

**Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
Archangel Michael Church
Howell, NJ**

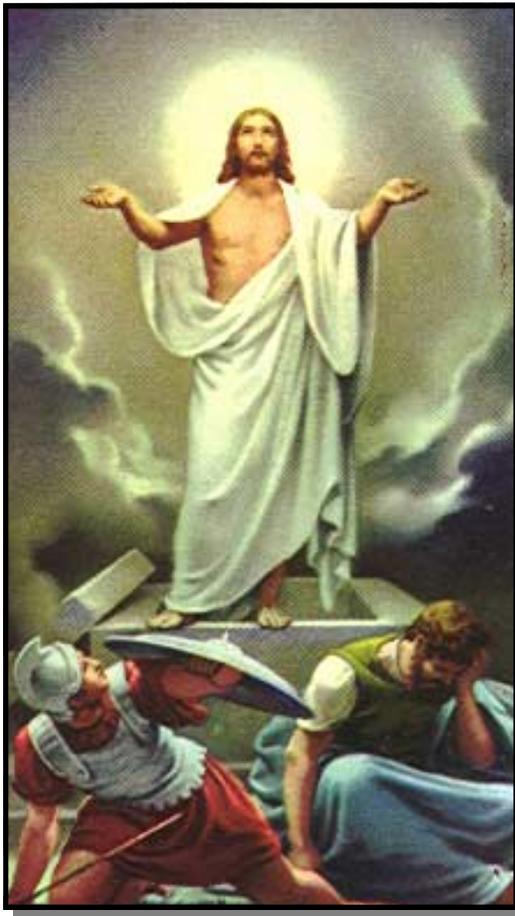


JMay 2000

Volume1

Issue5

Baramoda/Bashans 1716



*“Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee saying, **“The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.”**” (Lk. 24: 1-7)*

**Ekchristos Anesti
Christ is Risen
بالحقيقة قام**

**Alethos Anesti
Truly He is Risen
المسيح قام**



Easter Message - April 2000

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III: Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark

My beloved children in the land of immigration both clergy and congregation: Peace and grace to you from the Lord. It gives me joy to congratulate you on the Feast of the glorious Resurrection, with all that it carries of sublime meanings.

1. The Resurrection is joy.

The Lord said to His disciples about His Resurrection that, "your sorrow will be turned into joy." (John 16:20) "I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you." (John 16:22) The sorrow that broke their hearts at the time of the conspiracy, the trial and the crucifixion, was transformed by the Resurrection into joy, through the Lord's victory over death. There was a great and deeper joy however, that the phrase "you shall surely die" that was said to the first man (Genesis 2:17) was annihilated by the Lord Jesus Christ through His death and Resurrection. Likewise the phrase, "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), through His Resurrection He "abolished death and brought life and immortality." (2 Timothy 1:10)

Hence, we no longer fear death, but we say to the Lord in our prayers, "for there is no death for Your servants, but a departure." Being rid of death truly is joy, as Christ is risen and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:20) He has promised us that we will rise also, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22) As Christ arose in glory, we shall also rise in glory (1 Corinthians 15:43) since He, "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body." (Philippians 3:21)

2. There is another meaning that the Resurrection inspires, and that is that every difficult matter can now be accomplished. We worship a powerful God, Who is capable of all things. No one could overcome death except the crucified Jesus, Who arose, left the tomb while it was closed with a large stone and was guarded by the soldiers. With the righteous Job we say to the Lord in front of this amazing miracle, "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You." (Job 42:2) We repeat the gospel phrase saying, "With God all things are possible." (Mark 10:27) In this way we trust in God's unlimited power. We trust that He is able to solve any of our problems, no matter how complicated. And that He is also capable of answering any request, no matter how difficult. And so we live a life of hope, trusting in the Lord and His power

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ST. Mark

May 1 (Baramoda 23)

