

DIOCESE OF THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES



**ST MARY, ST PHILOPATEER, AND ST ABANOUB
COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCHES**

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2010

- ❖ It is a bigger miracle to eject passion from your own body than it is to eject an evil spirit from another's body. It is a bigger miracle to be patient and refrain from anger than it is to control the demons which fly through the air."

St. John Cassian

- ❖ Loving one's enemies does not mean loving wickedness, ungodliness, adultery, or theft. Rather it means loving the thief, the ungodly, and the adulterer.

St Clement of Alexandria

- ❖ There cannot be a victory unless first there comes a battle.

St Cyprian

LOVE AS AN INCENTIVE

Fasting is an experiment undertaken by a person against himself. In it, the ego is deserted and resisted by man. For that reason fasting is considered the foremost act of love, an integral part of the cross and a sensory means to it.

The Holy Spirit is revived within us when we follow His leadership into the desert of fasting to face the destruction of part of our ego.

It resembles the lamb that is led to slaughter in that the secret of the Spirits' revival within us is based on man's success in creating an image of the slaughtered love as an initial test on the way to the cross until the end.

You must realize that the effort of fasting falls mainly on the body. The body is the sensitive part in which the ego is contained and in which the disposition and desires are divulged.

Therefore, when we practice abstinence in fasting and exhaust our bodies we, in an indirect way, exhaust the ego.

Exhausting the ego is to accomplish an uncomfortable and undesired act, which occurs incidentally when fasting, because the main fundamental motive is love.

When we attain the exhaustion of self through the overcoming of the flesh we will have actually approached, the destruction, although a fraction, of the ego.

JESUS ENTRY TO THE TEMPLE

In the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the Old and New Testaments "meet." Christ, the Founder of the Law, submits Himself under the Law in order to fulfill it. In the icon, St. Mary is handing her Son over to Simeon as though to the whole world. St. Joseph carries the prescribed sacrifice of purification, "two turtledoves" or "two young pigeons" (Lev. 12:8) - symbolic of the Church of Israel and the Church of the Gentiles. Moses received the tablets of the Law, but Simeon received the Son of God in Whose Incarnation the "shadow" is replaced by the full reality of God's presence with His people. The Old Testament people, personified by Simeon, reached their fulfillment. Anna, the prophetess, is also present as she announces Christ to be the Creator of heaven and earth to those in the Temple.



"Wait for the Lord; be strong, take courage, and wait for the Lord." Psalm 27:14

Be patient and learn to wait humbly for God's moment. His help will come, even if it seems to be delayed. His timing is always perfect. Believe that because God loves you, He will never send His help too late. Even while you are still waiting for it, He will be with you to sustain you and carry you through. On the other hand, impatience, despair and lack of faith hinder Him from coming to help.

Mother Basilea Schlink

Top Secrets to a Happy Family

One of the best gifts you can give your children is a happy family. There are some tips that you can use to insure that your family will experience a lot of happiness together.

- 1) *Concentrate on What You Have to Be Thankful For:* So many times it seems that people focus more on the problems that they have in life, instead of truly enjoying the many blessings that they already have. One of the best ways to not only create more happiness in your family, but also teach your children the fine art of seeing the good side of things, is to focus more of your attention on the positive, instead of dwelling on the negative.
- 2) *Share Your Happiness as a Couple with Your Children:* One of the best gifts you can give a child is the knowledge that their parents truly love each other. Not only does this give them a strong sense of security, but it also provides them with a positive role modeling experience that they can look back on and emulate when they grow up.
- 3) *Be Happy with Less:* Many times financial worries and concerns can drain happiness from a family. Although you might try to hide your worries from your children, they can sense when there are problems. Try to keep your finances in order, but one of the best things you can do financially in your family is to learn how to appreciate the smaller pleasures in life.
- 4) *Make Your Home a Place of Kind Words:* Many times sibling fighting often starts when one child says something mean or puts down another child. That child responds with another insult. The fight soon escalates. To break this cycle, there should be a rule that no person puts down any other member of the family and the rule needs to be enforced, both with children and parents alike.

To be continued

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FIVE NEW COMMANDMENTS

“Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you ... Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-22)

In the Old Testament, we received 10 commandments through Moses. There are another five commandments in the New Testament. St. Paul mentions them in his epistle to the people of Thessalonica. These five commandments can serve us and help us to lead a Christian life.

Commandment 1: Rejoice always

Commandment 2: Pray without ceasing

Commandment 3: Give thanks

Commandment 4: Test all things

Commandment 5: Abstain

1. REJOICE ALWAYS

Sometimes this commandment may seem difficult because we are told to rejoice ‘always’. This means rejoice when you succeed, and rejoice when you fail. Rejoice when the life is smooth, and rejoice during times of hardships. Rejoice in good health, and rejoice in sickness. Therefore, the words “rejoice always” may seem unbelievable, but in Christ, you will not only believe that joy can be always, but you will be able to practice such joy. There are four reasons through which we lose our joy; by committing sin, when facing a problem, when fearing the future, when feeling we have a meaningless life. Therefore, in order to lead a joyful life, please get into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. And through His love and this commitment to be sons or daughters of God you can lead a joyful life.

Through repentance you rid yourself of sin, through faith you can tackle any problem, through love you can handle any fear, for love drives out fear, and if you feel you have a meaningless life, serve. The purpose and meaning of our life here on earth is to experience the love of God, and to convey this love to others through service.

If you maintain this spiritual pattern in your life, for sure your life will be joyful always. The characteristic of a Christian is joy, and the church fathers mention that a humble person is always joyful and smiling because he passes on all his concerns to the Lord, in full faith, and so he is always at peace.

To be continued by HGB Moussa

Sand and Stone

A story tells that two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand: "TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SLAPPED ME IN THE FACE." They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone "TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SAVED MY LIFE."

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, "After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?" The other friend replied "When someone hurts us we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."

LEARN TO WRITE YOUR HURTS IN THE SAND AND TO CARVE YOUR BENEFITS IN STONE.

RAMZROOIHCOY

ASHOISHOY

FEBRUARY SERVICE SCHEDULE IN SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

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**ALSO VISIT THE DIOCESE AT
suscopts.org**

Lawton, OK

Sat 13

Fr Samuel Bakhoun

Little Rock, AR

Fri 26 & Sat 27

Fr Samuel Bakhoun

Lubbock, TX

Fri 12 & Sat 13
Sat 27

Fr Ghobrial Samaan
Fr Ghobrial Samaan

Shreveport, LA

Sat 06
Fri 19 & Sat 20

Fr Boulos Mikhail
Fr Boulos Mikhail

TO OUR BELOVED CHURCH MEMBERS

Please inform the church

with any changes of

address or phone number