



## El-Keraza Magazine

**Editor-in-chief: His Holiness  
Pope Shenouda III**

Thirty-first Year

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### Gaddafi's Award for Human Rights

His Holiness the Pope is due to travel on 27/9/2003 to Libya.

Their Grace the Bishops who will be accompanying him are: Bishop Bakhumius the Archbishop of Buheira and Pentapolis, Bishop Pishoy the Archbishop of Dumiat and the Holy Synod Secretariat, Bishop Sarabamoon the Abbot of St. Pishoy Monastery, Bishop Youanes the Secretariat of His Holiness the Pope, Bishop Twadrus from the Diocese of Buhaira.

It has been requested to have Press Representative to join this delegate.

The Pope will stay in this trip for Saturday, Sunday and Monday. He'll be back, God's Willing, on Tuesday 30/9 (which will be on the feast of His Holiness' Ordination as a Bishop of Education, 41 years ago).

#### Schedule of The Visit

##### Saturday 27/09:

The Pope's meeting with Colonel Moammar Gaddafi. Followed by a welcome ceremony where both parties will address their speeches, this has been scheduled by the Award administration together with the Coptic Orthodox Church. Then a dinner party will be held by the Secretariat of the People's Public Assembly.

##### Sunday 28/09:

A Holy Mass will be prayed at the Coptic Orthodox Church. Then a cultural meeting will be held at the center of the International Islamic Mission Organization, which will on the same evening hold a dinner party for this occasion.

##### Monday 29/09:

The presentation of the award followed by the announcement of the message of Justice, Peace and love among all people of the world, the message which President Gaddafi is giving.

A dinner will then be held by in Tripoli.

##### Tuesday 30/09:

Farwell ceremony and return back to Cairo.

This Award (as mentioned in the letter of Ben Blah the president of the nation Award committee for human rights to HH the Pope):

"This Award has been granted by the Public Assemblies which have the authority and power in the Great Republic holding the name of Col. Moammar Gaddafi as an appreciation of his role in issuing the Great Green documentary for human rights in the era of the republic..." "Nelson Mandela while imprisoned was the first personality to be granted this award".

P P P

This issue of granting His Holiness the Pope this prize left a good impact on lot of people. For instance what Mr. Fouad Kandil wrote in Al-Ahram newspaper dated 17/09/03:

#### Egypt, The Winner Of The Pope's Award

When HH Pope Shenouda III the Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch of the seat of St. Mark is granted the Gaddafi's Award for human rights, this means that Egypt is the winner.

And at the same time it means that the international Award

committee, which is being presided by the former Algerian President and the well known struggler Ahmed Ben Blah, has also been granted the same award, because granting the award to this man, who uniquely owns distinguished characteristics, means in the first place how objective are the members of the committee who are a group of remarkable intellectuals and politicians". He also said:

My overwhelming happiness by Pope Shenouda's award winning comes from an extreme love to this man, the love that all Egyptians participate in, and the Arabs as well; they all truly love him and appreciate his historical reactions which witness for virtues, patriotism, dignity and humanity. And because of his straightforward attitude towards facing problems, and his supreme care for unity of the nation and safety of the Arabian emotions, also his deep understanding to the recent issues of the era, his in depth vision which is an inspiration to the role of dogma in lives, and the aim of the heavenly beliefs to save humanity from whatever facing and threatening its safety.

P P P

HH the Pope sent a felicitations message to Col. Gaddafi congratulating him on the UN decision of lifting sanctions against Libya...

His Grace Bishop Bakhomius delivered the message to his Excellency when H.G. traveled to Libya on the morning of Thursday 18<sup>th</sup>, September.

## Church News in Photos

### With His Grace Metropolitan Mounir Hanna

HH the Pope received on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September His Grace metropolitan Mounir Hanna the head of the Anglican Church in Egypt. Fr. Gabriel and Fr. Medhat from the Anglican Church as well as HH the Pope's Secretariat attended this meeting. The conversation was about condemning the ordination of homosexuals. The Anglican Church in Egypt is clearly condemning the issue as well.



