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ARCHANGEL MICHAEL & SAINT MENA COPTIC ORTHODOX
CHURCH
STATEN ISLAND NEW YORK

THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

ITS ROOTS IN HISTORY & ITS
ARTICLES OF FAITH

THE COPTIC CHURCH AND ITS ROOTS

1ST & 2ND CENTURY

- ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST - MARTYRED (68 A.D.)
- ST. MARK'S SUCCESSORS (POPES)
- SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA - CATECHISM

3RD CENTURY

- ROMAN PERSECUTION
- COPTIC CALENDAR
- ORIGIN OF MONASTIC LIFE - DESERT FATHERS

EARLY 4TH - MID 5TH CENTURY

- CHURCH COUNCILS - DEFENDING THE FAITH
- SCHISM (DIVISION) AT CHALCEDON, 451 A.D.

MID 5TH - MID 7TH CENTURY

- UNDER THE BYZANTINE RULE

MID 7TH - MID 9TH CENTURY

- ARAB CONQUEST, 641 A.D.
- UNDER THE ISLAMIC EMPIRE

MID 9TH-END OF 18TH CENTURY

- UNDER INDEPENDENT ARAB RULERS
- UNDER THE OTTOMAN (TURKISH) EMPIRE

19TH - PRESENT

- MODERN AGE

SERVICE SCHEDULE

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Liturgical Services | Sunday | 6:30am - 8:30am 8:30am - 11:30am |
| | Wednesday Friday Saturday | 8:30am - 10:30am |
| | Thursday | 4:30am - 6:30m |
| English College and Young Adult Meeting & Fellowship | Tuesday | 8:00pm - 10:30 PM |
| Arabic College and Young Adult Meeting & Fellowship | Thursday | 8:00pm - 10:30 PM |
| High School Vespers Prayer, Youth Meeting, & Fellowship | Friday | 7:30pm - 10:30 PM |
| Junior High School Vespers Prayer, Youth Meeting, & Fellowship | Friday | 7:30pm - 10:30 PM |
| Holy Family Meeting | Last Sunday of each month | 1:00pm - 3:00pm |
| Scouts, St. Marcelino's Theater, St. Cecelia's Music/Band Class | Saturday | 11:30am - 3:30pm |
| Diaconate School | Wednesday | 6:00pm - 8:00pm |
| Sunday School K-12 | Sunday | 12:00pm - 1:00pm |

SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Bible

- It is the inspired word of God – must be respected and obeyed
- It guides our daily life – reading , meditation and application
- It is a major part in the liturgical practices of the Church

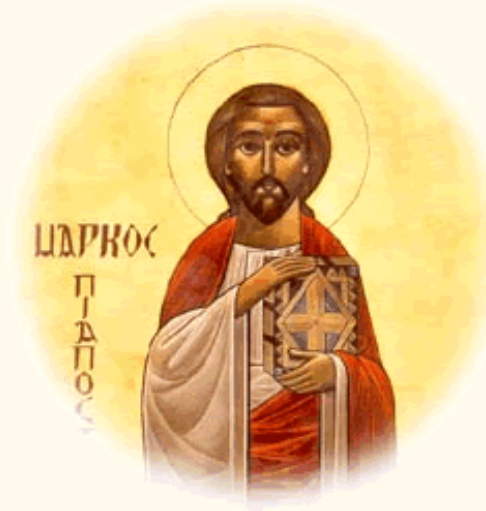
Prayer

- A daily practice for the believer – “The Agpya” or the prayers of the hours: 7 prayers corresponding to 7 divisions of the day
- Continuous communication with God is the believer daily goal

Liturgical Practices

- Through the Seven Sacraments
- Build and strengthen the believer’s life with the Lord

The salvation of every soul is the daily goal of the Church



ST. MARK & HIS SUCCESSORS

- THE WRITER OF THE 2ND GOSPEL OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
- THE FOUNDER OF THE EGYPTIAN (COPTIC) CHURCH
- THE FIRST POPE & PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA
- THE FOUNDER OF THE SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA

THE COPTIC CHURCH, ESTABLISHED BY ST. MARK, BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, HAS OFFERED TO THE WORLD: GREAT LEADERS, UNIQUE EXPERIENCES, AND VALUABLE TEACHINGS

CHILDHOOD

- Born in Cyrene, one of 5 major cities (“Pentapolis”) in north Africa, of righteous and wealthy Jewish parents.
- They lost most of their possessions in a barbarian raid and migrated back to Jerusalem - where St. Mark was brought up.

