

1 I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. 3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together. 4 I sought the Lord, and he heard me, And delivered me from all my fears. 5 They looked to Him and were radiant. And their faces were not ashamed. 6 This poor man called to the Lord, and he heard him, And saved him out of all his trouble. 7 The Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and see that the Lord is good; Blessed are the saints! There is no want in them who fear the Lord. 8 Those who suffer hunger and thirst will be satisfied; those who seek the Lord will find a good thing. 9 Come, you who fear the Lord, and see that the Lord is near. 10 Those who seek him will find him; he who calls him will not be disappointed. 11 Come, you who are weary and heavy-laden, and take my yoke upon you; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. 12 Who is the good? 13 Keep your commandments, and you will live. 14 Depart from evil, and come into the good; for the Lord loves the righteous. 15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry. 16 The face of the Lord is upon those who do well, and he remembers their remembrance of them from before time began. 17 The Lord hears and delivers them from all their afflictions. 18 Those who have a contrite spirit, and seek after God, he will hear and deliver them. 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. 20 He guards all his servants; Not one of them is broken. 21 Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. 22 The soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.







**H. H. Pope Tawadros II**  
Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark



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## INTRODUCTION Mahragan Alkeraza 2016

As we celebrated the conclusion of last year's Mahragan with the distribution of the trophies for the first, second and third place winners, we were grateful for God's blessings for a successful 2015 Mahragan. His Holiness Pope Tawadros II said during the Awards Ceremony in Egypt, "I am happy to see the activities of the Youth Bishopric, I am glad that our beautiful Church that is 2000 years old is full of young youth and I am proud to see the creative work and achievements of the youth."

Last year, in addition to the usual participation from Egypt and Sudan, we had a great worldwide participation from 192 Churches representing more than 20 countries and 8 languages.

The theme for Mahragan 2016 is "**Taste & See The Lord Is Good**" (Psalm 34:8).

This year, God is asking each one of us to grow in Christ by:

1. Rejoicing in Christ
2. Growing strong roots inside the Church
3. Building our faith through reading the Bible
4. Caring for everyone
5. Maintaining a peaceful heart

We hope that all of you will participate in the Mahragan activities this year, and encourage everyone you know to join us in one of the greatest annual events, presented by our mother, the Coptic Orthodox Church.

May God bless Mahragan Alkeraza this year and the efforts of all the participants and coordinators,

through the prayers of our beloved father Pope Tawadros II.

*My best wishes for a happy  
Festival*

*Bishop Moussa*



## VISION STATEMENT

St. Mark Festival envisions children, youth, and servants uniting with the Midwest Coptic Orthodox churches in order to grow closer to God and each other by having an opportunity to know Him better through spiritual lessons and activities.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is  
to love one another, as Christ loved us,  
and not let the competition get in the way of spiritual growth.



## THE ANTHEM

The Light was there, at our old ways  
And God formed His church, one and Orthodox (2)

To God we raise our eyes, who saw Him were enlightened  
And if we seek our God, we will follow His footsteps

Our God is a kind Lord, caring for His flock (2)

Our Lord is sweeter than honeycomb  
We tasted His beauty, love, and kindness (2)

We're His creation, saved by His will  
My joy is that I'm made in His image

And when I sought Him, with love I found Him (2)

## SPIRITUAL

**Spiritual Lessons - Coptic Hymns - Coptic Language**

## ACTIVITIES

**Choir - Drama - Multimedia - Video Clip  
Musical - Research Paper - Creative Writing - Arts & Crafts**

## SPORTS

**Basketball - Volleyball - Soccer - Ping Pong - Online Chess**

For more information about Mahragan activities please visit the Mahragan website at:

<http://www.stmarkfestival.us>



# IMPORTANT DATES & LOCATIONS

## June 26<sup>th</sup> - July 3<sup>rd</sup>: Midterm Exam - Church Level

- Format: Online Exam (Spiritual Lessons, Coptic Language, & Memorization)
- Participant: All Grade Groups
- Type: Individual (at your church under servant supervision)
- Location: Local Church

## July 17<sup>th</sup> - July 24<sup>th</sup>: Final Exam- Church Level

- Format: Online Exam (Spiritual Lessons, Coptic Language, & Memorization)
- Participant: All Grade Groups
- Type: Individual (at your church under servant supervision)
- Location: Local Church

## July 31<sup>st</sup> - August 7<sup>th</sup>: Regional Exam- Regional Level

- Format: Online Exam (Spiritual Lessons, Coptic Language, & Memorization)
- Participant: All Grade Groups Up to top 5 of each grade group
- Type: Individual but Graded based on average score (at your church under servant supervision)
- Location: Local Church

## July 31<sup>st</sup>: Due Dates for:

- Coptic Hymns\*
- Creative Writing\*
- Multimedia\*
- Research Papers\*

\*Please refer to the guidelines for submission instructions at [www.stmarkfestival.us](http://www.stmarkfestival.us).

## August 12<sup>th</sup> - Performances and Locations are TBD.

## August 13<sup>th</sup> - Sports Day @ McCook Athletic & Exposition:

4750 Vernon Ave, McCook, IL 60525 from 10:00am-8:00pm.

## August 14<sup>th</sup> - Performances and Locations are TBD.



# MAHRAGAN ALKERAZA RULES

**"He who heeds instruction and correction is (not only himself) in the way of life (but also) is a way of life for others." (Proverbs 10:17)**

Please remember this is a Christian competition and as such you are expected to act accordingly.

## PARTICIPATION:

- Each person wishing to take part in the Mahragan must take the written Bible exam to be able to participate in other activities. There will be no exceptions to this rule.
- No electronic devices of any kind including cell phones or iPods will be allowed during the written portion of the competition.

## ATTIRE:

- Modest attire is required at all times.
- Please wear appropriate clothes for the written exam, sports, and leisure activities.

## BEHAVIOUR:

- No cheating
- No fighting
- No use of bad words or inappropriate language

## PLEASE NOTE:

Any disorderly conduct that limits the other participants' right to enjoy a spiritual competition will be dealt with immediately.



