

Awlaad al-Assal (Children of the Honey-Maker): Pages from Church History

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Written by Awlaad al-Assal

The traditions of the Coptic Church in the 13th Century through the words of four generations of Awlaad al-Assal (Children of the Honey Maker), a wealthy Coptic family living in that time.

Translator's Preface:

The translation below reflects many of the cultural norms and traditions of the Copts at the beginning of the second millennium AD. These traditions are reflections of the Coptic society at that pivotal time, 500 years after the Islamic conquest of Egypt. Many of these customs and traditions have been long-forgotten, and even explicitly denounced by the Coptic Church. Nevertheless, the preservation and study of such writings is very beneficial in understanding this important stage of the Copts' history, during which the Egyptian population was on its way to becoming predominantly Muslim. We invite you to read and enjoy this text, but we would like to make it clear that these writings are not, and should not be interpreted as representative of the canons or laws of the Coptic Church, and they do not portray in any way today's Egyptian society in general, or the today's Coptic society in particular.

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Translated by Dr. William H. Hanna

On Prayer

1. Prayer is Speaking to God Al-Mighty by Thanking and Praising Him and Acknowledging His Lordship and confessing to Him our sins and asking Him to give us what is acceptable to Him.
2. First condition for Prayer: Standing Up because our Lord said: "When you stand up for prayer..." [Matthew 6] and as David (the prophet and king) said: "I stand in your presence and You see me..." [Psalm 5:3].
3. Second condition for Prayer: Girdling oneself because our Lord said: "Girdle yourself..."
4. Third condition for prayer: Turning your face towards the East, because this is the direction Christ the Lord said He will appear in His second coming. Also because David the prophet and king said: "Praise the Lord who is above the heavens. His voice from the east like many waters... Also we have to stop looking around because this is the command of the Lord to the Israelites.
5. Forth condition for prayer: With the fingers, make the sign of the cross from above down and from left to right. Making the sign of the cross is to cast the devils away because Christ said: "(if) by the finger of God I cast out the devils..." It is from above down because He came down from heaven. It is also from left to right because He transferred us from the left (evil) to the right (righteousness). Also, we make the sign of the cross because the cross was the tool by which Christ completed our salvation. And remember as you make the sign of the cross the grace given to us by Him who was crucified for us.
6. Our fathers the Apostles commanded us to make the sign of the cross on our foreheads with a pure heart always to make the devil flee from us. The Apostles made this sign on us to protect us from the corruption of the devil as the blood of the

Pascal sacrifice was a sign on the homes of the Israelites to protect them from death of their first born which rule on the Egyptians but not the Israelites (who had the sign).

7. The time for making the sign of the cross is at the beginning of prayers and when the name of the cross is mentioned.
8. Fifth condition for prayer: Recite the words of prayer with fear and trembling, while the soul is moved towards the creator. (Pray) either in spirit (silently) or by the tongue (audibly) in which case let the tongue translate (express) what the conscious (spirit) feels.
9. Sixth condition for prayer: Kneel and prostrate yourself in prayer, because the Lord commanded: "Kneel to the Lord your God and to Him only give worship..." Also the Gospel reminds us that in the night he was betrayed: "He knelt down and prayed..."
10. Kneeling should be by the Spirit and in Truth.
11. The time to kneel is when the name of the Lord is mentioned in prayer (and service) and should be either one time or three consecutive times to be repeated at the end of each prayer or the end of each Psalm or Praise.
12. Some (believers) make it kneeling and others make it prostrating themselves (leaning forward in awe and reverence) according to their physical ability.
13. But there are times in which we are commanded not to kneel like the Pentecost Season, the feasts of the Lord ("Ayaad Saideiah") and after receiving communion.
14. Prayer also requires raising the hands with opened palms especially during the times of intercessions, supplications, and requests as the Apostle Paul advised Timothy (I Timothy 3) Also as David the Prophet and king said: "Raise your hands in the evenings..." (Psalm 133).
15. Raising the eyes up high as our Lord to Whom is Glory taught us when He raised Lazarus from the dead. And also as David the prophet and king said: "I lifted my eyes up to you O Lord..." (Psalm 122)
16. Beating our chests asking the forgiveness from God for our sins and transgressions and the years we wasted without good fruits as the tax collector (publican) did when he beat on his chest saying: "forgive me Lord, I am a sinner." his prayer was praised more (than that of the Pharisee).
17. Weeping for those who can (weep) they will be like David (the prophet and king), the prophets, the saints, and the fathers the saints.
18. Prayer includes reciting what the Bible and Cannons (Laws of the Church) determined to be used in prayer which includes: The Lord's Prayer.
19. Prayer includes reciting the Profession of faith (Nicene Creed).
20. Praying day and night the Psalms, Praises, Glorifications, Confessing God the Omnipotent, and confessing our sins.
21. In the morning prayer recite psalm 62 and in the evening prayer recite Psalm 142.
22. The priests are to pray the praise of the three young men everyday and close with praising the Lady (The Theotokos) everyday.

23. On Mondays they sing Moses and Merriam his sister; on Tuesday the second praise; on Wednesday they use the praise of Hannah the Mother of Samuel; on Thursday the praise of Habakkuk; on Fridays the praise of Isaiah; on Saturday the praise of Jonah; and on Sunday they say all the praise mentioned before.

24. The fathers of the Church prepared prayers based on these and other praises to be followed.

25. The prayers required of all believers are seven.

(First) The Morning prayers are to be done after the washing of hands and before getting involved in the other activities of the day

(Second) The Third (Hour) Prayer

(Third) The Sixth (Hour) Prayer

(Fourth) The Ninth (Hour) Prayer

(Fifth) The Sunset (Evening) Prayer

(Sixth) The Sleep (Compline) Prayer

(Seventh) Midnight Prayer, after the washing of hands with water, if water is not available at this time one blows in his hands and uses the dampness.

26. If one is married, they pray together. If he/she is not a believer yet, one prays alone.

27. Married people should not delay prayer, they do not need to bathe, except for the washing of hands because marriage is purified.

28. Prayers are seven because David said: "Seven times every day I praise you..."

29. Morning Prayer is because God gave us the light and allowed the night to pass away. Third Hour is commemorating the judgment against our Lord by Pontius Pilate. In the Sixth (Hour) He was crucified, in the Ninth (Hour) He surrendered the Soul, Night (Hours) to thank God for giving us rest after the labor of the day. Let us thank the Lord in all these times in which He endured the betrayal, judgment, cross, death, and His being brought down from the cross in the evening. Midnight is because the bridegroom will come in it. Also, because David said: 'I get up in the middle of the night to praise you ...' Also, at midnight Paul and Silas were praying in the prison. Also our Lord prayed at midnight three times in the night of His suffering and He said be awake and pray so you will not enter into temptation. He also said be alert because you do not know what time the Son of Man will come...

30. Let Morning and Evening Prayers be conducted in the Church, especially on Sundays and Saturdays. Those who are late (not able to attend) for sickness, let them be. But the sick who are able to attend will benefit healing through the water and oil of the prayer. Those who do not attend for good reason need to be reminded by their acquaintances to attend every day.

31. The third (Hour) can be conducted at home. If the believer can not pray where he is, let him pray it in his heart.

32. The clergy are charged with certain prayers which are ordained in the Church: Baptism, Holy Communion, ordination of priests and Churches (meaning the bishops are charged with this), marriage, absolution, unction of the sick, and prayers for the dead when they depart and after.

33. The praying on oil and first fruit and every prayer on everything and let them close the prayer with Glory be to the father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever Amen.
34. But the prayer of baptism and bathing (for children) should be according to what is in the Liturgy concerning such things.
35. Prayers which are not required (but done willingly) are the prayers of the ascetics and monks because they pray day and night as in the sayings and the teaching of the lord and as the Apostle said: 'Pray always without ceasing'
36. Early morning prayer should be performed at the crow of the cock. As the Apostles said wake up early and profess to the Lord.
37. Pray also before and after receiving your food. Before eating you pray so the Lord may bless the food. You pray after so the Lord may keep your body healthy to be able to perform your practical worship always. When the priests are present at the table, they can pray while everyone is sitting down as the Lord blessed the five loaves (while they were all sitting down).
38. The prayer for the travelers is like when Paul prayed when the people of Ephesus sent him off. Also like the prayer when Paul traveled from Ciseria to Akka.
39. There is also a brief prayer for the monks when they enter or exist any place.
40. Prayer for distress is two kinds: (1) The person can pray for his own situation because the Apostle said: 'If any in difficulty, let him pray' Paul, Jonah, The Three Young Men all prayed in their distress and were saved. Our Lord taught us to do that as he prayed in the night of his suffering. (2) The prayer of others for one in difficulty is because the Apraksees teaches us about the prayer of the whole Church for Peter when he was in prison. Also, Paul said: 'pray for me so I also may be saved'
41. The prayer for the forgiveness of sin as the priests pray for the congregation as Moses, Aaron, and Phenhaas did.
42. Also prayers for needs which are not against the law like asking for having offspring and asking for wisdom. Hannah prayed to have an offspring and was given Samuel and we know the prayer and praise of Hannah (the mother of Samuel). Also, as the Apostle said: 'He who is lacking wisdom let him ask with faith and without doubt, and the Lord will give him what he asks for...' Also as the Lord said: 'Everything you ask for in prayer with faith, you shall receive it.'
43. The prayer of spiritual fathers for their children is like the prayer of Paul for Timothy and the command of Paul to timothy to conduct such prayers.
44. It is not lawful to conduct prayer with an excommunicated priest or a non-believer even if it was in a home. Everyone who participates in such prayer will be excommunicated.
45. Brothers, pray always for those who are unlawfully angry so they will depart their anger.
46. If one favored, or even stranger comes in (during the sermon), the bishop shall not stop the service, but let the deacon take him in and find an honored place for him so he can participate in a service acceptable to God.

