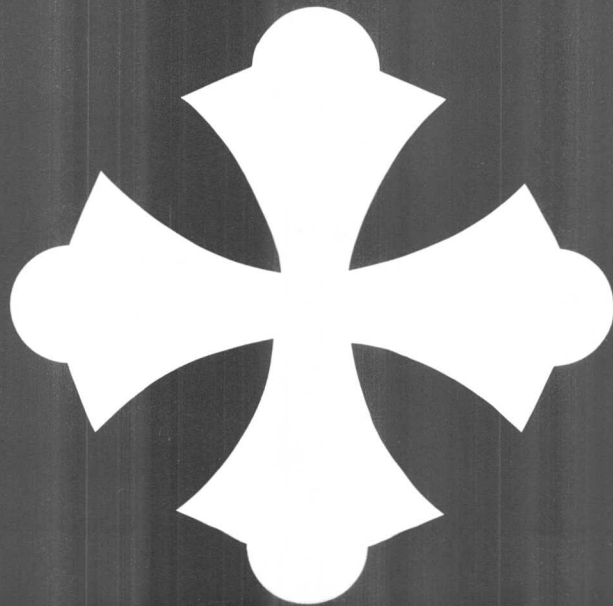


COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

Volume 3, Number 4 Winter 1982

- *The Coptic Patriarchs under the Sword of Islam*
- *St. Gregory of Nyssa's Commentary on the Song of Songs*
- *Fasts of the Coptic Church*



Society of Coptic Church Studies

EDITORIAL BOARD

Bishop Wissa
(Al-Balyana, Egypt)

Bishop Antonious Markos
(Coptic Church, African Affairs)

Bishop Isaac
(Quesna, Egypt)

Bishop Dioscorus
(Coptic Church, Egypt)

Fr. Tadros Malaty
(Alexandria, Egypt)

Professor Fayek Ishak
(Ontario, Canada)

Professor Shaker Basilius
(Cairo, Egypt)

William El-Meir, Ph.D.
(N.J., U.S.A.)

Girgis A. Ibrahim, Ph.D.
(Minnesota, U.S.A.)

Esmat Gabriel, M.A., M.S.S.
(PA., U.S.A.)

EDITOR

Rodolph Yanney, M.D.

© Copyright 1982
by *Coptic Church Review*
Lebanon, PA

Subscription and Business Address:
Post Office Box 714
E. Brunswick, NJ 08816

Editorial Address:
Post Office Box 1113
Lebanon, PA 17042

Subscription Price (1 year)
U.S.A. \$7.00
Canada \$8.00
Overseas \$10.00

COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

A Quarterly of Contemporary Patristic Studies

ISSN 0273-3269

Volume 3, Number 4 Winter 1982

130 *About This Issue*

132 *Calendar of Fasts and Feasts*

133 *A Meditation on the Life of Christ*
St. John Saba

135 *Feast of Circumcision of Our Lord*
Rodolph Yanney, M.D.

142 *Saint Dimiana*
Gamal Scharoubim, B.Sc., M.B.A.

145 *St. Gregory of Nyssa's Commentary on the
Song of Songs*
Casimir McCambley, OCSO

153 *The Coptic Patriarchs under the Sword of
Islam*
Raef Marcus, D.M.D.

156 *Currents In Coptic Church Studies*
● *Our Fasts Between the Past and Present*
Father Kyrillos Kyrillos

161 *Book Reviews*
● *Eerdmans' Handbook To The World's
Religions*

163 *Index of Volume III*

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Church Year

The Coptic Church Year starts on September 11. But for practical purposes we are including in this issue a ***1983 calendar of the liturgical life of the Church***, which is necessary for following some of our articles that deal with the Church life. (January 17) is dealt with in this issue from its various theological aspects.

On January 20, the Coptic Church commemorates the martyrdom of one of its most beloved martyrs, ***St. Dimiana***. The article on her life and martyrdom is written here by *Gamal Scharoubim, B.Sc., M.B.A.* He is one of the earliest Coptic immigrants to America and is now a member of St. Mark Coptic Church at Chicago.

The history and spirituality of the various fasts have been recently discussed in the Arabic book, ***"Our Fasts between the Past and Present"***. This is reviewed in the section of *Currents in Coptic Church Studies*.

St. Gregory of Nyssa's Commentary on the Song of Songs

The first complete translation from the Greek of this highly spiritual and mystical work from the early Church is due to be published in late spring of 1983 by the Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, Mass., in conjunction with the Thessalonike Patristic Institute. We thank the translator, *Brother Casimir McCambley, O.C.S.O.* for his article about St. Gregory in this issue of the Journal. He introduces the saint to us and follows him as he describes the stages of the spiritual life exemplified by the progress of the Bride in her relation with the Bridegroom in the Song of Songs. The feast day of St. Gregory of Nyssa is January 29 in the Coptic calendar. Brother Casimir is a Trappist of Saint Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts. Highly dedicated to patristic studies, especially as related to monasticism, he learned Greek, Hebrew and Syriac and he intends to take Coptic in the future.

Persecution of the Coptic Church in Egypt

The Egyptian government has ignored all requests for the release of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III from his house arrest in the Monastery of St. Bishoi in the desert of Wadi-el-Natrun. Requests on his behalf were sent from the Vatican, the Orthodox Church in America, amnesty international, members of the U.S. Congress, bishops

of the Coptic Synod and many other churches, organizations and personalities including wise Moslems in Egypt and in the U.S. All appeals have so far fallen on deaf ears. There may be a historical background for this strange action of the Egyptian government. After a life-long study of the history of the Coptic Church under Islamic rule, *Dr. Raef Marcus* concluded that the Coptic Patriarch has always been the target of Moslem persecutors. The first in a series of articles by Dr. Marcus about the *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church under the Sword of Islam* appears in this issue of Coptic Church Review.

Editor

1983 CALENDAR OF FASTS AND FEASTS

* **THE SEVEN MAJOR FEASTS OF OUR LORD**
 ** **The Seven Minor Feasts of Our Lord**
 *** Feasts of Virgin Mary
 **** Fasts

- * January 7 - **CHRISTMAS**
- ** January 14 - **Circumcision of Our Lord**
- **** January 18 - Parameno (1)
- * January 19 - **EPIPHANY**
- ** January 21 - **First Miracle of Our Lord at Cana**
- *** January 29 - Dormition of Virgin Mary
- ** February 15 - **Entrance of Our Lord into the Temple**
- **** February 28 - Fast of Nineveh (3)
- **** March 14 - Great Lent (55)
- March 19 - Feast of the Cross
- *** April 2 - Apparition of the Virgin at Zeitoun in 1968
- * April 7 - **ANNUNCIATION**
- * May 1 - **ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM**
(PALM SUNDAY)
- ** May 5 - **Holy Thursday**
- * May 8 - **EASTER**
- *** May 9 - Birth of Virgin Mary
- ** May 15 - **St. Thomas' Sunday**
- ** June 1 - **Entrance of Our Lord into Egypt**
- * June 16 - **ASCENSION**
- * June 26 - **PENTECOST**
- **** June 27 - Apostles' Fast (15)
- July 12 - Martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul
- **** August 7 - Fast of the Virgin (15)
- ** August 19 - **Transfiguration of Our Lord**
- *** August 22 - Assumption of the Body of Virgin Mary
- September 12 - New Year's Day (Feast of the Martyrs)
- September 28 - Feast of the Cross
- **** November 26 - Christmas Fast (42)
- *** December 13 - Presentation of Virgin Mary into the Temple

A MEDITATION ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST

From "The Spiritual Elder"

St. John Saba who is known among the Coptic and Ethiopian monks as the Spiritual Elder is a Syrian Father of the sixth century. He lived in a monastery on the Euphrates River and left a collection of writings on the spiritual life. These include 30 memres (verse homilies), 48 letters and seven treatises. This meditation is translated from his 28th memre. His feast day is March 15 in the Syrian calendar.

Rise and open your heart and your eyes to behold the Light. With the birds fly in the atmospheres of His purity, and with the fishes swim in the seas of His glory. In your inspired air breathe the fragrance of His holiness, and with your words mix His sacred Name. . .

Carry Him in your bosom like Mary His mother.

Come in with the Magi in order to offer your gifts.

With the shepherds proclaim the good news of His birth, and with the angels spread His praise.

Take Him from Simeon the elder; so you may also carry Him upon your arms.

Carry Him upon your shoulders with Joseph and go down to Egypt. When He comes with the children, ask for Him and kiss His lips to breathe the fragrance of His life-giving Body.

Follow Him in His growth through all the stages of childhood. Your constant touch with Him will infuse in you His love, so that your mortal body may give forth the fragrance of life of His Body.

Stand with Him in the temple in order to hear the words full of wisdom with which He startled the elders. And when He asks and answers pay attention to Him and wonder at His wisdom.

Stand there at Jordan, and receive Him with John. Marvel and wonder at His humility when you see Him bowing His head for John to receive from him the water baptism.

Go out with Him to the wilderness, and up with Him upon the mountains. Sit down quietly at His feet, along with the wild beasts which have come to keep company with their Creator. There also stand with Him in order to learn how to wage war and struggle against your adversaries.

When He changes water into wine be there to fill the jars.

Stand near the well with the Samaritan woman in order to learn how to worship in Spirit and truth.

Raise the stone from Lazarus in order to learn what is the resurrection from the dead.

Stand with the multitudes and take a morsel from the five loaves in order to learn the blessing of prayer.

When the waves rage around you, go and wake Him up from His sleep in the bottom of the ship.

