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REDEEMING THE TIME *By H.G. BISHOP YOUSSEF*

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise but understand what the Will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17).

With the blessing of another Coptic New Year (September 11) approaching, each one of us should consider the importance and meaning of "redeeming the time". St. Paul specifically preaches about the importance of continually walking in God's Will, guarding against all manner of evil.

How can we "redeem the time"? First, we must train ourselves to live in the moment of each day walking in the Will of our Lord. We should not desire to live in anticipation of some future date nor wish for a return of the past lest we neglect how this particular day is spiritually spent. The goals for our life should incorporate becoming more focused on developing Godly habits in our life avoiding impulsivity, escaping into the past, or acting and daydreaming upon the ideal that the future will always be better. With attentiveness, faithfulness and wholeness we need to savor each and every moment God has given unto us and make it worthy of His gift. Psalm 34:8-10 tells us, *"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man who trusts Him! Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger, but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing."*

Second, redeeming the time by abiding in God's Will is finding your joy and pleasure in heartfelt spirituality. Earthly accomplishments and earthly gain may only be short lived but dwelling within the Will of God can have life eternal as a benefit. A pure heart will savor the time spent in studying the Holy Bible focusing on prayer, and finding enrichment through service. If your circumstances become difficult in times to come, or encompass sorrow, a pure heart will approach these trials with acceptance as such times are not completely devoid of happiness when one is filled with peace by his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Moments of happiness, joy, and reflection at such undesired times give us all a tiny glimpse of what Eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ must be like. Further, separating yourself from a predisposition towards blaming the Lord and/or others for your circumstances is redeeming the time and walking in the Will of our Lord. The Holy Gospel of St. Matthew 6:34 tells us, *"Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."* We are further told, *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks; for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus for you"* (I Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Third, in order to know the Will of God for your life, pray for the Will of God to find an open door in your life. Redeem the time by living with hope and trusting that the Will of God will prevail in your life. *"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created things, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:38-39).

Prayer can serve as our protection from the most intense evil and pain when we talk to God. Also, prayer can be more than just a means of talking to God; it can also incorporate patience in waiting for a response during overwhelmingly difficult times. Let us all be alert in redeeming the time as we so often pray, "but deliver us from evil in Christ Jesus our Lord."

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EVENTS AT ST. MINA'S IN 2009

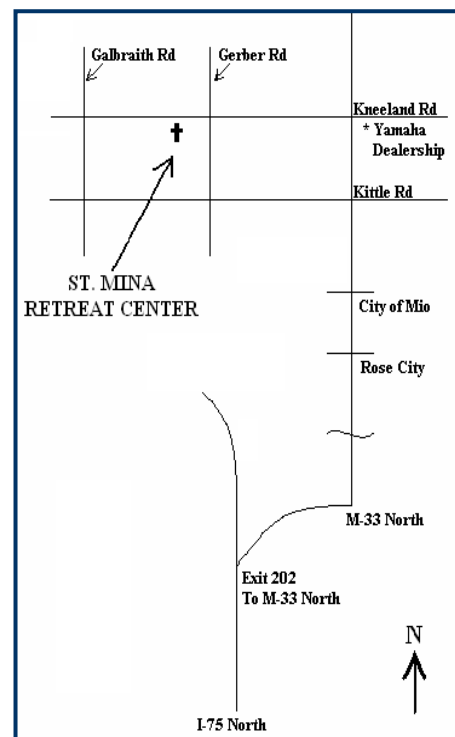
August 27-29	Choir Retreat
September 3 - 5	Family Retreat
October 8-10	Family Retreat
November 5 -7	Family Retreat
November 23	Vespers for the Feast of St. Mina
November 24	Holy Liturgy celebrating the Feast of St. Mina

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH SUMMER TRIP TO ST. MINA'S

JULY 2~ 4, 2009

RETREAT THEME: "SERVE THE LORD IN THE DAYS OF YOUR YOUTH"

Twenty-three members of the High School youth group visited St. Mina Retreat Center, over the 4th of July weekend. When the youth group visited the retreat center, they took time with Abouna Mina to contemplate the Word of God and to enjoy a few days together. The youth spent the retreat meditating on the Bible verse *"But the Lord said to me: Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak"* (Jeremiah 1:7). The youth and servants celebrated the Holy Liturgy on Friday and spent time enjoying the new basketball court in the retreat center.



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