

Mahragan Alkeraza 2014

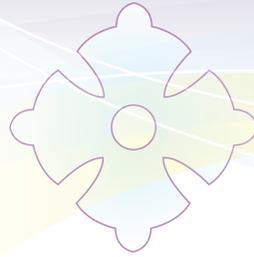


BEMY Witness

English Edition Gr 5-6



Be My Witness... Be My Witness..



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

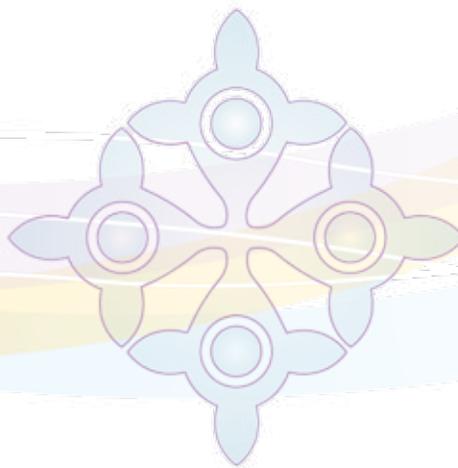


H.G. Bishop David
Bishop of Diocese of New York
and New England



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	4
I Am A Shining Star	6
I Will Shine For My Family	15
I Will Shine For My Church	18
I Will Shine For My Community	26
I Will Shine For My Country	31
Memorization	36





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



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



In a small village in the heart of Africa, people living in utmost poverty suffered from severe lack of food and shelter, along with many health and environmental issues. As an attempt to offer a helping hand, SALT, a non-profit organization specializing in humanitarian aid for third world countries around the world decided to take action. They organized a youth missionary trip, in which they sought volunteers to travel to Africa. After carefully reviewing the applicants, they chose a group of talented youth from all around the world all having very different strengths and interests.

After their plane landed at the airport in Africa, the group was greeted by a bus that would take them to SALT's head office. The narrow roads and heavy rain made the ride extremely difficult for the driver. The youths saw the worried look on the driver's face as he drove over the bumpy and crooked roads. Suddenly, they heard a loud thud, and the bus jerked into a stop. Worried and shocked, the driver and the youths got off the bus only to notice that one of the tires of the bus had completely burst and fallen off to the side of the road. No one could have helped but panic, as they looked at each other, frantically trying to find a solution. The chaos was interrupted when they heard a loud scream. "AHHH!"

The scream was followed by rushed footsteps. It was dark. The group had been captured. No one could see. No one could tell where they were heading. They were blindfolded and they couldn't say a word.

When they finally opened their eyes, they looked at each other only to find that they had been tied to trees, displayed in front of what seemed to be a native tribe. They could not understand what they were saying. The chief of the tribe walked towards one of the youth, Michael, and stared him in the eye, and mumbled





something to him. The bus driver, who was also tied to a tree, explained to the group that this man wanted the food that they had.

The driver explained to the chief of the tribe that they did not have any food but the chief did not believe him and insisted that his people search their luggage. When they did not find anything, the chief ordered his people to leave.

The youth were frightened. Were they going to stay like this for long? The driver spoke out again and asked the chief what it would take to let them go. The chief simply explained that his tribe

is living in starvation and that they need food. The driver made a deal with the chief that if the group helps him find food, the chief would let them go.

Sarah, one of the youth in the group, had a brilliant idea. She remembered that in the wilderness, wild honey is a prevalent source of food as wild honeybees put their hives in hollow trees and between rocks. The group was puzzled about how she knew this information. She simply explained that she had learned this from the story of St. John the Baptist in the Bible. The driver was not very familiar with the Bible and asked the group to explain the significance of this book. The group explained as follows:

The Holy Bible is a sacred book and the foundation of Christian religion, inspired by God Himself. It speaks about the story of the salvation of mankind and the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Word of God sent to all humanity, a true message of love as it proves that God takes care of His creation.





The Holy Bible contains a number of books written by different people. "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

The Holy Bible consists of Old Testament (39 books + 7 Deuterocanonical books) and New Testament (27 Books)

The contents of the Holy Bible can be divided as follows:

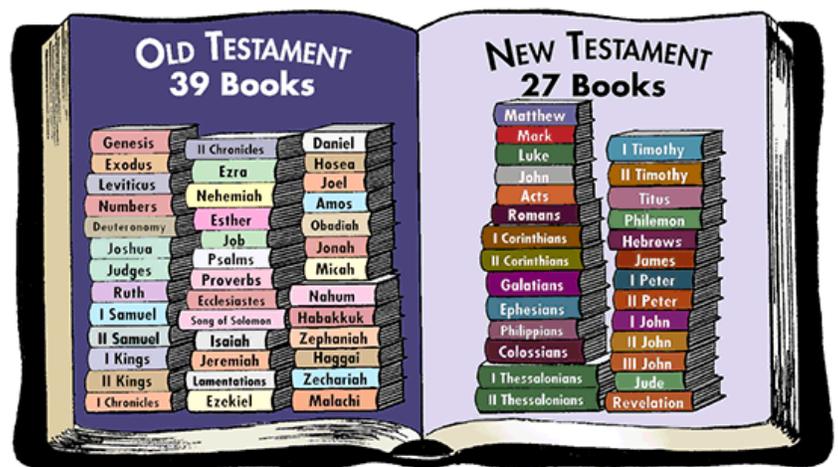
Old Testament

- **Books of Moses (5):** Genesis – Exodus – Leviticus – Numbers – Deuteronomy
- **Historical Books (12):** Joshua - Judges – Ruth – 1st Samuel – 2nd Samuel – 1st kings – 2nd Kings - 1st Chronicles – 2nd Chronicles – Ezra – Nehemiah - Esther
- **Poetry and wisdom books (5):** Job – Psalms – Proverbs – Ecclesiastes – Song of Solomon
- **Prophetic Books (5 Major):** Isaiah – Jeremiah – Lamentations – Ezekiel – Daniel
- **Prophetic Books (12 Minor):** Hosea – Joel – Amos – Obadiah – Jonah – Micah – Nahum – Habakkuk - Zephaniah – Haggai – Zacharias – Malachi
- **Deuterocanonical books (7):** Tobit – Judith - Wisdom of Solomon – Joshua the Son of Sirach – Baruch - 1st Maccabees - 2nd Maccabees and additional text in Esther and Daniel

New Testament

- **The Gospels (4):** Gospel of St. Matthew – Gospel of St. Mark – Gospel of St. Luke – Gospel of St. John
- The Book of Acts
- **The Epistles:** 14 Pauline Epistles (St. Paul's Epistles) and 7 Catholic Epistles
- **The Book of Revelation**

The driver was amazed to learn the richness of the Holy Bible, but he still wondered where Sarah had learned that wild honey was a source of food in the wilderness. So Sarah began to tell them the story of St. John the Baptist.