Weep with Mary and moisten His feet with your tears in order to hear from Him a word of comfort for your heart.

~~Put your head with John upon His breast in order to hear the beating of His heart.~~
Rise up, stretch your leg for Him that He may wash it for you, in order that you may be purified from your sins and your uncleanness.

Take for yourself a morsel of the Bread which He has broken during the Supper in order to unite with His Body and abide in Him forever.

Go out with Him to the Mount of Olives in order to learn from Him worship and bending of the knees, till your sweat falls down like His.

Rise up, welcome with Him your revilers and your crucifiers, and stretch your hands with Him for the bonds. Like Him spare not your face from slapping and spitting. Give your back to the smiters.

Stand up, my brother. Weary not but carry the cross as it is time for departure. Stretch your hands with Him for the nails, and withhold not your feet. Drink the myrrh with Him.

Arise early while it is still dark. Go to the tomb to see the marvellous Resurrection.

Sit in the Upper Room and wait for His coming with the doors shut. Open your ears to fill them with the words of peace coming out of His mouth . . .

Go with the others to a solitary place, and bow in order to receive the last blessing before His Ascension . . . Sit in the Upper Room to be clothed with power from on high through the divided tongues.

FEAST OF CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD A BIBLICAL PATRISTIC STUDY

Rodolph Yanney, M.D.

As the octave of Christmas, the occasion of our Lord's circumcision took its place in the Christian Calendar as a separate feast only in the fourth century. But the rite of circumcision was highly significant in the Old Testament, and with Christ subjecting Himself to it the writers of the New Testament and the Church Fathers dealt with its spiritual meaning in detail.

Origin of Circumcision

The custom of cutting off the foreskin (prepuce) of the male genital organ, usually as a religious rite, is practiced by many peoples, possibly by one fifth of the earth's population. The practice has been much older than the nation of Israel. It was a custom among the West Semites (Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites), but was unknown in Mesopotamia (Babylonians and Assyrians). Among the inhabitants of Canaan, the Philistines were exceptional in their non-adherence to the practice, and the Old Testament term "uncircumcised" usually refers to them alone.

In Egypt (Jer. 9:25-26; Josh 5:4-9; Ezek. 32:19), as it was the practice among all ancient peoples, circumcision was performed either at puberty or in preparation for marriage. A relief in the sixth dynasty tomb of Ankhmahor at Saqqarah depicts the rite performed by priests on 13-year old youths.

The original significance of circumcision is uncertain. Theories of its origin include hygiene to prevent infection, celebrating a person's initiation into manhood, a premarital rite, acting as a tribal mark, a remnant of human sacrifice, or a sacramental operation (through the shedding of blood) necessary to the validity of any covenant.¹ All of these theories had significance somewhere, and many are reflected in the Old Testament.

Circumcision in the Old Testament.

As a legal requirement circumcision is only mentioned in Lev. 12:3, "And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."

Curiously the practice appears chiefly in narrative passages of Scripture, and from these we can get an insight into its significance among Jews:

(1) As a seal of the covenant.

This is best described in Genesis 17, where the origin of circumcision in Israel is described. It was meant as a mark for God's covenant with the family of Abraham, "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised . . . it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." (Gen. 17:10, 11) "And he gave him the covenant of circumcision." (Acts 7:8) "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." (Rom. 4:11) "No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary." (Ezek. 44:9)

What was considered a tribal mark, became for Israel the mark par excellence of God's covenant with His people. It was a fitting sign for the chosen people of God of whom spiritual purity and holiness were required.

The rite was a symbol of the sanctification of the whole life of the individual practicing it. Actually the Old Testament repeatedly emphasizes that the membership in the covenant community is a spiritual thing that depends more on the heart, rather than on an external mark,

"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked." (Deut. 10:16)

"Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings." (Jer. 4:4)

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised: Egypt, and Judah, and Edom and the children of Ammon, and Moab (*all were circumcised peoples*), and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are *uncircumcised*, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart." (Jer. 9:25, 26).

This is a step towards the New Testament, the new covenant in which the law of God is written in the inward parts and in the hearts (Jer. 31:31-34). St. Paul says that the Christians are the "circumcised", while he uses the term concision (i.e. mutilation) to describe those who have been outwardly circumcised, without any spiritual change,

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For *we are the circumcision*, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:2, 3).

(2) Circumcision as a redeeming sacrifice, and its relation to marriage.

Although the account of the circumcision of Moses' son is full of strange and obscure elements, the narrative taken in full context has much to teach. After meeting

God in the Burning Bush, Moses was to carry the message of salvation to Israel, a message he could not carry without passing through the valley of the shadow of death; he must have the sentence of death inscribed by the hand of God upon his very nature. "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband art thou, because of the circumcision" (Ex. 4:24-26).

Historically and literally Moses had to be punished by God for neglecting to circumcise his son on the eighth day as was the order to Abraham. Apparently Moses became seriously ill and his wife, perceiving the cause of his affliction, took upon herself to circumcise the boy and associate Moses with the act by touching him with the dripping blood, while at the same time addressing him as "a bridegroom of blood". He has become her bridegroom once again thanks to the blood of circumcision that saved him from death.

The core of the narrative is the phrase "a bridegroom of blood". This may reflect a connection between marriage and circumcision in Israel. Such a connection is further attested by the Hebrew word *khatan* (bridegroom), which in Arabic means both "bridegroom" and, "circumcision".

However, the story lends itself to a very deep spiritual interpretation. Moses was a type of Christ who can attain the salvation of His people through the death of the Cross. Moses entered the place of death, typically, and not in his own person. He himself was saved by the blood of circumcision, another type of the Cross.

On the other hand, Zipporah is a type of the Church. She was united to Moses during the period of his rejection, and it is called to know Christ as the One related to her "by blood." It is her privilege to drink of His cup, and be baptized with His Baptism. She is crucified with Him, conformed to His death, risen with Him, "And ye are complete in him . . . In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him . . ." (Col. 2:10-12).²

(3) Circumcision and Passover (Josh. 5:2-10)

During the forty years spent in the wilderness, the Israelites neglected the rite of circumcision. The new generation that reached Canaan were uncircumcised, they did not have the seal that made them in covenant with God. So Joshua, by the order of God, circumcised the children of Israel at Gilgal. This gave them the right to participate in the approaching feast of Passover, "for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof" (Ex. 12:48).

Circumcision of Our Lord

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb (Luke 2:21).

The circumcision of Christ calls attention to various theological facts:

(1) His solidarity with the human race.

"God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, . . ." (Rom. 8:3). "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men" (Heb. 5:1).

(2) His obedience to the law.

"God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). "might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17).

In submitting to the law of circumcision, Christ became the fulness and completion of the Old Covenant. ". . . Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of god, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8).

(3) Anticipation of the Passion.

There was a vague relation between circumcision and sacrifice, and the story of Moses in Exodus points specifically to the crucifixion of Christ, when by His blood He became the Bridegroom of the Church (Songs 3:11). His circumcision, when He shed His blood for the first time, prefigured that other bloody consecration which He was to undergo on the Cross.

(4) The naming of Jesus.

The feast of circumcision is the feast of the name of Jesus. This was the main theme stressed by the Scripture in citing our Lord's circumcision. The name "Jesus" means "Yahweh saves." Salvation was repeatedly mentioned in the infancy narratives,

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call him Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour . . ." (Luke 2:11). "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke 2:30).

In his Commentary on St. Luke, St. Cyril of Alexandria says that giving the name "Jesus" for Christ at the time of his circumcision was a reference to our salvation, "as the death and resurrection of Christ were for our sake, so also was His circumcision."

Salvation was through the Cross and Resurrection, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . ." (Phil. 2:9, 10). "And it shall come to

pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). The invocation of the Name of Jesus has been widely practiced in the Church as the "Jesus prayer".³

Significance of Circumcision in the Christian Life:

(1) The New Covenant:

St. Athanasius the Great says, "Old things were a type of the new"; i.e. the shadows of the Old Testament were fulfilled in the realities of the New Testament. The law of circumcision was rescinded by the Cross of Christ, as St. Paul says in relation to the Jewish Christians, "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised . . . But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:12-13).

The New Covenant has been in the blood of Christ (Luke 22:20). The Church, which is the new creation, came through the Death and Resurrection of Christ.

(2) Circumcision as a type of Baptism.

In the Old Testament circumcision was a reception into the divine covenant of grace. The circumcised were called holy and had the right to participate in the Passover.

Baptism is the fulfillment of circumcision. If circumcision was the seal of the old covenant, Baptism is the seal of the new (Eph. 1:13; Rom. 4:11; 2 Tim. 2:19; Col. 2:11; Phil. 3:3). Christians are the new Israel, the new "holy" nation. Reception into the covenant of grace is now effected in Baptism which purifies the baptised person from all sin by permitting him participation in the death and resurrection of Christ.

St. Cyril of Alexandria, commenting on the circumcision of Christ in his Homilies on the Gospel of Luke, says, "After Christ's circumcision, this rite was fulfilled for ever. Instead, we now have Baptism, which had circumcision as its type. Because of Baptism, we no longer perform circumcision." He also says, "Spiritual circumcision occurs essentially in Baptism, where Christ makes us also partakers of the Holy Spirit . . . For Christ is considered the real leader, whose type was Joshua who first led the people of Israel and crossed with them the Jordan; then he immediately stopped and circumcised them with stone knives. In a similar way, after crossing the Jordan (i.e. Baptism) we are also circumcised by Christ, through the Holy Spirit, not to purify the body, but to cut instead the fornication and corruption of the soul." A Christian is received into the Body of Christ by Baptism. Baptism gives him the right to share in the Eucharist; eating the Passover was only its type.

