

# **Our Risen God**

**is Now  
in Our Midst**



Our daily unity together with the Lord  
Jesus during the Holy Fifty Days

**Interactive Online Book**

**Under Supervision and Revision of:  
HG Bishop Daniel**

Bishop of Maadi, the Papal Vicar and Secretary of the Holy Synod

**Prepared by:**

**Dr. Michael Medhat - Dr. Mina Medhat**



**H.H. Pope Tawadros II**  
**118<sup>th</sup> Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the**  
**See of St. Mark**



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## **Dedications and Acknowledgements**

**O Holy Trinity**, we give You all the glory, thanksgiving and honor. **Our gracious and compassionate Lord**, we thank You for granting us great blessings that we do not deserve, for You are good and Your love endures forever. We thank You for your guidance, grace, and support. We thank You for your Holy Church, Your pure bride, that You granted us to praise You in like the angles. You instilled her in our hearts that we cannot live even one day without being a holy Church ourselves, where You come and dwell in with Your glory that we may offer You the sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving and glory. **O our Lord Jesus Christ** make for Yourself within us a temple of Your Holy Spirit glorifying You.

We give thanks to our compassionate father, **His Holiness Pope Tawadros II** for his true fatherhood and his sacrificial love which encompasses us and all his children in the world. His Holiness expressed his great admiration for the idea of the previous book (*Welcome to Our Home My Lord Jesus*) that was released during the Holy Pascha Week 2020, and His Holiness sent us his sincere love and encouragement to continue preparing a new book that would serve The Holy Fifties. We learnt a lot from His Holiness' advice on how to be spiritually fulfilled during this period.

We thank **His Grace Bishop Daniel, Bishop of Maadi**, the Papal Vicar and Secretary of the Holy Synod, and all the Holy Synod Fathers in our Coptic Church.

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Lord, please accept from us this simple work, to bless it and shine on it with your grace that You may become completely clear and visible while we disappear, and to use it for our salvation. May this work be an aid and an encouragement to every house to become a living Church that gathers every day for prayer and praise. May every house be united to You, O Holy one, through the Bible, the writings of the early fathers and the teachings and our contemporary fathers. May every house minister and share Your good new with love to the whole world, to evangelize with Your Holy and Blessed name.

**Through the Grace of the Holy Resurrection of Our good Savior and our Holy Mother St. Mary and our Evangelist St. Mark, Amen**



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Maria Ghobrial	(Canada)	David Stefanos	(Canada)
Shady Nessim	(Canada)	Ragui Salama	(Canada)
Mark Hanna	(Canada)	Mirolla Youssef	(Canada)
Veronica Armanios	(Canada)	Christian Mourad	(Canada)
Magy Aziz	(Canada)	David Hanna	(Canada)
Antony Girgis	(Canada)	Joe Henry	(Canada)
Miriam Basta	(Canada)	Nicolas Mourad	(Canada)
Hany Samir	(Canada)	Maria Hany	(Canada)
Joy Hany	(Canada)	Philopateer Youssef	(England)
Karen Alfy	(Egypt)	Karim Mamdoh	(Egypt)
Marianne Rafik	(Egypt)	Merna Micheal	(Egypt)
Caroline Ayad	(Australia)	Adel Shenouda	(Australia)
Romany Bogtor	(Australia)	Markoryos Ibrahim	(USA)
George Ibrahim	(USA)	Theodoros Ibrahim	(USA)
Esther Boulos	(USA)	Danial Boulos	(USA)
Karim Nabih	(Netherlands)	John Samir	(Emirates)

**18 Baramouda 1736 - 26 April 2020 - Thomas Sunday**





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## **Patristic Articles on the Sundays of the Holy Fifties:**

- St Ignatius of Antioch
- St Athanasius the Apostolic
- St John Chrysostom
- Excerpts from the Desert Fathers (Paradise of the Fathers)
- St Anthony the Great
- St Cyril of Alexandria
- St Melito, Bishop of Sardis

## **The introductions and articles written on the weeks and Sundays of the Holy Fifties:**

- **Pope Tawadros II** (The Coptic Orthodox Pulpit book)
- Hegumen Pishoy Kamel (The Spirituality of the Readings of the Holy Fifties book)
- Archdeacon Banoub Abdou (The 6th volume of 'The Treasures of Grace' book)
- A variety of liturgical research in the spirituality of the Coptic daily liturgical readings.

## **The Audible Lectures:**

- **H.H. Pope Shenouda III**
- The Late Bishop Anba Poemen of Malawy
- Bishop Anba Moussa (Youth Bishopric)
- Bishop Anba Raphael (General Bishop)
- Bishop Anba Abraham, LA
- Hegumen Pishoy Kamel
- Hegumen Felimon Mikhael
- Fr. Moses Samaan
- The Late Fr. Mina Ramzy
- **H.H. Pope Tawadros II**
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- Bishop Anba Angaelos, UK
- Bishop Anba Kyrillos, LA
- Hegumen Tadros Yacoub Malaty
- Hegumen Mark Aziz
- Fr. Daniel Fanous

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Version 1

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If you find any errors, or if you have any comments or concerns,  
or if you would like to share in translating the next publications  
kindly email [minamedhat84@gmail.com](mailto:minamedhat84@gmail.com)



## ترنمة بكلمات كتابية عن القيامة

(لأعرفه وقوة قيامته وشركة آلامه متشبهاً بموته) ٢ 

(من أجله تركت كل شيء حسبته نفاية) ٢

(كي أربح المسيح) ٢ وأوجد فيه

(لأعرفه وقوة قيامته وشركة آلامه متشبهاً بموته) ٢

(كحزاني دائماً فرحين، فقراء نعني كثيرين) ٢

(كان لا شيء لنا ونحن الغالبيين) ٢

(في أتعب في أسهار في أصوام في صبر في الشدائد والآلام) ٢

كمضلين ونحن صادقون كحزاني ونحن فرحون

بطهارة في علم في أناة بلطف ومحبة بلا رياء

كمانتين ونحن نحيا في الإيمان (حياة أبدية في السماء) ٤

**That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.**

**For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him.**

**As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;**

**As poor, yet making many rich**

**As having nothing, yet we are victorious.**

**In labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings, in much patience, in tribulations and sufferings.**

**As deceivers, and yet true;**

**as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;**

**By purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by sincere love, without hypocrisy.**

**As dying, and behold we live by faith eternally in heaven.**

*Reflections on the Resurrection in our daily lives based on (Philippians 3) and (2 Corinthians 6).*

**Click on the icon  to hear it**

## اية ملحنة عن القيامة

  
رَبِّ إِنْ كَانَ رُوحَ الَّذِي أَقَامَ  
يَسُوعَ مِنَ الْأَمْوَاتِ سَاكِنًا  
فِيكُمْ، فَالَّذِي أَقَامَ الْمَسِيحَ مِنْ  
الْأَمْوَاتِ سَيُحْيِي أَجْسَادَكُمْ  
الْمَائِتَةَ أَيْضًا بِرُوحِهِ السَّاكِنِ  
فِيكُمْ (رُومِيَّةَ ٨ : ١١)



But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

**Romans 8:11**





## Books suitable for reading during the Holy Fifties + A full liturgy ( includes all the hymns of the Resurrection)

Click on the icon to download  

	<p>Audio Book (In Arabic) The basis of love in the spiritual life H.H. Pope Tawadros II</p>	
	<p>A full liturgy including all the hymns of the Resurrection Bishop Raphael, the General Bishop</p>	
	<p>كتاب : مع المسيح في قيامته كتاب : كيف نعيش في القيامة القمص بيشوى كامل</p>	
	<p>The Resurrection of The Lord Christ The Feast of the Ascension and our new life The Fiery Spirit The Gift of the Holy Spirit Egypt and the History of Salvation Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty</p>	
	<p>كتاب : اقمتمى مع المسيح كتاب : نور القيامة المفرد واسترداد اللؤلؤة المفقودة كتاب : عيد الصعود وحياتنا الجديدة كتاب : عطية الروح القدس القمص تادرس يعقوب ملطى</p>	
 Saint Paul Brotherhood	<p>THE TREASURES OF THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH The Holy Fifty Days - St. Paul Brotherhood Diocese of Los Angeles, Southern California, and Hawaii. □</p>	





## **I am in their midst**

In the deep Scetes Desert of Macarius, we met an honorable solitary monk who has lived alone in a cave in the heart of the desert for tens of years which he cannot count. Time for him is nothing but a constant presence with Christ as though mingled in eternity, even though his age was more than hundred years old.

"When God granted our request to meet this father, we asked him to give us a word by which we may live."

He looked up towards heaven and said, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

**Brethren, do you understand what the Lord meant? Who are the two or three?**

The Lord here was speaking of the Christian Family and how it starts with two (husband and wife) and could develop into 3 or more according to what the Lord grants them.

With this verse, Christ placed the base of the Church in every home. Whenever they gather together, Christ is immediately found in their midst and blesses them.

The Christian house is a house of praise. If the praising stops, the house collapses. If you wish to serve Christ, tell every Christian house to praise together every day that Christ may be in their midst.

Present together the praise of glory and say altogether, "Thine is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever amen...Immanuel our God and our King...My Lord Jesus Christ my good Savior...the Lord is my strength, my praise and has become my salvation"

Brethren, this praise is not exclusively the praise of Holy Week, but it is the praise of our perpetual passover to heaven and from the book of Revelation, we know that it is the daily praise of the angels in front of God.

The family gathering together for prayer and praise, is not a luxury but a source of life, power, and stability to the house.

We left this solitary monk and we completely understood that this special year, 2020 is when Christ desired to rebuild our family altar in every house. He wants to be in our midst, He wants to turn our house into heaven and make us heavenly!

What joy it is for this house that Christ is in its midst, present with the glory of His divinity every day. How powerful is that house!





## The Year 2020

After the days of Holy Week passed, the tone of many people became different, so we gathered and heard all these beautiful, spiritual feelings from about 200 individuals of varying ages, cultures, languages, and countries. So, in those days, every family gathered in their house in order to pray and praise. This led to acquiring a new and great spiritual experience.

From here came the idea of this new book, which aims to encourage every Coptic household to continue praying. We have become very sure now that one of the goals of this temptation (Covid-19) is the retreat to praying once again in our houses. For Christ has been standing on our doorsteps and knocking on our doors all these years, and we did not realize!



We used to think that prayers attended at Church were enough, and the readings that we heard at Church were enough! In fact, we used to complain about our lack of interest in them. However, now we understand that our home is an extension to the Church, and the more our hearts are inflamed with the prayers made in our houses, the more our participation in the Church becomes living, effective, and true. Our entire life is all linked together: our home and the altar do not differ or separate, but rather they intertwine.

For this reason, in this book, we are going to try to organize and put in order our prayers during the Holy Fifties. These prayers are a healthy spiritual meal of Biblical readings, praises, psalms, writings of our early fathers, and teachings of our contemporary fathers.





## **Our beloved in Christ,**

The Holy Fifties consist of 7 weeks and eight Sundays. It starts off with the Sunday of the feast of the Resurrection and ends with the feast of the Pentecost which is followed by the Apostles' fast.

The Holy Fifties period, in the Church's mind, is a long Sunday without day or night. The Sun of Righteousness has shone at the dawn of the resurrection Sunday, abolishing all the darkness of death and making 'life shine upon us.' On that Sunday evening, Christ appeared to the disciples, while the doors were shut, and gave them peace and breathed into their face the Holy Spirit. After fifty days, on Sunday of the feast of the Pentecost, while they were gathered together in the upper room, the Holy Spirit came upon them in the likeness of tongues of fire and filled them with all knowledge, understanding and all spiritual wisdom.

It is as if the morning of the resurrection Sunday continues for 50 days until the feast of the Pentecost in which the Holy Spirit came upon them in Jerusalem since Christ commanded them 'to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until [they] are endued with power from on high.' (Luke 24:49). After that, they went out ministering to the whole world and at this point, we begin the fast of the Apostles, the fast of ministry and service through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **In this book...**

**You will find it split into 8 sections:**

Seven of them are for the seven weeks as well as a separate section for the Ascension Feast (the 40th day) before the sixth Sunday and you will find it in the same order here in the book .

Every section starts with what we will pray in the weekdays and is concluded with what we will pray on Sunday. Every week during the Holy Fifties begins with Monday and ends with Sunday which comes as a crown that concludes its readings, with every week having its own spiritual message as we will see later on.

**Our spiritual meal during the Holy Fifties is divided into 3 meals and you will find its order and all the files you will need during your prayers in this book...**

Weekly  
intro.

Daily  
prayers

Sunday's  
Meeting





Weekly  
intro

In the beginning of the week (on Monday) we will read a short passage + listen to a recorded spiritual sermon to prepare us for our daily and weekly spiritual work as follows:

Read a beautiful  
article

We chose a beautiful weekly article as well as recorded spiritual words, so that through them, you can spiritually benefit from the blessed fifty days. The topics are all related to Christ's resurrection, how we can spiritually benefit from every week, and the focus of the readings of the church.

Listen to a spiritual  
word

Daily  
prayers

Every day you will find prayers and readings (psalms + passages from the Gospel, one of the epistles, or the book of Revelation) while reciting the Jesus prayer as follows:

Pray 3 psalms

One in the morning ... one in the evening ... and one at night.

The goal is that by the end of the holy fifties, we would be done praying the 151 psalms.

Read the Holy Bible

The Gospel of John, the epistles of John, and the book of Revelation (These readings make this period very special due to their theological and practical richness)

Pray the Jesus Prayer

Pray it throughout the day (focused on Christ's resurrection):

***"O Our Lord Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead and ascended into the heavens, raise us with Your power. "***

The Jesus prayer is a prayer of the heart that we pray constantly throughout the day and everywhere so that it may fill our heart with Christ's love and makes Him always present in our hearts with His glory. Its strength comes from repeating the





name of Christ, and the name of Christ refers to the person of Christ Himself, Who instantly becomes present whenever we call unto him with a sincere heart. Christ's presence grants us His Holy Spirit, Who protects us against all the strikes of the enemy and fills our entity with joy and praise. The Holy Spirit, then, purifies us, blesses our every moment and grants us the spirit of wisdom in every situation. It is a prayer that originated in the Coptic Church during the first centuries, stemming from various passages and from the experience of the desert fathers, and it stretched out to all the Churches in the world. Here, we borrowed one of its versions that is related to Resurrection, which the Church sings in the Thursday Psalm and the Paralexis of the Feast of Resurrection before the Gospel.

In this order, our hearts and our minds become joyful throughout the whole day with psalms and spiritual praises, with Christ's resurrection always dwelling within us.

*Sunday's Meeting*

**Every Sunday the whole family gathers together around the risen Lord who is present amongst us, and we pray in the following order:**

*Pray  
The Agpeya*

The whole family prays together the first, eleventh or the twelfth hour from the Agpeya (at the most suitable time for the whole family)

*Read  
Intro. about the Sunday*

Read a simple introduction on the event which the Sunday readings are revolving around. The events of each Sunday during the holy fifties are unique, similar to the Sundays of Lent.

*Read  
The Sunday readings*

We read the Sunday readings (which you will find as a PDF file). After that, we sing the Gospel's response in English, which you will find it in both written and audio formats.

*Read the teachings of  
the Early Fathers*

We read together a commentary written by one of the early fathers on the readings of the day.

*Pray a part of the  
midnight praises*

We pray together a part from the midnight praises in English (Every Sunday, we chose a part for you to pray, which you will find it in both written and audio formats).



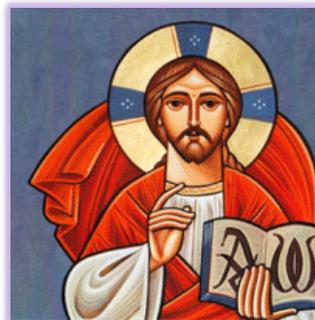


Then, we eat together an Agape meal, (Agape means love) which is considered one of the cornerstones of the early Christian tradition and is an extension of the Eucharist.

This meeting takes about one hour only, but it is a very fulfilling meal that we focused on presenting in an easy & attractive way, so that we may be filled with prayers, reading scripture, liturgical prayers, the writings of the holy fathers, and the meditations of the contemporary fathers.

