

THE SLAVE GIRL AT PHILIPPI

(Acts 16:16-24)



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In Philippi lived a slave girl possessed with the spirit of Python (i.e. a pythoness). Python was the name of one of the Gods people worshipped. They believed that anyone possessed with the spirit of Python could foretell the future. All who wanted to know what is going to happen to them -good or bad - had to find someone possessed with the spirit of Python, and inquire of the God through that person. This poor girl who had that evil spirit (really a demon) within her had been enslaved by bad owners who used her to pretend to foretell the future, while they made money on her.

One day, this girl and her owners met Sts. Paul and Silas. The demon in her recognized who the apostles were [just as the demons recognized Jesus when they met Him when He was on earth. (Mark 5:1-16)]

Instantly the girl became very excited



and shouted at the apostles: *"These men came from God, they can tell us how we can be saved."* Her owners hurried her away lest these preachers would make her stop fortune telling. But it was no use, day after day the girl insisted upon following the apostles and shouting the same words.

Suddenly, one day St. Paul stopped. He turned around, and facing the girl, said to the demon inside her, *"In the name of Jesus ... come out!"* Instantly the look of madness left her face, and her eyes became bright with the light of reason, and she smiled with joy. When her owners saw that they could no longer make money on her, they were furious.

They dragged Sts. Paul and Silas to the court-house and laid charges against them. They won the case and got Sts. Paul and Silas put into prison.



AN INSIGHT



A CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT

Many people are receptive toward Christian principles as long as such principles cost them nothing. But the test of a Christian commitment often lies in what one is willing to sacrifice.

What are your Christian convictions cost you? ... St. Paul delivered the poor slave girl from demonic oppression. Her owners reacted to their loss, and Sts. Paul and Silas paid for her liberation by going to jail.

If there is some whistle-blowing need where you work or live, are you willing to pay the price to bring equity or justice to others who are suffering? ... Scriptures say: *"...brothers, comfort the faint-hearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all."* (1 Thess. 5:14)

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Congratulations

As we celebrate

H.H. Pope Shenouda III's Eightieth Birthday,
we beseech the Lord to grant him health,
and keep him as a shepherd, leader,
and teacher for many years to come.
Many Happy Returns of the Day.

CHURCH NEWS

On Wednesday, June 18th, during his visit to Egypt, the priest of the church was blessed by visiting H.H. Pope Shenouda III. During the visit Fr. Isaac briefed His Holiness about the church and expressed the need to establish a new building to meet the increasing congregation needs and to serve the youths on a wider scale. H.H. gave his blessings for the project and prayed for its success.

H.H. also approved the list of the new members of the church's Board of Deacons;

- Mr. Magdy Dous
- Mr. Alphonse Mikbail
- Mr. Michael Farag
- Dr. Mourid Salib
- Dr. Ashraf Iskandar
- Dr. Nadim Youssef

The church would like to thank the previous members of the board for their time and efforts in serving the church. May the Lord reward them with the heavenly recompense.

Thursday, August 7th, starts St. Mary's fast, which lasts for 15 days. During this period the church will hold daily evening services according to the following schedule:

- From Monday August 11th to Friday August 15th, (prayers and glorifications from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.)
- From Monday August 18th to Thursday August 21st (prayers, sermons, and glorifications from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.)
- Two early Devine Liturgy services will be held from 6:00 to 8:30 a.m.
 - 1- On Tuesday August 19th, to celebrate the transfiguration feast.
 - 2- On Friday August 22nd to celebrate St. Mary's feast.

St. Mary the Virgin in Church Doctrine

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

The Coptic Orthodox Church respects the Virgin Mary, and gives her the honor she deserves, without exaggeration or underestimation.

According to church doctrine, she is the "Mother of God, Theotokos." She is not just the "Mother of Jesus, Christotokos" as the Nestorians called her; those who were confronted by St. Cyril of Alexandria, and were excommunicated by the Ecumenical Council at Ephesus.

The church believes that the Holy Spirit sanctified the womb of St. Mary during her conception with Christ. Therefore the angel told her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke.1:35). The sanctification of her womb by the Holy Spirit makes her to conceive with this child, who will be born from her, without the corruption of the original sin. On the other hand, St Mary herself was conceived in her mother's womb, like all mankind. Thus, she said in her song of praise "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior" (Luke.1:47). This is the reason that our church does not accept the Catholic doctrine of "Immaculate Conception".

The church believes in the intercession of St. Mary, considering her intercession above that of the angels and archangels. This is because she is the Mother of God, the queen who is sitting at the right hand of the King.

The Bible calls her "Full of Grace," but those who underestimate her translated these words "highly favored one." All people received favor but she is full of grace. At the same time, being full of grace doesn't mean infallibility.

The church believes in the "ever-virginity of St. Mary." No one denies that doctrine except for the Protestant Church which believes that St. Mary gave birth to children after the birth of Christ.

The church also believes in the assumption of the body of St. Mary to the heaven. We celebrate this feast on the 16th of the Coptic month of Misra. (August 22nd)

Congratulations To:

- ❖ Ibab William and Christine Barckbousen.
 - ❖ Dr. Nader Tobia and Nabila Gobriel.
 - ❖ George Latif and Marie George.
 - ❖ Mina Zikri and Nefrette Halim.
- for becoming one in Christ. May the Lord bless their marriage and grant them happiness.
- ❖ Anwar Awad and Julia De Shbizary.
 - ❖ Hany Salama and Mary Asaad.
 - ❖ Ramez Milad and Sarah Selim.
 - ❖ Emil George and Marie Lutfi.
- for their engagement. May the Lord crown their undertaking with joy and happiness.
- ❖ Salem and Eva Tuadrous, for the baptism of their son Benjamin.
 - ❖ Dr. Anis and Mona Mikbail, for the birth of their son Joseph David.
 - ❖ Drs. Sameh and Rasba Youssef, for the birth of their daughter Hannab Mirabelle.
 - ❖ Ayman and Julie Rassem, for the birth of their daughter Anasimone.

May the Lord bless the newborn to grow in grace and stature before God and men.

CONDOLENCES TO:

- ❖ Mrs. Cathrene Sedrak for the passing away of her mother the late Mrs. Linda Zaki.
- ❖ Dr. Mourid Salib for the passing away of his mother the late Mrs. Mohga Salib.
- ❖ Mrs. Wedad Gouda for the passing away of her mother the late Mrs. Margaret Baladi.
- ❖ Mrs. Afaf Menias, and her brothers and sisters, for the passing away of their brother the late Mr. Adel Menias.
- ❖ Mrs. Fawzia Bactor for the passing away of her father the late Mr. Fawzi Ghaly.
- ❖ Tasoni Nadia Tanios for the passing away of her mother the late Mrs. Ayda Salib.
- ❖ Dr. Nadim Youssef for the passing away of his brother in law the late Mr. Farag Saleh.

May the Lord repose the souls of the deceased and console their grieving families.