Oscar Cullmann, the famous New Testament scholar finds in the circumcision of Jewish children, an argument for infant Baptism. He also finds in the absence of a sex differentiation in Baptism, in contrast to circumcision which was a rite for males only,

a proof that the Holy Spirit through whom persons baptized into Christ are incorporated into His Body, no longer permits males to be singled out for favor (Acts 2:17 ff.). In Gal. 3:28, St. Paul refers specifically to Baptism when he says that there is no longer male and female.⁴

(3) *Heavenly Reality of the "octave" (the eighth day)*

As the Old Testament shadows point to the New Testament, the New Testament events also point forward to the heavenly realities. The Church Fathers, found a parallel between circumcision on the eighth day and eternal life.

St. Justin martyr was the first to comment on the eighth day, in *The Dialogue with Trypho*, "The command to circumcise children on the eighth day is the type of the true circumcision which circumcised you from error and sin by Him who rose from the dead on the first day of the week, Jesus Christ our Lord. For the first day of the week is also the eighth?"⁵

While for St. Justin the octave was a symbol of Easter Day, for many of the later Church Fathers it was a symbol of the future age. On his treatise *On the Octave* St. Gregory of Nyssa comments on the symbolic meaning of the eighth day for circumcision. In a long philosophical and metaphysical introduction he explains the coming of the Day of the Lord after the end of the cycles of weeks of this age. Then he adds, "In (this other world) we shall see the true circumcision of human nature in the taking off of biological life and true purification from true stain. For the stain of man is sin . . . It is in this sense that we take the law of the octave, which purifies and circumcises, . . . This septenary time having ceased, the eighth day will appear after the seventh . . . It is another sun which makes this day, the sun which sends forth the true light . . . the light that is everlasting and without alteration."⁶

A more mystical meaning is brought by St. Gregory in his *Commentary on the Beatitudes*, ". . . the eighth beatitude, . . . as the summit of the beatitudes, is placed at the peak of the ascending virtues. Indeed, by the symbol of the octave, the Prophet (Psalms 6 & 12) describes the day of the Resurrections . . . The circumcision symbolizes the stripping off of the dead skin with which, . . . after our disobedience, we clothed ourselves; in the same way, the eighth beatitude contains the restoration in the heavens of those who had fallen into slavery . . ."

The same teaching appears in St. Asterius of Amasea (c. 400 A.D.) in his homily on Psalm VI, "Why did circumcision take place on the eighth day? Because during the first seven, the child was wearing swaddling clothes, but on the eighth, freed from these bonds, he received circumcision . . . When we have carried the seven days of life, that is to say, the bonds of sin, we should, at the end of time, break these bonds and, circumcised by death and resurrection, as if on the eighth day embrace the life of the angels."⁸

St. John Chrysostom comments on the title of Psalm VI saying, "What is the eighth but the great and manifest Day of the Lord . . .? . . . The present life is nothing

but one week . . . This is why no one calls the Lord's Day the eighth day, but the first."⁹

St. Augustine concludes the *City of God* by meditating on the eternal eighth day, "The seventh day shall be brought to a close, not by an evening, but by the Lord's Day, as an eighth and eternal day, consecrated by the Resurrection of Christ, and prefiguring the eternal repose not only of the spirit, but also of the body. There we shall rest and see, see and love, love and praise."¹⁰

References and Notes

1. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol I. Michigan: Eerdmans; 1979, P. 701.
2. C. H. Mackintosh: Notes on the Pentateuch. Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brothers., P. 163.
3. For more information about the Jesus Prayer see Coptic Church Review, Vol. I, No. 2:57 & Vol. II, No. 2:86, 87.
4. O. Cullmann: Baptism in the New Testament. Philadelphia: Westminster Press; 1950. P. 60-66.
5. Dial. XLI:4.
6. J. Danielou: The Bible and The Liturgy. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press; 1956. P. 271-273.
7. Ibid. P. 274.
8. Ibid. P. 65.
9. Ibid. P. 274, 275.
10. The City of God: XXII: 30.

SAINT DIMIANA COPTIC MARTYR UNDER DIOCLETIAN

Gamal R. Scharoubim, B.Sc., M.B.A.

the early era of Christianity. In her life and death she exemplified a real and true conviction in Christianity. She exemplified the patient, loving, chaste and steadfast believer who had the vision and courage not only to preserve the faith but also to re-inforce it in her companion sisters and in her father. She faced more torture than any other known woman martyr. Her life tells the youth of our days, how easy it is to love the Lord and to sacrifice oneself for His Name. She shows the whole world that loving God must surpass any other human relationship.

Her Childhood

St. Dimiana was born circa the end of the third century (A.D.) to pious parents. Her father Marcus was the ruler over the Zaafran and Burullus¹ in the Siesban Valley (in the Northeast section of the Nile Delta).

The little saint grew in the faith of God and in the knowledge of our Savior Jesus Christ. She was nourished by a faithful mother and a good loving father who regularly offered alms and fulfilled his vows to the Lord. She was fond of reading the holy Scriptures. When she reached maturity, she vowed herself to our heavenly Father, shunning the life of wealth and affluence that her father's status could afford her.

The response of her father to her wish was positive. He built for her and for her friends a residence outside the city limits away from the worldly distractions. She moved into this convent when she was only fifteen years of age. Together with her friends Dimiana spent most of her days meditating on the word of God and her nights in prayers and praises.

Her residence became the focal point for other young girls who desired to join in the life of Christ. Forty virgins followed the example of St. Dimiana.

The devil declares his war:

This was the time when the Roman Emperor Diocletian declared his persecution of Christianity. He summoned her father - then the governor of the province - to Antioch with all the other rulers and governors. When Marcus was ordered to worship the

idols, as well as the others, he declined explaining to the emperor that "he worships the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." The emperor applied pressure on Marcus alternating coaxing and coercion until in a moment of weakness Marcus offered incense to the idols.

The sad news reached the populace who were stunned because of Marcus' reputation as a pious and faithful Christian. In disbelief and sorrow, St. Dimiana called her sisters and released the news to them asking them to pray with her for the salvation of her father's soul.

Dimiana and her father:

The saint travelled to see her father in his capital Farma. When she met him, she made the sign of the cross on herself and facing him with courage and love and with tears in her eyes, she said to him, "I wished to hear about your death and departure to paradise rather than hear that you denounced your Creator and Savior Jesus Christ. Were you scared by the threat of the emperor to kill you? Did you forget the saying 'fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' (Matt. 10:28)? Did you forget also the Lord's warning, 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.' (Matt. 10:33)?" The saint ended her talk with her father saying, "My father, if you insist on going this way, then you are not my father and I am not your daughter."

The work of the Holy Spirit:

When her father heard these words, he was pierced to the heart and realizing the terrible thing he did, he cried to the Lord with tears in his eyes asking for His forgiveness and he blessed his daughter. Then he went back to Antioch to confess in front of Diocletian his belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Meanwhile Dimiana was back with her sisters thanking God for saving her father's soul and praying for his spiritual strength and for his steadfast confession of the faith.

Marcus announces his renewed faith in Christ:

The emperor used every means at his hand to convince Marcus to change his confession but all his efforts went in vain. Enraged at Marcus, the emperor at the advice of his counselors ordered him executed. Marcus received the crown of martyrdom on the 5th day of the month of Abib which coincides with the feast of the Apostles in the Coptic Calendar (July 12).

Diocletian was sad and shocked at the death of Marcus, because he was one of his best and faithful men. To comfort the emperor, one of his wicked counselors told him that Marcus renewed his faith in Christ because of his young daughter Dimiana. The emperor was told also that the saint attracted many young girls around her to worship Jesus of Nazareth. On the advice of his counselor, Diocletian sent a centurion to the saint, advising her to worship his idols, or else be tortured and killed.

Dimiana's martyrdom:

When Dimiana heard the message of the emperor from his centurion, she denounced his gods and declared her faith in Christ. The centurion applied coaxing and persuasion to detract the saint from Christ. Failing in his attempts, he ordered her tortured. During her torture, she comforted and encouraged her sisters who were crying and she reminded them of the Lord Jesus Christ who suffered and died for our sins. At the end of the day, she was imprisoned with her companions. The Archangel Michael appeared to her, encouraging her to remain steadfast in the faith.

The process of torturing was repeated and escalated every day. The saint continued to recite verses from the Bible and psalms during her torture. Finally she received the crown of martyrdom on the 13th day of the month of Tubah². Her martyrdom was a blessing to the thousands of souls who witnessed her torture and then confessed their faith in Christ. Because of her faith, courage and steadfastness, four hundred faithful shed their blood in the name of the Lord and received the crowns of martyrdom.

The Monastery of St. Dimiana

After the era of martyrdom, St. Helena the mother of Emperor Constantine came to Zaafran³ and recovered the body of St. Dimiana and her forty companions and built a church and a monastery after her name. The monastery was destroyed in the year 760 A.D. after the Arab conquest of Egypt; however it was rebuilt. Once again, it was ruined by flooding and again rebuilt. The latest restoration of this monastery occurred in the last decade. His Holiness Pope Shenouda III ordained many nuns who joined the monastery, thus restoring the spiritual life to this holy place.

