

Sunday, September 16, 2012

Transformation (1)

While we are starting a new Coptic Year (1729 Martyrs), I would like to talk about renewal and transforming one's life to the better.

There are three questions that we will try to answer with the grace of God:

1 - What is the biblical foundation upon which we build the process of transformation?

2 - Is there a need for transformation?

3 - If there is a need for transformation, what are the tools that we can use to do so?

* **First:** There are many verses in the Bible that encourage us to be transformed:

+ "***I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.***" (John 10:10).

+ "***And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.***" (John 1:16).

+ "***They go from strength to strength ..***" (Ps. 84:7).

+ "***You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory***" (Psalm 73: 23-24).

+ "***But we all, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory...***" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

+ "***For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.***" (Romans 8:29).

+ "***Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.***" (Romans 12: 2)

Therefore, transformation is the goal of all spiritual practices. We fast to be transformed, we pray using Agpeya in order to be transformed, we regularly attend church meetings and liturgies to be transformed, we practice the sacrament of confession to be transformed, and we also serve in order to be transformed.

* **Second: The need for transformation:**

Transformation is essential in human life for the following reasons:

1 - The human life should be like **fresh running water**, sweet in its taste. But if the human life is inert like stagnant water, it would breed pests, bring disease, and smell bad. That is to say, spiritual stagnancy is a breeding environment for evil and the rotten smell of sin.

2 - As long as we are on earth, we are bound to change, but it's important to change to the better and in a controlled and thoughtful way. We shouldn't look behind us for time only moves forward so we ought to be "***Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead***" (Philippians 3:13)

3 - Transformation brings joy the heart for the inner soul cherishes everything new and rejoices in the renewal of her feelings. Here it appears to us that we need God who "***Makes all things new***" (Rev 5:21). God is the only one who man can taste everyday without being bored of Him, contrary to the worldly matters which bore man as soon as he reaches them.

4 - To change is an attempt to **improve our current state**, it is an acknowledgment that the current state is imperfect and needs improvement. This is an outlook that is characterized with humility, which is, after all, an honest and realistic outlook for the state of the human soul.

* **Third: Tools for Transformation:**

1 - Reading the **divine word of God** regularly.

- It renews the mind "***Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.***" (Romans 12:2)

- It strengthens the will, because when it enters the depth the heart, it unites with will and strengthens it.

- It brings life to the mortal souls "***the word of God is living and powerful...***" (Hebrews. 12:4), "***The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life***" (John 6:63), "***The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.***" (John 5:25)

- It illuminates the inner-soul

- It illuminates the path.

- It also rejoices the heart and fills it.

2 - Discovering the **divine love** that embraces human all the time...

This love, clearly manifests itself in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross for our sake and His endurance to the pain and insults because of his great love to mankind. Also, His care and forbearance to us, the undeserving, has surpassed all imagination. God's love and longsuffering is what changes us to the better. It transforms us from despair, sadness, loss, and servitude to hope. Joy, light, and freedom. We must give ourselves an opportunity to experience this love which changes everything.

3 - Humility:

Humility is one of the most important tools for change, without it man does not recognize his weakness so he forfeits the grace of God. Therefore, he [man] remains stagnant and stuck in his weakness, misery, spiritual destitution, blindness and nakedness (Revelations 3:17). The humble, however, is one who knows his true nature and asks the grace of God to support him. Thus, he would place his foot on the beginning of the right path to be transformed to the better.

God willing, we will resume our topic next article.

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