

# Mahragan Alkeraza 2014



# BEMY Witness

English Edition SK



Be My Witness... Be My Witness..



**H.H. Pope Tawadros II**  
Pope of Alexandria &  
Patriarch of the See of St. Mark



**H.G. Bishop David**  
Bishop of Diocese of New York  
and New England



Be My Witness...



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## INTRODUCTION

### Mahragan Alkeraza 2014

As we celebrated the conclusion of last year's Mahragan with the distribution of the trophies for the first, second and third place winners, we were grateful for God's blessings for a successful 2013 Mahragan. His Holiness Pope Tawadros II said during the Awards Ceremony in Egypt, "I am happy to see the activities of the Youth Bishopric, I am glad that our beautiful Church that is 2000 years old is full of young youth and I am proud to see the creative work and achievements of the youth."

We were also blessed to see that the Churches in Upper Egypt participated despite the sad and cruel events their Churches were subjected to last year. Last year, in addition to the usual participation from Egypt and Sudan, we had a great worldwide participation from 192 Churches representing more than 20 countries and 8 languages.

The theme for Mahragan 2014 is **"You shall be witnesses to Me"** (Acts 1:8). This year, God is asking each one of us to be His witness by:

1. Shining like a star
2. Shining for my family
3. Shining for my Church
4. Shining for my community
5. Shining for my country



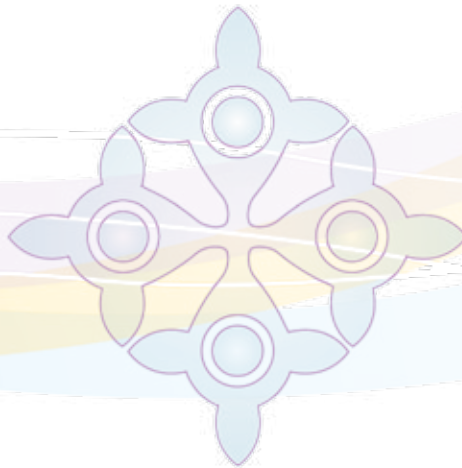
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We hope that all of you will participate in the Mahragan activities this year, and encourage everyone you know to join us in one of the greatest annual events, presented by our mother, the Coptic Orthodox Church.

May God bless Mahragan Alkeraza this year and the efforts of all the participants and coordinators, through the prayers of our beloved father Pope Tawadros II.

✠ My best wishes for a happy  
Festival  
✠ Bishop Mousa





## ***I AM A SHINING STAR***



**Osio:** Hi there, my dear friends, I'm so happy you could join me up here in the sky. My name is Osio, and I'm a small shining star. Do you see that big building over there in the shape of a big shining star? That's my school! Come with me and I'll show you around. Up here, we go to school so we can learn how to shine and give light to everyone around us. Look over there! Those are my two best friends, Astro and Gomy. Today is our first day of school and we're very excited! Here's Mr. Sun, our principal.

**Mr. Sun:** Hi everyone, I'd like to welcome all the new shining stars to our school. This year, I'm excited to announce that we will learn so much together and have a lot of fun. Let's all go to our classes.

*Osio and his friends headed to their class and were greeted by Mr. Moon.*

**Mr. Moon:** Hello class! I'd like to welcome all our new stars to our class. Together, we will learn how to make our light shine everywhere. Through our light, we can be useful and helpful to everyone around us.

**Astro:** Wow! Are we the only ones that could shine light on earth?

**Mr. Moon:** Actually, no! Here at school, we learn how to let our light shine to everyone on earth, but there are also people on earth that know how to shine their light through their actions. Those people are like stars on earth!







**Gomy:** Really? Can you tell us more about these people?

**Mr. Moon:** I'll tell you the story of the brightest star on earth. Her light was shining in everything she did, and she has a special place in everyone's heart.

### ***The Virgin Mary, a Girl in the Temple (1st of Bashans)***

The star that I'm talking about is the daughter of an old man called Joachim. Her mother's name was Anna.

Joachim and Anna lived in the city of Nazareth in Galilee. They loved God very

much and were always following His commandments. They didn't have any children because Anna was barren. For many years, they didn't stop praying and asking God to give them a child. They always prayed saying, "God please give us a child who can make You and us happy". They promised God that if He gave them a child, they would bring the child to the temple to be a servant of the Lord all the days of his or her life.



