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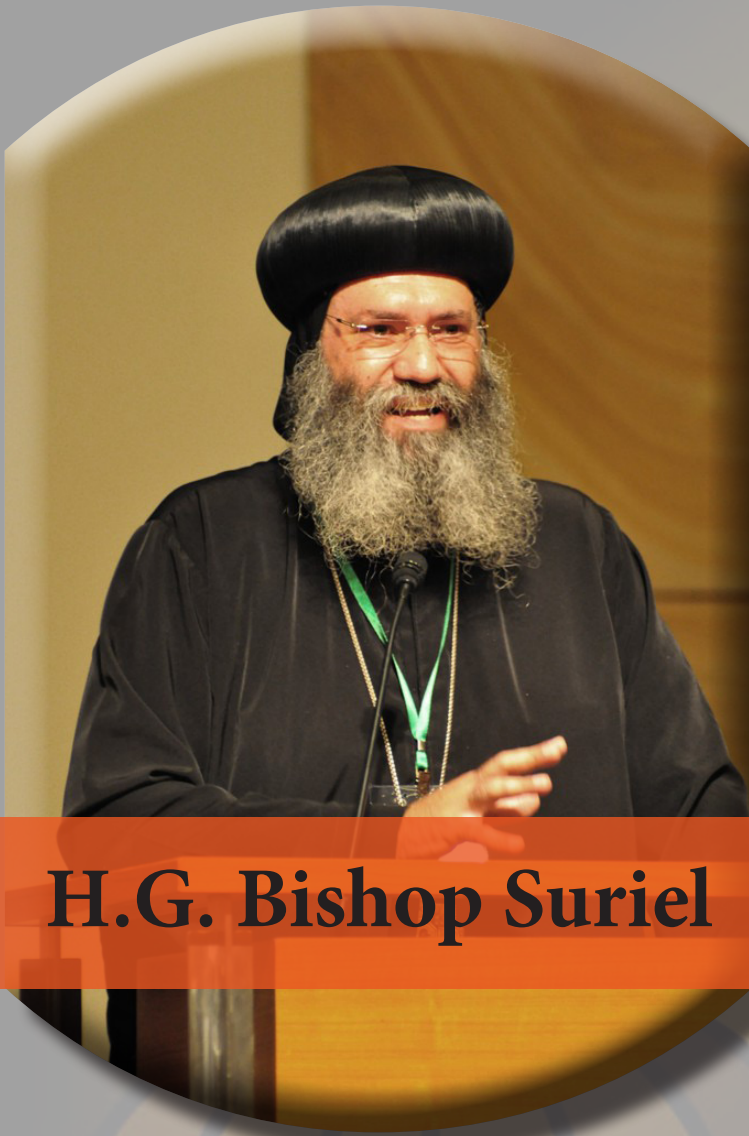


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Halloween HALLOWED OR HARMFUL?

H.G. Bishop Suriel

The subject of Halloween is something that has caught my attention over the last few weeks. Some might ask Why?

As this is a natural part of life in America, they may add that: “this is the second important occasion on our yearly calendar after Christmas. It is a fun time for us and our children, who dress up in a scary clothes and go around trick or treating and having lots of fun. Fun? I am not so sure about that? Can we call dressing up our children as vampires, ghosts, devils and witches as fun? As I passed through some stories, I was some what surprised by how much impact Halloween played in people lives. It was everywhere, in shopping centers, banks, hospitals, households, everywhere you could see signs of people preparing for this “fun” celebration. I was even asked by one person in a retail store where I had obtained my black gown, because this was exactly what she was looking for, for a Halloween party! When I replied “from Egypt”, she became so

sad, perhaps because she expected me to tell her which costume shop I had bought it from!

We also need to realize that Halloween is a big business in America. The Christian Broadcasting Network states that, “Merchants also look forward to October 31. The sale of candy, costumes, decorations, and party goods make Halloween one of the major retail seasons of the year”. In a book called “Halloween and Satanism” it states, “Did you know that Halloween is a day witches celebrate above all other days?...Even the Internal Revenue Services has given tax exempt status to the church of Wicca (the official church of witchcraft), which means your gift to witchcraft is a tax deductible, charitable donation of a religious nature, the same as if you were tithing to the (Christian) Church”.

So how did Halloween begin? Many centuries before the birth of Christ, the Celts and priests, inhabitants of Britain and Ireland, observed the festival of Samhain on October 31 (Samhain is their god, lord of the dead), this marked the eve of the Celtic New Year, which began on Novem-

ber 1. It was at this time that full harvest was complete and winter was creeping in. The Celts believed that the power of the Sun was fading and for the next few months, darkness would prevail. They also believed that during the Samhain, the evil separating the living and the dead was at its thinnest. They believed that on the evening of October 31, evil spirits and souls of the dead passed through the barrier and entered the world of the living. Departed family members would revisit their earthly homes. The thought was frightening and exciting!

The Celts believed that these spirits and dead souls could torment the living. Crops might be destroyed, babies stolen, farm animals killed. But this was also an opportunity to commune with the spirits, and divine the future. The Devil, the lord of darkness, was ordinarily feared, but during Samhain, his power would be called on to foretell the future.

Trick or Treat

The Druids were responsible for appeasing the goblins and preventing harm to the people. Huge Samhain bonfires were lit to guide the way of the spirits. Various sacrifices, including human,

were performed to assure a good year. Like many pagan cultures around the world, the Celts left out food for the spirits, hoping that a “treat” would prevent an evil “trick”.

Centuries later, descendants of the Celts continued to observe the Samhain festival by dressing as evil spirits. They roamed from house to house demanding food in exchange for the “spirits” leaving the home unharmed. They

craved demon faces in hollowed-out turnips and lighted them with candles. This is what is called “Jack-O-Lantern”. The story says that an Irish drunkard named Jack made a deal with the devil and devil agreed to spare his soul for ten years. But a year later, Jack died and was turned back from the gates of heaven. So he went to the gates of hell and was rejected by the devil also. So as Jack was walking to find a place, he was eating a turnip so the devil threw him a live coal out of the fires of the hell. So Jack put the coal in the turnip to help him see. It is believed that since that time Jack is roaming the face of the earth with the Jack-O-Lantern seeking a place of rest. I hope such a story that is rooted in devil worship will make people think carefully before they put a Jack-O-Lantern in their house!

Just as people once offered gifts of food to the spirits, people today offer treats to the children who represent them. In reality, the lighted Jack-O-Lanterns, the children carry, are really a symbol of the fires and torches of former Halloweens and of the ancient Samhain. This was the begin-



ning of the trick or treat!

All Hallows' Eve

In the seventh century the Roman Catholic Church set aside a day in May in memory of the early Christians who died for their faith. It was called All Saints' Day. By the year 900 the date was changed to November 1st. Another name for All Saints' Day was All Hallows. October 31st was known as All Hallows' Eve, which was later shortened to Halloween. The reason for the change of the date was an attempt to encourage people to replace this evil celebration with a holy feast.

Halloween in America

Halloween with all its customs arrived in America in the mid-1800's with the Irish immigrants. The costumes of the Children going "trick or treating" have become an established American tradition. Only in recent years have parents hesitated to send their children into streets because of the increased danger of accidents, poisoned food, and menacing strangers.

People today might be innocently imitating the ancient Celtic customs, but in an indirect way they are participating and celebrating something sinister and evil. The Christian Broadcasting Network states that, "Witches and Satanists still consider Halloween to be one of the strongest times during the year to cast a spell". On Halloween most witchcraft practitioners participate in ritual called "drawing

down the moon". In this, the chief witch of the coven (group of witches) becomes, they believe, a channel for the moon goddess. During this ritual, the participants both male and female are 'sky-clad' that is, naked... Evidence persists that some Satanist and voodoo groups offer sacrifices - usually animals but possibly human babies.

