



Summer Festival | 2026

But you must continue in the things which you have learned - II Timothy 3:14



ΜΙΑ
ΦΥΣΙΣ
ΤΟΥ
ΘΕΟΥ
ΛΟΓΟΥ
ΣΕΣΑΡ-
ΚΩΜΕΝΗ

Gr 1-3 | English Edition

**His Holiness Pope
Tawadros II**



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

**His Grace Bishop
Rewis**



**General Bishop of the
Diocese of Melbourne
and its affiliated
regions**

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) 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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I Have Joy When I Am With The Lord

St. Stephen

The Protodeacon and Protomartyr

The Synaxarion of the 1st day of the Coptic Month of Tobe (January 9)

Acts 6-7

We learn about St. Stephen who was faithful in keeping the true faith.

After our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples, they started spreading the word about our Lord Jesus Christ.

They told people about Christ's love for us, that He was crucified and resurrected. So many people believed in our Lord Jesus Christ and became Christians. Because so many people started to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, they needed more servants to help in serving the believers. The disciples asked the people to choose 7 people known to have strong faith and good conduct. They prayed and chose 7 people to be deacons, and these were the first to ever become deacons.

St. Stephen was one of them; he was the very first deacon to be ordained. St. Stephen was chosen to be the first deacon because he loved God so much and served God in a special way.

Even though he faced problems, he stayed faithful and kept the true faith. He was **“a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit.”** He did many miracles and told others about our Lord Jesus Christ, His crucifixion and resurrection. Many people believed in God because of him.



**“BUT YOU MUST CONTINUE IN THE THINGS
WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED” (II TIMOTHY 3:14)**

Because of his faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and knowledge about the Holy Bible, he was able to answer questions in a way that people who didn't believe couldn't answer him. When he preached, some of the Jews would argue with him about what he believed in. These non-believers secretly told some men to say that St. Stephen was speaking against Moses and even against God. This wasn't true, but many people got upset because they believed it was true. They took St. Stephen and brought him to the council. These were powerful men who were able to make life and death decisions about people. The rulers were very angry with him, but St. Stephen was not afraid to speak the truth.

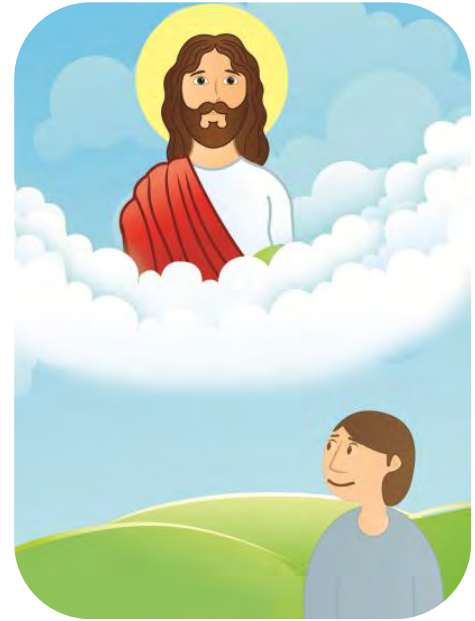
As he stood before them, they saw that his face was shining so bright, as the face of an angel. He continued to speak and tell them all about God, Abraham, Joseph, and Moses.

He told them how God came to earth and was born of St. Mary. That He was crucified and resurrected to take away our sins. He took this as a chance to witness for Christ.



**“BUT YOU MUST CONTINUE IN THE THINGS
WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED” (II TIMOTHY 3:14)**

This angered the people, but St. Stephen, being **“filled with the Holy Spirit,”** looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw our Lord Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God. He told the men what he was seeing. They didn’t want to listen to him; they covered their ears and screamed with loud voices so they wouldn’t hear what he was saying.



The people ran toward him, dragged him out of the city, and began to stone him to death. While they were throwing stones at him, St. Stephen prayed:

“Lord, do not charge them with this sin” (Acts 7:6).



St. Stephen was the first martyr. He was a true witness for Christ, not only by his words but by his actions too. He never feared to tell the truth, no matter what! He was firm in faith and had joy because he was with the Lord.

He became the **protodeacon** (first deacon), and the **protomartyr** (first martyr) of the Church.

We celebrate his feast on the 1st day of the Coptic month of Tobe (January 9).