One time, Joachim spent 40 days in the desert praying, until one day, Archangel Gabriel appeared to him saying, "I am the angel Gabriel. God has sent me to tell you that your wife Anna will conceive and give birth to a girl that you will name 'Mary'. From her, the Saviour of the world will be born."

Joachim rejoiced and went back to his house and told Anna his wife everything the Archangel had told him. Anna also rejoiced because Archangel Gabriel had also appeared to her and had told her the same thing.



Anna gave birth to a girl that she called Mary. The Church celebrates the feast of the birth of St. Mary every year on the 1st of Bashans.

**Osio:** How was St. Mary a star?

**Mr. Moon:** Let me tell you the rest of the story.

Anna and Joachim taught St. Mary the love of God. When she was 3 years old, they kept the promise they had made to God. They took St. Mary to the temple where she would live and serve God.

St. Mary's love for God was increasing day after day. Everyone could see the love she had for God in everything she did in the temple. She was always praying and praising God, and did everything she was asked to do.

She used to also clean the temple, and do the jobs that no one else wanted to do. Although she was young, she used to fast, and help the poor.

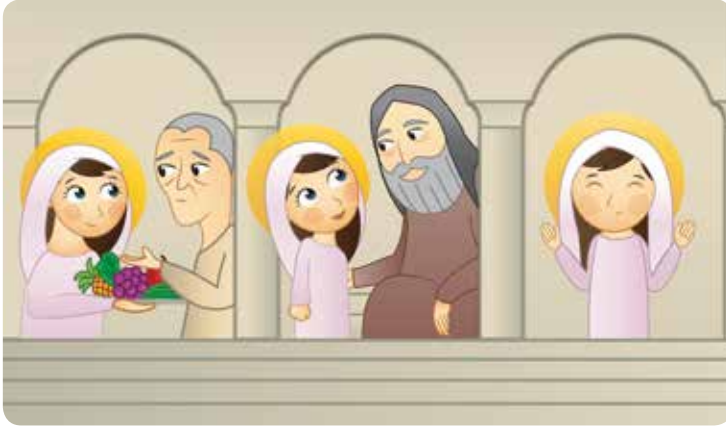
Because her heart was full of love for God, God chose her from among all the women to give birth to Jesus. She became "the Mother of God." Even today, everyone praises her as she said,

Memory Verse



**"For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed". Luke 1:48**

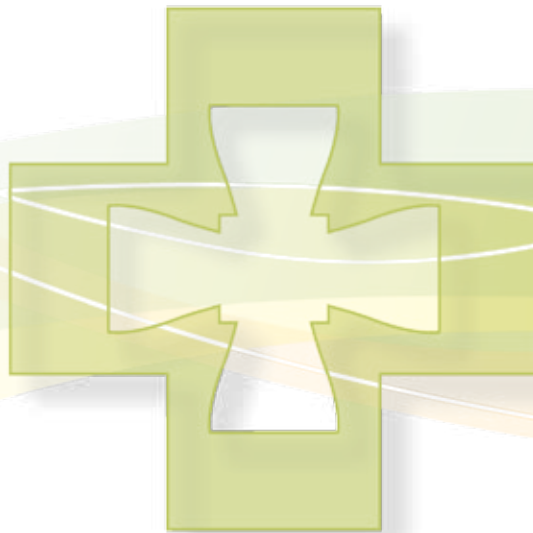




St. Mary lived like a shining star, shining her light to everyone around her. She loved God so much that it was clear to everyone in everything she did.

**Osio:** So if I listen and obey and do good things, I will shine brightly among all the other stars?

**Mr. Moon:** Exactly!



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# St. Mary Praying





Be My Witness...



## Joachim & Anna





## ***I WILL SHINE FOR MY FAMILY***

*The next day, when Osio and his friends went to school, Mr. Sun made a very important announcement.*

**Mr. Sun:** Today, we will have the first competition of this school year. Each competition will make your light shine brighter and as you complete each competition, you will receive a star in your report card. Your first competition is to decorate a classroom of your choice. Feel free to walk around the school to get some ideas to help you. The group with the best decorations will win. You have until the end of the day, and then I will announce the winner. You may begin now.