APOSTLESHIP

- The Lord Jesus chose St. Mark as one of the Seventy Apostles, and his mother’s house for the Last Supper.
- The same house was the meeting place for the Apostles where the Holy Spirit descended upon them on the Day of Pentecost.
- To emphasize his role as an eye-witness of the Lord Jesus, the Church gave him the title "Beholder of God".

EVANGELISM

- St. Mark accompanied St. Paul and St. Barnabas on their first missionary journey but left them at Pamphilia and returned to Judea.
- On the second journey, he went with St. Barnabas to Cyprus. He then went to Pentapolis, his birthplace, then to Egypt.

ST. MARK IN EGYPT

- He entered Alexandria in mid 1st century A.D., when it was the most outstanding center of culture and a home for many philosophers and a magnificent library.
- He preached to Anianus, a shoemaker, after he healed his finger. Then, together they spread the Good News in Alexandria.
- He ordained Anianus as Bishop for Alexandria with 12 priests and 7 deacons. Then he left to Pentapolis, going to Rome where he again joined St. Paul in his ministry (Col 4:10, 2Tim 4:11, Phil 1:24)
- When he returned he found that the Christians had already built a Church and grown in number significantly. He wrote his Gospel and continued to serve them until 68 A.D.
- He was seized and killed on Easter night, 68 A.D., and received the crowns of Apostleship, Evangelism and Martyrdom.



ST. MARK'S SUCCESSORS

- They carry the title "POPE" which means "Father of Fathers": Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria, all of Egypt, Ethiopia, Nubia, Sudan and the Pentapolis – the See of St. Mark.
- It was said about the prelates who succeeded him that they were "wise and good, meek and simple, and they taught the people with diligence and singleness of heart."
- They established Catechistic Schools to teach the fundamentals of Christianity, hence the name catechumen for the people who were being taught the new faith.
- Pre-Christian school encouraged and funded by Ptolemy, 323 B.C. Ptolemy also ordered the famous Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the "Septuagint" by 70 of the Jewish rabbis.
- It started as a school of science and literature, then expanded into philosophy and theological matters. The culture in Alexandria was quite advanced and diverse.
- The School of Alexandria played a critical role in the era of spreading the faith and leading the Christian teaching worldwide. It produced some of the most prominent Christian philosophers and Church fathers, e.g. Origen.

MISSION STATEMENT:

"HIM WE PREACH, WARNING EVERY MAN AND TEACHING EVERY MAN IN ALL WISDOM, THAT WE MAY PRESENT EVERY MAN PERFECT IN CHRIST JESUS. TO THIS END I ALSO LABOR, STRIVING ACCORDING TO HIS WORKING WHICH WORKS IN ME MIGHTILY." COLOSSIANS 1:28-29

OUR MISSION IS TO TAKE THE GOSPEL AND BRING IT TO LIFE THROUGH THE TEACHINGS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES AND THE PRESERVATIONS OF THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS. WE AIM TO APPLY THESE TEACHINGS EACH DAY IN ALL OF OUR PRACTICES AND SPREAD THE AWARENESS AND TEACHINGS TO OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY AND LOCAL COMMUNITY.

REGARDLESS OF ANYONE'S BACKGROUND, RACE, SOCIAL STATUS, FINANCIAL STATUS, ETC. ALL ARE ACCEPTED AND SERVED IN THE CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOR. IN THE GOSPELS, OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST ALWAYS DREW TOWARDS AND SOUGHT OUT ALL WHO NEEDED HIM MOST SUCH AS THE TAX COLLECTORS, THE SAMARITAN WOMAN, THE GREEDY AND RICH, SICK, SHUNNED, ETC. WE SEEK TO REPLICATE THE PRACTICES OF OUR LORD, AND THE TEACHINGS OF THE WORD.

