

Church News

Newcomers- The Church Welcomes:

- ❖ Noha, to join her husband, Mamdoouh Ibrahim who lives in Hayward.
- ❖ Ehab Hanna, his wife, Sihad and their son, Daniel (born in 6/9/2007). They live in Foster City.
- ❖ Hani Elmankabadi, his wife, Sherin and their sons, Karim (born in 3/25/2002) & Youssef (born in 12/23/2005).
- ❖ Julie Attalla to study in San Francisco.
- ❖ Michael Attalla to study in San Francisco.
- ❖ Erene Mina to study in San Francisco.
- ❖ Chris Magdy to study in Fremont.

Blessed Marriage- The Church Congratulates:

- ❖ On Sunday, August 31st, 2008, the marriage of the blessed son, Rudy Ghaly and the blessed daughter, Sherry Yassa was celebrated in St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church of Elk Grove, Sacramento by H.G. Bishop Athanasius of Beni Mazar, along with Fr. Arsanius, priest of St. Mary Church of Sacramento, Fr. James from L.A., Fr. John Ragheb, priest of St. John Church of San Ramon, Fr. Anthony Hanna, priest of St. Mina of Concord and Fr. Matthias. Congratulations and best wishes. Congratulations also to our fellow servants of the Church, Saher and Mona Yassa, the parents of the bride.

Condolences:

- ❖ Mary, her husband, Esmat Abdelmalek and her son, Dr. Michael the Church Board members and to Mourad Lotfy and his wife, Nawal and to Laura Lotfy for the departure of their brother, the late, Fouad Lotfy.
- ❖ Safwat Hanna and his wife, Ikhlas for the departure of his sister, the late, Hoda Hanna.

"Plant a Garden of Joy"



Plant 5 rows of Peas:

Prayer, perseverance, politeness, promptness, and purity

Plant 3 rows of Squash:

Squash gossip, squash criticism, and squash indifference

Plant 5 rows of lettuce:

Let us be faithful to duty; let us be unselfish; let us be truthful; let us follow Christ; let us love one another

No garden is complete without Turnips:

Turn up for church;
Turn up with a smile;
Turn up with new ideas;
Turn up with determination to make everything count for something good and worthwhile.

When you are praying alone, and your spirit is dejected, and you are wearied and oppressed by your loneliness, remember then, as always, that God the Trinity looks upon you with eyes brighter than the sun; also all the angels, your own Guardian Angel, and all the Saints of God. Truly they do; for they are all one in God, and where God is, there are they also. Where the sun is, thither also are directed all its rays. Try to understand what this means.

-St. John of Kronstadt



The Glorious Feast of the Cross

H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III



The Church celebrates the feast of the Cross twice every year, on March 19th and September 27th. On the feast of the Cross we remember many vital matters: spiritual, theological, doctrinal and symbolic.

1. We remember the love with which Christ loved us- to the point where He died for our sake:
We remember His words, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." Sacrifice is the greatest sign of love, and self-sacrifice is the summit of sacrifice.
2. In the Cross we remember also Redemption:
A soul that dies for another soul, this is the principle of atonement. We were under the judgment of death, then came He who would die for us in "order for us to live. His death on the Cross can be described as follows, "All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way,. And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).
3. In the Cross we remember endurance:
The great sufferings that our Master endured, whether the sufferings of the flesh of which He said, "They pierced My hands and My feet,' I can count all My bones", or the sufferings of dishonour, He endured happily for our sake; that is, whilst He was happy with our salvation. Hence, the Apostle said about Him, "...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame..." (Hebrews 12:2). How great then is this endurance if it is with joy?! This is a lesson for us.
4. In the Cross we remember forgiveness:
How our sins were forgiven on the Cross and how the Master spoke to the Heavenly Father whilst on the Cross saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).
5. In making the sign of the Cross we remember the Holy Trinity, the One God:
This is because we make the sign of the cross whilst saying, 'In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God; Amen'. Hence, the Cross carries a theological meaning.
6. In the Cross we remember the Incarnation and its aim:
We remember whilst making the sign of the cross how the Lord came down from heaven to earth to transfer us from the left to the right, from darkness to light and from death to life.
7. In the Cross we remember our sins:
Our sins that He carried on the Cross and for which He was incarnated and crucified. With this remembrance we are humbled and our souls contrited, and we are thankful for the price which He paid for our sakes, "For you were bought at a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20).
8. In the cross we remember Divine Justice:
That forgiveness was not on account of justice, but Divine Justice fulfilled its right on the Cross. Therefore, we must not underestimate sin, which has such a price.
9. When we remember the Cross, we remember the great power that defeated the devil:
All of the devil's effort to destroy mankind was completely lost on the Cross with the redemption which the Lord offered. Hence, the devil is extremely terrified of the -Cross. On the other hand, we find in it safety and protection, that is why we remember the Apostle's words, "But God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14).
10. In the remembrance of the Cross, we remember how we should be crucified with Him:
As the Apostle said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). We also remember the Lord Jesus Christ saying, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself; and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34).