St. John the Baptist, the Forerunner and the Martyr

The Holy Bible describes St. John the Baptist in the Old Testament as “a voice of one crying in the wilderness” because his role was to prepare the way of the Lord by asking the people to repent.

During the reign of Herod king of Judea, there lived a priest named Zacharias who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife’s name was Elizabeth. They were both righteous in the sight of God. But they did not have a child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both very old.

While Zacharias was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot according to the custom of the priesthood to enter the holy place of the Lord and burn incense. Archangel Gabriel appeared to him and told him that his prayer has been heard and that Elizabeth will bear him a son. Although Elizabeth was old and barren, she would miraculously bear a child.

When archangel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in the altar, he told Zacharias that many will rejoice at the birth of his son. Zacharias did not believe archangel Gabriel and asked for a sign. The angel told him that he would be mute until the day these things take place since he did not believe God’s words.

When Zacharias came out of the holy place, he was not able to speak so the people realized that he had seen a vision. When his time of service was over, he went home. After some time, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant.





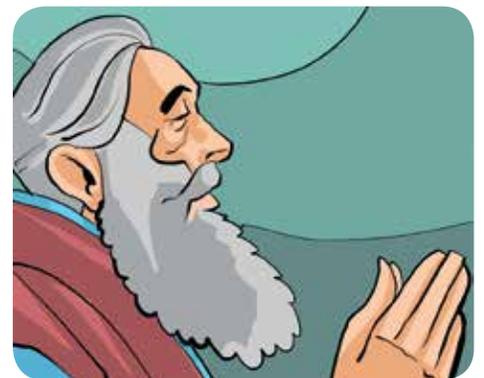
Archangel Gabriel also appeared to St. Mary to announce to her the birth of Jesus. After speaking with her, he told her that her relative Elizabeth was pregnant in her sixth month. St. Mary went to serve Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard St. Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. St. Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home.



When Elizabeth gave birth to her son as God promised, her neighbors and relatives rejoiced with her. The Church celebrates the birth of St. John the Baptist every year on the 30th of the Coptic month of Baounah.



On the eighth day, when they came to circumcise the child, they wanted to name him Zacharias after his father, but his mother replied, "No! He must be named John." So they asked Zacharias what he wanted to name his son. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote "his name is John". They were all amazed and immediately Zacharias' mouth was opened and he spoke, blessing God. Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied about our Lord Jesus and about his son John.



From a young age, St. John the Baptist lived in the wilderness of Judea. St. John wore clothing made from camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his diet consisted of locusts and wild honey. This was the honey Sarah was looking for.

St. John started his ministry a few months before our Lord Jesus Christ to prepare the way before the Lord. He asked the people to repent, to prepare the way of the Lord and to make His paths straight.

Many people thought that he was the promised Messiah, but he clarified this misconception when he talked about our Lord Jesus. He witnessed for Christ and said:



Memory Verse



"I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Luke 3:16



St. John was called the "Baptist" because he was baptizing people in the Jordan River. This was the baptism of repentance with water only and was a symbol of our Christian Baptism. The difference is St. John was baptizing with water only for repentance but our Christian Baptism is through water and Spirit for us to become children of God.

St. John the Baptist did not only baptize sinners, but he received the great honor of baptizing Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.



Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke very highly of him, saying, "I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist." Matthew 11:11

Memory Verse



"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" Matthew 3:16-17



King Herod Antipas arrested St. John and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife for St. John had been saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have her." Herodias left her husband Philip to marry his brother King Herod. This was against the Law of Moses, which is why St. John was opposing him. King Herod wanted to kill him but he was afraid of the people, because they considered St. John to be a prophet. Herod also feared St. John because he knew he was a righteous man and a saint.



On Herod's birthday, Herodias' daughter danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked, even up to half his kingdom. When the daughter asked her mother what she should request, she told her daughter to ask for the head of St. John the Baptist. So she went and said to the king: "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was distressed, but because of his oath made in front of his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted, and had St. John beheaded in the prison. His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. St. John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. The Church celebrates the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist on the 2nd day of the Coptic month of Tout.

While they were walking, Sarah found a number of trees. Within the cracks, she found a large amount of wild honey, which they collected and brought back to the chief. Thankfully, the chief of the tribe set the group free and thanked them for their help in solving their problem.