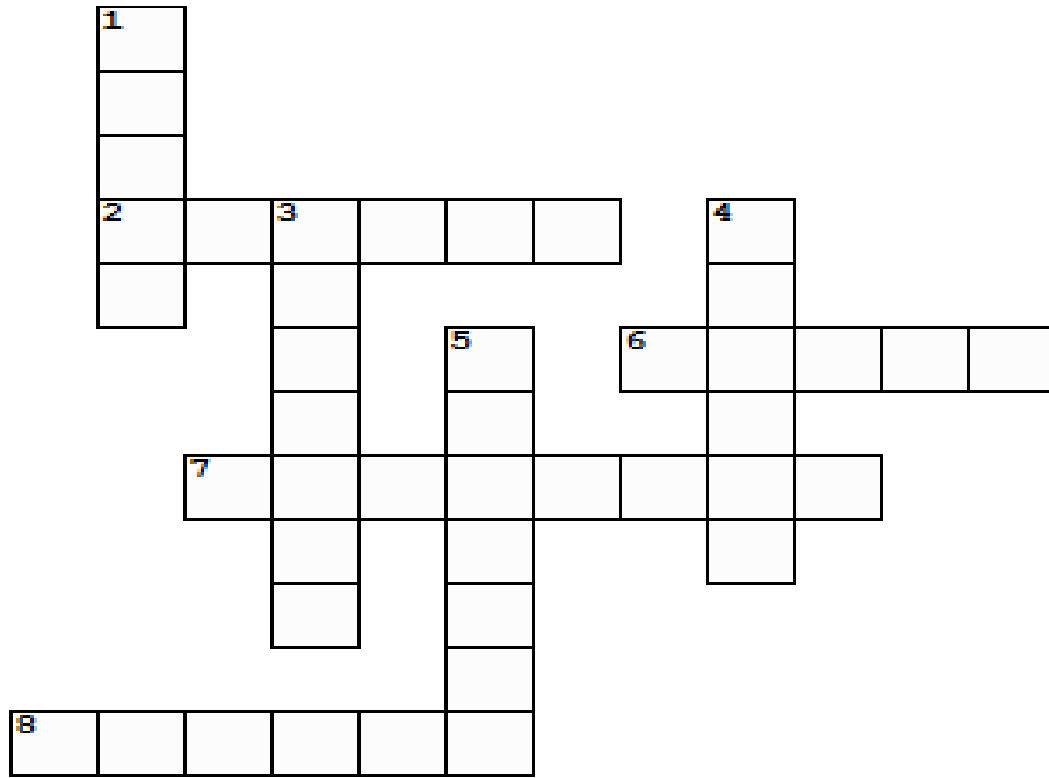
May the blessings of St. Stephen be with us all.

Amen.

**“With whom My hand shall be established;
Also My arm shall strengthen him.” (Psalm 89:21)**



St. Stephen



Across

2. He spoke with such _____ and grace
6. He was full of power and _____.
7. God performed many _____ through St. Stephen
8. What did the people throw at St. Stephen?

Down

1. He received the _____ of martyrdom
3. St. Stephen's face was _____ like an angel
4. The apostles _____ and laid their hands on them
5. St. Stephen was one of the 7 _____.

**"With whom My hand shall be established; Also My arm shall strengthen him."
(Psalm 89:21)**

I Am Well Rooted

The Holy Bread

Learning about the Holy Bread and its symbols teaches us about the rites of the Church and how we are well rooted in the Church.

Where is the Holy Bread prepared?

In the church, there is a special room called ‘**Bethlehem**’ where the Holy Bread is prepared. It is named after the town where our Lord Jesus Christ was born. It means ‘**The House of Bread.**’



How is the Holy Bread prepared?

The person who prepares the Holy Bread must be a man.

Water and yeast are added to the flour and made into dough.

The **flour** is pure like our Lord Jesus Christ, who is without sin.

The **water** is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who unites the members of the Church together.

The **yeast** is added to symbolize our sins that our Lord Jesus carried on the cross.



While making the dough, **Psalms** are prayed because they have many prophecies about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The dough is formed into a **circle**. The circle has no beginning or end, just like our Lord Jesus Christ, who is eternal, with no beginning or end.

It is then stamped with a special **Holy Bread stamp** that makes the crosses and the words. It is then put in the oven to bake.



