



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 4

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## PEACE ON EARTH

By H.G. BISHOP YOUSSEF

While we celebrate this New Year and the Glorious Feast of the Nativity, I would like each one of us to take measure of the amount of Peace that exists in our lives; the quiet times in which we allow our minds to reflect upon the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and recapture and live the Peace intended for us through this miraculous, divine event in today's world threatened with wars and rumors of impending wars. Is your life surrounded by the Peace of our Lord? Or does work entanglement, love of social life, competitiveness override your Peace; leaving little or no room at all for it; making the business of "getting ahead" precede Christ's Peace?

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was not born into peaceful times. Nor did His Holy Birth precipitate peaceful times upon the land. Born during a time for mandatory census, the jealousy of a king that precipitated indiscriminate killing of male infants, and a time of ceaseless oppression for the poor; our Lord's birth did not manifest the Peace the Heavenly Host had proclaimed... *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"* (Luke 2:14). "Peace on earth" promised Christ's Peace to those who were willing to love and obey God. The Peace brought to this earth was three dimensional: 1) peace between God and man, 2) peace between man and his brother, and 3) peace between man and himself; primarily, peace wrought through reconciling humanity with God the Father and people to each other through belief in and worship of One God. While a belief in One God is of absolute necessity, it must be combined with a true worship and communion with One God. A true worship, not a "get to Divine Liturgy race before the Holy Bible is read, maybe I can fit in the Vespers after work, or I will not be able to stay for the Midnight Praises because I have plans early tomorrow", type of worship. This is the Feast of beginnings, a time to commit to that true worship.

Why peace? Peace on earth was brought down to man so that man would know that he is the son of One God. If all men knew they were the sons of One God then there would be peace as the Prince of Peace came to seek and save the lost. The Lord Jesus Christ's mission was to establish peace. Peace had come down to earth in the form of an infant; the form of newness, in the form of creation, in the beating of a pure heart. A Peace one could lift one's eyes up to and see it declared from the Heavens. Indeed, one could feel that Peace in the midst of a humble birth, and in that humble birth anticipate eternity. This Peace was of a pure nature, everlasting, binding and comforting. The peacefulness of love from God the Father, in the form of an Infant Child was for then, now and forever. Cyprian (c. 250) said, *"The One peaceful and trustworthy tranquility, the One solid, firm, and constant security is this: for a man to withdraw from this whirlpool of a distracting world and to life his eyes from earth to Heaven, anchored on the ground of the harbor of salvation...He who is actually greater than the world can crave nothing or desire nothing from the world. How stable, how free from all shocks is that safeguard. How Heavenly...to be loosed from the snares of this entangling world and to be purged from earthly dregs and be fitted for the light of eternal immortality."*

At the presentation of the infant Lord Jesus in the temple, Simon the prophet, after seeing Him, knew with confidence that he could then **depart in peace...** *"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel"* (Luke 2:29-32). "Bless the Lord all you nations, the tribes, and all kinds of tongues, Praise Him and glorify Him above all forever."

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# UPCOMING RETREATS AT ST. MINA'S – 2012

February 13-15

Individual Retreat

March 8 & 9

Commemoration of the Feast of Pope Kyrillos

May 3-5

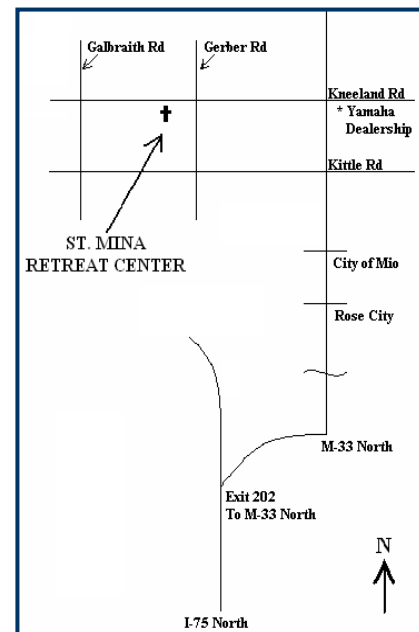
Group Retreat

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

### HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT

JULY 2011

For the 4<sup>th</sup> time, a group of high school youth, along with servants spent a great time at St. Mina Retreat Center. This year's theme highlighted understanding current events". The Youth had an open dialogue with Abouna Mina about the current events in Egypt and that the oppression of the Coptic church continues into these days. Abouna elaborated on the verse *"For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."* Phil 1:29 We further meditated on how these sufferings are gifts from the Lord to His beloved church whom He selected to crown her children with crowns of martyrdom. We prayed the midnight praise on Friday evening and then the Liturgy on Saturday morning. Everyone enjoyed a great time at the retreat playing sports and joining in prayers, praise and fellowship.



**OTHER NEWS...** A new building is under construction at St. Mina's Retreat Center. We seek your prayers for the completion of this project and also offer you the chance to share in the in the blessing of finishing this wonderful effort. A DVD is available commemorating all the events at the St. Mina Retreat Center and is available at the fundraising table in St. Mary's church.

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](mailto:info@stminaretreatcenter.org)