How couldn't we boast?!!

By H.G Bishop Raphael

Adel met with his friend Estavros at school; he had a question since the first day of school, that he was shy to ask. Later that day, Adel got the courage to ask Estavros that question:

Adel: Your name is quite strange! What does Estavros mean?!!

Estavros: It means Cross.

Adel: So why is your name was not simply "Cross", it would have been easier to understand?

Estavros laughed & told Adel: "Estavros" is in Coptic & Greek. Anyway, you may call me "Cross" if you wish & I will be pleased.

Adel: May I ask you a trite question but do not get upset?

Estavros: Sure! I'm all ears!

Adel: Why do you people love the cross that much, boast it, wear it, hang it in your homes & over churches, even your name is on the name of the cross? On the contrary, it is supposed to be a sign of shame, disgrace & hatred for you since the Lord Christ got crucified upon it.

Estavros answered the following:

1) The cross represents "Power" to us - As for the Lord Christ has not been crucified out of weakness or defeat, but to save us & to trample Satan & death down by means of the cross.

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God." (1Cor. 1: 18).

2) The Cross was our reconciliation means with Heavens - "And that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity." (Eph. 2: 16).

"By Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. 1: 20).

3) The Cross is the reason beyond our eternal salvation & the remission of our sins -

"Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." (Col. 2: 14). Of course the handwriting of our sins and bondage to Satan.

4) The Cross is the source of our boast by which we overcome sin & Satan - "I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me & I to the world." (Gal. 6: 14).

5) Cross is a mean of participating with Christ in His passion as well - "And he who doesn't take his cross and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me." (Mt. 10: 38).



"I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2: 20).

"And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passion and desires." (Gal. 5: 24).

Adel: What's a huge number of verses! Do you memorize them all?!!

Estavros: of course! Isn't it my name...? Besides, many people asked me before you.

We love the cross..

Because Christ has been crucified totally according to His will, power and plan...

He never got crucified forcibly, furiously, or out of coincidence.

By the cross, Christ has trampled down and defeated death by crushing the devil.

Moreover, by the cross He saved us and granted us eternal life.

So how couldn't we boast in the cross?!!

SMS speakers schedule for the month of
August:

See last page of newsletter for St. Mary's Revival
Schedule of Speakers

Speakers will begin at 7pm each night

Feasts of the Month:

- ❖ **September 11, Tout 1:** El Nayrouz Feast
- ❖ **September 12, Tout 2:** Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist
- ❖ **September 17, Tout 7:** Martyrdom of St. Dioscorus
- ❖ **September 22, Tout 12:** The council of Ephesus
- ❖ **September 26, Tout 16:** Consecration of the Church of the resurrection in Jerusalem
- ❖ **September 27, Tout 17:** The Feast of Cross
- ❖ **September 29, Tout 19:** Departure of St. Gregory the Armenian

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St. Antonius Coptic Orthodox Church Newsletter

Delivered to you by Saint Moses the Strong Fellowship
2500 Hansen Rd. Hayward, CA 94541

Logos Newsletter

September 2008
Volume 2, Issue 79



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

Return Service Requested

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حياة القداسة في رسائل القديس أثناسيوس الفصحية (رسالة ماجستير للقمص متياس) بقية