“BUT YOU MUST CONTINUE IN THE THINGS WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED” (II TIMOTHY 3:14)

What do the crosses on the Holy Bread mean?

Count how many crosses you see.

- 1 big cross surrounded by 12 little crosses
- The big cross in the middle is a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ and the 12 little crosses are a symbol of the 12 disciples.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ is in the middle of all the 12 disciples.



What do the holes in the Holy Bread mean?

The holes are a symbol of the wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ when He was on the Cross. Count them.

There are 5 holes in the Holy Bread.

- 1 for the crown of thorns on His head,
- 2 for the nails in His hands,
- 1 for the nail in His feet, and
- 1 for the spear in His side.



What is written on the Holy Bread?

The writing in Coptic says, “A~gioc o~ Yeoc, a~gioc Ic,uroc, a~

The words mean “**Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal.**”



How does the priest choose the Holy Bread for the Liturgy?

In the beginning of the Liturgy, 3, 5, or 7 Holy Breads are used (it must be an odd number).

These Holy Breads are used for the prayer at the beginning of the Liturgy called the **Offertory Prayer**. The congregation prays and says Kurie e~le/~con meaning “Lord have mercy” 41 times while the priest chooses the best-looking Holy Bread to be placed on the Altar. With the prayers of the priest, the Holy Spirit turns the Holy Bread into the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ.



At the end of the Liturgy, we receive the Holy Body in the Holy Communion, just like the disciples did during the Lord’s Supper. When we receive His Body and Blood, we abide in Him.

**“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him”
(John 6:56)**



The Holy Bread

Circle the correct answer.



What shape is the Holy Bread?



How many little crosses are on the Holy Bread?



How many holes are in the Holy Bread?



How many Holy Breads can be used for the Offertory Prayer?



How many times does the congregation say Kurie e~le/~con during the Offertory Prayer?



Fill in the blanks:

“He who eats My _____ and drinks My _____ abides in Me,
and I in him” (John 6:56)

My Faith Is A Refuge

Queen Esther Saves Her People

The Book of Esther

The story of Esther teaches us about the importance and power of prayers and that our faith is a refuge.

Long ago, there was a young Jewish lady living in Persia named Esther. She was very beautiful. Her older cousin Mordecai took care of her when her parents died.

He loved her as his own daughter and taught her the commandments of God. Esther was very obedient to Mordecai.

