



St. Mary & St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions

Monthly Newsletter: February 2020 Issue

Coptic Calendar: 23 Tobe 1736 – 21 Meshir 1736

Bible Readings

2nd February	24 Tobe	Psalms 36:9-10 Divine Gospel John 9:1-38
9th February	1 Meshir	Psalms 96:6, 4 Divine Gospel John 6:22-27
16th February	8 Meshir	Psalms 50:14, 23 Divine Gospel Luke 2:21-39
23rd February	15 Meshir	Psalms 2:11, 10 Divine Gospel Matthew 6:1-18

Coptic Feast Days

- + Feb. 1st (23 Tobe): The Departure of Pope Cyril (Kyrillos) IV, 110th Patriarch of Alexandria.
- + Feb. 4th (26 Tobe): The Martyrdom of the Forty-Nine Saints, the Elders of Shiheet.
- + Feb. 5th (27 Tobe): The Martyrdom of St. Abefam the Soldier (St. Phoebammon).
- + Feb. 9th (1 Meshir): The Commemoration of the Second Universal Council in the city of Constantinople.
- + Feb. 10th–12th (2–4 Meshir): Jonah's (Nineveh) Fast.
- + Feb. 10th (2 Meshir): The Departure of the Great Saint Anba Paul, the First Hermit.
- + Feb. 16th (8 Meshir): The Feast of Presenting the Lord Christ to the Temple.
- + Feb. 20th (12 Meshir): The Commemoration of the Honorable Archangel Michael.
- + Feb. 22nd (14 Meshir): The Departure of St. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch.
- + Feb. 24th (16 Meshir): The Beginning of the Holy Great Fast – 55 days.
- + Feb. 24th (16 Meshir): The Departure of St. Elizabeth, Mother of St. John the Baptist.
- + Feb. 29th (21 Meshir): The Commemoration of the Virgin St. Mary, the Theotokos.

Issued by: St. Mary & St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church.

Address: 2-1 Shimizu Saganaka, Kizugawa city, Kyoto, 619-0222, Japan.

Tel./Fax: 0774-26-4550

Email: japan@coptic.org.au

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/japancopticchurch/



Jonah's Fast (Fast of Nineveh)

Jonah, according to Hebrew tradition, was the son of the widow, whom Elijah, the prophet, raised from the dead at Zarephath of Sidon (I Kings 17: 10-24). He was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom of Israel around 825-784 BC. Therefore, Jonah prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II, the King of Samaria (II Kings 14:25).

The Holy Book of Jonah in the Old Testament tells the familiar story of Jonah, the fleeing prophet. Forty-eight verses comprise the entire story. This is a story of a legendary character with a nature similar to our own. Jonah, a contemporary of the prophet Amos, had faults, shortcomings, and weaknesses. The Lord chose Jonah the Prophet despite his faults and used his weaknesses to make him stronger. The Lord worked through him, in him, and with him to give him guidance and to teach him.

The waves did not suffocate Jonah. The whale caught him up and he did not perish. After three days and three nights, the Lord commanded the fish to "vomit Jonah onto dry land." (Jonah 2: 10) His salvation came from the Lord.

As the billows and waves of life also encompass us, let us follow Jonah's example and trust in the Lord. Remember Jonah's whale and be assured of our God's long suffering. Be careful in your complaints. Jonah's example of blessing your circumstances and having faith preserved his life.

The great fish can come in many disguises in the contemporary world of today. As Christians we need to take on this spirit of wondrous faith and assurance of the Unseen.

By His Grace Bishop Youssef



St. Mary & St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church
Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions
Monthly Newsletter: February 2020 Issue
Coptic Calendar: 23 Tobe 1736 – 21 Meshir 1736

The Coptic Church as an Apostolic Church

Term “Copts”

The term "Copts" is equivalent to the word "Egyptians." It is derived from the Greek "Aigyptos," which in turns is derived from the ancient Egyptian "Ha-ka-Ptah," i.e. "the house of the spirit of Ptah," a most highly revered deity in Egyptian mythology. From the Arab conquest and until today, this term refers to the Christian Egyptians to distinguish them from the native Muslims.

Son of Pharaohs

The Copts as the successors of the ancient Egyptians are defined as the modern sons of the Pharaohs. They played an essential role in the whole Christian world, especially during the first five centuries. Their religious background helped them to accept Christianity with eagerness and to enjoy its depth through their ascetic life, meditation and studying of the holy scripture. In this topic we wish to throw some light on the ancient Egyptian culture and how it reacted towards the new Christian faith.

- 1. Their religious background:** It is well-known that ancient Egyptians have been religiously minded by nature and upbringing since the very early times. Herodotus states that "The Egyptians are religious to excess, far beyond any other race of men." Their religious curiosity was satisfied by the Christian faith that puts no limits to spiritual progress, for it raises the believers towards the bosom of the Father that they might enjoy the likeness of God, fast communion with Him and acknowledgment of the eternal divine mysteries.
- 2. Their high scientific background:** In any case, the fact is that the ancient Egyptians put their scientific abilities at the disposal of the religious thinking (such as the building of pyramids, embalming etc.). It had influenced the Copts. They looked, to science not as an enemy of religion or contrary to it, but that science acts in favor of religion. Therefore, the School of Alexandria opened its doors to the scholars and philosophers, believing that science and philosophy could serve the true spiritual life.
- 3. Their religious dogmas:**
 - a) Each major town in ancient Egypt used to recognize some kind of a triad. But these triads were too alien from the Christian Holy Trinity.
 - b) Their philosophers believed in One Supreme Being; the best example is king Ikhnaton (1383-1365 B.C.).
 - c) While the majority of the ancient civilizations were preoccupied with the earthly life, seeking temporary pleasures, the Egyptian mind was absorbed in the world to come, and in the resurrection. When they were converted to Christianity, they became involved in awaiting the advent of the Risen Christ, through their lengthy hymns, excessive fasting, enduring and suffering with joy. This eschatological attitude has its effect on our worship, liturgies and even in our daily life.
 - d) *The Cross:* Egyptians tended to identify the Cross with their own sign of eternal life, "the Ankh," which was held in the hands of the immortals such as gods and pharaohs. The "Ankh" sign took the shape of a cruciform with rounded tip, which was readily adopted and used by the Copts from the very early times.
 - e) In addition to this, the Egyptians seem to have had an idea of the unity of God, His eternity, His infinity, as well as His loving kindness.

Fr. Tadros Y Malaty, Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Photos of January 2020

The Glorious Feast of Nativity