On Fasting

1. Fasting is to abstain from eating for a specified period as the law commands in obedience to Him who made the law. Fasting gives us the opportunity to examine our sins and reap our good rewards.

2. The purpose of fasting is to weaken the power of desire in order for the body to obey the spirit.
3. All Nazarene (Nassara meaning Christians) are required to fast the holy forty days (lent) which is followed by Paschal Week fast ending in Friday of Crucifixion (Good Friday). This fast is to be abstention to the end of the day (sunset around 6 PM). One should neither eat meat of any kind, nor meat by-products. Also all Christians are to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays of every week except in the Pentecost season, and the feasts of Christmas and Epiphany if any happens to be on either day. These two days are to be fast until the ninth hour (3 PM).
4. There is other fasts in the Coptic Church ("Bayaa Keptiaa") includes Hercules Week (The Week before lent), Nenevah 3-days fast, and the day before Christmas ("paramoon al-milaad") and the day before Epiphany ("paramoon al-ghotaas").
5. Other fasts are in the rank of Wednesday and Friday fast like the fast before Christmas which begins the second half of Hathor and ends on Christmas; and the fast for the Apostles which starts after Pentecost and ends on the 5th of Apeep, the feast of Peter and Paul.
6. These added fasts were practiced by our people with many of our Patriarchs, and they are beyond what the Councils of the Church ordained, so we have to keep them without reduction.
7. There is other fasts kept mostly by ascetics and virgins like the fast for our Lady (The Theotokos) which begins on First of and the feast of our Lady is when it ends. (please note the big shift, the fast of St. Mary is now observed by more people than any other fast including non-Christians in Egypt).
8. The above group of fasts are to the ninth hour (3 PM) and one should abstain from meat with the exception of fish (permitted to eat seafood in the group in 5 .. 7).
9. If one can fast more than what is ordained, he will receive his reward.
10. No abstention on Sundays or Saturdays.
11. Fasting is giving of the needs of the body, as giving is a sacrifice of the material wealth.
12. The commandment concerning fasting is to make the physical nature (desire) under the control of the spiritual one. Also, through fasting we control the power of the anger of the mind.
13. One of the benefits of fasting is to become like the Spiritual beings, this allows us to connect with the spiritual.
14. Also, when we feel hunger, we become kind to those who hunger.
15. Also, by fasting we receive communion with a great desire both physically and spiritually.
16. Fasting is worshipping through the physical nature ("Hayouaniah") as prayer is worship through the intellect (mind).
17. Let the Forty Day fast be honored among you, and start it on Monday the first day of lent, and end it on the Friday of the Completion of fast ("Khattam Al-Soom").
18. (About the Pascal week), we fast all six days including Friday for the betrayal and Saturday for the Salvation (death and burial). We end the fast on the seventh day (Sunday) at the Crow of the Cock. The Saturday of the Pascal Week is the only Saturday we abstain. But all other Saturdays are without abstaining because Saturday signifies the day on which the Lord rested. But this Saturday and the early part of Sunday (resurrection) is because the Lord was buried.

(remember that according to Jewish tradition, the day was counted evening to evening, for this he calls the hours on Saturday of light after sunset Sunday).

19. During these 6 days (Pascal Week), you eat only bread and salt with water. No meat or wine be consumed in these six days, because they are days of sorrow. But for Friday and Saturday, those who can, fast them together as one day. But if you can not fast the two days, be sure to fast the Saturday because the bridegroom is taken, and when he is taken they fast weep. Fast these days to the night as we did (meaning the Apostles) when He was taken away from us.

20. After you fast fifty days (lent) fast another week meaning Pascal week then no fasting for fifty days (meaning Pentecost Season) including no fast on Wednesdays and Fridays during Pentecost, with a reminder not to forget the Wednesdays and Fridays fast afterward. Also a reminder to combine fasting with giving to the poor.

21. If Wednesday or Friday is a feast, you go for prayer (liturgical) and communion and communion breaks the fast, so no abstaining.

22. If one was sick during the Pascal week and did not fast, let him fast for a substitution week afterwards, but not during the Pentecost season.

23. A priest (clergy) who does not fast the lent and Wednesday and Friday should be excommunicated ("Youktaa") and the lay person who does likewise should be separated ("Youasaal")

24. A priest (clergy) who celebrates the Paschal Week with the Jews should be excommunicated ("Yoktaa") and if he fasts Saturday or Sunday, except for the Great Saturday of the Paschal week should be excommunicated ("Yoktaa") also.

25. During the forty days (lent) they should not celebrate the martyrs on week days, but to do those remembrance only on Saturdays and Sundays.

26. During the forty days (lent) there should be no wedding, no celebration, and no sitting to drink (parties or social gatherings).

27. No priest (clergy) is to drink wine or bathe (these restrictions existed, the meaning is to be involved more in spirituality) during the forty days (lent).

28. No one is to touch his wife (sexual relations) during fasting days.

29. If a day of fasting is the feast of a martyr and if a bishop or a priest breaks the fast because of the feast, he shall be excommunicated ("Youktaa") because he became a stumbling block for many souls.

30. Also if the people break the fast for the feast of a martyr, let the bishop or the priest separate them, because it is not proper to break the fast when the martyrs died through hunger, thirst, or by burning in fire.

31. But on the day of Christmas and the day of Epiphany, the Council at Nicea ordained that they break the fast at night.

32. During the forty days (lent) they fast until sunset, meaning the eleventh hour (5 PM), but in Paschal week till the stars are bright (the dark of the night) and no one is to put on makeup and women should not wear their jewelry during these days. And no one is to touch (have sexual relation) with his wife. Woe to them that do that particularly during the Paschal Week.

33. If we do our pleasure during the forty days (lent), how can we enjoy seeing His resurrection.

34. Fasting is not the abstaining from food and water, but a fast acceptable to God is a pure heart. If the body goes hungry, but the soul is occupied with evil desire and the heart is defiled with high living, fasting benefits you nothing.

35. Fasting the forty days (lent) is to be with humility and avoiding the lusts of the body. It is unlawful to have weddings. And in Paschal week it is unlawful to have baptism or funeral prayers. On Paschal Thursday, it is unlawful to have ordination or baptism, but to stay in the Church ("Bayaa") the whole week.

36. On Palm Sunday is when they do the funeral prayers, Psalm, Gospel reading, and absolution (in advance) for the souls of those who depart during the Paschal Week. On Thursday of Paschal week no kiss or prayer for the departed ("tarheem") or go in peace. They do them all on Saturday: Tarheem, absolution, and raising of incense. On (Easter) Sunday no funeral or weeping.

On Giving

1. Giving is a form of mercy. It is one's generosity with his wealth towards those who are in need. It is not for seeking a reward but as an obedience to God who said: "Sell your possessions and give alms, and gather for yourselves treasures in heaven that does not rust or fade away." Also His saying: "If thou wilt be perfect go sell all you have and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven ..." (Matt 19:21).

2. By giving, one becomes like his creator to the level of his ability, because mercy (giving) and generosity are some of the qualities of God, because the Lord said: "Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful"

3. Giving is lending unto God. It is also a Godly business guaranteed to produce profit. It is a deposit by the wise with his God until a time of need. It is the offerings raised on the live (human) altars. Allah (God) says: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice".

4. Giving makes fasting acceptable (to God) as the prophet (Isiah 85:7) said.

5. Giving makes prayer acceptable as it was said to Cornelious (Acts 10:1-8).

6. Without it, celibacy will benefit nothing as it was said to the five foolish virgins.

7. The commandments and examples concerning giving are very many in the Holy Books. As in the Lord's saying: "If one asks you, give him" and His saying: "Blessed are those who have mercy, because they shall receive likewise" and His saying to those who have mercy: "Come you blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared before the foundation of the world." (Matt 25:34)

8. Giving (Mercy) has to be considered from different view points, because it requires both rich and poor to give, each according to his ability.

