

**Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
Archangel Michael Church
Howell, NJ**

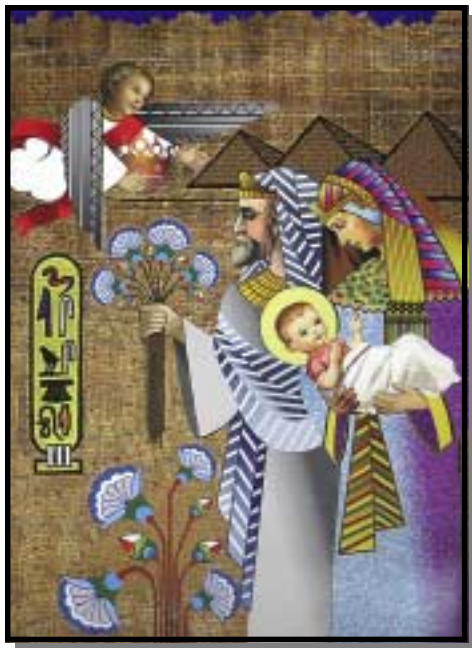


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**THE HOLY FAMILY IN
EGYPT**

From the Synodical Committee of the
third millennium celebration

The advent of the Holy Family to Egypt,
seeking refuge, is an event of the utmost
significance in our dear country's long
history.

Moved by the spirit of prophecy, Hosea

(Continued on page 4)

*When they had heard the king,
they departed; and, lo, the star,
which they saw in the east, went
before them, till it came and
stood over where the young
child was.*

*When they saw the star, they
rejoiced ...they saw the young
child with Mary his mother, and
fell down, and worshipped him:
and when they had opened their
treasures, they presented unto
him gifts; gold, and frankin-
cense, and myrrh. And being
warned of God in a dream that
they should not return to Herod,
they departed into their own
country another way. And when
they were departed, behold, the
angel of the Lord appeared to
Joseph in a dream, saying,
Arise, and take the young child
and his mother, and flee into
Egypt....When he arose, he took
the young child and his mother
by night and departed into
Egypt. And was there until the
death of Herod: that it might be
fulfilled which was spoken of the
Lord by the prophet, saying,*

***Out of Egypt I
called my Son.***

(Matt 2:9-14)

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES

From El-Keraza , June 1992



The descending of the Holy Spirit was the beginning of the work of the Christian Church. The Lord Jesus Christ started forming the Church when He chose the twelve apostles and sent them (Matthew 10: 1- 16). Even though He appointed the apostles however, He did not allow them to start preaching except after the descending of the Holy Spirit upon them. This great occurrence then, was the point of great conversion in the beginning of preaching on the largest scale. **The Holy Spirit was the One who gave the necessary power for the work of preaching.** The sending of the Holy Spirit was a promise from the Lord (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7), however, despite this He said to them, "*Behold, I send the Promise; Of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city Of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high*" (Luke 24.49). Where will this power come from? He said

to them regarding this, "*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*" (Acts 1:8). The Spirit of God was essential for them, for they could not work without Him.

They waited according to the Lord's command. Their previous preparation for service which lasted more than three years did not dispense them of the Holy Spirit and His work in and with them. Perhaps these ten days which they waited were days of prayer, hope and preparation from the heart for the coming work.

How did the Holy Spirit descend?

1. The Holy Spirit descended upon them in the shape of tongues of fire. The result of this was that, "*they were all filled with the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:4). They spoke with the tongues of all the nations gathered together on that great day (people from about 15 nations), speaking about the glories of God (Acts 2:9-11). Peter spoke, and the result was that the audience were cut to the heart, accepted the words with joy; three thousand were baptized on that day (Acts 2:37,41).
2. Thereafter, they granted the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, just as it occurred to the people of Samaria; the Bible says that the apostles sent Peter and John to them, "*who, when they had come down prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit ... Then they laid hands on them,*