**Gomy:** Oh! I love decorating! This should be easy! Where should we start?

**Osio:** Let's go to the games room.

**Gomy:** No, the music room!

**Astro:** How about the arts room?

**Osio & Gomy:** Good idea, let's go!

*When they got to the arts room, they found lots of paint buckets with different colours. They also saw lots of paintings on the wall.*

**Osio:** Wow! These paintings are so beautiful! I think our arts teacher, Mr. Biko painted these.

**Gomy:** Astro, look at this painting! I think Mr. Biko is still working on it. It's drawn inside the shape of a star!



**Astro:** Oh, this gives me an idea. What if we jump in the paint buckets and use ourselves to make coloured stars around the room.

**Gomy:** Wow Astro! That's a great idea.

**Astro:** Here is a white board we can use.

**Gomy:** I will jump in the red paint bucket!

**Astro:** I will go in the blue one.

**Osio:** Okay! I will try this clear one.

*The three friends jumped in the paint buckets.*



**Astro:** Alright, now let's go and make stars on the board.

**Gomy:** Wow! The board looks beautiful!

**Osio:** Help! I'm stuck on the board! What was this transparent liquid?

**Gomy:** Uh-Oh! That wasn't paint. That was glue!

**Osio:** Oh no! Quickly, help me off the board.

*Astro and Gomy tried to help Osio, but couldn't get him off the board. Suddenly Mr. Biko came into the arts room.*

**Mr. Biko:** What is all this mess? Why is there paint everywhere? I hope you didn't ruin my paintings.

**Astro:** Don't worry Mr. Biko, we didn't. We just used your idea to decorate the whole room!

**Gomy:** Yeah, we loved the idea of drawing stars! But why did you use that shape?



**Mr. Biko:** Well, our job as stars is to shine our light to everyone on earth. Just as we shine here in the sky, there are people on earth that shine like stars to everyone around them because they help other people believe in God. In my painting, I chose one of them and drew him in a star because he was definitely a star in his family and in all the land of Egypt. I will tell you his story.

### ***St. Mark the Apostle the Preacher of Christianity in the Land of Egypt***

**Mr. Biko:** St. Mark lived with his father and his mother Mary in a city called Cyrene. His family was attacked by barbarians and they lost their property. That's why they had to move to Palestine to live with their relatives. This is where St. Mark met our Lord Jesus. He believed in the Lord Jesus and followed Him and became one of the 70 disciples chosen by Him. Mary, St. Mark's mother, believed also in Jesus and was one of the Marys who followed Jesus and served Him. His father also believed in the Lord Jesus through St. Mark.

**Osio:** How did St. Mark make his father believe in our Lord Jesus?

**Mr. Biko:** One day, when they were on the way to Jordan, St. Mark and his father were faced by two lions. The father realized that they were going to be eaten by the lions and asked his son to escape. St. Mark reassured his father and told him that the Lord Jesus in whom he believes will save them. He prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and asked Him to save them from the lions. He also asked Jesus to not let lions attack this place again.

**Gomy:** What happened after St. Mark's prayer?

**Mr. Biko:** The Lord listened to St. Mark's prayer and the two lions perished, and no lions attacked this desert again.







**Astro:** What did St. Mark's father do when he saw what happened?

**Mr. Biko:** Because of this miracle, St. Mark's father believed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Osio:** You're right, Mr. Biko! St. Mark was like a star in his family because he made his family believe.



**Mr. Biko:** You're right Osio! You know, St. Mark's house wasn't just a regular house. Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist in St. Mark's house. That's why we consider his house the "First Church". St. Mark was a star in his house because he knew how to fulfill the verse that says:

### Memory Verse



**"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15**

Actually, St. Mark wasn't only a star in his house but in the whole land of Egypt. He was the one who preached the Lord Jesus in Egypt and instituted the Church there. That's why we call him the "Preacher of Christianity in Egypt."

**Astro:** What a beautiful story!

Be My Witness... Be My Witness...



## St. Mark





Be My Witness...

## ***I WILL SHINE FOR MY CHURCH***

*The next day at school, Mr. Sun addressed the new stars.*

**Mr. Sun:** I would like to congratulate our new stars for winning the decoration competition yesterday. As you can all see, today they are shining even brighter. Our next competition is to explore our school teachings found in the library. Your task is to find out what the teachings are about, tell others about them and do as they say.