Every year myriads of people visit St. Dimiana's shrine between May 12 and May 20, to fulfill their vows, pay homage, make offerings and ask for the intercession of this highly popular and beloved saint.⁴

Notes:

1. The sea-coast province on the Mediterranean between the Rosetta and Damietta Nile branches. It included a vast area that belongs now to the cities of Bilqas, Biyala, Shirbin, Baltim and Al-Mansurah, and which extended northwards to the Lake Burullus.
2. The 5th month in the Coptic Calendar. The feast days of St. Dimiana are January 20 (Tubah 13), for the commemoration of her martyrdom, and May 20 (Bashans 12), for the commemoration of consecrating her church.
3. A town about thirty miles southwest of the city of Damietta, the Egyptian port at the mouth of the eastern branch of the Nile.
4. Iris el-Masri: The Story of the Copts. Cairo, 1978, P. 88.

ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA'S COMMENTARY ON THE SONG OF SONGS

Brother Casimir McCambley, O.C.S.O.

Of all the books in the Old Testament, perhaps none is more difficult to interpret as the Song of Songs. Throughout the centuries since its composition, this song of love has caused vast amounts of literature to be written in both Jewish and Christian circles.¹ The subject which this Song of Solomon deals with is as old as humanity itself, namely love. In the early second century Rabbi Akiba exclaimed "No day outweighed in glory the one on which Israel received the Song of Songs." Since its theme of love arouses deep emotion, any commentary or interpretation of this sublime canticle evokes a passionate response among both saints and scholars. Since we are dealing with passionate love, the interpretation of the Song of Songs requires imagination, insight, and deep spiritual sensitivity. It was such qualities as these that the Fathers of the early Church brought to their commentaries in attempting to express the bride and bridegroom's various moods of love—the joy of union and the pain of separation.

Because the Song's theme is basically one of love, it represents the zenith of the spiritual life. No small wonder that Jean Leclercq speaks of the Song's predominant place in medieval monastic literature in light of the great patristic tradition of which they were direct inheritors.²

In Origen's work a theory about the three stages of the spiritual life is developed, based upon Philo and earlier Greek philosophers. What this theory boils down to is essentially a three-fold account of the spiritual life—purgative, illuminative, and unitive. These three divisions were assigned to the three books of the Old Testament—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs.³ It is with Gregory of Nyssa's Commentary on the Song that we find Origen's theology of the Spiritual life taken up and passed on.

Gregory of Nyssa was born about the year 335 in Cappadocia into an extraordinary Christian family which included among his relations St. Macrina (his sister) and St. Basil the Great (his brother). Around the age of forty, Gregory accepted being appointed bishop (372) of a small Cappadocian town located in what is now south cen-

tral Turkey called Nyssa. This appointment went pretty much against his contemplative frame of mind, yet he agreed to assume this position at his brother Basil's urging.

By nature Gregory was a philosopher of the profoundest kind. His background as a rhetorician and theologian rested on a solid basis of classical training at Athens which was shared by his friend, St. Gregory of Nazianzus. It was from such a solid training and exposure to contemporary culture that Gregory was able to build up a system of Christian thought which justified the monastic life so well propagated by his elder brother Basil.

Gregory carried over the mysticism inherited from Origen which in turn was based upon the Alexandrian Jewish-Christian tradition of Philo, Clement, and Plotinus. The spiritual life as expounded by the Alexandrians is solidly founded upon an imitation of God, particularly St. Paul. The summit of such a spiritual life is not simple self-fulfillment, but participation in the divine charity which impells a person to go out to his brothers and sisters. Such was the case with Gregory's depiction of Moses and the bride of the Canticle.

The work of Gregory of Nyssa has for a long time been misunderstood and neglected due to the philosophical tone⁴ of his writings. Gregory is not even ranked among the four "ecumenical" doctors—Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, and Athanasius—due to his speculative nature, strong interest in Greek philosophy, and Origenist tradition. Nevertheless, the Second Council of Nicea (787) bestowed upon him the title "Father of Fathers." Jean Danielou has shown⁵ how Gregory translated the object of his faith into terms accessible to the thought of his times, dominated as it was by such thinkers as Plato, Plotinus, and the Stoics.

A superficial glance at any of Gregory's works may give rise to the impression that he simply transferred to Christianity Platonic dualism, for example, the soul vs. the body. Nevertheless, he is firmly rooted in the biblical doctrine of creation where God is seen as completely transcendent yet in a living relationship with his creatures. A strong case against such a dualism is Gregory's luxuriant use of symbols in the Song of Songs which does not simply serve to imply their innate inferiority but on the contrary, to act as sacramental signs for manifesting the divine reality. We get a glimpse of this in the First Homily where "the remaining words of the Song reveal a kind of ecclesiastical concern (ekklēsiastikē oikonomía) for other members of the Church." This oikonomía is born out by references to such sacraments as baptism and the eucharist. It shows that Gregory's reflections upon scripture are primarily liturgical, yet backed up and re-inforced by Platonic terminology.

Just as influential upon Gregory as Platonism is Stoicism, especially regarding cosmological conceptions. Hubner has made a detailed study of this,⁶ and his book is well worth referring to. It should be kept in mind that Gregory was using Stoic terminology to make spiritual and immaterial realities accessible to his contemporaries.

What lies beneath the unity of both the material and immaterial worlds is a principle (Christ) which unifies the cosmos while transcending it; in other words, the principle is not immanent as it is in Stoicism. It is from the Stoic school that Gregory borrows the idea of cyclic movement of matter and his affirmation of the radical mutability of the Spirit.⁷ Gregory's thought here is important, for it is related to his explanation of creation—all things exist virtually at the moment of creation, but their emergence is successive and temporal.

Everything which Gregory has to say regarding theology and spirituality is affirmative. He has a special appeal to modern readers, despite the sometimes heavy allegory, by virtue of his stress on the goodness of movement. The ancient world was gripped by a philosophy and theology which feared change; any kind of movement was viewed mostly as negative and for evil. Gregory takes this almost primeval fear and transforms it into a higher kind of movement. Such a movement has its roots in St. Paul—"And we . . . are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another"⁸ (2 Cor. 3:18). Movement is of course rooted in Gregory's basic intuition that God is not totally incomprehensible and inaccessible to mankind, but remains boundless to any attempt to limit him. Our ignorance of God is simply due to the fact that He is infinite and the creature is finite—we can never conceive of his essence or *ousía*. Gregory's First Homily makes this point clear at the outset so as to set the tone for the remaining homilies.

Once the bride of the Song recognizes her capacity for change, she is overjoyed at this realization, and moves . . . changes . . . from one degree of perception and love of her bridegroom into another. As one reads the Song Commentary, this impression of change strongly impresses itself with the overwhelming insight of change being presented in terms of growth. In fact Gregory minces no words about this throughout the text. Since love (*agápē*) is at the root of this movement, the bride never wearies but is continually "winged" in her ascent (Fifteenth Homily); that is to say, she becomes like the Spirit, who is never at rest but constantly in motion.

To describe this ascent or perpetual growth of the soul, Gregory uses the term *epékstasis*⁹, literally "tension, extension, stretching out, reaching forward." Such a stretching out tends towards (*pròs*) the Immovable and is a kind of process of unification or concentration of the soul's capacities. The soul, once having been winged or spirited, moves out of desire¹⁰ towards God the Bridegroom. This all important desire does not cease with the attainment of beatitude but is intimately connected with the divine transcendence itself.

Right at the beginning of his Song Commentary, Gregory presents us with a synthesis of the diverse steps of the spiritual life culminating with the Song of Songs, "the innermost sanctuary" whose object is union (*anákrasis*) with God. The "law of desire,"¹¹ so to speak, is found in the First Homily—"Enjoyment of him (God the bridegroom) always becomes a starting point for a desire (*epithumía*) of what is greater; by this, participation (*metousía*) in his goodness increases our desire." Instead of satiety being produced we have on the contrary an even greater desire as a

result of our initial participation in God. For our edification, Gregory offers us throughout the Song Commentary three main examples of men of desire¹²—Moses, David, and Paul. Since it is a characteristic of God to present himself to us in a perpetual revelation, how then is participation in him the source of an even greater desire? For Gregory's response to this question, refer to the important text of the Fifth Homily:

"Therefore we now see the bride led by the Word's hand up a rising staircase by ascensions of virtue to what lies on high. First the Word sends in a ray of light through the windows of the prophets and lattices of the Law . . . The bride thereupon partakes in the good as much as she can; yet again as if not partaking of its substance, she is drawn to participation in the transcendent beauty. The bride's desire is proportionately increased by what always lies before her; though the transcendence of the good ever exceeds what she can find, she seems to touch only the first stage of her ascent."

Here we find ourselves at the heart of Gregory's mysticism where the spiritual life is perceived as an ascension, a classical description used throughout the history of spirituality. The bride-soul begins with an arousal of desire, is transformed into a dove, and runs on an upward course which never ends. At each stage of ascent the Word communicates himself to the spouse, always causing her to be satisfied while ever presenting a further desire for him—" . . . the bride has reached the summit of her ascent in what she desired . . . But this boundary of what had been attained is the beginning of a hope lying beyond" (Sixth Homily). Such then is the two-fold disposition of interiority and of exteriority, of instasy and of exstasy, a characteristic trait of the mystic life.

To human understanding God is completely unknowable, yet by love (agape) he is always present to us. Such a subtle notion leads us to the paradox of motion in stability and stability in motion. Movement in and by itself is proper to the material world, and is characterized by dispersion. Spiritual movement, however, is a process of unification where continuity presides over its changing nature. God is always acquired, like the fountain's water (Ninth Homily):

"This is indeed paradoxical. All wells contain still water; only the bride has running water with both depth and a continuous flow of water. Who can worthily comprehend the wonders shown here which are applied to the likeness of the bride? It seems that she has no further to reach, having been compared to beauty's archetype. She closely imitates a fountain—her bridegroom's—by a fountain; her life by his, and her water by his water."