9. The reward (of giving) is according to the intention of the heart, and not according to the amount large or small.

10. As for the rich; He said: "he who has more, is required to give more". Also His saying: "he who loves more, is forgiven more". Also His saying: "give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they place in your bosom. For with the same measure you give, it shall be measured back to you again." (LK 6:38)

11. Paul the Apostle follows (the sayings of Christ) by saying: "he which sows sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he which sows bountifully, shall also reap bountifully." (II COR 9:6,7)
12. Also he said to (his disciple) Timothy: "Advice the rich of this world to not be buffed up and to trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. .. Laying up foundation against the times to come that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I TIM 6:17-19)
13. As for the poor, God (Highly Is His Name) said about the woman who gave two pences that she gave more than all of those who gave alms on that day, because she gave willingly, she gave everything she had, she gave out of need but the other gave out of excess. See LK 31:1 ...)
14. He also said: "Anyone who offers you a glass of cold water in the name of Christ, Truly I say to you his reward is preserved in heaven" (Mark 9:40)
15. Also the Lord said on the tongue (mouth) of Isiah: "Divide your bread between you and the hungry" (Is 58:7)
16. The Apostles told us in Descolia (Cannons of the Apostles): "Give to the Lord from your money which He gave you, as you can afford, and what you can afford put in the offering plate even a pence or two or three or more. And share your money, particularly, with the strangers."
17. But the bread which is taken (given away freely) from the widows is pure alms, and even if it was little (because of their poverty) it is acceptable (to God).
18. Those who have nothing (to give), let them fast (not eat), and give have the price of the food they did not eat) to the Saints (meaning Church or Poor).
19. Giving is two types: openly and secretly. Secretly to the poor, hungry, naked, stranger, sick, prisoner, and those under arrest (like war prisoners). The secret giving is better because He (Christ) said give in secret and your father who sees in secret will reward you openly (Matt 5:6). Also, His sayings concerning those who are on His right hand (Matt 25:34-40).
20. Paul the Apostle said in Hebrews: "Don't forget the love for strangers, by which some hosted angels without knowing, and also remember those in chains as if you are imprisoned with them. See Hebrews 13.
21. Openly, is what we do when we come to the priests (clergy) and offer our tithes (1/10th), First Fruits ("Bekoor"), and promises ("Nezoor"). Because the Apostles in Descolia said: "tithes, first fruits, and promises which the believers bring into the Church shall be distributed to the men of God (servants) but those which are specifically brought for the poor shall be distributed, as good agents, to the orphans, widows, those in hardship, the strangers, those in need knowing that you will give account to the Lord about these things. Do not waste the Lord's possessions, do not eat it or waste it away, but guard for yourselves and for those who are in need, so you can be straight in front of God."
22. Listen to what was said early on, and let us repeat it for your benefit: "tithes, first fruits, and promises was made first to the High Priest, Christ, and those who serve him."
23. Also, tithes, first fruits, and promises which you are required to offer, bring it to him (the priest) and he will distribute it to everyone according to need so no one will receive two portions in one day or one week while another receives none at all.
23. Also, your grain, the works of your hands, bring (to the priest) so he may bless it for you, and give him your tithes, first fruits, and promises, and gifts which are the first grain, first fruit, first wine, first oil, first wool, and the first of everything God give you, because he is a priest of God so your offerings are acceptable unto God and your incense becomes good

("tayeeb") to the Lord your God. And He (the Lord) shall bless all the works of your hands and increase the bread of the earth because blessings will fall upon those who give. [Number 23. is repeated twice?]

24. Giving to some groups has priority over giving to other groups, although giving to all the needy is acceptable, as follows:

25. Highest priority in giving is to the (families of) the martyrs, then to the priests (full time clergy), then to the (needy) relative who are believers, then to the (needy) relatives who are non-believers, then to needy believers, then to any other in need even they were non-believers. If there was a widow who is not in need, let her not ask for alms, but she should be satisfied with what she has. But, if there was a widow in need because of physical handicap, or sickness, or raising of children these deserve giving more.

26. If one pays to support the poor, out of pure hearted motive, is considered a perfect man. That who support the martyrs (families) are even more so.

27. If a believer has widows (in his family), it is his duty to support them with his giving; otherwise they become a burden for the Church, which is served better if it supports the true widows (ones without any support).

28. Concerning priests, those with good repute ("Youhssenoun Al-Seerah") deserve more honor, especially those who work hard at teaching and preaching. (out of place maybe!)

29. If a believer does not care for his relatives, especially the ones who are believers, he is worse than the non-believers.

30. Now as long as we are in this world, lets do good to everyone, especially, those who are in the faith (Gal 6:10).

31. The reason giving should not be done discriminating between believers and non-believers is because our Lord said: "Give those who ask you, and those who ask you, do not turn down, .. and be like your Father who makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends his rain on the just and unjust" (Matt 5:44,45)

32. Hurry to help the needy, even before they become Christians.

33. There are times to encourage giving more than other times, but it is favored any time.

34. The more liked times for giving are Sundays and Feast days. This is because in the Old Testament ("Torah") it was said, on your feast do not to come to see my face with empty hands, but bring as much as you can afford, so the Lord your God will bless it all for you (Exodus 23:16).

35. Also (at certain times) as the Apostle said exalting the Galatians for collecting (for the saints in Jerusalem) so do you likewise. He said that they collect (on Sundays) every time they congregated, so it will be ready when he (the Apostle) came to their town. (Gal 6:10).

36. And giving is desired at all times because the Lord said: "give those who ask you" and the Apostle said: "As long as you have opportunity"

37. Also the Apostle said do not neglect to give as long as you have something to give because the day of the Lord is becoming closer.

38. Also, giving is preferred to those mentioned above, and not for some others because the Apostles said: if one misuses his money, or a drunker, or lazy, is not deserving of your giving.

39. Also, giving is preferred for those who are in need, and those who receive shall pray for the giver. Also, they said: those who are not in need are not deserving of giving and should not take, because blessed is indeed those who can care for themselves, so that they do not take away from the real needy: the orphans, the strangers, and the widows. And it is more blessed to give than to receive. And also, Woe to those who take when they are not in need, the Lord will judge them on the day of judgment. But if one accepts giving because of real need like aging, or sickness, or caring for large family, blessed are those, the Lord will honor them, because they cause offering ("Qurban") to be offered to God, and this offering will ask (intercede) at all times for the giver. But remember the saying of the Apostle: "Those who do not desire to labor, do not eat"
40. Also, giving cleanses from sin and absolves from bad deeds, and saves from evil, and is rewarded many times over. And those who neglect to give while they are able to are like non-believers and doers of evil, for the Lord said: "give mercy and everything will be clean for you" (LK 11:41)
41. Also the Apostles talked about giving (Descolia 19), and Daniel said: "For this O'king listen to my advice, absolve your sins with giving, and your transgressions with mercy to the poor" (Dan 4:27). David the king said: "Blessed are those who show mercy to the poor, the Lord will save them in the evil day" (Psalms 41:1). And Solomon said: "Who gives silver to the poor, shall receive many times over. " Also, "he who stops his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard" (Proverbs 21:13)
42. One who does not care for his relatives, especially those who are believers, committed sin and is worse than the non-believer.
43. The Gospel testifies that the Lord, on the day of judgment, will scold those on his left hand because they did not do good while they could and will say to them go away you evil doers to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels.
44. The parable of the rich man shows that he did not show mercy to Lazarus. Also the parable of the five foolish virgins.
45. Who he wants to be perfect, should sell all he has and give it to the poor. This is not for everyone to do.
46. The first type are the ones who desire to be perfect.
47. The second type is as the Apostle said, to live in this world with the least just to satisfy the needs, and the excess to help those in need?
48. Some of the rules of giving is to be not for future gain, with gladness, without hatred or sorrow, with love and without pride. Do not as the bishop for an account of it and do not examine his stewardship of giving. Do not have doubt but be sure that the Lord will reward you and him.
49. Our Lord said: "Do not do alms in front of other people, so they see you, otherwise you have no wages (reward) from your father in heaven. When you do alms (give) do not sound a trumpet. And do not do like the hypocrites in the synagogues and marketplaces, so they can be praised by people, they already received their wages (reward)." (Matt 6:1,2)
50. Do not feel sorry if you give your brother.
51. The Apostle said, everyone according to the desire of his heart, not through sorrow or by force, because the Lord loves a cheerful giver (II COR 8:8).
52. Also, (the Apostle said), "If I give everything I have, and have no love, I benefit nothing" (I Cor 13:3).
53. Do not cast away, from the door of your house, a poor man. Do not scold him, do not put him down, but make your

utmost effort to console him and bring him happiness, so the Lord gives you happiness. Let him sit at your table and from the same cup you drink, let him drink and do not show pride.

54. Do not ask account of the bishop, and do not ask him how he manages what he distributes, or when, or where because the Lord gave him the authority to manage.

55. If you gave, ask for the forgiveness of your sins, and do not be double hearted about it. And know who will reward you.