We got the idea of our weekly Sunday gathering in particular from the early Church which used to gather together at the beginning of every week as it is outlined in the book of Acts, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers," meaning the holy scripture, the Eucharist, the Agape meal, and prayers together from one spirit in simplicity and joy.

Of course, this order should not contradict with your spiritual canon which you arrange with your father of confession according to each one's spiritual rank, but it is only a simple trial to try and re-build the importance of the family meeting together every Sunday around the altar and the Bible at home. Even though we cannot go to Church due to the situation, we have faith in the presence of God in our midst and that He will never hold His grace and love from us for He longs for us more than we long for Him. He lives in us and He is closer to us than the breath that than breathe in, as St Gregory the Theologian says.





## **An overview of the philosophy of the Church readings during the Holy Fifties.**

**(from the writings of Hegumen Bishoy Kamel)**

The Holy Fifties is not the end of the spiritual struggles of lent and Holy Week, but a new beginning of positive spiritual combat to help us abide in Christ. During lent, we constantly persist in our efforts of repenting and purifying our hearts in an ongoing effort to grow in Christ.

The purpose behind the journey of the Holy Fifty Days is to declare Our Lord Jesus Christ into our lives and to abide in Him. The journey starts with our faith in Christ, who rose from the dead to completely defeat any traces of doubt within us. Through His resurrection, Christ becomes our bread, our living water, our light, our way, and our victory. At the end of our journey, we are filled with the Holy Spirit sent by Christ. Christianity is not just about some noble commandments, but is more about living in Christ. "For Christ lives in me," and His Holy Spirit is within me, and this is the secret of my strength and my triumph. The Church has organized for us the Sunday readings, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as stages of spiritual struggle to help us remain steadfast in Christ as we continue with our practices that we started during Lent:

**The First Sunday:** Christ is our faith and resurrection from doubt. (John 20:19-31)

**The Second Sunday:** Christ is Our Bread of Life. (John 6)

**The Third Sunday:** Christ is Our Living Water. (John 4:1-24)

**The Fourth Sunday:** Christ is the Light of our lives. (John 12:35-43)

**The Fifth Sunday:** Christ is the Way to heaven. (John 14:1-11)

**The Sixth Sunday:** Christ is the Overcomer of the world. (John 16:23-33)

**The Seventh Sunday:** Christ sends us His Holy Spirit. (John 15:26, John 16:1-15)





## Week One: The Faith

Christ confirmed the faith of His disciples in the first week, by entering the upper room when the doors were shut—to teach them that resurrection is the exodus from the closed tomb. Resurrection is the creation of life from death, success from failures, faith after despair and the departure from weakness. It encompasses all aspects of our faith as it is the secret and reason of our lives as Christians!

The Christian faith is based on the presence of God in our lives. Through our faith in Christ who is within us, we obtain endless gifts from God, which allows us to be capable of doing all things through Him. We have greater potential because of God and without Him, our potential is insufficient. Through Christ, we find it simple to fulfill all the Biblical commandments. With Christ being in our lives, we become much greater than we are on our own!

At the end of the week, Christ abolished Thomas' doubts by allowing him to touch His wounds. By doing so, He shows us that if we have faith and keep our eyes fixed on our resurrected Lord and His wounds, He will do what we think is impossible and resurrect us. This is the week of the faith!

## Week Two: Bread of Life

In the past, the Israelites needed food in the barren wilderness, and so, God sent them manna from heaven. The second Sunday Gospel affirms that life is granted to whoever eats the Body of Christ. Although the manna was able to sustain the people, it did not guarantee them eternal life. "Your fathers ate the manna, and are dead," but Christian resurrection has no death; just as Christ is living because of the Father, likewise, we feed on Him and live forever." (John 6:57).

However, what is the purpose of speaking about the resurrection if the person who rose must die again? Resurrection is the ultimate defeat of death! It grants us a new, eternal life that is nourished by the Eucharist.

This is the week of steadfastness in the resurrected Lord ... Eat His body, abide in the power of His resurrection and in His life!

All worldly foods will only inherit us death ... so why are we chasing these poisonous foods of the world?





### **Week Three: The Living Water**

One of the most important things for the people in the wilderness is water because without it, they will die of thirst. God sent them water from a rock so they can drink. How can a Christian live in this world without the water of the Holy Spirit? Humans have feelings and emotions that need fulfillment, but if they are not filled of the Holy Spirit, they become thirsty in the world and every time they drink of the earthly water, their thirst is never quenched. This is the story of the third Sunday Gospel which talks us about the Samaritan woman. Through her story, our Lord Jesus Christ reveals to us the nature of His Holy Spirit. He is "fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

In this week, a Christian must experience the filling of the Spirit through prayer, reading the Bible, and asceticism in this world ... so that they may feel this internal, spiritual movement which satisfies all their mental, emotional, and spiritual needs. The Church calls saying, "'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)

In the resurrection, we should feel that the movement of the Holy Spirit within us, is overflowing to others as well. Anyone who talks about the resurrection without feeling living water flowing from their heart is dead because every Christian in the Church has living water flowing from his heart! People constantly seek earthly things ... and in their ignorance they do not recognize the rivers flowing within them! The saints discovered these springs, and we must strive to do the same.

Come my brethren! Let's look inside our hearts for these springs of life ... so we can taste the power of the resurrection and be filled with its abundant water. We must seek living water so we may never ever go back to thirsting for the world's water.

### **Week Four: The True Light**

Another important thing for the people in the wilderness is light to guide their path. God provided this in the form of a pillar of fire to help illuminate their way through the darkness of the wilderness. That is the topic of the Gospel of the fourth week when Christ says: "Walk while you have light ... I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness."

Resurrection is walking in the light, for whoever walks in darkness, must fall. Brethren, we must live this week in the blessings of the Light; the light of the Gospel, the light of the Holy Spirit, the light of the Church and her teachings. We must be





cautious so as not to get lost in this world's ideologies, lusts and desires. We should also be careful from the darkness present in the flesh, which can lead to hypocrisy, greed, and hate. Let's dive into the light of God's love and simplicity which is the true experience of the resurrection for this week!

### **Week Five: The Way**

The last four pillars (Faith, manna, water from the rock, and the pillar of fire) are more than enough to illustrate for us a very clear way that leads us to the promise land. This is the topic of the fifth week where Christ tells us, "I am the way" and this does not mean that He came to draw the way for us, but that He Himself may be way. The apostle explains this, "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." (Ephesians 5:30) The more we abide in Him, the more we guarantee our way. The fifth Sunday is the Sunday that precedes the Thursday of the Ascension and because of that, the Church explains to us the method by which we ascend to heaven. Because Christ, the head of the Church, ascended into the heavens we, as His members who abide in Him, must believe that "our citizenship is in heaven."

When the Head (of the Church) ascended to the heavens and sat by the right hand of His father in the flesh and His members abiding in Him, the Church was granted to be able to say while remaining in the barren wilderness: "[He] raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 2:6).

The conclusion here is that we do not have to look for a way, for Christ is our Way ... Let us abide in Him, and may our thoughts be confined to Him who ascended into the heavens and prepared a place for us at the right-hand of the father so that we may live heaven on earth. Amen.

### **Week Six: The Victorious**

The people walking in the barren wilderness were prepared by the victorious God to fight the Amalekites and also to be cautious of longing towards the Golden calf ... Moses defeated their desires by looking forward to Canaan. The Church's topic this Sunday is that "in the world you will face tribulations ... I have overcome the world." Once the faithful, who are abiding in Christ, are assured that He has defeated (past tense) the world, their efforts are strengthened and by the sign of the cross, they defeat the Amalekites, give up their worldly desires, and remain steadfast in Christ: "I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." ... we are fighting a defeated devil, a defeated world, and 'a sin condemned in the flesh' (Romans 8:3). We do not look for triumph from the outside because victory is already within us—Christ. He was





victorious for us and we are victorious through Him ... He calls us in the Gospel of this Sunday saying, "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." ... for a life lived with the power of the resurrection is nothing but victory, joy, and contempt of the vanities of this world.

### **Week Seven: The Coming of the Holy Spirit**

Here, we are approaching something that has no likeness in the Old Testament. It is a gift that is granted to us by the Father through His Son...it is His Spirit. The Church lives this week in remembrance of the Holy Spirit who came down in the form of tongues of fire. A Christian without the Holy Spirit lives like an orphan "I will not leave you orphans" ... the topic of this week is the filling of the Holy Spirit. This starts with repentance "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:30-32). And the second step is the filling of the Holy Spirit which is achieved through, "Prayer, quiet time, thanksgiving, praise, and obedience." (See Ephesians 5)

This Sunday concludes the Holy Fifties, and thus, the Church has gradually guided us from the resurrection through abiding in Christ, walking in the Way, and finally being filled with the Holy Spirit. Living water then flows from our lives and from the Church. From here, we start the Fast of the Apostles where the Church fasts for evangelism and the spread of the Kingdom of God. The souls, which have been filled with the Spirit, offer their fasting and prayers as a humble sacrifice of love offered for the Church which He acquired by His blood: For its peace, its fathers, its gatherings, its holiness and outreaching, its unity of love; ... simply for the whole Church!



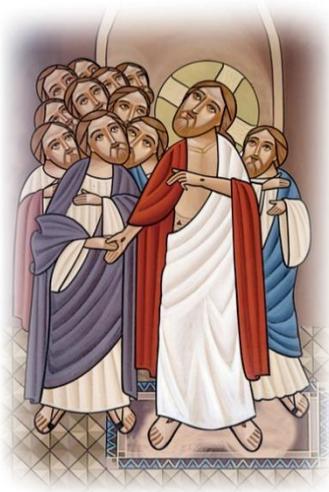


**There are significant similarities between what happened and what we live in the Church**

- 1) The Great Lent represents the time the people of Israel were in Egypt
- 2) The Pascha Week represents passing over the red sea
- 3) The holy forty days after the resurrection of Christ represents the forty years which the people of Israel lived in Sinai
- 4) The feast of the Ascension represents the second crossing of the Jordan river
- 5) The period from the Ascension till the feast of the Pentecost, represents the last settlement in the promise land and from there, came the readings of the church during the Holy Fifties, it explains in detail what we live now in Christ after we have passed through Him from death to eternal life. This Passover (Pascha) took place in us from the day we were baptized, This is the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ.

The readings are very much related to the events of the desert of Sinai after the crossing of the Red Sea and the settlement in the promise land with a lot of accuracy inspired by the Holy Spirit, in order to open our minds to recognize the mystery of our salvation and our lives in Christ.





## **The First Week of the Holy Fifties**

**“Christ healed Thomas’ wounds by His very own wounds”**

St. Augustine

Gospel  
Response  
of the  
First  
Sunday

*“We believe without doubt,  
In your true resurrection,  
Purify us with the print of the nails,  
Which Thomas saw and believed”*

Download





Weekly  
Intro.

At the beginning of the week (on Monday), we will read a short spiritual article + listen to a recorded spiritual word, that will prepare us for our daily spiritual work for the week, as follows:

spiritual  
Article

## **The Resurrection and Hope**

Humanity's life before the resurrection was always between optimism and pessimism. There were many reasons that encourage both behaviors, but after the resurrection, a new path was created for humanity and that is "hope" in all things. The slogan of humanity became: "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God."

For this reason, we see that devil's strongest weapon against us is "despair" which he uses to make humanity fall, as he did with Judas. But, we can defeat it through the resurrection... through hope! The worst sin that we can ever commit is to lose our hope in Him; we should never sin with the dreadful thought that "it is too late"!

You can start with Christ now, as the Church teaches us in the prime hour every day, "bring us to a good start" and this depends on your own personal desire and your decision of repentance.

**The resurrection solves all the basic human problems:**

**Death:** "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

**Fear:** "disciples were assembled...for fear...Jesus came...and said to them, "Peace be with you."

**Sorrow:** "He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord."

**Doubt:** "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."





**Sin:** "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day... thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

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Spiritual  
word

[Click here](#) to listen to a spiritual word about this week





Daily prayer

With the start of this week (Monday), we will start to pray together every day. We will pray 3 psalms and read the Bible daily, along with praying the Jesus Prayer, as follows:

Download the prayers & weekly readings



Pray 3 Psalms

One in the morning ... one in the evening ... and one at night. So that by the end of the Holy Fifties, we would be done praying the 151 psalms.

**This week we will pray together Psalms 1-21.**

Holy Bible

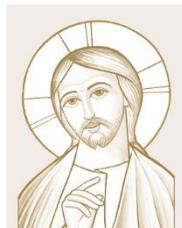
Every day, read a chapter from the Gospel of St. John, except on Sundays as we will follow the Sunday readings according to the Katameros.

**This week we will read the Gospel of St. John chapters 1-6.**

Jesus prayer

**The Jesus Prayer:** pray it throughout the whole day (focused on Jesus' holy Resurrection):

**"O my lord Jesus Christ,  
who rose from the dead,  
and ascended to heaven,  
raise us with Your power"**





Sunday's Meeting

On Sunday, the family gathers together in prayer and unity with Christ through the reading of scripture. We study the Bible together using the commentaries of the Church Fathers. We pray together and we partake in the Agape meal.

Download  
Sunday's sermon

Download  
Readings and the  
Midnight Praises



Pray  
Agpeya

We pray the appropriate hour from the Agpeya (ex. 1st, 11th, 12th hour)

Intro. on  
the  
Sunday

### The 'Sunday of Sundays' or the 'New Sunday'

This is the Sunday on which the Lord appeared to the disciples as they were gathered together in the upper room. The Lord had a brief and profound conversation with Thomas regarding faith, for which reason the Church calls it also "Thomas Sunday" or the "Sunday of Faith", since for Thomas did the Lord appear on this day. This day has been celebrated as a feast since the early Church, with the Didascalia (Didache) mentioning it as follows: "and after eight days, let there be another feast for this is the eighth day on which the Lord granted my desire I, Thomas, when I was unbelieving of the Resurrection, so he showed me the marks of the nails and the place of the spear on His side".

For on the evening of the Resurrection Sunday a week earlier the Lord appeared to the disciples as they were gathered together while Thomas was not with them. When Thomas returned they told him that they have seen the Lord, but he did not believe them and said that he will not believe unless he sees with his own eyes and





touches with his own hands the marks of the nails, and puts his hand on the place of the wound of the spear!

Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared once more after eight days in the presence of Thomas, and this is significant as this was the first Sunday after the Resurrection. Also, the Church was gathered together, embodied in the disciples. The Lord appeared in their midst and proclaimed clearly "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed". It was through this great statement that the Lord proclaimed three very significant truths:

1) Since that time onwards, the presence of the Lord in our midst will be unseen with the eyes of the flesh, but rather it will be a mystical presence, ever true and prevalent all the days and unto the end of the ages, as His promise is to us "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20)

2) With His words "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed," He instituted the sound understanding of faith in His presence in our lives and in the sacraments of the Church. Paul the apostle expounds "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1), "for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

3) The Lord was praising us who believe without seeing His Resurrection. Faith has become to us the way to salvation, an entrance to beholding the Lord and the fulfilment through His sacraments and continuous union with Him.

With this statement then, the Lord has established these three notions for our lives and the life of the Church: His ever-enduring presence, the understanding of faith, and the praising of those who believe in His presence.

For this reason, Thomas Sunday is one of the Feasts of the Lord that is celebrated in the Church. Our Lord blessed it through his dialogue with Thomas, and truly the Church is established on this mystery of faith. This feast has therefore become our feast and





the benediction bestowed upon those who believe without seeing is imparted to us; we who believe have not seen His Resurrection. This is considered as a ninth beatitude after those we are familiar with from the Sermon on the Mount. This is the last beatitude the Lord has said after His Resurrection and it is a mystery of way and life that propels the Church towards heaven day by day.

Fittingly, the Church exclaims in the Gospel response for Thomas Sunday: "We believe without doubt, in your true resurrection, Purify us with the print of the nails, which Thomas saw and believed"

### **The Resurrection and the Faith:**

Thomas the apostle represents the skeptical personality as we can see in three situations:

- 1) At the time of the death of Lazarus, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." (John 11:16)
- 2) When Jesus said "In My Father's house are many mansions... and the way you know. Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?'" (John 14:2-5)
- 3) With the apostles after the Resurrection: "Unless I see... and put my finger..." (John 20:25)

The problem: It is not that he does not want to believe or reject the faith. Rather, he wants to know first then to believe, but "blessed are those who believe and have not seen." He was the "last" of the apostles to believe in the Resurrection, but he became "the first" who confessed the divinity of the resurrected Savior.