The Biblical Response to Halloween

People celebrating Halloween today are naturally not thinking about the darkness and evil that underlies most Halloween practices. They are just thinking of it as a fun time. Some might say,

"Surely, you can not deny children or adults the fun of the Halloween just because of its past hideous history. Can there be anything wrong with light-hearted raging?"

Let us see what the Bible says

In the book of Deuteronomy God gives clear instructions to His people concerning associating with such practices.

"When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. These shall not be found among you anymore who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead" (Deuteronomy 18:9 - 11).

In the second book of Kings it says, *"And they*



caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger” (2kings 17:17). So, all of these practices God saw as evil, and angered Him.

Saint Paul mentioned witchcraft amongst the works of the flesh which are the manifest in Galatians 5:19-21. Also Saint John in his Revelation mentions that sorcerers *“shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).*

In the book of Micah the prophet also, God speaks out strongly against those who practice witchcraft and the like by saying, *“I will cut off sorcerers from your hand, and you shall have no soothsayers. Your carved images I will also cut off, and your sacred pillars from your midst; you shall no more worship the work of your hands; I will pluck your wooden images from your midst; thus I will destroy your cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury on the nations that have not heard” (Micah 5:12-15).*

I hope that it is clear to the beloved readers, the

background behind Halloween and that it is not something which is fun and nice. It does have evil connotations to it that we must be aware of. What does it mean as a Christian to dress your child as a witch or devil? Is this what our Lord has asked us to teach our children? Some might say that, “this helps us to teach our children not to be afraid of anything”. Is this the way to teach our children not to fear, or is it through the words of Christ that fear is cast out and peace and comfort prevail? I am sure the answer is clear! Let us rethink how we spend this day. Let us educate our young people about the facts of Halloween and perhaps arrange for a spiritual meeting to replace the Halloween parties that young people attend. During this time perhaps a lecture or discussion can be organized around this topic. It should be also a time of fervent prayer, so that our Lord Jesus Christ will protect us from all the powers of the Enemy. As we say in the Prayers of Thanksgiving. “All envy, all temptation, all works of Satan, all intrigues of the wicked, rising up of enemies, visible and invisible do cast away from us and all your people”.

Manliness and Femininity

There is a widespread feeling in the premarital society, that relationships are a natural human right. This belief has encouraged many adolescents to indulge in many obscenities and irresponsible behaviours veiled under the name of 'love'. There is also a surmounting trend to disregard gender differentiation under the claim of 'equality between man and women'. These two trends co-exist as a natural resulting of degrading genders of its sanctity.

Let us consider how God has elevated man's status in every possible way. He has created us in His own image and likeness. He has renewed his nature and set him up as His son in order to allow him to partake of the blessings of Godly life and eternal glory. Although God granted both genders equality in nature as well as in honour, yet He retained the differences between them in order to ensure the ultimate entirety and wholeness of human life. Consequently, we should honour the entire human entity with all its various aspects. On that account a man should honour his manliness, while a woman should honour her femininity. Both genders should be aware of each others respective honourable status.

The difference between the genders is one of God's good blessings. The Holy Bible says, 'Man and woman created He them... and God knew that all He did was very good' (Genesis 1:27-31). These differences are apparent on the psychological, social and spiritual level; and not only, on the mere biological level. They contribute towards supplementing each others being in all respects.

This belief has led some people to object to the expression of 'the opposite gender', which is used to indicate a different gender when speaking about one of them.

They consider this to be a 'misnomer' and prefer to use 'the other gender' or the 'complementary gender'.

It also helps to underline that each one finds in the other what answers his or her needs as long as they live together in the Lord and as they become one body. This helps to explain why 'man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife' (Matt 19:4, Eph 5:31).

In order to honour one's gender and at the same time appreciate the other's, it is vital to understand the deep meaning of manliness and femininity. Male adolescents need to be aware of the constituents of manliness as well as those of femininity. Likewise, women should be acquainted with their own underlying features as well as those of the other gender. This understanding would enable both to grow and develop into maturity while avoiding delinquent trends. Some people conceive that the reason for delinquency in its various forms is often due to husbands who are not manly. This also accounts for unsuccessful marriages. Similarly, problems may be due to women who are not feminine. The reference to males or females is not used here to indicate mere biological differences, but rather, to indicate that husbands do not know the significance of manliness in marital life or that wives misconceive femininity. Neither is aware of the other's needs.



Q: I have tried to talk to my non-Christian friends about God, but they never seem interested. What can I do?

Answer: it is better to talk to them through your example and not through words. If you are holy and you pray for them, and you genuinely like them and care for them, a time will come for talking to them. But first you must start by being a good example, and then the Lord will open the door for them, on a certain day and in a certain way.



Q: Sometimes I feel pressured to have a boyfriend. Is it okay to have a boyfriend if I don't do anything wrong?

Answer: As His Holiness Pope Shenouda said 'Have many friends who are boys and many friends who are girls', but if you couple off, you may start out clean and holly, but who can guarantee what may happen? Can you guarantee yourself, or your partner, or Satan? Each day we pray 'Lead us not into temptation...' (Matthew 6:13), but by having a boyfriend or a girlfriend we are leading ourselves into temptation. Let your relations be in groups from within the church until the time comes for you to select your partner for marriage.

Q: Why do Egyptians gossip so much?

Answer: It is not only Egyptians who gossip, but all nationalities. And gossiping only hurts those who do something wrong. Therefore, don't do anything wrong, and no one will gossip about you.





Shopaholic Anonymous

'I like shopping, is there anything wrong with that? Stores are put there to enjoy and the experience is enjoyable.....It's beautiful. The smell of new bags and shoes. The rush you feel when you swipe your card and it's approved and all that you have picked out is yours. The joy you get when you bought something new and all you have to do is hand over a card!!'

Most likely if you have not said these words you have either heard them or thought them. If you are not a shopaholic you at least know someone that can't walk past a shop without going inside and finding something to buy. The question that needs to be asked is, is shopping wrong? Is it bad to shop?

The answer to the above question is obviously. NO! Its not bad to shop. But like the bible always teaches us to question our motives.

'Do not store for yourselves treasure on earth, where rust and moth destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven where neither moth or rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. **For where your treasure is there your heart will be also.** (Mathew 6:19-21)'

Shopping on its own is something there to be enjoyed. As it says in the above quote "shops are put there to enjoy and the experience is enjoyable". God does not mind if you go buy yourself something new, He gave you the resources to enjoy. But if your aim is just to accumulate new things then your heart will cling to them and as the verse explains, that everything on earth, rust

and moth destroys and thieves break in and steal.

'If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth who will commit to you the true riches. (Luke 16:11)'

If everything we do here on earth will be magnified in heaven, then if we are not careful about the riches that are temporary and if we are not investing in the right areas with the riches that will eventually perish, how then can we be trusted with the riches that do not perish? If God has trusted us with money, time and resources and we go out and spend it all to accumulate stuff that will eventually perish, how then can He trust us with the riches that will never perish from Heaven.

This is something very important to think about when going out to buy something that you do not really need, only to accumulate more stuff that will end up perishing.

St Paul, gives us very sound advice when it comes to controlling our shopping,

'Let your conduct be without covetousness, be content with such things as you have. For He Himself said "I will never leave you nor forsake you"(Hebrews 13:5)also St Paul said 'for the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed in the faith in their greediness and have pierced themselves with many sorrows (1 Tim 6:10)'

Also, St Paul said 'run the race'. How would you like to run the race? Would you like to run the race with lots and lots of trolleys full of things that you are most likely not going to use or would you like to run the race as light on your feet as possible?

THE WORK OF THE ANGELS

Excerpt from *The Angels* by HH Pope Shenouda



Angels have work to do as regards God, and as regards man.

As regards God, they execute His will, in all swiftness and without discussion.