Birth of John

Word List

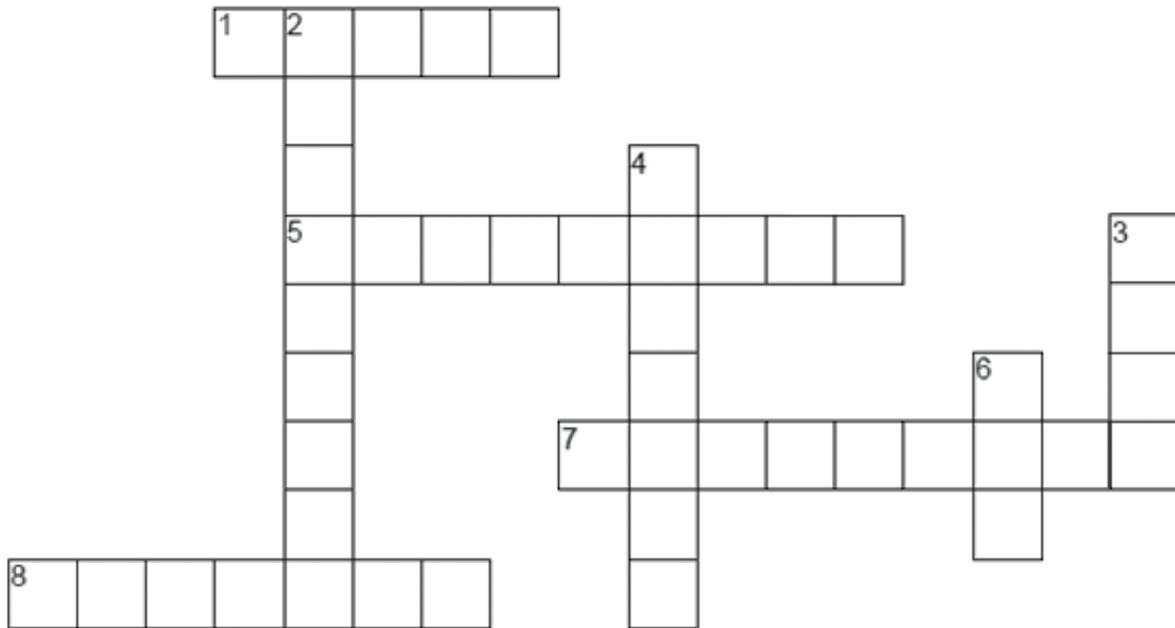
- AFRAID
- ANGEL
- BABY
- ELIZABETH
- GABRIEL
- GOD
- JOHN
- JOY
- PRAYER
- PRIEST
- SILENT
- SON
- SPEAK
- TABLET
- TEMPLE

Important words from the Bible story of John's birth are hidden in this word hunt. See how many you can find, reading forward and backward, up and down, and diagonally.





His Name Is John



ACROSS

- 1. Kind and gentle treatment of another person
- 5. The father of John the Baptist
- 7. To be forgiven of our sin
- 8. One who speaks for God

DOWN

- 2. The mother of John the Baptist
- 3. The one who prepared the way for Jesus
- 4. To make ready
- 6. To disobey God's law

ZACHARIAS	MERCY	SALVATION	PREPARE
ELIZABETH	SIN	JOHN	PROPHET



I WILL SHINE FOR MY FAMILY

While they were distributing the wild honey to the tribes' members, the group began discussing how they were going to get to SALT's head office. It was very dark outside and there was no way they were going to find their way. The chief of the tribe offered to let them stay in his house with his family until the next morning, an offer which they could not resist. The tribe was very welcoming to the group, especially after they learned how the group had helped them. As they finished eating dinner, the group was ready to get some rest after such a long day. They all headed to sleep, except Mariam, who instead, sat down with her notepad and pen, and began writing. The chief was confused and asked why she was not sleeping. Mariam explained how she was conducting research on family and its structure as well as the influence of the Christian family on society. She explained to the chief how his family demonstrated an ideal family environment that she had been researching for quite a while. Her research discussed two main points:

1. The family and its structure. The family starts with the sacred bond between a man and his wife that happen through the church prayers in the Sacrament of Matrimony. In this sacrament, the priest declares the formation of a new family. All the prayers during this sacrament indicate that the Christian family is a small Church of God.
2. The influence of the Christian family on the society, with an emphasis on the life of St. Macrina, the virgin and her positive influence on her brothers.





St. Macrina the Virgin

St. Macrina was born in Cappadocia in Palestine to Christian parents. She was the oldest sister, and had 5 brothers and 4 sisters. She received a pious Christian education from her parents who also taught her how to read and how to take care of the house duties. She was very dedicated in reading the Holy Bible, in particular the Psalms of David, the Wisdom of Solomon and Joshua the Son of Sirach. It was known about her that she would always say a psalm before and after doing anything. The psalms were always on her mind and she knew that the true meaning of prayer was to be always connected with God in constant dialogue.

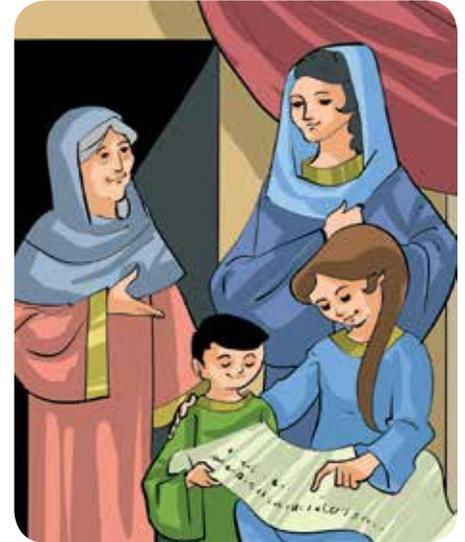
In order for this to happen, one must:

- Dedicate a time for prayer
- Understand and feel the words uttered in prayer
- Be confident that God always hears these prayers

Everybody around her knew St. Macrina for her loving heart. Although her father Basil died when she was still young, St. Macrina helped her mother, Emilia and her grandmother to take care of her siblings and raise them in the fear of God. Everyone called her “the angel of the family”. St. Macrina had a great influence on her brothers as she taught them how to pray and read the Holy Bible.

In fact, three of St. Macrina’s brothers became great bishops, St. Basil the Great, the bishop of Caesarea, St. Gregory the bishop of Nyssa and St. Peter the bishop of Sebaste.

- St. Basil the great, the older of the five brothers, was a shining star in the Church. He defended the true faith. This saint was greatly influenced by his father and what his sister St. Macrina had taught him. Because of his great knowledge, he became very well known and his popularity and praise of others began to affect him. It was his sister St. Macrina that taught him humility and encouraged him to desire the life of solitude.

