



**Summer Festival | 2022 / 2023**

# LIVE IN PEACE

**Gr 7-9 | English Edition**

**“ ...live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you”  
(2 Cor 13:11)**

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**COPTIC ORTHODOX  
DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE**

## **His Holiness Pope Tawadros II**



## **118th Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of The See of Saint Mark**

## Appreciation

The summer festival central committee of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and its affiliated regions would like to give thanks and appreciation to the **Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States** ([www.smfsus.org](http://www.smfsus.org)) for their blessed and tireless work in the translation, revision and art-work of St. Mark's Festival (Mahragan Al Keraza) books from the original Arabic version under the guidance and prayers of **H.G Bishop Youssef**.

May The Lord bless all their fruitful services and for many years to come.

**In Christ,**

**SF Melbourne Central Committee.**

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# Live in Peace

In the last two years the whole world had to deal with a big challenge, the Coronavirus Pandemic, which caused major losses in lives, affected the health of many, and caused long term challenges to the world economy and general human activity. This big challenge caused some to lose their inner peace and comfort.

Many of us imagine peace in a life without challenges. However, peace does not mean a place with no worry, challenges, or hardships. True peace is to maintain our inner stability and calmness in the midst of life's various storms as St. Paul described:

“peace of God, which surpasses all understanding.” (Philippians 4:7)

## Our Lord Jesus Christ Commanded us to Live in Peace:

- ❖ “But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’” (Luke 10:5)
- ❖ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9)
- ❖ “Do not worry about your life” (Luke 12:22) Worrying is a sign of exaggerated fear of challenges we face without faith in the ability of our God who is Pantocrator, all-loving, and able to help us overcome any hardship.
- ❖ “Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.” (Psalm 34:14)

- We use ‘peace’ even as the topic of our personal greetings as we say, “peace and grace”.
- The Lord Jesus Christ spoke to us about a special grace coming from Him, His peace, when He said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27) It is obvious that the peace which our Lord Jesus promised to give us is different and surpasses peace obtained by any other means.
- Peace is also one of the fruits of the Spirit: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23) In our relationships with others, “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” (James 3:18)



## Our Lord Jesus Christ is the King of Peace

- Our Lord Jesus is the King and the God of peace; eight centuries before His birth, Isaiah the prophet prophesied about Lord Jesus Christ saying: “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)
- ‘Peace’ was the melody which the angels sang on the day Christ was born, “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” (Luke 2:13)
- He was called Prince of Peace because He brought peace unto the earth; He peacefully spread His message of peace.

# “Live in Peace”

- The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was not only a peacemaker, but He was our peace through His redemptive work on the cross. **“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation” (Ephesians 2:14)**

# “Live in Peace”

## Peace on a Personal Level

Inner peace is connected with God’s work inside the person, He **“guides our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:79)** For anyone to always live in peace, He must have peace with the following:

### 1. Peace with God:

- After Adam’s sin, peace was no more. Sin entered into the world, and everyone inherited the original sin. Worry, tribulation, hatred, and war entered into the life of mankind. Even between brothers!
- Only through the Lord Jesus Christ’s incarnation and redemptive work on the cross was the reconciliation achieved between the Father and mankind.
- Peace with God is achieved by obeying His commandments and living a life of virtue and righteousness. Those who live according to the desires of the flesh are in enmity with God.  
**“There is no peace,” says the Lord, “for the wicked.” (Isaiah 48:22)**
- The only way to achieve peace again with God is through the sacrament of repentance and confession.

### 2. Peace with Oneself (Internal Peace):

- Internal peace begins with keeping oneself away from the sources of worry and fear initiated by sin.  
**“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” (Galatians 5:16-17)**
- Inner peace comes with self-control which is exercised through the periods of fasting and asceticism when we maintain our focus on spiritual matters like prayers, metanoias, and spiritual meditation, forcing the body to be aligned and subdued to the spirit struggling on the way to the heavenly kingdom.



### 3. Peace with Others:

- The priest always begins liturgical prayers with “peace be with all”, several times during the prayers. He prays that peace reaches the hearts of all the believers.
- Scripture also commands to care about others and live in peace with them:  
**“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink;...”**  
**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:20-21)**

**“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)**

## Peace on a Church Level

- **“God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved” (Psalm 46:5)** This was God’s promise at the time of King David and His congregation before and after him. **“God is in her midst”** He is her heart, the source of her existence, and her protector.
- The Church is the Body of Christ and shall not be shaken forever. The gates of hades shall not prevail against her, God is her Protector until the end of the ages.

# “Live in Peace”

- One of our most repeated prayers is **“Remember O Lord the peace of Your one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.”** We say it at the beginning of the minor litanies, at the beginning of the major litanies, in Vespers and Matins raising of incense, and every time the priest does a procession of incense around the altar.
- During the offertory, the priest says: **“Peace and edification to the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of God, Amen.”**
- In the Liturgy of St. Cyril, we also pray for the peace of the church in the litany of the leader: **“Speak to his heart concerning the peace of Your one holy catholic and apostolic Church.”**

## Peace for the Whole World

Peace is an important element in the life of the people; without peace society can never advance or enjoy stability. All nations and countries desire to achieve peace and live in a peaceful, worry-free environment. That desire is according to the will of God who said, **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”** (John 14:27)



Christian peace is not a “peace because of...” but rather a “peace in spite of...”; we have peace in spite of the pandemic, inflation, war, and anything else. We have faith in our Savior who is our fortress and refuge. **“The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.”** (Proverbs 18:10)

## How can we make peace with our brethren?

- By paying attention to the poor and those who are persecuted or in need.
- By extending a helping hand to the sick and those who are in captivity.
- By being supportive of those who are handicapped.
- By hosting those who have lost their homes, feeding the hungry, and being a refuge to those who need it.

