

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
Archangel Michael Church
Howell, NJ



November, 2000

Volume1 Issue11

Babah/Hatour 1717

Thanksgiving

He who lives the life of thanksgiving is a noble person, acknowledges and does not forget a favor. He NEVER forgets any good offered to him, and expresses his thanks. Thanksgiving is in his heart on his tongue for God and men. The Lord Jesus blessed the Samaritan, who was the only one of the ten lepers who were cleansed, he "fell down on his face at his feet, giving Him thanks. " So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed. But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? " (Luke 17:17). Therefore, when you give thanks, you are glorifying God, acknowledging His loving-kindness to you..... "*Give thanks always for all things*" (Eph. 5:20)

Giving thanks to God has no specific occasions but it must be "**Always**". As long as it is continuous, it covers the whole life and therefore the expression "*Life of Thanksgiving*" applies to it. The same teaching was explained in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, "*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing in everything give thanks*" (1 Thess. 5:17-18). For this reason the Prayer of Thanksgiving precedes all other prayers in our Church.



"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

Thanksgiving for All Things

The church begins with the prayer of thanksgiving even at funerals. The apostle says "*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God*" (Col. 3:17).

We thank You in every occasion, in every condition and for all things. So, it is not only giving thanks always but also for all things because God continually makes good to us. The apostle said, "*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God*" (Rom.8:28)., either in the apparent good or in matters that seem not for good, but in fact it is good and we do not know! For this we call God the "*Beneficent*", He does not do except good, and the person who believes in God's quality, gladly accepts everything which gives thanks to God. Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave; their action was in itself evil, treachery, and lack of love, cruelty and envy. But God changed that evil into good and Joseph "*Was made a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of his people*". ... He told his brothers, "*You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good ... to save many people alive*" (Gen. 50-20). The children of God are always joyful, they thank Him for all things. They thank Him from all their hearts, not only by words, but also by offering a sacrifice of praise, peace offerings or vows. As the prophet David says, "*I will take up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all people*" (Ps. 116:13,14).

Levels of Thanksgiving

The least is giving thanks for the miracles, gifts, great pleasures and

the plentiful good things,

There is a higher level of thanksgiving; to give thanks over little things.... If we gave thanks over a few things God will make us rulers over many things. Perhaps, among the advantages of thanksgiving are the continuity of the blessings and its increase, as one of the Church Fathers said, "**Not a gift without increase, except that without thanksgiving**"

There is also thanksgiving over what is hidden and unseen. Thanksgiving for the wars and troubles which were possible to come to us but did not because of God's keeping and care..... We give thanks for the hidden matters... In all this, thanksgiving is mixed with love. Constant thanksgiving does not need a specific reason but it is enough that we are in God's care, and we are His children, and such feeling is connected with the life of submission.

Thanksgiving Over Tribulation

The highest level of thanksgiving is to give thanks to God over tribulations. We thank God over the tribulations from which He saved us.... But, what is greater than this is also thank Him over the prevailing tribulations which we bear and live in. By faith we believe it is for our good. To endure and bear tribulations, is a virtue. To be content with the tribulation and accept it is a greater virtue. And what is more important is to give thanks over the tribulation with complete surrender and joy. If we thank God for the gifts only, then our love is for the gifts not for God the giver Himself. But if we give thanks to God in tribulation we prove that we love God Himself and not for His gifts. We do not only love Him for the nice gifts He gives us, health, wealth, success, peace and comforts of life, but God must be our goal, either He gave us good things or tribulations.

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Saint Mina

St. Mina's father Eudoxius was a native of the City of Nakiyos and was its Governor. The Emperor transferred him to Africa and appointed him Governor over it. He was a merciful and God-fearing Governor. His mother Euphemia had no children. One day she went to church on the festival of our Lady the Virgin Mary, at Attrib. She heaved a sigh and wept before the icon of St. Mary, entreating her to intercede for her before her beloved Son in order that He would give her a son. A voice came from the icon saying "Amen". She rejoiced in what she had heard and realized that the Lord had heard her prayers. When she returned to her home and told her husband, he replied, "May God's will be done". The Lord gave them this saint and they called him Mina, from the word "Amen" which his mother heard coming out of the icon. Later on, his parents got another son and a daughter.

