




Coptic Orthodox Christianity

Coptic Art, Architecture, Music

Fall 2018

6



***“You shall love
the LORD your God with all
your heart, with all your
soul, and with all your
strength.”***

(Deuteronomy 6:5)

Coptic Worship

Worship of the spirit, heart, mind, body ...

- **Our hearts** at peace in the presence of the Lord
- **Our spirits** nourished by the sacraments & teachings of the Lord
- **Our minds** contemplate on the depth of what is read, heard and gazed upon
- **Our bodies** partake in worship by standing, bowing, kneeling
- **Our hands** reach out to reconcile with others, exchanging a kiss of peace
- **Our senses** also join in worship ...
- Come and **hear** the sound of **hymns** that uplift the spirit
- Come and **see** sights of **icons** as windows into heaven
- Come and **smell** of **incense** as a sweet aroma to the Lord
- Take, **touch** & **taste** the **Body** & **Blood** of the Lord



Coptic Music



——— ***Much like ancient times, Coptic life is still celebrated musically!*** ———

Life on earth is a transient journey, with the human spirit longing to return to God – music helps uplift the spirit on our journey to heaven.

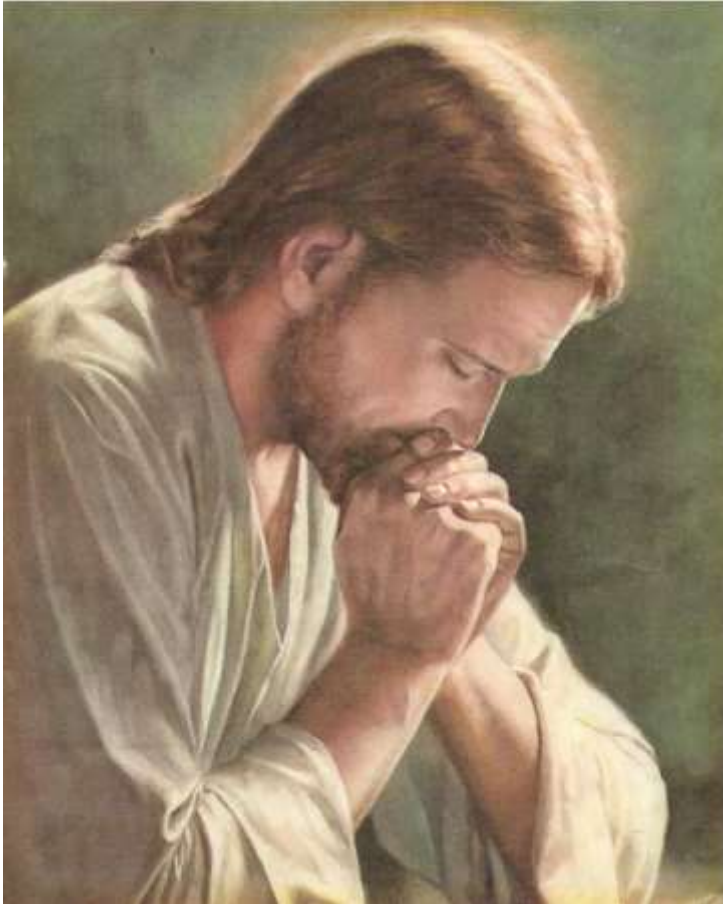
——— ***Traditional rites & services in the Coptic Church are chanted.*** ———

Coptic liturgical hymnology during worship helps to create a sense of heaven on earth.

————— ***After life here on earth, one joins God in paradise,*** —————
leading to the kingdom of heaven in eternal musical praise!

The afterlife is believed to be an eternal musical celebration in the presence of God.

Praise is the highest form of Prayer



- We **praise** You!
- **Your** will be done!
- We **thank** You
- The one **you love** needs You
- He **whom you love** is sick
- Please **forgive** & excuse them
- Please **help** them
- Please **remember** us
- Please have **mercy** on us
- Please **forgive** me (I'm **sorry**)
- Please give me ...