**All:** Awesome! Let's all go to the library!

*In the library, the stars began to go through the books. The first lesson they learned was that they were all made by a Creator and that no one can change them except Him. Suddenly, they heard a big explosion.*

**Gomy:** What's that noise?



**Osio:** I think it came from the room over there.

**Astro:** That's the lab. Let's go see!

**Osio:** Hey! It's our friend Abkarino!

**Abkarino:** Hi guys!

**Gomy:** Hi Abkarino. What are you doing? And what was that noise?

**Abkarino:** Oh, I was just testing my latest invention, but I haven't had much luck so far.

**Astro:** Wow, can we see?

**Abkarino:** Of course! Come here. Let me try my new invention on you.

**Astro:** On me? No way!



**Osio:** What are you trying to do exactly?

**Abkarino:** My invention is supposed to make the color of a star's head different than its body.

**Astro:** How come? The first lesson that we discovered today was that we were created with the hand of a Creator and no one can change us except Him. So you can't just change the way I look!

**Abkarino:** Yes it's possible! Don't you know what happened to the two mules?

**Gomy:** What mules? What are you talking about?

**Abkarino:** Let me tell you the story.

### ***The Bishop of Cyprus and his Miraculous Mules***

The Bishop of Cyprus St. Spyridon was a very simple and humble man. One day, he had to travel to a city called Nicea to attend a very important meeting. This meeting was regarding a man named Arius who said that our Lord Jesus was not God.

**Osio:** What? How can he say that?! Our Lord Jesus is the Creator of everything. That's why we praise Him saying:



Memory Verse



**"For You created all things." Revelation 4:11**



**Abkarino:** You are right, that's why the bishop of Cyprus wanted to attend the meeting.

The bishop of Cyprus put all what he needed for his trip on two mules, one was white and the other was black, and he began the journey with his disciple. On the way, they decided to spend the night in an inn to get some rest, so they put their mules in the inn's stable. After they rested for some time, he asked his disciple to bring the mules from the stable so they can continue their journey. The disciple went and found both mules with their heads cut off.

**Gomy:** How did this happen?

**Abkarino:** Well, there were some people who did not want the bishop to attend the meeting, so they cut off the heads of the two mules so that he would not be able to go.

**Osio:** Oh no! So the bishop didn't attend the meeting?

**Abkarino:** No, let me finish the story.

When the bishop heard what happened, he went with his disciple to the stable and told him to put the heads back on. Although it was dark, the disciple managed to put a head on each mule. The bishop then prayed on them and made the sign of the Cross and the mules got up. The bishop and his disciple were able to continue their trip and attend the meeting.



**All:** Wow! Truly, this is the power of the Cross!

**Abkarino:** Here's the best part. When they finally arrived to the meeting, the people who didn't want the bishop to attend were very surprised to see him, but they were even more surprised when they saw the mules.

**Gomy:** Why? What was wrong with the mules?

**Abkarino:** The white mule had a black head and the black mule had a white head! Just like what I wanted to do with you!





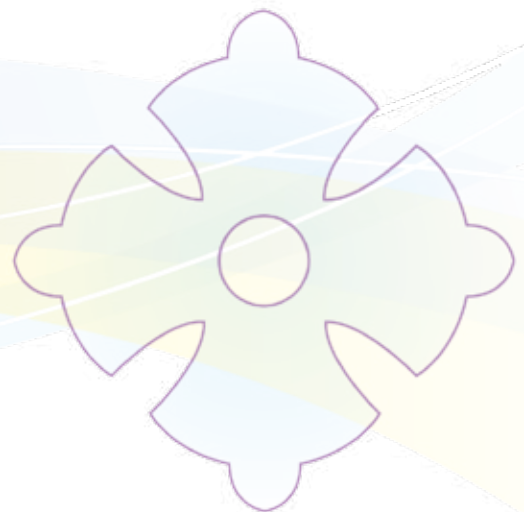
**All:** Oh! Now we understand!

**Astro:** But Abkarino, you have to be careful! What happened to the mules was a miracle. The mules were only changed by the power of God who created them.

**Abkarino:** Yes, you're right. The people who were saying that our Lord Jesus was not God were very upset when they saw the miracle because this miracle proved that Jesus was God the true Creator.

**Osio:** The bishop of Cyprus was a shining star in the Church. His story confirms the lesson we learned today, that we were made by the hand of the Creator.

**Abkarino:** Thanks guys for helping me realize that my invention is no good. I'm gonna try to invent something new that doesn't go against the teachings of the school.