They do not use their own thinking in the scrutiny of this will, as men do!! But rather the psalm says about them *'who do His word, heeding the voice of His word'* (*Psalm 103:20*). Therefore we pray in the Lord's prayer saying to the Lord 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven', or as it is completely and rapidly executed in heaven by means of your angels, let it be so done on earth...

Therefore God sends them for the ministry to help people toward salvation: as the Biel says *'Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation'* (*Hebrews 1:14*).

Therefore some pastors who minister to the execution of the will of God and the care of His children, are surnamed 'angels'.

Thus we see that the Lord sent messages by the hands of his servant the visionary John to the seven churches in Asia, to the angel of Ephesus, to the angel of the church of Smyrna, to the angel of the church of Pergamos, etc..., that is: He has sent to the pastors of these churches.

It was likewise said about Saint John the Baptist that he is the angle who will prepare the way before the Lord (*Mark 1:2, Malachi 3:1*).



The angles have likewise their work in praising God, as we have said about the seraphim. So they work in praise and in ministry.....

Is prayer vital to our existence in this world?



Excerpt from *Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way*, by Father Matthew the Poor

First, we should know that the world in which we now live is one that has fallen back to the worship of idols – money, greed and sensual pleasure. It is a world from which the fear of God has withdrawn. The race for gathering wealth; the use of power, cunning, guile, and bribery for reaching distinguishing positions; the resorting to lies for self-vindication; the use of force and oppression for establishing supremacy – all have now become commonplace. Such is the case both in the world and in the church alike.

As for how to 'save myself' in such a world, it has become a very critical problem. It demands much struggle and dissociation from this corrupt environment. One has to take refuge in prayer as the first and only weapon. In this age, more than any other, prayer has become the vital need on which hang the loss or the salvation of one's soul. In such an age, man may live without a God and escape the notice of everyone. In this midst of this world – which teems with atheism, sin and injustice – prayer now stands as a reminder for all of us that we have a living God, a kingdom prepared for us, another glorious life, and a judgement we have to face.

Prayer also reminds us day after day that we are not of this world. We are children of light. Prayer reminds us that we ought not to have communion with the dissolute, the wanton, the lewd or the immoral.

Prayer restrains our hearts from coveting injustice. It keeps our feet from wandering down the path of sin and our tongues from flattery and lies.

Prayer supplies us with a deep insight, so that we may refrain from involvement in wrongdoing or condoning improper behaviour or praising wayward or wicked actions.

Prayer grants us every day with a new heartfelt peace in return for that which we lose as a result of the provocations and injustices that we face in the world. Had it not been for God's grace, we could have been blighted with anxiety and morbidity.

Prayer is an inward light that exposes the blemishes and defects of our daily conduct. This saves us from being driven into the abyss of hell. But God does not seek mere believers. Rather, he seeks 'true worshippers... who worship Him... in spirit and truth' (John 4:23, 24). Here, Christ refers to the lawful state of prayer that is recognized by the Father. For God is truth, and he accepts no prayer except in truth. Such a prayer knows what eternal life is and submits to the Spirit of God. Therefore, the prayer that is in spirit and truth is the only prayer acceptable to God. It is thus an expression of true spiritual contact with God. This definition is actually the summary of the whole clear-cut theological concept of true prayer, or spiritual prayer.

Moreover, Christ's words that God 'seeks' such worshippers, or prayerful people, reveals the value and need for prayer from God's point of view: God seeks (John 4:23). The word seeks implies that God looks for man's prayer and shares in providing the circumstances and possibilities for its success. It is as if the existence of man hangs ultimately in the eyes of God on the existence of those who worship Him in spirit and truth! True prayer here appears as the only channel or bond between man and God. Without prayer, man loses the meaning of his existence and the purpose of his creation.

Oh that we should always remember that God ever seeks our worship? It is as if He awaits the hour of our prayer.

Q: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION?

Answer: These days, the concept which was started by Darwin is very misused. Evolution is just a theory and not the final word. The second point is that this theory is lacking concerning the start of life- Darwin says life began from a cell, but what happened before the cell? The third point is that the evolution theory is lacking concerning the gap between ape and man, known as 'the missing link'. Many people argue that we evolved from apes because we have similar features. But the similarities indicate that they are both created by the same, one God. God created animal with body and psyche, and He created man with body, psyche, mind and spirit. This spirit which was given to us by the Holy Spirit is what we use to communicate with God; for '*God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them*' (Genesis :27). God made animals as animals and man as man. Therefore where Darwin lacks, God answers and fulfils.



Q: WHAT CAN A SERVANT DO WHEN THEY FEEL SPIRITUALLY AND EMOTIONALLY DRAINED, AND NO LONGER FEEL THEY CAN SERVE?

(Excerpt from Youth Concerns Questions and Answers by HG Bishop Moussa)

Answer: The Lord gives you spiritual power when you feel weak and empty. Therefore, weakness is not an excuse to stop serving; but on the contrary, the time when you feel weak is the exact moment you are in need for God, and this is the way God will utilise you. So when you feel weak, as God for His support, and together with the Apostle Paul we can say, '*when I am weak, I am strong*' (2 Corinthians 12:10). As a human you are limited, so come into contact with the Unlimited and He will give you strength.



St. Mary's Moharraq

The Monastery of St. Mary, also known as the Muharraq Monastery is located about 60 km from Assiut (327 km south of Cairo) and it is one of the main stations in the path that the Holy family took while they were in Egypt. The word "Al Muharraq" is an Arabic word which means "burnt" and that is because the Monastery was partially burned by foreign invaders during the middle centuries. Another interesting fact about this monastery is that it is not located in the desert like most other Coptic monasteries, which makes it all the more unique & special.

According to the tradition of the Holy family's trip to Egypt, they traveled from Ma'adi to Upper Egypt by boat until they reached the village of Qusquam (al Qusia) and stayed there for 6 months in a cave. The monastery is said to be built on the very site where the Holy Family settled. It was here that the angel of the Lord is believed to have appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young child's life". (Matthew 2:20 & 21).

The monastery is usually very peaceful, even though it is one of the largest and most wealthy Coptic monasteries in Egypt. The walls of the monastery are located on an area of approx 30 acres and it contains five churches and about 100 monks, as well as a large library.

The church of St. Mary which is said to have been built over the cave where the Holy Family stayed, is believed to be one of the oldest churches in Egypt having been built in the first century AD. The Altar, dated 747 AD, is said to be located on the very spot where the baby Jesus rested and is claimed to be the oldest in the world. It was St. Pachomious who built the original monastery around the church, which predates the monastery by three centuries. The ancient altar lies in the sanctuary of this church.

Pope Theophilus, who was the 23rd Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria wrote that he had noticed that the church was small, and very simple. Because of the holiness of the site, he wished to build a great cathedral to replace the small church. He voiced this wish in his prayers, but in a vision the Holy Virgin is said to have visited him and explained that it was the

Monastery

will of her son that the church should be kept as it is, as a symbol of Christ's humility. She also told him that before Christ's Ascension, the Lord, the Virgin Mary and the Disciples came together upon a cloud to the small church to bless and dedicate it, and that the first liturgy was held in the church.

Behind the Church of the Holy Virgin is the Church of St. George which was built in 1880. The Church of the Archangel Michael was renovated at the time of Patriarch Gabriel, the 95th Patriarch of Alexandria (1525-1568 AD). This church is built on the upper level of the "Keep", which was a tower which protected the monks when they were being invaded by barbarians or other foreign invaders.

The library of the monastery is divided into two main sections. The first section contains thousands of modern books and reference material dating from the 19th and 20th centuries. They cover religion, science and other subjects written in various languages including Coptic, Greek, Arabic, English and Amharic. The second section of the library contains hand-written manuscripts in Coptic and Arabic.



الخورس الثاني ويظهر بابان للكنيسة من الناحية الجنوبية.