Video:

Midnight Praise Excerpt in Coptic & English



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DkK8uWWjHM>

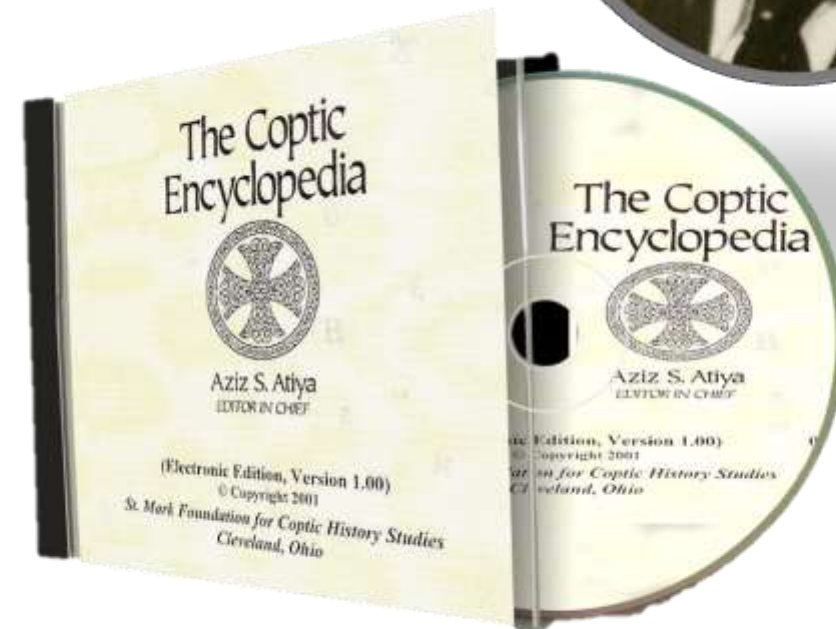
Coptic Personalities:

Dr. Ragheb Moftah, Musicologist

- **Dr. Ragheb Moftah** (1898–2001) was an Egyptian musicologist and scholar of Coptic music heritage. He spent much of his life studying the recording and notation of Coptic liturgical texts.
- Coptic music was previously transmitted exclusively through **oral repetition** throughout previous generations.
- Dr. Moftah dedicated his 75-year career to the collection, notation, and preservation of Coptic liturgical chant, now held at the US **Library of Congress**. He co-authored the article on Coptic Music for the **Coptic Encyclopedia**.

Learn more at the following Library of Congress web site:

<http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/html/coptic/coptic-learnmore.html>



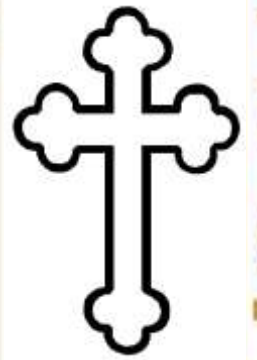
Pharaonic Musical Roots

According to Dr. Ragheb Moftah, Coptic music has a direct link to Pharaonic music ... which have been “baptized” for Christian use:

- ▶ • **Epouro (O King of Peace)** is known to be based on a pharaonic tune sung at the enthroning and entrance of the **King**
- ▶ • **Shere Maria (Hail to Mary)** is based on a chant believed to be sung for the **Queen**
- ▶ • **Ten Oosht (We worship the Father)** hymn, chanted as the clergy and deacons put on their service vestments to prepare for the Liturgy, is based on a tune sung by ancient Egyptians soldiers as they march into **battle**. In the Liturgy, as soldiers of Jesus Christ, we march into a **spiritual battle** against evil spiritual forces.
- ▶ • **Golgotha Burial** tune was used at the **burial** of pharaohs.