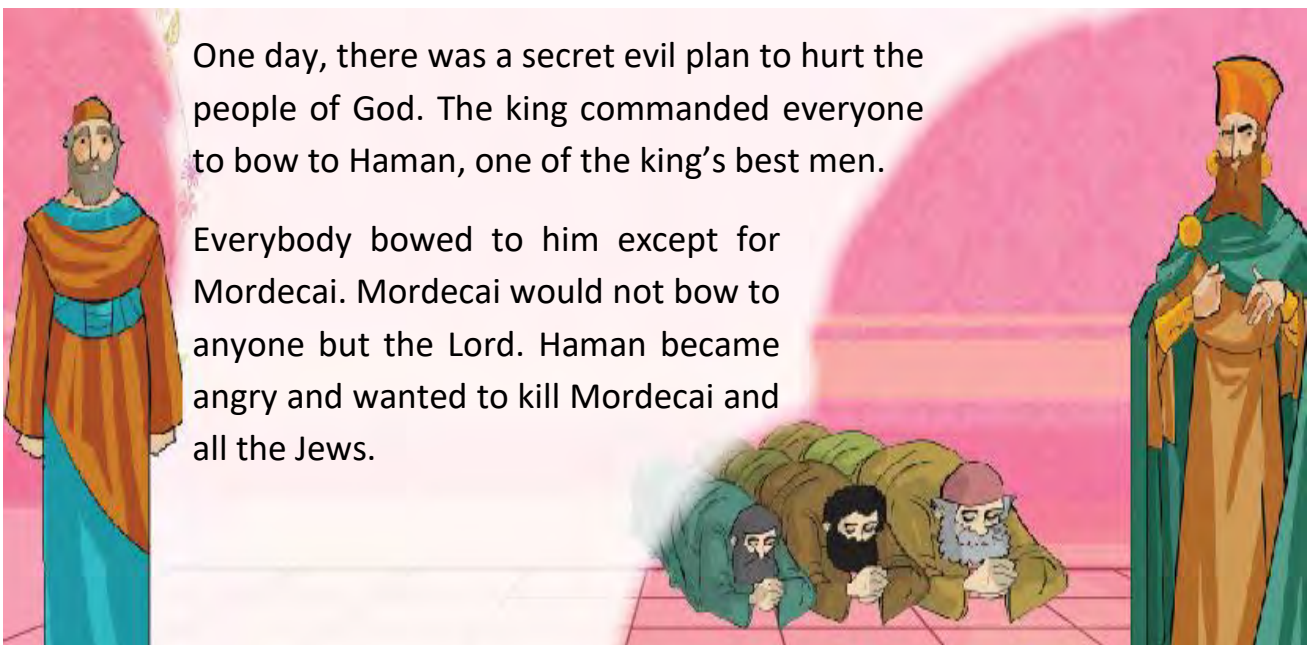


The king selected her from 7 other women to become the queen. However, he didn't know that she was from the people of God.



One day, there was a secret evil plan to hurt the people of God. The king commanded everyone to bow to Haman, one of the king's best men.

Everybody bowed to him except for Mordecai. Mordecai would not bow to anyone but the Lord. Haman became angry and wanted to kill Mordecai and all the Jews.



**“BUT YOU MUST CONTINUE IN THE THINGS
WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED” (II TIMOTHY 3:14)**

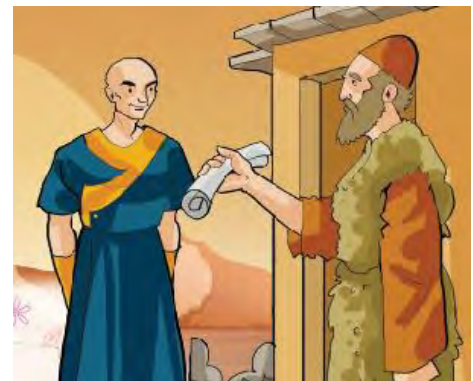


Haman went to the king and told him that some people are not obeying the rules of the kingdom, and the king should kill them all. The king agreed and wrote a decree to kill all the Jewish people.

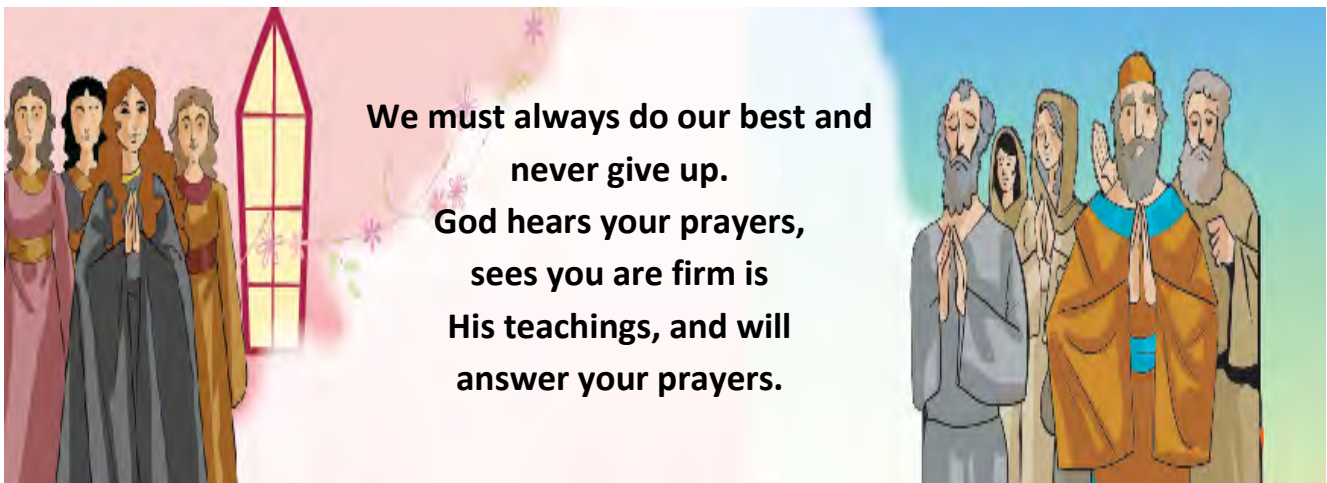
But God always protects His children. Mordecai asked Esther to go to the king and ask to save her people. This was not easy to do because anyone who went to the king without being asked by him could be killed.