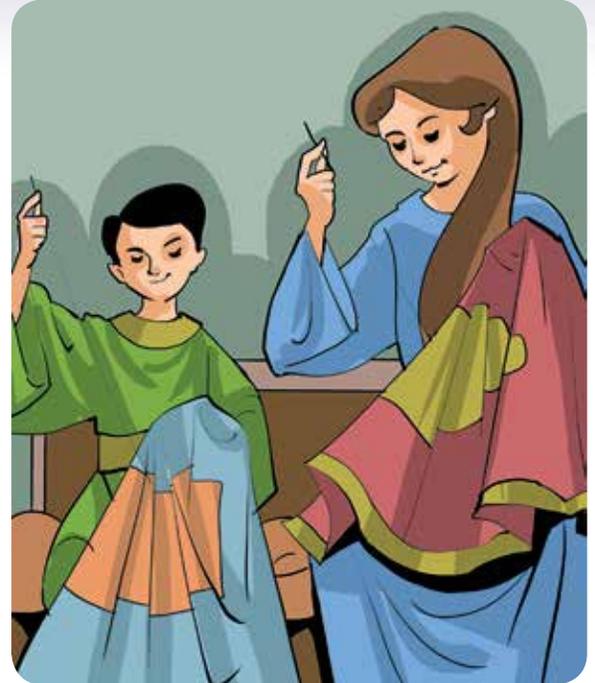




B. St. Peter was the youngest brother and always looked up to St. Macrina, who was like a mother to him. From a young age, he was very wise and handy. His brother St. Basil the great chose him to help a group of monks that he had gathered together. He defended the Christian faith and was ordained the Bishop of Sebaste.

C. St. Gregory was a very knowledgeable theologian who excelled in philosophy. Although everyone around him praised him, his sister St. Macrina was able to make him desire the monastic life. He loved his sister very much and used to call her “teacher”.

The care that St. Macrina had toward her brothers reaped forth good fruits. She witnessed for God in her family, influencing not only her brothers but her mother as well. St. Macrina lived an ascetic life in her house and was a living example of a life of prayer for her mother. She eventually moved to another house with her mother where a group of women joined them to live an ascetic and communal life. After the death of her mother, St. Macrina gave her house to the poor. She lived a saintly life, and departed in peace.





I WILL SHINE FOR MY CHURCH



In the morning, everyone was up and ready to go. Seeing how the chief was so interested in the teachings of the Bible, they were excited to speak to him about many other teachings of the Church. They decided to tell him about the seven sacraments as they are the pillars of the Church.

The Seven Sacraments

The Church, and all its members, are the body of the living Christ. The head of this body is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For this body to be built on the right foundation, our Lord Jesus Christ instituted seven Church sacraments.

A sacrament is an invisible grace that we receive through visible rites and prayers done by a priest using visible substances. During the prayers of the sacraments, the Holy Spirit comes down and sanctifies the people.

The Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism is a spiritual rebirth from water and Spirit done by immersion in water three times in the name of the Holy Trinity. It is the first of all sacraments and is considered the door through which the believer enters the Church. One must be baptized to receive the other six sacraments.

Through Baptism, the Holy Spirit restores the corrupted image that we inherited from Adam and Eve after the fall. Although we were separated from God, our Lord redeemed us by His death on the Cross. Baptism makes us worthy of this redemption by the renewal of our nature. Through Baptism, we become children of God. While our physical birth makes us children of Adam, Baptism makes us children of God. Finally, we become members of the body of Christ, and have the right to partake in the Holy Communion.





Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself instituted this sacrament when He was baptized in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. This was also confirmed after Jesus' resurrection when He said to His disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19. He also confirmed that this sacrament is essential for salvation when He said:

Memory Verse



"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." John 3:5

The Sacrament of Myron

This sacrament is also called the Sacrament of Confirmation or Holy Anointment. The word Myron is a Greek word, which means "ointment" or "fragrant perfume". The baptized person receives it immediately after baptism, by being anointed 36 times with the Holy Myron oil over the entire body (all the senses, heart, back, joints of the arms and legs)

The first group of anointments (12):

- 1 on top of the head to sanctify our thoughts.
- 2 on the nostrils, 1 on the mouth, 2 on the ears and 2 on the eyes to sanctify our senses.





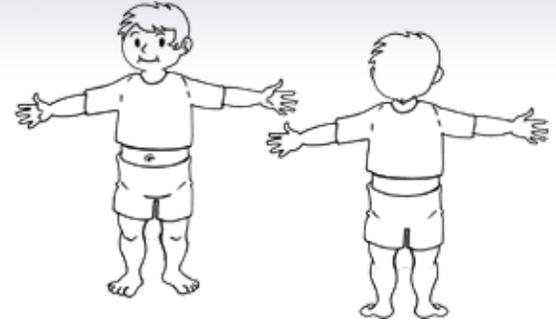
- 1 on the heart and 1 on the navel to sanctify our emotions.
- 1 on the back and 1 on the lower back to sanctify our will.

The second group of anointments (12):

- On the joints of the arms to sanctify our deeds.

The third group of anointments (12):

- On the joints of the legs to sanctify our way and our steps.



Through these anointments, the believer becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit dwells in him, sanctifies him and consecrates him to God.

The Holy Spirit dwells in us

The dwelling of the Holy Spirit enlightens us. "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you." 1 John 2:27

The Holy Spirit sanctifies us

When the priest anoints us with the Holy Myron, all our senses, our emotions, our will, our thoughts, and our deeds are sanctified.

The Holy Spirit consecrates us for God

We belong to God. When the vessels of the altar are anointed with the Holy Myron, they become consecrated for the altar and cannot be used for any other purpose other than the Body and the Blood of Christ. Therefore, when we become anointed with the Holy Myron, we become consecrated for God, and God only.

The Sacrament of Repentance and Confession

Through this sacrament, we reconcile with God again as we confess all our sins to God in the presence of the priest. The Sacrament of Repentance and Confession is considered essential for our salvation. Our Lord Jesus instituted this sacrament after His resurrection, when He appeared to His disciples and told them:





“As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’” John 20:21-23. In the Sacrament of Repentance and Confession, the Holy Spirit:

- Convicts us of our sins. When we sin, we lose our inner peace.
- Pushes us to confess to regain our peace
- Encourages us to reveal all our sins during confession and bestows upon the priest the wisdom to guide us.