### **Thus, regarding faith, we find three types of people:**

- He who does not believe even if he sees: such as Egypt's Pharaoh.
- He who believes only if he sees: such as Thomas the apostle.





-He who believes even if he does not see: such as Noah, Abraham, and many others and... us.

That is why the Church calls this Sunday, "The New Sunday" where the faith of Thomas the apostle was renewed. He touched Christ as a human, believed in Him as God, and cried out the cry of faith "My Lord and My God" which became the center of his new faith and his preaching later in India.

On the resurrection Sunday, the Church chanted with the phrase "Christ is risen" and on this Sunday it chants: "Truly He is risen."

**Blessed is he who believed and has not seen:**

This special appearance to Thomas the apostle has indications:

- A- Christ's care for each individual and the care for the absent
- B- A cure for the human weakness (doubt) as the ten disciples could not persuade Thomas.
- C- An answer to a raised prayer (touching the wounds) by Thomas the apostle.

**The enemy's fight takes two forms:**

- 1 - Doubt: in faith - in the tenderness of Christ - in his forgiveness - in his care - in his love...Etc.
- 2- Despair: from spiritual fight - from life - from studying - from spiritual work - from overcoming sin...Etc.

We need faith and trust in Christ, and there is a special blessing for those who believe and have not seen (John 20:29).

Thomas the apostle: A doubtful absentee, then a present believer, then a witness and a preacher of the resurrection.

Christ has appeared ten times between the resurrection and the ascension, five times on the day of resurrection at dawn, morning and afternoon, and the other five times after the day of the resurrection, the first of which was the appearance to Thomas the





apostle with the disciples. His last appearance (the 11th) was on the day of his ascension. These are the only appearances that were recorded in the Bible, with an important indication at the beginning of the book of Acts, "to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." (Acts 1: 3)

<p>Readings of Sunday</p>	<b>Vespers Psalm</b>	Psalm 33:3-4	<b>Pauline Epistle</b>	Ephesians 4: 20-32
	<b>Vespers Gospel</b>	Luke 5:1-11	<b>Catholic Epistle</b>	1 John 2: 7-17
	<b>Matins Psalm</b>	Psalm 96: 1-2	<b>Praxis</b>	Acts 17: 16-34
	<b>Matins Gospel</b>	John 21: 1-14	<b>Psalm</b>	Psalm 98: 1-4
			<b>Gospel</b>	John 20: 19-31



### Thomas' partaking of the Holy Spirit

#### St Cyril of Alexandria

"Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came..." (John 20: 24)

How, then, someone may not unreasonably inquire, if he were away, was he in fact made partaker in the Holy Spirit when the Savior appeared unto the disciples and breathed on them saying: Receive the Holy Spirit? We reply that the power of the Spirit pervaded every man who received grace and fulfilled the aim of the Lord Who gave Him unto them. Christ gave the Spirit not to some only but to all the disciples. Therefore, if any were absent, they also received Him, for the generosity of the Giver was not confined only to those who were present but extended to the entire company of the holy Apostles. And so that this interpretation is not strained, or our idea extravagant, we may convince you from Holy Writ itself, bringing forward as a proof a passage in the Books of Moses.

The Lord God commanded the all-wise Moses to select elders, to the number of seventy, from the assembly of the Jews, and plainly declared, "I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put





**the same upon them” [Num. 11:17].** Moses, as he was bidden, brought them together, and fulfilled the Divine decree. Only two of the men who were included in the number of the seventy elders were left behind and remained in the assembly: Eldad and Medad. Then when God put upon them all the Divine Spirit, as He had promised, those whom Moses had collected together immediately received grace, and prophesied. Nonetheless, the two who were in the assembly also prophesied, and, in fact, the grace from above came upon them first.

Furthermore, Joshua, the Son of Nun, who was the constant attendant of Moses—not understanding at once the meaning of the mystery, but thinking that after the manner of Dathan and Abiram they were rivals in the art of prophecy to those whom Moses had brought together—said unto him: **“Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp...Moses my lord, forbid them!” [Nu. 11:27-28].** But what was the answer of that truly wise and great man, seeing in his wisdom the working of the grace given unto them, and the power of the Spirit? **“Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” [Nu. 11:29],** Observe how he rebukes the saying of Joshua, who knew not what had been done. Oh that, he says, the Spirit were given to all the people! No, this will indeed come to pass in due season, when the Lord, that is Christ, will grant unto them His Spirit; breathing upon His holy Apostles as upon the first fruits of those whose due it is to receive Him, and saying: **“Receive the Holy Spirit.”**

Midnight  
praises

Find it in the PDF file, [click here](#)



[Click here](#) to pray together the hymn “Arise O Children of Light”.





## The Second Week of the Holy Fifties

Through the Holy Eucharist, the faithful eats and drinks the  
life of Christ”

St. Augustine

Gospel  
Response  
of the  
Second  
Sunday

*“I believe in You O Christ,  
For You are the Bread of Life,  
The Giver of Life,  
To all who eat of it”*

Download





Weekly  
Intro.

At the beginning of the week (on Monday), we will read a short spiritual article + listen to a recorded spiritual word, that will prepare us for our daily spiritual work for the week, as follows:

spiritual  
Article

## **The Eucharist and The Mystery of The Resurrection**

**"Alleluia! This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. O Lord save us!" (Psalm 117:24)**

This is the main response that is now said every Sunday and we have to know that the liturgy used to be done only on Sundays at the time of the apostles as we read in the book of Acts, "Now on the **first day** of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). To the Jews, the "first day of the week" is Sunday and it starts in the evening of Saturday at sunset.

Notice that this Psalm is what is sung in the liturgy of the resurrection feast. Since the early Church, this Psalm was always connected to the resurrection in particular.

**But now, what is this day that the Lord has made? And that which He made by the resurrection?**

This is the day that has no sunset forever! It is the day of the resurrection and its sun is the Sun of Righteousness "with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2). This sun has shone and has not set, and will never set. This is the day the Lord has made! An eternal day. It is also called "The Eighth day". This term is repeated again and again, but what does it mean? It is well-known that the week is seven days; Monday is the second day; Saturday is the seventh...etc., so what is the eighth day?

It is a new day, outside of the familiar realm of time. It is an expression of the new testament, the testament of the new creation that started with the resurrection of the Lord. A day that will never end and it is the day that the book of revelation mentions, "The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine





in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light." (Revelation 21:23). For Christ in the heavenly Jerusalem is the Sun of Righteousness, the Sun of the eternal day that the Lord has made.

But, why is it that the Psalm changed during the Feast of the Resurrection is also chanted at the beginning of every liturgy throughout the year? Is there any link between every liturgy and the resurrection?

***The Eucharist is the window from where we experience eternal life***

The liturgy's time is not counted as part of this world's time. They are moments from eternity; that we live while still in the flesh. We can imagine the time of the liturgy as when the barrier between time and eternity is temporarily removed for time to be mixed with eternity so that we may partake, while still physically remaining in a Church, in heaven; in the day the Lord has made; in the heavenly Jerusalem; in eternity.

The Liturgy is nothing but a window that sees heaven, from where we can experience the day that the Lord has made. During the liturgy, we live this very day when we transcend the limits of time and live our eternal life. The Eucharist is the mystery of the eternal life. The word 'eternal life' repeats itself a lot when Christ speaks of the Eucharist in John 6. The word "life" repeats more than 19 times in that chapter by itself. From the beginning when Christ says, "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life" until the end of the chapter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life," it is the chapter that talks most about eternal life.

For this reason, we must know this truth at the beginning of every liturgy; that we are called to live eternal life. You have to forget everything in this world. Do not let your thoughts wander away in anything whether inside the Church or outside of it; not in work or anything else. Instead, know that you are in the presence of the angels and the saints in heaven and in their midst, "[standing] a





Lamb as though it had been slain" and they all present Him all glory and throw their crowns in front of the Lamb.

One of the most beautiful sceneries that decorate the bosom of the Father in the Church, is the scene of the 24 presbyters of whom the book of Revelation says that that they always present glory and honor to the Lamb and in their hands, "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."

The altar is the starting place from where we ascend from this world to heaven. The altar is always built in the shape of a square representing the four corners of the Earth and the dome over it represents heaven. Thus, the altar with all its architecture represents our exodus from Earth towards heaven.

**Note:**

The Eucharist is always linked with the eternal day that is represented by "tomorrow" or "the next day" in the Lord's prayer. In our New King James translation, it was translated as "Give us this day our daily bread" but in our Coptic translation, "Give us this day tomorrow's bread" Πενωικ ἡτε ραϣϣ. The original Greek agrees with both.

So, what does "Give us this day tomorrow's bread" really mean? If we said it for example, on Friday, does that mean that we are referring to Saturday's bread? This is meaningless especially that the Lord asked us, "do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

Therefore, how can the Lord ask us to pray for tomorrow's bread? What is tomorrow? It is the day the Lord has made; the age to come; the Eighth day; that is not counted among the seven days of the week that is familiar to us on Earth. It is the eternal day! That is what this prayer is all about. "Tomorrow's bread" is the "Bread that is to come", grant it to us today and that is exactly what happens at the end of every liturgy when we are granted to eat "tomorrow's bread" that we may eat it today and live forever.





Severus Ben Mokafaa (one of the early Coptic Historians) has one of the most beautiful commentaries on the cluster of grapes that Joshua son of Nun and Caleb brought from the promise land to excite the people and encourage them to enter the land (See Numbers 13):

“Just as the spies who were sent to Canaan came back to the children of Israel with the fruits of the land, the priests come to the faithful with the fruits of the King of Heavens or in other words the Body and Blood of Christ. For that sweet fruit that the spies came back with to show the Israelites was only a small token of all the gifts of this land that the Israelites may taste it and know its sweetness that they may be excited to own this land that they may enjoy the abundance of these fruits. The priests, today, come to the faithful with the Body and Blood of Christ to show them and make them taste a small token of the Kingdom of Heaven where they will live eternally.”

That is the Eucharist! It is not from this age but from the age to come but it is given to us in this very age.

In the Eucharist, Christ comes to dwell in us for us to dwell in Him. He abides in us and we abide in Him as a small representation of what shall be in the joyful eternity where we will acknowledge all these mysteries.

At the end, the hymn, “This is the day the Lord has made” comes at the beginning of every liturgy as an announcement that the barrier between time and eternity is lifted. It is a calling to move towards heaven and enter into the eternal day that we may, “rejoice and be glad in it.”

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Spiritual  
word

[Click here](#) to listen to a spiritual word about this week





Daily prayer

With the start of this week (Monday), we will start to pray together every day. We will pray 3 psalms and read the Bible daily, along with praying the Jesus Prayer, as follows:

Download the prayers & weekly readings



Pray 3 Psalms

One in the morning ... one in the evening ... and one at night. So that we would have prayed all 151 psalms throughout the holy period of the fifty days.  
**This week we will pray together Psalms 22-42.**

Holy Bible

Every day, read a chapter from the Gospel of St. John, except on Sundays as we will follow the Sunday readings according to the Katameros.  
**This week we will read the Gospel of St. John chapters 7-12.**

Jesus prayer

**The Jesus Prayer:** pray it throughout the whole day (focused on Jesus' holy Resurrection):

**"O my lord Jesus Christ,  
who rose from the dead,  
and ascended to heaven,  
raise us with Your power"**





Sunday's Meeting

On Sunday, the family gathers together in prayer and unity with Christ through the reading of scripture. We study the Bible together using the commentaries of the Church Fathers. We pray together and we partake in the Agape meal.

Download  
Sunday's sermon

Download  
Readings and the  
Midnight Praises



Pray  
Agpeya

We pray the appropriate hour from the Agpeya (ex. 1st, 11th, 12th hour)

Intro. on  
the  
Sunday

### **Bread of Life Sunday**

This Sunday's readings are very special and wonderful as they are all Biblical Eucharistic readings, as if the Church had prepared for us a delicious meal of Psalms and writings of the Apostles and the Evangelists; all creatively revolving around the Eucharist. The Church is simply telling us that the resurrection of Christ from the dead was not for His sake, but for our sake, as the Book of Wisdom says: "Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of those who have oppressed him." [Wisdom 5:1]. This wonderful prophecy is read on Bright Saturday because Christ is our Resurrection, and the power of His resurrection is poured into us when we unite with Him, and we unite with Him through the Eucharist, the divine word and the Holy Spirit. As St. Cyril the Great talks about how we unite with God with all our being (Body, Mind, Spirit).





### **Commentary on the readings from the Second Sunday Liturgy Gospel and Praxis:**

"7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. 9 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. 10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." 11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted". (Acts 20: 7-12)

This passage is one of the most wonderful readings from the book of Acts and is often repeated throughout the year. We notice the phrase, "breaking of bread" which is the old term for the Eucharist in the book of Acts and in the writings of Paul the Apostle. We see the link between Sunday (First day of the week), the Eucharist (Breaking of Bread), and staying up in vigil every Sunday night listening to spiritual words. When St. Paul prolonged his words till midnight, Eutychus was overcome by sleep and he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. After St. Paul filled them with spiritual words, he took bread, broke it and gave it to them, and they brought back the boy alive. It is a miracle of resurrection that happened during a Eucharistic meeting and that was on the "first day of the week" i.e. Sunday (the resurrection day). Here, the relationship between the Eucharist and Sunday, and the link between the Eucharist and the resurrection are clear.

### **The Liturgy Gospel is from John 6:**

Christ said, 'I am the Bread of Life which came down from heaven.' The Jews know that the bread that came down from heaven is the Manna, but Christ in the same chapter clarified to them the difference between Himself and the Manna that was given to the





Jews in the Old Testament but did not live forever, as the Manna was only a symbol of Christ, the Bread of Life.

The Manna is earthly food, whoever eats of it hungers and dies, but Christ is the heavenly food, whoever eats of Him shall not hunger nor perish.

In the book of Jeremiah, we are given a key to understand how to be full of the word of God:

"Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart". (Jeremiah 15:16)

**That means that God presents his words to us in two ways:**

A- Audible and Readable... through reading the Bible

B- Seen and Eaten... through the altar and the holy sacrament of communion

Father Alexander Schmemmann (a Russian Theologian) comments on this and says:

"According to the fathers, feeding on the Body and Blood of Christ must be preceded by feeding on the word of God. These two methods are by which we attain unity with Christ".

### **Christ is the secret of Life**

\* Christ is Life and He gives life; He was incarnate in order to give His living Body to the world and that this Body may become the seed of the new creation, and that His life may be transmitted to all who drink His Blood.

\* Christ's sacrifice is a sacrifice of everlasting love; it consists of Christ's love to mankind + Christ's love to the Father.

\* He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. (John 6:56)





Whoever eats My Body and drinks My Blood, I will wholly abide in him and stay in him, as if Christ is saying:

+ I will abide in him with my body, through the mystery of My incarnation and My birth.

+ And abide in him with my blood, through the mystery of My redemption, My death and My resurrection.

My death shall be for his redemption and My life for his eternal life, and My resurrection for his resurrection unto my heavenly kingdom.

For every time we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, our souls unite with Christ and our lives mingles with His life, as St. Cyril of Alexandria says

“Just as by melting two candles together you get one piece of wax, so, I think, one who receives the Flesh and Blood of Jesus is fused together with Him by this Communion and the soul finds that he is in Christ and Christ is in him.”

When we pray the Fraction Prayer (O Lamb of God) for Saint Cyril of Alexandria:

“When your glory descends on Your mysteries, we lift up our minds to behold Your splendor. At the turning of the bread and wine into Your Body and Blood, our souls shall be turned unto fellowship with Your glory and our souls are united to Your Divinity”.

