



Summer Festival | 2022 / 2023

LIVE IN PEACE

Youth | 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) 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.
- 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.
- 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.”**

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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)

The Doctrine of the Trinity

In Orthodoxy we believe that our God is a triune God.
He is One in essence and three hypostases (persons).

Understanding “Divine Essence”

The divine essence is the divine nature. The divine essence Has three distinct hypostases (persons). The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Hypostasis (Plural, Hypostases)

- The Hypostasis is a person of divinity.
- The Father is the divine Hypostasis of existence.
- The Son is the divine Hypostasis of wisdom and speech.
- The Holy Spirit is the divine Hypostasis of life.
- God (the Father) is spoken by His Word (the Son) and alive by His Spirit (the Holy Spirit).



What does it mean that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

- Pope Shenouda III explained that the sonship of the Son is not carnal nor bodily. When we say the Son is begotten of the Father, He is begotten spiritually from the Father’s existence and has nothing to do with the humanly understanding of sonship.
- He gave an analogy saying, when we say that “an idea was born from a great mind”, we do not refer to the idea as being born a humanly, physical birth from the mind. Similarly, the begetting of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God (the incarnate Word) begotten from the Father.
- In a physical human birth we see a separation between the mother and the child. However, the Son is begotten from the Father and has no separation as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as said in John 10:30 **“I and My Father are one.”** He is begotten from the Father as an idea is begotten from the mind and light is begotten from fire.
- As if someone has an idea and publishes that idea, many people will have access to his idea and the idea was never separated from his mind.

The Holy Spirit Proceeds from the Father

- The Holy Spirit is in a state of continuous procession from the Father from the beginning of time to the end of the ages, similar to the procession of heat from fire. There is no heat without a heating element (fire) and there is no heating element (fire) with no heat. The Lord Jesus said about the Holy Spirit **“The Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father” (John 15:26)**

The Holy Trinity in the Old Testament

- There are many instances in the Old Testament where the Holy Trinity was evident. For instance in Genesis 1:26, we read, **“God said, “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”** ... Notice here God (One) ... Our image (Trinity) ... Our likeness (Trinity).
- Some argue that speaking in plural is to assert reverence. However, that is not true in the Hebrew language which was the language of the book of Genesis. The Hebrew language does not use plural for reverence.

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The Oneness of the Trinity in the Old Testament:

- “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! (Deuteronomy 6:4)
- “Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me” (Deuteronomy 32:39)
- “You are the Lord God, You alone.” (2 Kings 19:19)
- “O Lord, there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You” (1 Chronicles 17:20)

The Holy Trinity in the New Testament

1. In Matthew 3:16, “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.” In the Lord Christ’s baptism we see the Holy Trinity: the Father (voice from heaven), the Son (in the Jordan river), and the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove).
2. In Luke 1:35 we read the annunciation of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ; “And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest [the Father] will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One [the Son] who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”
3. In Matthew 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” notice here the Lord Jesus Christ said in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He did not say in the “names”.
4. In 2 Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ [the Son], and the love of God [the Father], and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”
5. In Hebrews 9:14, “how much more shall the blood of Christ [the Son], who through the eternal Spirit [the Holy Spirit] offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God [the Father]?”
6. In 1 John 5:7-8, “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”



Analogies to describe the doctrine of the Holy Trinity:

1. The Human

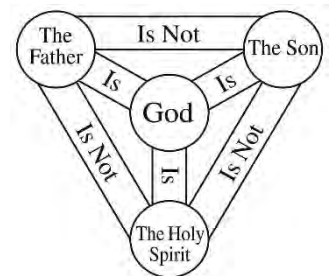
God created man according to His image and likeness. Man is body, soul, and spirit. The three are distinct but they are one and cannot be separated.

2. The Sun

The Sun is one in essence (nature), we see it as a yellow bright circle in the sky, we feel its heat, and its light makes us see all things. We cannot separate between the sun itself and its heat and light, the three are one and cannot exist without the others. The light rays are generated from it and heat proceeds from it as well.

3. The Triangle

The Son is not the Father nor is He the Holy Spirit; The Father is not the Son nor is the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is not the Father nor is the Son. However, all three are God.



Why is it important to have a clear understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity?

