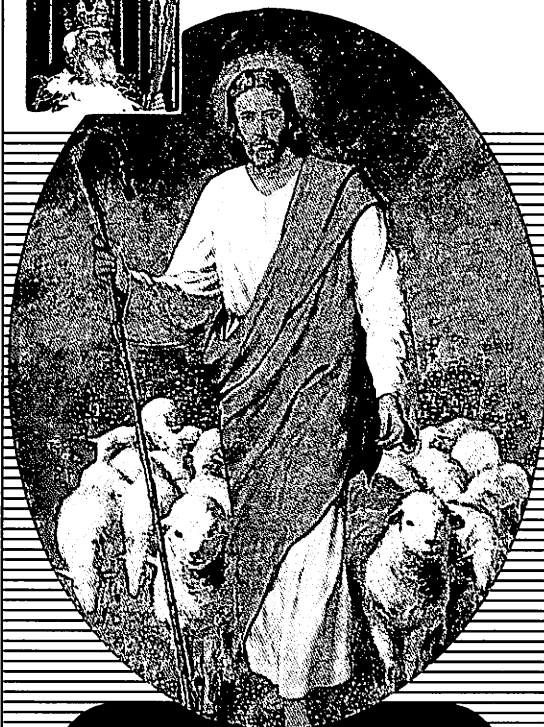


Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
 St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church
 Hasya Uapra
 Chicago



2100 W. Frontage Rd. • Palatine, IL. 60078

Volume 16 - NO. 1/2 Jan./Feb. 2001



"...thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

(Psalms 23:4)



A Candymaker's Witness

A candymaker in Indiana wanted to make a candy cane. He incorporated several symbols for the birth, ministry, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He began with a stick of pure white, hard candy. White to symbolize the Virgin Birth and sinless nature of Jesus, and hard, to symbolize the solid Rock, the foundation of the church, and firmness of the promises of God.

The candymaker made the candy in the form of a "J" to represent the precious name of Jesus who came to earth as our Savior. It could also represent the staff of the "Good Shepherd" with which He reaches down into the ditches of the world to lift out the fallen lambs who, like all sheep, have gone astray.



Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candymaker stained it with red stripes. He used three small stripes to show the stripes of the scourging Jesus received by which we are healed. The large red stripe was for the blood shed by Christ on the cross so that we could have the promise of eternal life.

Unfortunately, the candy became known as a Candy-cane - a meaningless decoration seen at Christmas time. But the real meaning is still there for those who "have eyes to see and ears to hear."

Let us pray that this symbol will be used to witness the wonder of Jesus and His great love that came down at Christmas and remains the ultimate and dominant force in the universe today.



H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III. PASTORAL VISIT

On Friday January 12, 2001, the boards of deacons of the three churches in the Chicago area and Milwaukee held a meeting at St. Mary's Church to prepare for the Papal visit of H.H. Pope Shenouda III. to Chicago.

The visit is expected to be in either May or August, 2001, according to El-Kiraza, issue #41, November 24, 2001

A LESSON IN REPENTANCE



■ A Fleeing Prophet

Nineveh was a great but sinful city, so God sent Jonah to warn them. However Jonah disobeyed God, and instead of heading East to Nineveh (Iraq), he boarded a ship and sailed West to Tarshish (Spain) trying to escape from God, thus facing God's wrath disregarding the salvation of a whole city. But God through His ample love and wisdom dealt with the matter.

■ Raging Wind

God sent a raging wind that resulted in great turbulence and the ship was about to sink. Jonah realized that he was the only one to blame for that because he was trying to run away from God. So he asked the passengers to throw him in the sea. The moment he was thrown in the sea, it became calm.

■ A Diligent Prayer

Now the Lord had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. Jonah prayed to the Lord, his God, from the belly of the fish saying that he was deeply sorry to have disobeyed, and begging for forgiveness and mercy. He ended his prayer by saying, "I shall sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. What I have promised I shall do. Salvation belongs to the Lord." (Jonah 2:9) And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out onto dry land.

