

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



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*And Mary said: “**My Soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.** For He has regarded the lowly state of His Maidservant For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me And holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel In remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever”.* (Luke 1:46-55).

THE TRANSFIGURATION

By: His Holiness Pope Shenouda III



The Lord Jesus Christ transfigured on Mount Tabor and His transfiguration was a token of the transfiguration of human nature in the after life, to convince us that it is not His Human Nature alone which will be transfigured, but our human nature also with Him. Moses and Elijah appeared with Him on the Mountain of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3) and they represent two types of saintly people, they differ in the method and style of life, but they are similar in holiness and in the depth of their relationship with God :

(a) Elijah was celibate and Moses was married. thus the Lord shows us that the transfiguration in eternity will be for those who are celibate and mar-

ried alike. We should also remember that the three disciples who witnessed the Lord's transfiguration had amongst them John the Apostle who was celibate and Peter the Apostle who was married (Matthew 17: 1).

(b) Elijah was an ascetic, living on the mountain (2 Kings 1:8, 9) and representing the life of solitude and contemplation. Whereas Moses lived amongst thousands of people and he represents the life of service. The Lord also shows us that those that live the, life of service and those that live the life of contemplation all will have their natures transfigured in eternity.

(c) Moses "*was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.*" (Numbers 12.3) He represents humility and forgiveness and he interceded for the people when they sinned (Exodus 32:11-14). Elijah was known for his zeal, power and infliction of punishment, he was able to say to the captain of fifty, "*...let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men*" (2 Kings 1:10,12). Both natures, despite of their different types, will be transfigured together in eternity.

(d) Moses represents those who have died and Elijah represents those who were lifted up to heaven alive (2 Kings 2:11).

(e) Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the prophets. Despite this diversity, each of them was *"the man of God"*. Each of them performed miracles. Each of them had familiarity with God. Each of them was courageous - Moses stood against Pharaoh and Elijah stood against King Ahab (I Kings 18) and King Ahaziah (2 Kings 1).

We can say that the Transfiguration represents the "illuminated nature" and Saint Paul the Apostle spoke

about the transfiguration of our nature. He said that we will rise from death, *"in glory", "in power", "in incorruption"*, with spiritual, heavenly bodies, *"as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man"* (I Corinthians 15:42-49). He also said, *"..from*

which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body" (Philippians 3.20,21).

The Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor was not His complete Transfiguration, but only partialas much as the apostles could bear at the time.

The form of His transfiguration before Saint John the Apostle in the island of Patmos was greater than this, *"His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength", "and His eyes like a flame of fire", "and His voice as the sound of many waters"* (Revelations 1:13-16). Saint John could not bear this glory and said, *"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead"* (Revelations 1:17).

Hence, you now see the nature of the summit of the Transfiguration in His Second Coming!

When He comes, *"in the glory of His Father with His angels"* (Matthew 16.27). *"When He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels"* (Luke 9.-26). He has

displayed, before us different forms of His Transfiguration in His glory: the glory of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, the glory of the Resurrection, the glory of the Ascension, the sitting at the right hand of the Father and the glory of the Second Coming.....and the glory of eternity, which is inexpressible.



St. Takla Hymanot

BY: Mark Michael



St. Takla descended from an ancient Hebrew family that lived in Ethiopia at a time when most Ethiopians worshipped pagan gods and evil spirits. St. Takla's parents loved God and were very kind to the ill and needy. They always asked the Archangel Michael to intercede for them, and they celebrated his feast on the 12th of every month by feeding the poor. One day, Archangel Michael appeared to them in a vision and told them that they will have a child who will be blessed and who will be like John the Baptist. St. Takla was born on the 24th of Kiahk. He was welcomed into the family by his father Tsega Ze Ab and his Mother Sarah (Egezi-Hareya was her Ethiopian name). He received the name Feseha Zion, which means the Joy of Zion. The Holy Spirit descended upon Feseha Zion three days after his birth and he opened his mouth and said " One is the Holy Father. One is the Holy Son. One is the Holy Spirit." As a child Feseha Zion performed many miracles like increasing flour and oil during a time of famine so his parents were able to make their monthly aghabi for the needy in

honor of Archangel Michael. Feseha Zion grew to love and adore God. He was later ordained a deacon at the age of fifteen by Bishop Kyrillos II. When he returned home his parents chose a young lady for him to marry but he refused. Once he was hunting with his friends and Archangel Michael appeared to him and told him to spend the rest of his life saving people's souls. Archangel Michael changed Feseha Zion's name to Takla Haymanot which means "Paradise of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." When he returned home he gave his money to the church and the poor and went to the monastery. He later became a priest. St. Takla preached to people about God and many were converted as a result of his preaching. For a while St. Takla was living in a monastery on a mountain and to get down they used ropes. One day St. Takla was on the rope, and all of a sudden it broke. St. Takla prayed to God and God sent Archangel Michael and gave him six wings so he was able to go down the mountain. St. Takla then went to a place called Katata where the people worshipped a tree. St. Takla saw an evil Spirit in the tree and made it disappear in the Name of Jesus Christ. When St. Takla was ninety nine years old he became very sick. He gathered all the monks and told them to live a spiritual life. St. Takla departed on the 24th of Misra (August 30th), 1711 A.D. Many miracles have occurred through the prayers and intercession of this great saint till this day.

BIBLE STUDY

The Gospel of St. Luke

By: Mark Michael

The Gospel according to St. Luke differs from the other three Gospels because unlike their authors, St. Luke was a gentile who never saw or heard Jesus speak. We know that he was a physician (Col. 4:14) so obviously; St. Luke was a very educated man. He gathered all that he could about Jesus and gave us a “step back,” a unique perspective on Jesus’ birth, ministry, death, and resurrection.

