

# Saint Mina Retreat Center



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Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

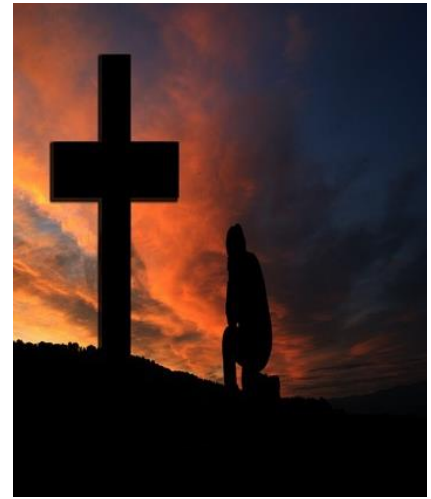
JULY-SEPT 2015

## You Have Laid Your Body Like The Ground

By HG Bishop Youssef

On Thout 17 (September 28) the church celebrates the Glorious Feast of the Cross. Although we celebrate this glorious feast twice a year, yet, sitting under the cross, meditating it, and chanting its blessings is the work of eternity and our main occupation therein. Among the most beautiful verses spoken by Isaiah the Prophet says: *"See, I have taken out of your hand the cup of trembling, the dregs of the cup of My fury; you shall no longer drink it. But I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you, who have said to you, 'Lie down, that we may walk over you.' And you have laid your body like the ground, and as the street, for those who walk over"* (Isaiah 51:22-23). As if this is the sweet sound of the Lord which will be heard from His blessed mouth by all who carry the cross every day with thanksgiving, as they stand at the doorway of heaven, after having left earth.

*"Lie down, that we may walk over you"* is the purpose of every cross placed on a person. This lying down of the ego, what the saints experienced throughout the ages, is what David the Prophet expressed in his psalm: *"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?"* and he continued in the same psalm, *"O my God, my soul is cast down within me"* (Psalm 42:5,6). Did not the Lord Christ point out this strong connection between lying down the ego and the cross, when He said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me"* (Matthew 16:24)? The cross, therefore, is the school of humility into which the Holy Spirit admits us. Yet we need to know vividly that our effort will not be officially crowned, and the Lord will not announce our successful graduation from the school of the cross, if we do not reach the juncture of *"you have laid your body like the ground, and as the street, for those who walk over."* The Lord Christ personally, not only succeeded through this school, but rather excelled, as David the Prophet spoke on His lips saying, *"The plowers plowed on my back; they made their furrows long"* (Psalm 129:3). The word long here reveals the Lord Christ's excel, of which St. Gregory chanted in the Divine Liturgy: *"You have given Your back to the scourge..."*



One of the saints said that there are two types of humility: ascetic humility and divine humility. Ascetic humility is actually a result of a person's struggle to enter through the narrow gate of asceticism and bear the cross in all its forms. Yet, no matter how much a person struggles, even if to the point of blood, the humility remains lacking; if the Lord's face does not shine on him and he does not see the Divine Light, he will not reach the fullness of humility. This is the second type of humility, which is divine humility. This means that a person sees and realizes his truth when he sees the Divine Light. Therefore, the cross is the ascetic humility laboratory, and ascetic humility is what attracts divine grace to shine on the person, to gain Divine humility.

Oh, bearer of the cross, whose ego is bowed down, rejoice for this is the way to your humility. Oh, who are trampled by everyone, until you have placed your body like the ground and as the streets for those who walk over, shout for joy, behold your rescue and crown are near. The Feast of the Cross is your feast, Oh who imitate your Master, offering your back to the scourge and handing it to the plowers who made their furrows long.

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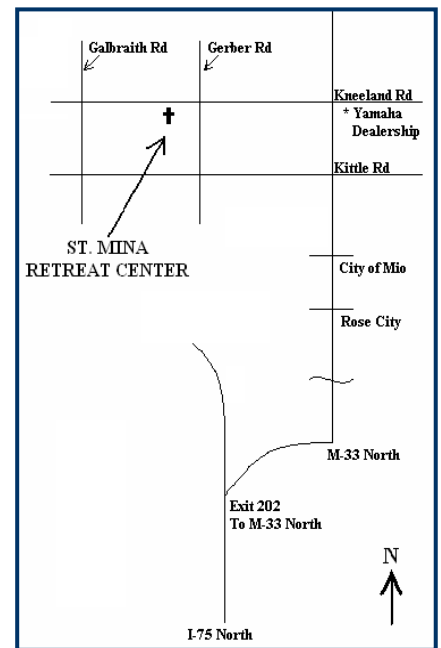
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## UPCOMING RETREATS AT ST. MINA'S – 2015

- Oct 19–21 Group Retreat
- Nov 5–7 Group Retreat
- Nov 16–18 Group Retreat
- Dec 3–9 Group Retreat
- Nov 25<sup>th</sup> Feast of St. Mina
- Dec 14–16 Group Retreat

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

We had a small group retreat this month and had a wonderful time of fellowship, in which we had a chance for discussions with Abouna in a very comfortable atmosphere. We were able to discuss openly and ask questions about our faith. “I was able to enjoy nature and the beauty of it”, one of the attendees said. She continued, “It's the perfect place to go have quiet time and get away from your crazy life”. The group shared their love for Tasbaha at the retreat, where they were able to take their time and really enjoy the beauty of the praises. While the monthly retreat is a perfect time to grow in your knowledge and love of God, it's also a great time for communion with one another.



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