



SMS speakers schedule for the month of March:

3/7/2008	Monastery Trip / No Meeting
3/14/2008	Fr. Karas St. Anthony, St. Antonius Monastery
3/7/2008	Fr. Antonius St. Anthony, St. Antonius Monastery
3/28/2008	H.G Bishop Serapion, Bishop of Southern California Dioceses

6:30 – 7:30 pm	Agape
7:30 – 8:00 pm	Praises & Songs
8:00 – 9:00 pm	Lecture, Q &A



Spiritual Exercises While Fasting

(By H.H. Pope Shenouda III)

To have a powerful effect on your spiritual life during Lent, you need to follow certain exercises. These exercises, when you apply them to life's situations, will help you benefit from your fast:

Exercise giving up a specific sin, from the sins that prevail upon you, and which is repeated in many of your confessions.

Exercise learning some Psalms from the Agpeya. You may choose one or two Psalms from each of the seven prayers, especially the Psalms that have a lingering effect on you.

Exercise learning the Bible readings of the different hours, divide them into parts, analyze them, knowing that for each prayer there are three or six parts.

Exercise the mental prayer of what you have learned. You may pray during work, on the road, while with people or at any time.

Use these prayers, Psalms and Bible readings as a sphere for contemplation, to enable you to pray them with depth and understanding.

Exercise spiritual readings: either by reading from the Bible regularly, with understanding and meditation, or reading the lives of the Saints or some spiritual books, so that you gain a profitable yield of deep readings.

During lent, you may exercise learning the hymns of lent and the Passion Week, and repeating them until you are full of their spirit. The same is true of Advent.

You may exercise a certain higher level of fasting, under the supervision of your spiritual father.

There are many spiritual exercises in the field of dealing with people... such as gentleness, patience, enduring others' weaknesses, controlling anger, using words of praise and encouragement, serving and helping others, kindness and meekness.

Other exercises in purity of the heart include: modesty, inner peace, love of God, being satisfied without grumbling, quietness with no disturbance, internal joy in the spirit, faith and hope.

Food for Thought:

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others"

"We need to be the change we wish to see in the world"

-Ghandi

Youth: How can we choose our partner in life?

(By: H.G Bishop Moussa)



*Pray a lot, * Think a lot, * Feel a bit, * Ask for spiritual guidance. We are asking you to 'feel a bit' because the sound of emotions can be very loud, and it can hide the spirit and the mind. For example, because of emotions, one may enter into a relationship with a non-Christian person because they are intelligent, good-looking, etc., but they do not think about the future of living with and raising a family with a non-Christian partner. Therefore if we rely on our emotions, it may cause our thinking to stop and our spiritual life to be minimum.

Biblical Answers

(Continued from last issue, By H.G Bishop Rapheal)

6- Thus, we have faith, baptism and repentance... what else?

- "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you"
- "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn. 6: 53-58)



7- Therefore, faith, baptism, repentance and the Eucharist. Is there anything more?

- There should be evidence of my true faith through good works, "They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him" (Tit. 1:16)
- "For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice, and come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (Jn. 5: 28,29)
- "Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven" (Math. 7:21)

8- Do our works affect our salvation that much?

- "Also, to you O, Lord belongs mercy, for You render to each one according to his work" (Ps. 62:12)
- "For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Eccl. 12:14)
- "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works" (Math. 16:27)
- "I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment" (Math. 12:36)
- "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Math. 12:37)
- "Behold I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work" (Rev. 22:12)

9- From all that we have read, I can conclude that:-

In order to reach heaven, I have to believe in Christ, be baptized on the name of the Holy Trinity, continually repent, strive to be pure and holy and continue to partake in the Holy Communion. I must try to search for what is good and be virtuous, while staying away from negative influences that can threaten my salvation. I must constantly reflect on my life and be ready to repent.

It is always good to remember:

- "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12)
- "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1)
- "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1Cor. 10:12)
- "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble" (2 Pet. 1:10)
- "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it" (Heb. 4:1)
- "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation" (Heb. 2:3)

Perseverance in prayer cleanses the intellect, illumines it, and fills it with the light of truth. The virtues, led by compassion, give the intellect peace and light. The cleansing of the intellect is not a dialectical, discursive and theoretical activity, but an act of grace through experience and is ethical in every respect. The intellect is purified by fasting, vigils, silence, prayer, and other ascetic practices.

• **St. Isaac the Syrian** •



Why isn't the Evidence Clearer?

