledge of Christ is significantly superior. The knowledge of Christ leads to peace, joy, and heavenly glory.

Verses 9 – 11

"Be found in Him" - To be found in Christ means to unite with Him forever. It is through



abiding in Christ that one is justified and will have Christ's righteousness in them. Faith in Christ is the beginning of all blessings.

"Not having my own righteousness that is from the law" - This is the righteousness that is acquired when the Law is fulfilled, however no one could fulfill the Law in full. If one could be made righteous by the Law there would be no need for Christ.

The righteousness that is received from God, through faith in Christ, leads to the heavenly glory but the righteousness that is acquired through the works of the Law leads to earthly success and earthly inheritance.

"The power of His resurrection" - St. Paul experienced the power of Christ in all the situations of his life. He saw firsthand the power of God that raised Christ from the dead and he experienced firsthand the power that was able to raise him from the death of sin.

"The fellowship of His sufferings" - When the Apostle experienced the love of Christ and His power toward him and the whole world he longed to suffer with Christ. Whoever experiences the love of Christ finds it easy to accept sufferings for Christ's sake. "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" Philippians 1:29 "That we may also be glorified together." Romans 8:17

Verses 12 – 14

"I press on" - This reflects struggling in life. St. Paul meant that he did not reach the full knowledge of Christ. It is a continuous process and he must continue to struggle to attain it.

"Forgetting those things which are behind" - He does look at what he achieved. He did not reach heaven or perfection. The word forgetting in Greek means to completely forget. He is like person in a race running toward a goal; if he turns around he will waste his time and will likely lose the race. Spiritually whoever looks behind will perish like Lot's wife and whoever put his hands on the plow should not look back.

Verses 15-17

"Mature" – This denotes maturity of the mind, having the same the mind as he does, as mentioned in verses 13, 14. Whoever strives for perfection must rely on God's grace and not on self-righteousness

"Otherwise" – Refers to something other than Christ's mind that is to say whoever is busy with worldly things or finds themselves righteous, thinking that they do not need to strive. The work of the Spirit is to show those people their error.

"Let us walk by the same rule" – No person should stop striving in their spiritual life no matter

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what level is attained, rather they must continue in the way of righteousness always. At the time there were no written Gospels so St. Paul put himself in front of them as a living Gospel. He asked them to imitate him as he imitates Christ.

Verses 18-19

St. Paul talks about the one who left the way of Christ and went after earthly matters. They assumed that the body is the source of all evil, so their sins will not add to the evil of the body. Based on this wrong assumption they did not see any wrong in their sins and thus they refused to carry the cross.

Verses 20- 21

"Our citizenship" - Meaning nationality or social responsibility. It refers to our heavenly citizenship given to us by our heavenly Father.

"Eagerly wait" - In the Greek translation it means waiting with strong desire and refers to waiting the second coming of Christ. What motivates Christians to behave as heavenly citizens is the second coming of our Lord who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to the glorious body.

Chapter 4: Rejoice always

Verses 1 – 2

"Stand fast" - It means as long as Christians are waiting for the second coming of Christ they must stand fast in their faith.

"My joy" – St. Paul calls the Philippians my joy because of their love and obedience. They are his crown, just as the one who wins a race receive a crown. In order to win a race the participants have to go through intense training for long periods of time. The apostle strived his whole life for their salvation and is proud of their faith. He will receive a crown because of them.

The apostle implored Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind so they do not deprive themselves from the unity with Christ and the joy in Him. The dispute between them hinders the work of the ministry and the work of the Holy Spirit.



Verses 4 – 6

“Rejoice in the Lord” - The true joy is to abide in Christ. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

“Let your gentleness be known to all men” – In the Greek translation it implies do not get angry, do not be hard on others, and be patient. It is being willing to sacrifice your own benefit just like how Abraham sacrificed his benefit for Lot. This characteristic will be only in those who rejoice in the Lord. Joy originates from love which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Joy and love produce patience, self-control, forgiveness, kindness and gentleness.

“Be anxious for nothing” - Do not worry or be concerned or fear when faced with problems.

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life” Matthew 6:25

Verse 7

“The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”. This is God’s gift for His children so that they can have victory over the tribulations of this world. Victory in Christianity is to have joy and peace despite the external troubles. “Your joy no one will take from you”. John 16:22

Verses 8 – 9

In these verses St. Paul instructs all to meditate on a number of valuable topics.

Verses 10 – 12

“I rejoiced in the Lord” - He rejoiced in the Lord as he taught them, he did not rejoice because of their gifts to him but rather for the love that God put in their hearts

“Flourished” - Refers to the fruit of their love to him as they looked after his needs while he was in prison.

“Not in regard to need” - Although he was in need of their gifts, he did not want his service to be the source of materialistic gain.

“I have learned to be content” – St. Paul had learned to be satisfied with that which he had no matter how little it was.

“I know how to be abased” – St. Paul knew how to live a modest life, with very little possessions.

“To abound” – Refers to having left over even with very little, and also giving to the needy. When he had a lot he did not get proud and when he had little he did not complain.

“All things” – Refers to all the situations that St. Paul faced in his life

“I have learned both to be full and to be hungry” - Spiritual life requires both training and striving. He accepted everything from the hand of God, trying to learn from it and giving

Come to Me...





thanks to God. Some people complain when they are troubled and forget God in their joy. St. Paul learned to live with Christ in all circumstances. St. Paul wanted to tell the Philippians that he rejoiced at their gifts not for the gifts themselves but because he saw their love in them.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" - Christ is in all things and thus the source of his strength. This is similar to what Jesus said, "without Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

Verses 14-17

St. Paul did not want the Philippians to misunderstand that he disdained their gifts, so he told them that they were doing good by sharing in his distress. He told them that he felt that in his distress, they were distressed. Since the beginning of the gospel, when he departed from Macedonia, no other church shared with him in distress like they did.

"But you only" - St. Paul received assistance only from them because he was confident in their love.

"Giving and receiving" - St. Paul gave them spiritual things and took from them materialistic things. He did not say this to seek more gifts, but wanted the spiritual fruit to abound in their lives.

Verses 18 – 20

St. Paul described the gifts of the Philippians by three amazing descriptions; a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice and well pleasing to God. Thus he prayed "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." That God give them according to His riches that they may enjoy the heavenly glory in Christ Jesus.

"According to His riches" - Each person gives according to the riches he has. This implies that the King of kings would give according to His infinite riches.

"Glory" - This is one of God's attributes from the beginning and forever.

"Those who are of Caesar's household" - St. Paul did not mean Nero and his family, but rather the soldiers to whom he was preaching. Those soldiers believed and were inviting others to hear St. Paul preach and to believe.



Come to Me... Come to Me...



The Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy is one of the most important forms of collective worship in the Coptic Orthodox Church. During the Liturgy, we join the angels and the heavenly hosts as the Holy Spirit descends to transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Divine Liturgy, therefore, is a connection with heaven and the time spent in Church during the Liturgy is a moment of heaven on earth. The Divine Liturgy sanctifies the bread, the wine, the congregation and the Church.

There are three different Divine Liturgy prayers:

- The Liturgy of St Basil
- The Liturgy of St Gregory
- The Liturgy of St Cyril

How can I benefit from attending the Divine Liturgy?

- Arrive early
- Participate in the responses
- Stand quietly; try not to get distracted by others
- Use the book of the Divine Liturgies- preferably your own book- to follow along with the prayers
- Concentrate and meditate on the prayers

The Divine Liturgy is composed of the following ten parts:

1. The Offering Of Vespers And Morning Incense
2. The Offertory
3. The Readings
4. The Prayer Of Reconciliation
5. The Anaphora
6. The Institution
7. The Litanies
8. The Commemoration Of The Saints
9. The Fraction
10. The Prayer Of Submission And The Communion

Come to Me...





Activity: Match the parts of the Liturgy to their relevant Bible references.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| • The mystery of Godliness | Revelations 4:11 |
| • The incense | 1 Timothy 3:16 |
| • He gave Himself for us | 1 Timothy 2:1-2 |
| • Proclaim My death | Hebrews 11:40 & Revelations 6:11 |
| • Getting ready by repentance | Revelation 5:8 |
| • The praise of the Seraphim | Ephesians 5:2 & Romans 5:8 |
| • The council of the Saints | 1 Corinthians 11:27 |
| • Meet and Right | 1 Corinthians 11:26 |
| • The prayer of reconciliation | Matthew 5:23 - 24 |
| • Uniting with Christ | Isaiah 6:3 |
| • Signs for the way | John 6:56 |
| • Praying for the president and the soldiers | Matthew 26:26-28 |
| • Sanctifying the sacrifices | Psalms 119:105 |

1. The Raising of Incense

The Raising of Incense is preparation for the Liturgy, where we pray to God, thank Him and request His blessing for the sacramental service. The Raising of Incense must always be prayed before the Liturgy, except during the Great Lent, where it is only prayed before the Sunday Liturgies. Since Liturgies during the Great Lent end later in the day, we do not pray vesper prayers.

The Raising Of Incense prayers consists of:

- The Prayer of Thanksgiving - The Church starts every prayer, including vespers and the raising of morning incense, with the Prayer of Thanksgiving. The Church thanks God for all His works.
- The Mystery of Incense - The priest puts incense five times in the censer while making the sign of the Cross during the first three times as a symbol of the Holy Trinity. The incense is put five times to represent the five righteous men of the Old Testament who offered acceptable sacrifices to the Lord, and He smelled the pleasant aroma of their sacrifice. These men are Abel, Noah, Melchizedek, Aaron and Zacharias.
- The Prayer of Efnouti Nai Nan - Lord Have Mercy on us - The priest asks for God's mercy and the congregation responds three times saying, "Lord have mercy".
- The Litany of the Gospel- The prayer before the Psalm and the Gospel are read.



- The Five Short Litanies - The priest prays the Five Short Litanies concerning safety, the Church Fathers, the Holy Places, the weather and vegetation, and the congregations.
- The Absolution - The priest reads the absolution and says the final blessing.

The priest encircles the altar with incense signifying the preaching of the Holy Trinity in the four corners of the world. The priest encircles the altar counterclockwise to symbolize that eternity is not tied to time, and that during prayer, we are tied to heaven.

The incense is an announcement of God's presence, which is why we pray, "Glory be to God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit" while the priest encircles the Church with incense. As we bow our heads, we feel the presence of God and offer repentance from the heart, saying, "I ask you my Lord Jesus to forgive my sins".

2. The Offertory

The Offertory is the beginning of the journey, in which the Church commits to offer its life to Christ.

Psalms are prayed before the Offertory because they prophesy the incarnation of Christ our Lord. On Saturdays and Sundays and outside the fasts, the Church prays the Third and Sixth Hour prayers before the beginning the Liturgy. During Fasts, the Church adds the prayer of the Ninth Hour, and during the Great Lent and Jonah's fast, we add the Eleventh and Twelfth Hour prayers.

Next, the priest examines the bread to choose the most suitable bread for offering, also called the Lamb. He then places his hands over the tray in the shape of a Cross and prays, "May the Lord choose a Lamb without blemish." The number of loaves in the basket of the Lamb is always an odd number, most commonly 3, 5 or 7. In the basket, there are many loaves to symbolize the incarnation of Christ amongst the people.

As the priest chooses the Lamb, he faces the people to symbolize that no one is worthy to stand before God, except the mediator chosen to stand between us and God the Father, who is His only Son Jesus Christ, who offered His life to redeem the sins of the whole world.

The priest dampens his right hand and wipes the Lamb all around. This action symbolizes the



baptism of Christ by St. John the Baptist by immersion in the Jordan River.

The priest then holds the Lamb in reverence against his head while standing at the door of the sanctuary saying, "Glory and honor, honor and glory". He then places it in the paten together with the cruet. He proceeds to cover them with the prospharin and encircles the altar followed by the deacons. This is called the procession of the Lamb. This procession around the altar symbolizes the Body of Jesus wrapped in linen and carried to be laid in the tomb.

As we confess our sins and put our hope in Christ, we are not worthy to approach Him except through His mercy. This is why we pray, "Kyrie Eleison" and promise to offer our whole life to Him to sanctify us with His Blood. During the Offering of the Lamb, we stand in awe, in repentance and in humility.

3. The Readings

The readings are our guide through the journey. They are the map by which we understand our position with respect to God and His position towards us. Without this map, we lose the way and do not reach our destination.

The readings are called the "Liturgy of Catechumen" as they make up the instructive part of the Liturgy. The Church has prepared five readings for each Liturgy:

- The Pauline Epistle (from the epistles of St Paul)
- The Catholic Epistle (from the other epistles)
- The Praxis (from the book of Acts)
- The Synexarium (the story of the saint(s) of the day)
- The Gospel (from the Psalms and from one of the four gospels)

The word 'Synexarium' means news or biography. It is the book containing the daily commemoration of the Saints. The Catholic Epistles are: The Epistle of James, The two Epistles of St Peter, the three Epistles of St John the Beloved, and the Epistle of St Jude.

During the Pauline Epistle the priest encircles the whole Church, while during the Catholic Epistles the priest does not leave the sanctuary. During the Praxis, he only encircles the first



Chorus.

At the end of the Liturgy, the priest announces, "The holies for the holy". It is only through the work of God's Word in us that we can attain holiness.

