

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

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Archangel Michael Church
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NEWSLETTER



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**Statement by Pope Shenouda III, Pope of
Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St.
Mark regarding the recent terrorist attacks in
the United States of America**

A Horrific Crime Against Humanity and Faith

The crime of terrorism carried out in the United States of America which saw the destruction of the World Trade Center and surrounding building is one of horrific proportion, which by no means complies with any concept of humanness or conscience. What did innocent people do to deserve these actions: those who faithfully went to their offices... those who were traveling on the airplanes... and what of the members of the emergency services upon whom the buildings collapsed?

No Faith can ever accept such terrorism, but rather , condemns its perpetrators and all those who assisted them in the planning and/or execution of such acts.

We pray that God keeps the world in peace, for it is He who said "My peace I leave with you, it is My own peace that I give you"

This Newsletter is a free monthly publication of the Archangel Michael Coptic Orthodox Church, PO Box 256 Howell, NJ 07731, 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 or e-mail them to archangelletter@netscape.net

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

The Feast of EL-Nayrouz

By: His Grace Bishop Youssef
Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The first day of the blessed month of Tute marks the beginning of the Coptic New Year and is the day set aside to celebrate the Feast of EL-Nayrouz. On this feast day we honor those who stood and confessed their faith in the Word of God with firmness, commitment and with the totality of their lives.

The risen Lord sent His chosen disciples throughout the world with this message, "*You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*" (Acts 1:8)." The

disciples were the Lord's WITNESSES. "MARTYRS" is the Greek word for "WITNESSES." The early church thought of death as the complete and final act of witnessing. Thus the term "martyr" has come to be defined as one who witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ by dying for His name.

During the first four centuries, the Coptic Orthodox Church produced an overwhelming number of martyrs whose steadfastness and perseverance was an inspiration to all Christian believers. Martyrdom was a fact of life for those who confessed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Egypt, known as "the land of the martyrs," counted more martyrs in its midst than any other country in the world. Our early saints became legendary examples on how to be a faithful member of the Church. As early as May 8, 68 AD, St Mark was slain on Monday following the glorious feast of Resurrection after being dragged from his feet by Roman soldiers all over Alexandria's streets and passageways.

The Copts have been persecuted by almost every ruler

of Egypt. Being abused, tortured and martyred under the Romans, Byzantines, and the Moslems, has only instilled dedication and courage to believers to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Upon studying Coptic persecutions, many have asked, "Why did the early Christians have to suffer?" The suffering of the Christians can be addressed with four Biblical scriptures. First, Philippians 1:19-20 tells us that Christians have to suffer to glorify God. *"For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or death."*

Second, they had to suffer to prepare for the eternal Kingdom. "Which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which you also suffer" (II Thessalonians 1:5). Also Matthew 5:10-12 confirms this stating, "Blessed

are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Finally, the saints had to suffer to be closer to God, *"If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon you- On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified"* (I Peter 4:14).

Those before us not only suffered, but they rejoiced in their sufferings. They prayed and endured their suffering in a steadfast way. They thanked God for their sufferings. We are told in Acts 5:40-41, *"And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that*

they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

In remembrance of these great saints, the Copts adopted a calendar called the "Calendar of Martyrs." This calendar truly honors the sacrifices of the apostles, the disciples and other saints of the early church. The Calendar of Martyrs sequences the years "in the year of the martyrs." The calendar began its era on August 29, 284 AD in commemoration of those who died for their faith during the rule of Diocletian the Roman Emperor. Today, this calendar is still in use in our Coptic Liturgies and commemorates saints in all historical eras.

It has often been said that the "blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." All of the apostles were inhumanely tortured for their faith and severely martyred. All but one. They died testifying of their faith in the Lord Jesus: of His Gospel, His life, His death, His resurrection and His ascension.

I pray that we always hold dear those who suffered the dark ages of persecution. Always keep near to our hearts those Christians who dwelt on the earth but were not of

the earth. Those who sustained hardships, persecutions, and tribulations but continued to increase more and more. St. John Chrysostom passionately summarizes the death and dying of the fallen martyrs in this manner: "The death of martyrs is encouragement to the faithful, daring of the Church, confirmation of Christianity, destruction of death, proof of the Resurrection, mocking at demons, condemnation of the devil, teaching of true wisdom and a pious way of life, instillation of disdain for present material benefits and the path of striving for the good to come, comfort in the face of the misfortunes which befall us, an inducement to patience, instruction in courage, the root and fount and mother of all blessings... The blood of martyrs nourishes the Church much, much more than the moisture of dew brings gardens in bloom." The martyrs truly professed and declared their faith, I BELIEVE, I BELIEVE, I BELIEVE, UNTIL THE VERY LAST BREATH. May the blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ and all the martyrs be with you all in this New Year!