## How can we live in peace?!

Many reasons could cause some to get worried and lose their inner peace; whether it is fear, illness, pandemic, the unknown future, or even unknown life challenges. In the midst of all these worries they do not remember God’s protective grace, which gives peace and comfort!

## To always live in peace we must:

1. **Recognize that our God is Pantocrator**, creator of everything, and in control of everything. He is the origin of life and the sustainer of every living being. **“The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.”** (Psalm 121:8)
2. **Believe that our God is more powerful than any challenge**; He is able to deliver us from hardships or tribulations, and He is stronger than all the powers of evil **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us”** (Ephesians 3:20)
3. **Be sure that our lives are in the hand of God**; no one has authority over our lives except for God. He is the lover of mankind, who does not wish the death of the sinner but rather he returns and lives.

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Being assured of these facts imparts comfort and peace into our hearts so we can sing with King David saying, **“The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?”** (Psalm 27:1), **“The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”** (Psalm 118:6) and **“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me;”** (Psalm 23:4)

## **Final thoughts**

We often pray asking God to **“Spare the world from death, scarcity, plagues, devastation, the sword of the enemies”** and we have confidence that God, as a loving Father, hears our prayers, and uses any and all hardship or tribulation for the good of everyone.

Therefore, we must always rejoice and say with St. Paul:

**“Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”** (2 Corinthians 13:11)

# Inspired by God

## The Holy Bible

The Holy Bible tells us “My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands, for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.” (Proverbs 3:1-2).

The Holy Bible carries peace for everyone.

### What is the Holy Bible?

- The whole book, with its Old and New Testaments, is inspired by God. It is all one unit, not mere writings of different people.
- It is God’s own word, written by people guided by the Holy Spirit, explaining God’s desire for the salvation of all humankind
- Written by around 40 people from different places over 15 to 16 centuries.



“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”  
(2 Peter 1:20-21)

Our Lord Jesus Christ had declared multiple times that He is the Messiah. The Church believes in the sanctity of the Old Testament, for the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament.

### Do the Old Testament stories include myths?

Mythology is a fictional or symbolic story that delivers a certain idea to people. However, this is not a new question to our church and it was answered by the Church fathers:

### Some people claim that...

- A. **The first eleven chapters from the Book of Genesis are myths**, which means they did not really happen. Even Adam and Eve didn’t exist, and they are just symbols

Of course not. We believe that all the biblical stories had really happened. Adam, Eve, Seth, Enoch, Noah, and his sons are real people who lived on Earth and who played a great role in showing God’s dealing with humans. They were real people and they also pointed to our Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation. Their lives can also benefit us in a spiritual way on a personal level.

- B. **Eden didn’t exist but was only a symbol.** The Holy Bible describes Eden “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden and there He put the man



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**whom He had formed”**. God created trees, rivers, animals, and birds and placed them in Eden. All the fathers’ interpretations agree that Eden is a real paradise and not a symbol.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, Saint Irenaeus says, “God had created the best place for Adam to live happily and placed all the necessities of life such as air, light, food, plants, fruits, water, and beauty. That is why it was called paradise.” It is located in Mesopotamia (Iraq).

C. Why do the non-believers say that **Adam and Eve are symbolic characters**? They assume that there is no first man and that creation started with a single cell that developed into complex organisms, then into apes and human beings (the theory of evolution). It means that God did not create Adam and the Holy Bible is a myth. It is a wrong theory and has been rejected throughout the centuries.

## **Our Coptic Orthodox Church believes in 3 types of interpretations:**

1. **The Literal Historic Interpretation:** which means the story, or the incident had really happened.
2. **The Messianic (Christological) Interpretation:** which means the story is a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ and His act of salvation.
3. **The Spiritual Interpretation:** which means how the Christians can benefit from this story and apply it in their lives.

**The Holy Bible is the word of God, and the Holy Spirit has inspired God’s people to write it. The Holy Bible tells the story of salvation from the beginning of the creation until the second coming of Christ. If we challenge the first chapters of the book of Genesis that include the work of God the Creator and the fall of man, then we challenge the Christian Faith and the Salvation of our Lord.**

## **If Adam is a mythical character, then how can that affect our faith?**

1. The Holy Bible says: **“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22)** If Adam is a myth and did not exist, then our Lord Jesus Christ doesn’t exist either.
2. In St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, he set a comparison between our Lord Jesus Christ and Adam. The first Adam in Genesis and the second Adam is our Lord Jesus Christ. If the first Adam is a myth, then the second Adam will not exist, and our faith is imaginary.
3. The Gospel of Saint Luke mentions the lineage of our Lord Jesus Christ: **“The son of Adam, the son of God” (Luke 3:38)**. If Adam is a myth then the lineage of our Lord Jesus is a myth too.
4. **“Death has reigned from Adam to Moses” (Romans 5:14)** there is a real person named Adam and another named Moses.
5. If we challenge the reality and history of the creation story, we are destroying our Christian faith. Why would our Lord Jesus Christ incarnate? Was our incarnate Lord a fictional character?
6. Our Lord mentioned people of the Old Testament.