The word of the Gospel requires that we humble ourselves and eagerly receive every word. We must surrender our hearts to God and to examine ourselves in light of the Scriptures. When the priest encircles the Church with incense, it is an invitation for repentance and acceptance of the Word of God in purity.

4. The Prayer of Reconciliation

The Liturgy of the faithful starts with the Prayer of Reconciliation as we must have reconciliation with God before the partaking of the Holy sacrament of the Eucharist.

The first part of the Prayer of Reconciliation consists of meditations on the creation of man without corruption, then the fall of man by the envy of Satan. During the second part of the Prayer of Reconciliation, the priest asks God to fill his heart and the hearts of the congregation with His heavenly peace. Soon after, the deacon calls on all those assembled in the Church to "greet one another with the holy kiss". Thus, the whole Church becomes one heart and one mind, in preparation for participating in the Divine Liturgy. The priest starts by saying, "The love of the God the Father be with you" meaning that the love of God will be steadfast in us if we love one another.

The Reconciliation Prayer is not prayed on Holy Thursday as an indication that the true reconciliation will not be accomplished until the crucifixion of Christ on Good Friday.

Man is made in God's image in the capacity to love. Without repentance and reconciliation with God, it is not possible to have truthful love. Sin deprives us of the capacity to love. Greeting one another with a holy kiss is a means of repentance, a way to revise oneself, to quit hatred and to enforce love.

The Priest lifts up the prospharin to declare that the resurrection of the Lord has been fulfilled in us through reconciliation with God by repentance and through reconciliation with our brothers through the holy kiss.

Come to Me... Come to Me...



Now we can be reconciled with others. We can offer love to others because we are reconciled to God. "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." Matthew 5:23-24

5. The Anaphora

Now we are ready to lift up our hearts to the Lord. The priest first prays for the sake of the congregation and the congregation prays for the sake of the priest:

"Peace be with you all."

"And with your spirit."

"Lift up your hearts."

"We have them with the Lord."

The priest thanks God for this great blessing and the congregation responds, "It is meet and right."

In the beginning of every liturgy, let us ask God to give us this blessing; that our hearts be occupied with Him alone throughout the entire Liturgy. Therefore, offering our hearts to God is a blessing granted by Him, and is worthy of thanksgiving.

The priest raises his hand, making the sign of the Cross three times saying, 'Agios'. He makes the sign of the Cross first on himself, then on the deacons and finally on the congregation. When the priest says to the congregation, "Lift up your hearts", we feel like we are in heaven so we participate with the heavenly hosts, praising the Holy God, who sits on the throne of His Glory, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy". We praise the Lord for all He has done for us, in that He became man, was crucified and buried, resurrected, ascended into heaven and will come back to reward us.

"As if man is shifted up to heaven, standing beside the throne of the Lord of Glory, flying with the Seraphim and singing the holy praise." - St John the Chrysostom

"All the heavenly powers come and sing this praise. The altar is filled with angels who congregate to honour the sacrifice. How can you Christians dare to attend this sacrifice without respect? The Church is heaven itself." - St John Chrysostom

6. The Institution



The Institution is the most important part of the Liturgy. It is when the Holy Spirit descends on the sacrifices and transforms them into the Body and Blood of our Saviour.

The priest points to the bread, with his hands covered with two veils and says, "He instituted this great sacrament that is for righteousness." He makes the sign of the Cross on the bread three





times and says, "And He gave thanks; And He blessed it; And He sanctified it." He then puts his hand over the rim of the chalice and makes the sign of the Cross three times saying, "And He gave thanks; And He blessed it; And He sanctified it."

When the deacon says, "Worship God in fear and trembling", the priest says a silent prayer and then declares the transformation of the bread and wine to the Body and Blood of Christ. The candles are lit around the altar during the institution of the bread and wine, which signifies that the light of life has risen from this sacrifice. While kneeling, the priest calls the Holy Spirit because Jesus Christ is the one who has established this sacrament. He is the one sending His Holy Spirit now to these sacrifices.

7. The Litanies

The Litanies demonstrate the mystery of the communion and unity of the Church. As we are part of the one Body, we pray for love and unity of heart. We pray for those we love and put their needs in front of the Lord. We pray for the safety of the Church and our father the Pope, our fathers the priests and for the well being of the deacons and servants. We pray for the widows and the orphans, the strangers and the sojourners. We pray for the sacrifices, the sick, the travelers, those in suffering and pain, the presidents and the soldiers. (Ephesians 2:1-2)

The priest prays the following seven short litanies:

- The Litany of Safety
- The Litany of the Fathers
- The Litany of the Priests
- The Litany of Mercy
- The Litany of the Place
- The Litany of the Waters or the Seeds and Plants or the Airs of Heaven
- The Litany of Oblation

By offering these requests, we return to the paradise of love in which we are united in one heart. Our hearts are filled with giving and caring for everyone.

8. The Commemoration of the Saints

After the litanies are prayed, the priest prays the Commemoration of Saints, which includes the



most prominent fathers of the Church. The Commemoration of Saints reminds us in the unity of the whole Church as one body of Christ. It does not only include visible members but also the invisible members. The commemoration of the saints is a communion with the Victorious Church, where we ask for their prayers on our behalf. During the commemoration, we should meditate on the virtues of the saints and ask for their intercessions. We then remember our dearly departed during the Diptych, where we pray for them so that God may grant rest to their souls.

During Holy Thursday's Liturgy, neither the Commemoration nor the Diptych (prayer for the departed) are prayed.

"We should pray for the departed faithful and offer on their behalf a secret sacrifice to make God merciful to them." - St Cyril the Pillar of Faith

9. The Fraction

The Fraction is a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His inexpressible gift. He freely gave us His Holy Body and Honored Blood as a way to eternal life for those who worthily partake of them. It is also a supplication that He may purify our hearts, souls and bodies so that we dare, in the intimacy of His Divine love, to partake of them.

There are many prayers for the Fraction. Some Fractions are prayed all year round, others are for major or minor feasts of our Lord, the Virgin's feasts, the angels' or saints' feasts, the fasts, etc. The priest divides the Holy Body into 12 parts around the spadikon. This symbolizes the sufferings that were inflicted on the Body of Christ. The priest makes the sign of the Cross on the Holy Body with the Holy Blood as a sign that Blood poured out of His side.

During the Fraction prayer, we should meditate on the pain and suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ for our sake. We pray, "Lord have mercy on me for I am a sinner."

10. The Prayers of Submission and Communion

The deacon says, "Bow your heads to the Lord." Everyone bows their heads to the Lord saying, "Before you O Lord." This is a moment of repentance and confession to become worthy to accept the prayer of absolution from the priest. While the priest is reading the absolution, we should offer repentance.