After the priest prays the Absolution, the Holy Spirit takes all our sins and puts them on our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb who carried the sins of the whole world. Through Jesus’ bloodshed on the Cross we obtain forgiveness of our sins.

Memory Verse



“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

The Sacrament of the Eucharist

This sacrament is also called the Sacrament of Thanksgiving or the Holy Communion. It is the Holy Sacrament through which the believer partakes of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament on Covenant Thursday when He was with His disciples in the Upper Room, at St. Mark’s house.





Memory Verse



“Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Matthew 26:26-28

The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist:

- Makes us abide in Christ
- Gives us the promise of eternal life
- Strengthens and heals our soul, body and spirit
- Grants us salvation and forgiveness of sins

In this sacrament, the Holy Spirit descends during the Holy Liturgy on the bread and wine and transforms them into the Body and Blood of Christ. The Holy Spirit also descends on the believers to purify them, cleanse them and prepare them to receive the Holy Communion..



These four sacraments: Baptism, Myron, Repentance and Confession and the Eucharist are all essential for the salvation of the believer.

The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

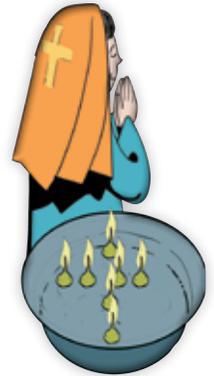
The early church performed this sacrament by putting oil in a lamp from which hung seven other lamps. Each lamp was lit at the beginning of every prayer. This rite still exists, however, the seven lamps were replaced by seven wicks, made from cotton wool, placed in a plate of oil in the shape of the cross. A wick is lit at the beginning of each prayer.

After the seven prayers, the Holy Spirit dwells and sanctifies the oil to heal the body, the soul and the spirit. For the sick believer to benefit from this sacrament, he must confess and receive the Holy Communion afterwards.



The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick does not prevent the sick from going to the doctor. The doctor treats but God is the one who heals through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament in the New Testament when He said to His disciples: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers" (Matthew 10:8). St. Mark also explained that the disciples practiced this sacrament when he said: "They anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them" (Mark 6:13). St. James also asked the sick to call the priests when he said:



Memory Verse



"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." James 5:14-15

The Sacrament of the Holy Matrimony

In this sacrament, the priest prays for the unity of the man and his wife in a holy union, through the action of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord Jesus said:

Memory Verse



"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." Matthew 19:5-6

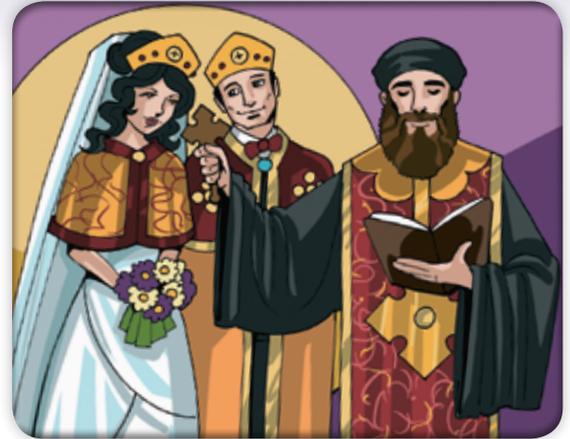


In this sacrament, the Holy Spirit descends upon the couple and makes them one body. They are no longer two. The priest places the crowns on their heads and makes the sign of the cross on them three times saying:

“Crown them with glory, O Father, Amen”
“Bless them, O Only Begotten Son, Amen”
“Sanctify them, O Holy Spirit, Amen”

Through these three supplications the Holy Spirit descends on the couple, blesses their wedding and unites them in one heart and body so that their house may become a Church for God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ blessed this sacrament when He attended the wedding of Cana of Galilee.



The Sacrament of Priesthood

The Sacrament of Priesthood is a holy sacrament through which the bishop lays his hands on the head of the selected candidate during the Ordination Liturgy, so that the Holy Spirit can descend on him and grant him one of the priestly ranks. He is then given the authority to absolve, to bind, to teach, and to mediate. Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament when He chose the twelve disciples, and consecrated them for His ministry. “He called His disciples to Himself, and from them He chose twelve whom He named apostles” (Luke 6:13). The priest also has the authority to oversee the Church and administer the other sacraments.



Memory Verse



“Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 18:18

Memory Verse



“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:19-20

As the youth ended their discussion with the Chief, he was amazed by the richness of the Orthodox Church. He was also very pleased with the youth for their willingness to witness for Christ and to tell everyone about their faith and their Church.





I WILL SHINE FOR MY COMMUNITY



After they finished telling the Chief about the sacraments of the Church, the youth and their driver headed back to the place where they had left their bus. The Chief was happy to help them navigate through the forest but as they arrived, all they found were broken pieces of the bus on the side of the road. What happened to the bus? How could a whole bus disappear? The youth panicked. This trip couldn't get more difficult. As they sat on the side of the road wondering what they were going to do, Michael had a brilliant idea. He

suggested that they follow the tire marks on the road, which might lead them to the bus. The group agreed and they began their journey.

Hours later, the chief, who was their walking guide, stopped suddenly and refused to continue. He explained that if they continue any longer, they would be trespassing another tribe's land, a tribe that has had many problems in the past with the chief's tribe. Knowing that they would not allow any foreigner in their land, the chief warned the group and refused to let them go through. He suggested that they find another way to go to SALT's head office.



But Michael was not convinced! He knew that this bus belonged to them and that it was their right to have it back. He explained that there is always a correct way of restoring one's right, just like in the story of the daughters of Zelophehad in the Book of Numbers.