Another important theme in Gregory's thought can be integrated along with what we have seen so far—the doctrine of the spiritual senses. God's presence, as we have shown, can never be grasped physical reality immediately (that is, no mediator between what is grasped and the person grasping it), provide excellent imagery for the soul's apprehension of spiritual reality.

Once sensible joys have been purified, man is free to taste God's goodness in paradise. The doctrine of the spiritual senses is not simply an expression of a psychological experience, but is closely connected with man's true nature, that of the first man in paradise. The death of corporeal senses does not signify death of all pleasure nor the accession of intellectual joy. When Gregory explains the watchful sleep of the bride, he shows that sleep of bodily senses is a condition for another kind of enjoyment or *hedonē*:

"A two-fold nature of pleasure exists in man—one is effected in the soul by detachment, and another is effected by passion in the body; the choice of one gives power over the other. If a person looks to the senses and is drawn by pleasure present in the body, he lives his life without tasting divine joy, since the better choice was overshadowed by what is inferior. On the other hand, those whose desire rushes to God have an un-overshadowed over good that abides; they realize that what enters the senses must be avoided. Therefore when the soul only enjoys the contemplation of the divine Being, it will not rise from sleep for that which operates according to the senses' pleasure. It will put to rest all bodily movement, and by a naked and pure thought, this soul will receive insight into God's vision through watchfulness." (Tenth Homily)

Without any doubt Gregory's entire mystical doctrine is founded upon the theme of the image of God as first expressed in Gen. 1:26—"Let us make man in our image and likeness." This is not revolutionary doctrine, but it takes on a relief stamped by Gregory's own thought. Being placed as lord over creation, man bears within himself all the divine attributes, especially participation in God's purity. Since God is unfathomable, so is man—after all, he is the Creator's image or *eikōn*. For Gregory the natural man (*noūs*, *pneūma*) as created by God with all his endowments is what later theology called supernatural. Opposed to this natural life is the animal life which is *added upon* the image. Hence man is good by nature, an insight dear to many Greek Fathers of the Church. Restoration of this image forms the central theme of all Gregory's writings, and it tends to dominate much of his Song Commentary.

All of Gregory's mysticism centers around the transcendence of God's *ousia* or being. We encounter this theme time and again throughout the Song Commentary. We do not weary of hearing it, because if our reading is coupled with faith, we discover that we are continuously led from one degree of knowledge (glory) to another without ever experiencing fatigue. The transition from one stage to another, if you will, is an on-going process of stripping off the outer man's tendency to corruption as well as a progressive entrance into the depths of one's own soul. That subtle phrase used by Gregory, "perception of his presence" (*aisthēsis parousias*, Eleventh Homily), binds together the closeness of God and his remoteness—God's uncreated grace is perceived more by its effects (in addition to transforming the soul and increasing its desire for him) than an outright vision of his being. God is both interior and exterior to the soul, and it is in such a tension that the image in man is found.

The darkness Gregory presents to us is a means of protecting God's complete transcendent nature. St. John the Apostle is shown as a sponge, an example of perceiving God in the darkness, although in the following text darkness is not specifically mentioned (First Homily):

"John loved the breasts of the Word as he reclined upon the Lord's breast. John's heart became a kind of sponge beside the fountain of life. It became filled with the mysteries of Christ by a kind of secret transmission."

We may compare this passive role of a sponge with its ability to absorb the drops of night running down from the bridegroom's locks (Sg. 5:2) in the Eleventh Homily:

"The drops of the night have a meaning which we looked at earlier. For it is impossible for one entering the inner part of the sanctuary of what is unseen to meet ~~signs that come to our minds by means of flowing drops of words from the saints~~ and bearers of the divine."

Despite the rather complicated terminology, rich allegory, and subtle language, Gregory of Nyssa's spiritual doctrine has great simplicity—it is nothing more than a prolongation and development of the grace received at baptism, the heritage of every Christian. Perhaps it has not been sufficiently appreciated, but his account of the soul's ascent as symbolized by the bride has a social dimension briefly mentioned above with regards to the "ecclesiastical concern" for other members of the Church. The bride interacts with her maidens throughout the Commentary, and the chief examples of Gregory's doctrine of ascent were the great leaders of the people, Moses, Abraham, David, and St. Paul. Thus you might say that mystic graces are intimately bound up with the apostolate.

Once a person has been initiated "into the hidden mysteries of this book"¹³ (Song of Songs) by a careful rumination of its contents, it transforms the docile reader by the Holy Spirit's grace into "something more than men;" that is, one's human nature is transformed by Christ's teaching into "what is divine." Only when a person has been purified can the mystic ascent begin which leads the soul back into heaven, its true and natural dwelling place.

The picture of the spiritual life in union with the Church, Christ's body, should be attractive to modern readers despite the fact that at times Gregory's allegory becomes difficult and tedious to follow. His doctrine of *epékstasis* or continual progress is especially meaningful today, and should give courage to all attempting to live a Christian life regardless of one's station in life. *Epékstasis* may be equated with growth in the Christian life whose roots lie in baptism. We are not to stop at the outward signs or revelations of God, but we are to continually press on to a deeper love and knowledge of the Blessed Trinity:

"Every person is drawn to desire what is blessed and praised . . . Everyone will look to the same goal and no evil will remain. God will be all in all, and all persons

will be united together in the partnership of the Good, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory and power forever and ever. Amen." (concluding words of the Fifteenth & final Homily)

Notes:

1. A chronological sketch of the Song of Songs in literature may be found in Song of Songs, p. 236-288, by Marvin Pope. Doubleday, Garden City, NY. 1977.
2. "The Canticle of Canticles is a contemplative text: theoricus sermo, as St. Bernard would say. It is not pastoral in nature; it does not teach morality, prescribe good works to perform or precepts to observe; nor even purvey exhortations to wisdom. But with its ardent language and its dialogue of praise, it was more attuned than any other book in Sacred Scripture to loving, disinterested contemplation. One can understand why Origen commented on it twice, why St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard and so many others preferred it over other parts of the Old and New Testaments." The Love of Learning and the Desire for God, p. 92, by Jean Leclercq. Mentor Omega Books. New York. 1962.
3. For a discussion on this three-fold division, cf. Platonism et Theologie Mystique, p. 17-26, by Jean Daniélou. Aubier, Paris, 1944. Bouyer comments on this division—"We cannot, without distorting the texts, make the succession of light, cloud, and darkness with Gregory coincide with the three divisions of Origen." The Spirituality of the New Testament & the Fathers, p. 355-356, by Louis Bouyer. Desclee, NY & Tournai 1963. For Gregory's words—"The purpose of the book of Proverbs is to teach, while that of Ecclesiastes is to preach. The philosophy of the Song of Songs transcends both by its loftier doctrine." (First Homily).
4. When reading Gregory's writings, one must understand the interrelationship between scripture, philosophy, and mysticism, for all three of these elements merge into a picture of human perfection and beatitude.
5. Platonism et Theologie Mystique.
6. Die Einheit des Liebes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa by Reinhard Hübner. E.J. Brill. Leiden. 1974.
7. Cf. Vita Moysis, pg. 44. 328A-B.
8. ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν—"from glory into glory" Note the dynamic thrust of this phrase so dear to Gregory. The image that comes to mind is a person walking through a beautiful mansion. As he passes from one lovely room to another, a composite picture of the entire house is gradually impressed upon him. Perhaps this notion can be kept in mind when reading "In my Father's house there are many mansions" (Jn. 14:2). I.E., we will never weary of moving from one mansion into another!

9. Epékstasis—note the preposition epi, "towards, upon" before stasis, signifying stability or no movement. Gregory develops this in the Sixth Homily with Phil. 3:13—"forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead."
10. Cf. Charles Dumontier's fine treatment of "desire" re. the Cistercians in his Saint Bernard et la Bible. Desclee. Paris. 1953.
11. This "law of desire" dear to St. Bernard may be first found in Gn. 2:24—"Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves (proskallésetai) to (pròs) his wife, and they become one flesh." The bride's desire for her spouse is this basic attraction between male and female, the Song's theme. Note that the Genesis text uses two prepositions—proskallésetai and pròs—in succession to emphasize this force of attraction. The attraction represented by pros is resolved when both man and woman "become one flesh"—eis sarkamian, literally, "into one flesh."
12. "Man of desires—cf. Dan. 9:23 where the angel Gabriel calls Daniel as being "greatly beloved"—'atah chāmūdōth. The Vulgate (Latin) translation of this reads ille vir desidororum; the lxx has anēr epithumiōn.
13. First Homily.

HISTORY OF THE PATRIARCHS OF THE COPTIC CHURCH UNDER THE SWORD OF ISLAM

Raef Marcus, D.M.D.

Introduction:

Throughout their long history, the Copts regarded their prelates with the highest deference. To them they looked for spiritual leadership and personal guidance, especially in the days of great trials which were not infrequent in Coptic annals.

The man who occupied the throne of St. Mark was never enforced on the Copts by any ruler or civil administration. He was always elected by the people, their representatives and their clergy, even in the darkest ages in the history of the Alexandrian Church.

This fact (beside his spiritual and ecclesiastical authority) has made from every patriarch the true representative of the Copts and the only one who can express their feelings and their expectations. For the Copts, the patriarch has been the only person who can resist the injustice and ferocity of the civilian ruler.

