



Dear Friend,

Confinement to time is a dreadful danger threatening man's life.

It means that man does not care but for what is temporal, materialistic or earthly. This is really awesome, for man is essentially spiritual, eternal and heavenly.

Therefore, worldly concerns alone throw man and humanity down to earth as man is essentially a divine being, a soul originated from the Almighty, placed temporarily in the earth, left to dust and matter. But soon man will restore his heavenly, divine and spiritual nature in an everlasting Kingdom.

Hence, any trial to confine man to time is not but an awesome suppression of man's eternal potentialities. Similarly, focusing on what is earthly alone is burial to the eternal spirit within man. Though man has a body moving in the earth, and lives on tangible food produced by the earth, yet he has an everlasting spirit that looks forward to the heavenly, surpassing time and matter, towering up towards divinity and eternity.

No barrier, no contradiction :

Our concern for eternity is never to mean that we are to neglect our bodies, worldly affairs, history and the issues of human injustices whether domestic or social. On the contrary, revealing man's authentic essence as a holy breath that surpasses its humanity and materialism, and recognizes the Lord as the real Origin and heaven as the homeland, makes out of him not only a mere human being but a true man: an image of God; a divine man; heavenly in nature; surpassing all temporal ambitions; beneficent as God; self-sacrificing; and giver of unlimited practical love. Moreover, man's care for eternity shines with special light on his life, giving it meaning and value, as he recognizes his position as a representative of heaven among earth dwellers, as Christ's messenger of love in a world missing love.

Time is entirely contained into eternity, no barrier, no contradiction but sanctification, sublimity and revival. Therefore, by caring for the heavenly Kingdom we serve ourselves, our beloved ones and the world as a whole. The Kingdom is not a far off future: "*The Kingdom of God is within you*" (Lk 17:21). The Kingdom begins in heart, gradually grows and eventually leads to eternity an endless eternity for we will be in God.

The present proceeds from the future :

There is a wrong concept that the future is the outcome of the present: "**What is sown today shall be reaped tomorrow**". In fact, this concept contradicts reality, for man actually takes present steps in light of certain attitudes in the future. The future exists in man's minds as an option, a direction, a vision and a hope. While the present is successive steps towards achieving this hope. Having a prospect for the future is the only proper means towards a promising future and a pleasant and a happy present.

Future & another future :

There is surely a great difference between planning for temporal future and planning for eternal future. Temporal future is confined to time. It deprives man from his right in eternity and fellowship in divine nature. On the other hand, eternal future elevates man up to his real origin as an image of God, as a son of heaven living in it, in a unity with the Everlasting God.

Dear Friend,

You are not to blame when you are concerned with your study, artistic faculties or social and administrative talents and skills which can help you to establish a happy family self-sufficed financially. A young man / young woman is expected to care for all these matters. What is dangerous is to lose your eternity, to be confined to time, choked up to death into the dust of earth. We are rather to care for eternity and immortality, not to focus only on worldly affairs ***“For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Mt 16:26).***

Ants & cockroaches :

There is a nice simile to differentiate between communities of ants and that of cockroaches. Having a prospect for the future, ants store food. This outlook generates a plan for the present accompanied by hard work. While cockroaches, short-sighted as they are, have no such outlook. This may form the major difference between advanced and underdeveloped countries: it is FUTUROLOGY.

The point is to plan for the future in its wider and immortal concept, not only in the temporal and narrow one.

Now, we come to the Milestones of Kingdom Way out of which seven will be handled:

- 1- Repentance.
- 2- Worship.
- 3- Fellowship.
- 4- The Word.
- 5- Testimony.
- 6- Diakonia.
- 7- Advent.

Bishop Moussa



1 REPENTANCE

Dear Friend,

Repentance is the first step in the Kingdom way. Christian repentance denotes a shift in the way of thinking, which leads, through Christ's grace, to a change in one's whole being.

✿ As sin starts with thought!

✿ Repentance also starts with thought!

A purely intellectual dialogue occurs between Eve and the Serpent **"Has God indeed said", "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen 3:1)** This is a captious question, for the Serpent is acknowledged with God's commandment and by posing such a question he designs at charging Eve's mind with doubts. Moreover, he also knows that God has only prevented Eve from eating of one specific tree, not from all the trees. Then, at what this sophism aims?

Eve answers correctly, declaring the unfortunate end **"You shall surely die"** as a wage for eating from **"the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:17)**, **"You will not Die"** comes the Serpent's reply, as if God has lied to Eve. God forbid!



As knowing Eve's confidence placed in God and His genuine words, the Serpent starts talking delicately and in a swindle way: **"For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:5)** Doubts start to creep into Eve's mind hand in hand with corruption capturing all her senses: **"the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to eyes"**. She has fallen and her fall is followed by that of Adam's.

Hence, repentance stands for a **"new thought"** best representative of it is the Prodigal Son who **"Came to himself" (Lk 15:17)** and said **"How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" (Lk 15:17)**. He thought, decided and carried out.

Repentance is simply a spiritual and intellectual consciousness enlightened by the Holy Spirit Who through the light of God's word-reproaches us for our sins, leading us to Christ's cross, His open heart and satiating home. This can be supported by our punctual honest confession before the spiritual father who provides daily guidance towards the media of God's grace and solving problems.