### With The Sudanese Minister Of Foreign Affairs

HH the Pope received Dr. Mustafa Othman Ismail the Sudanese Minister of Foreign affairs on the morning of Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, those who attended the meeting were: His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Abd El-Halim the Sudan Ambassador in Egypt, Mr. Khaled Fateh El-Rahman the Ministry Of Foreign Affairs' Counselor, Mr. Hadi Al-Sadeiq the Minister's Secretary and also His grace Bishop Youanes.

### With His Excellency the Governor of Alexandria

HH the Pope received on the morning of Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> of September General Abd El-Salam El Mahgoob the Alexandria Governor. Their Grace Bishop Beimen, Bishop Youanes and also Hegumen Sharoubeem El-Bakhoumi the Patriarchate's Vicar at Alexandria attended the meeting.



## Church's News



### His Holiness the Pope in Alexandria

3 HH the Pope received Hegumen Sharoubeem El-Bakhoumy and members of the Alexandrian Lay Council on the evening of Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> of September at the Papal Residence in Alexandria.

3 His Holiness had a meeting with the Poor on the morning of Saturday (as he usually does).

3 His Holiness also received Mr. Esmat Nathan on the evening of Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> of September. Mr. Nathan is one of the most well known businessmen in Egypt.

### With His Excellency the Ambassador of the United States of America

On the morning of Wednesday 17/9, HH the Pope received U.S. Ambassador Mr. David Welch and his Assistant Secretary; His Grace Bishop Youanes attended the meeting.

### HG Bishop Tadros

On the Wednesday 17/9, evening, HH received HG Bishop Tadros before he leaves on his pastoral trip to America and Canada and studied with him what should be done.

### The Dogma Convention

This convention will be held in Fayoum from the 22/09 to the 25/09.

His Holiness the Pope will, through videoconference, give a lecture about the Coptic Orthodox concept of Christian Unity.

Some of Their Grace Bishops and Rev. Fathers will give talks which we will be publishing later, God's willing.

### With A German Delegate

His Holiness the Pope received on Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, the Egyptian German Dialogue members; this incident is been organized by the Evangelical Coptic Organization. The number of members was 27.

## The Institute Of Coptic Studies Pope Shenouda Language center

The center announces the beginning of new courses to study the following languages: English, French, German, Coptic, Greek, Italian and Spanish.

### In Addition to courses in:

English translation - English Theological expressions - English Conversation - Preparation for TOEFL exam and IELTS.

For more information please call 02-4882526 daily from 10:00 to 20:00 except Saturday s and Sundays at the center of the Institute in Anba Reweiss, Cairo.

### A Righteous Leader Reposed In The Lord Dr. Halim Gerguis

On the evening of Tuesday 16/9, Professor Halim Gerguis the former PHD Surgeon at Kasr El-Einy Hospital, and the Board Chairman of the Anglo Hospital, left our perishing world and reposed in the Lord. His Holiness the Pope had visited him on Monday 15/9 at the hospital.

The funeral prayers were held on the afternoon of Thursday 18/9, officiated by His Holiness the Pope, Their Grace the Bishops who participated were: Bishop Pisanti, Bishop Daniel, Bishop Youanes, Bishop Martyrus and some Rev. Fathers. Brigadier General Gamal Hanna attended the funeral as a delegate of his Excellency President Hosni Mubarak. Also Doctor Hamdi El-Sayed, Head of the Doctors Union attended the funeral ceremony.

## Condolences

A Righteous Lady Reposed In The Lord

On the evening of Saturday the 13/9,

### Mrs. Minervette Metri The wife of Rev. Fr. Sargius Sargius

The priest of St. George church-Heliopolis, left our perishing world and reposed in the Lord. His holiness the Pope had visited her at Saint Peter hospital on Tuesday evening 9/9.

The funeral was held at St. George Church, Heliopolis on Sunday 14/9, Their Grace the Bishops who attended the funeral were: Bishop Moses, Bishop Pisanti, Bishop Daniel, Bishop Cherubim, Bishop Isotheres, Bishop Youanes (as Pope Shenouda's Delegate), Bishop Rafael, Bishop Meximus, Bishop Timothy, Bishop Athanasius, Bishop Aghathun; and around hundred Rev. Fathers as well. We ask the Lord to repose her holy soul, and we offer our condolences to the blessed family.