Some may wonder, “How does the doctrine of the Trinity affect my life and why do I need to learn and understand it?”

1. The fact is, the majority of the Christian dogma depends on the doctrine of the Trinity. If you do not have a clear understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, how will you understand ...
 - The doctrine of the incarnation
 - The doctrine of salvation
 - The mystery of the divine love for mankind
 - The Transfiguration and the Theophany
2. The doctrine of the Trinity shows how we were created in God’s image, which should encourage us to offer sacrificial love to those around us as He offered sacrificial love towards us.
3. The doctrine of the Trinity reveals to us God’s loving nature. The Holy Trinity existed before the creation of everything in unity, love, and holiness.
4. All the Church sacraments are given to us through the work of the Holy Trinity in us.

The Book of Judith

The Book of Judith is one of the Deuterocanonical books.
It tells a heroic story of deliverance of the Israelites by the hands of a woman, Judith.

The Zealous Servant and Active Citizen


- Judith represents the zealous believer, who has zeal for the glory of the Lord, and derives from Him strength and wisdom to confront the forces of evil. She cut off the head of evil, and defeated Satan in his own home.
- The book of Judith also represents belonging. As members of the body of Christ, the church, each one of us should have a sense of responsibility towards others.
- As for Judith herself, she is a woman of rare qualities combined in one personality: She was full of spiritual virtues and characteristics of a spiritual and patriotic personality. She combined wisdom and decency, wealth and asceticism, courage and humility, beauty and chastity.



The Main Storyline

- After overtaking the cities of Medes in the East, Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrian king, sent asking for the support of the cities of the West, but the latter mocked his messenger, and raised the banner of disobedience.
- He therefore attacked them with an “army like locusts” which was nothing like they had seen before, and took revenge on them with an evil vengeance, through Holofernes, the commander of his armies. He harvested men with swords, burned the crops of the land, and imposed tribute, in money and materials.
- The rulers of the cities which had not been conquered yet sent to him declaring their obedience and submission, and providing supplies to his great army, except for the Jews who refused to be included among the submissive ones. They did not send apologies or surrender like the rest.
- When the commander of the armies learned of their disobedience, and their lack of submission, he was astonished and convened a “council of war”, in which he summoned the commanders of Ammon and Moab, inquiring from them about the nature of the Jewish people and why they were so rebellious.
- Although the Ammonites and Moabites were enemies of the Jews, Achior, the commander of the Ammonites, warned Holofernes of the danger of clashing with the Jews, advising him to turn away from them because the God of heaven is fighting for them.
- However, the commander was not convinced of any of what Achior said and threatened to kill him in case the Jews were defeated and sent him to the Jews.
- The city at the frontline of the Jews and its people received instructions from the high priest in Jerusalem to block all ports through which the enemy is likely to attack.
- Likewise, the geography of the land made storming of the city by enemies a kind of adventure and gamble, which made Holofernes accept the advice of his advisors to resort to the siege and cut off the city's water supply. He did this in order to achieve two goals indicated by the Jewish neighbors' advisors:

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- **First:** the people will be subject to hunger and thirst, which will lead them to put pressure on their leaders to surrender the city.
 - **Second:** forcing them to consume God’s share of tithes and firstfruits, which brings His wrath upon them, so He delivers them into the hands of their enemies.
 - It happened that after five weeks after the start of the siege, the water ran out of the city and they suffered a great famine.
 - The people cried to their three leaders who promised to surrender the city.
 - Enters Judith, a beautiful and rich widow of piety. She heard the leaders’ determination to hand over the city, so she came to reprimand them for their diminished confidence in God, and asked them for a deadline in which God would make salvation on her hands. So they agreed with her without knowing her plan and without her asking for help from anyone.
 - She then offered a long prayer in the upper room of her house and after that, she adorned herself with all the jewels she owned which she had thrown aside since the death of her husband. She went to the city gate, the guards opened the door for her, and she went out with her maid. They headed to the enemy camp, who were dazzled by her beauty, and sent her to their leader as she requested.
 - There she stole the mind of Holofernes, especially since she had deceived him by telling him that the people were inevitably defeated, and that she ran to him in order to escape the certain destruction. She indicated to him what he should do, that he should wait for the start signal from her which she would take from God.
- 
- After three days, Holofernes invited her to his feast and while he was lusting for her, God was preparing salvation for his people that night.
 - He was heavy with his drinking and became drunk like a dead man. His soldiers left him with Judith and went out. Judith found that the decisive moment had come, so she pleaded with God, gathered her courage, fell with a dagger on his neck twice, and his head separated from him.
 - While trembling, she took his head, put it in her food bag, and carried it with her maid, she came out of the camp as usual, and no one objected her.
 - When she reached the city wall, she called out to the guards, they opened for her, and she cried out announcing the news of the victory.
 - Everyone went trembling, and the chiefs and the people gathered and when they learned the news. They hung the head on the wall, opposite the enemy camp, and in the morning they opened the gates of war.
 - The Assyrians became angry, and went to wake up their leader to issue an order to crush those men. They found him dead without a head, and at that moment they understood the whole trick which was woven by a daring Hebrew woman.
 - The army was disturbed and the soldiers fled in random ways, which allowed the Jews to chase and scatter them despite their number, which was estimated to be about two hundred thousand men, between soldiers and knights. They took possession of their luggage and the contents of their tents, and Judith became peace to Israel, throughout the days of her life and also after her for a long time.