Repentance as a resurrection :

St. Paul's appeal echoes in our ears, **"Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" (Eph 5:14)**. Sin is a **"grave"** that entraps man into the fists of death **"for the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23)**.

In the Old Testament, the lust has led to death. As a response to the Israelite's strong craving for meat, God sent them quails from the sea **"While the meat was yet between their teeth.. The Lord smote the people with a very great plague. Therefore the name of that place was called kibroth – hattaeva" (which means graves of lust)**.

That is why later in Ezekiel, the Lord promised the Israelite saying, **"Behold, O My people, I will open your graves... I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live" (Ezek 37:12-14)**.

Hence, repentance stands for **"the first resurrection"**, **"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection! over such the second death has no power" (Rev 20:5)**.

Repentance as a regeneration :

On coming back to the Father's heart and home, Christ's blood, and the believer's tears of repentance wash him of the filth of sin.

He is dressed in “**the first vestment of divine piety**” to cover his nakedness and conceal his sins as an atonement offered by the Lord on behalf of man. Notice that the Arabic term Kuffarra (**atonement**) = cover for the Lord covers us and conceals our sins. Then, the repentant reigns in the Kingdom with a ring in his finger that represents a new covenant of love. He puts on “**shoes**” of peace and holiness as starting to lead a pure life in which he is satiated by “**fats**” the Holy Body, and lives in a fellowship with the saints and the community of God's house. It is a comprehensive renewal that includes one's whole life, one's whole entity, time and eternity, man and humanity.

How can my body share in repentance?

Church tradition magnificently refers to repentance, conveying all its significance, bearing even its Coptic name the metania (**Kneel**).

The repentant or the struggler daily performs the metania according to a spiritual system under the spiritual father's direction. Except for Saturdays, Sundays, Eastertide and holy feasts, the metania are performed. In them, the worshipper beats his chest regretting his sins, and with hands grasped, with his front to the ground, he kneels before God in humiliation and submission. Then, he stands up, as if arising from the dead, and recites in each metania “**Have mercy on me, Jesus Christ my Lord**” in order to be gratified by the life - giving Lord.

- ✿ Shall we- you and me renew our repentance?
- ✿ Shall we shortly confess?
- ✿ Shall we perform the metania?

2 WORSHIP

Besides being a conscious response to the Lord's commandment, "*Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation*" (Mt 26:41), worship is an essential character of Orthodox life whose church is characterized by:

1- Devotional character :

Orthodox worship fundamentally aims at consecrating the heart to Christ, devoting all man's potential energies of love to the Lord - their original source - by Whom they are sanctified and used for the glory of His holy name as well as for man's salvation, happiness and growth, and for the expansion of Kingdom work and diakonia. Hence, worship in our church extends and varies:

a- Eucharist :

The Lord is the core of the liturgy, with Him we are in unity during liturgy celebration, and of His immaculate and Holy Body and Blood we communicate, His Holy Spirit flows and His divine grace is poured inside us. In partaking in the liturgy, especially when participating in its service, haven't you been overcome by a feeling that you were in heaven? Haven't you observe that church used to assemble at evenings for Vespers Raising of Incense, which is followed by mid - Night Psalms?

Then "**the door is closed**" for the Bridegroom has already come, to whom we start praising till morning. After that the liturgy is celebrated and eventually we communicate Him into our depths, as sanctity and redemption, as satiety and comfort.

b- Psalms :

Through the canonical hours, we are united to the Lord all the day long. We rise with Him in Matins, receiving His Holy spirit at the Third Hour, sharing His crucifixion passions at the Sixth Hour, supplicating for the death of our carnal parts with His own death at the Ninth Hour. Then, we practice self - introspection with the taking down of His body from the Cross in Vespers, with Him our sins are buried in grave when praying Compline. His advent we await with the Mid-Night sleep.

It is a consecrative union with the Lord all the day long, through selected psalms, passages from the Gospel, and gratifying reverent petitions.

c- Constant Prayer :

As hearing David's "*How I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day*" (Ps 119:97), church holds to practicing constant silent prayers. We daily recite short prayers hundreds of times, for example "**Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, the sinner!**", or "**Be pleased, O God, to deliver me! O Lord make haste to help me!**" Such prayers are said by the holy fathers to equal a "**dozen host of angels**" besides their effectiveness in bestowing inner peace on man's life. Have you experienced these types of prayer my dear friend?

d- Spontaneous Prayer :

It provides a chance for the soul to practice its state as it is, through simple direct and unsophisticated words, which may reflect full humility, regret for past transgressions, submission in beseeching, or express love, joy, delight in the Lord, or otherwise recite a petition for a needy person.

2- Communal Character :

The Greek term “**liturgia**” is employed as congregation worship, provided that the word congregation here denotes the community of believers in Christ, which includes both the earthly and heavenly dwellers. It is a community extending through time and place, the visible and invisible, strugglers and conquerors.

Moreover, even earthly dwellers cannot celebrate a liturgy but in a group (**priest + deacon + congregation**), as it is not permitted for any individual to celebrate the liturgy alone by himself.