Readings  
of  
Sunday

<b>Vespers Psalm</b>	Psalm 111: 1, 2	<b>Pauline Epistle</b>	Ephesians 2: 19-9: 3
<b>Vespers Gospel</b>	John 6: 16 - 23	<b>Catholic Epistle</b>	1 Peter 5: 10 - 20
<b>Matins Psalm</b>	Psalm 111: 3 - 4	<b>Praxis</b>	Acts 20: 1 - 12
<b>Matins Gospel</b>	John 6: 24- 33	<b>Psalm</b>	Psalm 111: 9 - 10
		<b>Gospel</b>	John 6: 35 - 4





Early  
Fathers

## **Our unity with Christ through the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist**

### **St Cyril of Alexandria**

To be made partakers of Christ, both intellectually and by our senses, fills us with every blessing. For He dwells in us, first, by the Holy Spirit, and we are His abode, according to that which was said of old by one of the holy prophets. "For I will dwell in them, He says, and lead them: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." But He is also within us in another way by means of our partaking in the oblation of bloodless offerings, which we celebrate in the Churches.

It was fitting therefore for Him to be in us both divinely by the Holy Spirit, and also, so to speak, to be mingled with our bodies by His holy flesh and precious blood: which things also we possess as a life-giving eucharist, in the form of bread and wine. For lest we should be terrified by seeing (actual) flesh and blood placed upon the holy tables of our Churches, God, humbling Himself to our infirmities, infuses into the things set before us the power of life, and transforms them into the efficacy of His flesh, that we may have them for a life-giving participation, and that the body of (Him Who is the) Life may be found in us as a life-producing seed. And do not doubt that this is true, since Himself plainly says, "This is My body: "This is My blood:" but rather receive in faith the Savior's word; for He, being the Truth, cannot lie. And so, will you honor Him; for as the very wise John says, "He that receives His witness has set his seal that God is true. For He Whom God sent speaks the words of God." For the words of God are of course true, and in no manner whatsoever can they be false: for even though we understand not in what way God works acts such as these, yet He Himself knows the way of His works. For when Nicodemus could not understand His words concerning holy baptism, and foolishly said, |669 "How can those things be?" he heard Christ in answer say, "Verily I say to you, that we speak that which we know, and testify that which we see, and you receive not our testimony. If I have





spoken to you the earthly things, and you believe not, how will you believe if I tell you the heavenly things?" For how indeed can a man learn those things which transcend the powers of our mind and reason? Let therefore this our divine mystery be honored by faith.

Midnight  
praises

Find it in the PDF file, [click here](#)



[Click here](#) to pray together the hymn "Who is likened unto You, O Lord among the gods"





## The Third Week of the Holy Fifties

“Blessed is the one who loves repentance, who does not think about doing evil, and does not deny the Grace in front of the Lord, Savior.”

St. Ephraim the Syrian

Gospel  
Response  
of the  
Third  
Sunday

*“The soul of the woman of Samaria,  
Who found the Living Water,  
Blesses you because,  
The fountain of life is in You”*

Download





Weekly  
Intro.

At the beginning of the week (on Monday), we will read a short spiritual article + listen to a recorded spiritual talk, that will prepare us for our daily spiritual work for the week, as follows:

spiritual  
Article

### **That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings**

+ "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." (Phil 3: 10-11)

What is interesting about this verse, is the way it has been constructed. When you first read it, the events may seem unorganized as it mentions resurrection first, followed by Jesus' suffering and death. St. Paul intentionally communicates this message to us for a spiritual purpose.

**How does the power of Christ's resurrection push me to the "fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death"?**

The way the events are listed in the verse, are not in chronological order. We tend to celebrate holy week first, and once it ends, we celebrate Christ's resurrection and forget His sufferings in the process. We must realize that the way we understand the chronological events (i.e. suffering, death, resurrection) is different than our spiritual understanding of these events. Christ Himself said:

+ "... who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame..." (Heb 12:2)

Christ proceeded towards the cross with His gaze fixated on "the joy that was set before Him", which was the salvation of mankind. This salvation would lift all of humanity from the depths of hades. The power of resurrection is synonymous to the power of eternal





life. Eternal life is a declaration of God's divine love, which is shared between the Father and the Son and is poured out over His creation. When we receive this divine love that is poured within us, we receive the power to love one another unconditionally.

+ "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). This is the love of the Father.

+ "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends (John 15:13). This is the love of the Son.

Divine love is a sacrificial love and the opposite of this love is lust, which is inherently selfish and is based on receiving, not giving.

In order for us to spiritually benefit from the resurrection, we must understand that the power of the resurrection is what encourages us to sacrifice ourselves, partake in Christ's suffering, carry the cross with Him and conform to His death. Christ's love was manifested when He offered Himself as a sacrifice to the Father for us. Partaking in Christ's suffering results in the power of the resurrection being poured in us. Partaking in the suffering of Christ is what guides us to conform to His death.

Through Christ's resurrection from the dead, Saint Paul the apostle was able to change his ways and transform his life. His transformation is a result of Christ's resurrection. When he saw Christ in a bright light, it blinded his eyes and filled his heart with the knowledge of who Christ is.

He constantly spoke of this incredible incident during his lifetime:

The incredible power which nothing can prevail: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4: 13)

The story of St Paul's transformation helps us understand the significance of this verse, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil 3:10-11).





The power of Saint Paul stemmed from Christ's resurrection because the power of resurrection is what strengthens a person to partake in the sufferings of Christ and be conformed to His death. This enables one to sacrifice abundantly and effortlessly.

Anyone who fixates their gaze on Christ and His work, finds their own work very small in comparison, and consistently feels as though they need to grow in sacrificial love. They are always running after Christ: "... but I press on (literally run), that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me." (Phil 3:12). A renewed power stems from Christ continually so that we may grow in sacrifice. This is the power of the resurrection that does not permit us to forget all of what we have gained from Holy Week, but rather, it encourages to grow and love one another. These are the powers of the cross and resurrection, which accompany a person throughout their journey and spiritual struggle.

Spiritual  
word

[Click here](#) to listen to a spiritual word about this week





Daily prayer

With the start of this week (Monday), we will start to pray together every day. We will pray 3 psalms and read the Bible daily, along with praying the Jesus Prayer, as follows:

Download the prayers & weekly readings



Pray 3 Psalms

One in the morning ... one in the evening ... and one at night. So that we would have prayed all 151 psalms throughout the holy period of the fifty days.

**This week we will pray together Psalms 43-63.**

Holy Bible

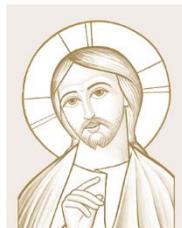
Every day, read a chapter from the Gospel of St. John, except on Sundays as we will follow the Sunday readings according to the Katameros.

**This week we will read the Gospel of St. John chapters 13-21.**

Jesus prayer

**The Jesus Prayer:** pray it throughout the whole day (focused on Jesus' holy Resurrection):

**"O my lord Jesus Christ,  
who rose from the dead,  
and ascended to heaven,  
raise us with Your power"**





Sunday's Meeting

On Sunday, the family gathers together in prayer and unity with Christ through the reading of scripture. We study the Bible together using the commentaries of the Church Fathers. We pray together and we partake in the Agape meal.

Download  
Sunday's sermon

Download  
Readings and the  
Midnight Praises



Pray  
Agpeya

We pray the appropriate hour from the Agpeya (ex. 1st, 11th, 12th hour)

Intro. on  
the  
Sunday

### **The Sunday of the Samaritan – the living water**

This Sunday is called the Sunday of the Samaritan which is the same name used for the fourth Sunday of Lent, marking the mid-point of the Lent. However, in the Holy Fifty days, the Sunday of the Samaritan is the Sunday immediately preceding the mid-point. The Gospel reading of this day is repeated for the third time during the Gospel of the third prostration on Pentecost.

#### **Every repetition marks a different perspective:**

**In the Holy Lent:** During this reading, the Church pays attention to the meeting between Christ and the Samaritan woman at the well and the change which occurred in her life, which emphasizes the importance of baptism. Our relationship with Christ begins at the baptismal font with the confession of our sins, our rejection of the devil, and the declaration of our faith in Christ. Baptism enables us to begin a new life with, through, and in Him. In the past, Lent was a period where catechumens (people who are new to the





faith, not yet baptized) were prepared for baptism by becoming educated about the faith. They were then baptized on the three days of the Holy Pascha or at a later date—the Sunday of the blind man (who was literally and figuratively enlightened).

**In the Holy Fifty days:** During this reading, the Church pays attention to Christ Himself. When this Gospel is read during the Holy Fifty days, it shows us that the love Christ poured out to the woman during their short meeting is what caused this woman, who previously spent her life enslaved to the sin of adultery, to repent and resurrect.

One of the principal thoughts of St. Irenaeus is that Christ incarnated because seeing God gives life to man. The very act of seeing the face of Christ who rose from the dead, is able to lift us from the death of sin. The power of resurrection flows from all of His features.

When one of the brethren said to St. Macarius the Great, "I have sinned and fell", his response to him was, "Return my son and you will thus see the person of Christ Jesus our Lord who is full of sweetness and His face filled with joy."

**In Prostration Prayer:** During this reading, the Church pays attention to what Christ says about the Holy Spirit. The Church focuses on the worshiping God in spirit and truth and how having faith in Christ is followed by the dwelling of the Holy Spirit inside our souls as rivers of living water. "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them" (John 7:38). We will speak in detail about this later in the explanation of the prostration prayer and the relation between its readings to the Holy Spirit—detailing the reasons why the Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has chosen this specific chapter to conclude the Holy Fifty days with.

When we reflect on the story of the Samaritan woman, we see that Christ was exhausted and sat on the well. His exhaustion was not





from the trip, but rather, from thinking and caring about you. Our unbelief is what exhausts Him.

A young man once said to a priest: "I don't believe in God".

The priest replied: "But... God believes in you".

Readings  
of  
Sunday

<b>Vespers Psalm</b>	Psalm 116: 1-2	<b>Pauline Epistle</b>	Col 3: 1-17
<b>Vespers Gospel</b>	John 8: 12-20	<b>Catholic Epistle</b>	1 John 3: 13-24
<b>Matins Psalm</b>	Psalm 116: 4-6	<b>Praxis</b>	Acts 10: 37-43
<b>Matins Gospel</b>	John 8: 21-30	<b>Psalm</b>	Psalm 115: 12-13
		<b>Gospel</b>	John 4: 1-42

Early  
Fathers

### Samaritan Woman

#### St John Chrysostom

If now a woman of Samaria is so earnest to learn something profitable, if she abides by Christ though not as yet knowing Him, what pardon shall we obtain, who both knowing Him, and being not by a well, nor in a desert place, nor at noon-day, nor beneath the scorching sunbeams, but at morning-tide, and beneath a roof like this, enjoying shade and comfort, yet cannot endure to hear anything that is said, but are wearied by it.

That Samaritan woman was so moved by Jesus' words, she even called others to hear them. The Jews, on the contrary, not only did not call, but even hindered and impeded those who desired to come to Him, saying, "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." (John 7:48-49).

How long shall we live uselessly and in vain? Because, not to do what is well-pleasing to God is to live uselessly, or rather not merely uselessly, but to our own hurt; for when we have spent the time which has been given us on no good purpose, we shall depart this





life to suffer severe punishment for our unreasonable extravagance. If a man has been entrusted money to trade with and has used it all on other things and is asked to return it, he cannot escape punishment. God did not bring us into this life and breathe into us a soul so we can only make use of the present time, but rather, to anticipate the life which is to come.

Although no one sees what we do in private, I encourage you to enter into your own, reflect on your actions and bring forward your transgressions. If you do not desire them to be exposed to the public on the day of judgement, heal your wounds now and apply the medicine of repentance on them. All wounds could be healed; even a person with ten thousand wounds could be healed. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." (Matthew 6:14-15)

Just as sins buried in Baptism disappear, if you are willing to repent your sins, they will also disappear. Repentance is defined as not repeating the same sin again; for he who puts his hand in the same spot is like a dog that returns to his own vomit, puts wool into the fire, or draws water into a basket full of holes. It is your duty to depart both in action and thought from your sinful actions, and once you depart from them, you must apply to them the remedies which will heal the sin. For instance: do you have the urge to steal and covet other people's things? Abstain from stealing and share what you have with others. Have you been a fornicator? If so, abstain from fornication and apply chastity to the wound. Have you spoken ill of your brother, and injured him? Stop finding fault and apply kindness.

Let us then set ourselves in order, let us delight in the fear of God; for if we live here without fear of Him, His coming will surprise us suddenly, when we are neither careful, nor looking for Him. As Christ declared when He said, *'But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.'* This also Paul declared when he said, "For when they say, "While people are saying, "For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden





*destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape." 1 Thessalonians 5:3*

Let us then repent here, so we may find God merciful unto us in the Judgement Day, and be enabled to enjoy abundant forgiveness; which may we all obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of Our Lord Jesus Christ to whom be glory and dominion now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

Midnight  
praises

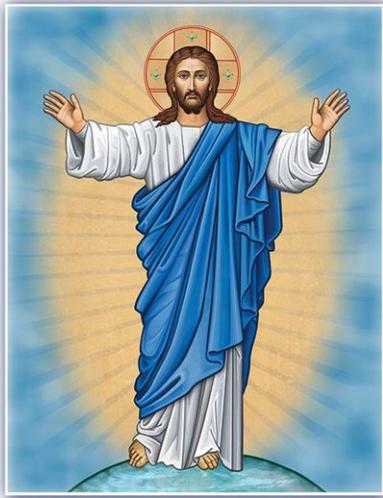
Find it in the PDF file, [click here](#)



[Click here](#) to pray together the hymn "The Second Canticle (Hos)".

Christ  
is  
Risen!





## **The Fourth Week of the Holy Fifties**

**Like a lamp which enlightens a dark house, the fear of God enters the heart of man and enlightens him and teaches him all the commandments.”**

**Saint Abba Jacob**

*Gospel  
Response  
of the  
Fourth  
Sunday*

*“We believe in You O Christ,  
With the Father who sent You,  
For You are the Light of the World,  
And the Life of those who believe in  
you”*

Download





Weekly  
Intro.

At the beginning of the week (on Monday), we will read a short spiritual article + listen to a recorded spiritual word, that will prepare us for our daily spiritual work for the week, as follows:

spiritual  
Article

## **The Light of the Holy Resurrection**

Saint John says in his first epistle: "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). God is light, which means pure love. There is no form of hate or negativity in Him. God is the ultimate positivity, surpassing love that has no limits. He is a shining light that is never quenched. He is good at all times and His love and mercy endure forever.

All the readings of this week are centered around light, for Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

**Christ's light can be seen in the following:**

1. Christ expels sin because light expels darkness;
2. Christ grants purity because light gives purity; and
3. A friendship with Christ is gratifying because His light radiates on us.

**Our Church sees this light in:**

- The eastern lamp (the candle on the altar in front of the Bosom of the Father): which signifies that Christ does not slumber nor sleep.
- The procession of the Resurrection: which signifies the path of Christ, the living light.
- The sacrament of Baptism: which is victory and new birth.





- The sacrament of matrimony: two candles are placed around the bride and the groom symbolize Christ, the light of the world, who sanctifies the marriage.
- Efnouti-nai-nan: there are three candles in the Cross, it is the Holy Trinity.

As light is associated with joy and life, darkness is also associated with sadness and death.

Resurrection is joy, a joy that needs to be translated into everyday life:

- Joy in the person of Christ: which we translate it to prayers, praises, doxologies, hymns and spiritual songs.
- Joy in the teachings of Christ: which we translate it to reading, studying, contemplating and living the Bible.
- Joy in the works of Christ: which we translate it to serving and having compassion on all people whom Christ called "my brothers".

### **The Light of the Holy Resurrection**

In the prophecies of the feast of the resurrection, which we pray during the distribution of Joyous Saturday, the most repeated word is light. It is a mystical word that points to the Resurrection of Christ, who lit the darkness of the tomb through His Holy Resurrection.

In the tradition of the early Church, the eve of Resurrection was the most important night of the year. Many would be baptised after the liturgy of Joyous Saturday. A large candle in the baptismal fountain, called the "Passover candle", was present. After the baptism, those who were baptised would light their candle from the Passover candle. They would then dress in a white tunic, with a red sash, and a crown on their heads.