Come to Me... Come to Me...



Deacon: "Let us attend in the fear of the Lord."

Priest: "Peace be with you."

Congregation: "And with your spirit."

Priest: "The Hobbies for the holy."

Congregation: "One is the Holy Father, one is the Holy Son, one is the Holy Spirit. Amen"

Then the priest says the last confession, and each time the congregation responds with, "Amen". The deacon then says, "Pray for the worthy partaking of these pure, heavenly and holy mysteries."

The Eucharist is the sanctification of the human creation, so we may return to our original image, announcing the presence of God and testifying to His love for man who was created in His own image.

We then proceed in one line as people going up to heaven, opening our mouths as in the manger of Bethlehem. As we welcome the Logos incarnate, we are filled with joy and sanctification.

"A person should not prevent himself from daily partaking of the Body of the Lord for his own healing." - St. Augustine

Summary

The Divine Liturgy is a journey to heaven. Through the sacrament of the Eucharist, we become members of His Body, united with Jesus Christ and with our brothers and sisters.

- The Raising of the incense: We announce the presence of God in our midst.
- The Offertory: The Lamb of God offers Himself for our sake
- The Readings: He gives us His Word to guide us and sanctify us
- The Anaphora: In order to come to Him, we must first be reconciled with God and with others. We can then lift up our hearts and dwell in heaven.
- The Institution: He offers us His Body and Blood so we can become His own Body.
- The Litanies: We pray for our brothers and sisters on earth.
- The Commemoration of the Saints: We remember our brothers and sisters in heaven.
- The Fraction: We share in his pain that he suffered on our behalf.
- Communion: We partake of His Body and Blood to be steadfast in Him and He in us.

Come to Me...



Come to Me... Come to Me...



A Journey to Heaven

Tasbeha is a collection of praises prayed before the Prime and Vesper raising of incense as preparation for the Liturgy. During Tasbeha, we join the angels and saints in heaven in praising God, as the Bible says, "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalms 19:1).

Sharing in their praises, we remember that we are all one body in Christ. Tasbeha can help us change bad habits and purify our minds and senses. Our Church also uses Tasbeha to teach the Christian Orthodox dogma across generations. Moreover, Tasbeha is an effective weapon against the devil.

"Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day" (Psalm 71:8).

Midnight praises is organized in the following manner:

1. The Hymn of Ten theno

- Here, the Church calls all Christians to wake up from their laziness and arise to praise our Saviour who granted us life
- We sing with the angels, "Arise O children of the light, let us praise the Lord of hosts."

2. The First Hoos

- The word Hoos means to praise. "Marenhoos" means let us praise.
- This is a song of victory, sung after the Israelites' deliverance from Pharaoh's slavery and the crossing of the Red Sea. It was sung by Moses, his sister Miriam and all the Israelites (Exodus 15).
- Pharaoh and his soldiers who enslaved the Israelites were a symbol of the devil that enslaved the human race. Just as crossing the Red Sea saved the Israelites, our Lord Jesus Christ saved us through His Cross. Through Baptism, which is the first sacrament and the gate to heaven and to eternal life, we crossed over from death to life. This is why the Church placed this hymn at the beginning of Tasbeha.

♦ The Lobsh of the First Hoos – Khen Ou-shote

- Lobsh is a Coptic word that means explanation. This first Lobsh explains the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and the great miracle of splitting the Red Sea.



- During weekdays, we sing parts seven to nine of the Sunday Theotokia after reading the Gospel from Luke, which begins with "Let your servant depart in peace" (Luke 2:29)
- We sing these three parts because they discuss the incarnation. Just as the Israelites were saved from Pharaoh's hands through the crossing of the red sea, we too are saved through Jesus' incarnation.

3. The Second Hoos

- This is a song of thanksgiving for our victory and salvation. The Church gives thanks to our Saviour for His goodness and mercy that endures forever. This Hoos has 28 verses and the refrain of each verse is "His mercy endures forever".

◇ Lobsh of the Second Hoos- Maren-Ouonh

- We express our joy and gratitude to our Lord for our salvation as we sing, "Let us give thanks to Christ our Lord with David the prophet and psalmist."

4. The Third Hoos

- This Hoos tells the story of the three young men in the fiery furnace. This story is a symbol of the numerous trials we will face in our lives as Christians, and how through God's grace and help, we can overcome them.
- It is an invitation for the creation to praise God in all His works. As David sings, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).
- As the Lord saved the three young men from the fiery furnace, the Lord will also save us from Satan and give us victory.

5. The Hymn of Aripsaleen

- This is the song of the three young men as they were in the midst of the furnace with the Lord. These three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego (also called Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah), rejoice in the presence of the Lord and His power.
- The verses of this hymn begin with the letters of the Greek alphabet in order, from alpha to omega.

6. The Hymn of Ten-oweh Ensok

- This hymn is an excerpt from Azariah's prayer that he prayed while in the midst of the furnace.
- The hymn begins with the words, "We follow you with all our hearts", and is the



introduction of commemoration of the saints.

7. Commemoration of the Saints

- This hymn commemorates the multitude of the saints, referred to as the victorious Church, who intercede on behalf of the striving Church. We call the saints the victorious Church because they have obtained victory over worldly lusts, Satan and all his temptations through the power of God. We are considered the striving Church as we are still struggling to fight against the adversities of the devil. They are our role models and we ask for their prayers and intercessions.

8. The Doxologies

- “Doxology” is a Greek word, which means glorification of the saints.
- There are doxologies for St. Mary, the angels and the saints.
- There are also doxologies for different Church occasions in which we rejoice in a tune of joy and thanksgiving.

9. The Fourth Hoos

- The Fourth Hoos is a joyful hymn consisting of the three Psalms, 148, 149 and 150. It invites the entire creation to praise the Lord our God.
- “Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful” (Psalm 147:1).