56. The Apostles commanded not to accept alms from evil doers.

57. Also (Descolia 14) if we do not give alms, how can we care for widows and raise orphans and care for the needy of your people. For this you here from us that it should be that we give as was for the levites from the grain which the people give to you (the clergy) so you will be sufficient and will be sufficiency for all those in need without having to accept giving from the evil doers. And if you all do as such, and there is still need, it is better that one dies from famine than to accept giving from the enemies of God, because he that accepts such giving is shamed and dispised among his friends, for this (David) the prophet said: The Oil of the sinner does no anoint my head.

58. Be of experience everyone, and accept from those who follow the straight path.

59. If out of necessity you accept silver (money) from one you do not desire (accept); i.e. one who is unclean or non-believer; use it for the price of fire wood; so your orphans and widows do not buy food or drink with this money, because it is not lawful. It is just that the money of the ungodly be used as food for the fire, and not as food for the saints.

Laws Concerning Laity

1. First, Christian teachings mentioned in the Gospels, Epistles of the Apostles, are in the forty fifth Chapter.
2. Second, What was mentioned in the Cannons (of the Church) which includes the introduction to the Descolia, Remember you children of God, to do everything which leads you to the obedience to the Lord.
3. If anyone seeks to sin, he is (acting) against the will of God and should be considered one of the disobedient gentiles.
4. Remove from you injustice and the love for larger inheritance. Do not add good to the good which the Lord gave you when you were born.
5. Do not let the hair of your head grow long, do not keep it un-cut and groomed so it will bring loose women to you (to desire you).
6. Do Not wear fine clothes, because it brings temptation.
7. Do not wear shoes which are brightly dyed (flashy) or gold rings in your finger, because these are signs of fornicators.
8. Do not make your hear wetted or bridled and do not take from the hair of your beard which changes the figure or spoils it from it natural (appearance) because the commandment (of Moses) forbids such things.
9. If you rich and do not need a profession for living, do not neglect wisdom (meaning not to idle and instead spend your leisure time doing useful things).
10. When you go out (of the house), associate with believers and speak with them the words of living.

11. You must remove the evil from among you, and forgive your brothers quickly. We do not say that to the rulers (meaning that the ruler might have to condemn and convict evil doers to keep order in society). We advise you to do good always, to receive from God unlimited rewards. And if through the will of Satan you get angry, do not let the sun set on your anger. Solomon said: "The souls of those who remember evil shall receive death." The Lord commanded us to love our enemies, how then can we despise our friends.

12. If you desire to become Christian, follow the Lord's commandments and absolve all the tie of evil.

13. Those who make hatred or judgment, or enmity are strangers to God, because He is God of Mercy. From the beginning, He called all the tribes of the earth to repentance through the godly, the prophets, and the righteous. Because those who lived before the flood had the examples of Abel, Seth, and Anoch who was taken (up to heaven). Those who lived at the time of the flood were pre-warned by Noah. Those who were in Sodom, were warned by Lot who received the strangers (angels). Those after the flood were taught by the example of Malchisedek and the Fathers (meaning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and Job. The Egyptians were pre-warned through Moses. The Israelites were taught through Moses, Joshua son of Nun, Kaleeb, and Phineas. Those who lived before His (Christ) coming, were taught by John (the Baptist), his forerunner. Those after His coming, He (Christ) preached to them concerning Himself when He said: "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near by." Those after his suffering in the flesh were preached to by us, the twelve Apostles, and Paul who became a vessel for honor.

14. That who busy himself with food and bath (material things) day and night and neglects the infinite (that which is not without beginning or end, the Lord), how can one not say to him the gentiles are made more righteous than you are, as the Lord scolded Jerusalem saying that Sodom became more righteous than you (because you received me not).

15. What does the Lord say to those who come to Church late. They make the practices of faith last thing, and their work is their God to worship. Instead, do as the Lord said and make the worship first and the work last. Do not labor for the food which vanishes, but for the food which is life everlasting. He also said: "This is the work of God, to believe on the one whom He sent"

16. It is unlawful for us, the believers, to be vulgar, or to tell secrets, but we must be steadfast in our search (of the holy words) because the Lord commanded us saying: "Do Not throw your jewels in front of the pigs" If the non-believers, hear our witness concerning Christ, they because of their lack of faith might mock us saying it is not true, but He said: "Woe to them who blaspheme against His holy name"

17. Every one who swears, he is swearing against himself.

18. We know that the widows and orphans receive what God sends their way with the fear of God and thanksgiving.

19. Separate yourselves from those who commit killing or adultery, so no one would say that Nazarenes ("Nassara" meaning Christians) joy in acts against the commandments, and (know) that Christ does not need us, we need Him. He asks of us to be comforted in the faith and doing His will.

20. We advise you our brothers, and companions in the service (of God) to escape from words of falsehood, bad words, drunkenness, and lust for food. All together, it is unlawful for you to speak idle words or do which is not useful. Especially on Sundays on which you should be enjoying spiritual happiness.

21. (St.) Peter said: "Do not speak evil of others, Do Not do evil, Do not be double hearted, or speak from both sides of the mouth. And do not desire higher positions. And do not give an evil advise"

22. Andrews said: " Do not envy, do not be stubborn, do not desire to fight, and do not be easily brought to anger, because

anger can lead to killing."

23. Philip said: " Do not lust, because lust leads to fornication. And if the devil of anger connects with the devil of lust, this (combination) leads to destruction of those who follow them. The place of the evil spirit is the sin of the soul, and if he (the devil) finds a small place to enter, he enlarges it and brings with him all the evil spirits and enter into this soul. He will not let this person rise again to see righteousness.

23. James said: "My son, do not speak about the signs (of the times), do not offer incense (to idols), do not follow the hours or stars (horoscopes), and do not desire to do so, because these are signs of idol worship"

24. Nathaniel said: "My son, do not be a liar, or lover of gold (money), or lover of false pride, because all these things lead to stealing. Also, do not be a grumbler, because grumbling leads to blasphemy. Do not be buffed up, but make your fellowship with the righteous and the humble and every thing that befalls you, accept with thanksgiving"

25. Receive the communion from the hands of the bishop, but the breaking of bread afterwards is blessing ("luqmaat Barakka") and not offering ("qurbaan"). If the bishop is not present, accept communion from the priest. If not present from deacon (The Church does not allow deacons to celebrate Eucharist, an arch-deacon may help with giving communion, but even this is rare today). The layman shall not give communion. (There must have been times when highly regarded deacon, gave communion because of shortage of priests)

26. Eat and drink (body and blood) orderly, do not drink until you get drunk (meaning only a small amount only when you receive communion) so people will not mock you.

27. It is not proper for a Christian ("Nussrany") to sing or clap when attending a wedding, but to eat in order as befit the saints.

28. It is unlawful for believers to drink in the houses of evil repute, or those of the ungodly, because these are drinking outside (not obeying the commandments).

29. My beloved, do not act with carelessness, do not roam around aimlessly. Do not desire silver or gold, but desire sufficiency of food and close within limits.

30. The laymen may engage in business, if he could not labor or farm (they considered working with ones hands to be more honored than business which is considered manipulation rather than labor).

31. Give all people more honor than yourself, make peace with everyone and do not desire enmity. Do not hit anyone, except the little ones (children) for teaching and punishment (necessary). And this you do sparingly and carefully, lest you cause big harm, because (if you are not careful) you might cause death.

32. We must be awake always, Do not close your eyes, because we might sleep, the sleep of carelessness. Do not be comfortable in being baptized and receiving the Eucharist, and do not say I am Christian ("Nussrany") while you love material things and do not follow the commandments of Christ. This is like one who entered the bath full of dirt, and exited without rubbing, so his dirt was poured on him once more. These are mocked even by Satan, because their mouth said we cast you away Satan, but they hurried back to him quickly by their bad deeds. Those who call themselves Christian and are not dressed with (good) deeds, they are called by the Lord and by people, Satanic. Because they did not desert the acts of evil but affixed themselves to it, he (Satan) gets their names here (rules them on earth) and in the other place (in the thereafter), if they die in heir sinful ways. Because the Christian must be like Christ in everything. Not desirous of what leads to destruction. Not distributing his inheritance to what is not leading to salvation. Not doing what is not right. Not short on mercy. Not lover of women, but to marry one woman only, raising his children in the fear of God. Not escaping

from tribulations, reading and contemplating what he hears. Paying what he owes and no be lazy. Not neglecting of his slaves (servants), but treating them like his own children. Not difficult in dealing or negotiating. Not neglecting of offerings ("Qurabeen"), first fruits ("Nezoor"). If a Christian person is affixed to all these (good) things , this is the one who is like Christ, and he will be on His (Christ"s) right hand praising with the angels and will receive from Him the crown of eternal life.

33. Do not love silver (money), the love of money is the source of all evil. Let us desire sufficiency in food and cloths, because it is written for us put your burdens on him and He will care for you.