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Judith's Character

- Judith appears in the book as an example of Jewish piety, as well as loyalty and obedience to the law.
- She derives her strength and courage - in the face of the enemy - from her honesty in her relationship with God.
- She prepared for battle by seclusion while praying and fasting.
- Judith also gives a living example of what a servant should be. She is an example of devotion.
- Chastity in her widowhood is also one of her distinctive characteristics.
- Her beauty, richness, and youth had been set aside, and she is cut off for worship in her house, in what looks like a monastic cell. However, she left her solitude when it was necessary to do so, when her people were endangered.
- She kept her prayers on time and washed for prayer as required by the law.

Prayer

- Judith had abstained from the world, turned her back on its joys and pleasures, and confined herself with God, spending her time in prayer and meditation accompanied with fasting.
- She was beautiful in the image, wise (like Susanna and Abigail), with a great deal of wealth, but she chose a life that resembles monasticism, in an upper room resembling monks' cells on the roof of her house.



Praise

- Praise for Judith was the spiritual expression, the appropriate translation in the book of joy in the Lord, and the celebration of victory.
- The festivities in the book are also spiritual, the songs are spiritual, and talking about the works of God in them.
- Praise was the constant language Judith used when she expressed her thanks to God the Almighty and powerful.
 - Judith calls the people to praise (8:25-27)
 - Judith praises God in her prayers (19:1-19)
 - Salvation Song (16:1-17).

Chastity

- Judith resembles the hermits who used to leave their caves and go down to share the Church's struggle in the days of heresies and persecutions. They were not satisfied only with praying in their caves.
- The Church is one body with many members. Judith left her room and went down to her dwelling, where she stripped herself of all aspects of widowhood and hermitage including sackcloth and ashes and changed her appearance in preparation for her mission.
- Some may think that the description in the text shows her abandonment of her chastity, but even though she had taken off her clothes of sorrow, she was not excessively adorned or glamorous because she knew very well that this was not pleasant in the sight of the Lord.

Fasting

- It is mentioned in the book that Judith fasted all the days of her widowhood, except on the days of the Sabbaths, feasts, and celebrations, like many of the hermits we know from Church history.

Abba Daniel

The Hegumen of Scetis

Synaxarion of the 8th day of the Coptic Month of Pashons (May 16)

Abba Daniel is mentioned in the commemoration of the saints in the Liturgy of the Faithful.

Daniel is a Hebrew name which means “God is Judge”. Abba Daniel, the hegumen of Scetis, is one of the sixth-century saints whose biography testifies to the asceticism and power of the Coptic Orthodox monasticism manifested in authentic spirituality and service.

Father of many monks in the desert of Scetis, he presented to the church many bishops fortified with knowledge and discernment through the study and preparatory programs offered in the monasteries, in which Abba Daniel taught along with other well-learned and pious elders. In addition, Abba Daniel's educational fortification extended to the nuns' convents.

Childhood and Early Life

Abba Daniel was born in 485 AD. At the age of sixteen, he went to the desert of Scetis embracing monasticism. His desire to live a solitary life led him to the inner desert. He used to eat only once a day at sunset, and his work was weaving baskets. While in his cave, he fell into the hands of the Barbarians three times and every time, he managed to escape.