## *I WILL SHINE FOR MY COMMUNITY*

*The next day, Mr. Sun announced that all the schools will participate in the next competition and that the competition would take place in the School of Planets. He announced that the first team to create something out of clay would win. The judge for this competition would be Mrs. Nany, the cloud.*

**Astro:** The other team is way bigger than ours. There is no way we're going to win!

**Osio:** No, don't worry! I'll make the clay and you guys make shapes!

**Mrs. Nany:** Alright teams. When I blow my whistle, you may begin.



*Mrs. Nany blew the whistle. While the two teams were busy with the competition, a member from the Planet team fell in the bucket of clay. His team took him out of the bucket and left him behind so they can continue with the competition.*

**Osio:** Poor guy! He doesn't look good at all!

**Astro:** It's none of our business! Let's focus so we can win.





*The Planet team member fell on the ground, but his team was too busy with the competition to help him.*

**Osio:** No guys! I feel so bad for him. I'll be right back.

*Osio went to help the Planet team member off the floor. He helped him wash off the clay that was on him.*

**Mrs. Nany:** You have a few minutes left. The Planet team is ahead. They're almost done! Come on Star team, you're falling behind!

**Gomy:** The other team is faster! Hurry up Astro! We are running out of time.

**Mrs. Nany:** Time's up! The Planet team wins! Let's all give them a round of applause.

**Astro & Gomy:** Aw man! We lost!

**Gomy:** There goes the trophy for our school!

**Astro:** Osio! Why did you leave us? Where did you go?

**Osio:** I went to help the Planet team member who fell. I felt so bad for him.

**Gomy:** Why would you help him? He's not even from our school!

**Osio:** So what? Our school teaches us to help everyone.

*As they talked, Mrs. Nany came and told them that the principal of the School of Planets wanted to meet with them.*

**Principal:** Hi guys. I just wanted to thank you all and especially Osio for what he did today. It really meant a lot and you represented your school very well. But Osio, what made you do this?

**Osio:** Well, our school teaches us to help everyone.

**Principal:** But you helped someone who's not from your school!

**Osio:** Help is for everyone who needs it. We have to be shining stars everywhere we go.

**Mrs. Nany:** Osio, you just reminded me of a story. It is about a person who was shining like a star everywhere she went.



**All:** Who is she?

**Mrs. Nany:** Let me tell you her story.

## ***St. Verena***

This story is about St. Verena, an Egyptian saint who was a star among people everywhere. Her name means “truth or truthful.” St. Verena was a shining star in her city Garagoss in Upper Egypt. As a child, she learned to love God, to pray every day and to help everyone in need. Her light spread to many places as she served in different countries. She went to Switzerland in Europe, where she used to sew clothes and sell them to support herself. She spoke to everyone about our Lord Jesus. Because of her love and service, everyone liked her and many believed in the Lord Jesus because of her preaching.

St. Verena used to help the sick and the needy. She taught people about hygiene and how to clean their houses and their clothes. When the governor of the city, who was not Christian, heard that she was Christian and that she was speaking to everyone about Jesus Christ, he put her in prison. There, she was praying continuously, trusting that God will not forsake her.

When the governor became very sick, he brought St. Verena out of prison and asked her to pray for him because he heard that when she prays for the sick, they are healed. She prayed for him and asked God to heal him, and he became well. The governor ordered the guards to release her from prison. She spent the rest of her life offering services to everyone until she went to heaven. We celebrate her feast on the 4th day of the Coptic month of Tout.





After she went to heaven, they built many Churches in her name. Her famous icon is a picture of her with a jar of water in one hand and a comb in the other hand. Throughout her life, she fulfilled the verse that said:

### Memory Verse



**"She has been a helper of many."**

**Romans 16:2**

**Gomy:** The story of St. Verena is truly a beautiful story. She was really a star everywhere she went. From her, we learn to serve and help everyone in need.

*When the stars went back to their school, Mr. Sun and Mr. Moon and all their friends greeted them at the door, cheering and clapping for them.*





Be My Witness...



## St. Verena



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## Helping the Poor





Be My Witness...

## ***I WILL SHINE FOR MY COUNTRY***

*Days went by and the stars became brighter and brighter. The last day of school finally arrived and the school was preparing for the final celebration to announce the winners.*

**Astro:** Guys! During the final celebration, our team has to present the history of our city. I don't know anything about it. That's gonna be hard.