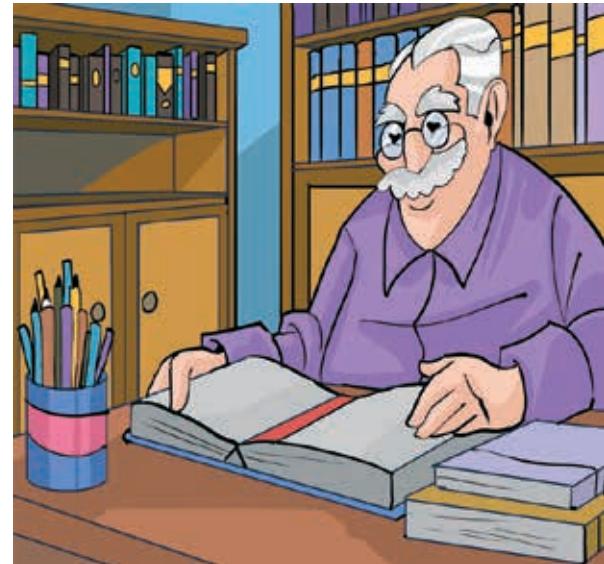
# MY HEART REJOICES IN CHRIST

*Everyone's favourite place in Grandpa's huge house had always been the library. It had the largest selection of books on an amazing variety of topics.*

*Every day, Grandpa came down from his room and went into the library to read a passage from the Holy Bible. He would then open one of the many books he owned and start reading. Grandpa kept the Holy Bible on its own very special shelf.*

*Sunday was different though, because that's the day Grandpa went to Church to attend the Liturgy. That's when Grandpa dressed up as a deacon and took his Liturgy book with him to Church.*

*On Saturdays, Grandpa added new storybooks to his library. He loved reading these storybooks to his grandchildren. This Saturday was no different. As usual, Grandpa put the new storybooks in his library, read a passage of the Holy Bible, then read one of his books and went to his room. When Grandpa left the library, the new books started to look around.*



**Storybook 1:** Wow! What a huge library! So organized! I love my new home.

**Storybook 2:** What are you talking about? Why are you so happy? Don't you see that we are squeezed here on this narrow shelf? I can't stay here.

**Storybook 1:** Where do you want to go? All the other books are with us and no one is complaining.

**Storybook 2:** Look over there! A whole shelf for just one book! And we're all squeezed here on one shelf.

**Storybook 1:** You're right... hmm... maybe this big book beside me would know, let's ask him. Hello!



**Big book:** Hi! You're new here, aren't you?

**Storybook 1:** Yup, we just came today.

**Big book:** Well welcome! Let me introduce myself. I'm the oldest storybook in the library.

**Storybook 1:** Wow! Nice to meet you. You're so big for a storybook!

**Big book:** Yeah, but Grandpa has storybooks of all different sizes. He organizes his books by categories. That's why we're all on the same shelf.

**Storybook 2:** Actually, we wanted to ask you about something since you have been around for a long time. Why are we all squeezed on one shelf while that book over there has a whole shelf to himself?

**Big book:** Oh! That book over there is the most important book in the whole library, in fact, in the whole world.

**Storybook 2:** The most important book?! Why?

**Storybook 1:** What is it called?

**Big book:** It's called the Holy Bible. It's inspired by God. It is the source of happiness for everyone who reads it. From the Bible, we learn how much God loves us through the story of the salvation of the world.

**Storybook 2:** Can you tell us the story of salvation?

**Big book:** Alright, let's start from the beginning.





## The Story of Salvation

**Big book:** Before the creation of man, God prepared everything because of His love for mankind. God created man in a way different from all of His other creations. Man is the only creature who received the breath of life from God Himself. God created man also in His own image and His own likeness. God also gave man free will to make his own choices.

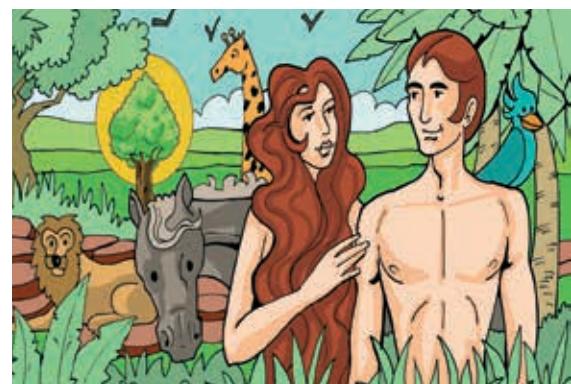
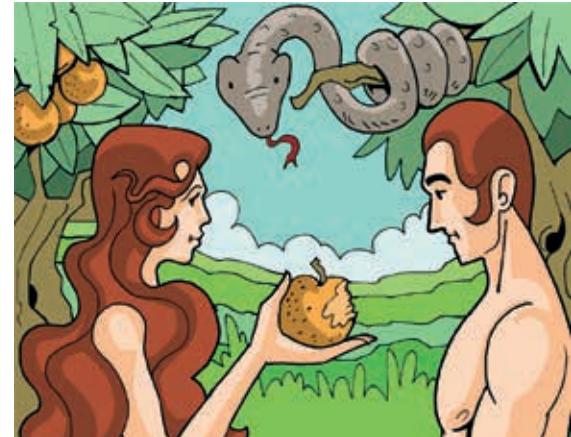
**Memory verse:** "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Genesis 1:27

**Storybook 1:** Free will? How?

**Big book:** He told man, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." You see, God could have prevented Adam from eating from the tree but He wanted to give him the freedom of choice. Unfortunately Adam and Eve ate from the tree. That's why God had to apply the penalty of death on Adam and Eve and all their descendants. For Adam and Eve, death was separation from God. Let me give you an example, when a lamp is disconnected from electricity, what happens?

**Storybook 2:** It won't light up.

**Big book:** Exactly! Adam and Eve, when they disobeyed God, they were separated from God who is the source of life. The absence of life is death.





Because of sin, their nature was also corrupted. It's just like when someone eats something poisonous, they get sick and need medication or they might die. The nature of Adam and Eve was corrupted and they were sentenced to death. All their descendants also inherited the corrupted nature.

**Storybook 2:** Oh no! Does that mean man can't go back and live with God?

**Big book:** Yes, for man to be able to live with God again, he needs to remove the death penalty and renew his nature that was corrupted by sin.

**Storybook 1:** Didn't you say that God loved man even before He created him? Why didn't He forgive him instead of doing all this?

**Big book:** God loves man but He is also just. If God forgave Adam and Eve, then the man who sins would be the same as the man who obeys God. This is against God's justice. God is holy and just and cannot accept anything wrong. The problem was not only that He could not forgive them, the bigger problem was that the nature was corrupted and needed to be renewed.