All those who were baptized would enter the Church during the midnight praises (tasbeha) of the Feast of the Resurrection, while the whole congregation was present. They were celebrated in a procession around the Church while everyone sang "Arise, O children of the light, let us praise the Lord of hosts", which is the first hymn of the midnight praises of the feast of the Resurrection. Everyone praised all night long, and ended the night by receiving the Eucharist, uniting with Christ at first light of the day of the Resurrection.

The holy light started coming out of the tomb of Christ after the liturgy of Joyous Saturday since the first centuries. It would then light all the lamps of the Church spontaneously and the believers would use it to light the Passover candle. Those who got baptized would then light their candles from that same light. That is why this Saturday was called the Saturday of Light.

This light is the mystery of the Resurrection. It is the spirit of the Resurrection that enters everyone present at Church and ignites the Church with a spirit of spiritual praise and marvelous love. Everyone would sing praises at dawn on Sunday while holding their holy light. They would not cease their praises until their joy became full through their union with the light at the end of the liturgy. Likewise, by the end of the Feast of the Resurrection everyone should feel light in them, a light that is pure love, empty of all sin, hate or hypocrisy.

Christ shined onto those who were sitting in the darkness of Hades. He held their hands, broke their bonds of death, and released them with an outstretched arm from the abyss of death and the darkness of Hades to the light of the new life. So, they entered a life of unceasing praise, united with the Savior. Likewise, we cannot celebrate the Resurrection if the light of Christ does not shine in our depths and we rise with Him from our sin.

The light of the Resurrection of Christ is not outside of us, but rather, it is a great light that shines in our depths. It is the





mystery of our resurrection, praise, and joy; and it is completed when we unite with Him through the Eucharist. This is the Church, inflamed with the spirit of the Resurrection, preaching this mysterious light to the world with power.

---

Spiritual  
word

[Click here](#) to listen to a spiritual word about this week





Daily prayer

With the start of this week (Monday), we will start to pray together every day. We will pray 3 psalms and read the Bible daily, along with praying the Jesus Prayer, as follows:

Download the prayers & weekly readings



Pray 3 Psalms

One in the morning ... one in the evening ... and one at night. So that we would have prayed all 151 psalms throughout the holy period of the fifty days.

**This week we will pray together Psalms 64 - 84.**

Holy Bible

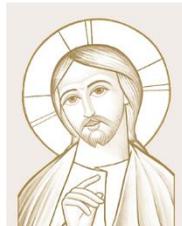
Every day, read a chapter from the Gospel of St. John, except on Sundays as we will follow the Sunday readings according to the Katameros.

**This week we will read the 3 epistles of John + Revelation chapters 1-4.**

Jesus prayer

**The Jesus Prayer:** pray it throughout the whole day (focused on Jesus' holy Resurrection):

**"O my lord Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, raise us with Your power"**





Sunday's Meeting

On Sunday, the family gathers together in prayer and unity with Christ through the reading of scripture. We study the Bible together using the commentaries of the Church Fathers. We pray together and we partake in the Agape meal.

Download Sunday's sermon

Download Readings and the Midnight Praises



Pray Agpeya

We pray the appropriate hour from the Agpeya (ex. 1st, 11th, 12th hour)

Intro. on the Sunday

**Sunday of The Light**

"A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light ... that you may become sons of light". The Holy Church directs our attention to the countdown to the end of the Holy Fifty days. We have passed the halfway mark, and we must use the remaining time to benefit from the grace of the Resurrection "light". Walking in the light means we are filled with Christ, and we ask for the heavenly things. We must draw some benefit out of the blessings of the Holy Fifty days before it is over.

Readings of Sunday

<b>Vespers Psalm</b>	Psalms 118:1,2	<b>Pauline Epistle</b>	2Thessalonians 2:13-4:5
<b>Vespers Gospel</b>	John 6:57-69	<b>Catholic Epistle</b>	1 John 4:7-13
<b>Matins Psalm</b>	Psalms 118:28,21	<b>Praxis</b>	Acts 14:8-23
<b>Matins Gospel</b>	John 8:51-59	<b>Psalm</b>	Psalms 118:14-16
		<b>Gospel</b>	John 12:35-50





Early  
Fathers

## **What is the purpose of a Christian who does not serve?**

**St John Chrysostom**

**You are the light of the world. Matthew 5:14**

What a great loss it is, brethren! Only a few of you care about the things pertaining to salvation. A great part of the Church's body is like a motionless dead man!

You say, "What does this have to do with us?" You have a great responsibility towards your brothers. You are responsible if you do not guide them. You are responsible to protect them from evil and to pull them here by force out of their laziness! Is it fitting for the person to be beneficial only for himself?! He must serve others too.

Christ explained that when He called us, 'salt,' 'leaven,' and 'light.' For these items are beneficial for others. A lamp does not give light for its own benefit but to those sitting in darkness. You are the lamp so that you do not enjoy the light by yourself but to restore those who are lost. For what is the purpose of a Christian who does not serve no restore someone to the path of virtue? Also, salt does not season itself but it seasons food that it may not be spoiled. Likewise, God made you spiritual salt that you may empower and encourage your lazy brothers that they may become beneficial to the body of the Church.

This is the reason why the Lord called us, 'leaven' for the leaven also does not leaven itself but the whole lump regardless of how big it is. Likewise, even if you are few in number, be strong in your faith and zeal towards God and just as a little leaven is not weakened by how small it is, you, also, can attract many to Christ.

Let Your light shine upon me! That I may be enlightened to enlighten others, and through You I become light of the world!





Let Your light shine through me, that all the souls sitting in darkness may be enlightened and alive because of You, O You the true Resurrection!

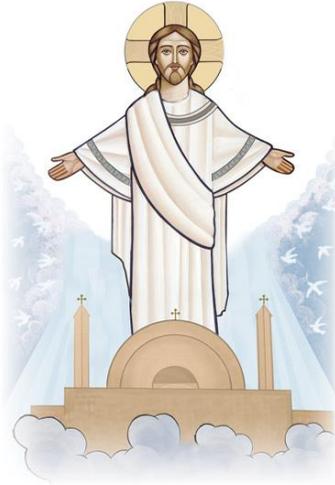
Midnight  
praises

Find it in the PDF file, [click here](#)



[Click here](#) to pray together the hymn "The Third Canticle (Hos)".





## **The Fifth Week of the Holy Fifties**

**"There is no straight (Orthodox) way except the way of Our Lord Jesus Christ for He is the Way, the Truth and the Life"**

**Abba Timothy**

*Gospel  
Response  
of the  
Fifth  
Sunday*

*"I am the Way and the Truth,  
And the everlasting Life,  
Believe that I am in the Father,  
And the Father is in Me"*

Download





Weekly  
Intro.

At the beginning of the week (on Monday), we will read a short spiritual article + listen to a recorded spiritual word, that will prepare us for our daily spiritual work for the week, as follows:

spiritual  
Article

## **The Way, The Truth, and The Life**

This week is the last week before the ascension of Christ, in which the Church reassures us that He is the 'Way, the Truth, and the Life.' Each word in this sentence has theological depth.

The season of the Holy Fifties is the season of eternal life and this eternal life is personified in Our Lord Jesus Christ: "This is the true God and eternal life" (1John 5:20) for Jesus is our eternal life. John the apostle summarizes the essence of Christianity when he says:

**"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." (1John 5:11-12)**

The season of the resurrection and eternal life is a season characterized by the daily union with Christ who is our true Life.

**St Ignatius refers to Him as:**

**"Jesus Christ is Our true Life," "Our eternal Life," "Our Life that cannot possibly leave us," "let us be found in Christ Jesus unto the true life. Apart from Him, let nothing attract you."**

**Life in Christ:**

**"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me." (John 6:57)** This verse explains how we eat the Body and Blood of Christ that His life may be in us.

St John repeats the same idea in his first epistle:

**"God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (1John 4:9)**





## How can we live this verse? How can we live through Christ?

The briefest explanation can be found in St. Anthony's last lecture before his departure. In this lecture, he summarizes his spiritual experiences which he has acquired over 105 years, in one sentence, "Breathe Christ at all times".

But, what does it mean to "Breathe Christ"? It means to gain strength from Him frequently so that He may be your breath of life. To us, He is like oxygen that we cannot live without. Our real life, our eternal life, is dependent on God, breathed from Christ, for He is the breath of life that renews us.

This is the most practical and impactful understanding of John's saying "to live through Christ" (1 John 4:9) and an explanation of Jesus' saying to live because of Him (John 6:57).

Meaning that we get all our feelings, emotions, thoughts, actions and words from God minute by minute and second by second.

+ John explains this in his Gospel when he writes, "that (their) deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." (John 3:21)

This is what it means to live through Him, that all our actions may be done from Him. From Him, we get our way of living, feeling, acting and reacting.

Therefore, we do not only live with him in our prayers but in our very being, in all we do, even in our eating and drinking. It is like what St. Paul said, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1Corinthians 10:31)

Spiritual  
word

[Click here](#) to listen to a spiritual word about this week





Daily prayer

With the start of this week (Monday), we will start to pray together every day. We will pray 3 psalms and read the Bible daily, along with praying the Jesus Prayer, as follows:

Download the prayers & weekly readings



Pray 3 Psalms

One in the morning ... one in the evening ... and one at night. So that we would have prayed all 151 psalms throughout the holy period of the fifty days. **This week we will pray together Psalms 85-105.**

Holy Bible

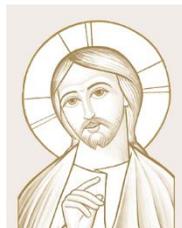
Every day, read a chapter from the Gospel of St. John, except on Sundays as we will follow the Sunday readings according to the Katameros.

**This week we will read the Revelation chapter 5-10.**

Jesus prayer

**The Jesus Prayer:** pray it throughout the whole day (focused on Jesus' holy Resurrection):

**"O my lord Jesus Christ,  
who rose from the dead,  
and ascended to heaven,  
raise us with Your power"**





Sunday's Meeting

On Sunday, the family gathers together in prayer and unity with Christ through the reading of scripture. We study the Bible together using the commentaries of the Church Fathers. We pray together and we partake in the Agape meal.

Download  
Sunday's sermon

Download  
Readings and the  
Midnight Praises



Pray  
Agpeya

We pray the appropriate hour from the Agpeya (ex. 1st, 11th, 12th hour)

Intro. on  
the  
Sunday

### Sunday of The Way

This is the final week before the Ascension, thus, the Gospel that is read is a preparation for the Ascension: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:2-3). This is one of the most beautiful promises Christ gave us as it gives us confidence that He will not leave us with His Ascension but will go before us in heaven to prepare a place for us until our time comes to rejoice with Him. "A place" is not a physical place but rather it is a way from which we may enter the Fatherly bosom. This way was opened to us through His death, resurrection and finally His ascension into the Fatherly bosom.





Readings of Sunday

<b>Vespers Psalm</b>	Psalm 135: 6,21	<b>Pauline Epistle</b>	Hebrews 10:19-38
<b>Vespers Gospel</b>	John 14:21-25	<b>Catholic Epistle</b>	1Peter 4:6-14
<b>Matins Psalm</b>	Psalm 135:19	<b>Praxis</b>	Acts 9:1-20
<b>Matins Gospel</b>	John 15:4-8	<b>Psalm</b>	Psalm 136:1-2
		<b>Gospel</b>	John 14: 1-11

Early Fathers

### Christ is our only way to heaven

**St Augustine**

**"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." (John 3:13)**

This means that only Christ came down and ascended...

But the question is: Will not the children of God ascend to heaven as well?

Certainly! This is His promise, "they will be like the angels of God." (Mathew 22:30)

Thus, how is it that 'no one ascended but He who came down'? What about the children of God?

The children of God have this hope that He came down to them that He may unite with them. They cannot ascend without Him and for this reason He came down for us that we may ascend through Him.

Here, you see the unity of the Church. Woe to those who hate unity and make for themselves smaller separated groups to ruin this unity!

Our departure is like a trip. May you walk on this trip with the power of your heart's affection that you may ascend through love.

Why are you looking for the way? Abide in Christ, who by His incarnation became the way.





Do you want to ascend? Hold onto Him who ascended.

Do you want to ascend? Be a member in Him who ascended.

No one can ascend if he is not a member in His body.

And thus, the saying is fulfilled, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down." (John 3:13)

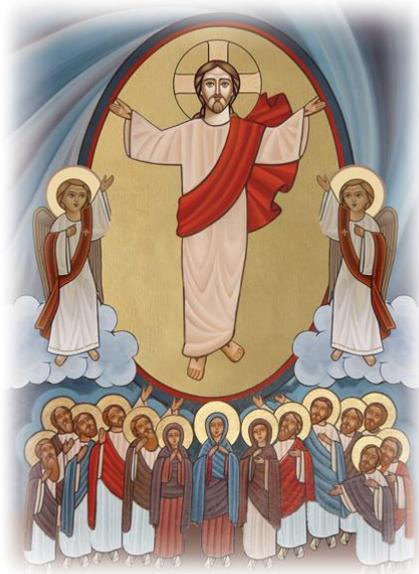
Midnight  
praises

Find it in the PDF file, [click here](#)



[Click here](#) to pray together the hymn "Doxology for the Resurrection".





## The Glorious Feast of the Ascension

“Christ ascended to heaven, and the Church's heaven is the sacraments”

St. Jacob of Serug

Gospel  
Response  
of the  
Liturgy of  
the  
Ascension

*Praise the Lord with a new praise,  
Proclaim His glory and wonders,  
Christ is risen from the dead,  
and ascended to the heavens.*

*The Lord came to Bethany,  
with His holy disciples,  
Raised His hands and blessed them,  
And ascended to the heavens*

*Alleluia (x4), Christ is risen from the dead,  
and ascended to the heavens.*

Download





Today, we celebrate the Glorious Feast of the Ascension...so, you will find a spiritual program special to the Feast of the Ascension

Liturgy for the period between the Ascension to Pentecost  
Bishop Raphael (Arabic)



D. Liturgy - Holy Ascension 2010 (English - Coptic)  
Anba Kyrillos, LA & Fr. Moses Samaan, LA



Prayers for the Feast of the Ascension- Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty



Playlist Hymns of the Feast of the Ascension



Readings and the Doxology



Listen to the Doxology



Sermon on the Feast of the Ascension





Intro.

## **An Introduction to the Liturgy of the Feast of the Ascension**

### **Before the Ascension, The Lord Christ:**

1. Appeared and confirmed the faith of His disciples and healed their weaknesses
2. Told them about the things pertaining to the Kingdom of Heaven
3. Promised them the Holy Spirit, that they may wait for Him
4. Prepared them for the *Second Coming* on the *Great Day* of the Lord

### **During the Ascension:**

1. The Lord Christ passed by Bethany (meaning: The House of Suffering), and the Garden of Gethsemane, before he went up to the Mount of Olives; in order to make the connection in the minds of His disciples that the Ascension is the fruit of the Cross.
2. On top of the mountain, the Ascension is completed, as a symbol of majesty and superiority
3. Two angels appeared confirming to the disciples the reality of watching and waiting for the *Second Coming*
4. Then, the disciples returned joyfully, worshiped at the mountain and returned to Jerusalem

### **Thus, after the Ascension, we have obtained many blessings:**

1. Christ is the Lord of Heaven
2. Our Christianity is heavenly and sublime
3. We qualify to live in heaven where a place has been prepared for us





4. We eagerly await the Second Coming from the East (hence the call in the Liturgy to "Look towards the East").

### **The Open Heaven:**

The Ascension provides us with spiritual fulfillment and helps us know that the gates of heaven are always open for us and we should always have our hearts open for Christ.

### **The experience of the Feast of the Ascension, gives us:**

1. A hopeful future, that is hope in the person of the Risen and Victorious Christ
2. A hopeful heart, which is longsuffering, as Paul the Apostle says, "by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love" (2 Corinthians 6:6)
3. A heaven that is open to prayer, requests and supplications, where the answers to our prayers are received in the most fitting and best time.

### **Thus, the relationship between heaven and earth is like Jacob's ladder with angels ascending and descending:**

- The descending path represents the Incarnation... and the Redemption
- The ascending path represents the Ascension... the Kingdom of heaven

### **The events of the Ascension have three very important elements:**

- The humility of the event: as Christ ascended into heaven in a very humble way, unlike Elijah the prophet (with a fiery chariot)
- The marvelousness of the sight: as He ascended in front of their eyes to show us the sight of the ascending Church





- The greatness of the Promise: that witnesses to the Son and works in glorifying the message of Christ on earth.