Short Story

A TRUE STORY

His name was Fleming, and he was a poor Scottish farmer. One day, while trying to make a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog. There, mired to his waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself. Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what could have been a slow and terrifying death.

The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman's sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy Farmer Fleming had saved. "I want to repay you," said the nobleman. "You saved my son's life." "No, I can't accept payment for what I did," the Scottish farmer replied, waving off the offer.

At that moment, the farmer's own son came to the door of the family hovel. "Is that your son?" the nobleman asked. "Yes," the farmer replied proudly. "I'll make you a deal. Let me provide him with the level of education, the same that my son will enjoy. If the lad is anything like his father, he'll no doubt grow to be a man we both will be proud of." And that he did.

Farmer Fleming's son attended the very best schools and in time, he graduated from St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London, and he went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of Penicillin. Years afterward, the same nobleman's son who was saved from the bog was stricken with pneumonia. What saved his life this time? Penicillin.

The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph Churchill.
His son's name? Sir Winston Churchill.

Someone once said: What goes around comes around.
Work like you don't need the money. Love like you've never been hurt. Dance like nobody's watching.

BIBLE STUDY



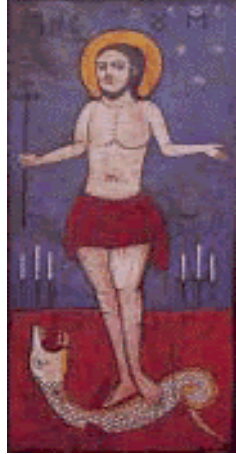
THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY BY CHRISTINE MICHAEL

One of the most significant memories we have of people who pass away are their last words. These last words of St. Paul's second epistle to Timothy were his final instructions he had for his disciple. The author of the letter identifies himself as Paul in the very beginning (1:1). Scholars believe that this second letter was written during Paul's second imprisonment around A.D. 67. St. Paul had been imprisoned by Emperor Nero of Rome who had been persecuting and blaming Christians for the fire that burned down Rome in A.D. 64. While imprisoned, Paul wrote this letter to Timothy with the awareness of his upcoming death in 4:6-8. The letter concludes with Paul's concern asking earnestly to Timothy: "*Be diligent to come to me quickly*" (4:9) because St. Paul wanted to give Timothy and Mark his last words of wisdom before leaving the earth. St. Paul, Timothy's spiritual mentor, wrote a letter repeatedly urging Timothy to remain faithful to the essentials of the Christian faith. This second letter St. Paul writes is to offer final instructions regarding Christian life. While reading the second epistle, one senses St. Paul's strong love and concern for Timothy, encouraging him to use his spiritual gifts, handle the Word of God by accurately instructing others in truth of the faith, and strengthen his loyalty to Christ by facing suffering and persecution that would come soon. St. Paul offers Timothy his final words of advice: "Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season." (4: 2). This message he sent to his beloved "son" in the faith, Timothy, to preach to the Gentiles. St. Paul also writes to urge Timothy to join him in Rome because he knew of his upcoming death. Paul's theology in the second epistle is his dealing with Christian ministry and apostasy. Giving Timothy a motive to remain faithful in ministry, he reminds him that he will have a promise of reigning with Christ through enduring in the midst of hardships (4:8). St. Paul urges Timothy to be bold in the work of the Lord, especially during the difficult times of believers.

From The Nelson study Bible: Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville

Saint Barsoum the Naked

By: Christine Michael



On the fifth day of the blessed month of El-Nasi, we celebrate the departure of Anba Barsoum the Naked in the year 1033 A.D. He was born in Cairo, Egypt. When his parents departed, his uncle took all the family's possessions. St. Barsoum didn't attempt to argue but left the world and went out to live the righteous life as a hermit. Living in the wilderness for five years, he suffered harshness wearing only a hairy sackcloth, following the example of the first hermit, Anba Paula. Saint Barsoum shut the world away for the next 20 years of his life staying in a cave inside the church of St. Marcurius Abu-Saifain fasting and praying day and night.

In the cave, Anba Barsoum encountered a huge serpent. Upon entering the cave, he saw the large serpent and cried out, "O my Lord Christ, the Son of the Living God, who gave us the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and every power of the enemy. You granted healing to the children of Israel, who were bitten by the serpents, when they looked to the brass serpent. Now I look to you, O You who was hanged on the Cross, so that you might grant me power to be able to overcome this beast." First making the sign of the cross, he moved toward the serpent saying, "You trampled the serpent and the snakes, and You tread upon the lion and the dragon. 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?" Making the sign of the cross over the serpent he said to it, "O blessed one stand still in your place. " Praying to God, he asked the Lord to remove the beastly spirit from the serpent and when he had completed his prayer, the serpent became calm and tamed. St. Barsoum said to the serpent, "Henceforth, O blessed one, you shall not have power or might to harm any man, but you shall be subject and obedient to what I say to you." The serpent became very obedient and followed the saint. He then left the cave living on the roof of the cave enduring the weather, until his skin became dark from asceticism, remaining this way for 15 years.