**Storybook 2:** Why couldn't God let Adam die and create another man instead?

**Big book:** Because God loved Adam, and couldn't accept the fact that he wouldn't live with Him anymore.

**Storybook 2:** Wow, that's tough, I think I understand the dilemma:

- Because God loves man, He could not just let him die and create a new one
- Because God is holy and just, He could not just forgive Adam and Eve and remove the death penalty. He has to renew their nature

**Storybook 1:** So, how do we solve this problem?



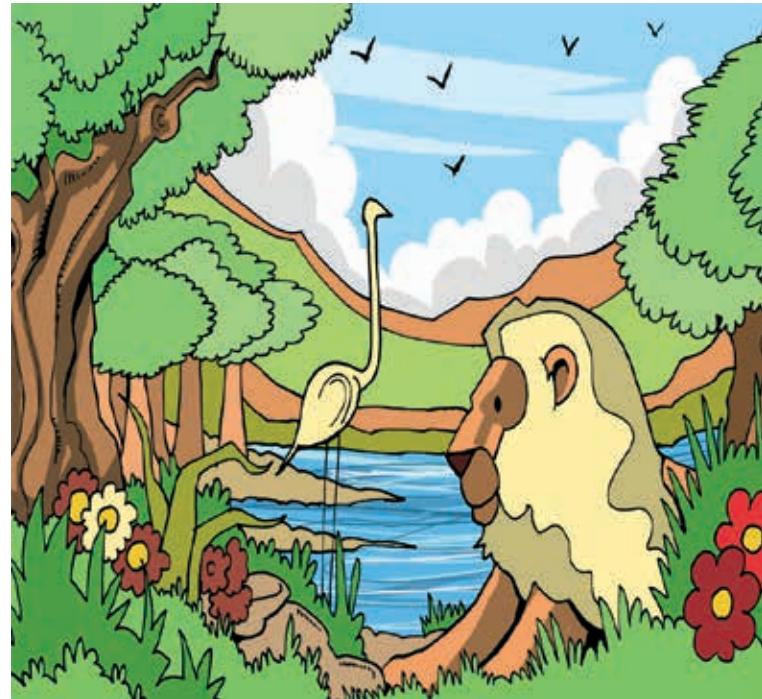
**Big book:** We need someone to redeem mankind and take away the sentence of death and renew the nature of man.

**Storybook 2:** Who can do that?

**Big book:** God is the only one who can do that:

- God came down from heaven and was incarnate and was born from the Virgin Mary. He was not born of man so that He wouldn't inherit the sin like us.
- He was crucified and died instead of mankind, fulfilling the punishment of the death penalty for us.
- On the third day He rose from the dead and conquered death.

With God's incarnation, death on the cross and His resurrection, He redeemed mankind. He took away the death sentence from mankind and renewed our nature, restoring man to his original image, the image of God Himself.



**Storybook 1:** God must really love man!

**Storybook 2:** Now all mankind can go back and live with God.

**Big book:** Yes, but we don't deserve God's redemption unless we are born again through baptism. Also, when we sin, we need to repent and confess to the priest and take Communion.

**Storybook 1:** You were right when you said the Holy Bible is the most important book in the whole world.

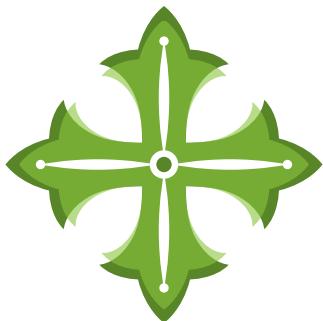


**Big book:** So you don't mind staying with us on the same shelf?

**Storybook 1:** It's not so bad after all (they all laugh). So what's the usual schedule around here?

**Big book:** Every morning, Grandpa comes down and reads a passage in the Holy Bible followed by another one of his books.

**Storybook 2:** Alright, we will sleep in the meantime until he comes.





# IN MY CHURCH MY HEART IS COMPLETE

*When they woke up, Grandpa was still not there...*

**History book:** Grandpa is still not here and the day is almost over... something's not right.

**A book:** You're right, today is Sunday! He was supposed to come, take the Liturgy book and go to church.

**Storybook 1** (whispering to the big book): Liturgy book? I don't understand.

**Big book:** I will explain later.

**Liturgy book:** It's not like him! What do you guys think we should do?

**History book:** Maybe Grandpa is still sleeping? We can wait and see if he comes down later in the evening. But if he doesn't, then there is a problem for sure and we should do something.

**Big book:** I agree... (To the storybooks) Okay, let's go to the Liturgy book... (To the Liturgy book), Hello these are our new friends, they just came yesterday. They wanted to know who you are and what is the Liturgy.

**Liturgy book:** Welcome to our library. I am the Liturgy book. I have all the prayers and the responses that are prayed by the priest, deacons and the congregation during the Liturgy.

**Storybook 2:** What is the Liturgy?

## The Divine Liturgy

**Liturgy book:** The Liturgy is a journey to heaven. It is the greatest journey ever. There would be no Church or even Christianity without the Liturgy. During the Liturgy, we enjoy the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. We remember the life of our Lord Jesus including His suffering, His death, His resurrection, His ascension and His second coming. After this beautiful journey to heaven, we all come back to earth rejoicing and saying:



**Memory Verse:** "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalm 34:8

To help you understand, we can say that the Liturgy is like attending a flight on a plane.

### Storybook 1: A flight?! How?

**Liturgy book:** Ok, let's say:

The airport is the church,  
The plane is the Liturgy,  
The pilot is the priest, because without him we can't go anywhere. He leads the liturgy.  
The passengers are the congregation. Let's start our journey...

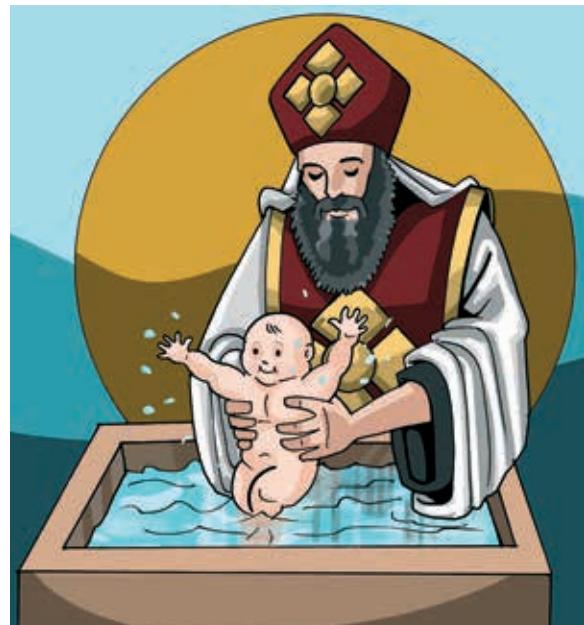
The passport is baptism, because without baptism, no one can attend the Liturgy and partake of the Holy Communion. After we get our passport, we have to get ready for the trip.