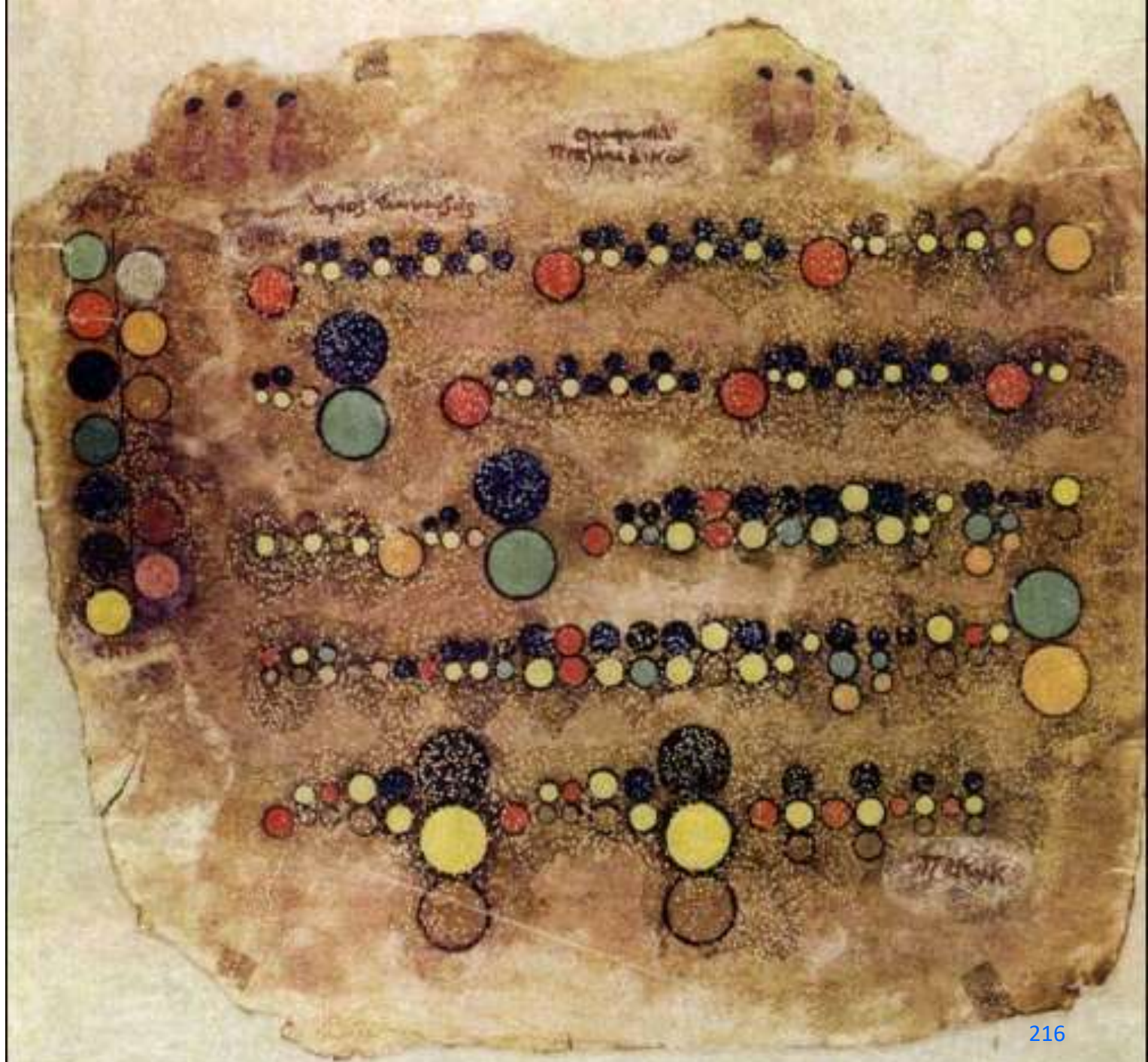
Audio files courtesy of:

<http://www.tasbeha.org>



Ancient Egyptian Music Notation

- A set of parchments from the **5th - 7th centuries AD**
- **Colors** are presumed to indicate **pitch** and **size** to indicate **duration**
- Writings (in Coptic) on the parchment: “Spiritual **Harmony**” and “Holy **Hymn Singer**”
- This manuscript had a profound influence on Egyptian composer **Halim El-Dabh**’s music notation and paintings in 1950’s