34. Be deserving of hurrying up to the Church with a full desire (for being in the Church) without hypocrisy and do not neglect the works of your hands so you and the poor of your people will have sufficiency.

Duties of Parents Towards Children and Children Towards Parents

35. Parents: teach your children by the Lord and raise them in politeness and the knowledge of Christ. Teach them trades appropriate for the words (meaning worthy trades or hard work), lest they desire idling. If you neglect in admonishing them when need be, they will grow to be cruel and not capable of doing good. For this reason, do not be afraid to teach and admonish them because this will not kill them but gives them life. Because Solomon said: "He that spares his rod hates his son, but he that loves him chastenth him" (Proverbs 13:24)

36. Teach your children the fear of the lord and crown them with (necessary) spanking, they will obey you from childhood.

37. Teach them all the Holy Books of God, and do not relent, lest they disobey.

38. Do not let them go with peers to public drinking places, because this would lead them to evil doing.

39. If they commit wrong with the approval of their parents both parents and children shall be punished. For this chasten them.

40. At the proper time for marriage, find for them the good spouses.

41. It is not required of children to give gifts to parents, but for parents to give good gifts to their children.

42. Children obey your parents in the Lord, because it is good to do so. This also is the first commandment: Honor your father and mother so your days on earth shall be longer. Parents do not provoke your children to anger but raise them in the nurture and admonition (teachings) of our Lord.

43. Children obey your parents because this is seen as good by the Lord. Parents do not get upset unnecessarily with your children, because this can cause them grief.

44. Teach your children the prayers of the hours with all purity.

45. Honor your parents in the flesh because they brought you to the world.

Husbands and Wives

46. Paul the Apostle said in his epistle to the Ephesians: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;" (Ephesians 5:23-26)

47. (St.) Peter said: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." (I Peter 3:1-6)

48. And to the men, live with your wives fully minded that they are weaker vessels and honor them because they inherit with you eternal life.

49. Listen all ye servants, sons of God, every male person should bare his wife, and do not be buffed up or two faced towards her, but be kind and straight forward. Be fast at pleasing her, and do not desire another woman, otherwise you are forcing her to do likewise.

50. Woman, fear your husband, be mindful of him, please him only after pleasing God. Give him comfort and serve his needs.

51. A wise woman shall do every good thing for her husband. She shall care for all the affairs of her servants, and her hands serve all that is good. Her fingers are on the weaving machine. She gives to the poor, and she sews cloth for her husband and herself. (See Proverbs 21:10-)

52. If you walk in the way, cover your head with your robe, and with your purity. This will save you from the staring of evil people. Do Not put make up on your face, because no part of you needs it. Let your face always look down, and you are covered all around.

53. A free woman shall not let her hair down in the Church. She shall not leave her Children with baby sitters, she shall not cease the service of her household, and she shall not talk back to her husband.

About Slaves/Servants

54. Paul said in his epistle to Colossians: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." (Colossians 3:22-)

55. Masters be fair to your servants and treat all of them the same.

56. Forgive your servants their sins against you, so the Lord will forgive you your sins, and He does not take by the face (has no respect of person).

57. The Christian does not put his slaves (servants) down, but treats them like his own children.

58. He should give them rest on Sundays and Holidays.

Concerning Satanic Acts

59. Those who practice witchcraft, horoscope, soothsayers, and interpretation of dreams, interpreters of needs, operators of houses of entertainment, shall all be separated.

60. Those who follow the teachings of Pharisees ("Hounaffaa") or teachings of the Jews shall be warned first then they shall be separated.

61. Those who are false priests, meet with doers of magic, or devil priests or servants shall be separated .

62. Those who tie or loosen or do call on spirits ("mandaal") shall be separated.

63. Those who follow maggots, or contemplate the phase of the sun or the moon to do certain things, and those who tie robes, or dance, or chant for casting the devil shall also be separated.

On Tithes, Pledges and Trusts

1. The Lord said in the Torah: Give Tithes, Give Tithes from the fruits of all your grain and plants and everything your land produces

2. In the Gospel He said: Give to God what is Gods Also when He wooed the Pharisees, He said: You do not follow the simple things of showing mercy and having faith He said you should have done this and not neglect the others.

3. For those who are full time servants in the Church to receive all their needs from the Church if they are priests or deacons as mentioned in the book of Levites concerning priests. The Lord told Aaron: You and your children and your children children have been given the offerings which are offered to the Lord for your labors and you shall keep the offerings which the Israelites shall offer unto me. And later on in the same book it said, all the first fruits of oil, wine, and grain is for you (the priests). Also, every forbidden and every first born of people and animals is yours.

4. The first fruits of the land and your press, oil, honey, milk, wool, and the first wages of your labors, you shall take to the priest or bishop (when present), and he shall pray a thanksgiving prayer for you outside the altar in your presence.

5. Promises in the law are covenant between man and his creator, by which one completes a virtue for himself or his offspring or to obtain a need from God the Al-mighty, which one determines in his mind or loudly in private or in front of a witness to satisfy the promise when one receives what he asked for. A promise can also be made through the intercession of a saint or martyr or directly to God. Promises could be monetary or material.

6. What one promises of himself is fasting, prayer, celibacy, monastic living, or abstaining from bad habits for the salvation of the soul or to receive a perceived benefit on earth or a real benefit in heaven.

7. Promising an offspring (son or daughter) to the Lord is a good thing, but if one changes his mind let him pay 50 Shekels of Silver for a promised male age 20 to 60. And for a female two thirds this amount. If the age of the promised is 5 to 20 years, then he has to pay 20 Shekels of Silver, if it was female, let him pay 10 Shekels of Silver. If the promised age is 5 year to 1 month, let him pay 5 Shekels of Silver, and for a female let him pay 3 Shekels of Silver.

8. If one promises and can not pay what he promised, let him come to the priest or bishop and the priest or bishop will determine what he can afford to pay according to his situation.

9. If one promised a sheep or any other animal and wants to pay money in its place, let him come to the priest and the priest will determine a fair amount to be paid instead. Let the priest be fair in the fear of God without favoring the Church over the worshipers and also let him not be lenient either. Let all measures be proper weight (Methkaal), one Methkaal is 20 Daniques. According to this measure, estimate all promises.

10. Any promise you make, do it timely without delay or neglect, otherwise you will be committing a sin against God, because if you can not satisfy do not promise so you will not fall in sin. But all the promises of your mouths, you shall do what you promised.

11. Every man who promises or swore, or made himself owe to God let him fulfill his promise and let him not go back on the word of his mouth. But if a woman promised and she was still in her fathers house, and if her father did not object to the promise, he is responsible for the promise if she can not fulfill. If she is married the same applies to her husband in place of her father.

Trusts

12. There is six issues related to trusts: 1) The Trust, 2) The Items in Trust, 3) The Person Who Makes a Trust, 4) The Place for Which the Trust Is Made, 5) The One Who Manages the Trust, and 6) The Rest of the Conditions.

13) Trusts are two kinds: Gifts and Donations.

14. Trust for those who are not poor at the time of forming a trust like parents, relatives, or friend. This type is a gift from the giver to the receiver intended for good remembrance on earth and in the thereafter.

15. Trusts for the needy and poor strangers or relatives alike. Intended to help (benefit) those who receive them in the world and to benefit the giver in the thereafter. This is a blessed giving which will benefit the giver on earth and in heaven, because if the Apostle Paul says: `That if one sins, he reaps the wages of sin here and thereafter' It is logical to say that the Justice of Al-Mighty that the benefits of giving are here and it will follow him (meaning in heaven).

16. Trusts are those things which give benefit without decrease of the original value. It is preferred not to use money for trusts, instead fixed assets like real estate, farms, fields and the likes as mentioned previously concerning Church Trusts. There are fixed assets which are not good for a trust like a barren land or farm, because it produces no profit. Also not recommended to give for a trust slaves, or bee hives, or sheep, because the value thereof can change and also it can completely disappear through theft, escape, or the likes.

17. If one desires to use the mentioned (above), as a trust, it is better if it is sold and the money is used to buy what is more appropriate for a trust property.

18. If one has equipment or items like the above included as a trust, it is better to give the fixed assets as a trust, and the other assets as a donation, so the receiver of the trust can sell it easily if he needs to.

19. The one who initiates a trust should be capable and have reached the legal age and in sound body (health) and mind.

20. Those who receive the trust should be abiding by the Godly Cannons (Followers of the faith of God), and not be idol worshippers. And in general those who do not worship God, robbers, and fornicators should be excluded from receiving trusts. If the trust is already made to them, it should be stopped until it is proven that they have stopped their sinful ways, at which time they start to gain their benefits again. It is forbidden to create a trust for unknowns.