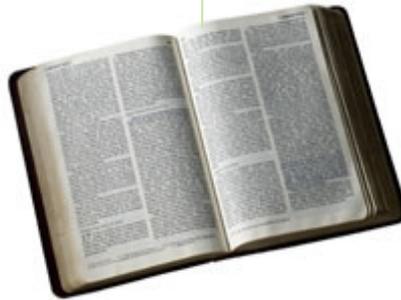
(By: George Bassilios)

Why isn't the evidence for the God of the Bible clearer? That is, why isn't the evidence for the truth of the Scriptures so obvious and undeniable that virtually everyone would acknowledge it, repent, and come to the knowledge of Christ, the One True God? Is God trying to trick us by making us hunt and search for answers?

Given this tendency on our part, how clear does the evidence have to be before people would universally recognize the divinity of Christ and His sovereignty over the world? In his book, *Contact*, Carl Sagan, an atheist, asked why God doesn't place a glowing cross in the sky at night to serve as irrefutable evidence for Christ's reign? But would a cross in the sky actually be sufficient to convert Carl Sagan? Would the performance of an undeniable miracle in the presence of the renowned atheist, Michael Martin, be enough? However impressive such events would be, the records of history show that most people choose to ignore whatever evidence they have, no matter how clear it may be.

In the wilderness, the Israelites, who had personally observed the miracles in Egypt and who were being fed and guided daily by miraculous means (manna and the pillar of fire), repeatedly rebelled against their leader Moses. The miracles performed by Elijah and Elisha were not sufficient to compel the Northern Kingdom of Israel to Godly worship. In the New Testament Our Lord healed the lame and the blind and raised the dead, yet the Jewish leaders, who could not dispute the genuineness of His miracles, wanted to kill Him. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man, in hell, pleads with Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his brothers so they will not face the same torment that he is experiencing. Abraham replies, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

God, through the scriptures, is showing us, that no matter how clear He makes the evidence, it will never be sufficient



for some. More evidence by itself will not convince people whose minds are already emotionally attached to an opposing view, because people are not always rational. The mind is all too often the servant of the wickedness of sin and tyranny of Satan brought into our nature by the fall.

St Paul says in Romans: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things." (Rom 1:20-23)

At the very least, the evidence which God gives includes His glory as seen in nature, evidence which in our perverse days we tend to ascribe it to causes like "chance" or the "laws of nature."

However we might personally feel about it, God says that He has provided evidence clear enough that every human being is morally responsible to respond to it. Those who choose to ignore His evidence will have to answer to Him and it is not an enviable task. It is like arguing with a Judge over a speeding ticket: How can we say we did not see the sign when the Judge himself posted it? How foolish would we be if we tried to argue that we saw the sign but thought it was too small and too insignificant to take seriously?

In Matthew 12:38-39 the Pharisees challenged Jesus by demanding that He perform a sign impressive enough to force them to believe His message. But God does not feel obligated to cater to the egos of the morally corrupt who bend whatever evidence they receive to suit their own needs and ends.

Blaise Pascal once said: "God has given us evidence sufficiently clear to convince those with an open heart and mind. Yet evidence sufficiently vague so as not to compel those whose hearts and minds are closed."

Feasts of the Month:

March 3 rd	Beginning of Lent
March 9 th	Feast of the Departure of Pope Kyrillos VI
March 19 th	Feast of the Cross
March 21 st	Departure of Father Bishoy Kamel
March 26 th	Departure of Father Mikail Ibrahim

New Comers:

The Church Welcomes:

- ✚ Wade Guindy, who lives in Dublin.
- ✚ Youssef Soras, who lives in San Francisco.
- ✚ Robert Salaa, who lives in Hayward with his father, Kamal
- ✚ Mary Abusief & her husband Mark Brodent, who live in Menlo Park.

رحلة الخبر إلى أذنيك للبابا شنودة الثالث

ليس كل ما يصل إلى أذنيك هو صدق خالص. فلا تتحمس بسرعة لكل ما تسمع ولا لكل ما تقرأ. ولا تتخذ إجراءً سريعاً لمجرد كلام سمعته من إنسان ما. بل تحقق أولاً. واعرف أن كثيراً من الكلام يقطع رحلة طويلة قبل أن يصل إلى أذنيك.