■ A True Repentance

Thus Jonah went to Nineveh and warned it of destruction unless it would repent, and the people took the warning seriously and answered his call by turning from their evil way, offering a true penance fast and praying so God forgave them. When "God saw that they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which He had said He would do to them; and He did not do it" (Jonah 3: 10). In this respect Nineveh's fast is like paving the way and preparing us for the Great Lent.

Jonah represents you and me, and the people of Nineveh are collectively us, through true penance, fast, praying and confessing our sins, we can come back to our Heavenly Father so we will be blessed and become worthy recipients of His forgiveness.

The Great Fast

*It lasts for 55 days. This year it begins on Monday, February 19th, and lasts till the Resurrection Feast on Sunday April 15th. It consists of *"The Holy Forty days" which our Lord had fasted for us, preceded by a week of preparation, and followed by the "The Paschal Fast" for Christ's passion (8 days). This fast is preceded by:*

■ The Fast of the Ninevites

It lasts for 3 days, beginning a fortnight before the Great Fast, i.e. from Monday, February 5th, until Wednesday, February 7th.

To prepare us for Lent, our church reminds us of the people of Nineveh. They repented at the preaching of the reluctant prophet Jonah. But we have "The Lamb of God" who is greater than Jonah. He was not reluctant but He saved us on His own accord; "being in the very nature of God ... He humbled Himself and became obedient to death." (Phil. 2:6-8)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, "The Savior of the world" (John 4:42) is our sign as Jonah was for the Ninevites ... "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so "The Son of Man" will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matt. 12:40)

When Jonah came out of the whale's mouth, his message was borne to the people of Nineveh, and when Christ rose from the grave, the message of His Gospel was borne to the Gentiles as "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes". (Roman 1:16)

The Book of Jonah is essentially, the book of Evangelism, a foreshadowing of our Lord's great commission to go forward and preach the Gospel to everyone ...

* During "the Holy Forty days", a Divine Liturgy service will be held on every Wednesday from 1:00 a.m. to 3:50 p.m.



Baptism Sunday, will be on April 1st, parents who want to baptize their children on that day, are kindly requested to contact Abouna at least two weeks in advance.



The priest, the board of deacons, the servants and congregation offer their condolences to

H.H. Pope Shenouda III

for the passing away of his nephew the late **Mr. Adel Rophael**. May the Lord to repose his soul in the heavenly Jerusalem and console his family.

Our condolences for the passing away of the late **Mrs. Elaine Gober Mileka**; mother of **Dr. Tharwat Bassily** and grandmother of **Dr. Atef Maquar**. May the Lord repose her soul in the heavenly Jerusalem, and console her grieving family.



Congratulations To:

- ❖ **Ebab Morcus** and **Amal Wassef**.
 - ❖ **Rizk Bishara** and **Mary Hanna**.
 - ❖ **Remon Hosney** and **Mary Fakhry**.
- For becoming one in Christ. May the Lord bless their lives and make their marriage honorable and blameless.
- ❖ **Salem Twadrous** and **Evelyn Berty**.
- For their engagement. May the Lord crown their undertaking with joy and happiness.

Schedule of the Regular Services

Saturdays	
5:30 - 6:45 p.m.	Youths meeting (In English)
6:00 - 6:45 p.m.	Coptic hymns for teens
7:00 - 7:45 p.m.	Vespers (Evening prayers)
8:00 - 9:30 p.m.	Confession for adults
Sundays	
9:00 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Divine Liturgy Service
12:45 - 1:30 p.m.	Sunday School
1:15 - 2:00 p.m.	Coptic hymns for adults
1:15 - 2:00 p.m.	Bible Study for adults
2:00 - 3:15 p.m.	Sunday School Teachers meeting
Thursdays	
10:30 a.m. - Noon	Bible Study for women
Fridays	
7:30 - 9:00 p.m.	Youths meeting (etc)