When he was growing up, his parents reared him in a Christian manner. St. Mina devoted his life to fasting, prayer and a Christian way of life.

After the departure of his father, he was placed in his position because everyone loved him and his father. In spite of that, he did not forsake his worship. When Diocletian had renounced Christianity and issued orders to worship idols. The Saint left his position and went to the desert, where he stayed and worshipped God with all his heart.

One day he saw the heavens open and the martyrs crowned with beautiful crowns. He heard a voice saying: "He who toils for the name of the Lord Je-

sus shall receive these crowns". He returned to the city over which he was Governor and confessed the name of the Lord Jesus. Knowing that he belonged to a noble family, they tried to dissuade him from his faith and promised him honor and precious gifts. When he did not change his mind, they threatened him and the Governor ordered him to be tortured. When the Governor failed to turn him away from his faith, he sent him to his brother so that he might influence him but he also failed. Finally, the Governor ordered his head to be cut off, his body be cast into a fire and his ashes be scattered in the wind. The body remained in the fire for three days and three nights, but it was not damaged. His sister came and gave the soldiers a lot of money and they let her take the body. She put it in a sack and intended to take it to Alexandria, as her brother had previously advised her. She embarked with her brother's body on one of the ships to Alexandria. On the trip, sea beasts came out of the water and attacked the passengers abroad the ship. They were frightened and screamed with fear. The Saint's sister prayed to the Lord and asked for the intercession of her brother. While the passengers were in fear and confusion, fire went forth from her brother's body and burned the faces of the beasts. They dove immediately into the water. When they reappeared the fire burned them again. They finally dove and did not reappear.

When the time of persecution ended, the angel of the Lord appeared to the honorable Patriarch, St. Athanasius the Apostolic. The

Lord's command was to place the body of St. Mina on a camel and to take it out of the City without letting anyone lead it but to follow it from a distance until it stopped at a place that the Lord had designated.

They walked behind the camel until they arrived at a place called Lake Bayad, in the district of Marriot. There they heard a voice saying: "This is the place where the Lord wishes the body of his beloved Mina to rest". They lowered the body and placed it in a coffin, and situated it in a beautiful garden and many miracles happened through the body.

After a while, the people of Pentapolis (the five cities) rose against the cities around Alexandria. The people were getting ready to face the Barbarians and the Governor decided to take the body of St. Mina with him as his strong protector. He took the body secretly and through the blessings of this Saint, he overcame the Barbarians and returned victoriously. The Governor decided to take the body Alexandria. On the way back, they passed by Lake Bayad, where, the camel carrying the body knelt down and would not move, in spite of frequent beatings. They moved the body over another camel, but again this second camel did not move from its place. The Governor finally realized that this was the Lord's will. He made a coffin from decay-resistant wood and placed the silver coffin in it.

When the Lord wanted to disclose the location of St. Mina's body, He did it in this manner. There was a shepherd in the desert who had a lamb with mange. It slipped down into the water of a well near the place of the Saint's body, then came out of the water and rolled over in the sand of that place, and instantly the lamb was healed. When the shepherd saw this

miracle, he was amazed. He started to take from the sand, mix it with water and smear with it every lamb with mange or any other disease, and immediately, they were healed.

The news of these miracles spread in all the countries until the Emperor of Constantinople heard of them. He had an only daughter and she was leprosy. Her father sent her to the place where the Saint's body was and enquired from the shepherd how these miracles were happening. She took from the sand, moistened it with water, smeared it on her body and slept the night in that place. In her sleep she saw St. Mina saying to her: "Arise early and dig in this place and you will find my body". When she woke up, she was cured. As she began digging she found the body of the Saint.