Even the liturgy anthems and hymns are predominated by a communal feeling:

✱ “**Through the intercession of the Mother of God... O Lord grant us the forgiveness of our sins**”.

✱ “**Amen, Amen Amen, Your death, O Lord, do we preach!**”.

✱ “**We praise You, we bless You, we thank you, O Lord, and we supplicate You, O our God**”.

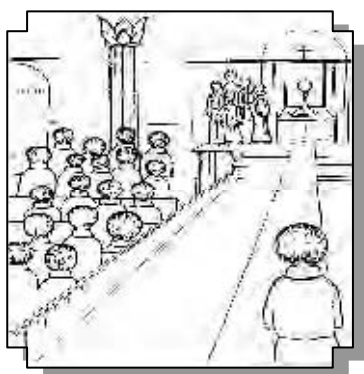
It is a feeling of one community united by the Spirit, a feeling of one body for we are “*members one of another*” (Rom 12:5).

“*The body is one and has many members*” (1Cor 12:12).

3- Ritual Character :

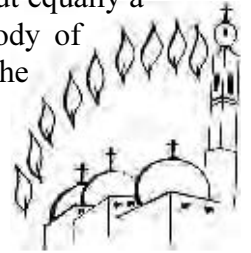
Orthodox worship involves rituals, (**ritual = system**) “*Let all things be done decently and in order*” (1Cor 14:40). Therefore, the same liturgy is celebrated everywhere as well as the same anthems and daily readings of Kutamurs (**Kuta = according, murs = share, i.e every day has its share of planned, well-studied and constructive readings**). Moreover, feasts, fasts and different occasions, such as the Holy Week and the Praise of Kiahk, all have one specific system and ritual, in Egypt as it is in America and Australia: one organized church. The ritual itself has its own spiritual implications, and its significance in explaining different concepts and meanings, in addition to its efficiency in controlling community to which the One Working Spirit gives one rhythm of one body, for the glory of Christ - its Head.

Let’s experience Orthodox worship with all its different satiating aspects to devote our life to the Lord, in order that our hearts rejoice with Christ, be sanctified by the Spirit, and gratified by the community of believers, interceding the triumphant heavenly hosts.



3 FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship is one of the most important milestones of Kingdom way. The Coptic word Ekkelhcia (**church**) means a community. Hence, fellowship not only represents an urgent need but equally a natural feature of church life. The church is the embodiment of the mysterious body of Christ: its head is Christ Himself while its parts are the Lord's believers throughout the ages. The believers include those who departed triumphantly to heaven forming the Invisible Church, or the Triumphant Part and those who still live on earth forming the Visible Church, or the Struggling Part, to whom will be added those who are to be born yet exist from the beginning in our loving God's mind and in His compassionate heart.



Hence, fellowship is a natural expression of this organic unity between parts of one body.

The Apostles & Fellowship :

At the beginning of Christianity, the apostles placed fellowship as a basic principle and a milestone of church life. St Luke reflects, *“They continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Act 2:42). “Now all who believed were together and had all things in common, and sold their possession and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need” (Act 2:44,45).*

Fellowship here stands for :

- 1- An everyday life practiced regularly.
- 2- One of the four basic elements of the church.
- 3- Not merely pure emotions, but a concrete fact, as the rich gives the needy not from his own hand but from that of the Church, the compassionate mother, Christ's bride.

A story :

A poor Christian was once asked:

- Are you happy?

☆ Very happy!

- How come! Aren't you poor?!

☆ In my heart lies an infinite treasure: faith in Christ, and in heaven another awaits me.

- How do you feel being poor yet surrounded by all these rich people? Is it fair?

☆ God's fair and loving. He's recommended me to my rich brethren, some obeyed and others didn't.

- Then you envy them!

☆ Never! I'm richer, *“as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2Cor 6:10).*

- Don't you aspire richness?

☆ No, for *“those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men into destruction and perdition” (1 Tim 6:9).*

- Then, you refuse to be rich!

☆ No, if the Lord wishes, it'll be His gift to which I'll act as a steward.

- You're really strange!

☆ That's true!



Fellowship with the brethren :

How miserable is the egocentric selfish person! For man is social by nature, and is never to have comfort or rest but inside a community; in offering, and in love. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said; **“It is more blessed to give than to receive,” (Act 20:35)** This is not for preaching but for experiencing. Have you experienced the happiness of giving and giving happiness? Our sole task and mission in life is to rejoice in the Lord and make others rejoice in Him. The Lord is love, a pure, generous and sacrificing love.

- ✪ Let’s have a fellowship of love, prayer and diakonia within family!
- ✪ Let’s have the same fellowship with friends!
- ✪ Let it be the same with our compatriots!

Love is always triumphant, it never fails. Beware egocentrism in taking decisions, for most of these decisions will be wrong being based on: limited reason + egocentric desires + one opinion. Rather try to experience fellowship in taking decisions: fellowship with God + others + the spiritual father.