2:3 السقوط

2:3 - أ اندحار

طالما أن البشر يحملون صورة الله، فهم يحملون الله الكلمة، ويسكنون في عدم الفساد. أما بعد السقوط، فالقديس يعبر عنهم أنهم "نزلوا، وانحدروا إلى أسفل" ويصور لنا عارهم وسقوطهم من النعيم. بقوله "أنهم لا يحملون صورة حياة القديسين، ولا صورة الله" بل رغم أنهم بشر صاروا يصلون بالكاد إلى مستوى الحيوانات، أما دوافعهم السائبة نحو الهفوات والملذات فهي يمكن أن تقارن بالأحصنة المملوطة السائبة في شهواتها (إر 5:8). ولأجل غشهم وجرائمهم وخطاياهم فهم يلقبون بأولاد الأفاعى (لو 7:3).

وهكذا سار الناس، بمشورة الشيطان (تك 3:5) وراء الأشياء الحسية التي تتناسب مع طبيعتهم الساقطة. إذن فأساس الخطية يكمن في هذه الحقيقة أن البشر، إذ نزلوا إلى مستوى أن يتمرغوا في التراب مثل الحيات، صارت عقولهم لا تتجه إلى شيء أعلى من مستوى الأمور التي ترى، معتبرين أن هذه الأمور هي أسمى من أي شيء آخر. لذلك فهم يتلذذون بهذه الأمور الحسية، وبهذا فهم لا يخدمون الرب بل شهواتهم الخاصة... وبعبارة أخرى قد تحولوا من صورة الله إلى صورة البهائم.

وهكذا فإن انعدام وجود العلاقة القوية مع الله الكلمة يعنى أن البشر قد تجردوا من العقل بصورة ما. فهم إذ يعيشون في الخطية فأنهم لا يختلفون كثيراً عن الحيوانات. ولذلك يقول لهم المزمور "لا تكونوا كفرس أو بغل بلا فهم" (مز 9:32). لذلك لأنهم يسمحون لأنفسهم بأنواع كثيرة من الفساد الأخلاقي. وأن أسوأ هذه الأنواع من الفساد هو عبادة الأوثان. فقد صار الناس أغبياء وعديمي الفهم، حتى أنهم صاروا يشبهون أنفسهم بالله، ظانين أنهم يمكن أن يخترعوا شيئاً مساوياً له، كما يقول بولس الرسول "بينما يزعمون أنهم حكماء صاروا جهلاء. وأبدلوا مجد الله الذى لا يفنى بشبه صورة الانسان الذى يفنى، والطيور والدواب والزحافات" (رو 1:32-33). ويقول النبي "فيمن تشبهون الله؟ وبأى شبه تعادلون به؟" (اش 40:18). لذلك يقول عنهم داود النبي "مثلما يكون صانعوها، بل كل من أكل عليها" (مز 108:8).

أما الهراطقة والمشقون وكل من هم غرباء عن الكنيسة الجامعة فهم أسوأ من الوثنيين. ذلك لأنهم خطاة ومحرومون من الشركة في تسييح الله مع القديسين. لذلك رغم أن هؤلاء الأشرار يزجون بأنفسهم في كنيسة القديسين، إلا أن الله يرفضهم. كما أنه لا توجد شركة بين البر والإثم، ولا بين النور والظلمة (2كو 6:14).

لقد نتج عن سقوط الانسان أنواع كثيرة من الخطايا، والأُن ما هي طبيعة الخطية؟

3:2 - ب طبيعة الخطية

أن المفهوم الأساسى للخطية هو أنها ظلمة، وانعدام وجود النور والفضيلة: بعيداً عن النور توجد ظلمة، وبعيداً عن البركة توجد لعنة. كما أن الشيطان بعيد عن القديسين، والخطية بعيدة عن الفضيلة. (رسالة 4:10).

وهذا معناه أن الخير موجود أما الشر فليس له وجود. لأن الفضيلة هي نور أما الشر فهو ظلمة. وبما أن الظلمة هي غياب النور، فالخطية هي غياب الفضيلة. وهكذا فالقديس أثناسيوس يصف الشر بأنه عدم، مستخدماً أسلوب الأفلاطونية وتعبيراتها. ولكنه يرفض وجهة نظر الذين يعتبرون المادة كأصل للشر. ومن أشهر هذه المجموعات هم الغنوسيون والمانويون!!