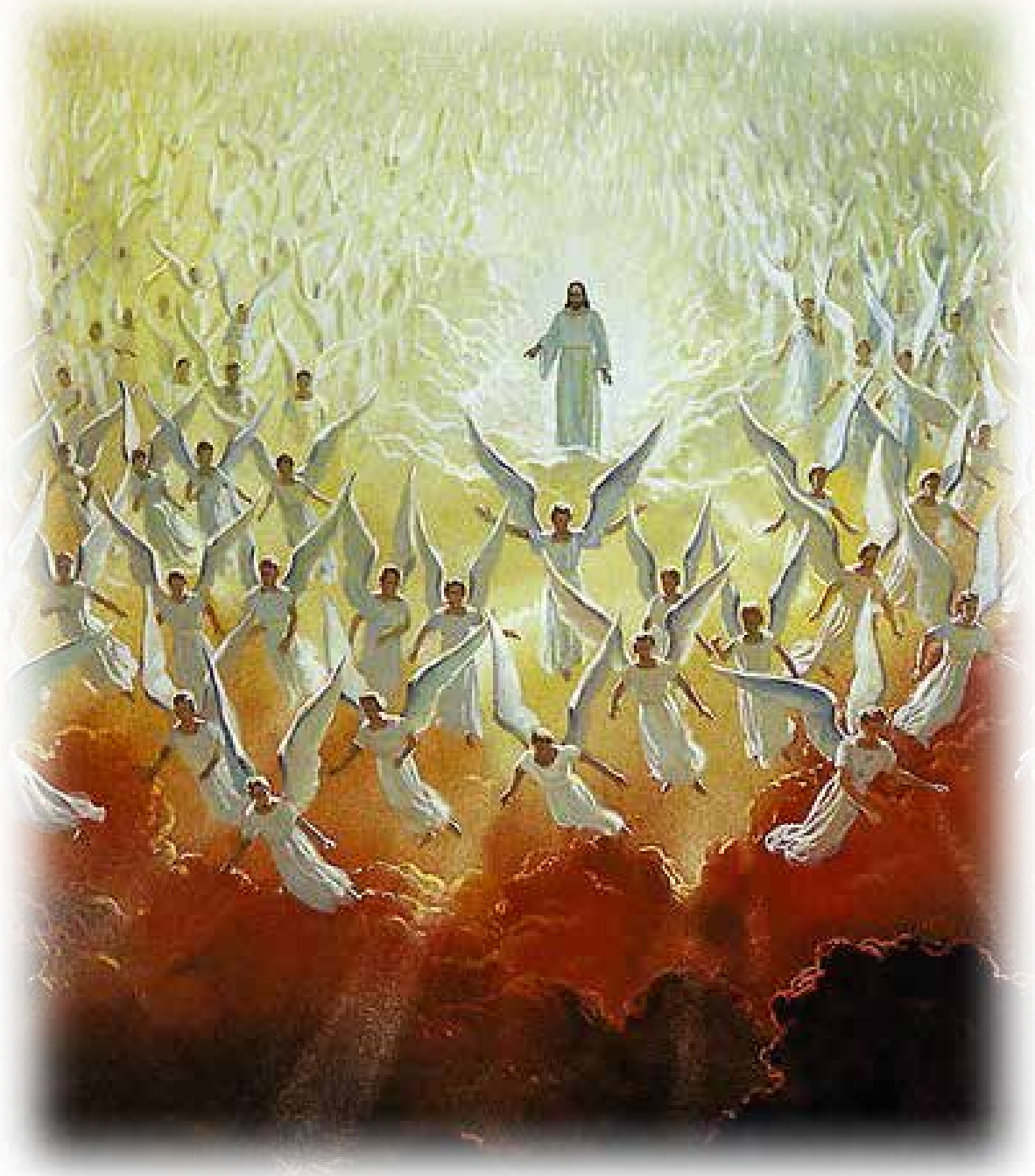
10. The Psali of the Day

- “Psali” is a Greek word, which means song or glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ. During the Psali, we repeat the name of our Lord Jesus Christ many times as it is the strong tower that protects us from Satan. “Remembering your Holy name brings joy to our soul.”
- There are 2 types of Psalis:
 - ◊ Adam Psali- This is a short tune only sung on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays. These days are referred to as Adam days.
 - ◊ Watos Psali: This is a longer tune, sung on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The days are referred to as Watos days. The word “Watos” means bush.
- Every day of the week, as well as every Church occasion, has its own Psali.

11. Theotokia:

- “Theotokia” is a Greek word, which comes from the word “Theotokos”, meaning Mother

Come to Me...





of God.

- It is important for us as orthodox worshippers to sing daily about the Mother of God, as she is an important part of our theological belief.
- Our Orthodox faith in the divinity of Christ, in the incarnate Word of God, in His one nature and in the mystery of the Incarnation are all related to St. Mary being the Mother of God, the Theotokos.

12. Defnar

- This is a short account of the life of the saint of the day.

13. The Conclusion of the Theotokia

- On Adam days, we sing the hymn, "Your mercies O my Lord". As we sing this hymn, we are reminded to live a life of repentance, confession and faith in God's mercy and compassion.
- On Watos days, we sing the hymn, "Our Lord Jesus Christ". This hymn expresses our preparation for the second coming and our yearning for eternal life.

14. The Conclusion of Tasbeha

- We conclude by reciting the orthodox creed followed by 41 kyrie eleison, asking the mercies of the Holy God, and finally the Lord's prayer. If the priest is present, he prays the midnight absolution.

After Tasbeha, we are now ready to meet with our Lord Jesus Christ through the sacrament of Eucharist in the Divine Liturgy. In the Divine Liturgy, we unite with Him, He abides in us and us in Him. It is important to remember to regularly participate in Tasbeha and not simply be an observer. When we praise with the angels, we taste the beauty of life in heaven. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

May we always sing with David the Psalmist saying, "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live, I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. May my meditation be sweet to Him; I will be glad in the Lord" (Psalm 104:33-34).



The Book of Habakkuk

The Author

The book of Habakkuk is written by Habakkuk the prophet. His name means, "to embrace". It is assumed that he was from the tribe of Levi as his writings resemble that of the psalms.

Date Written

The book of Habakkuk was written in the period between the years 612 to 589 BC. This is the period before the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem.

Purpose of the Book

The book starts with a prayer from the prophet complaining from the corruption that he was seeing among his people. God answers him, by saying that He will discipline them by the way of the Chaldeans. Then after he saw the cruelty of the Chaldeans, he cried to the Lord asking why the Chaldeans are punishing God's people when they are more evil.

In the second chapter, the prophet is waiting for God's answer to the complaints that he had in the first chapter. God answered him and said that He is using the Chaldeans only to discipline His people. Then after they accomplish their role and because of their pride, the Chaldeans will be overthrown.

In the third the chapter, the prophet rejoices. Through his prayer he saw the coming salvation and waited for the blessing. He encouraged the Jews to pray a similar prayer and to have hope during the time of tribulation in their captivity. It is a song of encouragement and comfort.

The prophet is in a continuous struggle with God in his prayer. Thus, he is called the questioning prophet; St. Jerome called him "the fighter of God" similar to Jacob. He has many questions so he stands continuously in prayer waiting for God's answers, does not seek answers away from God. He finds that those who are innocent are treated unfairly. Often when people are faced with situations that are unjust or that they do not understand, they complain and grumble against God. On the other hand the children of God should trust Him, and pose their questions solely to Him. God will always answer question in due time and give peace and justice to His people.