During massacres, persecutions, dismissal from office, and confiscation of property, the patriarch and the hierarchy under his control stood in the midst to fortify the faithful through times of storm.

Since faith was the Copts' means of survival, their rallying point was the patriarch as head of the Church whom they revered, not on account of the ecclesiastical powers accorded to his office, but because of his piety and godliness.

When Egypt fell under the yolk of the Muslim Arabs in 641 A.D., their General Amr ibn el-Asi gave the patriarch Benjamin a promise of protection and security. He also gave him freedom to administer the affairs of the Church.

Soon afterwards, the Muslim government of Egypt realized the extent of the popularity of the Egyptian prelates. This popularity seemed to be a source of anxiety to all Muslim governors of Egypt throughout the past thirteen centuries.

Soon it became evident that the policy adopted by the various rulers was to humiliate the Copts by crushing and attacking their patriarch, a blow which the people could not stand. The rulers wanted to place the patriarchs under strict surveillance, and demanded from them total obedience to the governor. In other

words, they prevented them from practicing their authority within their ecclesiastical affairs.

The Muslims first decided to enforce the patriarch to register his name as a government employee, after being elected and before starting to practice his authority. This action was started by Abd-el-Aziz ibn Marawan in 686 A.D., only 45 years after the Arab conquest of Egypt, and the edict of tolerance issued by the general Amr mentioned earlier.

This act was considered as a tradition until it became a law in 799 during the caliphate of Harun el-Rashid.

Sawiris ibn Al-Mukaffa, the Coptic historian of the eleventh century mentioned many incidents of violence and humiliation inflicted upon nearly every patriarch of Egypt from the seventh century and afterwards.

Slowly the authority of the patriarch faded, and by the spread and growth of the Arab Empire, this religious leader became no more than a puppet working for the Muslim rulers, following their instructions; occasionally He was asked to levy the poll-tax (Gizya) enforced by the Arabs on the Copts.

After the Arab conquest, the patriarch thought that he might be able to continue his relation with his people, the Copts outside the Egyptian boundaries. But, the punishment and torturing of the patriarch Simon in 691 A.D., made an end to the ecumenical role of the patriarch of Alexandria, the successor of St. Athanasius and St. Cyril the Great.

It was not until the election of the patriarch Cyril IV, surnamed the Reformer when the Copts for the first time in centuries had a strong leader who was able to impose his reform on his people and refuse the Muslim governor's interference in Church matters, and for this he ended his life as a martyr, being poisoned by the Muslim Wali Said Pasha in 1861.

In our time, H.H. Pope Shenouda III the 117th successor of St. Mark, an energetic and strong leader of the Church, very popular and devoted to its reform, also known for his devotion to the unity of the Church, who stood for his people who suffered under the rule of the Army officers in Egypt, has to pay for all these by being stripped of his powers and banished to a desert monastery by a law issued by President Sadat in September 1981 (one month before the Sadat assassination).

President Mubarak is still enforcing that law and the patriarch is now totally excluded from the whole world by police forces surrounding the monastery. The only reason for this inhuman treatment for Pope Shenouda is his stand for his people.

In a series of articles to be published in the following issues, we are going to narrate the details of the suffering that the various patriarchs of the Egyptian Church had to bear from the Muslim rulers of Egypt.

Bibliography

1. Ibn Al-Mukaffa: *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*. B. Evetts, Paris, 1713.

2. Atiya, Aziz S.: *History of Eastern Christianity*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1968.
3. Jacque Tager: *Copts and Muslims since the Arab Conquest*. Cairo, 1951.
4. Stanley Lane-poole: *A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages*. London, 1901.

CURRENTS IN COPTIC CHURCH STUDIES
**OUR FASTS BETWEEN THE PAST AND
PRESENT: THEIR SPIRITUAL ORIGINS
AND HISTORICAL ROOTS**

*By Father Kyrillos Kyrillos
Cairo, Egypt: St. George Coptic Church at Khumaraweyh, Shurbra; 1982.*

In this 224 page book, which has been recently published in Arabic, the author addressed himself to the study of the various fasts of the Coptic Church. After discussing the subject of fasting in Judaism and in early Christianity, he gave a detailed historical account about the origin of the fasts which the Coptic Church has now, and compared them to the traditions in other churches. Facing the problems many Copts have with the prolonged and austere fasts, the author concluded the book by offering his suggestions for a reform of the Coptic fasts basing it on what he understood from the various traditions and on the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of modern man.

Fasts in Judaism

Most fasts in the Old Testament were voluntary or were related to special circumstances. Examples were the fastings of Moses in Ex. 34:28 and Deut. 9:9, 18, of Elijah in I Kings 19:8, of Daniel in Dan. 9:3 and the fastings ordered by Samuel in I Sam. 7:6, by Saul in I Sam. 14:24, and by Esther in Est. 4:3. The only fast ordered by God was on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29). After the Babylonian exile the Jews fasted four other days in commemoration of national emergencies (Zech. 8:19), while some also continued to fast the day before the feast of Purim started at the time of Esther. By the time of Christ, it became the custom of the pious Jews to fast on Mondays and Thursdays (Luke 18:12). Prolonged fasts were also known (Matt. 3:4, Luke 2:37).

Fasts in the Early Church

Adam disobeyed God in order to satisfy his passion for food. Christ, the New Adam, came to treat this and started his royal road by fasting, "Man shall not live by

bread alone" (Matt. 4:4). He taught His disciples about fasting (Matt. 6:16-18; Mark 2:18-20). Fasting was a common practice in the early years of the Church (Acts 10:35; 13:2, 3; 14:23; I Cor. 6:5; 2 Cor. 11:27).

The early Christians did not regard fasting as well as all other ascetic disciplines as aims in themselves but as means on our way toward full communion with God. Bodily fasts alone are never enough unless combined with other spiritual practices,

- "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" (Is. 58:6 & 7).
- "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God . . ." (Joel 2:12, 13).
- And let us not believe that the external fast from visible food alone can possibly be sufficient for perfection of heart and purity of body unless with it there has been united a fast of the soul. For the soul also has its foods which are harmful, fattened on which, even without superfluity of meats, it is involved in a downfall of wantonness, slander . . . envy . . . vainglory . . . lust . . . If we abstain from these in a most holy fast, our observance of the bodily fast will be both useful and profitable. For labor of the flesh, when joined with contrition of the spirit, will produce a sacrifice that is most acceptable to God, and a worthy shrine of holiness in the pure and undefiled inmost chambers of the heart. But if, while fasting as far as the body is concerned, we are entangled in the most dangerous vices of the soul, our humiliation of the flesh will do us no good whatever, while the most precious part of us is defiled . . . For it is not so much the corruptible flesh as the clean heart which is made a shrine of God and a temple of the Holy Spirit. We ought therefore, whenever the outward man fasts, to restrain the inner man as well . . . in order to present it pure before God that it may be worthy to receive Christ . . ." (St. John Cassian: Institutes; V:21).
- All strife against sin and its desires is to be preceded by the labor of fasting, especially if one is struggling against inward sin. (St. Isaac the Syrian).

Rules for Fasting in the Early Church

The only fasts mentioned in the Didascalia¹ were those of Lent, the fast after Pentecost (known later as the Apostles' fast) and the fast of Wednesdays and Fridays.

The Church historians Socrates (5:22) and Sozomen (7:19) noticed a diversity of customs in the churches regarding the observation of fasts. Churches disagreed about the manner of abstinence from food, the types of food they ate in the fast, the number of fast days and the date they started Lent.

Eusebius quoted a letter of St. Irenaeus concerning the difference in the number of days various churches fasted before Easter (Church History; V:24:12).

Fasts of the Coptic Church

(1) Great Lent.

This 55 day fast is the traditional fast of the forty days (commemorating our Lord's fast in the wilderness) to which has been added a preparation week, and the Holy Week.

The fast of the forty days (Quadragesima) has been mentioned by many early Church Fathers including Origen, St. Hippolytus, St. Athanasius and St. Basil and several ancient Church canons (Apostolic Canons:69, Didascalia:10, Canons of Laodicea:50).

this review, what he wrote in Letter VI (Easter of 334 A.D.) is very essential,

"We begin the fast of forty days on the first day of Barmahat (February 25); and having prolonged it till the fifth of Barmuda (March 31), suspending it upon the Sundays and the Saturdays preceding them, we then begin again on the holy days of Pascha, on the sixth of Barmuda (April 1) and cease on the eleventh of the same month (April 6) late in the evening of Saturday, whence dawns on us the holy Sunday, on the twelfth of Barmuda (April 7), which extends its beams with unobscured grace to all the seven weeks of the holy Pentecost."

It is clear that at the time of St. Athanasius, the Coptic Church had a forty day fast for lent and that included the holy week; there was no abstinence on Saturdays and Sundays, which were the days when the Divine Liturgy was offered.²

(2) Wednesday and Friday Fast

Except for the fifty days following Easter, which have been called "*the holy feast of Pentecost*" (in the seventh festal letter of St. Athanasius) fasting is observed on Wednesdays and Fridays. This fast has been mentioned by the Didache (8:1) and by the early Church Fathers. St. Peter, 17th Pope of Alexandria and martyr, states the reason for the fast, in his 15th canon,

"Wednesday is to be fasted because then the Jews conspired to betray Jesus; Friday, because he then suffered for us."

(3) Christmas Lent.