Meanwhile, this period of time was a time of Christian persecution. Church doors were closed and Christians were forced to wear blue turbans. St. Barsoum had been captured by the ruler, beat, and cast in prison. Upon his release, he went back to the monastery where he went back to living on the roof of the church, not replacing his white turban he had. However, no one dared to make him change it to a blue one, because they knew he had the power of God in him. Before his death, he asked God to take anger away from His people. He departed at the good old age of 60, buried at the Monastery of El- Shahrán. May his blessings be with us all. Amen.

CHURCH NEWS

* For the past 4 years, the church has been searching the Monmouth/Ocean county areas for any property or any type of building to renovate into a church to be the future home of the church. The Board of Trustees and the Heads of Services Committee have unanimously agreed on the purchase of a 15-acre parcel of land directly off of Route 9 for \$500,000 dollars (\$50,000 less than the asking price) It is about 2 miles farther south of our present location of prayer; with all utilities in the street; and there are NO wetlands, making it fully useable.

By the grace of God, the church has signed the purchase contract and the closing, God willing, will be on October 15th, 2001.

The church currently has approximately \$150,000; and pledges for approximately \$40,000 leaving \$310,000 to be raised through fund-raising activities, solicitations, and personal loans before going to a financial institution.

We are counting on your prayers and hopeful of your financial support and participation.

* The 3rd Annual Festival has been postponed in mourning of the victims of the terrorist attacks on the United States. The new festival date is set for October 6 and 7, 2001.

* The church has planned a fund-raising Banquet at Crystal Point Banquet Hall. Point Pleasant, NJ. Sunday November 18, 2001

**"You shall be my witnesses
in Jerusalem and in all Judea
and Samaria, and to the end
of the earth".**

(Acts 1:8)

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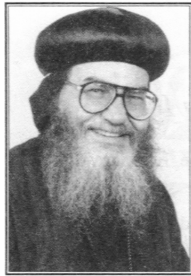
**His Grace, Bishop Makarios will be gracing
us with his presence on
Friday & Saturday
September 28th & 29th.**

**On Friday, His Grace will raise vespers
incense followed by a bible study meeting.
His Grace will also celebrate the Divine Lit-
urgy on Saturday.**

His Grace will ordain deacons during the Liturgy.
Anyone wishing to be ordained or have their children ordained
please contact Fr. Antonious Tanious



*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.*



Coptic Youth Ask **His Grace Bishop Moussa**

From the Youth Bishopric website

Question: Are these the last days?

His Grace Bishop Moussa: It is not important for us to concentrate on when the last days will be, but it is necessary for us to be ready at all times, by always repenting and preparing ourselves spiritually, so let us leave the dates for the Lord.

Question: I am under so much pressure and I cannot stand it any more. What can I do?

His Grace Bishop Moussa: For sure we have pressure coming from the outside, through the instincts, from the world and from Satan. But why do you forget that through the Holy Spirit and divine grace and the Lord residing in you, that you can have power over this & that power that you are feeling? The power which surrounds us in the world is limited and the power of God is unlimited. The problem occurs when we are not regular in taking this spiritual power from God, then we feel weak. If you, being limited, come into contact with the Unlimited, who is God, you will feel strong and victorious over these pressures around you.

Question: Sometimes I feel pressured to have a boyfriend. Is it okay to have a boyfriend if I don't do anything wrong?

His Grace Bishop Moussa: As His Holiness Pope Shenouda says, you can have many friends who are boys and girls, but if you become a couple, you may start out clean and holy, but who can guarantee what may happen? Can you guarantee yourself, or your partner, or Satan? Each day we pray, "Lead us not into temptation..", but by having a boyfriend or a girlfriend we are leading ourselves into temptation. Let your relations be in groups from within the church until the time comes for you to select your partner for marriage.

CHURCH SERVICES,
SEPTEMBER, 2001

Fridays

-7:30 PM-8:30 PM	Hymns Lesson
-8:30PM-10:00PM	Arabic Bible Study
	Arabic Prayer Meeting
-8:30PM-11:00PM	Midnight Praises
	Midnight Prayers

Saturdays

-8:30AM-11:30AM Divine Liturgy
-11:30AM-1:00PM Sunday School & Youth group meeting

COPTIC FEASTS

September 10	Departure of St. Barsoum the naked
September 11	Nayrouz Feast
September 27	The Cross Feast

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