By : Joseph Michael

St. Mark was a native of the North African country of Libya. He was born in the city of Cyrene in Pentapolis, the western part of Libya. St. Mark was born three years after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ to Jewish parents. His original name was John and his surname was Mark. St. Mark's parents, Aristopolos and Mary, left Libya for Palestine shortly after St. Mark's birth. They settled in Cana of Galilee not far from Jerusalem. Church tradition states that St. Mark attended the Wedding in Cana of Galilee in which Jesus turned the water into wine. In fact, St. Mark's mother, Mary, was an admirer of Jesus and followed Him wherever He would go. St. Mark became one of the apostles of Christ preaching the Word to all nations. It was in St. Mark's house that our Lord Jesus Christ ate the last supper. St. Mark witnesses the first "Eucharist" of the world and in essence his home becomes the first church in the world. His witnessing of this sacrament is later established in the formation of the Liturgy of St. Mark (Later to be edited and known as the Liturgy of St. Cyril). It was also in St. Mark's home that the Holy Spirit outpoured in tongues of fire over the disciples. After the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Mark returned to his native country and later established the Church of Alexander in Egypt. He was the first Patriarch of the Coptic

Church. He wrote the Gospel of St. Mark and preached the Word of the Lord to all nations. Christianity spread from Egypt westward to Libya, southward to Nubia and Sudan, and by the fourth century, St. Mark's teachings reached Ethiopia. St. Mark strongly opposed the pagans of the time and was so successful in his works that he aroused hatred of the pagan Egyptians. St. Mark was tied down with a rope and dragged through the streets of Egypt. Later he was imprisoned and was visited with two images, one of an angel encouraging him in his efforts and the other of Jesus Christ himself congratulating St. Mark on his future martyrdom. On Easter Sunday, May 8, 68 A.D. St. Mark was again tied and dragged through the streets of Alexandria until his death. The pagans tried to burn his body but the Lord opened the skies and heavy rains extinguished the flames. St. Mark's followers quickly received his body and took it to the Church of Baucalis where they prayed and buried him. The death of St. Mark inspired other Christians to spread the teachings of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ throughout Egypt. The Coptic Orthodox Church prides itself on the Apostolicity of their Church and its founder St. Mark the Apostle and Evangelist. St. Mark is regarded as the first Patriarch of a successive unbroken chain to the 117th patriarch, our current patriarch Pope Shenuda III. St. Mark was the first of many martyrs through whose works have spread Christianity, fortified its strong hold, and strengthened its faith.

May the Blessings of St. Mark the Evangelist, and all the martyrs who preserved our rich faith since the beginning, be with us all. Amen

A STUDY ON The Gospel OF St. Matthew

Succession to a throne is often a time of conflict and uncertainty. This is no less true when the heir is the King of kings. If ever there was a high-stakes succession, this was it. A Man claims to be Israel's own Messiah, of course all Israel sits up and takes notice. He must prove His credentials: Who wants an impostor? The Gospel of St. Matthew presents Jesus' credentials. It presents Jesus as the King, but King of a totally different kingdom-the kingdom of heaven.

This Gospel does not name its author, but it does contain clues. The author knew the geography of Palestine well (2:1; 8:5; 20:29; 26:6). He was familiar with Jewish history, customs, ideas, and classes of people (1:18, 19; 2:1; 14:1; 26:3; 27:2). He was well acquainted with the Old Testament (1:2-16, 22, 23; 2:6; 4:14-16; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9). And the terminology of the book suggests that the author was a Palestinian Jew (2:20; 4:5; 5:35; 10:6; 15:24; 17:24-27; 18:17; 27:53).

Other details point specifically to Jesus' disciple St. Matthew as the writer of this Gospel. As a tax collector, St. Matthew would have been literate and familiar with keeping records of money. Appropriately, this Gospel contains more references to money than any of the others. Furthermore, St.

Matthew's hometown was Capernaum, a village that is given special attention in this Gospel. When Capernaum is mentioned, some special description is usually attached to it (4:13; 11:23).