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ANBA ABRAAM



In 1829 A.D. (1545 A.M.), a child by the name of Boulos Ghobrial was born to righteous, God-loving parents in a village called 'Galad', 27 km south-west of Mallawi, in the diocese of Deirout. When he was eight years old, his mother was very ill and a few weeks later she died, leaving her only child. As he loved praying and reciting psalms, he found in God what satisfied his emotions, filled his heart and gave him Comfort. At the age of fifteen he became famous among his colleagues in the church school, and the priests recommended him to Anba Youssab, the bishop of the diocese, who consecrated him a deacon during his visit to the village church. Boulos then joined the monastery of the Virgin Mary (El-Moharraq) where he was loved by all in the monastery and was consequently consecrated at the age of nineteen in 1848, by the name of Fr. Boulos El-Moharraqi. He was distinguished by his patience, self control and interest in almsgiving. Bishop Yakoubos of El-Menia heard about Fr. Boulos and asked him to come to his residence and remain with him. Fr. Boulos worked day and night and changed the Bishop's residence into a shelter for the poor. His great desire for solitude with God urged him to ask Bishop Yacoubos to allow him to return to the monastery after he had spent four years helping him. The bishop then ordained him as a priest and allowed him to return to the monastery in 1863. Due to a change in the abbot of the monastery, the monks chose him to be

the new abbot; he opened the doors of the monastery to the poor. Despite this great work, some members of the monastery felt that he was wasting resources and subsequently asked him to step down from the leadership of the monastery. Fr. Boulos went with four of his disciples to Cairo to meet Bishop Marcos of El-Boheira who was also the acting-Pope, asking permission to go to the monastery of Anba Bishoy and after a short period, they then went to El-Baramous Monastery in 1871. At that time the abbot of this monastery was Fr. Youhanna El-Nassekh, who later became Pope Kyrillos V. Fr. Boulos devoted all his time to prayers and study, but his deep love for the poor did not end, he loved the Arabs who were living in the area of the monastery and he shared with them everything which he had, even his clothes. Pope Kyrillos V and the people of El-Fayoum agreed upon the consecration of Fr. Boulos as Bishop Abraam, bishop of El-Fayoum and Giza 1881. Rulers and governors found comfort in his presence, and the simple bishop's home became their rest place. In the year 1893 he had trouble with his leg, and the doctors decide to have it amputated. When he learned of this, he smiled, and said 'God will not let this happen, I am sure'. After two months recovered completely. After he had spent 33 years as a Bishop, rich with deep fellowship with God and real worship, serving everybody sincerely, tiring continuously for the poor, using the gift of healing and exorcising of evil spirits he was ill in bed for a month. And he refused to call a doctor saying 'I am flying to the Lord Jesus'.

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THE HOLY FAMILY IN EGYPT (Continued from page 1)

foresaw the flight from Bethlehem where there was no safe place for the Christ Child to lay his head, and the eventual return of the holy refugees from their sanctuary in Egypt, where Jesus had found a place in the hearts of the Gentiles, when he uttered God's words: "*Out of Egypt I called My Son*" (Hosea 11:1). In the Biblical Book of Isaiah, the prophet provides us with a divinely inspired prediction of the effect the Holy Infant was to have on Egypt and the Egyptians: "*Behold the Lord rides on a swift cloud, And wilt come into Egypt; The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, And the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst*" (Isaiah 13:1)

The authority of Old Testament prophecy, which foretold the crumbling of idols wherever Jesus went, further foreshadowed the singular blessing to be bestowed upon Egypt, for its having been chosen as the Holy Family's haven, and upon its people for having been the first to experience The Christ's miraculous influence.

God's message also delivered through the prophetic utterance of Isaiah "*Blessed be Egypt, My people*" (Isaiah 19:25), was an anticipation of the coming of St Mark to our country, where the Gospel he preached took firm root in the first decades of Christianity. Isaiah goes on to prophecy: "*In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar to the Lord at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt*" (Isaiah 19:19-20)

According to the traditions of the Coptic Church, the altar mentioned is that

of the Church of the Virgin Mary in Al-Muharraq Monastery, a site where the Holy Family settled for a period of more than six months; and the altar-stone was the bed, upon which the Infant Savior lay. Al-Muharraq Monastery is located, literally, "*in the midst of the land of Egypt*" ... Standing at its exact geographical center. As for the "*pillar at its borders ... which will be for a sign and for a witness ...*" surely there can be no more demonstrable, concrete proof of the fulfillment of this prophecy than that the Patriarchal See of the Apostolic Church in Egypt was established by St. Mark himself. It is situated in Alexandria, on Egypt's northern borders.