Mordecai, Esther and all the Jewish people fasted and prayed for 3 days to the Lord to save them. They had faith that God would hear their prayers. Esther also prayed that God be with her when she spoke to the king, and she said:

**“Heed the voice of those who have no other hope.”
(Esther 14:19)**



Then Esther went to see the king, and she invited both the king and Haman to 2 banquets (feasts). At the banquets, the king was so happy and asked Esther what she wanted. Esther asked the king to save her and her people. She told the king that Haman wanted to kill them all. After listening to Esther, the king ordered Haman to be killed. The people were saved, and they were so happy! Every year, they celebrate this day; they call it the Feast of Purim.

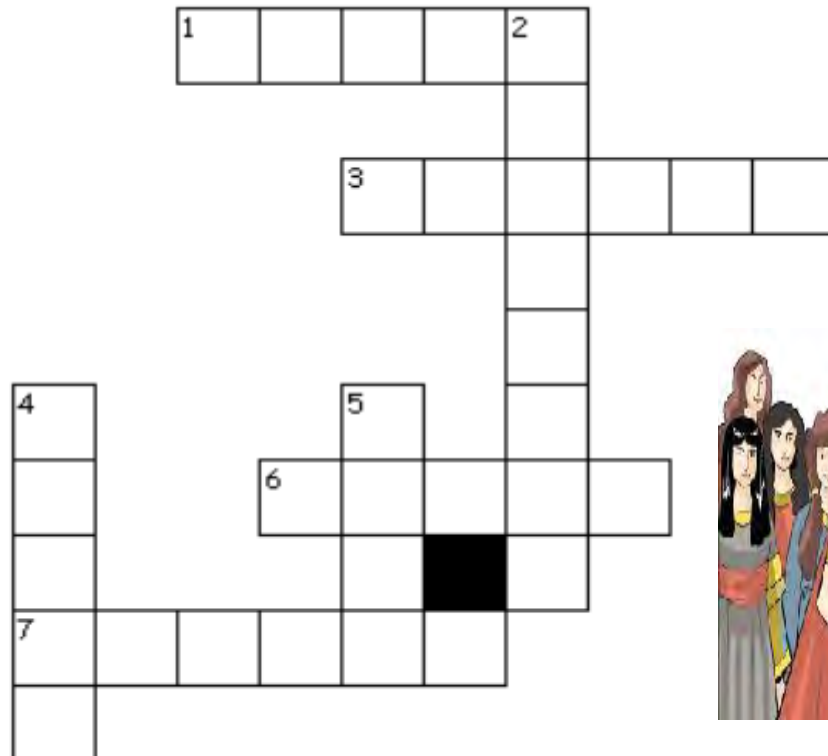


**We must always do our best and
never give up.
God hears your prayers,
sees you are firm in
His teachings, and will
answer your prayers.**



Queen Esther Saves Her People

Complete the crossword puzzle



Across

1. The name of the feast the Jews celebrate each year
3. Where did Esther live?
6. He wanted to kill all the Jewish people
7. She became the queen

Down

2. He took care of Esther
4. How many days did the people fast and pray?
5. Esther asked the king to ____ her and her people

My Doctrine Is Life And Rule

St. Mary the Mother of God (Theotokos)

Learning about St. Mary the Mother of God in the Coptic Church teaches us how we honor her and how much she loves us.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, human nature was corrupted because of sin, and we needed someone to save us from sin and renew our nature.

God promised that He would be born of a woman and die instead of us to save us. For a long time, people kept waiting for the promise, and the prophets wrote that He would be born of a virgin.



When the time was right, our Lord Jesus Christ was born of St. Mary.

She was a young girl from Nazareth. She loved God with all her heart. She had many virtues; she was patient, obedient, humble and full of wisdom.



One day, God sent her Archangel Gabriel, who told her that she would be the mother of the Lord.

**“Behold, you will conceive in your womb
and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.”
(Luke 1:31)**

She was a virgin as the prophecies said, and she remained a virgin. That’s why we call her the ever-virgin St. Mary.



St. Mary obeyed the words of the angel with all humility.