Children of God should understand that God's wisdom is beyond any human wisdom. This book is a dialogue between God and man, God speaks and man listens, and vice-versa man speaks and God listens with love.

The question that the prophet posed was "Why is God allowing His people to suffer injustice?" This is a question that is asked by all generations including the present. The Book demonstrates that God disciplines His people because He loves them.

Characteristics of the Book

The Book of Habakkuk is one of the books by the 12 Minor Prophets. The Minor Prophets are those who wrote shorter prophecies, the Major Prophets are those who wrote longer prophecies. The difference between the Minor and Major Prophets are the length of their prophecies and has nothing to do with the importance or prophecy itself.

The Book is a dialogue with God, and thus it has the potential to touch the lives of all who read it. It demonstrates that in time of trouble a person should seek and can find the comfort of the Holy Spirit. The book presents the problem of evil and the victory of truth.

Chapter 1: Crying out to God because of pain and injustice. God is using these as tools to discipline His people.

Chapter 2: God answers and explains why the Chaldeans are unjust such that it can be a lesson to not imitate them if the circumstances are different.

Chapter 3: Praise and thanksgiving to God because He did great things for them.

Chapter 1

Verses 1 – 4

The prophet cries out and intercedes for his people. He is wondering why there is injustice. His question is clear, "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear? Why do You show me iniquity, And cause me to see trouble?"

The law is too strict such that not one can follow it, and the unjust are proud of their lawlessness. There is no justice and the wicked have surrounded the righteous.

Verses 5-11

The Chaldeans are an unjust nation; God allowed His chosen people to be subject to them in order to be disciplined, "For I will work a work in your days" (Habakkuk 1:5). In the Bible, every nation that rose against Israel symbolizes the devil and his kingdom. Thus, the interaction be-

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tween the Chaldeans the Israelites can be taken as a spiritual lesson.

"A bitter and hasty nation" The Chaldeans are violent and cause bitterness to the nations that they conquer.

"Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs" The Chaldeans are forceful and invade other nations.

"They are terrible and dreadful" The Chaldeans terrify all other nations

"Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves" The Chaldeans are a very authoritative nation that follows its own laws. They take over everything, following their pleasures and lusts.

"Their horses are swifter than leopards" Horses at that time were mainly used for war, this shows that the Chaldeans were in constant state of war, they had no mercy and were a deceptive nation.

"More fierce than evening wolves" Wolves which spent the day hungry and go out at night to hunt, kill and devour.

"Their chargers charge ahead" The Chaldeans attack from where you don't expect.

"Eagle that hastens to eat" Eagles are very fast and have excellent sight. They can see their prey from a far distance choosing to attack at the most opportune moment.

"They gather captives like sand" The evilness of the Chaldeans outweighs their goodness. They gather up other nations to make captives of them.

"They scoff at kings, and they scorn princes" All attempts from other nations to attack the Chaldeans generally fails and they end up becoming their prey.

"They deride every stronghold" This refers to any human stronghold.

"For they heap up earthen mounds and seize it" The Chaldeans plundered all of Israel's treasures.

"Then his mind changes, and he transgresses; he commits offense" The victories of the Chaldeans inflate their egos and pride makes them God's enemies.

"Ascribing this power to his god" They attribute their victory to their own power and that is how they drew near their destruction.

Verses 12 – 17

The prophet cried out again to God after he learned that the Chaldean punishment was not for death, "Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One?" as if he wanted to say to God You are Holy how can You tolerate this injustice.

"We shall not die" Habakkuk realizes that God is everlasting and will give from His infinite good-



ness to His people.

"O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment" The Chaldeans will not be able to abolish God's nation. All what they are doing is just disciplining them.

"O rock, You have marked them for correction" God appointed the Chaldeans for the purpose of discipline but He is the rock who will protect His people. God allowed Satan to punish His people, but He will not allow him to persist in his torment. The Chaldean sins are greater than the sins of the Israelites and God can use evil people or any means He desires to discipline His people. God allows tribulations from time to time to discipline us, but He will never leave us. So, we should go to Him and find shelter in the time of our tribulations.

The prophet then goes on to describe the characteristics of the torment of the Chaldeans. "They make men like fish of the sea" referring to the Chaldeans who can catch whomever they want from the Israelites. The verse "like creeping things that have no ruler over them" refers to the Chaldeans who can crush the Israelites like bugs. Finally, the Bible says, "They take up all of them with a hook, They catch them in their net, And gather them in their dragnet. Therefore they rejoice and are glad" verse 15

The verse 16 states, "Therefore they sacrifice to their net" usually people offer sacrifices to their god, but the Chaldeans are sacrificing to their net, signifying to their army. They considered their army the source of their power and sacrifice to it, making it like a god. People tend to glorify their own power and do not ascribe the glory to God.

"And burn incense to their dragnet; Because by them their share is sumptuous And their food plentiful" The Chaldeans rejoice over the big catch referring to the army capturing many Israelites, which is symbolism for the devil rejoicing over each of man's sinful mistakes.

The verse 17 says, "Shall they therefore empty their net, And continue to slay nations without pity?" The devil is like the Chaldeans, who with every catch get even hungrier for more. Thus the Chaldeans empty their net quickly such that it can be used it again, symbolizing the devil who will quickly come to tempt man time and time again.

Chapter 2

Verses 1 – 2

After Habakkuk finished his prayer to God, he waited for God's answer and His salvation.

"I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart" This is Habakkuk waiting for God's answer. He stood on the rampart, which is Jesus Christ, the Rock who protects all. Thus complaints and questions for God will not weaken our faith. The Lord can be questioned, but in the spirit of prayer, trusting in Him, however, not with a lack of faith or grumbling. Jesus Christ is the Ram-



part that announces the love of God the Father, also the Holy Spirit presents the Son (John 6:13-15). The Holy Spirit is in all Christians, and one has to withdraw from the loud noise of the world to be able to hear Him. Questions are answered in prayer and submission to God not by murmuring or disagreeing with His decisions.

"What He will say to me, and what I will answer" God answered the prophet and the believers. "The Lord answered me and said... make it clear for all the readers" So that they can understand and thus go repent.

The summary of the vision is that the righteous will live and those who are evil will perish. This may take time and happen eventually even if it is initially delayed. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time"

Verses 4 – 5

He started to describe God's sadness regarding the human sinful state of man and how it is like that of the Chaldeans. Man is proud, greedy, envious, unjust, dishonest, violent, and does not know God.

"His soul is not upright" This means that man is proud, ascribing all achievements to themselves and their own might.

"But the just shall live by faith" Those who are just should endure and trust in God, that He allows all things to be for good regardless of how they seem at the time.

The Chaldean people are wicked, they transgress in wine. The effect of wine is deceit. It causes man to do wrong just like in Noah's story. Drunkenness is more dangerous than pride.