When he advanced quickly in his spiritual level, they ordained him as a hegumen, then a leader of the monks. The Lord had granted him spiritual wisdom and discernment by which he led thousands of monks, as well as the gift of disclosing their inner thoughts and sins. It is worth noting that at that time, it was not common for monks to be ordained as priests except for one who was ordained a priest for the whole Scetis region, to celebrate the divine liturgies and receive the monks' confessions.

His Disciples

One of the most famous disciples of Abba Daniel was St. Anastasia the Worshiper, who lived under his guidance in the wilderness for 28 years. She was a deaconess from Antioch of rich and noble descent whom the Emperor of Constantinople wanted to marry. She escaped to Egypt with St. Severus of Antioch (518 AD). Disguised in men's attire, she revealed her story to Abba Daniel who allowed her to stay in a cave close by where she had lived in disguise for twenty-eight years.

Her food and water supply were provided for her once a week by one of Abba Daniel's disciples, who would leave the provision by the door of her cave. Whenever St. Anastasia needed spiritual advice, she would write to Abba Daniel in Greek, a language that the disciple who would carry back the written script did not understand. Thus, back and forth messages were conducted without revealing her identity until her time of repose.



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Eulogius, the Stone Cutter

On his way to the city to sell his handwork, the baskets, Abba Daniel met Eulogius, a stone cutter gaining his daily living by cutting stones and helping the poor. Seeing how hard Eulogius worked to care for the poor and house the sojourners, Abba Daniel prayed asking God to give the man more money.

In response to Abba Daniel's prayer, Eulogius found a treasure hidden in the stones he was cutting. In Constantinople, Eulogius left his first mission of almsgiving and pursued worldly desires and status, becoming a minister. Upon hearing about the wrong path that Eulogius had taken, Abba Daniel went to Constantinople to meet with him but was prevented by the guards of the palace. One night, Abba Daniel saw a vision as if the Lord Jesus Christ, the judge, demanded Eulogius' lost soul from Abba Daniel.

Back at his monastery, Abba Daniel continued praying for Eulogius. However, an angel of the Lord appeared to him asking him to stop rebuking him for rejecting God's judgment concerning His creation. Later, in 532 AD, Eulogius participated in a conspiracy against Emperor Justinian. After that, he fled to Egypt and went back to his original trade, that of cutting stones. Then he met with Abba Daniel and narrated to him what had befallen him because of the money that had led him astray. Abba Daniel comforted him and restored him to his love of the poor and almsgiving.

The Repentant Thief

One night, a thief pretending to be Abba Daniel and dressed similarly, broke into one of the nun's convents overseen by Abba Daniel. The nuns, fooled by the thief's appearance, asked him to pray for their blind sister. Ridiculing their faith, the thief asked them to wash her eyes with the same water they had used to wash his feet. To his amazement, the nun had her sight restored. The thief was deeply moved. In repentance he sought Abba Daniel to confess his awful deed. Abba Daniel told him that he had been present with his spirit at the convent during the incident. The thief adopted Christianity, was baptized, and became a follower of Abba Daniel.

Standing for the Orthodox Faith

Abba Daniel showed a great deal of tolerance of persecution because he held fast to the faith he received by his fathers.

Abba Daniel was exposed to terrible beating to the point of death for having rejected the Tome of Leo, Chalcedonian heresy, before Emperor Justinian's representative. Consequently, upon the advice of his disciples, Abba Daniel escaped to Tambok where he established a monastery and stayed there till the death of the Emperor (565 AD).



For forty and half years, Abba Daniel lived a life of fasting and prayers in the deserts performing a lot of miracles, fathering many monks and nuns, and bearing a lot of suffering for the sake of his faith. Near the time of his departure, he gathered his disciples to inform them and to strengthen and console them. He reposed on the 8th day of Pashons, of the year 296 of the martyrs.

Time Management

Time is an important aspect in our lives. Some have great use of time, some look for ways to kill time, some try to save time, and some try to redeem the time. We often find ourselves pressed for time; life is busy, and we run between our studies, work, family responsibilities, and service. There is always a general feeling of lack of time ... but is it enough time that we are lacking or good time management?