But the prophecy, knitting a perfect pattern of things to come, does not stop there. It continues, "*Then the Lord will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day and will make sacrifice and offering*" (Isaiah 19:21). As Christianity in Egypt spread, churches were built throughout the length and breadth of the land, and the sites chosen were, primarily, those which, had been visited and blessed by the Holy Family's sojourns. The New Testament records the fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies as they unfold in their historical sequence.

" - *behold an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him"* (Matthew 2:13)

Joseph complied and a donkey was fetched for the gentle Mother, still so young in years, to ride with her newborn Child in her arms. They set out from Bethlehem on their predestined journey, the hardened old carpenter, who was Mary's betrothed striding ahead, leading the donkey by its leash into the

untracked paths of a wilderness dark as the desert nights, and unending as the mother of never ending horizons.

Such an arduous journey, it was fraught with hazard every step of the way. In those far-off days, there were three routes which could be followed by travelers traversing Sinai from Palestine to Egypt, a crossing which was usually undertaken in groups, for without the protection of well-organized caravans, the ever present dangers—even along these known and trodden paths were ominously forbidding.

In their escape from the infanticide fury of King Herod, the Holy Family - understandably - had to avoid the beaten tracks altogether, and to pursue unknown paths, guided by God and His angel- They picked their way, day after day, through hidden valleys and across uncharted plateaus in the then rugged wastelands of Sinai. They endured the scorching heat of the sun by day and the bitter cold of the desert by night. Being preserved from the threat of wild beasts and savage tribesmen, their daily sustenance miraculously provided, the all-too- human fears of the young Mother for her Infant calmed by the faith that infused her with His birth.

They arrived, at last, safely, for God had pre-ordained that Egypt should be the refuge for the One who was to bring the message of peace and love to mankind.

The tortuous trails they followed in their passage across Sinai, and their subsequent travels within Egypt, are chronicled by Pope Theophilus, 23rd Patriarch of Alexandria (384 - 412 AD.). He testifies, in his celebrated annals, dial on the eve on the 6th of Hator (the Coptic month correspond-

ing roughly with November), after long prayer, the Holy Virgin revealed herself to him and, after relating the details of the Holy Family's journey to, and from Egypt, instructed him to record what he had seen and heard. It is a source which no Christian believer would question.

Besides, it is a virtual certainty that, at a time when happenings of a momentous or historical nature were transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to the next, the account of Pope Theophilus' Vision confirmed the oral tradition of supernatural occurrences which accompanied the arrival of a wondrous Child in the towns and villages of Egypt some four hundred years earlier.

Anba Abraam (Continued from page 3)

On Thursday 2 Baouna 1630 A.D., 9 June 1914, after sunset, our blessed father departed to Paradise. It is estimated that over twenty-five thousand people attended his funeral Christians and Moslems, with many dignitaries amongst them.

The history of Anba Abraam has not ended In every Egyptian house there is still a lot to be told about him, for he was really a God-loving man. On the third of Baouna 1860 A.M., 10 June 1964, the Church celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his departure under the care of the Late Pope Kyrillos VI in the great hall of the Cathedral of St. Mark, Cairo. All the churches in the See shared in the deep religious and spiritual celebrations. The Holy Synod then approved his canonization. May the prayers of this great contemporary saint be with us all; amen.

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST
(Continued from page 2)

and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15,17). Likewise with the people of Ephesus, as the book of the Acts of the Apostles states, "And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

3. The Holy Spirit was then granted by the Holy Anointment This was because there was no opportunity for the laying on of hands by the apostles after the spread of Christianity in many countries. Therefore, Christianity used what is now known as the Holy Myron (Chrism).

Saint John the Apostle alluded to this anointment by saying, "*But you have an anointing from the Holy One...*" (I John 2:20) and, "*But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you...*" (1I John 2:27) (Also see 2 Corinthians 1:21).