21. The administrator of a trust shall be selected by the one who make the trust, and shall rule over it while the maker of the trust is alive and after his death. The maker of the trust can administer it in his life as well, but if he dies without appointing an administrator, the receiver of the trust can administer it if he is capable, also it can be administered by one appointed by the ruler as the ruler see fit.
22. The administrator can be the bishop as well.
23. If through witnesses it is proven that the administrator is mismanaging the trust, he can be replaced by one known of being honest and capable. The receiver of a trust can not rule it as sole administrator, also administrators can not rule without the receiver(s).
24. The administration of trusts (by bishops) is like what was mentioned under giving, if they are made administrators of the affairs (souls) of the people of God, are they not capable of handling trust. Also, the saying, they administer all that belong to the Church of God. Trust shall be administered by people who are honest and have the fear of God in them.
25. Ten Rules for Running a Trust, starting with the: First, it shall be used only for the benefit of the beneficiaries until it vanishes, and none of it shall be sold, and if it is sold, it should be replaced. It can not be given away, or transferred, or used as collateral, or as ransom, or as donation. And it also shall be cared for carefully.
26. Second, the conditions of the trust shall be followed exactly, which is the continued benefit of the receiver of the trust.
27. Third, if a trust was made for one who was missing, the benefit goes to the Church only to be used for supporting the needy. if relative(s) of the one who made the trust are needy they are given priority over others in need. As for the needy, it is according to priority based on higher levels need.
28. Also, if a trust is made to one who is not qualified to receive, it shall return to the Church as explained above. But, it shall return to the original receiver if it is proven that he corrected his ways.
29. If there was an end time for the trust, it shall be administered according to rules above and if it stops early and starts again, shall be according to above rules.
30. If the receiver of a trust is in bad need, he shall receive what he needs even if it means that the trust will disappear!!!
31. Fourth, The improvement of the trust is according to the rules set by the maker of the trust regardless of how the recipient feels about these rules.
32. Fifth, If the trust is deteriorating, income from the trust shall be used to repair it at the time of the problem or at future time.
33. Sixth, if the maker of a trust is impoverished, he shall have first priority to receive what satisfies his needs before those to whom the trust was made.
34. Seventh, If one makes a trust of a property which is not a sole ownership, he can do so. The other owners can chose to divide the property if this is possible to do.
35. Eighth, It is unlawful to tax trusts as stated by Bassellious.
36. It is unlawful to make a trust without witnesses known to be of good conduct, and knowledge. Seven or five witnesses, but if that number is not available, trust witnesses can be three or two of the best present.

37. Tenth, It is unlawful for the maker of a trust to hide parts or all of it, be warned of what happened to Anania and his wife Saphira as mentioned in the book of Acts. Also, as the Lord punished Aber Ibn Karmy when he hid the silver and (statues in his tent) breaking the commands of (God) by Joshua the son of Noon, which caused him, his family, and his animals to be destroyed.

Concerning Saturdays, Sundays, The Lord's Feasts, and Pilgrimages

1. It is not proper for Christians to take Saturday as their Holiday as the Jews do. They should work Saturday.
2. Do not keep Saturday as the Jews do.
3. Do not prostrate yourself on Sundays and the Lord's feasts because it is days of joy. Although it should not be done, no one should fear Church punishment if they do.
4. On Sundays, there should be no judgment or holding of court or investigation. And no one should ask another for a debt or any unpaid obligation on this day, but you all should go together to Church. You all should come to Church with purity and humility without fear of an enemy or a judge or the likes. And if any tax collector dares to collect from people going to Church, he should be made to pay penalty.
5. Meet in the Church everyday as you can, and specially on Saturdays and Sundays. If the gentiles do not miss a meeting and also the Jews do not miss a Sabbath day meeting, and they both gain none, how can you answer the Lord when you do not attend the Church of God.
6. Do not speak unprofitable words at all times, and especially on Sundays in which we rejoice spiritually in the Lord. The prophet said: `Worship the Lord with gladness and praise Him in fear and trembling'
7. The servants shall work five days, and they shall use Saturday, on which the Lord rested, and Sunday on which he rose again to serve God.
8. It was stated under fasting, that you do not fast (abstain) on Saturdays and Sundays, except the Saturday on which He was in tomb.
9. On all Saturdays and Sundays, except Saturday in which the Lord was in tomb, come together in the Church and rejoice.
10. The first Lord's feast is the annunciation on the mouth of Gabriel the Archangel to the queen of us all, the mother of the savior Mary. This is celebrated on the 29th of Baramhaat.
11. Remember to keep these feasts to the Lord: The Lord's Birth on the 25th of the 9th month of the Hebrew Calendar which is the 29th of the 4th month of the Coptic Calendar. Epiphany must be honored by you, because on this day the Lord's divinity was revealed when He was baptized by John (the Baptist), this shall be celebrated on the 6th of the 10th month of the Hebrew Calendar, which is the 11th of the 5th month of the Coptic Calendar.
12. Let us celebrate these feasts at night not because we dislike fasting, but because we honor the feast.
13. Celebrate the feast of the `Zaitouna' (Olive Branches) (meaning Palm Sunday), because on it the Lord entered Jerusalem.
14. It is lawful for you who were bought with the precious blood of Christ to celebrate the Pascha. Do it once a year and not twice, because He who died, died once for all of us.

15. Be careful not to celebrate your Pascha with the Jewish Pascha, since they celebrate 14 days after the Crescent, you celebrate 21 days after the Crescent.
16. Only on a Sunday shall you celebrate Resurrection and do it after midnight, at the cocks crow, and be together in the Church the whole night praying and reading the psalms, prophets, and the law. If you baptize unbelievers that day, read the Gospels to them in fear and trembling. Talk to the people what is profitable for their salvation and bring your offerings which the Lord commanded you to do on the hands of the Apostles saying: `do this in remembrance of me' Then break your fast rejoicing that Jesus Christ Rose from the dead and became the first to rise again. Let that be a law for you unto the age of ages. And in this age unto the second coming of the Lord.
17. Eight days after Resurrection is a feast, because on this day Thomas believed and was satisfied when the Lord showed him the places of the nails and the place of the spear in his side.
18. From the first day after resurrection count 40 days and celebrate the Ascension of the Lord which was the completion of all things He was to complete. He ascended to the Father who sent Him and sat on the right hand of the Power.
19. Ten days after Ascension, which is the 50th day after resurrection, celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost). Let this be a great feast because at the third hour on that day our Lord Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit, the Barakleet and the Disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with many diverse tongues as they were given utterances and preached the Jews and the Gentiles that Christ is the Lord.
20. After you celebrate the Pentecost, celebrate another week, because we should celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit which was given to us.
21. It is a sin to fast on resurrection Sunday or during the Pentecost Season, because these are days of spiritual joy and we should not replace joy with sadness.
22. Do not do any work on Paschal Friday or the Sunday that follows it, resurrection because these are feasts to the lord.
23. Do not do any work on the day of ascension because it is the day on which the Lord's will was completed.
24. Do not do any work on the day of Pentecost, because on this day the Holy Spirit descended on the believers by Christ.
25. Do not do any work on the day of Christ Birth because on this date Grace was willed to all humans.
26. Do not do any work on the day of the feast of the bathe (epiphany) because on this day the divinity of Christ was manifested and the Father testified for Him and the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove and the Baptist testified for Him saying this is truly God and the Son of God.
27. Do not do any work on the feast of the Apostles because they became your teachers who taught you the knowledge of Christ and made you worthy to receive the communion of the Holy Spirit.
28. It came in the Chapter on giving, that you should not come to your Lord's feasts in the hands of the Lord empty handed.
29. About the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, "beet Allah almighty" (the house of the Al-mighty God). You shall visit the Holy Land if you can, to see the Holy sites, do it without delay. Visit the places of Christ passion where He suffered in the flesh and also visit the place where He rose again (the Holy Sepulcher) and receive the blessings of these holy places. If you can not make the visit, send offerings in the visit place to help maintain the holy places and to support those who care for it as you can. Your offerings can be gold, or silver, or clothes, or vessels, or appropriate books, or the likes. Also, the Holy

Land can have a portion in your will with those others who receive inheritance from you. This is good and acceptable to the Lord. It will be for you an offering in the Holy Land acceptable to God The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Concerning Martyrs, Confessors, and Those Who Depart the Faith