God explains to the prophet that Chaldeans will be destroyed by their own greed and pride.

God's people have to holdfast to the faith, trusting in God regardless of what the Chaldeans do to them.

Verses 6 – 8

This is a prophecy of the fall of the Chaldean tyranny and that all the people oppressed by them will mock them. The Chaldean sin is pride thus their punishment was shame.

"Increases what is not his" The Chaldeans took what they did not deserve.

"Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty. In a moment the Chaldeans do not expect, people who seemed asleep will wake up and the Chaldeans will be their captives. As they plundered many nations the people shall plunder them. As they caused bloodshed their blood will be shed." The Chaldeans will lose all that they had achieved, what they did to other nations will be done to them. This is symbolic to sin. No matter how tempting and enjoying sin seems, it will never satisfy or fill man's desire.

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It will only destroy their life.

"Creditors" All what they capture is like a loan or a debt that they have to return.

Verses 9 – 11

"Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house" God is not against materialistic gain as long as it is done in an honest and proper way. The Chaldean people built up their nation by evil means thinking that this will protect them and give them security in the days to come. This is similar to what the people of Babel did, when they tried to build a tower to save them from any future flood.

"You give shameful counsel to your house" If evil is used in an attempt to build up wealth, security and protect from hard times, evil will come and destroy all that effort. The Chaldean people after they destroyed many nations, had evil eventually come to them. "For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the timbers will answer it"

Verses 13 – 14

"Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed" Nebuchadnezzar built the cities through injustice toward captives and bloodshed. The end result was fire that consumed Babylon, "Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the peoples labor to feed the fire?" This is a message to all those who put their hope in materialistic things.

"The nations weary themselves in vain" The whole world is vanity and will perish. However, this does not mean that man should not work. God put Adam in paradise that he might toil in it. Also, God was with Joseph and he was a successful man. This means that we should labor and toil but being careful to not give all our time for vain things, we must leave sufficient time for God.

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord" This is what happened with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the extension of His kingdom on earth.

Verses 15 – 17

This woe is against the devil that tempts the people to get drunk with the pleasure of this world, such that they loose their dignity. "Pressing him to your bottle" refers to whoever pours the wine. When Lot and Noah got drunk they lost their dignity and this is what the devil attempt to do to us. The devil tempts us with the lust of this world and with our freedom. This can also apply to all pressure others into commit sins or those who teaches others new sins.

"Be exposed as uncircumcised" Sin or anything that is perceived to earthly glory is a loss. St. Paul considered the whole world as a loss and this is what Satan attempt to trick man into



thinking is glory.

"For the violence done to Lebanon will cover you" Lebanon here represents man, God created man perfect in His own image, and through sin Satan has corrupted this image. Likewise the Chaldeans ruined the beauty of Jerusalem and oppressed its people.

"The plunder of beasts" The Chaldeans stole livestock. The verse points out that Satan can only influence those who follow their own desires.

"Made them afraid" The devil prepares tribulations for those who refuse to follow him in order to scare them. He even prepared the cross for Jesus. Those who get scared from the devil's tribulations and persecutions left God and eventually perished.

Verses 18 – 20

This final woe is against all idol worshipers. Idolatry will be of no benefit to them on the last day. The atheistic beliefs of modern philosophy are like gold and silver. They make one think that he can do all things, and cause one to trust in their own power.

The prophet saw God in the holy temple, so he said, "Let all the earth keep silence before Him". The prophet started questioning God's judgment only to eventually understand that through God's wisdom every mouth will be shut. Habakkuk replied with what could be paraphrased with "let Your will be done, Holy is Your name". Which is the appropriate prayer for anyone who wants to submit to God's will and who trusts in His wisdom (Revelation 11:33-36).

Chapter 3

Verses 1-2

"A prayer of Habakkuk" Prayers from prophets are considered prophecies.

"Shigionoth" This a musical instrument or could refer to a distinctive type of music.

"I heard your speech and I was afraid" When Habakkuk heard what the Chaldeans will do he was afraid. Thus he went to the Lord interceding for his people

"Revive Your work in the midst of the year" Habakkuk looked at the great work of God in the past, God showed him the future and His plan for salvation. However he understood that between those two realities there will be a period of discipline.

Verse 3

"Teman" Refers to the mountain in Sinai that Moses climbed to meet God.

"Paran" Refers to the mountain of Edom.

Come to Me... Come to Me...





Beginning from verse 3 we find a switch in the prophecy as the Lord answers Habakkuk's prayer. He remembered all of God's glory in Sinai and God showed him that this glory will be repeated again when He will save His people (Deuteronomy 33:2, Exodus 19: 20 & 24:17). These verses refer to the presence of God in His glory among the people. When God comes the heaven will be full of His glory and His majesty. Heaven may also refer to the human soul that as it gets attached to God becomes like the heaven.

"God came from Teman and the Holy one from Mount Paran" This means that God revealed His glory in Teman. In Deuteronomy 33:2 Moses said, "The Lord came from Sinai, and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran." Meaning that the Lord will show His glory first to the people of Israel in Sinai, followed by Seir which refers to the spreading the knowledge of God to the Gentiles.

Habakkuk uses Seir as a symbol of Gentiles who later came to believe in Jesus Christ. This is in contrast to Mount Paran, where the people of Israel were lost and is a symbol of the Jews accepting Christianity in the last days.

"And the earth was full of His praise" Is a prophecy for the spread of Christianity to the whole world.

Verses 4 – 8

Verse 4 is a description of the incarnation, light is a symbol of the divinity, the hand is a symbol of the humanity.

"His power was hidden" Referring to the incarnation, Jesus took the shape of a bondservant.

"Fever followed at His feet" Our Lord Jesus trampled death by His death, and death fled from His presence.

In verse 7 it refers to the place of Cushan which is part of the Palestinian land. This land is not Jewish land, rather its inhabitants were in continuous enmity with God's people.

In verse 8 the Sea refers to the world and the rivers refer to God's children. Here Habakkuk asked if God is displeased, and he makes a prophecy of God saving his people.

Verses 9 – 13

When God came to earth, He conquered death and crushed the head of the serpent. He destroyed all of the devil's power and gave us a New Covenant. He sent His apostles to announce to the whole world the message of salvation. The "arrows" entered our hearts and we became full of the Holy Spirit.

Warriors used to hang their bow on their backs while riding their horses. The Word of God



enters the hearts of people like arrows, filling them with the Holy Spirit which transforms them. The Word of God is like a beautiful river that goes through the land and giving life. "You divided the earth with rivers."

In verses 10 through 13 it explains how God's glory filled the whole earth. His wrath will be upon those who are evil and salvation will be for the righteous.