★★ نعم لو كنا نعيش في عالم مثالي، أو في وسط الملائكة، لأمكنك حينئذ أن تُصدّق كل ما تسمعه، ولا تتعب ذاتك في فحص الأحاديث ولكن ما دُمنّا نعيش في مُجتمع توجد فيه ألوان من الناس يختلفون في نوع أخلاقياتهم، وفي مدى تمسكهم بالفضيلة، فإن الحكمة تقتضي إذن أن تُدقّق ونُحَقِّق قبل أن تُصدّق، وأن نفحص كل شيء ونتمسك بما هو حق.

★★ ولكن قد يقول أحدهم: "إنني أُصدّق هذا الخبر على الرغم من غرابته، لأنني سمعته من إنسان صادق لا يمكن أن يكذب". نعم، قد يكون هذا الإنسان صادقاً، ولكنه سمع الخبر من مصدر غير صادق، أو من مصدر غير دقيق ... أو قد يكون الشخص الذي نقل الخبر إلى مَن حدّثك، جاهلاً بحقيقة الأمر، أو قد يكون مبالغاً أو ربّما يكون قد أخطأ في السماع أو الفهم. أو أن المصادر التي استقى منها معلوماته غير سليمة...

★★ أو ربّما يكون المصدر الأصلي الذي أخذ عنه هذا وذاك غير خالص النية فيما يقول. وهناك أسباب شخصية تدفعه إلى طمس الحقائق، أو إلى الدس والإيقاع بين الناس. أو قد يكون من النوع الذي يتباهى بمعرفة الأخبار والسبق إلى نشرها بين الناس. فيقول ما يصل إليه بسرعة بدون تحقيق ...

★★ ولكن ربّما يقول القائل: "إنني لم أسمع هذا الخبر من فرد واحد فقط، إنّما من كثيرين، مما يجزم بصحته". فنقول: إنه لا يصح أن نحكم عن طريق السماع دون تحقيق، حتى لو سمعنا من كثيرين! فما أكثر ما يكون كلام الكثيرين على وفرة عددهم، له مصدر واحد مخطئ ...

★★ إن وصية "لا تشهد بالزور" كما أنها موجهة إلى المُتكلِّم، هي أيضاً موجهة إلى السامع. فالذي يسمع الكذب ويقبله، إنّما يُشجّع الكاذب على الاستمرار في كذبه. وبقبوله، يحيط نفسه بأناس مخطئين غير مخلصين.

★★ وقد يقع في هذا الفخ، البسطاء الذي يُصدّقون كل ما يسمعون! ويتكلمون عنه. كأنه حقيقة، دون فحص أو تدقيق. وفي الحقيقة لا نستطيع أن نُسمّي مثل هذه بساطة. لأن البساطة في جوهرها هي عدم التعقيد، وليس قلة الفهم أو البعد عن الحكمة والتدقيق.

★★ إنّما بعض الأشخاص قد يسمع كلاماً، فيتناوله ويضيف عليه رأيه الخاص ومفهومه الخاص، واستنتاجه وأغراضه وطنونه، ويُقدّم كل ذلك معاً لإنسان آخر، كأنه الكلام المباشر الذي سمعه ممن نطق به!!

★★ انظروا يا إخوتي ماء النيل وقت الفيضان، وهو بني اللون من كثرة ما حمل من طمي ... هذا الماء كان في أصله ماءً نقيّاً صافياً رائعاً عندما نزل مطراً من السماء على جبال الحبشة. ولكنه طوال رحلته في الطريق، كان ينحت الطمي من الصخور، ويختلط بالطين حتى وصل إلينا في الفيضان بصورته وهو بني اللون طيني...

هكذا كثير من الأخبار التي تصل إليك مُشَبَّعة بالطين، ربّما كانت رائقة صافية في بادئ الأمر. والفرق بينها وبين ماء النيل، أن طينه مُعِيد للأرض. أمّا الطين الذي خلطه الناس في نقلهم للأحاديث، فإنه صار وخطر ومُفسد للعلاقات...
كثير من الأخبار عندما تصل إليك، تكون أخبار مختلفة جداً عن الواقع. لذلك أقول مرة أخرى: لا تُصدّق كل ما يُقال. بل حقّق ودقّق، قبل أن تُصدّق

Saint Moses the Strong Fellowship

Delivered to you by St. Antonius Coptic Orthodox Church

2500 Hansen Rd. Hayward, CA 94541

Logos Newsletter

March 2008

Volume 2, Issue 3

LOGOS

Return Service Requested

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hayward, CA
Permit No. 247

If you would like to subscribe to this magazine, please send us your information to logos@antoni.org or fill out the attached form.