الخورس الأول بالكنيسة



صوره للقديس القمص ميخائيل البخيري المحرفي في نهاية الخورس الأول





THE SIMPLE MICHAEL

Excerpt from

The Fragrance of Christ: In the life of Contemporary Righteous Individuals: Part 2,
by Hegumen Luke Sidarous



I used to see him from time to time sitting silently among those who were waiting for confession. He was a man of prayer. He intentionally waited to be the last of the confessors. This meant that he stayed in the church two or three hours before seeing me for confession. He looked poor and simple, almost pathetic. One wished to give him alms. He worked as a construction labourer.

Through what he said in his repeated confessions, I discovered he had a simple but enlightened soul. In appearance, he was a man who worked from morning till evening carrying to the builders a basket full of sand or gravel, or a basin full of concrete. It is well known that life among such workers is difficult; the temperament and language of those men, the way they treat each other or live is all very hard. Not to mention their rows, scuffle in which they sometime use the construction tools as weapons. In such surroundings it is difficult for a man to keep his peace and spirituality.

As for Michael, he was able with God's blessing, to live in that environment and grow in grace and spiritual stature. He practices the life of continuous prayer in these shocking conditions. And in spite of his simple appearance, he had a profound relationship with God. He loved Christ and memorised the Agpeya because he had learnt it at his small school in Upper Egypt. He kept the hours of prayer and had nothing in mind but prayer. He was happy as he said his secret prayers alone with God and did not care what people said about him. He lived in peace with all the people, being helpful and humble. Prayer had given his life an amazing character and meaning.

He came to see me one day and was preoccupied with the idea of leaving this world because life with those people had become unbearable. He felt that the time he spent working daily was a waste, without any profit. Why not spend all the time in prayer without disturbance? He had no desire in this world; he had no demands or hope, so why is he in this world?

These thoughts had often occurred to him in the past, but now they persisted. I used to explain to him that leaving the world required a perfect intention, an undivided heart, and an obvious aim. I told him that a man must first test himself and count the cost. I gave him such advice as given by

the Fathers who drew the landmarks in that path through which the desirous walk. He used to obey quietly and simply without discussion. However, this time he implored me and was in tears. The world had become a heavy burden for him. He had no more power. Therefore, when I knew his true pure intention, I wrote a letter to Father Mena Ava Mena the archmandrite of Mari Mnea the Wonder Worker monastery and explained in that letter Michael's circumstances and his desire to live in the monastery.

The man had no wish for a name or a certain appearance: he did not want to give him a monk's clothes or name. He just wanted to be a servant in the monastery. Father Mena accepted him and gave him, as he wished, a small room at the gate of the monastery. The man was overjoyed; he had realised his wish. He was full of joy with the early morning prayers an praise. He was comforted by the Holy Liturgy everyday. This was paradise on earth.

One night, after they ended the Vesper prayers, Michael went to his small room. He lit a candle and started praying the midnight psalms until very late at night... But he was overcome by drowsiness while still holding the candle and kneeling on his small cotton mattress. Then he slept and his lit candle burned the mattress. You can imagine how fire devours cotton in seconds. And yet he did not feel the danger... he was asleep. The smell of conflagration and the smoke spread. Some people who were far ran to the place and how very strange... the place was full of smoke and when they called Michael and shouted, he awoke. They brought a lamp and entered the room. The fire was out, it had burnt all the mattress except the part on which he lay. That part was not touched as though the fire was limited by a border line which it could not cross. The man's clothes did not burn and did not even smell of burning.

Not a hair of the man was burnt... how wonderful. All the people could not believe that amazing scene. It was similar to the young men cast into the furnace. How was he not hurt by the fire! They thanked God. Michael blamed himself for causing all that trouble and loss because of his carelessness; so they sent him back to Alexandria. He came to me dejected, but I soothed him and employed him as a guard for the Church of the Archangel Michael and later for the Church of Saint Mark. After a few years God gave him rest from the worries of this passing world and Michael joined the chorus of the righteous of whom the world was not worthy.

Lost amongst this world?

Oh my soul why do you feel so lost?
Oh my soul why is your lamp not alight?
Oh my soul why do you thirst? Are not the oceans plenty?
To whom do you long for?

I long for my saviour, I let my light weaken and my knees
would not bend nor to the ground would they draw their strength....

How could one's soul get to this condition?

I depended on my own will and went my own way. To
the light I turned my back, for my way seemed brighter.
To that judgment I was indeed wrong for it only shined
when the world willed it. Very soon that light ran out
and no one of the dust could help it bright again.

Did not find yourself? Did you not know where you
where going? Did not the world tell you where to go?

How could I know north from south or east from west,
When I have lost my compass. You see how can the
world direct itself? All the arrows were mixed up, all
the signs confusing. I drowned in the oceans that were
meant to quench my thirst. The waters visible, but like
an infant I could not drink of it. Instead I added to the
oceans for I had no other resort, for all seemed one
and I turned my back on the light, the light that no one
could've taken away from me.

Where is your happy ending? Is everyone not entitled
to happy ending?

There is no happy ending. For everyone falls and rises
again. I am not entitled to a happy ending, but by his
grace he promised me more than a happy ending. He
promised me eternal life, he promised me that his hand
will always be there. For when I had turned from the
light I did not know what I had. He heard my cry he
rescued me from the waters. He lifted me in his arms,
he told me "You are Mine". I betrayed him, I hurt him, I
turned on him. Any other person would have given up
on me, but he searched for me, he gathered my broken
bones and he restored the light within me. Happy I am
to have a Father as such, to have a lover of whose love
cannot be measured nor taken away.

Oh my soul rejoice!
Oh my soul, rejoice!
For your Saviour has come to your rescue.
For your cup overflows and seas are calm.

Made of Wood or made of Gold?

A cross made of wood is better than a cross made of gold.
It is better that it is made of Gold with your good deeds. Than
it to be made of earthy gold, which shines but its value
decreases or increases as the worldly time passes by, because
according to God's time your value far exceeds
that of the earth. For in God's eyes you are worth more than
a thousand jewels. You are not a ruin nor are you an island.
You are a treasure that the kings and princes of this earth
run after. For you are not like any earthy treasure. You are
anointed from above and for that reason they run after what
they can not buy.

Bp

IRENE HANA

They cannot do to you more than they did him

Always remember, if they have hurt you with words, they have
not yet spat on you. If they have spat on you, they have not
yet gave you vinegar to drink. If they have persecuted you,
they have not not wiped you. If they have whipped you they have
not pierced your side like they did your king. Always
remember that your king feels every single pain that you
feel, f...or when they hurt you they hurt him. For we are his
children and he is our father. For we abide in him and he in
us. No matter what they do to you they will not do to you
more than they did your father and king. He is strong but
chose to remain like a sheep all for you. Do not mistaken
love for weakness. The more you take the more reward you are
given. So stay strong children for you are sons of a great
warrior. Stay strong till he opens the doors of his heavenly
kingdom, where sorrow is no more. For in his arms what more
could you want.

Floating Spirit

I am a floating spirit in between. Look up to the sky and it
seems I am not there yet. Look down on the earth and I am not
of it. I nethier belong to this earth nor the heavens above.

Although the sky seems closer I am not there, for this
creation has not yet been summond by its master. He put on me
wings to soar like an eagle, He breathed on some s...and, and
behold I was made. Made from the earth but valued from above
to live above. For every father wishies his children to be of
equal and better value. Like Jewels you are my children above
this earth, but for a time you need to be polished and cut
into shape. It will hurt but you will be like no other. No
necklace can carry you, no crown hold you, except that hand
of the jewelery maker.

Run!!

Run! Run!
Many times have you ran. What have you obtained?
Your life is on the line. In a moment it could begin, in a
moment it could end.
A breath in, a breath out
You could die, you could live.
But if you live... Will you understand?
One chance! One chance is all I need, Oh Lord!
Run till the end of the road. Run! Run!
Don't wait till the end. Don't wait till you have no chance

Peter Guirguis Fawzy

had been nominated for the

Ethnic Schools Primary Teacher of the Year Awards 2013

Congratulation Peter!!!