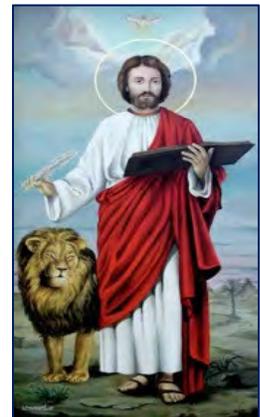
**Eden is then real, and Adam and Eve and their fall are real.  
God’s incarnation and redemption are also real.**

# The Gospel of St. Mark

The Gospel carries a message of peace from God to man.  
“We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

1. St. Mark was born in Cyrene, Libya to Jewish parents: Aristopolos and Mary.
2. He had 2 names: his Hebrew name is John which means God is gracious, and another Roman name, Mark, which means “hammer”.
3. He was the nephew of St. Barnabas and related to St. Peter.
4. He learned 3 languages: Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.
5. He lived with his family in Palestine. His mother served the Lord and opened her house (the Upper Room) for the believers. It is considered the first church where the Lord Jesus Christ had the Last Supper with the disciples, instituted the Eucharist, and the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples.
6. St. Mark is one of the 70 apostles.
7. St. Mark is given the symbol of a lion. It is told that while he was traveling with his father to Jordan, they were attacked by a lion and a lioness. St. Mark prayed and at once the two lions died. Also, his gospel declares the power and lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ as the **“Lion of the tribe of Judah”** (Revelation 5:5)
8. He served with St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Barnabas.
9. He established the Church of Alexandria when he entered Alexandria in 61 AD., Anianus the cobbler was the first Egyptian to accept Christianity and be baptized with his family.



## THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK

- It was written between 65 and 70 AD.
- It is likely the first Gospel to have been written.
- It recounts what our Lord Jesus did and His authority over the devil, disease, and nature.

### Chapter 1:

- The Gospel starts with **“I send My messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you”** St. Mark tells about St. John the Baptist, who prepares the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- St. John baptized the people with the baptism of repentance. The Lord Jesus Christ went to get baptized by him. The Holy Spirit came upon Him like a dove and we see the 3 hypostases: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Our Lord was baptized to teach us the importance of baptism and to obey the commandment.
- We believe that Baptism is the Holy Sacrament through which we are born again by being immersed in water three times in the name of the Holy Trinity.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ has authority over Satan. He fasted 40 days in the wilderness after His baptism, was tempted by Satan, and defeated him. Christians also fight the devil during their life on earth and need to be prepared with prayer and fasting.



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- Our Lord Jesus Christ selected simple fishermen to be His disciples (Simon and his brother, Andrew, James, and his brother John) to show that success is by the work of the Holy Spirit.
- We see our Lord’s authority over evil spirits when He drove one out in the synagogue, and sickness in the healing miracles He performed.

## Chapter 2:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ has authority over sin and disease. He healed the paralyzed and forgave his sins. The man was lowered by his friends through the roof of the house where our Lord Jesus was teaching.
- In this chapter, our Lord Jesus Christ invited Matthew to be His disciple and ate at his house. With love, He turned tax collectors to repentance.
- The scribes accused the Lord’s disciples of not fasting, but He explained that His disciples shall not fast while He is still there with them. They will fast when the bridegroom is taken from them.
- The Pharisees accused the disciples of breaking the Sabbath as they picked up grain from the field on the Sabbath and ate them. He explained **“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27)**

## Chapter 3:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. He explained that the Sabbath is for doing good deeds.
- The Lord Jesus Christ healed many people and cast out demons.
- The Lord Jesus Christ selected the 12 disciples to preach the word of God, heal the sick, and cast out demons.
- When the scribes said that the Lord cast out demons by the power of Satan, He explained to them that a kingdom divided against itself will not stand.
- The Lord said that all sins can be forgiven except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which is to reject the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

## Chapter 4:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ uses parables (a symbolic form of teaching) to teach the gathered crowd. The first parable is **the Parable of the Sower**.
  - The **sower** is our Lord Jesus Christ and the **seeds** are the word of God. He gives His word to all people and it is their choice to accept them or not.
  - The **wayside** represents someone with a hardened heart; he hears the word of God but doesn’t accept it.
  - The **stony ground** is someone who believes but his faith is not strong enough to stand against trouble.
  - The **thorny ground** is someone who receives the word of God but the worries of life, riches, and lusts kill it. The thorns can be greed, going after earthly pleasure, wasting time on social media, and harmful behavior.
  - The **good ground** is someone who hears the word of God and allows it to grow in his life.
  - The **four types of soil** represent the different spiritual states of people.



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- The Lord Jesus Christ told another **parable about the Kingdom of God** which is like the mustard seed. It is the tiniest seed that grows into one of the biggest trees. The Church started small and kept growing to include the whole world.
- A great storm arose, and the Lord Jesus Christ was sleeping in the stern of the ship. The Lord rebuked the storm and the wind instantly ceased. The disciples realized that the Lord Jesus Christ is not just a leader but the Lord Almighty.

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## Chapter 5:

- The chapter starts with the Lord Jesus Christ helping the man with an unclean spirit. The spirits left him and entered a herd of swine. The Lord Jesus Christ has power over the unclean spirits.
- The Lord Jesus Christ healed the woman who had a flow of blood for 20 years. The woman touched the Lord's garment and she stopped bleeding. The Lord has power over all diseases.
- The Lord Jesus Christ shows power over death when He raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead.

