



In the name of The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God Amen.

**Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
St. Mary and St. Joseph
COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Deacon Meeting's Minutes (Sunday April 07-2013)

+ All deacons are encouraged to attend the deacons meeting; Deacons' meetings take place on the first Sunday of each month.

+ Church will announce Abouna Shenouda's arrival and welcoming ceremony times.

+ Abouna Shenouda Welcoming schedule (Deacon Service and the rites) have been sent to the deacons,

To download the welcoming presentation follow this link <http://stgeorgejc.org/multimedia/all-downloads-mainmenu-90/viewdownload/11-powerpoint-presentations/1123-the-rites-of-welcoming-a-new-priest> , a copy of the presentation is on the church's laptop.

+ There will be a sheet of paper (a list for the departed) at the back of the church for the people who would like to write the names of their beloved ones who departed, to be mentioned in the liturgy after the commemoration of saints. It is the responsibility of the Altar deacon leader to bring this list to the Altar before the commemoration of saints. Please do not bring the list too early or too late-after the commemoration of saints. The leader can bring it himself or send another deacon to bring it for him. Appropriate time is to get it at the begging of the commemoration of saints or during the litany of the oblations.

+ At the back of the church beside the departed paper, there is a prayers box. Around the time of reconciliation prayer the Altar deacon should pick up these prayers from the box and put them on the Altar.

+ We agreed that the deacons shouldn't open the prayer papers on the altar. Abouna will open them and if the paper is for a departed person, he will put it under the incense box, for other prayers Abouna will put it in a different box on the Altar. The altar deacon is responsible to take the departed names from under the incense box and write them on the "departed people sheet".

+ The Altar has to be clean, as an Altar deacon you have to organize and clean the Altar during and after the service. For example; try to move the books off the altar at the end of the Divine Liturgy. Use only one book per side of the Altar. Watching the kids inside the Altar is very important, if a child doesn't respect the Altar and does not obey advices and instructions of the leader then take him out.

+ It has been noticed that the deacons are mixing up the great lent weekend tunes and the great lent weekdays tune, please review and use the proper tunes. Deacons are encouraged to practice especially if you are the leader.

+ Altar deacon needs to be more alert; most deacons are focusing on the hymns only. Everything around the Altar is your responsibility (For example; closing the closet door after Abouna washes his hands, washing towels from time to time, folding towels properly, cleaning the censor area). Look around, notice and react accordingly.

+ Another example is to tidy up the books on the deacon benches outside the Altar, and cleaning the sanctuary after the service is also the deacon's responsibility.

+ Church is not trying to be picky but in the Bible you can see how much God cares for little details. (Building the tabernacle, building the temple, and even details within His creation), therefore we should also care about His Altar with much detail and precision. That shows the level of respect to God and His house.

+ There is another problem at communion time, Altar deacons have to help Abouna during communion time. At least 2 deacons (not including the deacon who is holding the candle\cross) have to stand in front of Abouna to line up the kids properly, bring them to Abouna carefully to take communion, organize the people, taking leffafas from people before taking the blood. Deacons have to be pro-active (do the action ahead of time before the person arrives to Abouna).

Here are some hints for Altar deacons during communion:

- Bring the table for the body
- Line up the kids\people
- Candle deacon watches the body and the blood.
- At least 2 deacons around Abouna to help him
- A deacon can announce quietly at the altar door for anyone who has not partaken of communion to proceed to partake of communion

+ Regarding the readings; there is a purpose why the church has arranged the readings and called it the liturgy of the word. During this part of the Divine Liturgy, the church teaches the congregation the Word of God. Deacons have a responsibility to read clearly with a loud and clear voice.

+ Regarding responses in the altar; it is the Altar group leader's responsibility to make sure that the younger deacons can respond properly with clear voice and in the proper tune. Deacons are urged to learn the hymns properly then say it (respect the hymn).

+ The deacon who is responsible for the overhead projector presentation should be trained well on how to use it. Don't display the seneksarian readings (the live of the saints book), Abouna sometimes cut it short.

+ Regarding Pascha Schedules (Passion Week); there will be 4 Paschas :

- Complete early morning Pascha (6:30 AM – 9:30 AM)
- Complete second morning Pascha (10:00 AM – 1:00 PM)
- 2 complete evening Paschas, one Arabic-English and one English. (Place TBD)



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Minutes for Deacons' Meeting on August 11, 2013

1. The schedule is no longer being followed even though nothing has changed. Amir sends an email to the group leader who has the responsibility of sending the rest of their group about the service.

Action Item: Abouna Shenouda to send an email list to every deacon encouraging them to check the schedule.

Action Item: Abouna Shenouda to send each group leader the contact info of their groups.

2. The readings are to be distributed to the members of the altar group. The Gospel is to be distributed to (a) Abouna if he is able to read it and (b) a senior deacon who is able to read it properly.

3. There is an issue with some groups having members who consistently cannot make it on Sunday.

Action Item: Each group leader is responsible for checking with their groups who wishes to remain in the group and who wishes to be removed.

4. There is also an issue with commitment for the Presentations and the kids not knowing what to do with it.

Action Item: Michael Boutros is responsible for organizing the Presentations schedule and for finding / training the kids who will be responsible for doing it.

5. For future emails regarding special events, Amir will make the email he sends more specific to ask who can lead outside, take care of the altar, etc.