1. The Martyrs shall be held in high esteem with you as they were with us. Like James the Blessed (the Great) Bishop and Stephen the Arch-deacon. Those are blessed by God and their virtues are unimaginable.
2. The Christian who is despised by a government for the sake of the name of the Lord and the orthodox faith and for the love of the Lord deserves your support, with exceeding effort take care of the needs of such so he may find the strength to continue. Also care for those whom he cared for so he does not have to worry about them. Because such person is a martyr, a saint, a brother of Christ, and a son of the most high, and a dwelling for the Holy Spirit, and a witness for the suffering of Christ and an heir to the form of his glory.
3. For this reason, all you believers, serve the needs of the saints with your possessions and your efforts. If one of you has nothing to give, let him fast and give half his wages to the saints, but if one is wealthy let him give from his wealth and his wages everyday to the saints. And if one has to give all what he owns to free one of those brothers, he will be blessed friend of Christ.
4. The martyrs are those about whom the Lord said: 'If one professes me in front of people, I profess him in front of my Father in heaven.' If you share with them their sorrows, you will be professed in heaven because you cared for them.
5. If one who helps the martyrs is punished for it, he is blessed because he shared with the martyrs and became like Christ in sharing with Him the suffering. We also (meaning the Apostles) have suffered many tribulations on the hands of the (head) priests and we used to depart from their presence filled with joy because we became worthy to share the suffering of Christ our Savior. So, you also rejoice if you suffer likewise because you will be blessed in the day of judgment.
6. Those who are persecuted for the orthodox faith and have to escape from city to city for the commandments of the Lord, receive them, comfort them, and honor them like the martyrs. Rejoice if you share with them their persecution because Christ said: 'Blessed are you if they persecute you for my name because they persecuted the prophets before you. Rejoice and be extremely glad. If they persecuted me, will they not persecute you!' If they drive you out of a city, escape to another. Also, in this world there shall be sorrows and they shall bring you in front of councils, kings, and leaders for my sake and this shall be a witness for you. Those who endure to the end shall be saved. Those who turn away and love themselves more than their love for Christ will not receive mercy, because they loved the people more than their love for God and are enemies of God, and in place of the eternity of the blessed they shall receive eternal damnation in the pit of fire. Because for this the Lord said: 'Who denies me in front of people, I deny him in front of the angels of my Father.'
7. The Lord told us His disciples, if one loves son or daughter more than his love for me, he does not deserve me. And he who does not carry his cross and follow me, does not deserve me. If one loves his self, he shall despise it And he that despises his self for me, shall find it. What does one profit if he loses his self and what shall one give for ones self. He also said: 'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and has no power on your souls. I tell whom you shall fear. Fear him who after he kills the body has power to put the body and soul both in the fire of eternal damnation'
8. We ought to pray lest we fall into temptation. Also if we are prepared to witness, let us do it with steadiness confessing the Glorified name which is the name of our savior.
9. Let us not be surprised if we are persecuted. Let us love not the world, neither the honors of the world, neither the glory of the world, neither the glory of the leaders of the world, and let us not be like the Jews who preferred the glory of this world more than the glory of the Lord.

10. Let us confess so we can be saved (relieved) and become able to strengthen others so that we are not cause for destruction of others which leads to our eternal suffering many times over (if we do not confess).
11. Let us not lead ourselves into temptation, because the Lord said 'The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' But if we fall in temptation, let us not change our story (lie) for fear of short suffering. And if one denies the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, because he is afraid of suffering for a short while, he is setting himself up for grave sickness which has no cure and his suffering will be here and in the thereafter in the darkness of the outcasted where weeping and gnashing of teeth.
12. If one is suffering for Christ sake before receiving baptism, he should go without sorrow of the heart because the suffering he endures for Christ sake is to him pure baptism, because he dies with Christ in his suffering.
13. Let him (who is martyred) not worry about baptism because he is baptized by his own blood.
14. If one left the orthodox faith because of fear of the unbelievers or by force, and if he comes back to the faith with pure repentance and sorrow from the heart, and with humility and willingness to profess the orthodox faith, receive him. If he was previously a priest, he can again serve the priesthood because his denial was not by his free will. If he was a laymen, he can be allowed to serve in the church and if qualified to join the priesthood. But if one departed the faith, out of fear without being beaten or persecuted, or without losing possessions for the faith, this shall stay in repentance for a long time. Only after he is proven to repent, will he receive communion except if he was sick the sickness of death, but if he recovers from his sickness, he shall continue in his repentance.
15. Those mentioned above shall be accepted back to the fold after long repentance (as mentioned above) because our religion teaches kindness and mercy.
16. If one caused others as well to depart the faith, his repentance period shall be longer.
17. Everyone whose blood was shed for the (Christian) faith, shall be considered martyr and shall have a remembrance on the date of his martyrdom.
18. The places where you the martyrs (remains) are kept, shall be controlled by the universal Church, not that the Church needs the corpses, but because the martyrs are the glory of the Church. Because the Holy Spirit spoke about one Holy, Catholic (Universal), Apostolic Church based on our fathers the saintly Apostles (many of them were martyrs).
19. Let us place the remains of the martyrs in the Churches and Monasteries, so that miracles and wonders shall take place in those places for those who are sick, in distress, or in bad need. Those who mock these things, God will convict them through the wonders and miracles and the healing of bodies and souls and the casting out of devils (through the intercession of the martyrs).
20. Who through the sin of pride mocks those who come to the martyrs feasts, shall be anathematized.
21. It is unlawful for the believers to leave the feasts of the martyrs of Christ and attend celebrations for martyrs not in Christ. Remember the saying of the Apostle Paul: 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' (Romans 8:35-36).
22. The Apostle Paul continues in the epistle to the Corinthians: 'Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils

by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.' (II Corinthians 11:23-27). Showing the many types of sufferings he endured for Christ's sake including hunger, Thirst, beatings, imprisonment, hiding, fearful situations, laboring, sleeplessness, nakedness, cold exposure, being thrown to the lions, .. etc. He at the end endured and with patience received the crown of martyrdom when his blood was offered (As a Roman Citizen he was beheaded) in the city of Rome. Also, most of the Apostles were martyred and their stories are in the books of the martyrs (meaning the Synxarium) and is read on their feasts, so we ask the Lord to give us the benefit of their intercessions so we can be successful in all the affairs of our lives. To Him is Glory and Thanksgiving unto the age of ages. Amen.

Concerning the Sick: What The Sick Ought to Do

1. The Apostle Yacoub (James) said in the Catholic Epistle: 'Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.' (James 5:14,15).
2. The Gospel testified that when the Lord sent the Apostles two by two, they anointed the sick for the healing of their sickness. And the crazed man who troubled the disciples in the beginning of their ministry, they brought him to the Lord (to Jesus) and He healed him and commanded the devil to be cast out while saying: 'This kind can not be cast out except by fasting and prayer.'
3. The prophet David said in the psalms: '{To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.} Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.' (Psalms 41:1-3).
4. The Book of Kings (in the Old Testament) mentions that the one who sent to the Gods of Aphron to ask for healing was scolded by the Lord and died instantly.

What the Believers Should Do for Them

5. The Lord said: 'I was sick and you visited me.'
6. He also said: 'And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:' (Matt 25:40-41).
7. The Apostles said: 'The sick who are not able to come to the Church, visit them every day.'
8. The deacons are required to inform their bishop (and/or priest) of all that are sick, so he visits them.
9. The completion of these commands are mentioned in the chapter on giving.

Concerning the Departed

1. Get together without delay in the Church to read the Holy Books and to sing (the appropriate) songs on them who departed, the martyrs, the saints, the leaders, and the brethren who departed while in the faith of God. Afterwards, have the Communion of thanksgiving which is the holy body and honored blood of the King (of Glory) in the Church to say your farewell to those who departed. You begin (the funeral service) by walking in front of (the casket) him singing (the appropriate) hymns if he departed while in the faith of Christ. The prophet David said: 'Precious in the sight of the LORD is

the death of his saints.' (Psalm 116:15). Also he said: `Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.' (Psalm 116:7). Also in the Gospel, He speaks about the God of the Living saints: `I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' (Matthew 22:32) (meaning that those who departed are not dead but alive in the paradise).

2. Also about the bones of (the departed), those who are alive in the Lord, these bones are not despised or unclean. Think of how the bones (remains) of Elisah raised the dead who was killed by the allies of the Syrians. When his corpse came close to the bones of Elisah, he was raised. This was only possible because the body (remains) of Elisah is holy.

3. Also, Joseph the wise embraced the body of his father Jacob on the bed of his death. Also (the prophets) Moses and Joshua carried the body (bones/remains) of Joseph (out of Egypt) and did not consider it unclean or defiled (deed).

4. We the bishops shall touch the bodies of those who departed and do not consider it unclean to do so. But let us do it with purity and wisdom (wisely).

5. Washing (bathing) the dead is allowed but not absolutely necessary. Remember the young woman, Tabetha. The Book of Acts mentions that they washed her and if it was not allowed, the saints (believers) would not have done it because the disciples would have prevented them from doing it. Also, the departed could be wearing (affected by) the effects of their sickness, for this reason they ought to be washed before they enter (are brought) into the Church.

6. Also it was mentioned in laws in the Old Testament that if a woman dies after she gives birth, wash her body and bring her to the Church, because death has cleansed her.

7. If the departed was a priest (clergy) bring him in front of the altar (area where deacons usually stand), but if he was one of the congregation, bring him farther away from the altar. The highest ranking priest shall start the service with the prayer of thanksgiving, then the Psalms, and Gospel from the verses concerning the rising up of the dead and confessing the resurrection of the dead and the life of the coming ages. After that the ranking priest followed by those who are in attendance shall greet the departed kissing him (his casket?). Afterwards, the ranking priest shall pour oil on him (his casket) after that he shall be kept (buried) in a place suitable to his position (in the Church, meaning bishops with bishops, priests with other priests, etc.).