St. Matthew wrote the Gospel before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. He describes Jerusalem in the book as the "holy city" and as though it was still standing (4:5; 27:53), and he speaks of the customs of the Jews as continuing until "this day" (27:8; 28:15). Furthermore, Jesus' prophecy (recorded in 24:2) of Jerusalem's destruction includes no indication that it had already occurred when St. Matthew wrote

Jesus' words. In light of all of this, it is reasonable to conclude that the book was written sometime between A.D. 50 and 60.

The Gospel of St. Matthew emphasizes many Jewish overtones. The Gospel was targeted at the Jewish community. The Gospel begins with a genealogy depicting the correct inheritance of Jesus as the rightful heir to David's Kingdom. The gospel emphasizes in the Kingdom of God in hopes of reviving the Jewish hopes in the revival of the glories of David's Kingdom. He uses the royal title 'The Son of David' nine times in his Gospel. St. Matthew also discusses the law, ceremonial cleanness, the Sabbath, the temple, David, the Messiah, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, and Moses - all from a Jewish point of view.



St. Matthew's gospel was written to prove to its Jewish readers that Jesus is their Messiah and promised King. This gospel proves Jesus' legitimate authority by highlighting His wise teachings and righteous life.

Another major purpose of the book was to outline the characteristics of the Kingdom of Heaven and of the Holy Church. St. Matthew instructs the church.

He issues the great commission: "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (28:20). The Gospel of St. Matthew was more of a document of proof, a legal binding work that proves that Jesus is the one true Christ, the rightful heir to the Kingdom of God.

May the blessings of St. Matthew be with us all. Amen.

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3. In our spiritual life, we trust that God is able to lead us to repentance because repentance is also a resurrection from death. Sin is a state of death. As the father said about his prodigal son: "for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found" (Luke 15:24) Therefore the repentance of the sinner is considered a return to life. How great then, is the work of the servants who lead others to repentance. The words of the Holy Bible apply to them, which say: "...he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins." (James 5:20) Every sinner who finds repentance hard should turn to the Lord saying: "Restore me, and I will return" (Jeremiah 31:18). The Church even chants for such a sinner, saying: "Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." (Ephesians 5:14) We also say the word "Arise" to the slothful in order to work and to the slack to be active. It is one of the lessons inspired by the Resurrection, so everyone should rise and do the work of the Lord. The Resurrection inspires activity. I wish that we would all live with the spirit of the Resurrection and if we fail, then we ask the Lord to raise us, support us, and strengthen us.

4. Another meaning of the Resurrection is that the Lord not only has risen, but said: "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20). And so the Lord continued to work in His Church after His Resurrection. He stayed with His disciples for forty days, strengthening their faith, wiping out their doubts, explaining the Scriptures and commanding them to preach, teach and baptize. (Matthew 28:19, 20) We therefore feel that the Lord is with us after His Resurrection. He never left us through His death or in His Resurrection or even in His Ascension to the heavens. He is still with us, working in us and by us, to complete building His Kingdom.

It is the message of the Resurrection to all of us: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19,20). Truly, that is our duty as the Lord commanded us, and it is the mission that He has entrusted us with. To Him be all glory, now and forever Amen.

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What did the Lord mean by His words in the Gospel: "*Love your enemies*" (Matthew 5:44) and how can that be done?

Loving one's friend is something ordinary and found even among pagans and unbelievers. But loving one's enemy is the highest and noblest moral virtue which the Lord desires of us. He wants us to hate evil, but not those who do it. We are to hate sin, but not the sinner. Sinners are only the victims of misunderstanding or of the devil. We must love them and pray for them, so that they be released from their bondage.