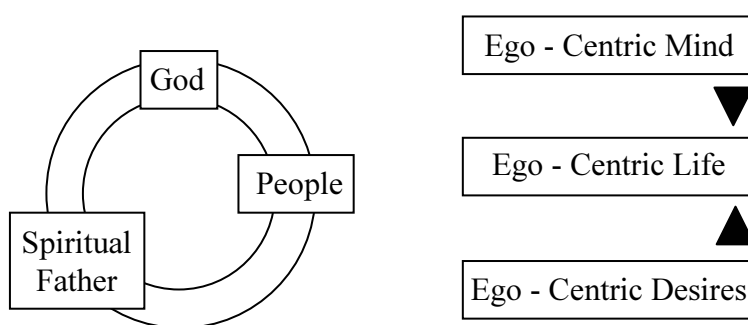
Fellowship with the heavenly beings :

In front of us, the church places the iconostasis on which are hung icons of Christ, the Holy Virgin, John the Baptist, angels, saints... etc. All are looking to us as if appealing to follow them on Kingdom way. Yet how can we do that unless we study their lives to **“follow their faith” (Heb 13:7)**. Hence the Church surrounds us with **“a cloud of witnesses” (Heb 12:1)**, not as mere icons but as presence in person, for our God is **“not God of the dead but of the living”**.

Dear Friend,

- ✪ Do you have a patron saint?
- ✪ Have you experienced this type of fellowship?

I wish you could get into this fellowship for you will see marvels.



4 THE WORD

One of the most important milestones of Kingdom Way is the Word. On this point we have to differentiate between two things:

- 1- **THE WORD WITHIN** : the Self-existent Word, the Second Hypostasis, the Logos, the Divine Wisdom.
- 2- **THE WORD WITHOUT** : the vocal, legible or written word, referring to word when heard or read or in a book.

Therefore, the Word in the first case is male: ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (Jn 1:1,2)***. Here, the Word of God = Logos, while the latter refers to mere utterances explaining something, not referring to the Logos or one of the Hypostases.

Good news :

Preaching the word in church is essential for two reasons:

- ***“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17)***. To believe, man must hear the Bible’s good news. Therefore, no faith comes without preaching Christ-God’s good news, or without ministering the word, or without instructing in different ways. St. Paul the Apostle reflects, ***“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” (Rom 10:14,15)***.
- ***“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos 4:6)***. The word is essential for knowledge, and sound knowledge is essential for salvation. Any deficiency on our side on conveying God’s word to people leads to their destruction.

The importance of preaching the Word :

The importance of preaching the Gospel proceeds from the fact that the good news-the news of salvation through Christ-must reach every soul. People must be acknowledged with the Kingdom Way and its milestones even its obstacles as well as the encouraging elements. They have to know what is required to go through peacefully and safely.

Therefore, church exerts every effort to instruct believers after they are spurred to repent. Preaching and then giving instructions are two complementary and inseparable tasks. In church, the congregation are spurred to repent, to come back to God’s bosom and His open arms. To them, the milestones of the Kingdom Way are revealed and explained which helps towards following a sound spiritual line.

Preaching precedes giving instructions, concerning a believer’s needs. Preaching brings the believer back to the Father’s realm, while the instructions show how to go on. But this is not to deny man’s daily need for preaching and self-exhortation: ***“Exhort one another daily” (Heb 3:13)***, in order not to be lost in a dilemma of hidden and apparent wars, or to be lifeless due to love of sin or spiritual lukewarm ness.



Channels of conveying God's word :

On my wonder: “**How God's words can be conveyed to brethren?**” This is available in numerous channels, out which are:

a- The Vocal Word :

It is preaching the Gospel in spiritual meetings or domestic visits or through individual work with full confidence that God's word “**Shall not return to Me (God) void**” (*Is 55:11*), for workers' preoccupation and duty is to preach.

b- The Audible Word :

The service of cassette records is equally excellent and effective as people can listen to at any time, such as while changing clothes, or having a rest, or driving.. etc. Bear in mind that listening to liturgies, church anthems, sermons and hymns actually sanctifies soul and mind together.

c- The Legible Word :

It is available in spiritual books, pamphlets, leaflets and magazines. It is a vitally important method though contemporary generations abstain from reading, which is a regretful phenomenon the fruits of which will be reaped in forms of spiritual and mental shallowness and in weakness in human creativity in fields of literature, art, culture, and particularly in the religious domain. Therefore, young people should be encouraged to develop their faculty of reading gradually starting with a leaflet, then a magazine, then a booklet, then a book then move to read references. This system of developing the faculty of reading will make young people give up this stagnation of mind resulted from T.V. a stagnation that afflicts all the world mentally, psychologically and spiritually.

As a scientific experiment, turning off T.V proved basic for :

- Consolidating ties between family members.
- Establishing social relationships with other families.
- Promoting the faculty of reading in people.
- Establishing new constructive friendships.



d- The Visual Word :

It is available in video and projector. It is a method of the age, which the church can use constructively in establishing a healthy life for young people. It is a compromising element that can retain balance against the flood of obscene and destructive video films.

BUT...

All this is useless unless being accompanied by the Spirit of God the Word to penetrate into the depths of heart, to make the word of the Gospel, the word of God, “**Living and Powerful and sharper than any two - edged sword piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart**” (*Heb 4:12*).