What is time?

Before we talk about time and time management, we need to understand the concept of time and how it relates to us.

- Time is defined as an indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole.
- Time is measured by the movement of the earth around the sun, that is why time is measured differently on other planets as their cycle around the sun is different than earth.



Time as it Relates to God

Since time is relative to created matters, then God is not bound by time. He is above time; He created time by creating our solar system. Time does not limit God nor that He is bound by time.

“Who inhabits eternity” (Isaiah 57:15)

However, even though God is not bound by time the way we humans are, He still puts great emphasis on it. He made it clear that He is the God of order and not confusion.

**“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”
(1 Corinthians 14:33)**

- He is always punctual—He always acts at the right time (even if it may seem to us like we have to wait a long time).
- He also has set aside certain times that He has blessed—for our benefit (i.e. the Lord’s day, Holidays, etc...). These are designed to teach us important lessons and to reveal His plan to us.

Our Time is Limited

Our life on earth is limited, the average human lifespan is 70-80 years. Time is the most valuable asset in our lives, even more valuable than wealth; If you lose money, it can be regained. If you lose time, it’s gone forever. That’s the perspective we must have in order to be intentional with how our limited time is spent as we read in James 4:14.

**“For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.”
(James 4:14)**

“Live in Peace”

It's imperative that one should make the most of his/her time while being here on Earth, for our lifetime is but a fleeting mist in the scope of eternity.

“Life is not measured by its length but by its depth” - HH Pope Shenouda III

The Value of Our Time

The value of time is increased or decreased based on what we do with it! In the secular world, some professions have a high rate per hour (i.e. lawyers, physicians, etc...) which indicates how valuable their time is.

You can meet with someone for a few minutes and feel that this time was a blessing to your whole day, and sometimes something can ruin your day in a matter of a few minutes!

We have many examples of people who used their lifetime to do great things and glorify the Lord, take St. John the Baptist for instance, his ministry was only about 1 year, and during this time he brought many to repentance. St. Paul did not waste any time during his ministry, he spread Christianity to the majority of the ancient world. Our Lord Jesus Christ changed the world and the life of everyone during the few hours he was on the cross! Time can be very critical!

If we look at St. John Chrysostom, although he departed hundreds of years ago, his sermons are still alive and relevant to this day, the same with many other church fathers, St. Augustine, St. Basil, St. Gregory, etc.... St. Mark the apostle who was martyred in the year 68 AD is certainly alive in our Coptic Church and the many other places where he preached.

Also, in the secular world, there are names that are never forgotten, like Tesla, Braille, Michael Angelo, etc... because of how they used their time to accomplish timeless accomplishments.

Sometimes, a few minutes can be used to do something great and can be used to fall into a great sin! Look at St. Peter for example, in a few minutes he denied the Lord and lived with guilt for a while, and in a few minutes he brought 3000 to the faith by his sermon! Very little time can save someone's life! Look at the right thief, the few minutes being crucified with the Lord saved his eternity, he did not waste time or procrastinate. It is surprising when people say they have “time to kill”! time should be cherished not killed.

Our Struggles with Time

- “I can't get everything done!”
- “I have so much going on right now!”
- “I am busy all the time, but I never feel like I'm getting the important things done!”
- “I have so much to do; I don't know what to do next.”
- “When I take a day off, time just seems to slip away and I feel like it was a wasted day.”



“Live in Peace”

Does this sound like you? There is no doubt that the responsibilities and pressures of this world take a lot of our attention. The number of tasks pulling us in different directions makes it easy for our time to get swallowed up in less important matters. We are always advised to manage our time but why do people fail to manage their time? Why do they plan but not execute? Why do they find it so hard to get things done? The answer is simple: many people tend to focus more on time, and less on themselves and without even realizing it, they end up doing the wrong tasks at the wrong time. The fact of the matter is, that you cannot control time. It's simply not possible. We all have the same number of hours in a day. You can't get an extra hour no matter how good you are and you can't re-use the minutes that you wasted the previous day. However, you can manage yourself.

Five Keys to Self-management:

1. Take Responsibility

- The first key is to take responsibility for your use of time; The Lord commanded us to redeem the time, which means to make the most of the time God has given us (Ephesians 5:16). It is a talent like your other God-given talents and you will give account for it.
- Choose to take charge of your time to the best of your ability. If you don't manage your time, something or someone else will.