**“BUT YOU MUST CONTINUE IN THE THINGS
WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED” (II TIMOTHY 3:14)**

When she knew that St. Elizabeth, her relative, would also have a baby (St. John the Baptist), she went quickly to her house. As soon as St. Elizabeth heard St. Mary's greeting, the baby leaped with joy in her womb. She was filled with the Holy Spirit and knew that St. Mary is the mother of God, the Theotokos. And she said: **“But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Luke 1:43)**



St. Mary praised God and thanked Him and said:
“All generations will call me blessed.” (Luke 1:48)

The Church continues to glorify St. Mary the Theotokos in our prayers. Prayers like the introduction to the Creed, **“We exalt you, the mother of the true Light”** shows us how highly venerated St. Mary is in our Church.



In the church, her icon is placed at the right of our Lord Jesus Christ because she is the queen, the mother of the King of kings.



She is called the second heaven, who carried our Lord Jesus Christ in her womb.

We ask for her intercessions in our prayers because the Lord Jesus Christ listens to her prayers for us. She has a higher rank than all the angels and saints.

**The Church celebrates St. Mary's
departure to heaven on
the 21st day of the Coptic month of Tobe
(January 29).**



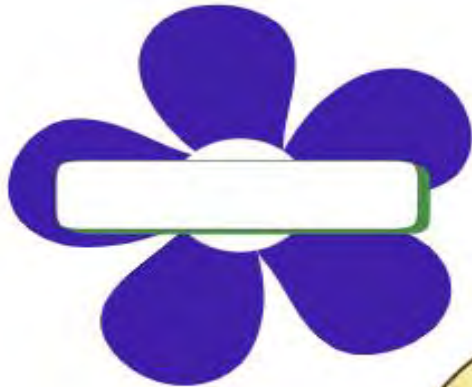
“All generations will call me blessed.” (Luke 1:48)

**“BUT YOU MUST CONTINUE IN THE THINGS
WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED” (II TIMOTHY 3:14)**



St. Mary the Mother of God

What are some names we use to honor St. Mary?



“All generations will call me blessed.” (Luke 1:48)

I Am Proud Of My Heritage

St. Julius of Aqfas

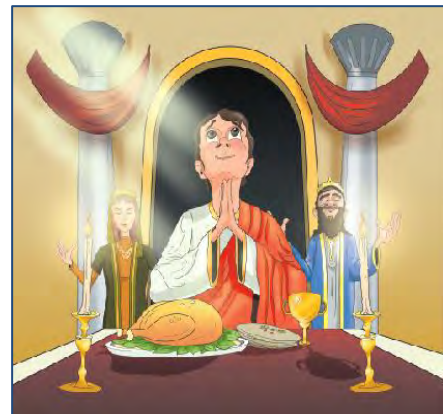
The Synaxarion of the 22nd day of the Coptic Month of Thoout (October 2)

We learn about the writer of the lives of the martyrs, who showed us that our fathers kept the true faith and gave it to us unchanged.

Our Church has strong roots, like the saints who preserved the faith for us. With God’s help and protection, they were able to confess their faith even if it meant giving up their lives (martyrdom). Their great love for God was the reason many people believed and became Christian. We, their children, need to know their amazing stories and learn from them.



There is a great saint who collected the stories of many of the martyrs of our Church. His name is St. Julius of Aqfahs; he is called **‘the biographer of the martyrs.’**



St. Julius was born to a rich Christian family in the town of Aqfahs. He moved to Alexandria around the time when Emperor Diocletian began persecuting Christians. St. Julius visited the Christians in prison to help and encourage them. He helped take care of them and bandaged their wounds.

St. Julius made sure he was there when someone was martyred so he could take their bodies, honor them, and return them to their hometowns.

He had 300 young men who helped him. They traveled to many places to bury the martyrs and write their stories.

The Lord Jesus Christ kept him for the purpose of writing the stories of the martyrs as a remembrance for future generations.