### Storybook 2: What do you mean?

**Liturgy book:** We need to prepare.

#### Personal readiness

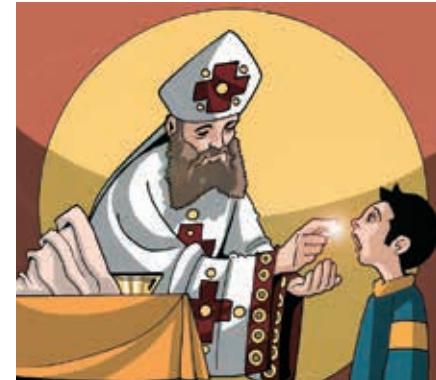
- When we do something wrong we repent and confess and try not to do it again
- If we are upset with someone, we reconcile with them and confess our sin
- Our clothes should be appropriate for the church
- We should be fasting for 9 hours before taking Communion





## Church readiness

- Attend the raising of incense the night before the Liturgy and the morning of the Liturgy. The purpose of the raising of incense prayers is to prepare the altar, the priest and the congregation to receive the Lord Jesus in the Liturgy.
- After the raising of incense, the priest and the deacons wear the service clothing (Tonya).
- We pray the hours of the Agpeya as the psalms prepare us for the celebration of the Liturgy.



We then begin the Liturgy: First, the priest chooses the Lamb which is the Korbana that will become the Body of Christ. Meanwhile the deacons and the congregation chant: Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy) 41 times. As the priest is choosing the best korbana without blemish, we also pray and prepare our heart to make it a suitable place for Jesus to dwell in after having Communion.

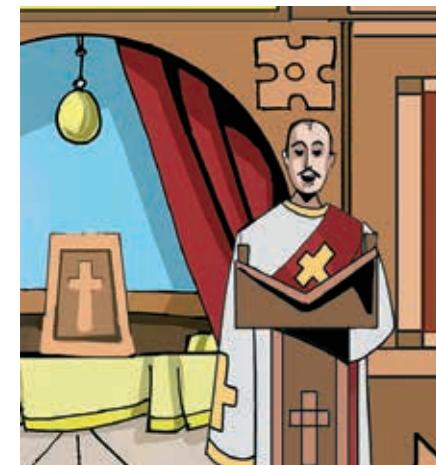
The priest prays the prayer of thanksgiving (all the prayers in the church start with the prayer of thanksgiving). The priest covers the paten and the chalice with the "prospheron", which symbolizes the big stone that was put on Jesus' tomb, and he puts on top a handkerchief in the form of a triangle to symbolize the seal of the tomb.



The priest prays the absolution of the servants in which he absolves all the people who are present.

The Liturgy readings are read. This is called the Liturgy of the Catechumens. The readings have teachings and instructions to guide us on our journey. Those readings are:

- The Pauline: A passage from the letters of St. Paul (14 Pauline Epistles in the New Testament)
- The Catholicon: A passage from the Catholic Epistles (7 Catholic or universal Epistles in the New Testament)



- The Praxis: A passage from the Book of Acts
- The Synaxarium: An account of the lives of the saints
- The Psalm and the Gospel

This is usually followed by the sermon. Then the "Orthodox Creed" is recited, which is a declaration of our faith.

This is followed by "the prayer of reconciliation". Reconciliation is two parts:

- Reconciliation with heaven: This is achieved by the incarnation, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus who redeemed us and brought back to us our original image and opened for us the gate of heaven one more time.
- Reconciliation with each other: We greet each other with a holy kiss to signify that we are all at peace with each other.



The next section is referred to as the Anaphora. It starts with 3 sentences:

- The Lord with you all
- Lift up your hearts
- Let us give thanks to the Lord

The priest is asking everyone to lift up their heart to God as we head to heaven. We should not be distracted by anything or anyone. That's why when the priest says, "Lift up your hearts", we answer, "They are with the Lord".



The priest starts to describe heaven and the angels surrounding the throne of God praising and saying: Holy, Holy, Holy. We also share in praising God and sing "The Cherubim worship You..."

The priest then recounts "the Story of Salvation", beginning with the creation and the fall of man and ending with the second coming: "He will appear to judge the world in righteousness and give each one according to his deeds."



The next section is the Consecration. Here the priest explains the story of the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist that took place on Holy Thursday. The priest does the sign of the cross on the bread and the wine three times saying: "He gave thanks, He blessed it and He sanctified it". He shows that partaking in the Body and Blood of Christ is necessary for us to be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. As the verse says:

**Memory verse: "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life." John 6:54**

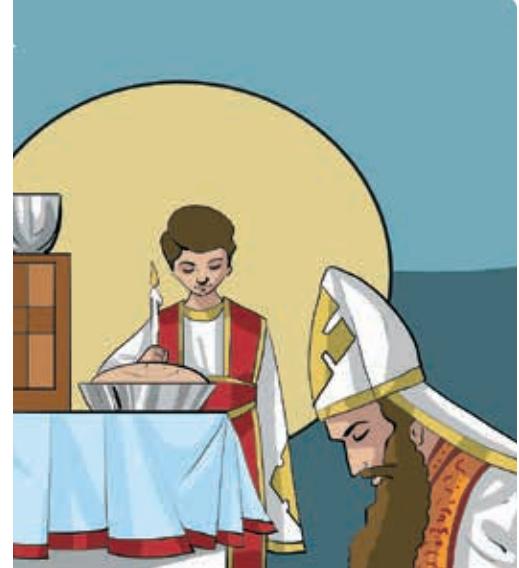
Next is the Invocation of the Holy Spirit. The priest prays that the Holy Spirit descends upon the bread and wine to change them into the Body and the Blood of Christ and to sanctify the church members.

Now that our Lord Jesus is present on the altar through His Body and His Blood, the priest prays the "Litanies".