The Daughters of Zelophehad ***(Numbers 27)***



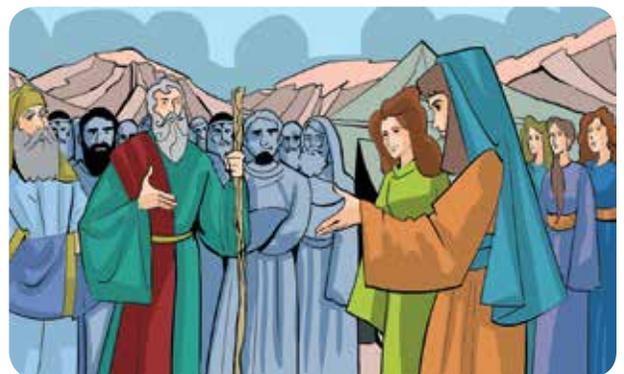
After the people of Israel departed from Egypt they wandered in the desert for 40 years before they reached the Promised Land. God asked Moses to divide the Promised Land among the 12 tribes of Israel according to their numbers.

There was a man named Zelophehad from the tribe of Manasseh. This man did not have any sons, but had 5 daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. Zelophehad died before the Promised Land was divided. During that time,

a woman only inherited land through her husband or through her father if he was still alive. Therefore, Zelophehad and his family were not accounted for and the daughters of Zelophehad did not have any inheritance in the Promised Land.

The daughters of Zelophehad were very brave. They did not merely sit around and weep, mourning the loss of their inheritance. Instead, they were full of hope and had faith that they will have an inheritance like the rest of the Israelites. They decided to go and ask for their rights. They went and stood before Moses the Prophet, Eleazar the Priest, the elders and the entire congregation and raised their complaint in humility and modesty.

They spoke in front of the people saying, "Our father died in the wilderness, not having a son. Why should he not have an inheritance like all the men of his tribe?" They defended their father, assuring the people that their father was not in the company of those who gathered together against the Lord but had died like any man of Israel. They asked, "Why





should his name be removed from among the heirs of the Promised Land?"

The daughters had faith in God's promise and trusted Him. Their request showed their courage and bravery, as it was not according to the custom and the Law at that time. Since this request had never been brought up before, Moses went and asked God. Moses and the entire congregation were amazed by God's answer.



Memory Verse

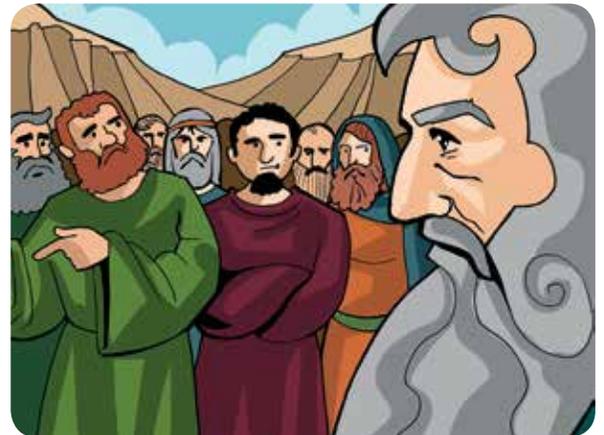


"The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father's brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them." Numbers 27:7

Because of the daughters' request, God gave the Israelites the Law of "inheritance", which states that a son should inherit from his father, but if a man has no sons, then his daughters would inherit in his name. If a man has no children, then his brother or closest relative would inherit.

The daughters of Zelophehad caused a change in the Law, the customs and traditions, all because they stood for their right, and made the request rightfully:

1. They identified the problem and the person in charge
2. They summoned their courage and confidence to ask for their right.
3. They were persistent and determined. "They stood before Moses, before Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders and all the congregation, by the doorway of the tabernacle of meeting."



4. They chose their words wisely. Their words were concise, organized and convincing. This is why God witnessed for them, saying, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right."
5. They asked a question, "Why should the name of our father be removed from among his family because he had no son?"
6. They gave their request briefly and politely, "Give us a possession among our father's brothers."

The daughters of Zelophehad had to also take responsibility of their rights. After the decision was made, the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, the son of Joseph, came near and spoke before Moses and before the elders. They explained that since the Lord commanded to give the daughters of Zelophehad the inheritance of their father in the Promised Land, that the daughters must marry men from their own family or their own tribe. They explained that they cannot marry men from a different tribe because if they do, their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they married.

Moses then commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the Lord, explaining that each daughter can marry whomever she wants, and will not be forced to marry anyone in particular. However, in order to keep her inheritance, any daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe shall be the wife of one in that tribe. Thus no inheritance shall change hands from one tribe to another, but every tribe of the children of Israel shall keep its own inheritance.

The daughters fulfilled their responsibility and were married to the sons of their father's brothers so that their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father's family.

After hearing the story, the group summoned their courage together with the Chief, and confidently went to talk to the chief of the other tribe about the bus. They explained that the bus belonged to them, and that it is their right to have it back. The chief of the other tribe agreed to give them their bus.

The driver fixed the bus, and they finally began their journey to SALT's head office, hoping that they would not run into any other obstacles. They promised the Chief that they would drop him off at his home on their way.



Activity

Zelophehad's Daughters

Use the key match the correct symbol to the corresponding letter to discover the names of Zelophehad's five daughters

KEY:	
N = ÷	S = 8
A = #	O = π
C = ○	R = □
H = ~	T = z
I = □	Z = N
G = †	
L = P	
M = ©	

Daughter 1 (top left): © # ~ P # ~
 Daughter 2 (top right): ÷ π # ~
 Daughter 3 (middle left): ~ π † P # ~
 Daughter 4 (middle right): © □ P ○ # ~
 Daughter 5 (bottom): z □ □ N # ~



I WILL SHINE FOR MY COUNTRY

On their way to the Chief's house, the Chief began asking the group about their heritage and homeland. He was very impressed with their knowledge of the Church's faith and tradition and could not help but wonder where they had learned all this information. The group began to tell the Chief about Egypt. They explained that there were many throughout the history of their country who, through their love for Egypt, contributed so much to the heritage and identity of the Coptic Orthodox Church, among whom was St. Habib Girgis.

