

St. Mary & St. Joseph Coptic Orthodox Church

11308 Yonge St, Richmond Hill, ON L4S 1K9

June 2020 • **Special Edition**

# THE ROCK

THE LORD IS MY ROCK.  
- PSALM 18:2

*Flashback on the readings from the last week of  
the Holy Pentecost*

## **Reflection on (Ephesians 4:11-16) by D.R.**

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ - 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.





This particular portion of today's reading struck me differently because of its immense practicality and simply how frank St. Paul was being. To me, this passage reminded me that we each have our role to play as a part of the body of Christ, and each and every role is critical and important and apart of His plan. Our role in service of whatever capacity, as long as its purpose is to edify the body of Christ; to uplift each other and bring each other closer to Him, we strive closer to His plan.

What's further is when we choose to sacrifice the time to serve in whatever capacity, it makes us as a church stronger; each individual as a part of the whole is less likely to be swayed by the creative measures of the devil designed to bring us astray. Service as a labour of love enriches our faith collectively.



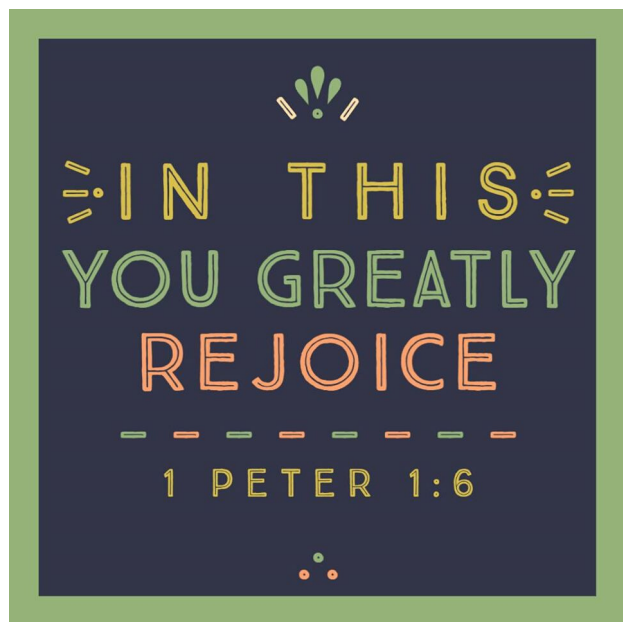
### ***Reflection on (1 Peter 1:6-8) by J.S.***

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love.

Today, more than ever, we face many trials as individuals and as a community. We face many uncertainties on a daily basis. Our lives that we always had planned months in advance, we now live day by day taking everything one step at a time. Our faith proved to be the most precious of our possessions, the only thing that stood when nothing else did.



Did it get shaken? Maybe a little. But did it get weaker? Thank God, Certainly not. Upon reflecting on this passage, I learned that the only source of true happiness is the knowledge that I have an inheritance that does not fade away and that does not perish, even when everything around us is uncertain, this is something that is certain.



### ***Reflection on (John 15:1-8) by V.S.***

1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

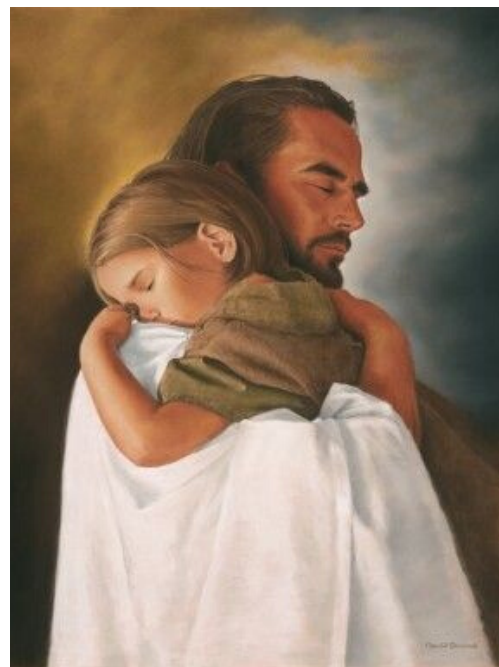






John 15, a passage that we come upon many times throughout the year. I realized the amount of times the word ABIDE is repeated which got me to think: what does it mean to abide in Christ?

Abide (Greek, meno) means to remain or continue. So abide is to continually rely and depend on our true Vine which without, we will never be able to bear the fruits (Galatians 5:22-23) that we were called to bear, therefore becoming useless. If we humbly acknowledge the connection that we have with Christ - the branch is connected to the vine and the vine is connected to the branches we will live a fruitful, peaceful and joyful life (vs. 11). During this difficult time we are in, we can learn to cope and to stop worrying by abiding in Christ. This doesn't mean that we won't face hardships or tribulations but through abiding in Christ we will learn to love and accept all situations we are put in and become more fruitful.



### ***Reflection on (Exodus 14:13-14) by M.F.***

13 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14 The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."