### A Righteous Lady Reposed in the Lord

### Mrs. Soad Aziz

The sister of Rev. Fr. Abram Aziz, priest of St. George Church, Heliopolis, left our perishing world and reposed in the Lord. Funeral ceremony was held on Monday 15/9 at St. Mary Church in Maghagha, His Grace Bishop Aghathun and a large number of Rev. Fathers attended the funeral.

We ask the Lord to repose her soul, and we offer our condolences to her blessed family.



### **His Grace Bishop Anthony**

- 3 He has been assigned by HH the Pope to travel to France for the preparation of Fr. Moses Wahib's service. HG is to prepare for where he should serve and also for all what he would need there.
- 3 HH the Pope also assigned HG Bishop Anthony to travel to the Scandinavian Countries for the preparation of all matters concerning the service there, also for issuing a united law for our churches there, as well as supervising the church councils' elections, and every other aspect needed to sustain a successful service there.

### **With Some Rev. Fathers of Immigration Countries**

During the last two weeks, HH the Pope has received:

- 3 Fr. Marcos Hanna the priest from Los Angeles.
- 3 Hegomen Mina Abraham the priest from Melbourne.
- 3 Fr. Joseph Joseph the priest from Belleville before returning back home.
- 3 HH also received Fr. Angaelos Khella, with his wife and son before their departure to USA.

### **Two Priests for the Deaf and the Mute travel to Los Angeles, USA**

On 7/9, Rev. Fr. Bishoy Kamel the priest of the Deaf and Mute in Alexandria, traveled to USA for the purpose of dealing with some matters that concerns the special needs service.

And on 19/9, Rev. father Angaelos Khella who is one of the priests of the Deaf and Mute in Cairo, traveled as well to Los Angeles; his wife and son accompanied him.

HH the Pope contacted HG Bishop Serapion to make things easier for them there.

### **About the Issue of St Anthony's Monastery fence**

General Saad Abu-Reeda, the Governor of The Red Sea Governorate, received HG Bishop Yostus the Abbot of St. Anthony's Monastery, with Their Grace Bishop Youanes and Bishop Thawfelus the Bishop of the Red Sea, it was a nice loving meeting where all issues have been completely settled down.

### **With the Canadian TV**

On Tuesday evening 16/9, HH the Pope received Dr. Larry Brile, Rev. Dr. Samir Abou Keer; HH had an interview in the

"Reachout Ministries" Canadian TV Channel.

### **Educational Feast Celebration in the Coptic Studies Care and Education Institutes**

On the anniversary of the Enthronement date of HH Pope Shenouda III the first Bishop of Education, a celebration is to be held from 30<sup>th</sup>, September to 2<sup>nd</sup>, October 2003. A Seminar will be held as well where the activities of both Institutes will be presented also reports showing how the curriculums have been recently updated upon HH the Pope's instructions. HH is the Head Chief of the Religious Institutes.

Also a Book fair for all HH the Pope's books will be held. And HH the Pope will deliver his weekly lecture on Wednesday as usual.

The celebration will be concluded by the distribution of Graduation Certificates on graduates and a word given by HH the Pope announcing the beginning of the new Academic year 2003/2004. And for the first time the Choir of the Coptic Studies Institute will participate in the celebration.

### **The Institute's Principal Dr. Rasmy Abd El-Malek Rostum**

### **Fr. Pastor Marcos, The Priest Of St. George Church, Herafeyin, Reposed in the Lord**

He left our perishing world on 17/9. The funeral ceremony was prayed on the evening of the same day in the St. George Church, Herafeyin, Their Grace Bishop Botrus, Bishop Meximus and large number of Rev. Fathers attended the funeral. We ask the Lord to repose his soul and we offer our condolences to his congregation and his family.

### **St Mark Computer and Language Center at Nasr City, Cairo**

The center grants its students certificates approved by the Ministry of Education.

The center offers both morning and evening sessions.

Highly Qualified Professional certified teachers and Engineers.

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You can view Felicitations for our Graduates on the net.

The center also hosts spiritual conventions in its overnight retreat facilities, Seminars, evenings, Athletics competitions, and also camps.

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For Information and Reservations please contact the center daily from 09:00 to 21:00 except Saturdays and Sundays.

Tel: (+20)2605999

(+20)2623375

(+20)2603495

(+20)4019157

**Center Manager  
Dr. Nahed Fahim.**

### **With journalist Mrs. Sanaa El-Say'eid**

HH the Pope received Mrs. Sanaa El-Say'eid in his office on Tuesday morning the 9<sup>th</sup> of September for an interview.