Christians used to greet one another, saying: “Maranatha” during the Feast of the Ascension, which is a Greek expression, meaning: “The Lord is coming” or “O Lord, Come!”

Readings

<b>Vespers Psalm</b>	Psalm 68:32-34	<b>Pauline Epistle</b>	1 Timothy 3:13-16
<b>Vespers Gospel</b>	Luke 9:51-62	<b>Catholic Epistle</b>	1 Peter 3:15-22
<b>Matins Psalm</b>	Psalm 68:18-19	<b>Praxis</b>	Acts 1:1-14
<b>Matins Gospel</b>	Mark 16:12-20	<b>Psalm</b>	Psalm 24:9-10
		<b>Gospel</b>	Luke 24:36-53

Reading Explan.

**Explanation of the Gospel of the Vespers of the Feast of the Ascension**

In the Gospel of the Vespers of the Feast of the Ascension, there is a phrase, that is used to express our detachment from the world: “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51).

Although it may seem unrelated, the Church chose this specific passage from the Gospel because it represents the essence of this feast, which is connected to the heavenly aspect of the Christian life.

First, it presents an image of our Lord Christ that His face is steadfastly set on Jerusalem. It alludes to the Christian who set his face towards the Heavenly Jerusalem, and who is not concerned with the worldly matters.

Following these verses is a passage that pertains to following the Lord. The Church points out that the Feast of the Ascension is





connected in essence to our following of Christ. This passage presents 3 cases of those who wanted to follow Jesus:

**The first**, "Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head." (Luke 9: 57-58)

**The second**, "Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." (Luke 9: 59-60)

**And the third**, "And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house." But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9: 60-61)

Three examples of following the Lord, which are preceded by the image of Christ setting His face to go to Jerusalem.

The Feast of the Ascension is the Feast where we witness our souls ascending from earth to heaven, and we are freed from all the bonds that tie us to the world.

This is the power of the Ascension, the power of being freed from the world, all its temptations and everything that binds us and makes us attached to this world.

### Jerusalem and the Church

It is important to keep our sense of heaven. To keep this feeling, it requires: an "upward gaze" as St. Ammon expressed, or "discernment" or "insight" as St. Anthony calls it, by continuously yearning for heaven. This comes by the following:

### Using the words of the Psalms:

"I was glad **when they said to me**, "Let us go into the house of the Lord," (Psalm 122:1) (which is said on the way to Church). "How





lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts!" (Psalm 84:1) (that is said upon entering the Church). "O God, You are my God;

Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You..."

### Using the words of Isaiah:

"With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early..." (Isaiah 26:9)

### Using the words of the Song of Songs (Solomon):

"Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, So is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, And his fruit was sweet to my taste." (Song of Solomon 2:3)

"His mouth is most sweet, Yes, he is altogether lovely." (Song of Solomon 5:16)

Our connection to heaven is expressed through our attachment and love for the Church. The goal of the Feast of the Ascension is to unite us to heaven, and because the Church is heaven, the goal of the feast becomes to unite us with the Church and Her Sacraments.

Early  
Fathers

## **A Commentary on the Liturgy Psalm of the Feast of the Ascension**

### **St. Athanasius the Apostolic and St. Cyril of Alexandria**

"Lift up your heads, O you gates!  
Lift up, you everlasting doors!  
And the King of glory shall come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord of hosts,  
He is the King of glory." (Psalm 24:9-10)





This is explained by St. Athanasius the Apostolic and St. Cyril of Alexandria as the entry of Christ in His flesh (which represents us) to heaven. The hosts of angels were told to lift up and open the gates of heaven to Him who was coming from the earth. They were greatly amazed, as this was the first time they witnessed a human approach the gates of heaven. Thus, the other angels coming with Christ replied saying, "This is the King of glory;" so, open the gates of heaven. For His divinity, open the gates for the flesh that was made one with His divinity.

As St. Athanasius expresses it, "For it was not Christ Himself Who needed the gates to be opened, He being Lord of all. No, it was we who needed it, we whom He Himself bore in His own body—that body which He first offered to death on behalf of all, and then made through it a path to heaven." (On the Incarnation - Chapter 25)

For Christ, with His Ascension, has opened for us the door to Father's bosom.

Spiritual  
Article

## **The Ascension of the Treasure**

The Lord has said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Luke 12:34), which we say in the Agpeya Midnight prayers.

What is our treasure? **We do not have any treasure other than Christ.** This is why Christ ascended to heaven, to be our Treasure in heaven; and therefore, our heart would be there also.

Christ never stopped throughout His life on earth from directing the peoples' sights to the Kingdom; as the goal of the entire Gospel is the inheritance of the Kingdom of heaven. This is explained in the following:

- "Then the kingdom of heaven...shall be likened to ten virgins..." (Matthew 25:1)





- "The kingdom of heaven... is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son," (Matthew 22:2)
- From the beginning of the Gospel, "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Matthew 4:17), to the end of the forty days after the Resurrection, "to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3).
- In the Gospel of the Third Watch of the Midnight Prayer, "... for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Luke 12: 32, 34)

Christ is gradually guiding us to Himself. He first asks, "What is your treasure? Is it not Myself, Jesus?! So, now, I will ascend in front of you, as you are looking at me, until I have been taken up and a cloud receives Me from your sight...after which, where will your treasure be? Your treasure will be in heaven. So, you will walk on earth while your heart is in heaven; your heart is attached with a golden chain in heaven where I am."

In the beginning of the Liturgy of the Faithful, the priest puts a condition for us,

- "Lift up your hearts"
- So, the congregation (the people) replies, "We have them with the Lord"

The person who does not respond with these words from all their heart, "We have them with the Lord," will not be able to enjoy the trip of the Ascension during the Divine Liturgy. During the liturgy, we celebrate our fellowship together with Christ so that our hearts are no longer on earth but in heaven.

- + "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these





things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21: 34-36)

Here, Christ is confirming the importance of watching, praying, and that our lamps are lit, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour..." (Matthew 25:13).

### **The Gospel of the 10 Virgins:**

"But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Luke 12: 39-40),

The goal is to, "Lift up your hearts!" and to say, "We have them with the Lord."

The Gospel continues, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," is "**Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning**" (Luke 12: 35)

"Let your loins be girded:" means the tying cloth around the waist and getting ready. It is an expression for the life of asceticism and fasting.

The tying of the stomach, means a separation from the needs of the body and a detachment from this vain world.

"Let your loins be girded," means blocking and preventing yourself from the negative, earthly thoughts.

"And your lamps burning," referring to the hearts enflamed with the love of Christ. The heart burns and the lamps are lit by the constant yearning for Christ.

"Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching."

"Blessed are those servants" Why? Because, I "Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them." (Luke 12:37).





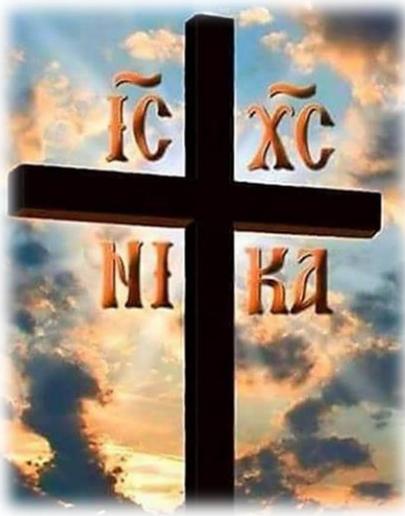
Christ, the Lord of Glory, girds Himself, has them sit down, makes them comfortable, and then He gets up and serves them Himself! And this is done in the Kingdom! Not only did He do this on earth, when He got up and washed His disciples' feet; but He does the same in the Kingdom! We would have expected Him to say: "He will command His servants (His angels) to serve them." Nevertheless, He, Himself, has them sit down, makes them comfortable, girds Himself and serves them. It is something that surpasses the mind and understanding, but its sweetness is beyond imagination.

"The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, **that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.** And these things we write to you that your joy may be full." (1 John 1: 2-3)

Because our heart is where our treasure is, and our Treasure is the Lord who is in heaven, our hearts are attached to Him in heaven: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," (Phil 3:20).

"And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess 4:17-18). Paul the Apostle is telling the early Christians: to speak to one another about their citizenship is in heaven, where they will always be with the Lord; that their hearts may be attached to heaven. This is the absolute result of Christ's presence in heaven on our behalf. He did not ascend for His sake, but He ascended with us, being in Him.





## The Sixth Week of the Holy Fifties

" Brethren, the victorious is him who relies on God and does not rely on his own power for God supports him and fights on .his behalf

The devil is experienced in wars but if God is with us, we will defeat him."

St. Augustine

Gospel  
Response  
of the  
Sixth  
Sunday

*"O You who out of Your abundance,  
Loved us as such,  
May Your joy settle within us,  
That we may love one another"*

Download





Weekly  
Intro.

At the beginning of the week (on Monday), we will read a short spiritual article + listen to a recorded spiritual word, that will prepare us for our daily spiritual work for the week, as follows:

spiritual  
Article

### **The Desire for Departure**

Christ said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself" (John 12:32).

The departure of our Lord Jesus Christ from this earth was begun through the cross and commenced with our Lord's holy ascension. Through his ascension, an attraction such as that of a magnetic field, was instated between us and our Heavenly Father. This force between ourselves and the Father pulling us towards eternal life, constantly manifests itself as a newly-created instinct within our hearts. It is an irresistible force, in the face of which, we find ourselves week. It is the instinct of "returning to God"; the instinct of "eternal life", and the "call to eternity". We feel it deep within our souls. This force, towards Christ and towards heaven, is stronger than all the forces of the earth and that which is beneath, so long as we have our eyes are constantly fixed on Christ. "Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:23).

This yearning towards Christ is not merely one-sided. In fact, it is initially Christ's desire to unite with us. On the night of His arrest, we see Christ praying, "Father, I desire that they also whom you gave me may be with me where I am" (John 17:24). Was this not the purpose of the incarnation? "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father" (John 16:28). Would our Savior leave as he came, without us and without our salvation? It would be absurd to even suppose so! He returns to the Father, "bringing many sons to glory" (Hebrews 2:10). Christ tells the Father, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me" (Hebrews 2:13).

It is written in the book of Isaiah: "So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void" (Isaiah 55:11). The Word is Christ. For Christ, the Logos, whom the Father sent, shall not return to the Father empty-handed. Rather, he returns





like a grain of wheat, bearing us. The ascension of Christ is therefore not merely an individual ascension, but an ascension of Christ with all the members of His Body.

In his book, *"The Incarnation of the Word"*, St Athanasius talks about how Christ did not need the ascension, "but we are the ones who needed this, we whom He carried in His flesh."

In truth, Christ did not need to ascend, for Christ had never left the bosom of the Father. It was said of Him on Earth:

"The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (John 1:18)

"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." (John 3:13)

Even though He was "walking among men", He never left the Father's bosom. He therefore did not need to ascend for the ascension did not bring Him any closer to the Father.

The essence of ascension comes from the fact that Christ ascended in His flesh and placed this flesh (us) in the bosom of the Holy Father for the first time ever. "[He] raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 2:6). Christ paved the path for salvation through the ascension so that all of us may be saved through faith, Communion, and a holy life in Christ.

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Spiritual  
word

[Click here](#) to listen to a spiritual word about this week





Daily prayer

With the start of this week (Monday), we will start to pray together every day. We will pray 3 psalms and read the Bible daily, along with praying the Jesus Prayer, as follows:

Download the prayers & weekly readings



Pray 3 Psalms

One in the morning ... one in the evening ... and one at night. So that we would have prayed all 151 psalms throughout the holy period of the fifty days.

**This week we will pray together Psalms 106-126.**

Holy Bible

Every day, read a chapter from the Gospel of St. John, except on Sundays as we will follow the Sunday readings according to the Katameros.

**This week we will read the Revelation chapter 11-16.**

Jesus prayer

**The Jesus Prayer:** pray it throughout the whole day (focused on Jesus' holy Resurrection):

**"O my lord Jesus Christ,  
who rose from the dead,  
and ascended to heaven,  
raise us with Your power"**





Sunday's Meeting

On Sunday, the family gathers together in prayer and unity with Christ through the reading of scripture. We study the Bible together using the commentaries of the Church Fathers. We pray together and we partake in the Agape meal.

Download  
Sunday's sermon

Download  
Readings and the  
Midnight Praises



Pray  
Agpeya

We pray the appropriate hour from the Agpeya (ex. 1st, 11th, 12th hour)

Intro. on  
the  
Sunday

## The Victorious Sunday

The heavenly priesthood of Christ, and the secret of the accepted prayer:

In both, the matins and liturgy Gospels (on this Sunday which follows the feast of ascension), there is a promise from Christ that He would inevitably respond to every prayer, and in each of His promises, He says "Most assuredly, I say to you."

Today's Liturgy Gospel, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23-24).

In this Gospel, our Lord Jesus Christ gives us the secret to an accepted prayer, which is to ask in His name (since He is sitting at the right-hand of the Father). For He is extremely close to the





Father. Hence, when we ask in His name, our prayers will be received and accepted.

Furthermore, today's Matins Gospel, "Most assuredly, I say to you, He who believes in me, the works that I do He will do also; and greater works than these He will do, because I go to my Father. And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:12-13).

In both *Gospels*, the Lord gives us the secret of an accepted prayer, which is to pray to the Father in His name.

Christ is sitting at the right-hand of the Father. Therefore, the Father will never refuse a request that is proposed to Him in the name of the Son who took our flesh, making Him extremely close to us, as He represents us in front of the Father.

Thus, all that we ask in the name of the Son will be heard and accepted.

### **The Heavenly Priesthood of Christ:**

In the epistle to the Hebrews, there are several powerful verses about Christ's heavenly priesthood. In fact, it can be said that Christ's heavenly priesthood is the main message around which this epistle revolves.

- "Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: we have such a High Priest who is seated at the right-hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord has set up, and not man" (Hebrews 8:1-2).
- "But now He has obtained a more excellent (from the priests of the old testament) ministry, inasmuch as He is also mediator of a better covenant which was established on better promises..." (Hebrews 8:6-8).

This is the greatest covenant that Christ is serving with His heavenly liturgy, which is later explained in the epistle as the new





testament which the prophets prophesied about that the law will be engraved within our hearts so that each of us will have the knowledge of the Lord.

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their mind and write them (engrave) on their hearts ... None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” (Hebrews 8:10-11).

So, Christ, who is sitting at the right of His Father in heaven, serves this liturgy with His intercession on our behalf that we may have His commandments engraved within our hearts.

This is what St. Paul considered, “main point of the things,” meaning that the most important thing He wants to illustrate to us is that we have a High Priest who is sitting at the right-hand of the Father in heaven. This High Priest is not sitting idle, but rather His work is more significant than anything. His work is to serve “the Liturgy of the New Testament” with the Father, which leads to the engraving of His commandments in our hearts.

This is the mystery that Christ gave to the apostles in the Gospel that is read in Matins and the Liturgy of this Sunday.

### **Other Verses That Share the Same Meaning:**

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15-16).

Therefore, because Christ, our High Priest sat at the right-hand of the Father, we have strong confidence and courage to approach the Father in His name. Why? Because Christ, being one of us (humans), is sitting at the right-hand of the Father.





So, when we approach the Father, we approach Him in favor of our sonship; in other words, in favor of our membership in His beloved Son's Body which He ascended with.

- "Where the forerunner has entered for us" (Hebrews 6:20).
- "Now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24).
- "Since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).
- "With His own blood He entered the most holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12).

The entire epistle to the Hebrews discusses the priestly intercessions of Christ on our behalf, which is a result of His ascension in the flesh, the flesh which He has taken from our holy mother, Saint Mary.

Christ was, from the beginning, in the bosom of the Father, but starting from the day of His ascension, He sat on the right-hand of the Father in the flesh that is ours.

+ Christ in John 14, after His words regarding His ascension to heaven in order to prepare a place for us, stated:

"At that day (which is after my ascension) you will know that I am in my Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20).

I am in my Father: It is natural for the Son to be in the Father, and the Father to be in the Son since they are both one.