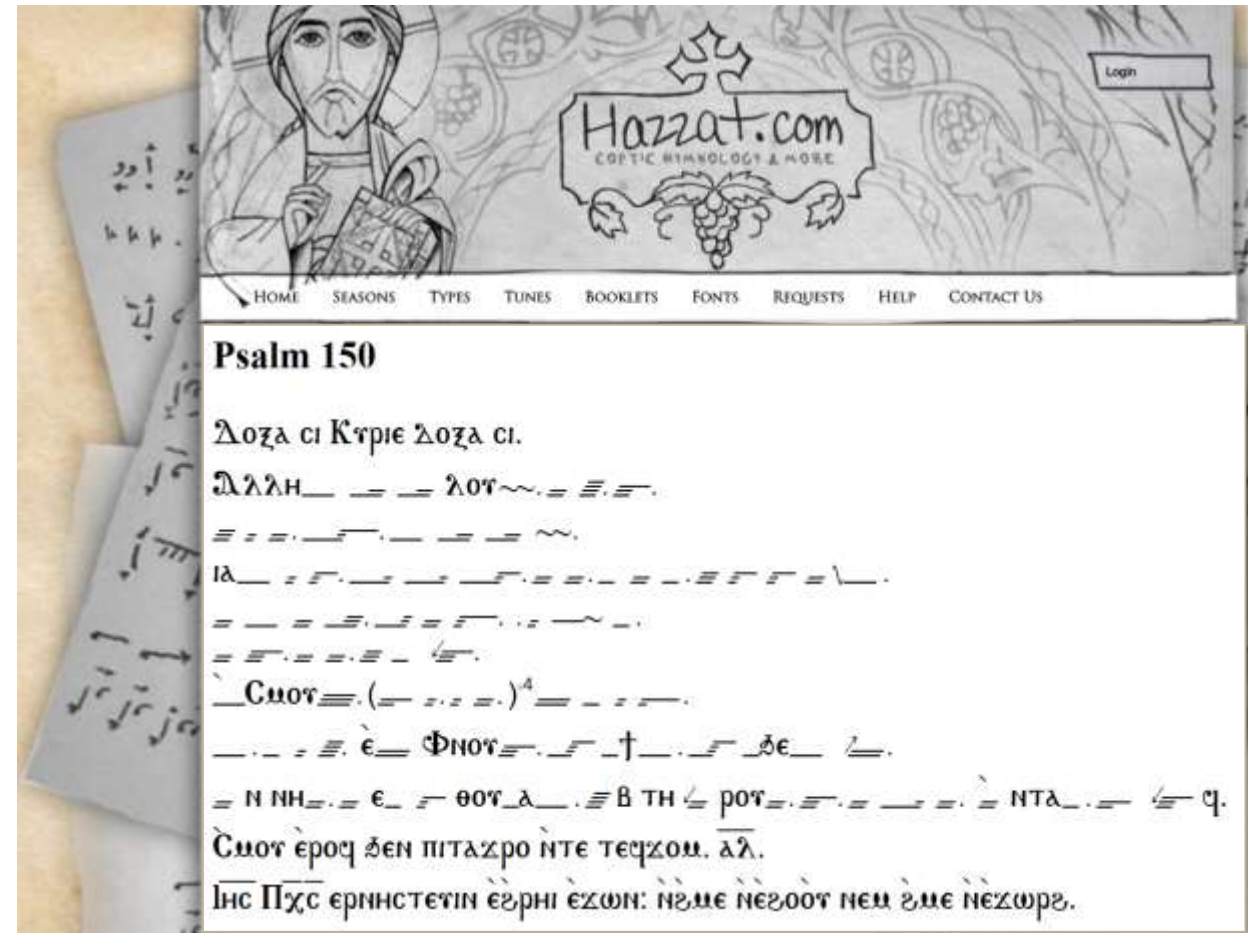


More info available in this informative video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qg9gwQZUYnw>

Coptic *Hazzāt* Music Notation

- Coptic music **notation** is now called ***hazzāt***, and utilizes dashes & dots.
- *Hazzāt* appeared in Egypt as early as the **3rd - 4th centuries AD**, and does not resemble Western musical notation. The word literally means (musical) vibrations.
- They do not imply pitch, intervallic motion, meter, or a specific rhythm.
- Since many early Coptic cantors were blind, these notations were reserved for their students and deacons.
- They serve to help memorize what has been an exclusively **oral tradition**, reminding deacons of melodic directions, embellishment on **vowels**, and the upward or downward motion of extended melisma (groups of notes sung to one syllable of text)



Coptic Liturgical Hymns

Three parties are musically involved during the liturgy celebration:

- **Clergy** (musically, clergy chant the most)
- **Cantors** and **deacons**
- **Congregation**

*Coptic hymns are an exclusively **vocal** tradition, accompanied by two percussion instruments: **cymbals** & **triangles**.*

These instruments help keep time, and produce an intricate rhythm that mimics the embellished vocal lines they accompany.



Coptic Musical Genres

Traditional

- **Alhān** – the oldest of Coptic musical genres; these liturgical **Hymns** are chanted during church services and traditional rites
- **Tasabīh** – **Psalmody & Praise** (Morning, Vespers, Midnight, seasonal)
- **Madā'h** – **Doxologies & Glorification** in praise of God, St. Mary & Saints
- *Traditionally **Coptic** with modern-day translation into **Arabic & English***
- *Typically chanted without instruments other than cymbals & triangles*

Additional

- **Taratīl** or **Taranīm** (informal Chants, Melodies, **Carols or Spiritual Songs**)
- *Can be sung in a chorus with or without modern musical instruments*
- *Typically in **local languages** (e.g. Arabic, English, French)*

Tasabīh (Praise)

Arise, O Children of the Light

English Midnight Praise [compilation](#)
Saint Anthony Monastery, California



Arise, O children of the light, let us praise the Lord of hosts.