6. There is a need for commitment during the week for the liturgies, especially for the new services during special times like the Fast of St. Mary.

Action Item: Michael Boutros and Amir to look at new methods of communicating with the deacons.

7. Abouna Youssef is stressing that it is up to the Lead Deacon of the altar group to be the main communicator with their group members.

8. The new Coptic Class curriculum is beginning in September and with the new schedule / organization there will be a weekly class for adults to learn the hymns of the church. Additionally, there will be another class for the deacons to coordinate their voices to learn how to sing like a choir.

Action Item: Abouna Shenouda will email the leaders of the St. Mary Revival Week a list of the hymns for St. Mary for the lead deacons to decide what will be said on what day.



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Minutes for Deacons Meeting - June 2, 2013

- The most important item we discussed last meeting was that whenever we decide on something in a meeting, only the deacons in the meeting apply it while the other deacons continue doing something different. This problem was addressed by sending the minutes to all deacons so that everyone is aware of what should be done.
- Unfortunately, Amir didn't receive many confirmations that people read the minutes, although some people may read the minutes and not replying that they read it.
- Abouna is thanking the deacons that the communion service has improved very much based on the decisions made in previous meetings.
- Although there are now usually two or three deacons standing with Abouna during communion, this is still not enough. The deacons standing must be very aware of everything that is going on and must proactively assist Abouna.
- The deacon's main duty in the church is to serve the Holy Altar in every single way possible. Chanting hymns and songs never meant to be the only service for deacons.

Notes on Holy Week:

- In general the Holy Week service was very good and Abouna is thanking the deacons for all their hard work in the downstairs and upstairs Pascha as well as Good Friday.
- There are small improvements to be made.
- Sometimes in the downstairs Pascha the assigned deacons would not arrive for their designated service and no one was there to cover for them.
- The church is happy to give the younger deacons a chance to say hymns and lead. However, there shouldn't be one single Pascha that has an overwhelming amount of younger deacons saying hymns / leading the chorus.
- One suggestion is to distribute the Evening Pascha leading task among many deacons. Meaning, one deacon leads the First Hour, another deacon leads the Third Hour, etc.
- It's nice to provide the younger deacons with a chance to say the Psalm in the long tune because usually after the deacon says it once he passes his breaking point and can say it many times.

- At the same time, we should not assign a young deacon this difficult hymn if he is not ready because this puts unfair burden on the child and also on the congregation who have to hear a young deacon say the hymn while struggling.
- It was very nice that a group of deacons says the big Holy Week hymns.

Notes on Feast of the Resurrection:

- The Resurrection Re-enactment should be said as a group because if there are three priests and three deacons saying it, then that is six different people saying one hymn in five minutes.
- For next year, the deacons should learn and say the Re-enactment hymn together in a group of two/three/four.
- Similarly, for the big Altar Responses like Is Pateer, the deacons should say it as a group as it sounds nicer and the group is stronger than the individual.
- One common problem for the deacons is that there are many, many hymns to review because there are many Feasts and events in a short period of time. One solution is to start a bit earlier.
- Another solution is to decide from now that every Easter the same three deacons will say the Re-enactment and those three deacons can meet earlier in the year to learn the hymn. This way they only need to meet once or twice before the Feast just to review the hymn, not learn it.

Notes on the Divine Liturgy:

- There should be only one deacon leading the Divine Liturgy from the beginning to the end. It's not necessary to give each deacon one hymn or response - the lead deacon should say all of it.
- This is especially important for things such as "Khen PiKhrastos" after the Fraction or the three final Amens before the confession. These should be said by the lead deacon.

Notes on Altar Service:

- Again, as stated in every deacons meeting, young deacons who do not know the responses should not say them. It ruins the spiritual atmosphere and is a distraction to the congregation.
- This is not a matter of sounding good. When a deacon does this, he breaks the continuity or spiritually of the liturgy for the congregation.
- Abouna is suggesting a system where the young deacons are tested to see what hymns they can say and then they are only allowed to say these hymns during the liturgy.
- There is a problem with the young deacons in the altar because if they say the responses, they say them wrong, but if they don't say anything, they may get upset. We also cannot remove them from the schedule completely because that will upset them. Therefore, we can put them in the altar but only let them respond if they know the hymn properly and have gone to hymns class.

- One issue is that there is no standard reference for the English altar responses. We need to decide on one set of English recordings for all the deacons to learn from. Abouna Abraam suggested that Albair from Mississauga has recently recorded the entire English Divine Liturgy. Abouna Shenouda will listen to these recordings and decide which standard the church will follow.
- The incense circuits should be with the cross only, not the cross and the bishara. Also, the deacon who is standing with Abouna during communion should have the candle, cross, and cloth for the Body, and a candle only for the blood.

Notes on Readings:

- The deacon who is reading must be chosen based on whether or not he can read. If a deacon cannot read the Word of God properly, he should not read until he has practiced and learned.
- One mispronounced word can change and ruin the entire meaning of a sentence.
- We should practice with the younger deacons how fast they should read, how far they should hold the microphone, etc.
- The current English gospel is not being read in the correct tune at all. The older deacons must sit and confirm the correct tone and then teach this to the younger deacons.
- For the time being, if the Gospel will not be read correctly in the English tune, it is better for it to be said without tune.
- The conclusion to the Pauline, Catholic Epistle, etc. should be read with the same strong and clear voice as the rest of the reading. It shouldn't be mumbled quickly after everything else is done.