And you in Me: With the flesh that He took from us - because He ascended in our flesh - and since He ascended with that body, we share something with Him. Based on this premise, St. Paul said, "And raised up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 2:6), and also, "For our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20) and commanded us to "Set [our] mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:2-3).





Readings  
of  
Sunday

<b>Vespers Psalm</b>	Psalms 146:1-2,10	<b>Pauline Epistle</b>	1Corinthians 15:57-16:8
<b>Vespers Gospel</b>	Mark 12:28-37	<b>Catholic Epistle</b>	1 Peter 1:2-12
<b>Matins Psalm</b>	Psalms 147:1-2	<b>Praxis</b>	Acts 20:1-16
<b>Matins Gospel</b>	John 14:8-14	<b>Psalm</b>	Psalms 147:12,18
		<b>Gospel</b>	John 20: 19-31

Early  
Fathers

## The Victorious Christ

### Melito, Bishop of Sardis

"The Lord, having put on human nature, and having suffered for him who suffered, having been bound for him who was bound, and having been buried for him who was buried, is risen from the dead, and loudly proclaims this message:

Who will contend against me? Let him stand before me. It is I who delivered the condemned. It is I who gave life to the dead. It is I who raised up the buried. Who will argue with me? It is I, says Christ, who destroyed death. It is I who triumphed over the enemy, and having trod down Hades, and bound the Strong Man, and have snatched mankind up to the heights of heaven. It is I, says Christ. So then, come here all you families of men, weighed down by your sins and receive pardon for your misdeeds. For I am your pardon. I am the Passover which brings salvation. I am the Lamb slain for you. I am your lustral bath. I am your life. I am your resurrection. I am your light, I am your salvation, I am your King. It is I who brings you up to the heights of heaven. It is I who will give you the resurrection there. I will show you the Eternal Father. I will raise you up with my own right hand."

Midnight  
praises

Find it in the PDF file, [click here](#)



[Click here](#) to pray together the hymn "Psalm for the Feast of the Resurrection".





## **The Seventh Week of the Holy Fifties**

**“O Our Lord Jesus Christ Make for Yourself within us  
A temple of Your Holy Spirit Glorifying You”**

**St Mary's Doxology**

*Gospel  
Response  
of the  
Seventh  
Sunday*

*“The Paraclete,  
Descended upon the apostles,  
On the day of Pentecost,  
And they spoke in many tongues.*

*Alleluia (x4)  
Christ is risen and has ascended  
He sent to us the Paraclete”*

Download





Weekly  
Intro.

At the beginning of the week (on Monday), we will read a short spiritual article + listen to a recorded spiritual word, that will prepare us for our daily spiritual work for the week, as follows:

spiritual  
Article

## Unity of Spirit

When the Holy Spirit came on the apostles and all who were gathered in the same room, they became the Church. It did not come on an individual alone in his home but on the people gathered in that upper room. As St. Luke explains: "they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1).

In total, there were 120 people gathered together, including St. Mary the Theotokos and the 11 disciples, praying in unity for the past 10 days in one mind and heart. This is what brought down the Holy Spirit giving birth to the Church.

"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers." (Acts 14:1)

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all [...] in one place" (Acts 2:1)

"So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart," (Acts 2:46)

And the Church was renewed by the Holy Spirit whenever they prayed in unity. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read how Peter and John were arrested and warned of preaching the name of Christ. So, they went to their companions to tell them what had happened:

"So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them [...] And when they had prayed, the





place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:24,31)

This is the result of prayer in one spirit.

"And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were with one accord in Solomon's Porch." (Acts 5:12)

"And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." (Acts 8:6)

"it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul." (Acts 15:25)

**St. Paul also said of the unity in spirit:**

"that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15:6)

"Only let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Christ so that whether I come and see you or am absent I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel," (Philippians 1:27)

"fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." (Philippians 2:2)

"Behold! What is so good, or what so pleasant, as for brothers dwelling together?" (Psalm 133)

This psalm is so full of hidden meanings that need a closer look to be understood; it is not enough to just read it shallowly. What is meant by "The beard of Aaron"? What is the connection between the brethren dwelling together in unity and the precious oil running down the beard of Aaron? By shallow reading, one may not find a meaning in this, but it is in its hidden meaning where we find the





explanation to the dwelling of the Holy Spirit upon the Church gatherings. This is why the Fathers loved this psalm; St. Athanasius wrote an entire explanation dedicated to it and the Church sings in meditation of it during the Morning Doxologies.

Furthermore, this psalm shows the unity of the brethren who are gathered: "Behold! What is so good, or what so pleasant, as for brothers dwelling together?". This unity is what brings down the Holy Spirit upon Aaron the priest, on his head, beard and entire body. Aaron is the High Priest, and the precious oil that is poured on his head is an expression for the Holy Spirit. It is like the Holy Oil (Myroon) that we use in some of the Mysteries for the Holy Spirit to be actively involved in it.

Aaron, the High Priest, is a symbol of Christ who is the true High priest: Jesus is the head, and we, the Church, are His body. The psalm speaks of the pouring of the oil (Myroon = Holy Spirit) from the head onto the rest of the body. What is interesting is that this psalm makes a connection between this pouring and the unity of the brethren and this is exactly what happened on the 50<sup>th</sup> day of the Pentecost when all who were gathered were united in spirit.

**St. Athanasius the Apostolic says:**

"Behold! What is so good, or what so pleasant, as for brothers dwelling together? It is as ointment upon the head, that came down upon the beard". He means by this that when the Church becomes united the Holy Spirit comes down upon it, first on the head of Christ then on the beard, which is the apostles, and finally to the rest of the body, meaning all who abide in Christ within the Church. "For there the Lord commanded the blessing and the life forever." By saying "there", he means the place where the brethren united (the Church). Moreover, "life" means the everlasting life, for the life-giving Holy Spirit has come down from Zion unto the saintly apostles. With it, the believers have one everlasting blessing because they had one heart and one spirit."





In this commentary, St. Athanasius connects the psalm to the Pentecost and the declared dwelling of the Holy Spirit upon the gathered Church that became of one mind and soul. It shows that the unity of heart of the apostles is what brought down the Holy Spirit as the psalm prophesied.

Morning Doxology:

"Behold how beneficent, and how pleasant, it is for brethren, to dwell together in unity"

"United in the true evangelic love, like the apostles"

"It is like the fragrant oil, on the head of Christ, running down the beard, down to the feet"

"That anoints everyday the elders, the children and young men and the deacons."

"Those whom the Holy Spirit has attuned together as a stringed instrument always blessing God"

"By psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, by day and by night with an incessant heart."

From this we see how the Morning doxologies focus on the Church's unity, likening it to a beautiful song. "Those whom the Holy Spirit has attuned together as a stringed instrument" like a symphony. This tuning, orchestral, symphonic unity of spirit between different parts of the same body, meaning different members of the Church, is what brings down the Holy Spirit upon us.

### Unity of Heart

It is one the most important aspects that brings down the Holy Spirit on the Church and it is the agreement between the different members of the one body in the spirit of community because at its





core the Holy Spirit is the spirit of community for, as we said, the spirit of community is within the Holy Trinity.

St. John the apostle says, "If we love one another, God abides in us". If there is true love in everyone, if one shares in his brother's pain according to the commandment, "Bear one another's burden and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2) and each one bears the burden that has befallen his brother and not only caring to what is our own, "Let each of you not only look for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."(Philippians 2:4) If we love each other and "God abides in us", then the Holy Spirit will easily find His comfort by dwelling in us.

But if we were separated from each other, and there is no connection between the members of the one body, then the Holy Spirit will find no comfort in us. This will hinder His dwelling upon us and will find great difficulty to come within us. This may be our greatest hindrance, as the Holy Spirit only comes down when we are gathered together in one spirit.

Spiritual  
word

[Click here](#) to listen to a spiritual word about this week





Daily prayer

With the start of this week (Monday), we will start to pray together every day. We will pray 3 psalms and read the Bible daily, along with praying the Jesus Prayer, as follows:

Download the prayers & weekly readings



Pray 3 Psalms

One in the morning ... one in the evening ... and one at night. So that we would have prayed all 151 psalms throughout the holy period of the fifty days. **This week we will pray together Psalms 127-151.**

Holy Bible

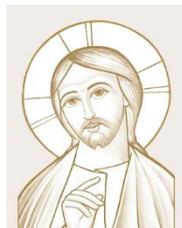
Every day, read a chapter from the Gospel of St. John, except on Sundays as we will follow the Sunday readings according to the Katameros.

**This week we will read the Revelation chapter 17-22.**

Jesus prayer

**The Jesus Prayer:** pray it throughout the whole day (focused on Jesus' holy Resurrection):

**"O my lord Jesus Christ,  
who rose from the dead,  
and ascended to heaven,  
raise us with Your power"**





Sunday's Meeting

On Sunday, the family gathers together in prayer and unity with Christ through the reading of scripture. We study the Bible together using the commentaries of the Church Fathers. We pray together and we partake in the Agape meal.

Download  
Sunday's sermon



Download  
Readings and the  
Midnight Praises



Hymns for Pentecost



A full Liturgy for  
Pentecost  
HH Pope Tawadros II



Pray  
Agpeya

We pray the appropriate hour from the Agpeya (ex. 1st, 11th, 12th hour)

Intro. on  
the  
Sunday

## Feast of the Pentecost - the Sunday of Joy

The rites of this day are divided into two parts:

- 1) The Liturgical feast of Ascension (Vespers, Praises, Liturgy)
- 2) The (Sagda) Prostration Prayers

### Who is the Holy Spirit?

Whereas the Bible describes the Lord Christ as the Son of God, Jesus said about the Holy Spirit: "Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father" (John 15:26). The expression 'proceeds' is a





unique expression that is not attributed in the Bible to anyone or anything other than the Holy Spirit.

A good example that might bring us close to an understanding of the intricate difference between 'proceeding' and 'being born' is the paradigm of the sun which gives 'birth' to light, and heat 'proceeds' from it. The sun is the source, and from it the rays of light are born, and from it also proceed heat and warmth. The birthing and the proceeding in the example of the sun are not differentiated in any way with regards to time of origination. The sun does not exist and then its light exists afterwards, rather as long as the sun exists, its light also exists. There was never a moment of sun without light, nor will there ever be. Likewise, heat has always co-existed with the sun, there has never been a moment when the sun did not have its heat, the heat has always accompanied the sun for as long as it existed.

The Holy Spirit grants gifts, talents, and consolations. The Spirit also leads human beings unto salvation, rebukes them for their sins, for their rejection of Christ, and for following the evil one.

**The role of the Holy Spirit is to evangelize to the world through the faithful. The Spirit also convicts the world in three main areas:**

1) Conviction of sin: Notice that it is singular sin and not plural sins, this sin is the source of all sins and it is the sin of unbelief in the Lord Jesus. The Spirit reproaches and rebukes so as to lead the person to accept the Lord Christ as a redeemer, Savior, and reconciler with the Father. The lack of faith of humans in Jesus highlights their sin, therefore the sin of humans is lack of faith.

2) Conviction of righteousness: The Holy Spirit convicts the world because of the world's rejection to Christ's righteousness. The Lord Christ fulfilled the Jewish rites where a sacrifice was offered for the forgiveness of sins and for purification. Two birds would be involved in this sacrifice and while one would be slaughtered, the other would be released to fly free after being





dipped in the blood of the sacrificed bird. The released bird symbolized the carrying of the blood of redemption and flying up with it into the heavens (Leviticus 14:4). Likewise, with goats, one would be slaughtered and the other would be released after being marked with the blood as a scapegoat into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:9).

Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for atonement and after offering Himself as a ransom on our behalf He went up to Heaven to His Father to intercede for humanity, even though they no longer see Him. This evidence ought to be sufficient to explain His sacrifice for the atonement and justification of humans, since the signs of old were fulfilled through Him. The Jews however rejected all this evidence and thereby rejected the righteousness that Christ offered on the cross.

3) Conviction of judgement: The Lord convicts' people for following the devil, the ruler of this world, showing them that he is judged and has fallen from his authority when Christ died on the cross and trampled the head of the serpent of old.

The role of the faithful is to be gods, alive and animated, in the hands of the Holy Spirit so as to witness with words and strive as ambassadors to the heavenly kingdom. The faithful are to proclaim the Good News and offer reconciliation to every human with the Lord, who alone is wise and mighty (2 Corinthians 5:20).

The harmony of that Fiftieth day stands in contrast to the day of the confusion of tongues at Babylon. This harmony is considered a renewal, though temporary, of the heavenly language. Peter's sermon came after the speaking in tongues because the educational work of the Holy Spirit always comes after His working inside the soul of the servant.





## A Unique Ritual in the Liturgy of the Feast of the Pentecost

The Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples on the daytime of the day of the Pentecost and specifically on the third hour which is 9:00 am in the current day times. The Coptic Church has arranged to celebrate this event through praying only the psalms of the third hour excluding the litanies. Then, after reading from the Acts of Apostles (Praxis), in which we read about what happened on this day in detail, the Church prays the litanies of the third hour, "Your Holy Spirit, O Lord...etc." followed by singing the beautiful hymn of the Holy Spirit (ΠΙΠΝΑ ὑΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΤΟΝ) that concludes with the Paralex hymn, "O my Lord Jesus Christ, who is coming in His Second Coming, deal with us in loving mercy, before Your fearful throne." The Church, then, prays the hymn of the Trisagion followed by the Gospel reading from John (15&16) in which our Lord Jesus Christ spoke about the Holy Spirit and His work in us. Reading John 17 is kept for the first Prostration prayer which is Christ's high-priestly prayer the Father for our sake on the night before His Passion. This prayer has extremely deep mysteries referencing the Holy Spirit extensively. Everything Christ has requested from the Father on our behalf was fulfilled in us through the Holy Spirit. This evidently reveals for us the unity and harmony in the work of the Holy Trinity and our everlasting communion with Him. Wherever the Son is, the Father and the Holy Spirit are; having one will and power.

An important Note: On this day, if it is not possible for us to attend the prayer of the holy Liturgy at Church, it would be wonderful to pray the third hour from the Agpeya (the Thanksgiving prayer, Psalm 50, the psalms of the 3rd hour, the Gospel, the Litanies, Kyrie eleison 41 times, the absolution, and the conclusion of every hour). Then, offer your heart-felt prayer to the Holy Spirit along with the tunes of hymn of the Holy Spirit (Pi Ep Nevma), the Paralex hymn of the feast, the Trisagion and finally pray the Gospel of the liturgy.





You will feel the grace of this great joyful feast which is the feast of the heavenly kingdom and the feast of the birth of the Church. The grace of God has always been present and as long as He is present in our midst, the desire of Christ's heart and the fulfilment of His redemption is granted to us through the gift of His Holy Spirit, as He said "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Luke 12:49).

The fire of the Holy Spirit is the divine life of the Holy Trinity. This is the kingdom of God within us. This fire is in a continuous state of ignition as long as we abide in Christ and cling to Him like the many connected branches to the one vine and the many organs in the same body connected to the One Head, Christ. All what Christ has done for our sake, all what He taught and all the virtues that He commanded us to acquire will not be available nor will be achieved by us without the Holy Spirit. The Spirit teaches us all things and bring to our remembrance all things that Christ said to us. The Holy Spirit grants us the virtues of Christ and pours into us an eternal divine life. This is everything!