## Chapter 6:

- The Lord Jesus Christ began to send the disciples off to start preaching. He sent them two by two (showing the importance of working together) and gave them power over unclean spirits and to heal the sick. The Lord asked them to take nothing but their staff, which symbolizes the cross.
- King Herod thought that the Lord Jesus Christ was St. John the Baptist whom Herod had killed.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ took the disciples to a deserted place to rest awhile. But a great multitude followed to listen to His teachings. The multitude was hungry and there was not enough food for them. The Lord blessed five loaves of bread and 2 fish. All the multitude ate and were filled, and they collected 12 baskets full of fragments.
- The disciples were straining because of the wind while they were on the boat, so the Lord came to them walking on the sea. Here we see His authority over nature.



## Chapter 7:

- The scribes blamed the disciples for not washing their hands before eating. The Lord Jesus Christ told the scribes that they are honoring God with their lips but not with their hearts. Food does not defile man, but the words that come out of the man defile him, such as deceit, theft, and wickedness.
- Then a Greek woman came to our Lord Jesus asking him to help her daughter who had an unclean spirit. Despite not being Jewish, the Lord healed her daughter. He wanted to show the Jews her faith and humility.

## Chapter 8:

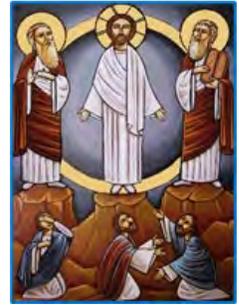
- The multitudes followed the Lord Jesus Christ for three days and they had nothing to eat. The Lord didn't send them away hungry, or they would faint on their way. The Lord blessed the 7 loaves of bread and a few fish, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to distribute among the multitudes. God accepts the few that we offer and blesses them.
- The disciples went onto the boat and forgot to bring bread with them. They started complaining about not having enough food. The Lord Jesus Christ expected the disciples to understand when He broke the five loaves for the five thousand and the seven loaves for the four thousand and fed the multitudes. Then, the Lord warned them against the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.
- The Lord Jesus Christ asked His disciples **“Who do you say that I am?”** and revealed to His disciples that He is Christ, the Son of Man.



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## Chapter 9:

- **The Transfiguration:** The Lord Jesus Christ took the three disciples (Peter, James, and John) to a high mountain where He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shiny and white like snow, and Elijah and Moses appeared and talked to our Lord Jesus Christ. Elijah represents the prophets and Moses represents the law.
- Then the Lord says, **“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off”** – the hands, the eyes, and the foot. The Lord Jesus Christ here talks about friends, social media, and the internet. If you feel that they are causing you to sin, cut them off.
- The Lord Jesus Christ uses salt to show certain traits Christians should have:
  - a. Flavors food, as a Christian should spread peace and love.
  - b. Preserves food, as a Christian should show good behavior to the world.



## Chapter 10:

- From the beginning of the creation, the Lord had created man and woman to become one flesh. Man leaves his father and mother and joins his wife; **“what God has joined together, let not man separate.”** That’s why our Orthodox Church forbids divorce.
- The Lord Jesus Christ says that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. It is not because of his wealth but because he loves money more than the Lord.
- The Lord Jesus Christ, once again, talks to the disciples about what will happen to Him and His crucifixion.
- He points out to us that to be great, we ought to serve one another (Mark 10:43-45).



## Chapter 11:

- The Lord went into Jerusalem on a colt as the prophecy says in Zechariah 9:9.
- No one has ridden this colt before. It is a symbol of the heavenly procession.
- The Lord Jesus Christ sent two disciples to get the donkey and the colt. They represent the Old and New Testament. By His redemption, the Lord connected both.
- The fig tree represents the hypocrite who looks shiny (having leaves) but has no virtues (no fruits).
- The Lord Jesus Christ drove out those who sold and bought in the temple.

## Chapter 12:

- **The Parable of the Vineyard:** the owner is God, the **vineyard** is the Church of the Old Testament, and the **vinedressers** are the leaders of the Jews, the scribes, and the prophets.

The **Lord Jesus Christ** sent the **prophets** who were persecuted and beaten, while the son is our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified.

**The owner of the vineyard gave it to new vinedressers (the church of the New Testament which are the apostles and their successors).**

- The Lord Jesus Christ simplified the 10 Commandments in 2: Love the Lord from all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself.
- The poor widow gave more than all of them since she gave all that she had.

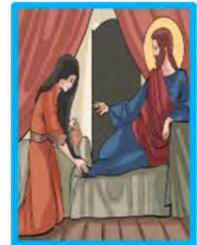
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## Chapter 13:

- The Lord Jesus Christ talked about the destruction of Jerusalem “**Not one stone shall be left upon another**” and how there will be wars, earthquakes, famines, and troubles before the destruction.
- The temple will also be destroyed, signifying there is no longer a need for animal sacrifice since the Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself, the true sacrifice on the Cross.
- The Lord Jesus Christ talked about the end of the world, the false Christ, and the false prophets who would come to deceive others.
- The Lord Jesus Christ will come to take the believers with Him to heaven, at a time we do not know, so we must be watchful and vigilant in prayers and fasting.

## Chapter 14:

- The Lord Jesus Christ spent the night in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper. A woman came in with a flask of oil. She broke it and poured it on the Lord’s head.
- The story of Judas teaches us to love and praise God from all our hearts and not only with our tongues.



- The Lord Jesus Christ sent two disciples to prepare for the Passover. They prepared the upper room at St. Mary’s house (the mother of St. Mark). This house became the first church where our Lord instituted the Eucharist.
- St. Peter denied our Lord 3 times before the rooster crowed. The rooster resembles the Holy Spirit. It reminded St. Peter of his sin and the Holy Spirit reminds us of our sins.