The word litany means petition. This is the time where the priest offers prayers and supplications to the Lord. The deacons and the congregation lift up their hearts with him.

Next is the commemoration of the saints. As we see heaven with all its beauty in our journey, we remember all the saints who departed. The priest mentions them by name. This commemoration reflects the unity of the Church between those who are on earth and the saints in heaven.

After the commemoration of the saints, the priest breaks the Holy Body as a symbol of our Lord suffering on the cross. That is why we call this part "The Fraction".



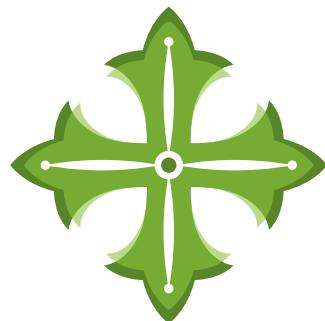


After the fraction prayer we pray the Lord's Prayer. As we approach the end of our journey, the prayer of Confession is recited by the priest. This is when the priest confirms that what he has in his hands are the true Body and the true Blood of our Lord Jesus.

Finally, the end of our journey is the Holy Sacrament of Communion, which is the entire goal of our trip. This is when we become united in Christ as we partake of his Holy Body and His Precious Blood.



After communion, the priest blesses the congregation and dismisses them to "depart in peace". We can then leave the church and witness for Christ though our Christian behavior.





# WITH THE BIBLE MY HEART IS FAITHFUL

*The books all wait and wait, but grandpa is still nowhere to be found.*

**History book:** The day is almost over and Grandpa still didn't come down. I'm afraid something happened.

**Liturgy book:** I think we should go to Grandpa's room.

**Storybook 2:** I have an idea! Let's take the magic carpet!

**Big book:** There's no such thing as a magic carpet! That's only in fairytales.

**Storybook 1:** What if we use the time machine to take us back to when Grandpa left the library?

**History book:** That's only in fairytales too!

**Storybook 2:** Ugh, this is so hard! I can't think of anything.

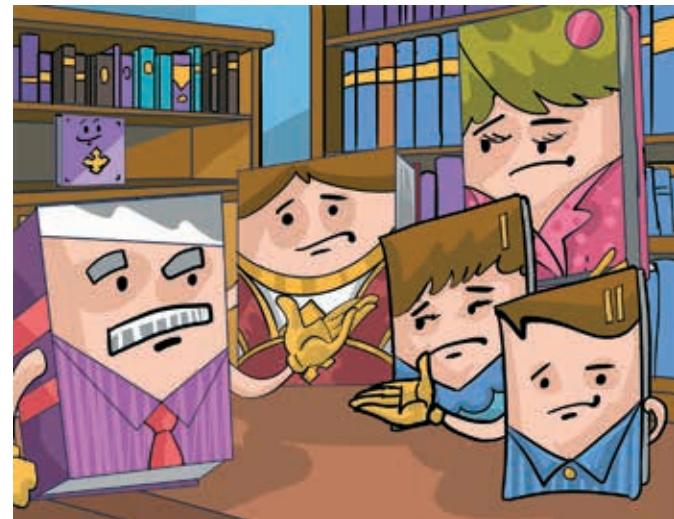
**The Holy Bible:** Don't worry... Every problem has a solution!

**Storybook 2:** Who said that?

**Big book:** It's the Holy Bible. Let's see what he has to say.

**Storybook 1:** The Holy Bible! I'm so excited to talk to the most important book in the whole world.

**The Holy Bible:** Why are you worried? God teaches us that when we have a problem, we





should put our trust in Him... and have faith that He will help us. Let's pray and do what king Jehoshaphat did when he faced a problem and said to God:

**Memory verse: "For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."** **2 Chronicles 20:12**

**Storybook 1:** King Jehoshaphat? Who's that?

## King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 17 – 20)

**The Holy Bible:** Jehoshaphat means "God judges". After the reign of king Solomon, son of David, the kingdom of Israel was divided into two parts. They were called the Northern kingdom (Kingdom of Israel) and the Southern kingdom (Kingdom of Judah). Jehoshaphat was the son of king Asa and the fourth king of the Kingdom of Judah after his father.

Jehoshaphat was a king who pleased God in all he did.

**Storybook 1:** What did he do?

**The Holy Bible:**

- He took care of the kingdom and its relationship with the surrounding countries. He placed troops in each city (2 Chronicle 17:2).
- He got rid of the worship of idols and walked in the way of God (2 Chronicles 17:3-6).
- He sent out leaders, priests and Levites to instruct the people in the Law of the Lord.



**History Book:** So Jehoshaphat was a good king and followed the way of God?

**The Holy Bible:** Yes, that's why God gave him many blessings:

- All the lands that were around Judah did not fight against his kingdom.
- The Philistines brought Jehoshaphat gifts as tribute.





- Jehoshaphat was powerful and had great honor. God established his kingdom.

**Big book:** So everything seems perfect, what was the problem?

**The Holy Bible:** Well, one day a big army came to fight against Jehoshaphat. What do you think he did?

**Storybook 2:** He must have prepared his troops for battle?

**The Holy Bible:** Actually, Jehoshaphat prepared himself and his people for battle in a different way. He did two important things:

- He lifted up his eyes to God and prayed
- He called for a fast in the whole kingdom of Judah

He gathered all the people and prayed and at the end of his prayer, he said, "For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." He had faith and trusted God.

**Big book:** So what happened after that?

**The Holy Bible:** There was a prophet in the kingdom whose name was Jahaziel. He stood in midst of the assembly and said, "Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's." (2 Chronicles 20:15) He told them to go down against them in battle but not to fight because the Lord will be with them.

**Storybook 1:** Did they listen to him?

**The Holy Bible:** Yeah, they did! The next day, Jehoshaphat went down to the battle. He trusted



that God was with him and had faith. He stood and said to the people, "Believe in the Lord your God and you shall be established; believe His prophets and you shall prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20). He asked the people to do something really strange.

**All:** What did he ask them to do?

**The Holy Bible:** He appointed people to sing and praise the Lord, and told them to go before the army. They obeyed Jehoshaphat and praised God saying: "Praise the Lord for His mercy endures forever" (2 Chronicles 20:21).

**Big Book:** Wow! They went out singing before the army? I've never heard of a war where the weapons used are songs and praises!