The Ethnic Schools Association
of South Australia Inc.

***Certificate of
Achievement***

awarded to

Peter Guirguis Fawzy

of

*St Mary and Anba Bishoy Inc.
Egyptian Coptic School*

a nominee for the

**Ethnic Schools
Primary Teacher of the Year Award
2013**

In recognition of generously contributing
to the field of language and culture education.

Binh Quang Nguyen,
Chairperson.

Family Spiritual Day

The day started at around 10 am with some activities and games we all involved in which was amazing and we had too much fun, then we went straightaway to get the first workshop with *Dr Samir* and afterwards we had lunch and then some videos with spiritual meanings, and after the second workshop we had a barbeque dinner together.

The spiritual family day was perfectly organized and served and we also had 2 very good workshops held by *Dr Samir Ibrahim* and the main objective of these workshops was to highlight on some drawbacks in our families in the way we deal and raise our kids in order to build more coherent and stable families in presence of our **Lord Jesus Christ**.

1-The first workshop was to divide all of us into 4 groups, *Dr Samir* gave each group a different case of a family with some problems and there were few questions on every case. The role of the coordinator was to control the conversation between the group members in order to find solutions for those questions. At the end of the 20 minutes time given to every group, the cases were discussed in detail.

There were some common mistakes and suggestions in all of the participating groups like:

- 1- Defect in the family structure (age difference between the bride and the groom, absence of father figure, absence of Christ in the family, no communication between the family members).
- 2- No teamwork between the church and the parents to rectify any problems.
- 3- Sometimes the Mother is absent most of the days for extended hours doing business neglecting her family and her kids.
- 4- Some important suggestions were, to adjust all of the above negatives and also to have time with Abona in church and to let the kids involved in some activities, either in church or outside.
- 5- For any family to be stable and healthy there should be three main supporters, communications, everyone has got his own role and finally there is a unified target.

2-The second workshop was concerning more about the relation between the parents and their children so *Dr Samir* divided us in 2 main groups, the parents and the children group, each group was attending at different venue and every group got the same question which was:

What do you want from the other group?

And this made a kind of brain storming so everyone of the parents wrote what he/she want from their kids and the same thing happened in the other group with the kids and at the end *Dr Samir* discussed the outcomes of this workshop which were amazing.

Some of the advices he gave to parents were:

- 1- Need to give our kids more trust
- 2- Need to give our kids more time to listen to them
- 3- Need to give our kids the freedom to make their own decisions
- 4- We should look at any point of discussion from their perspective to have a better judge.
- 5- We should deal with our kids in every stage of their life with different ways
- 6- We shouldn't have too much fear that our kids may fail or lose their roots

FAM SPIRI DA



FAMILY ACTUAL DAY



١- حقوق روحية:

فإنه لم يبغض أحد جسده قط بل يقوته ويربيه كما الرب أيضاً (أف ٢٩:٥)

- + وهذا يعنى أنه يجب على كلا الزوجين أن يغذيا بعضهما روحياً ففى طقس الإكليل يفعل الكاهن أربعة أشياء وهى:
- + وضع الأكلايل على رأس كلا العروسين وهذا يعنى محبة باذلة بينهم.
- + نقل خاتم العرس من اليمين إلى الشمال وها يعنى الإلتزام ووضعه فى الشمال لقربه من القلب.
- + الزنار وهذا يرمز على التسامح.
- + الروب وهذا يعنى أن الرجل كاهن البيت وهو المسئول الأول عن روحانيات الزوجه والأولاد.

٢- حقوق نفسية:

كذلك أيتها النساء كن خاضعات لرجلاكين وإن كان البعض لا يطيعون

الكلمة يرحبون سيرة النساء بدون كلمة ملاحظين سيرتكم الطاهرة بخوف (بط ١ ٣:١)

كذلك أيها الرجال كونوا ساكنين بحسب الفطنة مع الإناء النسائي كالأضعف معطين إياهن كرامة (بط ١ ٣:٧)

وهذا يعنى إشباع الإحتياج العميق للمشاعر داخل كل منهما لأننا قادرين على الحب مهما طال العمر.

٣- حقوق جسدية:

ليس للمرأة تسلط على جسدها بل للرجل وكذلك الرجل أيضاً ليس

له تسلط على جسده بل للمرأة لا يسلب أحدكم الآخر (كو ١ ٧:٣-٤)

وهذا يعنى الالتصاق بين الزوجين والحرص الشديد على الحقوق الجسدية كل منهم للآخر.

الخطر الثانى:

الهرم المقلوب

تعنى هذه الجملة أن الكلمة الأولى والأخيرة فى البيت ليست للقائد والقائد هو رأس المرأة هو الرجل.

والكلمة الأولى للزوج ليس معناها التسلط ولكن حياة الشركة واجبة بين زوجين ولكن عند إختلاف الرأى يجب أن تكون الكلمة

الأخيرة للقائد أى الزوج وأكبر مثل يوضحه لنا الكتاب المقدس عن الهرم المقلوب هو **بيت باتوئيل**.

باتوئيل هو الاب لرفقة إمراة إسحق.

عندما أرسل إسحق اليعازر الدمشقى لبيحث له عن زوجه وكان طلبه أن تكون إمراة خادمة.

دخل اليعازر بيت باتوئيل ليطلب رفقة زوجة لإسحق وعندها اجاب طلبه لابان الإبن بالرغم من حضور الاب

دخل اليعازر بيت باتوئيل ليطلب رفقة زوجة لإسحق وعندها اجاب طلبه لابان الإبن بالرغم من حضور الاب وهذا يعنى أن الإبن لم يتعلم الإحترام

هنا الهرم مقلوب ولاحظ اليعازر ان باتوئيل لم يكن له كلمة فى بيته وكانت الكلمة الاولى والاخيرة للزوجة والاولاد و عندما اخرج اليعازر

انياً واعطاها لرفقة واعطى تحفاً لآخيها وامها تجاهل باتوئيل تماماً.

ومن هنا أيضاً كما الفتاة هكذا لامها.

كان إسحق طيب القلب واحب رفقة حباً عميقاً واساءت رفقة فهم هذا الحب وفعلت مثل أمها تسلطت على البيت وكانت النتيجة كره عيسو يعقوب وخرب البيت وماتت فى إذلال.

ومن هنا رجاء لكل بيت إحذر أيها الرجل ويجب أن يكون دائماً هرمك معدول ويجب على الزوجة إحترام الزوج وإحترام كلمته وتعليم

الأبناء كيفية إحترام الأب.

وأخيراً أطلب من الرب أن يحافظ على أسرنا وبيوتنا وحمائتها

من أى دمار أو خراب يلقى بها

أمين



أخطار تهدد البيت المسيحي

سوف نتكلم فى هذا العدد عن موضوع شديد الاهمية لكل إنسان مسيحي وكل بيت مسيحي فهناك أسر مسيحية كثيرة تعاني من هذه الأخطار الشديدة التى تهدد إستقرار الأسرة القبطية. هناك أخطاء شائعة كثيرة يمر بها البيت والأسرة مع طول فترة الزواج ولكن اليوم سنتكلم عن أهم خطرين يمكن أن تتعرض لها الأسرة ويؤدي الى خراب الأسرة ودمارها.



الخطر الأول:

الحاضر الغائب

وهذا يعنى إن أحد الزوجين أو كلاهما يعيشان فى نفس البيت ولكن كل واحد يشغله أشياء أخرى غير الآخر وبلاتلى عدم الاهتمام بالآخر مما يؤدي للشعور بلوحدة وبلاتلى إلى (جوع عاطفى).

وبما أن الإنسان كائن إجتماعى لا يمكن أن يعيش فى فراغ عاطفى حتى ولو كان طفل صغير أو متزوج أو أعذب أو مراهق...إلخ.