Readings  
of  
Sunday

<b>Vespers Psalm</b>	Psalm 51:12,14	<b>Pauline Epistle</b>	1Cor 12:1-31
<b>Vespers Gospel</b>	John 7:37-44	<b>Catholic Epistle</b>	1John 2:20- 3:1
<b>Matins Psalm</b>	Ps 104:30,31	<b>Praxis</b>	Acts 2:1-21
<b>Matins Gospel</b>	John 14:26 - 15:4	<b>Psalm</b>	Psalm 47:5,7
		<b>Gospel</b>	John 15:26- 16:15

Early  
Fathers

## The Fiery Holy Spirit

### (Excerpts from St Anthony's letters)

"What could be likened to the soul wherein dwells the fire of God? It is like a two-winged bird that flies up high in the air, for birds are the only creatures with wings. The wings of the soul are the power of God's fire that lifts Him up to the heavens...do not ever let the power of this fire be extinguished, for many diabolic wars will arise to attempt to take it away from you. So long as you have





this fire within you, the devil knows that he is powerless against you." (Letter 18:2)

"If any of you recognizes that this fervor is not in him, let him plea to God that he may receive it. This fervor is like the fire that is used to boil water; once the fire is stoked by blowing upon it, the overlying water acquires its characteristics by sharing in its heat, and begins to fizz, boil, and overflow. Likewise, my brethren, if you ever see yourself lukewarm in slumber and laziness, strive to wake yourself up...mourn over yourself that this fervor may not delay in returning back and uniting with your soul again, sharing the characteristics of its nature with you, so that your soul may overflow with good deeds" (Letter 10:4)

"If you want to receive Him that He may dwell in you, offer first your physical struggles and the humility of your heart, and lift up your thoughts to heaven by day and by night. Then, ask for the fiery Spirit, and He will be granted to you. When this happens, though still in the flesh, you will be in heaven, and the heavenly joy will be granted to you by day and by night" (Letter 8:1)

"If the soul is steadfast in obedience and attentiveness to the Holy Spirit, who pulls her towards repentance, the merciful Creator will have compassion on her struggles, which are fasting, vigils, reading the Scriptures, unceasing prayer, and service to all in purity of heart and simplicity of the spirit. If the soul is steadfast in these, our good Lord will look down upon her and deliver her from all temptations through His mercy and compassion, for He is the lover of mankind, and to Him is due all glory and honor, together with His good Father and the Holy Spirit both now and forever and unto the age of all ages. Amen."

Midnight  
praises

Find it in the PDF file, [click here](#)



[Click here](#) to pray together the hymn "Doxology for Pentecost".





## Prostration Prayer

Prostration Praises



First Prostration



Second Prostration



Third Prostration



Sermon about the Holy Prostration



Prayers for the Pentecost  
Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty



Prostration Prayers (PDF)





## **Prostration Prayer:**

The Prostration Prayer is a prayer full of depth and reverence where we are able to demonstrate our belief in the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. The Church arranged the Prostration Prayer, which consists of three separate prayers, with references from both the Old and New Testament and beautiful rites which allow us to distinguish the prayers from each other. During the conclusion of each of the prayers, we bow down on our knees and, in complete reverence, ask the Holy Spirit to intercede on our behalf.

On the Eve of the Sunday of Pentecost (starting at the ninth hour or at 3:00pm), the Prostration Prayer is said to commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples.

This prayer is composed of three Prostrations we offer to God: Reverence, Thanksgiving and Supplication. Through these prostrations, we imitate the angels as they pray "Holy Holy Holy" (Is 6:3, Rev 4:8).

In the nave of the Church, the first and second Prostrations are prayed at the second chorus (where Pascha is prayed) as a symbol of the law of Moses and the prophets while the third Prostration is prayed at the first chorus (in front of the altar, where deacons usually stand) as a symbol grace. The three Prostrations demonstrate that the grace was announced by the law, and that the law was completed by grace.

Moses received the commandments from God on Mount Sinai 50 days after Passover (the crossing of the red sea). The Church has constructed the readings of the Prostration Prayer and its rites to commemorate when Moses, the arch prophet, received the Ten Commandments. During this prayer, there is a specific rite that is performed. A large censor is filled with coal and placed in the center of the Church; the Church is then filled with incense.

This is a sign that God gave Moses the commandments on the 50<sup>th</sup> day following the offering of the Passover sacrifice during the sounds of lightning and thunder. The Mount Sinai was full of smoke as God descended fire on it, and its smoke was raised as the smoke of the furnace (Exodus 19:16-18). Similarly, when the Holy Spirit was given on the Pentecost following our Passover, a sudden sound of blowing wind came from heaven and filled the house in which they were staying. The tongues of fire then appeared and descended on each disciple and immediately, they were filled with the Holy Spirit.





## **Readings of the Prostration Prayer**

We pray 3 Prostrations and we read 3 readings during each one.

1) Prophecy.

2) The Pauline.

3) The Psalm and the Gospel.

- The three prophecies are from the book of Deuteronomy (chapters 5, 6, 16).
- The Pauline epistles of all 3 Prostrations are from the book of 1 Corinthians (chapters 12, 13, 14).
- The Gospels of the first and third Prostrations are from the Gospel of Saint John (chapters 17, 4) and the Gospel of the second Prostration is from the Gospel of Saint Luke (chapter 24).

The Church has prepared the Gospel of the third Prostration to be the Gospel of the Samaritan woman, which the Church prays for the third time within 100 days (since it has already been prayed during the fourth Sunday of the Great Lent and on the third Sunday of the Holy Fifties, and would be prayed during the third Prostration on the day of Pentecost). As we already explained in the Introduction of the third Sunday of the Holy Fifties (Sunday of the Living Water), each time this Gospel is being read from a different perspective related to that day. On the day of Pentecost, it is read both as a conclusion of the Holy Fifties and an introduction to the fast of the apostles, which will begin shortly after the Prostration Prayer. The fast of the apostles is considered to be a fast for the Holy Spirit and the services driven by His works. In the last verse, Christ establishes the right foundation for the spiritual prayer, saying: "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

The Gospel of the Samaritan woman resembles different levels within our relationship with Christ: being away from Christ, knowing Him during Baptism, having faith in Him, getting resurrected with Him, getting transformed from the life of sin to the life of service and preaching. The life of service and preaching is reached through repentance: "The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could





this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him" (John 4:28-30). Through the power of the Spirit of Resurrection and repentance, a repentant heart radiates light to attract all those who have drifted away from the fountain of living water and brings them back.

## The Paraclete

"Paraclete" is a Greek word, which, when directly translated to English, means "lawyer" or "counsellor". The reason why we use the Greek word is because there is nothing equivalent to it in English; within the context of the Greek language "Paraclete" is used to refer to a "loyal friend". "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:26)

The Holy Spirit has many characteristics! He is the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Wisdom. The main purpose of the Holy Spirit living in us is to grant us a life of holiness.

On the day of Pentecost, St. Peter delivered a sermon to a multitude of people. After his sermon (refer to Acts 2), 3000 people believed, were baptized and became the First Fruits of humanity. Since this day, we believe that the Spirit of God lives within us in a way that has never been achieved before. "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Is 11:9).

The symbols used in the Bible to describe the Holy spirit, help us understand the difficulty of holding onto the Holy Spirit:

1. The wind: The Spirit is like the wind, the source of life, present at all times and fills all.
2. The fire: Which cannot be held onto as it is living, free, always in motion, immeasurable and cannot be weighed nor contained.

## The Orthodox tradition teaches us two things about the Holy Spirit:

- The Spirit is a person of the Trinity and not just an energy or divine power.
- The Spirit is ever existing, one in essence with the other two persons of the Trinity (the Father and the Son).





## The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Tomorrow begins the fast of the apostles, a fast of service, in which the Gift of the Holy Spirit offers:

1. Sanctification: And for their sakes I sanctify Myself (John 17:19). The entire being, the time, the mind, the heart and place. It is sanctification by prayer.
2. Unity: As we pray in the liturgy "the oneness of heart that is of love, may it take root in us" (i.e. to be united together in love, in order to be united in our service).

and this is the unity with the Holy Bible.

3. Variation: The renewal, innovation, creativity, services, jobs, activities, but the Spirit is one because love varies in its works.





## How do we pray the Prostration Prayer together at home?

### 1 -The Psalms and Praises

The psalms of the sixth hour and until the compline hour
The Fourth Hos - Psalms 148, 149, 150
Psali for the Prostration
Sunday Psali
Sunday Theotokia
Who is likened unto You, O Lord among the gods
Conclusion of the Adam Theotokia (Your mercies O my God)

Prostration Prayers (PDF)



### 2-The First Prostration

<b>The Prophecy:</b> Deuteronomy 5:22-6:3
<b>The Pauline:</b> 1 Corinthians 12:28-13:12
The Trisagion
<b>The Psalm:</b> Psalms 97:7,8,1 <b>The Gospel:</b> John 17:1-26
The Exposition
The Gospel Response <a href="#">Click to Listen</a> <a href="#">EN</a>  <a href="#">AR</a> 
First Prostration Prayer (prayed while we are bowing down)





### 3-The Second Prostration

**The Prophecy:** Deuteronomy 6:17-25

**The Pauline:** 1 Corinthians 13:13-14:17

The Trisagion

**The Psalm:** Psalms 115:12-13      **The Gospel:** Luke 24:36-53

The Exposition

The Gospel Response      [Click to Listen](#) [EN](#)  [AR](#) 

Second Prostration Prayer (prayed while we are bowing down)

### 4-The Third Prostration

**The Prophecy:** Deuteronomy 16:1-18

**The Pauline:** 1 Corinthians 14:18-40

The Hymn of the Holy Spirit (Piepnevma) [Click to Listen](#) 

The Trisagion

**The Psalm:** Psalms 66:4;72:11      **The Gospel:** John 4:1-24

The Exposition

The Gospel Response      [Click to Listen](#) [EN](#)  [AR](#) 

Trisagion and 'Hail to you we ask you'

Doxologies for the Virgin and for the Apostles





Introduction to the Creed followed by the Creed
O God, have mercy upon us (Efnoti Nai Nan) we pray it with the priest
Third Prostration Prayer (prayed while we are bowing down)
The conclusion



**First Prostration response**

He ascended to the  
heaven of heavens  
Towards the east  
To send us the Paraclete  
The Spirit of Truth



**Second Prostration response**

The Lord came to  
Bethany  
With His holy disciples  
Raised His hands and  
blessed them  
And ascended to the  
heavens



**Third Prostration response**

The soul of the woman of  
Samaria  
Who found the Living  
Water  
Blesses you because  
The fountain of life is in  
You





## **Entrance of the Lord Christ into the Land of Egypt**

**(Pashons 24 – June 1)**

Rejoice and be glad, O Egypt: and all her borders: for unto you came the Lover of Mankind: who was before all ages

The Verses of Cymbals for the feast  
of the Entrance of the Lord Christ into the Land of Egypt

Sermon for the Feast

Feast Prayers





## **The Escape to Egypt**

"The burden against Egypt. Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst." (Is 19:1).

Isaiah the prophet exclaimed this joyful prophecy, which was fulfilled by the escape of the holy family to the land of Egypt. The Gospel of St. Matthew (Mat 2: 13-18) narrates the escape of Joseph the righteous, the virgin Saint Mary and our Lord Jesus, the newborn child, as refugees to Egypt. This escape was to avoid Herod the King from killing the child Jesus. This escape and return were what Matthew the evangelist mentions as a fulfilment of Hosea's prophecy: "And out of Egypt I called My son" (Hos 11:1 & Mat 2:15). This verse originally referred to the children of Israel, when God called them through Moses the Prophet to go out of the land of Egypt. However, St. Matthew saw that it also referred to the return of our Lord Jesus from Egypt, so He can start His messianic mission. The Coptic liturgy explains the meaning of the Isaiah's prophecy; St. Mary is the cloud that Christ rode on, who offered Him up for humanity.

## **A Jewish family lives in a Coptic land**

The Coptic Church is the only Church among the Churches of the world that celebrates this occasion. It is a minor feast of the Lord, and is considered a national feast. As they walked through the land, the Holy Family blessed Egypt from north to south and from east to west. Drawing the sign of a cross through their steps, while carrying their sufferings. They travelled quickly throughout Egypt because of their cross of suffering, constantly being expelled and left destitute as they travelled from city to city in Egypt.

It is as though Christ founded the Coptic Church before the start of His service in Judea. This is to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah: "In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border." (Is 19:19). The first Christian family in Egypt (if we may say so) was the holy family (Joseph the carpenter, Mary the Virgin and Christ Himself, and perhaps Salome with them). This family was the seed of the Coptic Church!





It is common that one quickly learns the language of his family, community, or nation for the first 5 years of his life. Thus, perhaps, in addition to His native language, the second language that Christ may have spoken during His childhood was the Ancient Egyptian Language (Coptic).

## **The character of the Coptic Church**

Our Coptic Orthodox Church has its own character and unique taste in her spirituality which combines depth, simplicity and authenticity. Since the time of the great evangelist saint Mark, God has granted her to lead the Christian world in faith, education, monasticism and liturgy. We find her traces and fingerprints imprinted in most Christian Churches in the world. Indeed, it is a beautiful Church. We love her, honor her, we wish to serve her in our lives. Her simple and silent love makes her a beautiful mother. Her personality is similar to that of St. Mary and St. Joseph. The Church is spiritual, choral, quiet, and made rich by Christ in meekness and chastity, similar to His mother. She is an ancient Church that has dignity, a spirit of pure sacrificial service, and wise counsel like Joseph the carpenter.



## **The Church Assembly**

She is a warm Church, with her people gathered around Christ in true reverence. The warmth of the infinite and mutual love that was between Christ's family was poured into the Church, that she may love the same way. She is one of the greatest liturgical Churches in the world, whose theology, praise, and teaching does not observe isolationist, competitive, or solitary thought. Her essence is rather one resembling a mature collective entity. Every one of her members humbly seeks to disappear in





Christ, so He can appear clearly in her. Her theology is established on the self-sacrifice founded on Christ's mind, "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men." (Philippians 2:5,7)

We are proud that we belong to this Church who is loyal to her nation, despite the oppression and innumerable persecutions she has suffered over the course of history. She always lived with the spirit of sacrificial love and loyalty to her country, bowing in love and pride in the midst of pain. Thus, she resembles her Master, taking on Christ's role in washing the feet of humanity, so they can be saved through the mighty power of her love and self-emptying humility. The Church has never been hostile to any person, but instead has served everyone, whoever they are. Her arms are open, hoping for salvation of everyone, never afraid to venture with love and acceptance, as long as her faith is clear, truly lived out, and never compromised.

Early  
Fathers

**Now I leave you beloved reader to enjoy what St. John Chrysostom wrote about the Church of Egypt:**

Come to the land of Egypt to see that it is better than paradise!

Principalities of angelic hosts are in human form,

Nations of martyrs and multitudes of consecrated virgins...

The tyranny of Satan has been destroyed and the kingdom of Christ shines in His splendor!

Egypt, the mother of poets, wise men and magicians, has fortified herself with the Cross!

She has not exclusively done these things (living in Christ) in cities, but in the wilderness, she has manifested them more than cities.

Wherever you go in this country, you will witness the camp of Christ, the royal herd and the state of the highest forces!

We do not find this among men only, but also among women...

They [women] practiced the seeking of wisdom, no less than men.





Unlike the Greeks and their philosophers, who arm themselves with shields and horses, they fight more fierce wars.

The sky with all its planets is not comparable to the splendor of Egypt's wilderness, that is full of the cells inhabited by the ascetics.

## **How do we pray the Feast of “Our Lord’s Entry into Egypt” at home?**

On this day, let us stand together to glorify the Holy Trinity, glorify the Mother of God and St. Joseph the carpenter. We Pray for Egypt. We Pray for the Coptic Orthodox Church. Let’s gather together as a family, just like the holy family who lived together in Egypt, and surely prayed and read from the Old Testament, prophecies and psalms. They were the fulfilment of these prophecies themselves.

**The order of our prayer today will be as follows:**

- |                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1- We pray any hourly prayer from the Agpeya (depending on the time of the gathering)                                                                    |
| 2- We read the Bible readings of this feast                                                                                                              |
| 3- We pray the doxology of the feast <a href="#">click to listen</a>  |
| 4- We venerate the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph the Carpenter (singing Hail to you O Mary)                                                                 |

**Download the PDF of the prayers**



It is, also, well-known that the diocese of Maady (under the auspices of its bishop, His Grace Bishop Daniel) has annually conducted many celebrations on the banks of the Nile river on this day. These celebrations include prayers, praises and edifying talks such as the “The Second Millennium Celebration,” which the whole world applauded and was a great model to the importance of the national and religious celebration of this feast.





The Church, in cooperation with the Egyptian government, is paying much care to the pathway that the Holy Family took during their flee to Egypt. The importance of this is to stay connected to our spiritual heritage and that these holy places may be spiritually edifying to the whole world.

**Here is a talk for His Grace Bishop Daniel of Maadi (During one of the celebrations emphasizing the importance of this project)**