أذن فالخطية هي ظلمة، لذا فالخطاة مثل اليهود والأريوسيين وكل الأشرار هم محرومون من النور والحياة والنعمة التي كان يمكن لهم أن يحصلوا عليها في المسيح المخلص. أنهم يعيشون في الظلمة "لأن الروح الفحس يهرب من الفس، ولا يسكن في الأجساد التي تحب الخطية، بل ينزع منهم الأفكار البعيدة عن الفهم (حكمة 1:4، 5)

لذلك أذ هم بلا فهم، فهم يعيشون في الظلمة، أذ ليس لهم "النور الحقيقي الذى يضى لكل أنسان أتى إلى العالم" (يو 1:9). أنهم هكذا عميان عن الحق، حتى أنهم يزحفون في الظلام كما يقول أشعيا (اش 6:9، 10). كذلك أيضاً بما أن الأشرار محرومة من الحياة فهم أذن أموات، إذ هم يصلون (اش 13:22). أنهم يدفنون أرواحهم في الخطايا والسخافات، ويغذونها بالشيء المائتة. فهم مثل النور التي تنزل على جثث الأموات

وتأكلها. وإنما نجد الناموس يأمر بعدم أكل النسر ولا أى طائر آخر من اطيور التي تتغذى على (لا 11:13) كرمز موجه ضد الذين يقتلون أرواحهم. لذلك لا عجب إذا كان هناك نوعان من الطعام يمكن للنفس أن تتغذى بهما. فإن الله يغذى كل البشر بالمسيح، الله الكلمة الحى، ويقدم طعاماً وحياة للقديسين، كما يصرح الرب ويقول "أنا هو خبز الحياة" (يو 6:48). ومن الناحية الأخرى، فالخطية أيضاً لها خبزها الخاص، خبز الموت، لأن الذين يحبون الملذات ينقصهم الفهم!!

خاتمة

وفي ختام هذا الفصل، نود أن نقول أن نتائج السقوط يمكن أن تتلخص في نقطتين رئيسيتين وهما الموت وتعتميم الصورة التي كان يمكن بها للإنسان أن يعرف الله الكلمة. وهاتين النقطتين تتفقان مع السببين الرئيسيين للتجسد الإلهي وهما إيتعادة الخلود وتجديد صورة الله في الإنسان الساقط.

Happy September Birthdays to:

9/2 Daniel Atallah	9/13 Adriann Ekdawy	9/27 Antonius Abdel Shahid
9/2 Daniel Hanna	9/13 Patrick Takla	9/27 Sarah Elzahr
9/2 Rodrigo Calderon	9/14 Edward Ishak	9/27 Steve Sidhom
9/4 Heidi Iskander	9/14 Louis Nessim	9/28 Andrew Youssef
9/4 Leeza Gabriel	9/15 Marline Agib	9/28 Jennifer Kyrollos
9/4 Nancy Safain	9/15 Sandra Aziz	9/28 John Nashed
9/4 Ramez Tabri	9/16 Kerolos Nakhla	9/29 Natalie Foad
9/5 Karmen Ghobrial	9/16 Mariam Sentaws	9/30 Nancy Sousou
9/6 Michael Demian	9/17 Paul Aziz	9/30 Scott Hilmy
9/7 Helen Yohanes	9/19 Monique Takla	
9/7 Marina Hanna	9/20 Rosemary Wanis	
9/7 Monica Ishak	9/22 Dina Traza Sharkway	
9/7 Noha Armanios	9/24 Suzan Saddik	
9/8 Anthony Dahdah	9/25 Dina Mikhail	
9/8 Mark Awad	9/25 Michael Sakla	
9/10 Daniel Gallab	9/26 Abram Moudi	
9/10 Monica Morcos	9/26 Angel Amir	
9/11 Bishoy Wassef	9/26 Antoine Marcus	
9/12 Maggie Assad	9/26 Ava Moudi	
9/12 Mina Badrous	9/26 Sable Kiflegiogs	