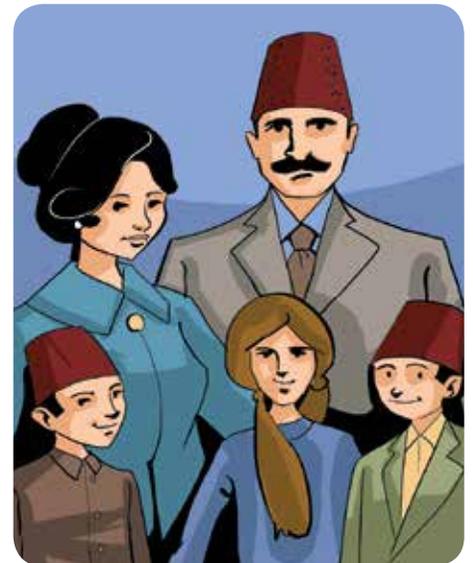
St. Archdeacon Habib Girgis (the leader, teacher, patriot and saint)

St. Habib Girgis was born in Cairo in the year 1876 from a blessed pious family. His parents were from Upper Egypt. He had an older sister and a younger brother. After his father died, his mother raised him and taught him to love God and to follow His commandments.

He received his education at the Great Coptic School in Azbakia. He was chosen to be the personal deacon for Pope Cyril V because of his knowledge of the Church's rites and his spirituality. When he was a high school student, he was ordained a deacon and later, Pope Cyril V ordained him an archdeacon and he became his personal disciple.

The Coptic Church's Holy Synod recognized the sainthood of archdeacon Habib Girgis on 20 June 2013. Once a person is recognized as a saint, the Church holds a feast to commemorate him, displays his icons around the Church and builds altars in the saint's name.

St. Habib Girgis is considered a modern-day saint. Saints are not just from the old days. God has saints that witness for Him in every generation. Holiness is for everyone:





Memory Verse



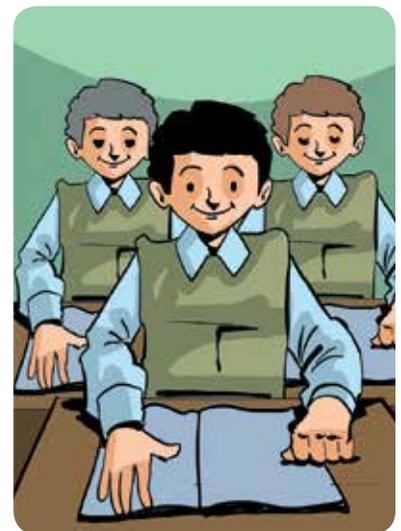
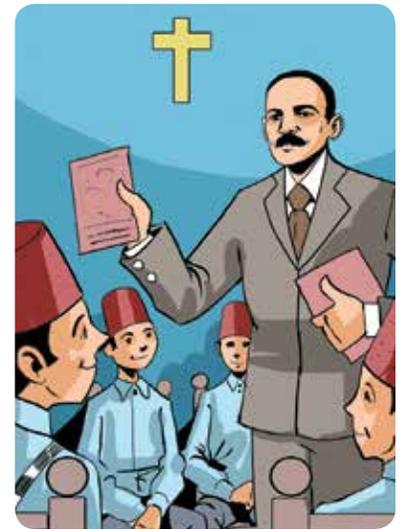
“Be holy, for I am holy.” 1 Peter 1:16

St. Habib Girgis was a leader because he instituted Sunday School. At first, he setup a number of preaching and teaching organizations for adults. But he felt that he needed to pay special attention to the younger generations to have a true revival in the Coptic Church, so he began to formulate what would later become known as Sunday School. He gave special attention to teaching the kids using innovative methods, incorporating colouring pictures for the younger kids, memory verses, summarized lessons and prizes for correctly answering questions.

In the year 1900, when he was only 24 years old, he started to teach the first group of kids at the Church in El-Fagala. He was the leader of the Sunday School service until it spread throughout Egypt. By the time he passed away in 1951, the number of kids regularly attending Sunday School had reached 350,000 under the care of 7700 servants. Thanks to St. Habib Girgis, children everywhere now have a chance to learn about the Christian faith in Sunday School.

St. Habib Girgis was also one of the first students to attend the Theological College which was instituted to teach the Christian faith to leaders and teachers in the Coptic Church. In his final year at the college, he was asked to teach theology because of his advanced standing and brilliant performance. Despite his young age, everyone loved and respected him. He dedicated a lot of time and effort to the development of the college.

St. Habib Girgis also had an important role in establishing the teaching of religion to children in government schools. He put together a strong curriculum that was used in schools throughout Egypt.





His love for his country was clear in everything he did. He believed strongly in the unity between Copts and Muslims in Egypt and always thought of practical ways to support the unity of the nation. He created a number of charitable organizations that gave freely to the poor in the community without differentiating between Copts and Muslims. He felt that the unity was natural because Copts were raised to love their country and their brothers regardless of their religion. He believed that this unity had to be strengthened through:

1. Exchanging visits between friends and family during both Coptic and Muslim religious feasts.
2. Stressing the importance of this unity in the teachings and sermons of the priests and preachers.
3. Implementing the spirit of national unity in schools.
4. Instituting a committee to continuously defend this unity.



St. Habib Girgis loved Egypt so much that he wrote a poem titled "God bless Egypt". He fulfilled the verses that said:

Memory Verse



"Whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:19

St. Habib Girgis was a loving person, loyal not only to the Church but also to his country. After a life full of spiritual struggle and continuous giving to the Church and to his country, he departed to heaven on 21 August 1951 (Eve of St. Mary's feast) at the age of 75 years.

Finally, the group ended the discussion with a very important point. The most important thing that they could do for their homeland, Egypt, is to pray for it as the Church teaches.

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



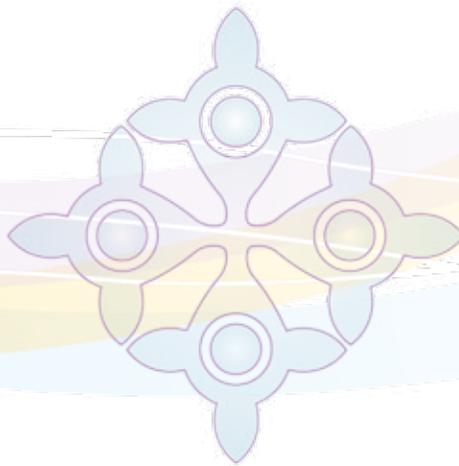
Memory Verse



“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.” 1 Timothy 2:1-3

On the way, the group thanked the Chief, said their goodbyes and dropped him off at his home. The Chief was so grateful to have learned such valuable lessons during the past few days.