St. Luke wrote both, his gospel and the book of the Acts of the Apostles. However, there is no byline to these two works. Scholars were able to deduce that St. Luke was indeed the author because of certain facts. First, the author stated that he was not an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus. On the other hand, the author was present with St. Paul at some of the events described in Acts, events that are commonly called as the “we sections.” Therefore, the author must have been a lately converted Christian that accompanied St. Paul on some of his journeys.

The author of both Acts and the Gospel did not indicate when they were written, but there are many pieces to this puzzle that when put together in the proper order, they give us a relatively accurate date for these two works. First, the last event recorded in the Book of Acts in the first Roman imprisonment of St. Paul. Consequently, the earliest it could have been written was 62 A.D. Many scholars have chosen either the early to late sixties or mid seventies to late eighties

as the time-frame for the writing of the gospel. Two key factors that have influenced the dating of the gospel are the date of the other gospels and the portrayal of the fall of Jerusalem in Luke. It is most likely that the gospel was written in the early to mid sixties because of the gospel’s concern with a prediction of the fall of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) The Gospel according to St. Luke is unique in many ways. It is the only gospel with a sequel, the Book of Acts. Both have a vivid description of the Ascension of Jesus, which only St. Luke does. Second, it is the longest of the four gospels. Third, St. Luke provides us with the most detailed portrait of Jesus by including a variety of miracles, parables, and teachings. Fourth, St. Luke’s gospel was the only one written to an individual, in this case Theophilus. St. Luke reassures Theophilus that God was still at work in the Christian community founded by Jesus. He emphasizes that this grace is still available to Gentiles, even though the promises relating to Jesus’ ministry stretch back into Israel’s history. The rejection of Israel was part of God’s plan to start Christianity. In fact, persecution of the Christian community would be the means by which the church would spread the Good News throughout the world. Jesus Himself had predicted that this would happen in Luke 24:45-48.

KNOW YOUR CHURCH

From:

Our Mother: Virgin Mary

By: His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

There is no other woman the prophets had prophesied about and the Bible took great care of, like the Virgin Mary... How excellent are the titles, which the Church calls her inspired by the spirit of the Bible. She is our mother and the glory of our race, the Queen who sits at the right hand of the King, the ever virgin, the pure, the full of grace, St. Mary. She is the strong and merciful helper, the mother of the true light, the true vine and the mother of salvation.

The Church elevates her above the rank of the Archangels, the Cherubim and the Seraphim.... There is no such human personality, people have loved in Christianity like the Virgin Mary.... There are many praises, songs, glorifications and doxologies focused on her especially in the month of Kiahk. Our brothers the Catholics give her one whole month named after her. In Egypt, one quarter of the current monasteries are called after her name. In the West, thousands of Churches, schools and hospitals are named after her blessed name.

The Greatness of the Virgin:

The greatness of the Virgin was decided by the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus which was held in the year 431 AD, and attended by 200 Bishops from all over the world. They add the introduction of the Creed that says, "We magnify you, the mother of the true light, and glorify you the Theotokos, the Holy Virgin, for you bore for us the Savior of the world who

came and saved our souls...."

On what basis did the Council issue this introduction?

1. The Virgin is the blessed saint, whose blessedness will continue throughout all generations according to her song, "*For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed*" (Lk.1: 48).
2. The Church gave the Virgin the title of the Queen who stands at the right hand of the King according to the Psalm 45:9. Therefore, many artists when they draw the picture of the Virgin they depict her with a crown on her head as a Queen and place her on the right side of Christ the King.
3. The praising of the Virgin is also clear from the salutation of the angel Gabriel, "*Hail to you O full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women*" (Lk.1:28).
4. Before the greatness of St. Mary, St. Elizabeth felt so lowly and witnessed to her, "*Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy...*" (Lk.1:42-45)
5. The greatness of St. Mary is shown by: God's selecting her out of all the women; Of the world and favoring her above all.
6. It is written, "*Many daughters have done well but you excel them all*" (Prov.31:39).

The Lord is with you; blessed are you among women

(Luk 1:28)

**** “I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jeremiah 3:15)**

The church congratulates St. Mina Church, Holmdel, NJ, on the ordination of Rev. Fr. Abraam George and we wish God grace to lead His people.

** The church congratulates Fr. Michael Michail on his 12th ordination’s anniversary.

Church Activities

* The church would like to encourage spiritual reading in order for us to develop spiritually and intellectually. Over the past couple of months, a bookstore for the church has been developed. God willing, it will be open every Friday & Saturday.

* Due to the lack of an Egyptian grocery store in our area, the servants have come up with an idea to serve our community as well as raise funds for the church. There will be a variety of items for sale and orders can be taken for other items.

* Summer Activities: every Tuesday and Wednesday from 7 to 9 PM.



*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
among us in the*

This Newsletter is a free publication of the church, under the supervision of Fr. Antonious Tanious.

The committee welcomes your participation in the form of articles, reviews, news, or comments.

Please mail your articles, comments, ...etc. to the church at:

PO Box 256
Howell, NJ 07731

If you would like this newsletter mailed to a friend or wish your name to be deleted from our mailing list please fax your request to 732-821-1512.

Church Services

August, 2000

Fridays, August 4,11,18 and 25

-7:30pm-8:30pm— Hymns Lesson

-8:30pm-8:45pm— Prayer Meeting

-8:45pm-9:30pm— Bible Study

Saturday, August 5,12,19, and 26

-8:30am-11:30am— Divine Liturgy

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

COPTIC FEASTS

- August 7 Beginig of St. Mary Fast.
- August 19 Transfiguration Feast.
- August 22 Assumption of St. Mary Body.
- August 30 Departure of St. Takla Haymanot.