What a horrible danger that threatens our life if we neglect reading the Bible in a spirit of prayer and need, asking for “**understanding**” which means “**standing under**” the level of God's word, enabling it to examine us, revealing our depths and showing us the way! But those who study the Bible as if it were an ordinary book will be forsaken from both God's Spirit and the power of salvation.

For it is the Bible that studies and examines us. At this point one may wonder “**How to approach God's Word?**” .

How to approach God's word?

The holy Gospel is the extended word of God. When the Holy spirit uttered it through the Apostles, it was meant to have actual "**presence**" and perpetual "**action**", as being the word of the Perpetual Immortal God.

To approach the Gospel, some fundamental conditions are required, so as to benefit from the word, giving it the chance to disclose its mystery and effectiveness: "**The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life**".

○ **SPIRIT** : The word is uttered and written through God's Holy Spirit.

○ **LIFE** : The word gives life to all whoever hear or read it. Blessed are they!

Conditions of approaching the word :

Two basic conditions for reading the Gospel are reflected in the Old Testament: as the Lord demanded of Moses and the people a special condition of sanctification.

a- Personal Sanctification :

That is purification of body + mind + soul + spirit. In short, it is full devotion of heart to God, for sanctification does not mean not to sin, but rather to devote heart to God. It is man's struggle with all his power not to sin, even when sinning, returns soon to the Lord.

b- Observance of the Holiness of the Speaker :

That is to listen in full submission, filled with God's fear.

It is submissive reading "**God speaks, listen in full submission!**" Hence, spiritual struggle and humility before God are two basic conditions to benefit from reading and studying the Gospel. But for every self-conceited person who approaches the Bible with no intention to repent, the Gospel will turn into reproach and condemnation in his life.

However, if this person responds and returns to God, he will benefit from the word of God. But if he proceeds in his intellectual pride, intentional impure way, and indifference, the word will condemn him.

How to read God's word?

Many methods are followed in reading God's word: all are based on spiritual benefit designed at our salvation. Unless I open my mouth and quench my thirst in the barren desert of life, no avail knowing the site of the source of water or analyzing its water concerning quantity, geological origin, source of proceeding, streams... etc. The point is to drink, to quench thirst, then to study. The following are some of the methods:

a- The Personal Method :

It is God's personal message to me. The Gospel is daily opened preferably at the early morning. A chapter is read regularly through which I listen to God's voice as a letter in my mailbox.

His message may be a comforting verse, and encouraging promise, or a miracle stressing God's infinite potentials.

b- The Method of Experience :

The Old Testament reveals God's work for man throughout successive generations. This helps towards acquiring experience, for the Bible is a school of experience. If you read the Old Testament (**I wish you can read three chapters per day to finish the whole Bible once a year**), you will acquire successive experiences:

- Eve's fall due to listening to the Serpent.
- Adam's fall due to his easy surrendering to Eve.
- Father Abraham's triumph under the sole guidance of God.
- Joseph's triumph as determining the situation.
- Samson's and David's falls due to their indifference.
- Solomon's degradation to idolatry as preoccupying himself with lust.

c- The Method of Study :

It is a very rich and gratifying method. You can study a Biblical book per month, with the aid of an exegesis book that provides sound explanation and reveals the spirit of the holy fathers, and their method of comprehending God's word.

This method requires patience, exerting mental effort, and perhaps learning languages both archaic and in-use, holding comparisons between different explanations, drawing tables and recording abridged notes. Yet, it is surely a very gratifying method capable of occupying mind with constructive thoughts and ideas, providing material for diakonia and establishing life on a sound Biblical basis.

If You...

- Read a New Testament chapter per day in a personal method.
- Read three Old Testament chapters to acquire experience,
- Read a Biblical book per month with the aid of an exegesis book,

You will...

- Read the whole Bible once a year,
- Study twelve Biblical books.

How gratifying! The Gospel is a gratifying bread "***Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God***" (Mt 4:3). It is a water that washes, "***Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You***" (Ps 119:11).

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps 119:105).

Let's always remember H.H Pope Shenouda III when saying "**keep the Bible, the Bible keeps you!**".



5 TESTIMONY

“My pledge of perfect love for Lord Jesus Christ cannot be fulfilled unless I shed my blood for Him. I fear your charity lest it prejudice me; rather suffer me to be the food of wild beasts through whom I may attain unto God. I am God’s grain and I am to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts to become my sepulcher that they may leave nothing of my body, that when I am dead I may not be troublesome to any man.. Now I am invisible to the world, I become thus a sacrifice offered to God”
St. Ignatius Theophorus.

On their giving testimony, both living and enlivening, our fathers so bravely faced death that when we contemplate their lives - ashamed of ourselves- we wonder: **“Can we attain unto the Lord as martyrs?”** St. John Chrysostom replies: **“Is crucifixion an only way for martyrdom? If it were so, Job would be denied his crown though his sufferings exceeded that of many martyrs. His sufferings and pains were great enough to include property, children and his own body, moreover, to include humiliation from wife, friends and enemies even from his servant. For all this I would say that Job was a martyr”**.