## Chapter 15:

- The chief priests delivered our Lord Jesus Christ to Pilate. Pilate tried to release our Lord Jesus Christ, but the Jews refused and asked him to release Barabbas instead and crucify the Lord Jesus
- They made Simon the Cyrenian carry the cross for Christ.
- The Lord Jesus Christ was offered vinegar and wine on the cross but didn’t drink it.
- The Lord Jesus Christ was crucified during the sixth hour and there was darkness over all the land.
- The Lord Jesus Christ cried out on the cross, then the veil of the temple was torn into two from top to bottom.

## Chapter 16:

- The women brought spices and came to the tomb of the Lord Jesus Christ. The place was filled with angels and became a place of blessing.
- The angel told the women to go and tell St. Peter and the disciples that the Lord is risen from the dead. The angel mentions St. Peter to show that the Lord forgave him and accepted his repentance.
- The Lord Jesus Christ told the disciples to go and preach the gospel to the whole world and then He ascended into the heavens.



# The Book of Haggai

## HAGGAI THE PROPHET

- Haggai in Hebrew means “festive.” It is said he was given this name because he was born on a feast day.
- He was born in Babylon, the land of captivity. Later, he went up to Judah with Zerubbabel on the first return in 536 B.C.
- Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi are considered the after-captivity prophets.
- He performed his prophetic works in the year 520 B.C. in the second year of the reign of King Darius.
- He started his prophetic works two months before Zachariah the prophet, they were very close friends, and shared the same goals in their prophetic work.
- He prophesied for 3 months and 24 days.



## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK:

The Book of Haggai is a book from the Old Testament, it has only two chapters.

The book is:

- a divine invitation for every believer to rejoice in God’s salvation and accept His dwelling in their heart as a temple.
- a divine reproach to the souls slacking in receiving Him as their king but are busy with the things of this world.

**The prophet emphasized the importance of repentance and righteousness to prepare for God’s dwelling in us.**

## CHARACTERS IN THE PROPHECY:

### Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel

- Zerubbabel means “born in Babylon”. King Cyrus appointed him governor over Judah
- Zerubbabel symbolizes our Lord Jesus Christ.
- He was born in captivity, just as Christ was born as a human like us.
- He was from the descendants of David, just as our Lord Jesus Christ.
- He was a ruler over God’s people after the captivity, just as our Lord Jesus Christ is our ruler after He freed us from the captivity of sin (crucifixion).

### Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest

- His name means “God saves”, just like the Lord Jesus Christ.
- He is a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest who offered Himself to save us from sin.

**As the people started neglecting the temple and started to focus on their own lives, Haggai warned them that the blessings would depart from them and urged them to work. He spoke with simplicity about God being first in everyone’s life. We must prioritize Him before our personal lives, directing our focus on Him.**

# “Live in Peace”

## First Prophecy:

- The prophet reveals the beginning of his prophetic work and in Haggai 2:20 the prophet reveals the last of his work.
- The word “hand” in this book means “strength.” It is a metaphor that illustrates that the prophetic Word of God is like a spiritual sword given to destroy evil, and the prophets must reveal it without fear or doubt.
- He told the prophecy to Zerubbabel and Joshua to rebuild the house of God. They symbolize the Lord Jesus who built the temple of His body, the Church.
- He rebuked the people for rebuilding their own houses and neglecting the House of the Lord, warning them that the blessings will be taken away if they did not heed and obey.
- God called the people **“This people” (Haggai 1:2)** and not “My people” because they have sinned against Him, and when people sin against Him, He doesn’t call them His.
- The Spirit stirred the people and everyone started to work together in one spirit and one accord. This is a message of unity for everyone to gather together and partake of the blessing.
- “Consider your ways...” (Haggai 1:5) Meaning examine your hearts and repent. What is keeping you away from the Lord?
- **“Go up to the mountains...” (Haggai 1:8)** The people had to go up to the mountain to get the wood to build the temple. After we offer repentance, we must work for our eternal salvation, we must rise, and grow spiritually.
- **“Build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified...” (Haggai 1:8)** God is inviting the people to work in His house, He does not force them to do anything. This shows us the free will that God has given us. Credit is given to the people for building God’s house, even though God is the true builder.

## Second Prophecy:

- The prophecy was told on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month.
- He told the people about the new altar that He will establish.
- That day was a festive day for the people of the nation, and it was a double message that the people shouldn’t only rejoice because of the feast, but also the blessing of building God’s house.
- He encouraged the people as the war of despair started regarding the old temple. The elders who were present witnessed the old temple that was built by Solomon and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. They were sad, they felt the new temple was not as beautiful as the old one.
- The elders were turning the joyous event of building God’s house into despair and mourning. It is a symbol of what the devil plants inside of us at moments of joy, as we build God’s house inside our hearts every day. By His dwelling in us, He establishes the inner-peace.
- **“I am with you says the Lord” (Haggai 1:13).** God encourages the people and assures them that He is with them because they haven’t neglected Him.
- **“The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts” (Haggai 2:9).** The first temple was fancy in its architecture, but the second temple built by Zerubbabel, the Lord refers to it as His own body, which is the Church. Also, the second temple was used by our Lord Jesus Christ in His service on earth which shows its importance and its meaning.



# “Live in Peace”

## Third Prophecy:

- God asks them for the purity of their hearts.
- He confirms that neglecting God will cost them the huge blessing of building His temple.
- He confirms that God does not want the work or offerings if they are offered with an impure or an unpeaceful heart; it counts as unclean.
- Building God’s House is important, but it is more important to have a heart that is ready to build it. Even though the altar is established for the purification of our hearts, our Lord Jesus Christ does not accept the altar as a house for Himself if we are not offering our hearts as inner altars for the Lord to dwell in.
- **“Now, ask the priests concerning the law” (Haggai 2:11).** The Lord confirms here that they must be free of sin, and learn the law from the priests. Priests are a blessing for us, to teach and guide us.