فاذا وجد الحب وجد الشبع والاستقرار والنشاط وإذا غاب الحب بدأت المشاكل والإضطرابات النفسية وقد يبحثون عن سبب المشاكل وهم لا يعرفون السبب وهو غياب الحب والشبع النفسى والعاطفى. إذا غاب الحب فى البيت المسيحي سوف يبحث عنه كل فرد فى الأسرة لكى يجده ولكن كل واحد سوف يبحث عن الحب بطريقته الخاصة والأخطر من ذلك هو البحث عنه خارج البيت وخارج الكنيسة.

ولم يتركنا الكتاب المقدس بدون شاهد على هذا الخطر وأهم وأوضح مثال هو **بيت فوطيفار**.

فوطيفار كان مثلاً قوياً للرجل الحاضر الغائب.

كل منا يعلم هذه القصة جيداً ولكن هل هناك أحد سأل ما الذى دفع إمراة فوطيفار ذلك ولماذا أرادت فعل الشر مع يوسف؟ كان فوطيفار رجل شرطه وهذا كان يجبره على عدم التواجد فى المنزل لفترات طويلة.

فترك كل ما كان له فى يد يوسف ولم يكن يعرف شيئاً إلا الخبز الذى يأكل (تك ٦:٣٩)

وبلطف شعرت إمراة فوطيفار باحتياج عاطفى يقول الكتاب:

رفعت عينها إلى يوسف (تك ٧:٣٩)

وبحثت عن إحتياجها لتجده فى رجل آخر ومن هنا الوقوع فى الخطية.

أهمل فوطيفار زوجته بسبب عمله وهى بحثت عن الحب والإهتمام بعيداً عنه وهذا هو الخطر الحقيقى الذى نتحدث عنه هناك أزواج كثيرة تشغل عن بيتها سواء فى العمل أو الخروج مع الأصدقاء أو مشاهدة التلفزيون أو الانترنت وأيضاً هناك زوجات تشغل عن أزواجهن بلابيت والأولاد أو بلامحادثات عبر الهاتف وهنا ينسى الزوجين أن هناك حقوق لكل واحد منهم على الآخر وضعها لنا الله والكنيسة وهذه الحقوق هى:

من أقوال الآباء

الشيخ الروحاني



من يمنع فمه عن الكلام يحفظ قلبه من الاوجاع
و الطاهر القلب من الاوجاع يرى الله في كل
ساعة و من يهذ كل ساعة بلاله يطرد
عنه الشياطين (الشيخ الروحاني)

قلب الغضوب مستوحش (خلأ) من اسرار الله و الوديع الهادئ
هو ينبع اسرار العلام الجديد (الشيخ الروحاني)

المسكين من متاع العلام يستغني بالله و صديق الاغنياء يتمسكن مما للرب
(الشيخ الروحاني)

اذا لم يتقدم انسان الى النار لا يسخن بها ولا يتنعم بدفئها هكذا ان لم يقتن
الانسان ايمانا بربنا يسوع المسيح لا يتنعم باسرار معرفته (الشيخ الروحاني)

الملتصق برجال الله يستغني بأسرار الله والملتصق بلاجاهل والمتكبر بيتعد عن الله وأيضا يبغضه أجاؤه (الشيخ الروحاني)

الحاسد لا يري النور لأنه يلوم المضيئين ويعيبهم بحسده (الشيخ الروحاني)

اكثر من كل ساعة في وقت القداس يجن ان نعد انفسنا بلاحذر و القدوسية (القداسة)
ولا نترك صداً الاوجاع داخل نفوسنا لئلا يكون لنا جسد المسيح و دمه الذي نأخذ للشفج (للحرم او الدينونه) (الشيخ الروحاني)

اقوال جميلة و مؤثرة جدا و لكن من هو الشيخ الروحاني الذي نسمع عنه كثيرا و نقرأ اقواله دائما ؟

الشيخ الروحاني يعتبر من اساطين الرهبنة في القرن السادس الميلادي و له
اختبارات في منتهى العمق في حياة النسك و العبادة و الصلاة و العشرة مع الله.

الشيخ الروحاني هو الناسك يوحنا سابا من اباء السريان في القرن السادس الميلادي ترهب في دير على نهر الفرات و كان له
اخ بلاجسد ترهب هو الاخر باسم يوحنا ايضا التي تفسيرها الله يتحنن.

القديس يوحنا سابا هو من مواطني نينوى من مدينة صغيرة تدعى دلياتا على نهر الفرات و يوافق الاحتفال
به على التقويم السرياني يوم ١٥ مارس و اعماله عبارة عن ٣٠ مقالة و ٤٨ رسالة و محفوظة في مكتبات روما.

بعد ان اكمل قوانين المجمع انفراد في برية قاسية و كان يشقى بين الحيوانات و الحيات متكلا على الله عابدا اياه بكل حرارة و ايمان.
كان الشيخ الروحاني نسطوري المولد و يعتقد انه ترهب في احد الاديرة النسطورية و لكنه لما كبر في السن و القامة الروحية

و العلمية عرف الحقيقة و نبذ النسطورية و خرج من حضن اديرتهم.

و ذهب الى دير يدعى اركول و هو من الاديرة السريانية الاورثوذكسية المستقيمة الراي و قد قام بتعمير هذا الدير و اقتبس و
تعلم منهم الكثير و الجدير بالذكر انه كما تعلم من السريان الاورثوذكس تعلم ايضا من الآباء الاقباط الاورثوذكس فيقول في رسالته

الثامنة و العشرون من رسائله حيث كان يتكلم عن الشياطين فيقول (و حين انتهرتهم بقوة ربنا يسوع المسيح يرتدون الى الورا و كلما الوح
لهم بعلامة صليب مخلصنا أراهم يعودون الى الظلمة و ارى نارهم تنظف هذا تعلمته من الجبار انطونيوس الذي غلب الشيطان و دوحه).

كل كتاباته تفيض تعاليم اورثوذكسية وراي مستقيم.

و غير معلوم على وجه الدقة سنة نياحته و لكن تحتفل الكنيسة به يوم ١٥ مارس

بركة صلاة تكون معنا امين

«أرسي خبزك علي وجه السياه فيعود لك بعد أيام كثيرة» (جامعة ١١ : ١)

الطريق شيء من الظلام. فجأه كادت سياره «كارولين» المرسيديس ان تنحرف فقدت توازنها لان احد العجلات قد فقدت كل ما بها من هواء. صارت كارولين العجوز في صراع بين بقائها في العربه او تنزل من السياره وتعاني من البرد القارس والثلج المتساقط . عبر جاك بسيارته المستهلكه، فتوقف ليسأل السيده العجوز ان كانت تحتاج الي معونه. رأته السيده فخافت منه جداً اذ يبدو انه عامل فقير غير مهندم في ثيابه وهي سيده غنية تركب سياره مرسيديس.

ادرك جاك مشاعر السيده القلقه، فأبتسم وهو يقول:

«لا تخافي يا سيدتي، فأني اود ان اساعدك»

«اني محتاجه الي تغييرالعجله»

«ولماذا نزلتي في البرد القارس؟ ارجوكي ادخلي في السياره»

في وسط الثلج المتساقط قام جاك بتغيير العجله وسأل السيده أن تتحرك حتي يطمئن عليها. فمدت يدها لتقدم له مالا، فقال لها:

«أنا لم افعل شيئاً، كثيرون خدموني

بمحبه مجانا وانا لم اعرف حتي اسمائهم. فأني ارد لهم ما فعلوه معي»

«ربنا اعطاني الكثير، فكيف اظلمك؟

ارجوك اخبرني ماذا اقدم لك، ومهما طلبت ساعطيك»

«لا ياسيدتي. ردي لي هذا الدين بأن تسندي انسانا محتاجا، وتذكري ان اسمي جاك.»

انطلقت السيده بسرعه وهي متهلله فقد شعرت بالحب يقني الذي لا يطلب لنفسه شيئاً. وانطلق جاك بسيارته القديمه متهللا ايضا فقد شعر بدفء عمل المحبه وسط العاصفه الثلجيه .