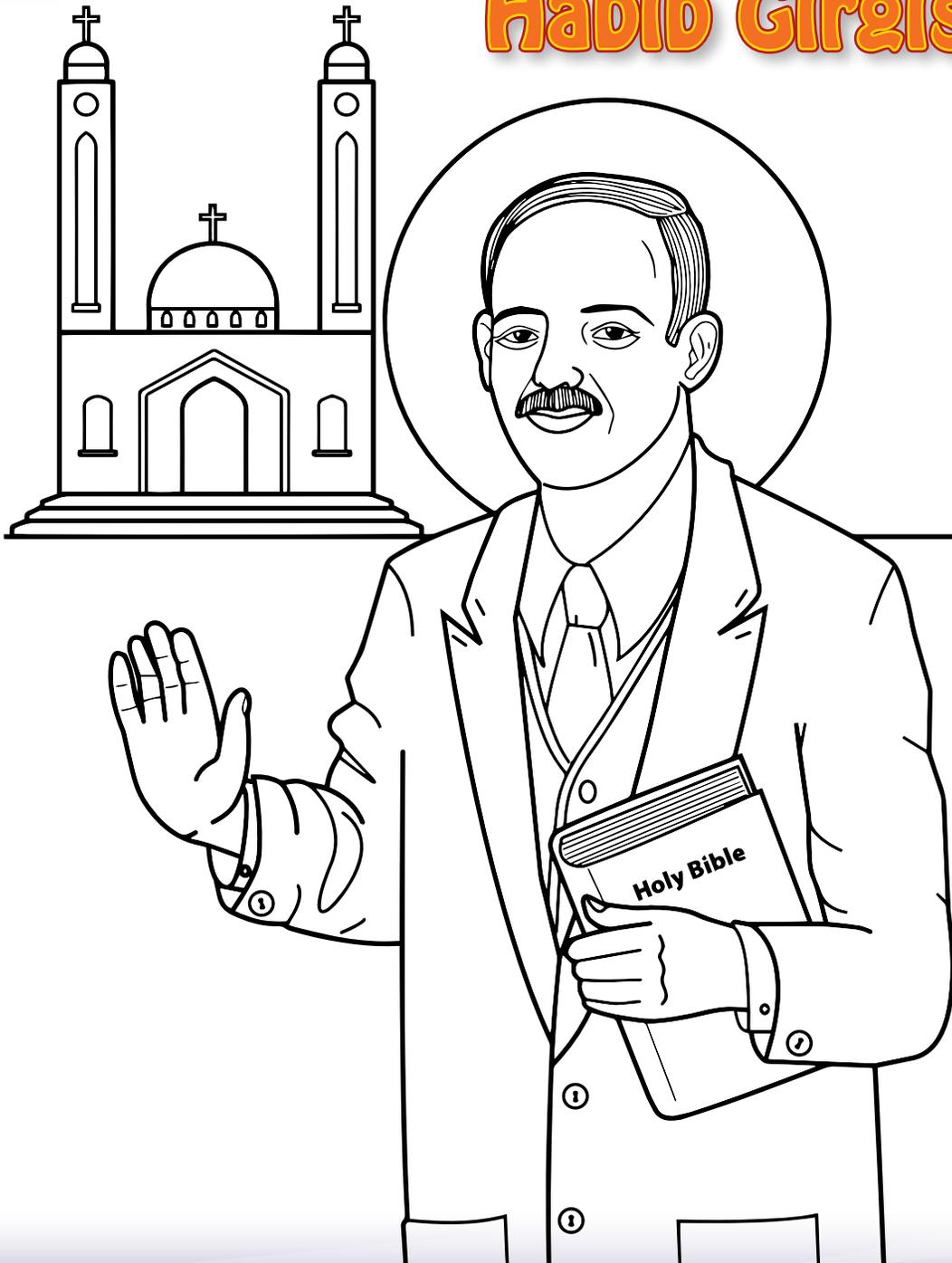
When they finally arrived to the head office, everyone was so happy to see them. They had been worried about them because they were late, but were amazed and grateful when they heard the adventures that they had.



Be My Witness...



St. Archdeacon Habib Girgis



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



Memorization

Zacharias' Prophecy

Luke 1:67-79

"Blessed is the Lord God of Israel,
For He has visited and redeemed His people,
And has raised up a horn of salvation for us
In the house of His servant David,
As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,
Who have been since the world began,
That we should be saved from our enemies
And from the hand of all who hate us,
To perform the mercy promised to our fathers
And to remember His holy covenant,
The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:
To grant us that we,
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
Might serve Him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.
"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;
For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,
To give knowledge of salvation to His people
By the remission of their sins,
Through the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;
To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,
To guide our feet into the way of peace."

Be My Witness...



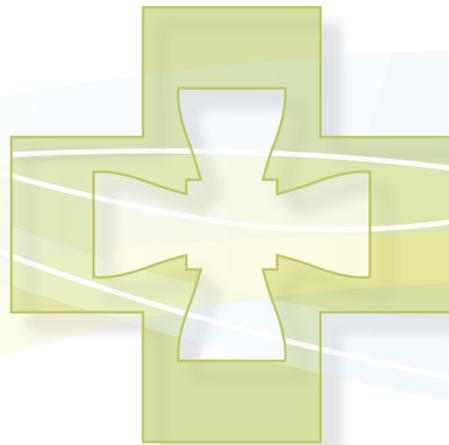
A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spanning the width of the page.

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



A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spanning the width of the page.

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 Mahragan books from Arabic to English.



COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE
DIOCESE OF NEW YORK & NEW ENGLAND