The Emperor then sent men and money and built a Church in that place. Multitudes of people came to that church asking for the intercession of the blessed St. Mina. The Lord had honored him with many signs and wonders that appeared from his body. When the Arabs came to Egypt, some of them attacked the city and the church was destroyed, only its ruins remained.

The late Pope Abba Kyrillos VI took interest in building a large monastery in this area of Marriot in the name of St. Mina. There are two churches in the monastery, visited by many Coptic worshippers for blessings and for praying. He also bought one hundred acres of land and built a fence around it. He ordained a number of monks who had high degrees of academic and religious education. May the intercession of St. Mina be with us. Glory be to God forever. Amen.

BIBLE STUDY

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

By: Mark Michael



The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans is the first of a series of letters by Saint Paul. He wrote these various letters to neighboring churches to strengthen their faith and to instruct them about the Christian faith. By the time St. Paul wrote this letter, the Holy Spirit had now shaped him into a skillful communicator of the faith. This letter expresses perfectly his description of all Scripture as “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” This letter serves two purposes. The first is to tell us Christians that we are all sinners and that we are undeserving of being with God in heaven. However, God showed His love for us by sending Christ to die for us.

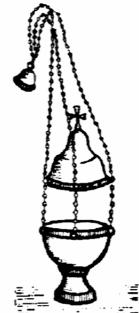
The first verse of the book tells us who the author is. He tells us that it is Paul, a bondservant and apostle separated to the gospel of God. It was written to the city of Rome.

It is unknown how the church was established but it is believed that faithful from Jerusalem established it. St. Paul wrote this letter to promote harmony within the community.

KNOW YOUR CHURCH

The Censer in our Church

- The censer is a vessel which is made up of a cup-shaped base, in which burning coal and a special mixture of incense is placed, and a domed cover. These two parts are connected by three long chains which meet at a common point, enabling the censer to be held easily.
- Censers are used in liturgical and ritual services in accordance with associated Church traditions and rites.
- According to the teaching and tradition of our Church, the censer is symbolic of the Virgin Saint Mary. Just as the censer bears burning coal, so did Saint Mary bear the True Coal, our Lord Jesus Christ.
- The three chains which connect between the base and cover of the censer symbolize the Holy Trinity. The joining of these three chains together at a common point symbolizes the Holy Trinity as One God.
- The domed cover of the censer is a symbol of heaven, and the rising incense symbolizes prayer. Therefore, together they symbolize the raising of the prayers to God.



'The smoke of the incense... ascended up before'

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We should not allow such events to take away our peace from us or our joy in the Lord. No matter what the outer circumstances may be, we rejoice in the Lord always and do not lose our peace with God and man. It is written that the fruits of the Spirit are "*Love, peace, joy...*" (Gal. 5:22), and our peace, comfort and joy will affect others and by our good example we lead others to God. Also, tribulation needs thanksgiving because it strengthens the spiritual life. It gives us depth in prayer and depth in our relationship with God...a severe tribulation leads man to repentance. More than a hundred sermons or reading many spiritual books. In tribulations, we see the hand of the Lord working... and His care and protection. In the tribulation, we see the hand of God, His wonders and His power. It gives us experience we could not attain without it. Also, it sifts the Church and separates the tares; from the wheat. For all these reasons, we give thanks to God over tribulation and consider it a blessing. Of course the person who thanks over tribulation shall give thanks for all other things. He lives the constant life of thanksgiving and never murmurs or complains.

"we know that all things work together for good to those who love God"

(Rom. 8:28)



His Grace Bishop David

General bishop, delegated by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III to oversee the Archdiocese of North America

and the east cost youth services.

The deacons, servants and the congregation wish to thank His Grace Bishop David for gracing us with his presence on Saturday, October 28.

His Grace celebrated the Divine Liturgy and ordained 4 Epsaltos level deacons. An agape' meal was served for Bishop David and the congregation. The agape' was followed by a two hours, spiritual and informative session, during which His Grace answers many of the congregation's questions.

May the Lord preserve your life and support you in ministry for many years and peaceful times.

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

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

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

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*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.*