## Fourth Prophecy:

- Zerubbabel was chosen for the work.
- God speaks to Zerubbabel who is from the descendants of David. God blesses him and comforts his heart that He will destroy the Gentile kingdoms. It assures us that no matter what problem we face, we will get through it because we have God in everything we do.
- He confirms to the people that God establishes Himself into their hearts, and their lives.
- The Lord declares His unity with us in His Son **“Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm” (Songs of Solomon 8:6)** and that He chose us as beloved to Himself.
- This book calls for rebuilding the House of the Lord after the captivity, it is a symbol of establishing the House of the Lord in our hearts through the water of Baptism. We are renewed by the water of Baptism, just like the temple was risen and renewed by God.



# The Story of the Coptic Church

Our Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15) The Church was established on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. The Apostles preached in all parts of the world, in North Africa, Asia Minor, Europe and India, and were able to bring many to the Christian faith, within a few years, to the Lord who offered Himself to save them.

## The Apostolic Sees in Early Christianity

Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria were the first apostolic sees established by the Apostles. These cities were the center for spreading Christianity to the surrounding areas.

### The Church of Jerusalem

- The church was established in Jerusalem on Pentecost in the upper room of the house of St. Mark, where the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples.
- The center of evangelism to the world.
- The first bishop of Jerusalem was St. James the Apostle, who headed the council of Jerusalem
- Jerusalem was blessed by our Lord’s presence, miracles, and the blood He shed in it. It was also blessed by the first martyrs like St. Stephen, and both St. James the Apostles.

### The Church of Antioch (Syria)

- The closest to the church of Jerusalem, and the commercial capital of the Roman Empire
- St. Barnabas was the first to preach in Antioch
- The first church established in a Gentile country
- It was the center for St. Paul’s missionary trips
- The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26)

### The Church of Alexandria

- Alexandria was the cultural capital of the world at the time of the apostles
- The Church of Alexandria was established by St. Mark the Apostle

Two other churches were established and were considered Apostolic sees:

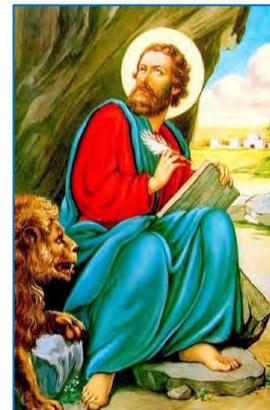
**The Church of Rome and The Church of Constantinople.**



# “Live in Peace”

## St. Mark and the Church of Alexandria

- St. Mark preached in Alexandria during the reign of Emperor Nero in the first century, about 20 years after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The Patriarch of Alexandria is enthroned on the see of St. Mark.
- All the churches in the world had one faith until the year 451, when the Council of Chalcedon took place.
- During the **Council of Chalcedon**, the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ was discussed. Pope Dioscorus, the Patriarch of the Church of Alexandria (The Coptic Church) wanted to keep the faith that was received from the fathers like St. Athanasius and St. Cyril, the Pillar of Faith, saying that the Lord Jesus Christ had **One Nature** (the Incarnate Nature) out of two (the Divine nature and the human nature) (**Miaphysite**).



- Other churches like the Church of Rome believed that the Lord Jesus Christ had two natures all along (the Divine nature and the human nature) which was contrary to what the fathers taught (**Diaphysite**).
- As a result, the churches split into two groups; those who agreed with Pope Dioscorus and the fathers were called non-Chalcedonian churches (later known as Oriental Orthodox) and those who did not agree with Pope Dioscorus and the fathers were called Chalcedonian churches.

**“The Life-giving flesh that Your only begotten Son took from our lady the Holy Theotokos Saint Mary. He made it one with His divinity without mingling, without confusion, and without alteration.” - Liturgy of St. Basil**

- In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Chalcedonian churches split. Some followed the Church of Rome and were called Catholic, and the others followed the Church of Constantinople and were called the Eastern Orthodox.
- Then in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Protestantism started when Martin Luther protested some of the Catholic Church teachings in what was called the Reformation.
- More splits took place within the Protestant Church which led to the many denominations existing to this day.

**In all those years, the Church of Alexandria and her sisters, the Oriental churches (the churches of India (Malankara), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Armenia and the Syriac Orthodox) kept the sound faith received from our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles without any change.**

- Catholicism entered Egypt in 1248 A.D., and Protestantism in 1860 A.D.

### **The Coptic Orthodox Church Spreads Throughout the World**

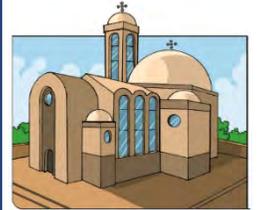
- Pope Cyril IV (116<sup>th</sup> Patriarch of the see of St. Mark) established the first churches outside of Egypt in Australia, the United States, Canada, Lebanon, and other countries. He also cared for the Church of Ethiopia and ordained for them an Ethiopian Metropolitan.
- Pope Shenouda III (117<sup>th</sup> Patriarch) continued his predecessor's efforts in caring for Copts outside of Egypt, especially when the number of immigrants started growing.
  - He started visiting different countries, establishing new churches, and meeting with priests to follow up with the service.
  - Established dioceses and assigned bishops to oversee them.
- Pope Tawadros II (118<sup>th</sup> Patriarch) now continues these efforts in the churches outside of Egypt.