**The Holy Bible:** Yeah, they have so much faith in God. As they sang and praised, the Lord set ambush against the enemies and they were defeated. They started fighting against each other instead of fighting against Jehoshaphat's army. When Jehoshaphat and his army came to the place overlooking the enemies, they found them all dead. They went back to Jerusalem with joy for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies.

**History book:** Jehoshaphat had faith in God and trusted that in the time of trouble, God would help him.

**Holy Bible:** Exactly, why don't we follow Jehoshaphat's example and pray.

**All:** Let's pray!

**Holy Bible:** Where's the Agpeya so we can pray?

**Storybook 1:** Agpeya? Is that another book?

**History Book:** The Agpeya is the book of prayers. She has 7 prayers for different hours of the day. Grandpa prays from the Agpeya every day.

*They started praying from the Agpeya as the Holy Bible taught them.*





# MY HEART CARES FOR EVERYONE

*When they finished praying, the Agpeya headed towards her drawer.*

**History Book:** Where are you going?

**Agpeya:** I'm going back to my place.

**Big book:** Stay with us! We still didn't solve our problem.

**Storybook 1:** The Agpeya is just a prayer book, she can't do anything else.



**History Book:** No, we have to work together to find a solution to our problem.

**Storybook 1:** I think if your job is to pray, you shouldn't do anything else. Right?

**Synaxarium:** No! That's not right!.



**Storybook 1:** Who's talking?

**Synaxarium:** It's me.

**Storybook 1:** Who are you?

**Synaxarium:** I am the Synaxarium. I hold the stories of the lives of the saints.

**Storybook 1:** Hi Synaxarium. Thanks for joining us. So why do you think it's not right?



**Synaxarium:** When we give special attention to prayer, it doesn't mean we can't do anything else. It's the exact opposite actually! Prayer will help us take care of people around us. Even if we spend all our time in prayer, this doesn't prevent us from taking care of others. Don't you know the story of the saint who the church calls "the Man of Prayer"?

**Agpeya:** Oh! Are you talking about Pope Kyrillos VI?

**Synaxarium:** Yup! Pope Kyrillos VI spent most of his time in prayer but also took care of others.

**Storybook 1:** Who is Pope Kyrillos? Can you tell us his story?

**Synaxarium:** Sure!

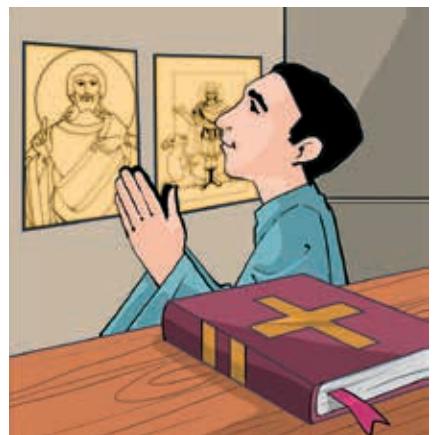
### **Pope Kyrillos VI, the 116th Patriarch (Synaxarium 30 Amshir)**

**Synaxarium:** Pope Kyrillos VI was born on 2 August 1902 in the city of Damanhour. His name was Azer. His family loved God and loved the church. From his youth, he had a special relationship with the saints, St. Mina the wonderworker in particular. Azer loved God with all his heart and invested so much time in his relationship with God.

**Storybook 1:** Why? What did he do?

**Synaxarium:** He used to attend the liturgy and take Communion regularly. He prayed and read the Holy Bible daily. One day, because of his father's work, the family had to move to Alexandria.

He completed his high school education. He got a job at a shipping company in Alexandria and was honest and dedicated in his workplace. His work never prevented him from studying the Bible. Azer liked the monastic life, so he resigned from his job and went to the monastery of El-Baramos. He became a monk with the name of Mina Elbaramosy. He was 26 year-old at that time.





## Storybook 1: What's a monk?

**Synaxarium:** A monk is someone who loves God so much and wants to spend all his time with God. He doesn't want to be distracted from God, which is why he leaves the world and goes to live in the monastery and dedicates himself to prayer.

## Storybook 1: Okay, I understand. What happened after?

**Synaxarium:** In the monastery, he spent his time in prayers, and reading the Bible. He also took care of the older monks. He helped them, washed their clothes and brought them whatever they needed.

Three years later, he was ordained as a priest under the name of Fr. Mina Elbaramosy. He longed for a life of solitude, so he took permission from the Abbot of the monastery and went to live by himself in the desert.

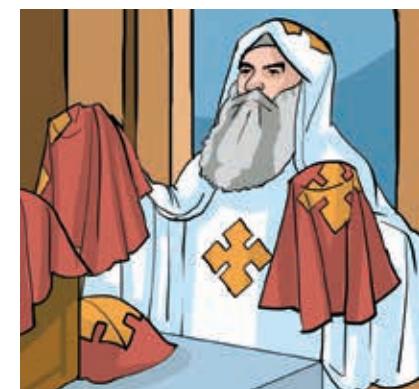
## Big book: What is a life of solitude?



**Synaxarium:** It means that he wanted to live by himself and pray away from everyone else. He moved to a deserted windmill outside of Cairo. Because he loved prayer so much, he used to pray a Liturgy every day in the windmill.

## Storybook 1: A Liturgy every day! So that's why we call him the man of prayer!

**Synaxarium:** Exactly! They chose him to be the Abbot of the monastery of St. Samuel the Confessor. He took care of all the youth who loved the monastery and had many disciples whom he taught the way of monasticism. He also worked hard on the restoration of the monastery. He instituted the church of St. Mina in old Cairo, where he also established a residence for



foreign students who needed this service. He followed up on their spiritual lives and prayed for them to succeed in their studies. Many sick people would come to him and he would pray for them too. He was faithful with the few things in his care, so God put him in charge of many things.

**Big book:** What do you mean?

**Synaxarium:** Well, he was chosen to be the 116th Patriarch on the See of St. Mark under the name of Pope Kyrillos VI.



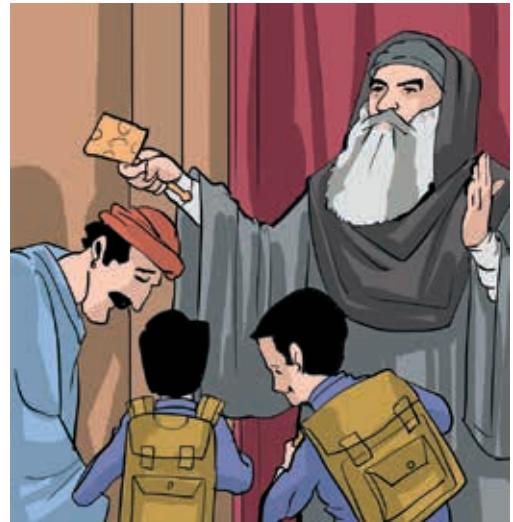
**History book:** Wow! The Patriarch! He must have been very busy after that!