And on Wednesday evening she had another interview with H.H. the Pope which was requested from her by Al-Mussawar magazine.

Mrs. Sanaa El-Say'eid has been nominated to travel among the members of the trip to Libya.



## **A Statement from the Christian Churches in Egypt against Homosexuality and its Ordinations**

Heads and representatives of all sects of Christian Churches in Egypt. The meeting was headed by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, in the Papal Residence Anba Rowais Bldg., Cairo, on the evening of Monday 8/9/2003 AC.

After discussing the actions of some Western Churches, trying to legalize Homosexuality, Same -sex marriage, the ordination of homosexuals in different pastoral degrees, and the process to ordain a homosexual bishop in the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire, U.S.A., consequently - in this special meeting – the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church decided unanimously the strong condemnation of these acts, that violate the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Scriptures: Old and New Testaments. This complies with our responsibility to witness for the truth of the Gospel.

- 1- Jesus Christ condemned homosexuality in an explicit way, when He spoke about the devastation of Sodom & Gomorrah (Lk 10:12). See also (Gn 19:24). The Holy Bible warns also saying: "Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor Sodomites... will inherit the Kingdom of God" (1Co 6:9, 10). See also (Ro 1:26-32), and what is mentioned in Old Testament: "If a man also lies with male, as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Lv 8:22 -Lv 20:13).
- 2- Same-sex marriage is against the Divine plan for marriage and its purpose of procreation: "But from the beginning of the creation, God made them 'male and female'. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife" (Mk 10:6, 7). See also (Mt 19:4-6, Eph 5:31, Gn 1:27, Gn 2:24).
- 3- Those who are ordained for Church ministry must uphold the teachings of the Holy Bible. "A bishop then must be blameless... of good behavior... able to teach" (1Ti 3:2).

Consequently, we disapprove and condemn strongly the same-sex marriage generally, and the ordination of homosexuals, which is more erroneous, and more dangerous.

### **The attendees declare:**

- 1- That these movements contradict the teachings of the Holy Bible, and threaten the stability of natural marriage, the nature of forming a family, the morals of the society, the purity of the Church, the future of the efforts towards Christian unity, and the Ecumenical movements.

- 2- Those who rely on the chains of human rights to encourage homosexuality, neglect the fact that it is not the right of any person to spoil himself or the other. Real freedom does not ruin the human nature, nor contradict with the Divine Commandments, morals, and general ethics.
- 3- We applaud the courageous voices, in and outside those Churches, which oppose Homosexuality, Same - Sex Marriage, ordination of Homosexuals in pastoral orders. We call these Churches to obey the Biblical Teachings without compromise or change. Members of these Churches have no right to vote on the Biblical Divine Commandments.
- 4- This abnormal conduct is a stumbling block for other people, bad example and fame, and dangerous for the future of these Churches themselves leading to divisions and disintegration.
- 5- While we condemn homosexuality, we invite those who are under this sin to repent out of concern for their eternal life.
- 6- The attendees welcomed the Egyptian Episcopal Church declaration that it absolutely condemns homosexuality and considers it a sin and an abomination and that they reject ordinations of such people in pastoral degrees.

**Those assembled decided to publish this statement on all possible Media inside and outside Egypt, and to send it to all Ecumenical Councils, such as the World Council of Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, The Councils of America, Canada, Europe, Australia, and Africa.**



# Worthiness

I would like to talk to you today about worthiness, the worthiness of each of us, whether of the Kingdom of Heaven, salvation, communion or even our worthiness of prayer and worthiness of service and priesthood. I will also talk about repentance as a condition for worthiness and about unworthiness as an evidence of repentance.

## Worthiness of the Kingdom of Heaven

We sometimes hear within some of the sects saying someone who says: I am demanding my rights of Christ's blood, I am asking for my inheritance!! We say to such people: What rights do you have? All what you take is a gift from God that you paid nothing for. And as the apostle says: "Being justified freely by His grace" (Ro 3:24). This is the first point.

**The second point is that Christ's blood is sufficient for the salvation of everyone in the whole Earth, but not everyone deserves salvation.** Though the blood is sufficient for salvation, and that it has unlimited power to save people, yet it did not save Caiaphas and Herod nor Judas. It also did not save the non-faithful, atheists, or those who die in their sins.