وعندما بلغت كارولين قريه صغيره بها مطعم بسيط امامه نور خافت بالكاد يمكن رؤيته بسبب العاصفه الثلجيه، فنزلت ودخلت المطعم فقدمت لها عامله المطعم الطعام وكانت حاملا .

فسالتها كارولين:

«متي تترقبين المولود السعيد؟»

«ربما غداً»

«وكيف تعملين وانت حامل؟»

«الأحتياج يا سيدتي»

فقدمت كارولين لها ورقه بمائه دولار، وإذ ذهبت العامله لتحضر لها بقيه الحساب، غادرت كارولين بسيارتها .

خرجت العامله لتبحث عنها فوجدتها قد انطلقت بالسياره بعيدا وعندما عادت الي المائده وجدتها كتبت لها ورقه:

«الابنه المباركه، ارجو ان تقبلي المبلغ

الذي بيدك للمولود السعيد فأني ارد لك ما قدمه غيرك.

تذكري ان جاك صنع بي خيرا.

ارجو ان تردي لي هذا العمل في انسان محتاج.»

فرحت السيده جدا وفي اليوم التالي انجبت طفلها السعيد، وبعد يومين اذ كانت العامله مع زوجها سألتها :

«اراك لم تطلبي مني مالا للانفاق علي الطفل.»

فقبلته زوجته وهي تقول :

«لقد ارسلت لي المال يا جاك مع كارولين صاحبه المرسيديس!»



PRAYER



أيها الآب الحبيب الذي ترتاح لك القلوب و تأتي اليك كل النفوس .
أنى آتى اليك بكل همومى و كل ضيقاتى مستندا على وعدك الصادق الأمين
(تعالوا إلى يا جميع المتعبين و الثقيلى الأحمال و أنا أريحكم) .
يارب يسوع لا يوجد غيرك فى هذا الكون كله يستطيع أن يقدم لى العون و يرفع عنى الهم غيرك .
أنت يارب الذى فديتنى بدمك و فعلت أعظم عمل للانسان
تستطيع أيضا أن ترفع عن صدرى همى و تخفف عن كاهلى حملى .
و أنى أثق فى وعدك يارب الذى يعطى النفس رجاء (للرب السيد عند الموت مخارج) .
و أنت يارب لا يستحيل عليك شئ .
- فأنت الذى أقمت لعازر من الموت بعد ما أنتن و مضى عليه فى القبر 4 أيام
إذن يارب تستطيع أن تقيمنى أنا من الموت و الآم الخطية المبرحة .
- أنت يارب الذى أنقذت دانيال من جب الاسود تستطيع
أن تنقذنى من المخاوف و المخاطر التى تعترض حياتى .
- أنت يارب الذى أنقذت الثلاثة فتية من أتون النار تستطيع
أن تنقذنى من أتون هذا العالم الملى بالظلمة و الغش و الخداع .
ربى ها أنا بين يديك أسلمك أمرى و حياتى كلها . لا تخذلى
يارب و أريدك أن تصنع معى آية مصاف القديسين و الشهداء الابرار

الشهيدان أباكير ويوحنا



شخصيتان مسيحيان، الأولى تمثل الإنسان الناجح في حياته، فقد عاش طبيباً ناجحاً في مهنته، محبوباً في معاملاته، تقياً في حياته الداخلية كما في سلوكه الظاهر.... متمماً الوصية الرسولية: **”أيها الحبيب في كل شيء أروم أن تكون ناجحاً وصحيحاً كما أن نفسك ناجحة“** (٢يو٣).

أما الثاني فيمثل الإنسان الحي الذي يحيا قويا في داخله، يبحث عن صداقة تسنده وتلهبه روحياً.... بمعنى آخر يمثل الإنسان الجاد في حياته، يطلب حتى في صداقته ما هو لبنان نفسه.

نشأة أباكير:

ولد أباكير بالإسكندرية من أبوين، تقيين، اهتما بحياته الروحية وثقافته العلمية والفلسفية فصار طبيباً ماهراً في شبابه المبكر. كان محبوباً ومشهوراً من أجل أمانته مع تقواه وفضيلته. شعر الوالي سيريانوس بخطورته كمسيحي يحمل شهادة حق لإيمانه، فطلب أن يقتله متهماً إياه بالسحر والشعوذة وفعل الشر، وإذ سمع أباكير بذلك هرب من الإسكندرية كوصية سيده: **”ومتى طردوكم في هذه المدينة فاهربوا إلى الأخرى“** (مت ١٠: ٢٣).

نسبه:

انطلق متجهاً نحو الجبال العربية ليعيش بين النساك متأملاً في محبة الله، دون أن يتجاهل مهنته السابقة كطبيب.... وهناك ذاع صيته فبلغ فلسطين وسوريا وما بين النهرين.

احتمالهما الآلام:

إذ اشتعل الاضطهاد بعنف في كل مصر في عهد دقلديانوس، سمع القديس أباكير عن القديسة أثناسيا وبناتها الثلاث العذارى ثيودورا وتاؤبستي وتاؤذكسيا أنهن قد حُملن مقيدات إلى كانوب (بالقرب من أبي قير الحالية بجوار الإسكندرية)، فخشى لئلا تغلبهن العذابات فيخرن للأوثان، لهذا رأى أن يذهب بنفسه مع صديقه المحبوب يوحنا لينال الاثنان إكليل الشهادة مشجعين هؤلاء العذارى وأمهن. تعرف أهل الإسكندرية على المتوحد الطبيب فأكرموه جداً، أما هو فاهتم مع صديقه يوحنا بخدمة المسجونين....

قبض عليهما الوالي وحاول ملاطفتهما أولاً ثم صار يعذبهما مع العذارى وأمهن . استخدم الوالي كل أنواع العذابات مع الناسكين، فكان يمزق جسديهما بخطاطيف حديدية ويحرقهما بالمشاعل، ويضع خلاً وملحاً على جراحاتهما، ويسكب شحماً مغلياً على إقدامهما.... وكان الرب يسندهما ويشجعهما حتى يحققا الشهادة له. استشهدت العذارى وأمهن أمامهما ثم الناسكين، إذ قطعت رؤوس الكل. وكان المشاهدون متألمين على قتلهم.... ودفن جسد الشهيدين الناسكين بقبر في كنيسة مارمرقس حيث بقيت رفاتهما قرناً من الزمن، ولما جاء القديس كيرلس نقلها إلى مينوتيس Menutlis بالقرب من كانوب، حيث تمت معجزات كثيرة.

تحتفل الكنيسة القبطية بعيد استشهادهما في السادس من أُمشير.

بركة شفاعة المقديسين فلتكن مع جميعنا آمين.

ذو الشعر الطويل

سافر أب كاهن معاصر لأحد بلاد المهجر في زياره قصيرة . وفي يوم ذهب مبكراً لعمل قداس بإحد الكنائس ، وهناك وعند ارتداء الشمامسة للتونية، وجدواحد من شمامسة الهيكل وهو يرتدي تونيتة قد أنسدل شعره على ظهره ووجد طويلا جدا ثم بدأ الشماس في لم شعرة مرة ثانية ولفة كعكة وثبتها بالبنس ثم أرتدى سورتيت على رأسه ليرفعة من على جبهته فنظر الأب الكاهن الية في تعجب وقال في نفسة الحمد لله أن أولادنا في مصر ملتزمين ولا يسلكوا مثل هذا الشاب !!! ، وقال في نفسة هل أحدث هذا الشاب بأن هذا لا يليق بأولاد المسيح ولا بالهيكل المقدس الذي يخدم فيه ثم راجع نفسه وقال أنا ضيفوهذه بلاد مهجر ، ثم طلب منه ألا يقف في مقابلته حتى لا ينشغل فكرة به أثناء القداس وبعد أنتهاء القداس رجع الأب الكاهن الى مسكنه ونسي هذا الامر .