**Synaxarium:** Despite all his responsibilities, he continued taking care of the church and the congregation. He also continued to pray a Liturgy every day. He prayed more than 12,000 liturgies during his lifetime.

**Storybook 1:** He was a man of prayer indeed.

**Synaxarium:** Pope Kyrillos knew the importance of prayer and its power. Prayer was the weapon he used to overcome all his problems. He outreached the congregation in many churches and villages. Even with all his responsibilities as a Patriarch, he kept his door open to everyone. God gave Pope Kyrillos the gifts of casting out demons, healing the sick and performing many miracles.

He also established many new services. He instituted a Bishopric for the service of the poor and the needy. He took care of the spiritual teaching of his people and instituted the Bishopric of Christian education. He consecrated Bishop Shenouda as the bishop of Christian education (who later became Pope Shenouda III).





**Big book:** So Pope Kyrillos took care of the entire congregation in Egypt.

**Synaxarium:** Not only Egypt. Pope Kyrilos felt that the church is responsible for all her children everywhere in the world. That's why he gave special attention to the Christian ministry in many countries outside Egypt in order to shepherd his Coptic congregation abroad as well.

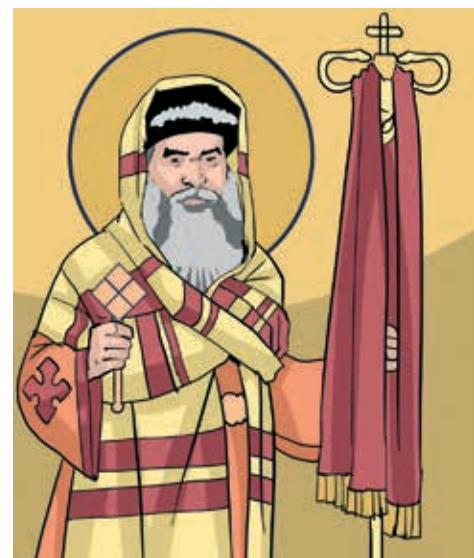
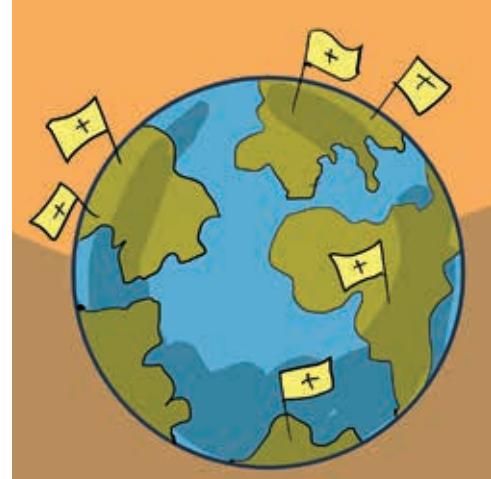
He established the monastery of St. Mina in Mariout, and lead many restorations in the monastery of St. Samuel and many other monasteries. He also took care of the renovation of the ancient Cathedral of St. Mark, and established the new St. Mark's Cathedral at Anba Rewis.

Another one of his greatest accomplishments was bringing back a portion of the relics (body) of Saint Mark from Italy.

He departed in peace on March 9, 1971. The Coptic Church's Holy Synod recognized the sainthood of Pope Kyrilos VI on 20 June 2013.

**History book:** What does it mean that the Holy Synod recognized his sainthood ?

**Synaxarium:** It means that the Holy Synod confirmed that this person is a saint in the church. The church can then celebrate his feast, anoint churches and altars after his name, and have his icons in the church. May his prayers be with us all. Amen





# MY PEACEFUL HEART MAKES NO MISTAKES

*Suddenly, a cellphone began ringing...*

**Agpeya:** That's Grandpa's phone. It's his doctor... probably calling to check on him.

**Storybook 1:** Answer the phone!

**Big book:** But he won't hear us.

**History book:** It's okay, he won't hear anything but he'll know something is wrong. Let's just pick up the phone.

*The ringing stopped...*

**History book:** Aww man! We missed his call.

**Big book:** I have an idea, I remember one time when Grandpa was reading, he called his son Mina by holding down the number 2. Why don't we do the same?

**History book:** Yeah, and when he doesn't hear Grandpa's voice, he'll know something is wrong!

*The Agpeya pressed on the number 2...*

**Mina:** (on the phone): Hello, hello... Dad? Are you there? Hello? Oh no! Something's wrong. Dad hang on! I'm coming!!

**All:** Yay!! We got it!





*A few minutes later, Mina came in with the doctor. They checked up on Grandpa, and stayed with him until he felt better. The doctor told Mina that it was good that he called him because Grandpa needed immediate attention. Mina hugged Grandpa and promised to visit more often. He apologized for not checking up on him more regularly.*

**Big book:** Mina knew how to make Grandpa feel better and not be upset with him.

**The Holy Bible:** Yeah, this reminds me of a story about how wisdom and a soft answer can turn away wrath and create peace.

**Storybook 1:** Yay! Another story! Tell us! tell us!

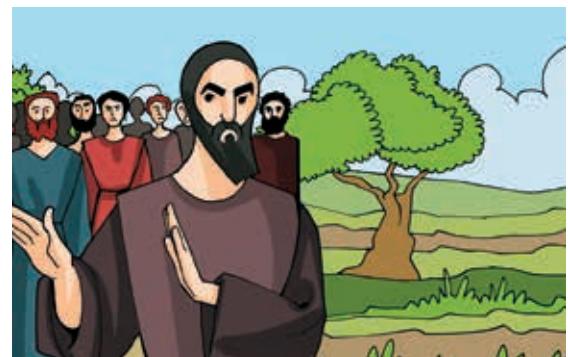
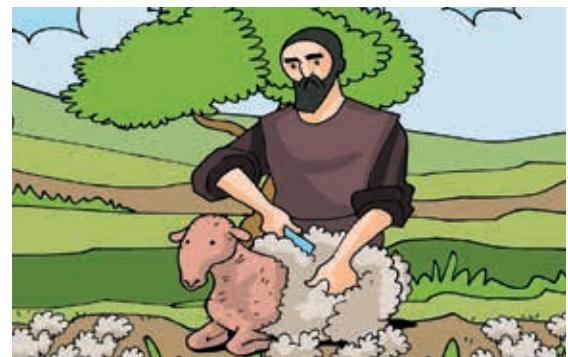
### **The wisdom of Abigail. 1 Samuel 25:1-35**

**The Holy Bible:** Abigail was a woman who lived at the time of David, son of Jesse. Her name means “gives joy”. She was a beautiful and wise woman who knew how to deal with others peacefully. She was married to a man named Nabal. But her husband was not like her.