Epiphany, or the feast of "manifestation of our Lord" has been known in the Eastern churches since the second century. Observation of Christmas Day started in the West about the end of the third century. It was accepted by the Eastern churches about a century later, and was adopted in Alexandria somewhere about A.D. 430³.

The only fast mentioned by the Church Fathers before Epiphany and Christmas was a one day fast of preparation called the Parameno.

A 43 day fast before Christmas in the Coptic Church first appeared in the eleventh century in the canons of Abba Christodolos. The author assumed that this Patriarch was responsible for adopting this fast into the Coptic Church and that he took it from the Byzantine churches.

(4) Fast of the Apostles.

The Didascalia ordered a fast for one week starting one week after Pentecost. The canons of the 66th Coptic Patriarch, Pope Christodolos (1047-1078 A.D.) included in this fast all the days between the Pentecost and the feast of the martyrdom of St. Paul and St. Peter the Apostles (July 12). The fast of the Apostles thus varies in length between 15 and 49 days.

(5) Fast of Nineveh.

The Coptic Church observes a strict three day fast two weeks before great lent. This fast, which commemorates the fasting of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5-8) was introduced to the Church by its 62nd patriarch, Pope Ephraem (976-979) who was of Syrian origin.

(6) The fast of the Virgin

A 15 day fast before the feast of Assumption of the Body of Virgin Mary is of relatively recent origin in the Coptic Church. None of the historians mentioned it before the thirteenth century, and it does not have strict rules for its observation. However it is one of the most popular fasts at present.

Can the Coptic Fasts be reformed?

The Coptic Church rules now require fasting days that amount to about two thirds of the year. During the fast there should be complete abstinence till the ninth hour (3 P.M.). This is extended till sunset in Lent, and in the fast of Nineveh and the Parameno. Only a strict vegetarian diet is allowed after that in these three fasts. For other fasts seafoods are also allowed.

A reform of the Coptic fasts was ordered in 1602 A.D. by Abba Ghabrial (Gabriel) VIII. He cancelled the fast of Nineveh, made the Virgin's fast voluntary, and reduced the Christmas fast to four weeks and the Apostles' fast to two weeks. Although widely accepted by the Church at the time, the reform of Abba Ghabrial did not survive long.

There was another trial to reduce the fasts at the time of Pope Yousab II (1946-1956 A.D.), but the Coptic Synod could not reach an agreement about it.

Pope Kyrillos VI attended the Council of Oriental Orthodox Churches at Addis Ababa in 1965 which recommended among its decisions,

"Our churches should take effective and urgent measures, in order to give the people the opportunity to participate in the Church life. Regulations of fasts may be

revised, also the number of fasting days. The faithful should be taught the spiritual values, behind these practices in order that the people may practice them with depth and understanding."

Looking at the adverse effects of the regulations that require of the faithful prolonged and strict fasts, Father Kyrillos called for drastic reductions in most fasts regarding their length and period of abstinence and for more liberty in the foods allowed. He has a point in his call for sticking to the fasts of the early Church (i.e. the forty days of Lent, the fast of Wednesdays and Fridays and one week after Pentecost). But we cannot accept his view that Christmas lent and the Apostles' fast were started by Abba Christodolos in the eleventh century. The fact that they were mentioned in his canons can only mean that they were established fasts at his time. More historical research is needed in this. We also cannot endorse his idea of adopting regulations of other churches which are contrary to the Tradition as observed in the Coptic church. His call for fasting in the last ten days of Pentecost and for kneeling on these days is very absurd and the evidences he gives for this are unconvincing. Abbot Theonas was standing on firm ground when he faced the same problem in the fourth century and we can recall now his same words as mentioned in Cassian's Conferences,

"These ten days are to be kept with equal solemnity and joy as the previous forty. And the tradition about this festival, transmitted to us by Apostolic men, should be kept with the same uniformity. For therefore on those days they do not bow their knees in prayer, because the bending of the knees is a sign of penitence and mourning. During these days we observe in all things the same solemnities as on Sunday in which, according to the teaching of our predecessors, men ought not to fast nor to bow the knee, out of reverence for the Lord's Resurrection."⁴

In conclusion, we think that although a reform of some fasts may be necessary, more serious research is needed before any such action can be taken. Meanwhile the problems faced by the author and by many priests and spiritual directors can be solved on the pastoral level. Fasting is still a spiritual means of grace and not a rigid law to be enforced. There is nothing in the Tradition of the Church that compels the growing child, the pregnant woman, the nursing mother, the sick, the malnourished, or those on restricted diets to fast. Any confessor should know how to adapt the fasts to the spiritual needs of the people and to their social conditions.

References and Notes

- 1 For a review of the history and contents of The Didascalia, or the Teachings of the Apostles, see Coptic Church Review: Vol. 2, No. 3, P. 119.
2. "On Saturdays and Sundays the spiritual sacrifice is offered." (The canonical answers of St. Timothy of Alexandria (22nd patriarch): 13 - in NPNF, second series, Vol. XIV, P. 613.
3. For more details about the history of Epiphany and Christmas, see Coptic Church Review: Vol. 1, No. 4, P. 151.
4. Cassian's Conferences:XXI:21 (NPNF, Second series, Volume XI, P 511)

BOOK REVIEWS

Eerdmans' Handbook to the World's Religions

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans; 1982. Pp. 448. Hardcover, \$21.95.

This newest reference handbook is a comprehensive, clear and stimulating introduction to the world's religions, past and present.

The first part of the book serves as an introduction to the subject of religion in general. It deals with its various definitions, origin of religious practices, the development of religion and the major figures in religious studies.

A section on ancient religions deals with the religion of the Aztecs and Incas in America as early as 1200 B.C., and the religions of the ancient empires in Sumer, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. It includes also chapters on the religions in Northern Europe and Central Asia and the Canaanite religion. This section is of more than historical interest, because some of the modern discoveries given throw light upon the study of the Old Testament. As an example, among the Babylonians the priests were mostly of the royal family. So, "when religion becomes a department of the government, a seeker after the city of God, like Abraham, has no alternative but to leave. The Bible pictures Abraham as a man who abandoned the city-state religion of Ur to follow and serve God." The work of Elijah gets more meaning to us when we know that the popular Canaanite God Baal had control over rain but was powerless against the prophet of Yahweh (I Kings 18). A study of a great religious movement in the sixth century B.C. shows a revolt against the corrupt priesthood of the ancient world, and the appearance of several great religions (including Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism). This movement was probably influenced by the Jewish prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

The section dealing with the living religions discusses beside the known religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam) the Primal religions of the tribal groups that have no literary tradition. Judaism is discussed beyond the Old Testament, with chapters dealing with its development and influence and with life in a Jewish family. In discussing the history of Islam in the last century, the book observes "a distinct retreat from the traditional Islamic positions" because of contact with the modern world, and that it is doubtful that any fanatical resurgence of fundamentalism will be able to succeed. Teachings like the doctrine of 'holy war', death penalty for apostates,

and punishing offenders by stoning, flogging or amputation of the hand are inconsistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international relations.

A section dealing with Christianity as the fulfillment of religion has tried the impossible task of introducing in a short space its beliefs, worship, history and future in view of today's competing ideologies and modern religious syncretism.

We feel that this well illustrated book with its numerous charts and maps and a special 50 page Rapid Fact-finder makes a good reference for the general reader.

COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

INDEX OF VOLUME III

- No. 1: p. 1-48 No. 2: p. 49-88 No. 3: p. 89-128 No. 4: p. 129-168
- Main articles are indicated by **boldface** page numbers.

St. Agatnon 119 **A**
 Agpeya **124**
 St. Alexander 53
 St. Alonis 95
 St. Ambrose 57, 60, 67, 68, 84, 85
 St. Apollo 44, 97
 Apostles' Fast 157, 159
 St. Arsenius 94, 95, 98, 119
 Artides of Athens 51
 Asceticism 22, 93, 94, 95
 Assumption: *See feast*
 St. Asterius 140
 St. Athanasius the Great **4**, 51, 53, 86, 92, 139, 146, 158
 St. Augustine 37, 41, 59, **65**, 141
 St. Augustine in search of God **65**
 The Practical Method in the Search of God **70**
 The Story of Monica and her Son Augustine **84**

B
 Baptism 139, 140
 St. Basil 121, 145
 Bible: *See Scripture*
 St. Bishoi 98
 Book Reviews
 The Agpeya **124**

Bamberger, J., OCSO: *Evagrius*
Broome, C. J.: The Asceticism
Standard Bible Encyclopedia **86**
 Msgr. Cristiani, L.: *The Story of*
Monica and her son Augustine **84**
Eerdmans' Handbook to the World's
Religions **161**
 Goppelt, L.: *Theology of the New*
Testament **45**
 Ishak, F. M., Ph.D.: *Coptologia* **86**
 Maloney, G., S.J.: *Intoxicated with*
God **123**
 McGuckin, Paul, CP: *Symeon the*
New Theologian **125**
 Ward, Benedicta, SLG: *The Lives of*
the Desert Fathers **43**
 The Brethren of the Lord **28**

C
 Calendar of fasts and feasts **132**
 Cassian's Conferences 95, **100**, **105**, **110**, 156, 160
 Christodolos, Pope 159
 St. Chronius 100
Church
 The Cry of a Persecuted Church **4**
Church Fathers, Lives of
 St. Augustine in search of God **65**
 St. Macarius of Egypt **18**