So do not say my rights! But ask: who is worthy and who is not? Who are saved? Who are those having their names written in the book of Life?

**Salvation is given for free to all. But there are conditions to deserve it. Among these conditions are: Faith, Repentance, and Baptism...**

Therefore it was said that "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." (Mk 16:16), "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (Jn 3:36). It was also said "Unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Lk 13:3, 5).

Salvation was made for everyone. But it is only worthy for those repenting baptized faithful who do good deeds. Thus, the Foolish Virgins were not worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven although they cried saying "Lord, Lord, open to us!" (Mt 25:11-13) also those who say to the Lord on the Last Day: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'. And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Mt 7:22, 23).

So salvation was made for everyone, but it is never gained except by those who are worthy. And so is filiation.

## Filiation

You say: Isn't it one of my rights to be called son of the Lord? Theoretically speaking, you say. But are you worthy? Jews used to have pride in that they are sons of Abraham. But the Lord answered

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them saying: "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham." (Jn 8:39). What about you? What are the deeds that show who you are?

The apostle says: **"Whoever has been born of God does not sin... and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."** (1Jn 3:9). "In this the children of God are manifest" (1Jn 3:10) "he who has been born from God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him" (1Jn 5:18). Do these aspects apply on you?

Therefore, the Lost Son – in his going back – said to his father "I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (Lk 15:19). And so we say in our prayers "Make us worthy of saying: Our Father in Heaven...".

**You say you are a son, and that is only a fake title you are holding!**

Here is the apostle saying "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him." (1Jn 2:29). Are you like this?

**Let not filiation be a matter of vain pride from us, while practically we do not deserve it. The son is similar to his father. Are those sinning similar to their father?!**

## Prayer

God – out of his humbleness – allowed us to pray. But are we worthy of standing in front of God and talk to him?! Our father Abraham in his humbleness said: "I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord" (Gn 18:27).

Therefore we say: Make us worthy to pray; May my prayer come to your presence. That is because there are a lot of non-answered prayers.

Therefore we also say in the ninth hour absolution "May our prayers on all times and the prayer of this hour... be acceptable in front of You". We also say in the parts of the ninth hour prayer: "May my begging come in front of you Lord, as you said make me understand. May my prayer come to your presence; as your word bring life to me." And in the absolution of the third hour we say: "Bring our prayers to you...".

## Communion

The subject of worthiness also include communion. It appears clearly in the first Epistle to Corinthians, where the Apostle warns from taking communion when unworthy.

He says: **"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of

the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep" (1Co 11:27-30).

Communion is offered to all people, but it is not acceptable for the unworthy go for it. We pray in the Holy Liturgy saying:

**"Make us worthy, O our Master, to partake of Your holies unto the purification of our souls, our bodies and our spirits"**. We also say: "Make us worthy, O our Master, to partake of Your holies unto the purification of our souls, our bodies and our spirits and for the forgiveness for our sins and iniquities".

And that's why the priest – before the Holy Liturgy – washes his hands and says: "I wash my hands with purity and not with water". And he also says to the Lord: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

**White Clothes that priests and deacons wear to the Holy Liturgy is symbol of their internal heart purity.**

As was said in Revelation Book "Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes;" (Rev 4:4). "For the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev 19:8). Therefore, angels appeared in white clothes (Jn 20:12). And so were the righteous (Rev 3:4) (Rev 7:9).

It is a serious and scary statement that St Ava Tiji said:

**[That who partakes communion should have an interior as pure as the interior of St Mary where she conceived the Lord].**

It is not a simple phrase at all. But it gives us an idea of preparing for communion or worthiness of it... Anyways it shows us to what level of self inspection was that saint talking about worthiness of communion... Purity of body and soul and fasting are also conditions to deserve communion...

**Also making peace with people as much as possible is also a condition.**

St Paul the Apostle said about this: "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men" (Ro 12:18).

And as the Lord said: "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother" (Mt 5:23, 24).

Therefore we pray the Reconciliation Prayer at the beginning of the Liturgy so that we be worthy of communion and we say in it: "And make us all worthy, O our Master, to greet one another with a holy kiss, that without falling into condemnation, we may partake, of Your immortal and heavenly gift in Christ Jesus our Lord".

