

Saint Mina Retreat Center



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St. Joseph the Carpenter

During the holy days of the Nativity Fast, as we prepare ourselves to receive the Word Incarnate, we tend to focus on the Baby Jesus and His blessed mother Virgin Mary. We sing praises to our Lord Jesus Christ and we venerate St. Mary as we chant the Kiahk Praises.

In the churches, replicas of mangers are up and the icons of the Nativity and the Holy Family take center places. In all this festivity, we tend to overlook the role of a very important member of the Holy Family during these events, St. Joseph the carpenter.

Born in Bethlehem of Judea, St. Joseph came from the royal lineage of King David. Both St. Luke and St. Matthew mark his descent from David, the greatest king of Israel (Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38). The Scriptures do not tell us why or when originally St. Joseph left Bethlehem and chose Nazareth to be his place of residence, but it tells us that he was a carpenter (Matthew 13:55).

According to tradition, when St. Mary, who was dedicated to the temple, completed twelve years in the sanctuary and could not stay there any longer, the priests announced through Judea that they wished to find in the tribe of Judah a respectable man, to espouse her. St. Joseph was among the candidates. A miracle revealed the choice of St. Joseph God had made. When the priests gathered twelve righteous men from the tribe of Judah and took their staffs inside the sanctuary, a dove flew up and stood on the staff belonging to St. Joseph. They immediately knew that this was Gods will.

When St. Joseph discovered St. Mary was pregnant, he knew the child was not his. St. Joseph knew that a woman accused of adultery could be stoned to death. Being a compassionate man, full of love he did not want to defame her for *"Love covers all sins"* (Proverbs 10:12). Being sensible and discreet he did not show annoyance nor behaved in anger but behaved with prudence *"A fools wrath is known at once, But a prudent man covers shame"* (Proverbs 12:16) and decided to put her away secretly (Matthew 1:18,19). *"But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit' Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife"* (Matthew 1:20-24). St. Joseph did not doubt the angel of the Lord but in full faith accepted his words and kept St. Mary with him.

A few months later, Caesar Augustus issued a decree ordering the entire world to be registered everyone in his own city. For St. Joseph and St. Mary, this meant to travel from Nazareth of Galilee to Bethlehem of Judea. Upon their arrival in Bethlehem *"the days were completed for her to be delivered."* and *"there was no room for them in the inn"* (Luke 2:1-7). St. Joseph was there with St. Mary at the birth of our Lord. He was there when the shepherds came to greet the Newborn. He witnessed the wise men offering gifts to the Child. He took full responsibility of the Mother and Child.

St. Joseph was man of faith, obedient to God in every way. When the angel of the Lord appeared to him and told him *"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). He did not hesitate but immediately left everything he owned, all his relatives and friends, and fled to Egypt, a strange country. He took full responsibility of the Child although he is not His real father. It did not occur to him that his own life and the life of St. Mary were not in danger, but only the Child. He could have resented this move but he did not. In all obedience he went to Egypt and waited there submissively until the angel of the Lord told him it was safe to go back (Matthew 2:13-23).



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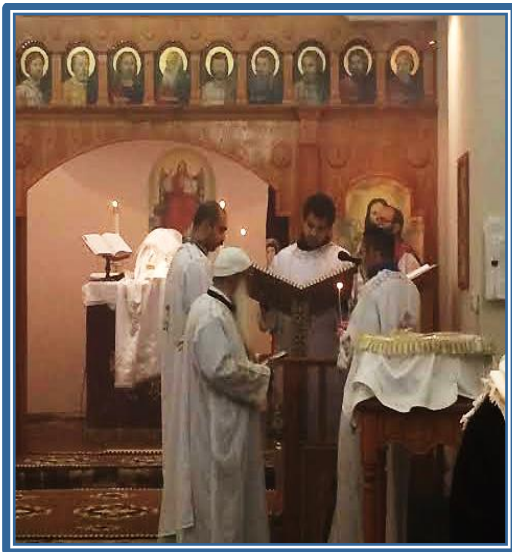
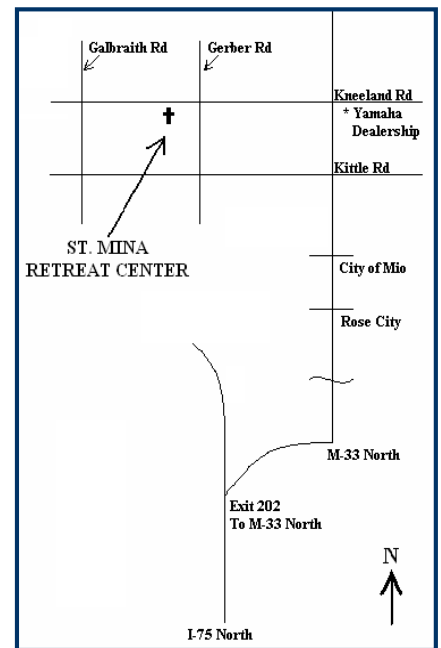
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UPCOMING RETREATS AT ST. MINA'S – 2015

- Jan 11–13 Group Retreat
- Feb 4–6 Group Retreat
- Feb 15–17 Group Retreat
- Mar 8–10 Group Retreat
- Mar 31 – Apr 2 Group Retreat

WHAT'S NEW AT ST. MINA'S RETREAT CENTER...

Members of the church took the time to make their way to St. Mina Retreat Center during the month of Kiakh. It was a night full of praises, fun, and spiritual growing. After the liturgy, they enjoyed playing card games and bonding. Members said they were able to enjoy peaceful alone time, and find some silence to enjoy the presence of nature. “The retreat center offers a place away from our daily lives, and it gives us a chance to forget about our worries even if it is only for a couple of days.”



If you know anyone who is not currently receiving this newsletter and would like to receive it, please send their information to info@stminaretreatcenter.org