**“BUT YOU MUST CONTINUE IN THE THINGS
WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED” (II TIMOTHY 3:14)**

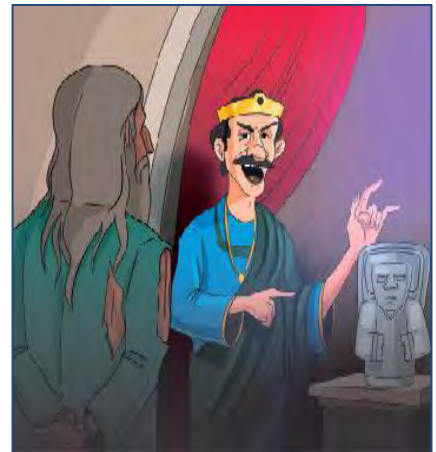
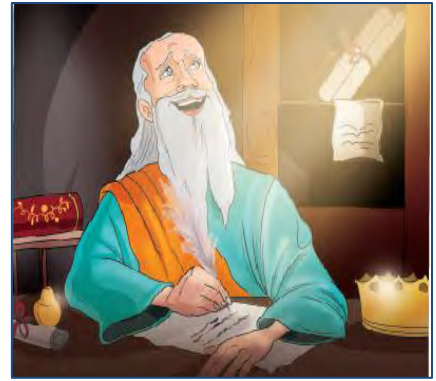
When it was time for St. Julius to be martyred, the Lord appeared to him and told him to go to the governor of Samanoud and confess his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The saint did as the Lord told him and accepted all the torture by the governor with joy because the Lord Jesus Christ was with him and strengthened him.

Many people believed because of the miracles they saw and St. Julius' strong faith, including the governor of Samanoud himself.

At the end, St. Julius was martyred on the 22nd day of the Coptic month of Thoout (October 2).

His story and all the stories of the martyrs can be found in the Synaxarion, a book that has all the feasts celebrated in the church according to the Coptic Calendar. New stories of the saints and martyrs are added to it every day so we can learn from them.



The saints and martyrs are our intercessors in heaven.

They pray for us before our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Church honors the saints and martyrs by:

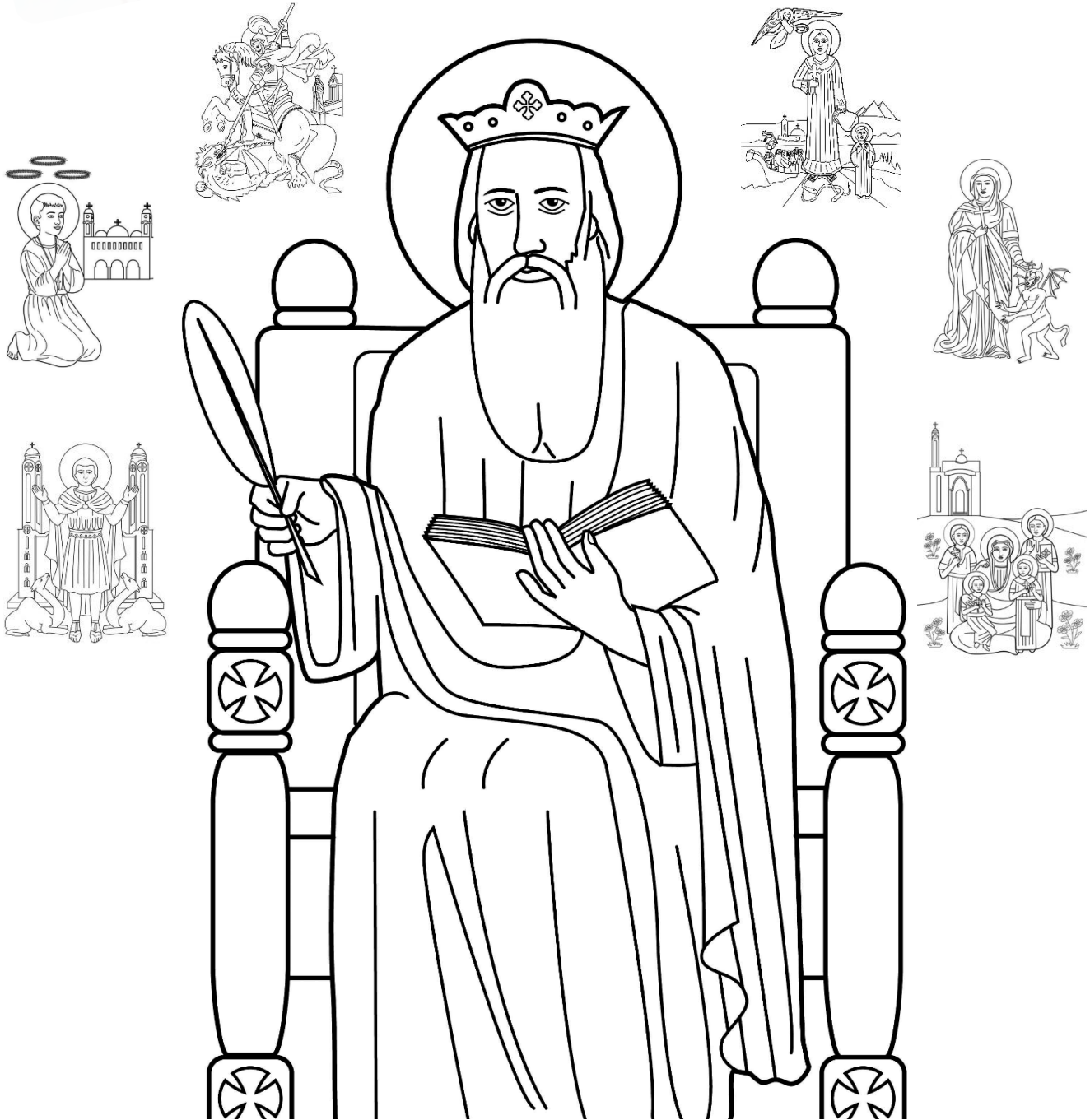
- 1- Naming churches after them.**
- 2- Celebrating their feasts.**
- 3- Writing their icons to remind us of their good works and their example.**
- 4- Lighting candles in front of their icons because they are the light to the world.**
- 5- The priest offers incense in front of their icons.**
- 6- Singing praises about them.**