I’d introduce you - my dear friend - some stands of testimony to introspect ourselves on their light:

Your body :

Struggle - my dear friend - against body and its many wars as a martyr. Deprive it joyfully from the pleasures of sin and food, pommel it to keep vigil and pray, subdue it many times to kneel, raise hands up to heaven and beat chest as a repentant sinner who has come back to the Father’s house. If you do all this, you would be on the way of martyrs. Therefore, St Paul the Apostle appeals to us, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom 12:1)**. **“You were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s”**.

When St. Paul’s slogan is made foremost in our lives, **“Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (1Cor 6:13)**, when we live as true repentants constantly and daily entreating God to grant us His grace, we become **“temples of the Holy Spirit”** sanctified in both body and senses with blessed purity.

Yet attaining this state depends on our honesty, industriousness persistence and keeping alert as well as particular stands in which we witness against body and its lusts whether in our private or public life.

In summer, sometimes we come back from our club-services so exhausted that we can not stand for prayer. In fasts we escape pains of thirst and hunger, moreover, we frequently rebel against the idea of fasting itself and its effectiveness as purifying love sacrifice. We do not want to exhaust ourselves in kneels or beating chest. Let’s start struggling against body offering it up to God as a sanctified sacrifice.

St. Peter introduces us to a way of purity, **“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us, in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin” (1Pet 4:1)**. Let’s follow the example of the Crucified Lord offering Him our bodies slaughtered upon the cross of love, with an iron will for purity.

Before your friends :

A Secondary school young man suffers pressures whether from school and street atmosphere or from the group of friends with whom he has already established strong relationships. An adolescent is easily drifted by such group, particularly, if he senses some sort of inferiority due to a defect whether

congenital, social or psychological or rather due to failure in study. Hence, he compensates for his defect through trifling whims either on the path of sin, profanity and indifference or by imitating those who attained long goals in sin.

Fascinated by their personality, he starts to acquire deeply - rooted habits that turn to destroy his life, such as: lustful habits, smoking, perverse conduct at streets, shameful hair style and dressing fashion... etc.

Starting a new life of repentance, this young man is immediately encountered by his old group and their perverse ways. He finds it difficult from the beginning to witness for his new way. But if he successfully gets through this exam, persisting and insisting on Christ's way, the young man would be granted great blessing in every sphere. He will surely attain triumph over sin, inner peace, and spiritual growth in an integral personality, psychologically, socially and spiritually.

On the other hand, a hesitant young man is coward before friends. His retreating intention is always prepared for escape. Terrified from criticism and ridicule, he is diffident to declare his new intentions; worse still, he flatters on account of Christ. Such a young man will not but fall back if he does not determine to go on his new way, making out the traits of his Christian personality in an enduring testimony, confident of Christ's glories.

Moreover, alienated from Christ, these friends are in a bad need of a strong example of triumphant and steadfast life... How do we need to live according to St. John the Apostle's words, "***I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one***" (1John 2:14). Why do we escape testimony before perverse friends? To escape a soiree that does not glorify God, why do we excuse for being busy and never try to testify to Christ obviously? Why do we timidly avoid seeing an exciting obscene film on T.V. without revealing God's view concerning the matter? When do we testify as daringly as right holders and children of Light?

Before the people of the world :

Primarily, we need to bear witness for Christ before the group of friends with whom we had once strong relationships in the land of sin; then before other people whose different principles were violently undermined in the 20th century world.

In this century everything has become confused: moral and religious values have been swept away in front of a flood of human assertion, extremist liberalization, materialism, moral laxity and atheism, the matters of which St. Paul the Apostle knew by the Spirit and prophesied they would take place in our days "***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears they will heap up for themselves teachers***" (2Ti 4:3). "***You should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of hardening of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ... Therefore do not be partakers with them... walk as children of light***" (Eph 4:17-20; 5:7,8).

Nothing is new under heaven. All worldly perversions and wrong principles have been in Gods' foreknowledge. "***Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more***" (Rom 5:20). But a young man who is drifted in the going of evil needs to introspect himself frankly before his conscience, before God and before the instructions of the word.

Here lies testimony and saints' patience, "***For that righteous man Lot***", dwelling among them, tormented his righteous "***soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds***". The Apostle resumes, "***The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust under***

punishment for the day of judgment” (2Pet 2:8,9). Let’s witness for the Lord before predominant perversions, abstaining from and condemning the barren deeds of darkness, never to overlook faults anywhere but rather attracts brethren’s attention to the deficiencies in love rather than primness and pride nor passivity and introversion.

Numerous are the stands of testimony before perverse attitudes. Let’s adopt the Apostle’s slogan, *“All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2Tim 3:12).* We are not to interact with perverse fellows in the evil world. We are not to overlook faults but rather testify to the right whatever be the loss.

Before others :

As children of Christ, we need a careful study of the facts of Christian faith, particularly what concerns: the Holy Trinity, Incarnation as a Necessity, Redemption, the Evidence of Christ’s Crucifixion, the Lord’s Resurrection, the Authority of Bible... etc. To prepare ourselves to answer inquiries aroused, as Christian young people we need to comprehend fully these subjects so that our reply can reflect meekness and fear of God rather than partiality and adversary.