# The Church

In Greek, the word “church” is “εκκλησία”. It means a place of gathering and joy. A church is a building sanctified to be the House of God. The Church is where those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ gather around His Body and Blood. The Church is like being in heaven on earth.

Noah's Ark saved him and his family; just like the Church that saves us.

“There is no salvation for man if he's outside the Church.” (St. Cyprian)



## The Building of the Church:

From the beginning of creation, God gave His people places and ways to worship Him and have a relationship with Him. The building of the Church has evolved over the years as man's understanding and spirituality developed.

In the Old Testament it began with the Garden of Eden, then the altar at Bethel, to the Tabernacle, then the Temple until we reached the Church in the New Testament.



## The Church in the Old Testament:

- **The Garden of Eden** is considered the first Church. Adam and Eve were created and were in constant communication with God in the Garden of Eden. ([Genesis 2:8, 3:24](#)) However, after the fall, they were separated from God.
- **The altar** then became the place God dwells and the place of our communication with God. God presented to man the idea of redemption. ([Genesis 3:21](#))
- When Jacob dreamt about the ladder to heaven, he woke up and said, "**This is none other than the house of God.**" ([Genesis 28:17](#)) **Bethel** was the result of Jacob's dream. It gave Jacob comfort and peace.
- **The tabernacle** was built according to how God showed Moses. It was God's dwelling among His people. ([Exodus 25:9](#)) Its presence gave the Israelites peace and love among them.

# “Live in Peace”

The tabernacle and its rituals resemble what we practice now in the church of the New Testament, not through symbolism but by the Holy Spirit.

It was called...

- **The dwelling place** where God dwelt with His people
- **The tabernacle of the Testimony** where the Ark of covenant was kept
- **The tabernacle of meeting** where God met with his people

The tabernacle traveled with the people as a guide to lead them in the wilderness, just like the church leads us on our journey in the world, as a symbol that we are strangers in the world, and we strive to attain heaven, our eternal home.

**The Temple** was established once the people of Israel settled in Jerusalem and it was a continuation to the tabernacle.

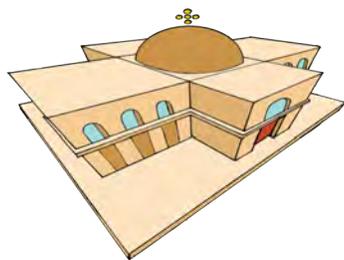
The Scriptures themselves are the inspiration for the Temple. As Solomon the wise said:

**“You have commanded me to build a temple upon Your Holy mount... a resemblance of the holy tabernacle, which You have prepared from the beginning” (Wisdom of Solomon 9:8)**

## **The Church in the New Testament:**

### **Shapes of the Church:**

**A ship (An ark):** The Church protects us from any danger. The shape of the ship reminds us of Noah’s ark where the people were saved from the flood, likewise the Church can protect and save us.



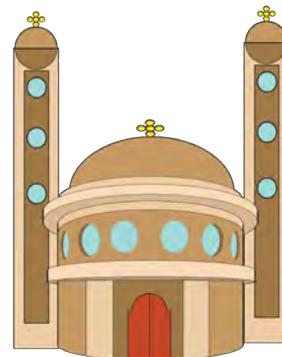
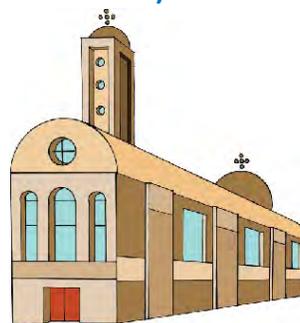
**A cross:** Our Lord Jesus Christ died for us on the Cross to save us so we can go to Heaven. The Church is the way to heaven.

**A circle:** It refers to the eternal nature of the Church, as being endless with no beginning and no end, just like our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Facing the East:** East was the place of the Garden of Eden. We face the East praying to return to the first paradise

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness (**Malachi 4:2**) and the sun rises from the east. Therefore, we face the east when we pray.

Our Lord will return from the East on His second coming. (**Matthew 24:27**)



# “Live in Peace”

## Understanding the Rites of the Church Building:

### The Sanctuary:

- The **Sanctuary** is elevated by several steps; it is the holiest place in the Church.
- In the east part of the Church, inside the Sanctuary is the **Niche; "The Bosom of the Father"**. It is a semi-circular wall with the icon of the Lord Jesus Christ on His throne, the four incorporeal creatures, and the 24 priests offering incense. It represents Heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ and the Heavenly beings dwell.
- The **Altar** is in the center, behind the iconostasis. On top of the Altar is the **Throne**, where the chalice (cup) is placed inside.
- The location of the Altar symbolizes the Ark of the Covenant, which was placed in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and the Temple (**2 Ch. 5:7**).
- Just as the Ark of the Covenant was a special place of meeting between God and man (**Ex. 25:22**), so is the Altar where we receive **the Sacrament of the Eucharist** is the holiest place in the church.
- Our Orthodox Church teaches us to prostrate (bow down) before the Sanctuary when we enter the Church, thanking God for His mercy to allow us to come to Him. No one is allowed in the Sanctuary except the priest and deacons serving the liturgy.