Verses 14 – 16

When the devil directs his evil arrows toward the Son of God, these arrows will bounce back towards him. The cross defeated Satan and his authority. Thus the evil nation's oppression of the Israelites would have very little overall effect.

"You walked through the sea with Your horses" Similar to how God saved His people from the Egyptians when he parted the Red Sea, He will save His people from the Chaldeans.

"When I heard, my body trembled" When Habakkuk realized the strength of his adversary he was frightened. However, after he asked God he understood that this tribulation was to discipline the Israelites, so he was reassured. Often people might feel like strangers in this world, but through the presence of God in their lives and the promise of eternal life they are reassured. As it is written, "In the world you will have tribulations, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world."

Verses 17 – 19

In verses 17 through 19, we learn that a sinner who insists on continuing in his/her sins loses all of their potential blessings. However, if there is repentance they must trust that the blessings will return even if they might be delayed. "Though the fig tree may not blossom... Yet I will rejoice in the Lord" this reinforces that when there is trust in God's mercy blessings will come, as long as there is repentance.

The believers rejoice in Christ even if "the fig tree may not blossom". This is because the true believer does not rejoice over materialistic things. The true believer will instead rejoice in their eternal life.

These verses might also refer to the last day and the great tribulation. The fig is a symbol of the Jewish nation that was cursed and the vine is a symbol of the church who as dispersed. "The labor of the olive may fail" is a symbol of the foolish virgins who did not have oil. "And there be no herd in the stalls" refers to a lack of believers in the churches. Despite all this the true believers rejoice. The secret of this joy is, "The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills"



Agpeya - Prayers of the Ninth Hour

Psalm 112 - Agpeya (Psalm 113 - Bible)

Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its going down the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high, who humbles himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth? He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, that He may seat him with princes-- With the princes of His people. He grants the barren woman a home, like a joyful mother of children. Alleluia.

Holy, Holy, Holy. A passage from the Gospel according to Saint Luke. May his blessings be with us all. Amen.

Luke 9:10-17

And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." But He said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people." For there were about five thousand men. Then He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of fifty." And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them.

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

Come to Me... Come to Me...



We worship You O Christ together with Your Good Father and the Holy Spirit, for You have come and saved us.

The worshipper prays the litanies:

O You, who tasted death in the flesh in the ninth hour, for the sake of us sinners. O Saviour, put to death our carnal lusts, O Christ, our God, and deliver us. Let my supplication draw close before You, O Lord; according to Your Word give me understanding. Let my petition reach Your presence; according to Your Word give me Life.

“Zoksapatri ke Eiyou-ke agi-you epnevmaty” (Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.)

O You, Who commanded Your spirit into the hands of the Father, after being on the wood of the cross at the ninth hour. You guided the thief who was crucified with You to join You in Paradise; do not neglect me, O Good-One, nor reject me, I, the lost one, but sanctify my soul and enlighten my understanding. Allow me to be a partaker of the Grace of Your Life-Giving Mysteries, that when I taste of Your Goodness I may offer praise without lukewarmness, longing for Your Light above all things, O Christ our Lord, and save us.

“Kenin ke aa-ee ke-ic-touce e-on-ace ton e-onon Amen.” (Both now and forever and unto the age of all ages, Amen.)

O You, Who for our sake was born of the Virgin, and endured crucifixion, O Good-one, and abolished death by Your death, and revealed the resurrection by Your resurrection; do not turn Your face, O God, from those whom You have created with Your own hands; but show forth Your love for mankind, O Good-One. Accept the intercession of Your Mother on our behalf, and save, O Saviour, Your humble people. Do not abandon us unto the end, and do not forsake us forever. Do not break Your covenant, and take not Your mercy from us, for the sake of Abraham Your beloved, Isaac Your servant, and Israel Your holy one.

“Kenin ke aa-ee ke-ic-touce e-on-ace ton e-onon Amen.” (Both now and forever and unto the age of all ages, Amen.)

When the thief saw the Author of Life hanging upon the Cross, He spoke saying:” If He Who is crucified with us were not the Incarnate God, the sun would not have hidden its rays, neither



would the earth have quaked in fear. But, O Almighty One, who endures all things, remember me, O Lord, when You come into Your kingdom.”

“Zoksapatri ke Eiyou-ke agi-you epnevmaty” (Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.)

O You, Who accepted unto Him the confession of the thief upon the Cross, accept us also unto Yourself, O Good-One, we who deserve the sentence of death because of our sins. We acknowledge our sins with the thief, confessing Your Divinity, crying out and saying: “Remember us, O Lord, when You come into Your Kingdom”.

“Kenin ke aa-ee ke-ic-touce e-on-ace ton e-onon Amen.” (Both now and forever and unto the age of all ages, Amen.)

When the Mother saw the Lamb, the Shepherd, the Saviour of the world, hanging upon the cross, she said weeping: “The world rejoices in that it has received salvation, while my heart burns as I look at Your crucifixion, which You are enduring for the sake of all, O my son and my God.”

Verses to Prove the Divinity of Christ

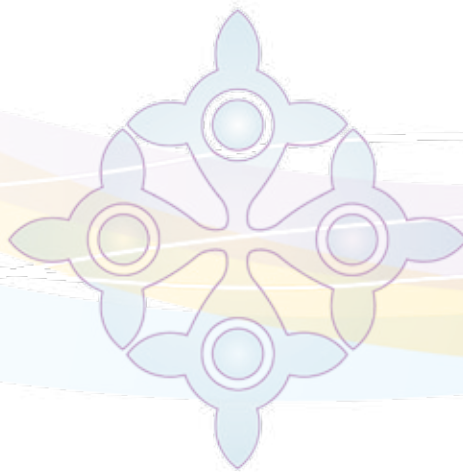
1. “Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’” (Matthew 16:16).
2. “Then they all said, ‘Are You then the Son of God?’ So He said to them, ‘You rightly say that I am’” (Luke 22:70).
3. “Nathanael answered and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’” (John 1:49).
4. “Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world’” (John 4:42).
5. “Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:69).

Come to Me... Come to Me...



Sayings of the Fathers

1. God loves each of us as if there were only one of us. Saint Augustine
2. From our neighbor is life and death. If we gain our brother, we gain God, but if we cause our brother to stumble, we sin against Christ. Saint Anthony
3. Do not fear that evil might spread or prevail. Evil should be defeated before the endured truth, despite of the length of time. For every Goliath there is a David waiting to defeat him in the name of the Lord of Hosts. Pope Shenouda III
4. If you are not able to carry others tribulations, at least do not be the source of their tribulations. Pope Shenouda III
5. The way of humility is to undertake bodily labour and believe yourself a sinner and make yourself subject to all. An Elder of the Desert.



Come to Me...

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