2. Acquire Wisdom and Discipline

- You need to work smarter not harder, the smarter you plan your day, the more effective you will become in managing your time and completing tasks.
- You also need the wisdom to discern what's important to you.

**“If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength;
But wisdom brings success.” (Ecclesiastes 10:10)**

PRACTICAL TIPS:

- Set your priorities, create a master to-do list, calendar your to-do list, set specific times and days you will get something done.
- A good way to gain wisdom is to learn to live each day with an eternal perspective. **“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11)**
- Knowing that we will have to give an account to the God who gives us time should motivate us to use it well. **“If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next.” C. S. Lewis**
- Ask the Lord to help you manage your recreational time, your family time, and your friendships with others, renew your creative energy, and give you opportunities to serve.
 - Seek the Lord's guidance, too, for the time you spend with your family. Ask Him to help you manage your family time so that relationships are made strong and joyful.
 - Seek guidance from your spiritual father, your servants, and your parents.



3. Put God First in Your Life

We cannot neglect to spend time with God, both in private and within the community of the believers (church). Schedule regular—daily—time with God. He who equips us to carry out the tasks He has given us. It is He who directs our days. Do not manage time as if it belongs to you. Time belongs to God, and we need to ask Him to give us wisdom on how to best use it, then proceed in confidence.

- Christ bought us by His blood, our lives, our time, and everything we do belongs to Him. **“For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.” (Romans 14:8)**
 - That is why, Sunday, the day of the Lord should be kept for the Lord! In it, we should do what is pleasing in the sight of the Lord.
 - God will bless the time of your study when you give Him an adequate portion of your day in His service.
 - It is important to recognize that God has ordained for you a series of good works to accomplish.
 - Ask the Lord each morning to help you identify the good works that He has planned for you on that particular day. Ask Him to show you how and when and to whom you might minister by using the good gifts and talents that He has given you.

4. Plan and Prioritize

- Setting priorities is a divine commandment, **“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)**
- Months can go by without your making any progress toward the fulfillment of your God-given goals if you don't plan your schedule and set your goals and dreams in the context of deadlines.
- Organize your time for maximum productivity and efficiency. If mornings are your most productive hours, set aside those times for work directly related to your goals. Put your greatest concentration and effort into those hours.
 - The Bible is full of examples of organization; Noah, the tabernacle, feeding the multitudes, etc. All these examples were guided and commanded by God.
 - When you assume responsibility, acquire wisdom, and put God first in your life, you will be able to have your priorities aligned.
 - Doing a good job at the tasks put before you are part of God's plan for your life. Interruptions may be lessons that God has for you to learn, including the lesson of flexibility.

5. Review Your Day

At the end of the day, review the way in which you have spent your time; evaluate your schedule. Compare what you did with what you intended to do.

Ask yourself: Did I make good use of my time? Did I procrastinate? Was I able to maintain my concentration? Did I engage in activities that truly were priorities? Did I make progress (even a little) toward the accomplishment of my God-given goals?

- As you see yourself doing things you desire to do in order to be successful in God's eyes, give thanks and praise to God for His guidance, help, and encouragement.
- If you recognize that you have made mistakes or have fallen short of the ideal schedule you set for yourself, ask the Lord's forgiveness for any sins you have committed in wasting time, and then ask for His help to do better the next day.
- Don't give up on the pursuit of your goals! Make adjustments, learn from your mistakes, and begin the next day with fresh enthusiasm and courage.



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 first service of the Midnight Prayer – Agpia (Matthew 25:1-13)

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. “Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. “Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, “but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. “But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ “Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. “And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ “But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ “But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

3. Sayings of the Church Fathers

a) "Holy men ask for peace, not only that which dwells among men in mutual dealings, but that which belongs to ourselves. For oftentimes we wage war in our hearts, and are disturbed even when no one troubles us; bad desires also frequently rise up against us." **St. John Chrysostom**

b) "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**

c) "When you have made your inward parts clean from every spot of sin, that dissensions and contentions may not proceed from your temper, begin peace within yourself, that so you may extend it to others." **St. Ambrose of Milan**

d) "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**

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**

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