8. Pray the third day for those who departed using the Psalms and the Prayers of the Departed, because Christ rose on the third day. Do also a remembrance of the live and dead on the seventh day. Also do a remembrance after the completion of one month and the completion of one year, because this is what the Israelites did for Moses. Give to the poor from the possessions of the departed and if you are invited to eat, do it orderly and with the fear of God.

9. You ought to remember those who departed on the third, seventh, fourteenth, and fortieth day.

10. Also, remember them on the ninth, twelfth, fortieth day, and the completion of two months.

11. The customary in the Church these days (the time of Awlaad Al-Assal) is to have service on the day of burial, the tenth day, the completion of one month, six months, and one year. And many who can afford have liturgy service on the completion of the fortieth day and give to the poor on this day. Those who can do more, let them. These extras will not benefit the departed but will please him (his soul).

12. If a bishop depart, the "Khoury Abescopose" (assistant bishop), priests and deacons shall walk in front of him (his casket procession) as children in their father's funeral. But if one of those departs, the bishop shall walk in front as a father in his son's funeral. In their funeral, the readings will be as appropriate for a teacher and a worthy spiritual father. The entire congregation shall attend their funeral because they are called spiritual fathers to all, and it shall be made known of their

departure in all the Churches and all the Monasteries of their region. Also, they shall be remembered in the Church without restriction?.

13. Do not be unfair in burial expense, pay those who dig the graves and those who are in custody of them. Let the bishop pay from the income of the Church for maintaining these places (when necessary).

14. Do not grieve for those who are departed. Those who do are the ones who have no hope as the Apostle Paul said (1 Tess 4:13).

15. Because the sorrow which is for the sake of God gives us repentance from sin, but the sorrow for the world produces death.

16. If a priest loses a family member, let him neither grieve, nor rent his cloth, nor cry, nor weep, nor pull his hair, but be extremely thankful to God and have patience like the patience of Job.

Concerning Food, Dress, Housing, and Lines of Work

Concerning Food

1. About food, nothing is forbidden except those which were forbidden by the Apostles in the Book of Acts and their Cannons in which they said: `That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.' (Acts 15:29). Also do not eat what lion (wild animals) kill, and this comes from the Old testament (Exodus 22:31). You are not to eat what was offered to idols, because by doing so you share with idols worshippers their worship and that can lead you to worshipping idols. These forbidden things also have bad effects on the body, the mind, and the soul. When it hurts the body, it hurts also the persons behavior and can lead to destruction. These things are not defile by nature, because they are God's creation, but because it can harm us, it was written for us in the Torah that God found everything He created to be very good. Also in the Gospel, the Lord said: `There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.' (Mark 7:15). Saint John "Golden Mouth" Chrysostom said by this saying, the Lord rescinded many of the laws of the Torah.

2. This opinion is supported by what came in the Book of Acts stated by St. Luke the Evangelist: `On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.' (Acts 10:9 -16).

3. The learned saints John Chrysostom and others understood this to mean two things:

First, hidden meaning that the gentiles after they believe are not defiled and it is proper for the Jews to meet with them and have communion with them,

Second, Obvious meaning which is animals are clean and are to be used for food as long as common sense sees that they are fit for us to eat.

4. So anything other than blood, strangled, slaughtered for idols, and wild animals kill are legitimate for us to eat except that we also have to abstain from what the law forbade since it forbade it because it can harm the body and/or the soul.

5. The above is two categories,

First, Things that are not fit to eat which includes not only animals but plants as well which can be poisonous. Examples are animals which do not spilt toe nail and animals which have hooks or trunks because these could be poisonous or feed on poisonous things. Also plants that can poison or harm the body and/or mind (for example drugs). Also in this category if some were found to heal a sick and the same were found to harm a healthy person, it is to be given to the sick as medicine for healing and forbidden from the others to save them from harm (talking about medications which can have healing elements and bad side effects and how even then they recognized such things).

Second, anytime one has doubts about food or when others have doubt about it is not wise to eat it.

6. Add to these two reason the saying of Paul the Apostle in his Epistle to Romans: `Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.' (Romans 14:1-7).

7. Also his saying in the Epistle to the Corinthians: `All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.' (I Corinth 6:12-13).

8. About what was sacrificed to idols, we know that idols are nothing in this world, and that there is no God but the One God. But the knowledge of these things is not given to everyone, for this reason we forbid eating the sacrifice to idols, so we do not become a stumbling block. For this reason `if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend` (I Corinthians 8:13).

9. Also he said: `Even as I please all men in all thing , not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.' (I Corinth 10:33) which also means: `All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.' (I Corinthians 6:12). For this reason we eat everything sold in the butcher shop, and when you are invited to supper eat everything they offer in front of you without examination so not to offend them, but if it is said one says this was sacrificed to idols, do not eat because of the desire to save the one who said it.

10. Also he said to Timothy: `Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' (I Timothy 4:1-5).

11. No food can defile a bishop or a priest except that he can leave it all for the sake of God.

12. It is proper for all Christians and in particular the priests and monks to not desire to have variety of foods, not desire the delicious of foods, or that is desirable because of soft touch or aroma or color. But have sufficiency in things that are useful to the body and commonly available according to the season and the place because the Lord said (to Martha) ` , thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful:' (Luke 10:41).

13. Paul following the saying of Christ wrote to Timothy: 'And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.' (I Timothy 6:8). Also the Lord warned about over eating and drinking (Matt 24:42-51 and Luke 12; 41-48). He also called them blessed who hunger and thirst for the kingdom of God (Sermon on the Mount).

Concerning Clothing

14. It was mentioned, in many places, concerning cloths that it is prohibited to wear the fine and colorful of it. Also, for altar service to wear special white robe. Also, it is prohibited for women to wear men cloths and for men not to wear women cloths. It is not proper for men to wear gold rings and for women to wear golden jewelry nor fancy cloth. The ascetics are to wear rough woolen cloths or the likes. When one dresses according to the advice it is good.

15. One ought to dress according to the dress code of the region of his residence and according to the code of his vocation. For example, it is not proper for a priest to dress like a soldier or for a physician to dress like a builder, .. etc.

16. He who is a disciple (follower) of Christ shall be careful what to wear, because the Lord advised his disciples to be careful about what to wear and not to vaunt. He also praised John the Baptist because of the simplicity of his dress because John was not one to wear fine cloths. We ought to use as examples to follow the disciples, apostles, prophets, and saints. St. John Chrysostom said that believers should be known by what they serve at the food table, their dress, their speech, and the way they walk because our faith teaches us what is proper in all these things.

17. The wise saint Bassellious said: 'We ought to wear only what covers our bodies and protect us from the cold and heat. To follow this law: The laymen ought to wear what is commonly available, and the ascetics what is not soft.'

Concerning Housing

18. As it is advised for the followers of this highly regarded faith to desire less food and cloth, it is also advised to do the same in selecting a house. It is sufficient to seek what protects from the elements for which houses are for.

19. The Lord Jesus Christ who is the best example for us to follow had no house or even a place to rest his head (Matt 11:7-12). See also Matt 8:20 and Luke 9:58. His Apostle Paul praised those who lived in caves and dens '(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.' (Hebrews 11:38). Chrysostom said that the houses of the strangers and travelers should be known and you should prepare them as the present need necessitate.

20. The one who envisions and desires the heavenly homes will not want to stay in our earthly houses for very long, because the heavenly is much better. Those are the ones who are not affected by the width or the breadth of this world and will not sorrow for missing the best of this world.

Concerning Professions

21. All professions are acceptable except: Ones which are against the laws (God's Laws) such as magic, astrology, idols making, sorcery, reading the stars, places of (adult) entertainment, dancing, (prize) fighting, and witchcraft.

22. Paulidis said: Every maker (of castings) should know that it is not proper to make idols, neither statue nor flat image.

23. All the makers of manufactured things, after they are baptized, if found to make any of these things shall be separated (from the Church) until they repent

24. It is well known that the above mentioned industries are not needed by people, because people can certainly do without

it. The appropriate industries for the Christians are two kinds:

First, Industries important for sustaining life, these are agriculture and hunting for food, tailoring for cloths, construction for building homes, and medicine for health maintenance and fighting diseases.

Second, support industries needed to maintain and/or extend the purposes of the above mentioned such as carpentry, metal works, writing, milling, baking, bread making, teaching, and merchandising.

25. Merchandising (trade) could be necessary for moving goods from one region to another. It also requires shipping and storage.

26. It is desirable for all these industries to become proficient in the most basic activities only. For example, it is not proper to neglect basic agriculture in favor of fruits hybrids or flowers over production. Also, it is not proper to neglect basic cloth making in favor of dying and ornamental cloths. Also, same applies to caring for building homes instead of caring for decorating and enlarging them. This was pointed out by the wise (John) Chrysostom in his commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

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