We may do this by taking the following points into consideration:

1. Do not bear hatred in your hearts towards anyone, no matter how much wrong he/she has done. For no hatred can dwell in the heart which houses love.
2. Do not rejoice at all, at any misfortune that should strike one who has done you harm, for the Bible itself tells us that: "*Love does not delight in evil...*" (I Corinthians 13:6). Rather, we should feel sorry that any harm has befallen our enemy.
3. Counter evil with love and goodness, and by doing so, change the feelings of the one who wants to do you wrong. As Saint John Chrysostom said. "There is a way of being rid of your enemy, and that is to turn him into a friend".
4. Do not confront hostility with hostility, as this only serves to enflame the situation. Keeping silent in the face of hostility will simply cause it to stay as it is, but confronting hostility with love, heals it and makes it disappear.
5. Do not speak evil against your enemy, in case the hostility of his heart increases. But instead, do the opposite. If you find anything good in his favor,

praise him for it, for this will help to change his feelings towards you.

6. If your enemy falls into difficulties, go to help him, for the Bible says: "*If your enemy is hungry feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.*" (Romans 12:20).

KNOW YOUR CHURCH
By:
Marian Abdelmessih

The Ostrich Egg

As you walk into the church you will notice Ostrich eggs hanging over the sanctuaries.

There are a few symbols why the eggs are there but we will mention why an OSTRICH egg. These eggs symbolize the Creator's love for his children. Since the laying of the egg, the ostrich stays with it at all times, watching it, allowing no harm to it until it

hatches. This is exactly how God is; He never leaves His children in any situation. He stands by us until we are joined with Him in heaven.

Archangel Michael Church wishes you a Happy Easter

Church Activities

Starting May 5th, St. Paul's Teacher Prep Class will be responsible for Friday's Bible Study. The schedule will be arranged by Mr. Raafat Mankabadi.

St. Paul's Teacher Prep Class is preparing a water rafting trip to Jim Thorps, Pa. on June 11, 2000 (rain day; June 18). For more information contact Mrs. Laura Michael at 363-2261

Social News

The Church Congratulates Essam and Clair Adly For the birth of Baby Sarah.



Please do not forget to pray to the Lord that He may heal the sick and repose the souls of those who have passed away in the paradise of joy

The Church Bulletin Committee welcomes your participation in the form of articles, reviews, news, or comments. Please contact Fr. Antonious by fax at 821-1512

In next month's issue:

"Ask the Priest"
By Mary Sharobiem

"Know Your Church"
By Christine Michaels

"The Saint of the Month"
By Rania Abdelmessih

"Games and Fun"
By Mark Guirguis

Church Services

May, 2000

Fridays, May 5,

- 7:30pm-8:30pm— Hymns Lesson
- 8:30pm-8:45pm— Prayer Meeting
- 8:45pm-9:30pm— Bible Study

Saturday, May 6

- 8:30am-11:30am— Divine Liturgy (1st Saturdays English)
- 12:00pm-3:00pm— **Sunday School Easter Party**

Fridays, May 12

- 7:30pm-8:30pm— Hymns Lesson
- 8:30pm-8:45pm— Prayer Meeting
- 8:45pm-9:30pm— Bible Study

Saturday, May 13

- 8:30am-11:30am— Divine Liturgy
- 11:30am-1:00pm— Sunday School & Youth group meeting

Fridays, May 19

- 7:30pm-8:30pm— Hymns Lesson
- 8:30pm-8:45pm— Prayer Meeting
- 8:45pm-9:30pm— Bible Study

Saturday, May 20

- 8:30am-11:30am— Divine Liturgy
- 11:30am-1:00pm— Sunday School & Youth group meeting

Fridays, 26

- 7:30pm-8:30pm— Hymns Lesson
- 8:30pm-8:45pm— Prayer Meeting
- 8:45pm-9:30pm— Bible Study

Saturday, May 27

- 8:30am-11:30am— Divine Liturgy
- 11:30am-1:00pm— Sunday School & Youth group meeting

COPTIC FEASTS

- May 1 St. George's Feast Day
- May 8 St. Mark's Feast Day