### The Iconostasis:

- The iconostasis lies between the Sanctuary and the chancel (where the deacons stand).
- It represents one of the most important architectural features of the Orthodox Church. It confirms our relationship with Heaven and the saints.
- It can be made of wood, bricks, or marble.
- It has icons of our Lord Jesus Christ, angels, the disciples, and saints. When we look at the iconostasis, we should direct our eyes to heaven and remember the Victorious Church and their unity with us, the Striving Church.
- On top of the iconostasis is an icon of the Last Supper and the Crucifix.
- The iconostasis has three doors. **The Royal Door** is in the center and it is the entrance to the main sanctuary used by clergy members only. There are two other doors, one on each side of the iconostasis for the side sanctuaries.

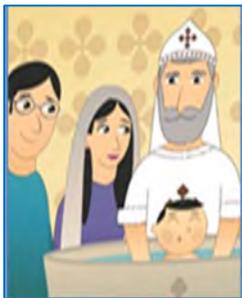


# “Live in Peace”

**The Chancel:** The chancel is separated from the sanctuary by the iconostasis and steps. The chancel, or chorus of deacons contains the lectern.

**The Lectern:** "The place of the Gospel". It is the place where the priest and the readers stand to read the liturgical readings and the Holy Gospel.

**The Nave:** The nave is separated from the chancel by steps. The nave gets its name from the Latin “navies,” meaning a ship. It is the chorus of believers, or the nave of the Church.



## The Baptistry:

- The Baptistry is the birthplace of a “new” Christian.
- The Baptistry should be built at the northwest side of the Church (left side of entrance).
- While the altar faces the east, the Baptistry is built at the west, so it transports those who are in the west of our Lord Jesus Christ, to His east where He dwells.

**Bethlehem:** The place where the holy bread is made is called Bethlehem and it refers to the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in the manger in Bethlehem of Judea. It is usually in an area of the Church separate from the main prayer area.



**The Church is full of heavenly symbols and spiritual messages to remind everyone of the story of salvation, offered by the Lord Jesus Christ and through the Church.**



# “Live in Peace”

Time is a precious gift that God gave us, but it's a limited resource. It is always passing and can never be retrieved. Using our time wisely is a gain, and the opposite holds true. Do we invest our time by using it in spiritual and useful things, or do we waste it in useless things that can lead to sin?

Time management helps you finish your work faster, with less effort, and allows you to seize opportunities you come across. Time is very valuable.

## No to Wasting Time

### Dangers of misusing time and having too much idle time:

- A field for evil thoughts
- Destructive relationships
- Earthly lusts
- Using the internet in the wrong way
- An empty mind is the workplace of the devil

When King David was a simple shepherd who spent his time in praise and prayer, his life was full of love and peace. However, when he was a king who had too much idle time, not busy with prayers, he started to look around, lusts in his heart, sins and kills.

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16)

### Beware of Time Wasters:

#### Social Media

- Not all the time spent on social media is wasted. You can share and learn from edifying and beneficial posts.
- It can be a time waster if you use it for extended times visiting useless, unedifying, and harmful sites.
- It can lead to addiction.

#### Friends

- One who does not respect their friends' time.
- Spending too much time on aimless phone calls or text messages.
- Idle talk can lead to many sins like mockery and judging others.
- Benefit from the time spent with friends in doing useful things like Bible reading, studying, sports, etc.



# “Live in Peace”

## Prioritize things to do based on their importance:

Study, helping your parents, attending church services, spending time with friends, social media, prayer, leisure.



## 🕒 Time is a Talent

We need to:

- Appreciate it and thank God for entrusting us with it.
- Know how to invest it.
- Train ourselves to wisely manage it and have more fruits in order to hear the Lord say to us:  
“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.” (Matthew 25:21)



## 🕒 Time is a Treasure

We need to value it and preserve it, not waste it but benefit from it and rejoice in your accomplishments.

## 🕒 Time is a Two-edged Sword

When used wisely, you benefit, but when wasted, you lose and give a chance for sin to come into your life.

## 🕒 Time is a Train

Fast! Always going according to schedule. Doesn't wait for anyone. Once wasted, you can't get it back.

## 🕒 Time is a Vapor

“For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” (James 4:14) It is limited, and we ought to focus on how to benefit from it.

### Sayings of the Church Fathers:

Do not count the day from life if you don't examine yourself.  
Love tranquility, for it has life for your soul. If you look at others, you will not see yourself.  
- St. Ephrem the Syrian

# Memorization

1. “Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:11)

## 2. The Gospel of the 6<sup>th</sup> Hour – Agpia (Matthew 5:1-16)

And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. “Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

**Glory be to God forever. Amen.**

## 3. Sayings of the Church Fathers

- a) "In truth we should convey the message of peace, and that our very first entrance in any place be attended with the blessing of peace." **St. Ambrose of Milan**
  
- b) "To the peacemakers the likeness of God is given, as being perfectly wise, and formed after the image of God by means of the regeneration of the renewed man" **St. Augustine**
  
- c) " It is the perfection of peace, where nothing offers opposition; and the children of God are peacemakers, because nothing resists God, and surely children ought to have the likeness of their father." **St. Augustine**

# “Live in Peace”

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

# Summer Festival Anthem 2022/2023

(When we're planting love and goodness  
Peace is what we'll always reap  
We're not worried if days are evil  
The Lord won't slumber nor sleep) **x2**

(Church is an Ark where souls are saved  
No matter what hardships we face  
Her Sacraments will help us always  
Grow in faith and dwell in grace) **x1**

(At His word I'd walk on water  
Strong in faith and firm in Doctrine) **x2**

(I will follow His commands) **x1**

(With God joy will never cease  
And His Spirit gives us peace) **x2**

(And His Spirit gives us peace) **x1**

## Contact us on:

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