4. As for Priesthood, the apostles received it through the Holy Breath.. The Lord Jesus Christ breathed on them, "*...and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained*" (John 20.22, 23). Thus, the Holy Spirit which was in them forgave or retained sins through them. The apostles then granted the Holy Spirit through the sacrament of priesthood by the laying on of hands. Here, we remember the saying of Saint Paul the Apostle to his disciple Timothy, the bishop of Ephesus, "*Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands*" (2 Timothy 1.6). He also said to him regarding the ordination of others, "*Do not lay hands on anyone hastily nor*

share in other people's sins" (I Timothy 5:22). We can also see in the sending of Barnabas and Saul that, "*...having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia*" (Acts 13:3,4).

Therefore, by the laying on of hands they were sent by the Holy Spirit Likewise in the ordination of the seven deacons, "*whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them*" (Acts 6:6). In this way we can see that the laying on of hands was accompanied by certain prayers, which are presently the rites of ordination. We can also see that the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples from God directly, as there is none higher than them to whom He may grant the Holy Spirit. They became, "*...stewards of the mysteries of God*" (I Corinthians 4:1). They became stewards of God who then granted the Holy Spirit with the laying on of their hands and their prayers, as in the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons, or by the laying on of hands initially and then by anointing as with granting the Spirit to the believers in general. In this way the Spirit which is in them is transferred to others in the way that we mentioned.

5. At present we practice the sacrament of the Holy Myron (Chrism) or the sacrament of Anointment, after Baptism. During the rites of this sacrament, we anoint the child with the Myron (Chrism) on many parts of his body, and we also lay the hand on his head and breathe in his face saying to him, "*accept the Holy Spirit*" With respect to ladies, the bishop can lay his hand on the woman's head with prayers to accept the Holy Spirit and anoints the visible parts of her body such as her head and hands.

Blessed is Egypt, My people

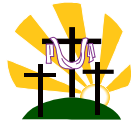
(Isaiah 19:25)

Church Activities

- * The 23rd anniversary of Fr. Bishoy Demetrious' ordination was on May 22nd. The Church will celebrate this joyful occasion on Friday, June 16th at 8pm.
- * The Church will have a Graduation Party for the high school & college graduates on Friday, June 16th at 8pm.
- * As summer approaches, the church would like to encourage spiritual reading in order for us to develop spiritually and intellectually. Over the past couple of months, a bookstore for the church has been developed. God willing, it will be open every Friday & Saturday starting mid June.
- * Due to the lack of an Egyptian grocery store in our area, the servants have come up with an idea to serve our community as well as raise funds for the church. There will be a variety of items for sale and orders can be taken for other items.
- * St. Paul's Class will be going to Jim Thorps, Pa. for a rafting trip on June 11, 2000 (rain date June 18th). For more information contact Mrs. Laura Michael at 363-2261.

Church Social News

- * The church wishes Dr. Ashraf Fahim and his family best of luck in their move to California.



Condolences

The Church offers its condolences, to the children of Mrs. Elaine Shokry, Magdy, Mona and Hoda Malaty, and their families on the departure of their beloved mother. May the Lord repose her soul in the Paradise of Grace.

This Newsletter is a free publication of the church, under the supervision of Fr. Antonious Tanious.

The committee welcomes your participation in the form of articles, reviews, news, or comments.

Please mail your articles, comments, ...etc. to the church at:

PO Box 256
Howell, NJ 07731

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

Church Services

June, 2000

*There will be no services on Friday and
Saturday June 2 and 3*

Fridays, June 9, 16, 23 and 30

- 7:30pm-8:30pm— Hymns Lesson
- 8:30pm-8:45pm— Prayer Meeting
- 8:45pm-9:30pm— Bible Study

Saturday, June 10, 17, and 24

- 8:30am-11:30am— Divine Liturgy
- 11:30am-1:00pm— Sunday School & Youth group meeting

COPTIC FEASTS

- June 1 Chrise coming into Egypt
- June 8 Ascension Feast
- June 10 St. Abraam
- June 18 Pentecost Feast
- June 19 Apostoles Feast