- The Practical Method in the Search of God **70**
See also Desert Fathers,
and also: Ambrose, Antony
Church Fathers, Writings of
 St. Macarius of Egypt **26**
See also Ambrose, Artides, Asterius,
 Athanasius, Augustine, Cyril,
 Gregory, Hippolytus, Ignatius,
 Irenaeus, James, John Chrysostom,
 Justin, Proclus, Tertullian, Theodo-
 sius, Thomas.
and also Desert Fathers
 Church History
 History of the Coptic Patriarchs **153**
See also under Persecution
 Church Year *See* Liturgical cycle
 Circumcision, Feast of **135**
 Copts **86**
See also under Church and under
 Persecution
 Coptologia **86**
 The Cry of a Persecuted Church **4**
Currents in Coptic Church Studies
 Fr. Bishoi Kamel: *The Voyage to*
Canaan **78**
 Fr. Kyrillos Kyrillos: *Our Fasts*
between the Past and Present **156**
 Fr. Manasseh Youhanna: *Jesus the*
Crucified **34**
 H.H. Pope Shenouda III: *Life of*
Silence in St. Isaac of Nineveh **117**
 Cyril, IV, Pope **154**
 St. Cyril of Alexandria **58, 139**
 St. Cyril of Jerusalem **53**
- D**
- Desert Fathers*
 St. Aio **20**
 St. Isaiah **20**
 St. Macarius of Alexandria **21**
- St. Moses **21**
 Mysticism of the Desert Fathers **114**
 St. Paphnatus **26**
 Abbot Peter **22**
 St. Sisoës **24, 93, 98**
See also: Abhila, Alonis, Apollo,
 Arsenius, Bishoi, Didymus, Eva-
 grius, Isaac, John of Lycopolis,
 Macarius, Nestor, Nilus,
 Pachomius, Philoxenus, Silvanos,
 Theonas, Zosimas.
 Didascalia **157, 158, 159**
 St. Didymus **44**
 St. Dimiana **142**
 St. Domedius **97**
- E**
- Ecumenism*
 A Pope in Exile **91**
 St. Ephraem **52, 53, 57**
 Ephraem, Pope **159**
 Eve **51, 52**
 Eucharist **14, 97**
 Evagrius **96, 97, 98, 121, 125**
- F**
- Fast*
 Christmas Lent **158, 159**
 Fast of the Apostles **157, 159**
 Fast of Nineveh **159**
 Fast of the Virgin **159**
 Fast of Wednesday and Friday **157,**
158
 Our Fasts between Past and Present
156
See also: Lent
 Feast of Assumption of the Body of
 Virgin Mary **61**
 Feast of Circumcision of our Lord **135**
- G**
- St. George the Egyptian **75**

Ghabrial VIII, Pope 159
 St. Gregory of Nyssa 59, 140, **145**
 St. Gregory the Theologian 121, 146
 St. Gregory the Wonder worker 58

H

St. Hippolytus 55, 158
 History of the Coptic Patriarchs **153**
 Holy Thursday **14**

I

St. Ignatius 51
 Interpretation of Scripture **110**
 Intoxicated with God **123**
 St. Irenaeus 51, 57, 158
 St. Issac of Cellia **100, 105**
 St. Isaac of Nineveh (the Syrian) 93,
 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, **117**, 122, 157

J

St. James, the brother of the Lord 31
 St. James of Serugh 35, 36, 38, 40
 Jesus the Crucified **34**
 Jesus Prayer 77
 St. John Chrysostom 58, 140, 146
 St. John Climacus 94, 122, 125
 St. John of Lycopolis 44
 St. John Saba 93, 95, **133**
 St. Judas (Jude), the brother of the
 Lord 32
 St. Justin Martyr 51, 140

K

Kyrillos VI, Pope 158

L

Last Supper: *See Eucharist*
 Lent 157
 Message of 7
 The Journey of 9
 A Life of Prayer **93**

The Lord's Prayer **100**
 Life of Silence **117**
Liturgical Cycle
 Calendar of fasts and feasts **132**
 Feast of Circumcision **135**
 Feasts of Virgin Mary **61**
 Holy Thursday **14**
 Lent 7, 9, 158
See also fast
 Liturgy *See Eucharist*
 Love 21, 145

M

St. Macarius of Alexandria 121
 St. Macarius of Egypt **18**
 St. Macarius, homilies of **123**
 St. Macrina 145
 Manichaeans 65, 66, 67
Martyrs
 St. Dimiana **142**
 St. George the Egyptian 75
 St. Mary of Egypt 97
 St. Maximus 97
 A Meditation on the Life of Christ **133**
 St. Melania 121
 Messalianism 123
 A Metaphysical Apprehension **114**
Monastery
 Al-Baramous 19
 St. Dimiana 144
 St. Monica 65, **84**
 Mysticism **114**
*See also under Prayer and Song of
 Songs*

N

Neoplatonism 67
 St. Nestor the Great **110**
 A New Martyr: St. George the Egyp-
 tian 75
 St. Nilus of Sinai 98
 Nitria 44

O

Origen 121, 146, 158

P

St. Pachomius 96

Persecution: 84, 85

The Cry of a Persecuted Church **4**

History of the Coptic Patriarchs **153**

Persecution of the Coptic Church
130

A Pope in Exile **91**

See also under Martyrs
St. Philoxenus 122

Plato 74

Popes of Alexandria (The number is that of the succession from St. Mark; for references see under the name of each pope.)

Alexander (19)

Athanasius (20)

Christodolos (66)

Cyril I (24)

Cyril IV (110)

Cyril (Kyrillos) VI (116)

Ephraem (62)

Ghabrial VIII (97)

Peter (17)

Shenouda III (117)

Simon (42)

Theophilus (23)

Timothy (22)

Yousab II (115)

The Practical Method in the Search of
God **70**

Pragmatism 74

St. Proclus of Constantinople 57

Prayer

The Agpeya **124**

Evagrius Ponticus **121**

A Life of Prayer **93**

The Lord's Prayer **100**

Unceasing Prayer **105**

Pseudo-Dionysius 97, 122

Purity of Heart 95

R

Religions **161**

Rule of St. Pachomius 96

S

Sacrament *See Baptism and Eucharist*
the Song of Songs **145**

Saint Mary:

Saint Mary in the Writings of the
Church Fathers **51**

See also Virgin Mary

Saints

St. Dimiana **142**

St. George the Egyptian **75**

*See also Church Fathers, Desert Fa-
thers, Martyrs, Popes
and also Basil, Gregory, Melania,
Monica, Symeon*

Scripture 96, 97

Book of Exodus **78**

The Brethren of the Lord **28**

Jesus the Crucified **34**

The Journey of Lent **9**

The International Standard Bible En-
cyclopedia **86**

Interpretation of **110**

Song of Songs **145**

Theology of the New Testament **45**

Virginity of St. Mary 55, 56

The Voyage to Canaan **78**

Shenouda III, Pope 4, **91**, 130, 131,
144, 154

St. Silvanos 98

St. Simon, brother of the Lord 32

Simon, Pope 154

St. Sisoës 93
 Solitude 20
 Song of Songs, Commentary on **145**
 St. Symeon the New Theologian **125**
Spiritual life
 Intoxicated with God **123**
 Life of Silence in St. Isaac of Nineveh
 117
 The Practical Method **70**
 The Voyage to Canaan **78**
 See also under Lent, Prayer, Song of
 Songs
 The Story of Monica and her son Augu-
 stine **84**

T

Tertullian 52
 St. Theodosius of Ancyra 58
 St. Theonas 159
 St. Theophilus of Alexandria 100
 Theotokia 55, 60
 Theotokos 53
 St. Thomas a Kempis 42, 95, 96
 Timothy, Pope 160

U

Unceasing Prayer 105

V

Virgin Mary
 The Brethren of the Lord **38**
 Feast of Assumption **61**
 St. Mary and Christ 53
 St. Mary and Eve 52
 St. Mary in the Writings of the Church
 Fathers **51**
 St. Mary the Mother of God 53
 Virginity of St. Mary **54, 51**
 The Voyage to Canaan **78**

Y

Yousab II, Pope 159

Z

St. Zosimas 97

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

Articles: The Journal invites submission of articles on biblical, liturgical, patristic or spiritual topics.

Special Issues: We are planning for special issues on:

Saint Athanasius the Great

Saint Cyril of Alexandria

The Coptic Liturgy

We welcome scholarly and general articles on these or related subjects, as well as translations from the original languages.

Special Sections: Contributors to the sections of *Book Reviews* and *Currents in Coptic Church Studies* are advised to contact the editor before submitting their articles. Of the extensive new literature, we only choose for review books of lasting spiritual benefit for the reader.

Manuscripts are preferred to be typed double spaced (including references and footnotes)

All authors are expected to hear from us within one month of the receipt of their articles. Unpublished material is returned only if requested.

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

Subscription Price: U.S.: \$7.00. Canada: \$8.00. Other countries: \$10.00 a year.

Subscription is for one year (four issues). Unless otherwise stated, it starts from the current issue. However, new subscribers are advised to start by the spring issue to get the full benefit of the annual index which appears at the end of the year.

Previous Issues: \$2.00 per copy (while a supply lasts).

Renewals: Early renewal is appreciated, you do not have to wait for an expiration notice. Notices are sent after you receive your last issue. Failure or delay of renewal will result in interruption or delay of the subsequent issue.

Change of address requires six weeks notice.

SUBSCRIPTION AND BUSINESS ADDRESS: EDITORIAL ADDRESS:

Society of Coptic Church Studies

P.O. Box 714

E. Brunswick, NJ 08816

Coptic Church Review

P.O. Box 1113

Lebanon, PA 17042



SAINT DIMIANA AND THE FORTY VIRGIN MARTYRS