VISION:

'LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT. AND THE SECOND IS LIKE IT: *'LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'* **MATTHEW 22: 37-39**

OUR VISION IS TO TAKE THIS COMMANDMENT AND DEMONSTRATE THE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE THAT CHRIST HAS BOTH SHOWN TO US AND COMMANDED US TO SHOW EACH OTHER AS WELL AS TO OUR COMMUNITY. WE AIM TO BRING THIS UNCONDITIONAL LOVE THROUGH SERVING EACH OTHER AND PUTTING THE NEEDS OF OTHERS BEFORE OUR OWN, REGARDLESS OF WHO THEY ARE. ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST REMINDS US IN THE GOSPEL WHERE HE SAYS THAT *"HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE. JOHN 3:30"* WE WILL DO THIS THROUGH SERVING OUR COMMUNITY BY GETTING TO KNOW EACH INDIVIDUAL, AND SERVING THEIR NEEDS BY HOLDING SERVICES THAT STRIVE FOR WORSHIP IN UNITY, LEARNING IN UNITY, LOVE IN UNITY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY WELCOME ALL WITH OPEN ARMS. CHRIST ALWAYS CONTINUOUSLY WELCOMES US DAILY WITH OPEN ARMS REGARDLESS OF OUR PAST, WHERE WE ARE, OR WHO WE ARE.

The Seven Sacraments

| SACRAMENT | ACTION | RESULT |
|-------------|---|---|
| BAPTISM | Immersion in the specially blessed water 3 times | Death and resurrection with Christ; New birth |
| CHRISMATION | Anointment with the Holy Myron 36 times | Receiving the Holy Spirit |
| CONFESSION | Repentance and confessing sins in front of a priest | Absolution and forgiveness of sins |
| EUCCHARIST | Communion/partaking of the Holy Body and Blood | Unity with Christ, forgiveness of sins & Eternal life |
| MATRIMONY | Special wedding prayer and celebration | Unity between the wedded couple to begin a new family in Christ |
| UNCTION | Anointment of the sick with the blessed oil | Comfort and healing in spirit and body |
| ORDERS | Ordination of deacons, priests, and bishops | Special grace and authority for the ordained to perform Church duties |

MARTYRDOM

Passion, courage, preaching, and practical proof of the Christian faith and virtues

THE COPTIC CHURCH, THOUGH VERY PEACEFUL AND LOVING TOWARDS EVERYONE, SUFFERED SEVERE PERSECUTIONS ACROSS ALL AGES. THE FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT PREFERRED TORTURE AND DEATH (MARTYRDOM) OVER GIVING UP THEIR FAITH AND LOVE.

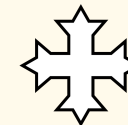
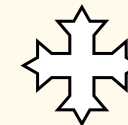
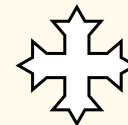
- THE COPTIC CHURCH IS KNOWN FOR OFFERING THE LARGEST NUMBER OF MARTYRS (WITNESSES TO THE LORD) IN THE WORLD.
- CONFESSORS: SUFFERED PERSECUTION AND TORTURE BUT WERE NOT KILLED
- MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS WERE PERSECUTED DUE TO THEIR FIRM STAND REGARDING THEIR CHRISTIAN FAITH, THEIR CHASTITY AND PURITY, AS WELL AS THE BIBLICAL AND CHURCH DOCTRINE

MARTYRS = WITNESSES: SUFFERED PERSECUTION AND DEATH AS WITNESSES FOR CHRIST "AND YOU SHALL BE WITNESSES TO ME" (ACTS 1:8)

The martyrs knew that this world is temporary with respect to eternal life. They also knew that The sadness, pain & suffering of this world will result in great glory in heaven.