وفي اليوم التالي زاره الأب الكاهن راعي هذه الكنيسة وأخذوا يتحدثون معاً عن خدمات الكنيسة وأحتجاتها وما شابه ذلك

ثم قال الأب الكاهن خادم كنيسة المهجر : على فكرة يا أبونا مش أنتم في مصر بس إلى عندكم قدسين أحنا كمان عندنا قدسين أنت عارف يا أبى الشماس إلى كان معاك أمبارح في القداس إلى شعرة طويلا أوى دا دا قدس عظيم

فقال له كيف هذا يا أبى ؟!!!!!!

أستعجب الاب الكاهن من هذا الكلام وشعر ،

أن هذا الشماس هو خادم في خدمة مرضى السرطان ومن كثرة أحساسة بالآم النفسى الذى يسببة هذا المرض للمرضى بسبب سقوط شعرهم بعد العلاج الكيماوى وحالة الاكتئاب الذى يصيبهم.

و لان البواريك الصناعية لاتجدى وغير عملية و البواريك الطبيعية غلاية الثمن جدا هنا، فنذر نذرا الإيخلق شعر رأسه غير مرة واحدة كل عامين، ثم يذهب به لاحد صناع هذه البواريك ويدفع ثمن صناعتها ويقدمها لبعض المرضى كعطية حب لهم .

خجل الأب الكاهن من نفسة وعرف أن الله أراد أن يوبخة على أدائته لهذا الشماس أن يعطيها درساً حتى لا يدين أحد .

وقال لنفسه خرجت مدان كلافريسي

وخرج الشاب مبرراً كالعشار.

حقا يا رب إن الصفات الظاهرة للناس لا تعطى حكما كاملا عليهم، فقد يبدو شخص بطباع لكنة قد يكون أكثر حنانا وعطاء وحباً منا ، إن الإدانة خطية تتسلل بهدوء من العين الى الفكر الى القلب ثم اللسان.



الأخلاق الشخصية للمسيحي

القمص أثناسيوس جورج



ليست المسيحية مجرد فلسفة؛ ولا هي قانوناً أخلاقياً أو فن ممارسة التصوف النسكي، لكنها الخلاص بكلمة الانجيل (كيريحما)، فالإنسان وخلاصه الشخصي هو هدف تدبير الله؛ لتصير أفعال المسيح الخلاصية حاضرة لنا (لي أنا شخصياً) (ومن أجلي؛ بيقين حي يشمل حاضري وكل كياني في نطاق الجسد الواحد).

كل شخص (عضو) مسافر على طريق الخلاص الأبدي حتى يكتمل على رجاء ما سيكتمل؛ لأنه عضو في جسد المسيح مطعمٌ فيه، متأصل ومتأسس (نسبة إلى أساسات البيت)، مبنين فيه لنحيا بالروح ونسلك بالروح في الإنسان الباطن وأخلاقه.. هنا تشير الأخلاقيات إلى عمل المسيح كتلمذة تجسدية؛ كما علم وعمل ودعانا لنقتدي في أفعالنا للتلمذة، فهو الشخصية التي علينا التشبه بها، وهدف حياتنا الذي ينبغي أن نسعى لبلوغه.

لذا تشدد إرسالية الكنيسة ومهمتها على الأخلاقيات الشخصية؛ والتي تفهمها في ضوء (ملك المسيح الموسوم بالخلاص والمحبة والعدل والسلام والفرح والبركة والحضور الإلهي)، والتي دعانا لتبنيها وعيشها والسكن فيها؛ وتوجيه مسيرة حياتنا بها، لتتشكل أخلاقيات شخصيتنا بها، وتكون مؤسسة على قنوات لاهوتية ومعيار الخليفة الجديدة، وفضائل شعب الملكوت.

العظة على الجبل كانت تضم المطالب العملية لأخلاقيات الملكوت، فتأتي لتدشينه ويكون الطريقة الفضلى لكون مسيحيين حقيقيين، وكما يصفها بعض الدارسين بأنها التطبيق العملي للملكوت، وقلب القيم العالمية كمحبة الأعداء وضم المنبوذين؛ والنية الصالحة تجاه البشر؛ والانفتاح نحو الآخر ورفض الانتقام والعنف؛ بل والسعي نحو المصالحة والرحمة والإحسان وصنع السلام؛ وعدالة إطعام الجياع وضيافة الغرباء ومسامحة المديونين، وهذه جميعها كل ما بدأ يسوع يعمله ويعلم به.

صارت أخلاق الخليفة الجديدة هي البوصلة الأخلاقية التي تحدد طريق كل مسيحي، وهي نفسها كلمات النعمة التي كانت تخرج من فم إلهنا؛ لنفهم بها؛ ونتمكن من عيشها كحياة، فيكون المسيح مخلصنا هو مركز حياتنا وهو الذي يقودنا في طريقه ليتشكل فينا، لأن للنعمة شكلاً معلناً، شكل الملكوت، شكل التطويات، شكل طريقة المسيح الطريق، شكل النعمة التي نتشارك بإستجابتنا السيئرجية لعملها.. فهي ليست نعمة رخيصة ولا هي بر الأعمال؛ لكنها عطية الله الفائقة المجانية للتغيير والفعل؛ لنريد ونعمل من أجل المسرة وثمار النعمة، نعمة التغيير إلى صورة المسيح.

ينبغي التدليل على المواقف الأخلاقية على أساس دراسي تفسيري استقصائي للعهد الجديد؛ بإعتبارها فضائل الذي نقلنا من الظلمة إلى نوره العجيب : التواضع الروحي، المسكنة بالاتكال على الله، تحرير المظلومين، مساندة الضعفاء، ضم المنبوذين، محبة الأعداء، الوداعة والحلم، صنع البر والعدل، عدم تخزين الأموال والاكنتاز، العطاء في الخفاء، المسامحة، الاكتفاء، الأمانة، العين الكريمة البسيطة، القبول، البساطة والحكمة.

وهذه الأخلاقيات هي في مجملها عمل الله الخلاق؛ وهي طريقة تكريس النفس له في توجه شامل نحوه؛ لأن ملتقى التطويات هو اختيار لعمل نعمة الله ورحمته؛ المعطاه لإمكانية استقامة الكيان الداخلي والخارجي واستقامة العمل؛ بالأخلاق المسيحية التي لا تتغير من زمن معين إلى الزمن التالي وحسب، لكنها كونية وممتدة إلى المجيء الأبدي بدناميكية.. ومن هنا لا نتوه بل تتشكل الشخصية وتتدفق منها الأفعال، مع التشديد على الإدراك، والرؤية، والتميز، والنظر بالإيمان؛ (مبصرين، سامعين، فاهمين)؛ لأن الأخلاقيات تبني وتشدد على الفضيلة والقيم والقناعات المسيحية.

النقلة الرئيسية في الأخلاق المسيحية هي التي تتبع مثال يسوع في التعليم المستمر والتوبة التحولية (ميطانيا) للتصحيح والنمو في المسيح الذي قال (من ثمارهم تعرفونهم)؛ فمن شأن التوبة تصحيح السيرة بوسائط النعمة والممارسات الروحية المؤسسة على نمط طريقة اتباع الرب يسوع، والتي تعتبر النموذج الكامل الذي فيه نتشارك وبه نحيا ونوجد ونتحرك... وكل فضيلة أخلاقية ليست عملاً نعمله نحن، ولا هي ملكاً شخصياً لنا؛ بل هي بمثابة مشاركتنا في المسيح الحي، والحياة هي الحياة في المسيح، والحياة في الروح القدس الذي من خلاله يسكب الله سكيب عمله وتقديسه في قلوبنا.



SAINT MARY & ANBA BISHOY
COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH SA

Adelaide Copt's

The Voice Of The Coptic Church



عدد رقم ١١

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