**Gomy:** Yeah, where are we gonna get our information?

**Osio:** Let's ask our principal.

**Astro and Gomy:** Yes! Mr. Sun would know. Let's go!



*The stars went to Mr. Sun's office and asked him.*

**Mr. Sun:** So you want a story from the history of our city? I have a beautiful one. It actually happened to me! Let me tell you the story, I'm sure you'll like it.

### ***Joshua stopped the sun (Joshua 10)***

The star of our story today is Joshua, Moses' servant. God commanded Joshua to lead the people of Israel after Moses' death. At that time, he was 80 years old. God told him, "As I was with Moses, I will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua led the people of Israel and took them to the land of Canaan, the land that God had promised to give them. On his way to the Promised Land, Joshua fought many battles but God was with him as He promised and gave him victory in every war.



The king of Jerusalem heard about Joshua's victories. He also heard that the city of Gibeon made peace with Joshua. He was very scared, so he called the kings of the four cities around him to come and help him to fight the people of Gibeon.





The people of Gibeon asked Joshua to come quickly and help them in the war.

The Lord said to Joshua, "Do not fear them." Joshua went up with his men and fought the king of Jerusalem and those who were with him. Joshua and the Israelites defeated them and the Lord brought down large hailstones from heaven on the enemies.

When the sun started to go down towards the end of the day, Joshua spoke to the Lord and asked Him to perform a miracle so he can pursue the enemy and have complete victory. Joshua said to the sun, "Stand still over Gibeon; and Moon in the Valley of Aijalon." God answered Joshua's prayer and the sun stood still over Gibeon where the war was.

**Astro:** Wow! What an amazing miracle!

**Mr. Sun:** Yes, it was truly an amazing miracle that God did to answer Joshua's prayer. I remember that day very well. I stood still that whole day and didn't go away until Joshua and the Israelites had revenge on their enemies and saved the city of Gibeon.

**Osio:** Wow! God loved Joshua so much that he heard his prayer and saved the city from their enemies. Joshua is truly a star. When he felt that the people of Gibeon needed him to defend them, he did not delay to fight for them and bring them victory with the power of God and His help.

Memory Verse



**"Deliverance is of the Lord."**

**Proverbs 21:31**



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Activity

# Joshua Leads The People of Israel





## Books of the Old Testament

- |                  |                     |               |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Genesis       | 15. Ezra            | 29. Joel      |
| 2. Exodus        | 16. Nehemiah        | 30. Amos      |
| 3. Leviticus     | 17. Esther          | 31. Obadiah   |
| 4. Numbers       | 18. Job             | 32. Jonah     |
| 5. Deuteronomy   | 19. Psalm           | 33. Micah     |
| 6. Joshua        | 20. Proverbs        | 34. Nahum     |
| 7. Judges        | 21. Ecclesiastes    | 35. Habakkuk  |
| 8. Ruth          | 22. Song of Solomon | 36. Zephaniah |
| 9. 1 Samuel      | 23. Isaiah          | 37. Haggai    |
| 10. 2 Samuel     | 24. Jeremiah        | 38. Zechariah |
| 11. 1 Kings      | 25. Lamentations    | 39. Malachi   |
| 12. 2 Kings      | 26. Ezekiel         |               |
| 13. 1 Chronicles | 27. Daniel          |               |
| 14. 2 Chronicles | 28. Hosea           |               |

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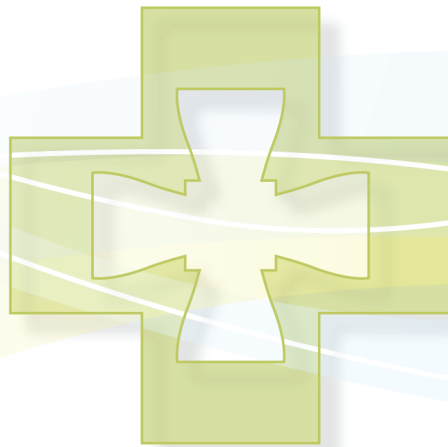
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*Be My Witness..*



**The Diocese of New York and New England, USA acknowledges the distinguished work of the dedicated servants of the Diocese of Mississauga, Vancouver and Western Canada for their tireless effort in translating the Mahrangan books from Arabic to English.**



**COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE**  
DIOCESE OF NEW YORK & NEW ENGLAND