THEREFORE....

- They rejected everything carnal or worldly
- They longed to leave the body and be with Christ
- They did all of that with great love and joy



BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. BLESSED ARE YOU WHEN THEY REVILE AND PERSECUTE YOU, AND SAY ALL KINDS OF EVIL AGAINST YOU FALSELY FOR MY SAKE. REJOICE AND BE EXCEEDINGLY GLAD, FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN, FOR SO THEY PERSECUTED THE PROPHETS WHO WERE BEFORE YOU."
(MAT 5:10-12)

MONASTICISM

- Asceticism / Ascetic Life is a chosen life of poverty, solitude, and abstinence.
- Renouncement of social life and comfort for solitude, self-mortification, & religious devotion; leading a very austere (rigidly abstinent) and self-denying life.
- Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (Mat 19:21)



ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT (C. 251-356 A.D.) – THE FATHER OF MONASTIC FAMILY WORLDWIDE



ST. SYNCLETIKI (4TH CENTURY) – LEADER OF MONASTIC LIFE FOR WOMEN

The Coptic Church also offered the world several forms of monasticism

- Anchoritic / Eremitic – St. Paul of Thebes, St. Mary of Egypt
- Anchorites / eremites / hermits living in solitude; own prayer, clothing, food & work. Anchorites with no specific cells but wandered in the desert: "wanderers / pilgrims".

THE COPTIC LANGUAGE

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|------|-------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|-----|
| Ⲁ ⲁ | Ⲃ ⲃ | Ⲅ ⲅ | Ⲇ ⲇ | Ⲉ ⲉ | Ⲋ | ⲋ Ⲍ | ⲍ Ⲏ | ⲏ Ⲑ | ⲑ Ⲓ | ⲓ Ⲕ | ⲕ Ⲗ |
| alpha | veeta | ghamma | delta | ei | soo | zeta | eeta | theeta | iota | kappa | |
| a | b, v | g, gh, ng | th, d | e | 6 | z | ee | th, t | i, y | k | |
| [a] | [b, v] | [g, ŋ] | [ð, d] | [s, e] | | [z] | [i:] | [θ] | [i, j] | [k] | |
| ⲗ Ⲙ | ⲙ Ⲛ | ⲛ Ⲝ | ⲝ Ⲟ | ⲟ Ⲡ | ⲡ Ⲣ | ⲣ Ⲥ | ⲥ Ⲧ | ⲧ Ⲩ | ⲩ Ⲫ | ⲫ Ⲭ | |
| lamda | mei | nei | eksee | o | pee | ro | seema | tav | epsilon | fei | |
| l | m | n | x | o (short) | p | r | s | t, d | v, u, y | f | |
| [l] | [m] | [n] | [ks] | [ɔ] | [p] | [r] | [s] | [t, d] | [v, u, i] | [f] | |
| ⲭ Ⲹ | ⲹ Ⲻ | ⲻ Ⲽ | ⲽ Ⲿ | ⲿ ⲏ | Ⲑ ⲑ | Ⲓ ⲓ | Ⲕ ⲕ | ⲗ Ⲙ | ⲙ Ⲏ | ⲏ Ⲑ | ⲑ Ⲓ |
| kai | epsee | o | shai | fai | khai | horee | cheema | tee | janja | jinkim | |
| k, sh, kh | ps | o (long) | sh | f | kh | h | ch | tee | g, j | | |
| [k, ʃ, x] | [ps] | [o:] | [ʃ] | [f] | [x] | [h] | [tʃ] | [ti] | [g, dʒ] | | |

- Pantaenus and Clement (2nd century scholars) formalized the Coptic Language, based on the common Egyptian Language at that time (derivative from the ancient Hieroglyphic Language). They used the Greek Alphabet, with the addition of 6 letters.
- They also translated the Bible into Coptic in the second century. This is one of the most ancient translations of the Bible. Other valuable Coptic manuscripts are also in existence.
- It was the dominant language in Egypt until the 10th century when finally it