Nabal was wicked and harsh in dealing with people. The meaning of his name is “fool”. He didn’t know how to behave wisely which is why he was about to get himself in big trouble.

**Storybook 1:** What trouble?

**The Holy Bible:** Nabal was a rich man. He had thousands of sheep and goats. His flocks were in a place called Carmel in the wilderness of Paran. After the death of Samuel, the prophet David and his men dwelt in the wilderness of Paran as they were protecting the land there from the attacks of the Philistines and from wild animals. Anyway, one day, Nabal was shearing his sheep in Carmel.



### Storybook 1: Shearing his sheep?

**The Holy Bible:** Yes, shearing means cutting the wool off a sheep. The wool is then used or sold. And of course, Nabal was making lots of money out of it. So when David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent ten of his men and told them: "Go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. And tell him: 'Peace be to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have! Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them while they were in Carmel. Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.'"



**Big book:** What did Nabal do? He must have given David what he wanted, especially that David asked very politely.



**The Holy Bible:** Unfortunately, he did not. As I told you he was not a wise man. He treated David's men very badly and mocked them saying: "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse?"

### Storybook 1: Uh oh! What did David do?

**The Holy Bible:** When the men came back to David and told him what happened, David was very angry. And in a moment of weakness, he decided to avenge himself and go fight Nabal.



**History book:** Oh no! So what happened?

**The Holy Bible:** Because God loves David and knows that David is a good man with a heart according to God's heart, He prevented David from doing wrong and stopped him from fighting Nabal.



## Storybook 2: How did God do that?

**The Holy Bible:** One of Nabal's servants went and told Abigail what happened. He told her that David's men were very good to them, and that they were not hurt, nor did they miss anything when they were with them in the fields. He told her that Nabal did not give them anything in return.



**Big book:** Why did this servant go tell Abigail what happened?

**The Holy Bible:** Because he knew her wisdom in dealing with different matters.

**History book:** So what did Abigail do?

**The Holy Bible:** She dealt with wisdom. She took lots of gifts including bread, sheep, raisins, roasted grains and other things and told her servants to go before her. But she did not tell her husband Nabal. On her way, she met David and his men who were on their way to fight Nabal. Now David had said to his men: "Surely in vain I have protected all what Nabal had in the wilderness, so nothing was missed of all that belongs to him. And he has repaid me evil for good."



**Storybook 1:** David must have been very angry. What did Abigail say to him?



**The Holy Bible:** When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground and said: "On me, my lord, on me let this iniquity be!" She apologized on her husband's behalf for a mistake she did not do. She spoke to David with words full of wisdom and told him that she did not see the men that he sent. She asked him to accept the presents she brought for his men and to forgive her husband.



David was very happy with what she did, and thanked God who sent her to him saying:

**Memory Verse:** “And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand.” **1Samuel 25:33**

**Big book:** Wow! Abigail was a wise woman. She was able to make peace because of her wisdom. Just like Mina did with Grandpa.

**History book:** Oh look! Grandpa’s coming! At last! Can’t wait to see what book he’ll read next...





## Memorization

### Level 1

#### Lesson 1:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”

(John 3:16)

#### Lesson 2:

“This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me”

(Luke 22:19)

#### Lesson 3:

“Before the war begins, seek after your ally” (St. Isaac the Syrian)

“The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14:14)

#### Lesson 4:

“Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth” (Psalm 54:2)

“Prayer is by nature a dialogue and a union of man with God” (St. John Climacus)

#### Lesson 5:

“A wise man fears and departs from evil, But a fool rages and is self-confident”

(Proverbs 14:6)

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself”

(Matthew 22:39)



**Memorization**  
Level 2

# BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

## Books of the Law

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

## Historical Books

6. Joshua
7. Judges
8. Ruth
9. 1 Samuel
10. 2 Samuel
11. 1 Kings
12. 2 Kings
13. 1 Chronicles
14. 2 Chronicles

15. Ezra

16. Nehemiah

17. Esther

## Poetic Books

18. Job

19. Psalm

20. Proverbs

21. Ecclesiastes

22. Song of Solomon

## Major Prophets

23. Isaiah

24. Jeremiah

25. Lamentations

26. Ezekiel

27. Daniel

## Minor Prophets

28. Hosea

29. Joel

30. Amos

31. Obadiah

32. Jonah

33. Micah

34. Nahum

35. Habakkuk

36. Zephaniah

37. Haggai

38. Zechariah

39. Malachi



Me **morization**  
Level 2

## GOSPEL OF THE VESPERS PRAYER

### LUKE 4 : 38-41

Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.

When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.

Glory to God forever. Amen.



# St. Mark Festival 2016

Midwest Coptic Orthodox Churches

## ILLINOIS

St. Mary - Palatine, IL  
St. Mark - Burr Ridge, IL  
St. George - Monee, IL  
St. Mina - Champaign, IL

## INDIANA

St. Mary & St. Mark – Indianapolis, IN

## IOWA

St. Mary - Des Moines, IA

## MINNESOTA

St. Mary - Twin Cities, MN

## MISSOURI

St. Mary & St. Abraam - St. Louis, MO

## NEBRASKA

St. Mary & St. George - Omaha, NE

## WISCONSIN

St. Mary & St. Antonious - Milwaukee, WI  
St. Mary & St. Rewais - Madison, WI



If you have a question,  
Or if your church would like to join the mahragan competition,

Please contact:

**Fr. Samuel Azmy**

219-629-3326

[abouna@stgeorgechicago.org](mailto:abouna@stgeorgechicago.org)

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