Be still, have faith. Time and time again the world gets darker, with tragedy and corruption all around us it is often difficult to keep strong in all the pain that surrounds us. It's hard to see the light through all of the darkness around the world in times like this. More often than not we let our anger and hatred take control, we let it slip our minds that our faith is the strongest weapon in our arsenal. In times of fear and uncertainty more than ever we must stand firm in our faith with the Lord. He tells you to not be afraid, He is on your side standing with you. Always, in times where you may feel completely alone, He is with you. You need only have complete faith and trust in the Lord that things will get better, you will succeed, do not be afraid.



### ***Reflection on (Romans 8:35-36) by D.Y.***

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

In this verse it is so easy to read each individual torment so quickly but if you take a second to read the verse slowly, each one of these problems comes with a multitude of hardships.



It is so important to understand the extremity of these problems and that none of these in all their severity will overtake the love of a Christian who trusts in God. How many times have we suffered a small inconvenience and begin to complain to God and drift away? How many times has something great in your life happened through prayer and you almost completely disregard it? If you feel that you have never felt God's hand, then it may be time to start today! It is so important to never forget these moments and to write them down so you can turn to them in times of distress and truly understand that nothing will ever separate us from the love of Christ because we will continue to be slaughtered all day long as mentioned in the next verse and we must be prepared.

St. John Chrysostom says, **"It is possible in one day to die not once or twice but many times. For someone who is always prepared for this will continually receive a full reward. This is what the psalmist hints at when he says "all the day long."**



### ***Reflection on (3 John 1:11) by V.L.***

11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

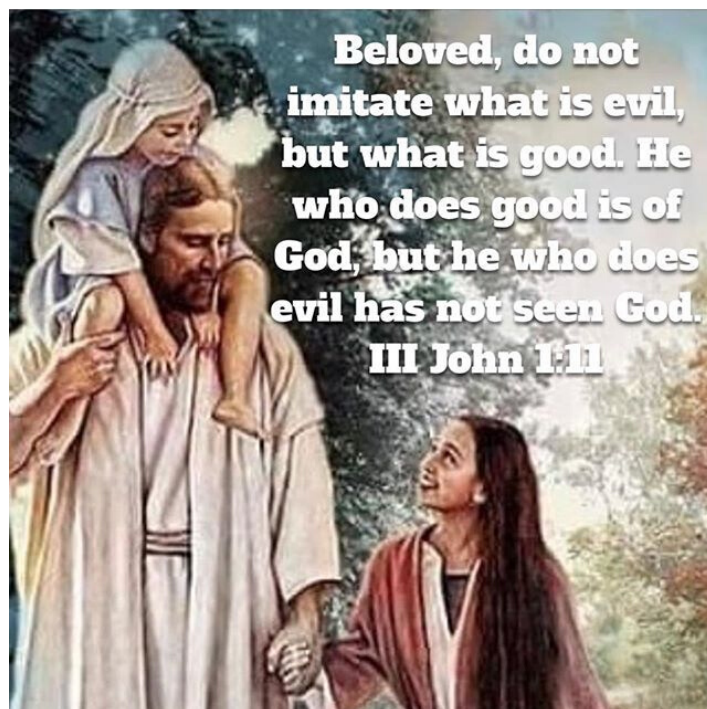
Reading this verse allows us to reflect on our own lives. How often have we followed, or imitated something simply because it was a trend? Or because we feared of what people would think if we didn't?





On the other hand, how often do we display our Christian values, helping others see God through our words and actions? This verse seems simple and straightforward but allows for a lot of reflection. There are things we know are evil, and things we know are good, and as Christians, do everything in our power to show that we are of God.

This can be done by displaying the fruits of the spirit that the Bible tells us; love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. And these, always. Not only when it's convenient, or when we're fasting, or when around certain people. Always. And people will question, ask, praise or even hate these actions, but showing that we are of God is the first step of renouncing evil and preaching his name.



### ***Reflection on (Jude 22-25) by S.H.***

22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction; 23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.





24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25 to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

With the help of Anba Youssef, this is what I learned from today's reading: Not every sinner is a false teacher, some fall into sin because of weakness and they need compassion. We need to make a distinction between those who are false teachers and those who need compassion. The false teachers refuse to repent and reject God, however those who need compassion are willing to repent and come back to God. We should not condemn any sinner. When we help them we need to do that with wisdom and discernment. Some sinners need to be saved with fear, meaning we need to be careful lest we fall into the same sin. We pull them out of the fire like a firefighter saving someone from a burning building quickly. Some sinners need compassion, some are helped with fear and some it's best if we keep our distance. We need that wisdom and discernment. The only One who can give us that wisdom and keep us from stumbling, as we are all sinners and weak, is God. His blood will save us. We need to stay rooted in God and ask Him to give us wisdom and discernment and keep us from stumbling. We should always pray for our brothers and ask God to help them with what they are struggling with and pray that He may give us wisdom to know the difference between the things we can change and the things we cannot.