**“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word
of God to you, whose faith follow,
considering the outcome of their conduct.” (Hebrews 13:7)**

**“BUT YOU MUST CONTINUE IN THE THINGS
WHICH YOU HAVE LEARNED” (II TIMOTHY 3:14)**



St. Julius of Aqfas



**“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you,
whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.”**

(Hebrews 13:7)



Know the Martyrs of the Church

Just like St. Julius of Aqfahs, we should know more about the saints and martyrs of our Church. Look for more information about these martyrs in the Synaxarion.

St. Febronia, the Ascetic



St. Philemon the flute player



Feast date: _____

Something special about her:

Feast date: _____

Something special about him:

Memorization

“But you must continue in the things which you have learned” (2 Timothy 3:14)

Introduction to the Creed (in the Agpia)

We honour you, Mother of True Light and glorify
you, O' Holy Virgin Mother of God, for you gave
birth to the Saviour of the World. He came and saved
our souls. Glory to You, our Master and King Jesus
Christ, Pride of the Apostles, Crown of the Martyrs,
Joy of the righteous, Steadiness of the churches,
Remission of sins. We preach the Holy Trinity, the
One Divinity, whom we worship and honour. Lord
have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord bless us.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers of Every Hour (in the Agpia)

Have mercy upon us O' God, have mercy upon us. For You are always worshipped and glorified in heaven and on earth. O' Christ, our good Lord, plenteous in patience, mercy and compassion, who loves the just and shows mercy to all sinners amongst whom I am the first. Who does not wish death for the sinner but repentance and life, calling us all to salvation for the promised forthcoming rewards. O' Lord, accept our prayers of this hour and every hour. Ease our lives, and guide us to act according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls, purify our bodies, set right our thoughts, cleanse our intentions, heal our sickness, forgive us our sins and deliver us from every evil grief and distress. Surround us with Your Holy angels that we may be guided and guarded with them to attain the unity of faith and knowledge of Your imperceptible and infinite glory, for You are blessed for ever.

Amen.

Anthem 2026

(Our doctrine, from the start,
established by God himself,
preached by the apostles,
and our fathers kept it safe.) **2x**

a strong tree of faith,
its roots trace back to history,
pure and watered by God's words
(Rites and also liturgy) **2x**

firm,
firm in my faith and doctrine
Our church is fatherly
Orthodox as my forefathers
Heroes of the Coptic church.

Mark, Athanasious, Dioscoros,
heroes and pillars of faith,
though heresies arise,
still we're steadfast in our faith.

Rooted in your church,
be firm in what you've learned.

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