**Believe me my brothers: If all people partaking communion each and every one of thousands and tens of thousands are worthy, the Lord would have been doing wonders with people and grace would have been prevailed in the church...**

But unfortunately: so many people are partaking communion with true repentance. An evidence of that is that each of them comes out of communion with his same nature, same mistakes and same used expressions he used to say!

And you ask that person: what did communion change in you?! Or has it just become a habit for you?! Without inspection of whether you worth it.

When Prophet Samuel planned to offer a sacrifice in Bethlehem said to the house of Jesse: "Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to sacrifice" (1S 16:5). The phrase that this great prophet said reminds us of the priest crying at the liturgy saying: "The holies for the holy." That's why we call the communion liturgy the "Holy Liturgy" to distinguish it from the "Catechumens Liturgy".

In the Catechumens Liturgy they listen to Holy readings from Epistles, Acts, Synexarion, Psalms and the Gospel and then a sermon. They then leave and no one stays at the church other than those who will partake communion, the holy... Then, the veil of the altar is removed and the liturgy of the holy start.

If that is what we say about the preparation and worthiness of normal people, **then what can we say about the preparation and worthiness of priests the altar servants?**

A priest starts his service with (the preparation prayer) in which he says:

"You, O Lord, know my unworthiness, my unfitness, and my unmeetness, unto this, Your holy service; and I have no boldness that I should draw near and open my mouth before Your holy glory; but according to the multitude of Your tender-mercies, pardon me a sinner, and grant unto me that I may find grace and mercy at this hour...". He also says: "O You, our Lord, make us meet, in the power of Your Holy Spirit, to finish this service; so that without falling into condemnation before Your great glory, we may offer up unto You a sacrifice..."

**May the priests attending with us gather the phrase "without falling into condemnation" and all similar phrases from the liturgy prayers...**

A priest also says "O Lord, give me the purity of body and soul, to deserve to come to Your holy altar, and to offer gifts and spiritual sacrifices for my sins and ignorances of Your people"... he also says: "Because of my own sins and the abomination of my heart, deprive not Your people of the grace of Your Holy Spirit". This last phrase used to be said inaudibly but ever since I started my current service in priesthood, I started saying it audibly so that people hear it.

**The problem is that most priests consider that worthiness for the service of the altar is worthiness because of the grade and the job and not because of spiritual life!**

Truly – from the legal point of view – as long as hands were laid on him and he became a priest, he can pray liturgies. But what about his worthiness spiritually?!

### **Worthiness of the Christ**

Our Master, the Lord says: "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Mt 10:37).

More than that, he also says: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate... and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Lk 14:26, 27).

So how much do we deserve the Lord? How much are

we worthy to be his disciples?

Do not say then: As long as I have believed and got baptized it is over!! No, there is also the condition of having fruits as well...

### **Fruits**

The gospel says "Every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Mt 3:10). The Lord also says "You will know them by their fruits" (Mt 7:16). And He says "I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (Jn 15:16). So what is your fruit, you believer? Is it permanent?

Of course deeds are the fruit of faith. There is a serious verse saying: "**Him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin**" (Jas 4:17).

And of course the sin forbids from the Heaven Kingdom. And there is also another condition for reaching the Heaven Kingdom and it is:

### **Wedding Garment**

Wedding garment is the white clothes; it is the righteous acts of the saints. It is as St Paul the Apostle said "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called..." (Eph 4:1). And we say in the ninth hour absolution: "Grant us to walk as is fit for the call that we were called to. So that if we come out of this body, we are counted among the worshipers whom are worthy of the sufferings of Your Only Son Jesus Christ, our Lord; and we may win mercy and forgiveness from our sins".

**And from the seriousness point of view of the wedding garment, the Lord says in his Parable of the Wedding Feast:**

"But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment... Then the king said to the servants, bind him hand and foot, pick him away and cast him into outer darkness..." (Mt 22:11-13)

And among the messages that the Lord sent to the seven churches, he said to the angel of the church in Sardis: "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy" (Rev 3:4).

Wedding garments are white clothes, unclean. Those who wear them are worthy to walk with the Lord in the righteous retinue.