Through godly life, meekness, love and sacrificing diakonia, we can testify to Christ before everyone, in meek and calm words. We must avoid barren arguments which lead to disputes, rather give an answer to clam questions which design at constructive knowledge. In love and group spirit we can establish harmonious relationships with our brethren of other religions rather than being confined to ones of our own religion *“Let your light so shine before men” (Mt 5:16).*

In the Diakonia :

Contemplation in Lord Jesus’ life and service and in the lives of His Apostles and Church Patriarchs set us striking examples. One of the Apostles has sold himself as a slave to enter a city and another disguised to get into another city. Greatest of these is St. Paul’s example who wandered out over continents, establishing numerous churches, seeking our souls in sufferings and vigils, in dangers of sea and desert, in hunger and thirst, suffering coldness and nakedness, beaten, put to chains, confined, exposed to death whipped and stoned.

This might record of suffering for diakonia shows us that we have not yet become workers. A true worker is fully and heartily prepared to endure sufferings as a **“tax”** of diakonia. These sufferings fill him with ecstasy as he looks forward to the glory that accompanies and follows sorrow.

★ Do we sacrifice and shed our blood for diakonia?

★ Do we offer the Lord a part of time we need, or some of indispensable money, or rather some of our faint and weak effort?

Here lies testimony, for a worker who is satisfied with the luxuriousness of the diakonia and its external aspects and glories must offer himself up to God as a crucified and slaughtered love sacrifice.

God grant us to sacrifice ourselves in the various fields of testimony so that the Holy Spirit may testify that we are bloodless martyrs.

6 DIAKONIA

One of the most important Milestones of Kingdom way is the diakonia:

An ordinary believer:

In church, believers are not divided into working believers and ordinary ones, for Christianity does not admit ego-centrism. All forms of Christian life whether monasticism, monachism, and eremiticim reject such an idea of idleness. Being an integral part of the church - Christ's invisible body – the believer is never to remain idle, for - Christ has never had any idle part except a dispensable appendage.



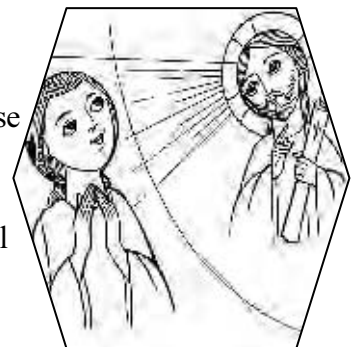
A difference may lie between a believer of church orders and a layman who is wrongly called secular, being related to the world, for even such a believer is not of the world, “*They are not of the world*” (Jn 17:16). A believer loves all who are in the world but hates all what is in the world. Hatred here denotes detestation for sin and evil as well as complete weaning from materialistic and worldly property.

On the other hand, the believer of church orders is a part whose tasks are determined by the Holy Spirit, such as:

- ★ **PSALMIST** : Leading hymns and religious anthems in church.
- ★ **IGHNUSTUS** : Reader, reading and instructing in church.
- ★ **EBEZIACON** : Visitation and attending on the Holy Sacrifice.
- ★ **DEACON** : Managing the affairs and work of Ebeziacons.
- ★ **ARCHDEACON** : Managing the affairs and work of deacons, and assisting the bishop in managing church affairs.

All are workers :

All are workers in God's house, whether believers of church orders whose diak-onia are confined to cert-ain tasks, or ordinary ones, each has a talent, each offers his sacrifice to the Lord. Any attempt to escape resp-onsibilities of the diakonia is an escape from Christ Himself, rather from Christianity - the symbol of infinite giving.



Christ works in heart to make a preacher out man. Look :

- ★ The Samaritan Woman preaches a whole city!
- ★ Matthew preaches tax collectors!
- ★ Zecchaeus sets a striking example that spurs many to believe in Christ!
- ★ The woman with hemorrhage tells of God's marvels!
- ★ The Paralyzed Man takes up his bed announcing that the Beloved has healed him!
- ★ After being healed, the Mad Man wants to follow and hold to Christ, but he is to hear the Lord's commandment, “*Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how he has had compassion on you*” (Mk 5:19).

Can I serve?

Sure, you can participate in many fields of diakonia :

a- Prayer :

It is the most important glorious and impressive of all types of diakonia for it inflames the spirit in church, in both the word and the souls. It changes others' feelings and circumstances.

Remember that whoever prays for himself is granted a blessing which is only doubled when praying for others. Do you feel other's pains and sufferings whether being beloved ones or even enemies? Do you pray for them? ***“Pray for those who spitefully use you” (Lk 6:28).***

b- Love :

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35). ***“Trough love serve one another” (Gal 5:13).*** Love's profound effectiveness exceeds all for love is God Himself. Seek out persons who are in need of a touch of compassion and love, or in need of any private service whether educational, health, materialistic, financial, psychological or spiritual. Give them sacred, genuine and practical Christian love. Be sure that you will see the fruit of love reflected on both of you.

c- Proclamation :

Do you think that Christ can ever accept our suppressing the proclamation of the Holy Bible, i.e. the work of God's grace for the salvation of our souls and the dwelling of the Holy Spirit within man?