Finally, imagine, my brothers, that there are many other matters; matters that we may have never imagined that we can classify under the subject of worthiness. So what are they?

### **Other Matters**

<sup>3</sup> **Even life needs worthiness.**

Thus we say in the sunset absolution: "We thank you, our merciful King because you granted us to pass this day peacefully. And made us worthy of seeing the light till the evening". This means that God gave use worthiness to continue living till the evening.

<sup>3</sup> **Entering the Lord's House also requires worthiness:**

In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector,

we find that the tax collector "standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven" (Lk 18:13) feeling unworthy... He reminds us of what Prophet David said in the psalm "But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy" (Ps 5:7). He feels that he is unworthy to enter the Lord's House. And that his entrance is an act of Lord's mercy.

<sup>3</sup> **Also blessing and peace require worthiness:**

The Lord said to his apostles: "whatever city or town you enter, enquire who in it is worthy and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you" (Mt 10:11-13).

<sup>3</sup> **Even listening to the bible requires worthiness as well.**

Thus the priest says in the prayer for the Gospel: "May we be worthy to hear and to act according to Your holy gospels through the prayers of Your saints". So not only acting according to commandments requires worthiness, but also only listening to them requires it... It is a blessing from the Lord to make us worthy to listen to His words...

<sup>3</sup> **No doubt that Elder Baptism requires worthiness:**

Currently, in the case of marriage between different sects, we require from the non-Orthodox side to join in and get baptized. Yet in early ages they used to put baptism seekers among the classes for Catechumens to get lessons in faith. The priest says in the prayer for Catechumens: "... And in the specific day may they deserve the bath of the new birth for the forgiveness of their sins". The grace of baptism requires worthiness.

**Finally: Feeling of unworthiness is an evidence of humbleness.**

John the Baptist, who was the greater among those born of women (Mt 11:11), he said about the Lord Jesus Christ "whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose." (Mk 1:7).

Also the Centurion who asked the Lord to heal his servant said to him: "I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed." (Mt 8:8).

## News in Photos

### With Our Church Council In Greece

His Holiness the Pope received, on the 15th of September, HG Bishop Pishoi, Father Athanasius Isaac our priest in Greece, and Mr. Wafaa'y Hanna the president of the church council. And of the council's members HH the Pope received Mr. Rizk Tawfik the Vice President, Mr. Sami Lotfy, Mr. Nagy Asaad, and Mr. Anwar Asham.



### Our New Church In Obour City

On the morning of Monday the 15th of September, H.H. the Pope received Hegumen Rafael Abba Pishoy the priest of our church in Obour City. And of the church council members His Holiness received Mr. John Keriako Keriazy, Eng. Sami Fahim Gabriel, and Eng. Nabil Khalil Magd-allah.

### At the Misr-International Hospital

His Holiness the Pope visited Mr. Hany Aziz at the Misr-International Hospital on Tuesday evening the 9th of September.

And on the 15th, he visited counselor Wasfy Nashed at the same Hospital.

It was a chance to meet with lots of patients, their friends and their families, and also to meet with His Eminence the new Azhar Vicar.



## Church News in Photos

### The Association of Theological Seminaries and Institutes in the Middle East - ATIME

His Holiness Patriarch Ignatios Zakka Ewas I of Antioch, when he received the members of the Association of Theological Seminaries and Institutes in the Middle East – ATIME. They congratulated him on his safe arrival after having a successful surgical operation.



### With the Deputized Committee from Libya

At the Papal Residence in Cairo, H.H. the Pope received at his office the members of the deputized Committee from Libya to inform His Holiness that he has been awarded the Gaddafi prize for Human Rights. His Holiness received a letter from Chief Ben-Blah the former Algerian President and the head of the nation's committee for the prize.

### A Photo With History

This photo goes back to the year 1939, since 64 years ago.

You can see in this photo the graduates of the Theological College at that time (Madraset Al-Rohban Al-Lahoteya) which was established by HH Pope Youanes XIX. In the middle you can see Egomalous Michael Mina the College Principal, to his right you can see Hegomen Kozman Al-Mohreky who became later on the Abbot of Moharek Monastery, and also Hegomen Thawfelus Al-Syriani who became afterwards a Bishop and the Abbot of the Syrian Monastery.

**Photo sent by Hegomen Theodosius Al-Syriani.**