There are glorious and joyful news that many of your beloved ones know nothing about! Tell them once in a friendly talk, another time by leaving them a pamphlet, and a third time by reading over them some verses of the Gospel. ***“The generous soul will be made rich. And he who waters will also be watered himself” (Prove 11:25).***

d- Visitation :

Is there an organized and planned visitation in our meetings?

Study this matter with the brethren. Isn't it important to seek out souls before Satan seeks them out for their destruction? Why don't we arrange an alphabetical index for Christ's Children?

Divide them into approximate dwelling areas then distribute each group of names on two workers to visit them. These two workers should be followed-up by experienced workers in the field of individual diakonia. All can be done regularly and according to arrangement through using tables and timings. When do we stop chaos?! We have to bear in mind that the Holy Spirit's blessing is that of discipline, and it calls us to do everything ***“Decently and in order” (1Cor 14:40).***



Dear Friend,

Have a look on the aforementioned types of diakonia. Pray God in submission and calmness and consult your godfather in choosing a type of diakonia. You have to know that all the types of diakonia are essential and fundamental for your salvation and spiritual growth.

God bless you!

7 ADVENT

All man's toil ends at this point: the harvest, at Lord Jesus evident return, "*He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they also who pierced Him. And all tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him*" (Rev 1:7).

Unlike His first concealed and humble coming which aimed at our salvation, the Advent will be "*with great glory*" (Mt 24:30). It will be a dazzling presence of the Lord, "*the brightness of His coming*" aiming at judgment.

All continues as it is :

As an extension of some old deviant beliefs, eschatological facts are put to be mere religious fables, for all continues as it is. On this point, St. Peter reflects, "*Scoffers will come in the last days walking according to their own lust, and saying. Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation'... But beloved, do not forget this one thing that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promises as some count slackness, but is longsuffering towards us, not willing that any should perish but all should come to repentance*" (2Pet 3:3,4,8,9). At the end he exhorts us, "*Account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation*" (2Pet 3:15).

As a religious fact, the world will perish and heavens will pass away "*with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up*" (2Pet 3:10).

Scientific theories emphasize that the cosmos will either explode by heat or contract by severe coldness. Any way, it will pass away. Philosophy also supports this fact, for eternity contradicts change: the cosmos is changeable, consequently perishable, as it has a beginning it also has an end.

The Lord's impending coming :

Unlike the belief proclaiming that divine Advent carries which can be a real endowed chance for repentance, some first-century believers thought that "*the Kingdom of God would appear immediately*" (Lk 19:11). Expressing their inability to imagine the world without Jerusalem, these believers interpreted the Lord's prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem as being the end of the world.

The Bible tells of the Thessalonians, who believing in the impending coming of the Lord, they gave up every work and occupation and waited for the Advent in idleness. St. Paul the Apostle reproached them. "*Not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled with by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come... for that Day will not come, unless the falling away comes first... If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat*" (2Thess 2:2,3;3:10).

Though yearning for the Lord's coming and though sharing St. John's call "*Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*" (Rev 22:20), we hold to our mission in life, a mission of diakonia and preaching, and of Christian life and worship. We hold to earthly order, to work, to struggle and to be honest.

Advent is a responsibility :

The Advent is in fact every believer's responsibility, the aspects of which are the following:

a- A Prospect for the Future :

The believer that places his treasure in heaven, looking forward to the Kingdom and feeling it within (*Lk 17:21*), thinks, moves, occupies himself and struggles on one sole basis: eternal life, by which he is overwhelmed, never permitting worldly affairs to distract him from the heavenly ones.

b- Renewed Repentance :

Preparing himself for heaven, man must be on the image of the dwellers of heaven. Therefore, St. Peter the Apostle instructs us, "*Since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking and hastening the coming of the day of God*" (*2Pet 3:11,12*).

c- Abidance in the Lord :

The believer drops and fixes the anchor (**anchor = hilpis = hope**) of his life on the shore of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Holy City, alongside seawater holding eternal life, abiding in Christ, sailing in his ship till reaching the safe harbour. Therefore, St. John appeals, "*Now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming*" (*1Jn 2:28*).

d- Proclaiming the Lord's Death & Resurrection :

It is the believer's purpose of life "*As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes*" (*1Cor 11:26*). The diakonia is the believer's mission of life which gives meaning and value to his existence "*to remain in the flesh is more needful for you... But if I live in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor*" (*Phi 1:22,24*).

Mid - night Prayer :

The church believes that "**The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night**", when people say "*There is peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with a child, and there will be no escape*" (*1Thess 5:2*). Hence, the church calls us to keep vigil for we "*are all sons of light and sons of the day*" (*1Thess 5:5*) in order that we would not be surprised with the Lord's coming, but rather to prepare our hearts for this glorious day. Notice that the church system reflects both bodily and spiritual vigil. Bodily vigil is reflected in the three services of Mid-Night Prayer, while spiritual vigil stands for constant inner waking.



The Advent will be a glorious day witnessed by two groups of people: one group would say to the mountains and rocks "*fall on us and hide us from the face of Him Who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?*" (*Rev 6:16,17*). While the other group, playing on lyres of repentance, love and joy would say, "*Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*" (*Rev 22:20*).

O' my soul! With whom

shall you stand?