That He may grant us the salvation of our souls.

Whenever we stand before You in the flesh.

Cast away from our minds the slumber of sleep.

Grant us sobriety O Lord,
that we may know how to stand before You at times of prayer.

And ascribe unto You, the befitting glorification,
and win the forgiveness of our many sins.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Behold bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

You who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

By night, lift up your hands, O you saints and bless the Lord.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

The Lord bless you from Zion, who made heaven and earth.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Let my cry come before You, O Lord. Give me understanding according to Your word.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Let my supplication come before You, deliver me according to Your word.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

My lips shall utter praise, for You teach me your statutes.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

My tongue shall speak of Your words, for all Your commandments are righteousness.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Let Your hand become my help, for I have chosen Your precepts.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

I longed for Your salvation, O Lord, and Your Law is my delight.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Let my soul live and it shall praise You, and let Your judgments help me.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

I have gone astray, like a lost sheep,
seek Your servant for I do not forget Your commandments.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Glory be to the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Now and forever, and unto the age of all ages amen.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Glory be to the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
now and forever and unto all ages, amen.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Glory be to You, O Good One, the Lover of Mankind.
Glory be to Your Mother the Virgin, and all Your saints.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Glory be to You O only-begotten One, O holy Trinity, have mercy upon us.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

Let God arise, and let all His enemies be scattered,
and let all that hate His holy name, flee from before His face.
Glory be to You, O Lover of Mankind.

As for Your people, let them be blessed, a thousand thousand fold,
and ten thousand ten thousand fold, doing Your will.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

Tasabīh (Praise)

Amen, Alleluia, Kyrie Eleison

- **Amen**

Declaration of Faith

- **Alleluia**

*Joy, Thanksgiving & Praise
Glory & Honour to the Holy Trinity*

- **Kyrie Eleison (Lord have mercy)**

Petitions & Repentance



Audio lecture by H.H. Pope Tawadros II at Queen's University (Kingston) in 2014:

http://www.stmary-ottawa.org/sermons/2014/HH_2014_09_26_pm.mp3

Alhān (Hymns)

Seasonal Liturgical Tunes

1. **Annual Tune**
2. **Joyful Festive Tune**
(Coptic New Year and other festive periods)
3. **Advent Tune**
(during the Coptic Advent Month before Christmas)
4. **Great Lent Tune**
5. **Triumphal Hosanna Tune**
(Palm Sunday and the Feasts of the Cross)
6. **Passion Week Tune**
7. **Bright Saturday Tune**
(after Good Friday before Easter Sunday)

Alhān (Hymns)

Sample Coptic Hymns



- **Annual Tune: Amen, Lord have Mercy**

[http://media.tasbeha.org/mp3/Hymns/Annual/Congregation_Responses/English_Hymns_Committee/43.Amen. Lord_have_mercy_3x.2085.mp3](http://media.tasbeha.org/mp3/Hymns/Annual/Congregation_Responses/English_Hymns_Committee/43.Amen._Lord_have_mercy_3x.2085.mp3)



- **Holy Week: Remember me O Lord**

http://media.tasbeha.org/mp3/Hymns/Holy_Week/St_Mary_and_Archangel_Michael,_Houston,_TX/13.Remember_me_O_Lord.mp3



- **Holy Week: O King of Peace**

http://media.tasbeha.org/mp3/Hymns/Holy_Week/St_Mary_and_Archangel_Michael,_Houston,_TX/05.O_King_of_Peace.mp3



- **Holy Week: O Only Begotten Son**

http://media.tasbeha.org/mp3/Hymns/Holy_Week/St._Mark,_Jersey_City,_NJ/omonogeneis_english_oliver_youssef.1840.mp3

Alhān (Hymns)

“Evlogimenos” Palm Sunday Chant

Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord;
Yes, in the Name of the Lord.

*Sung in Coptic in 1970 by the
Higher Institute of Coptic Studies*

Hosanna to the Son of David;
again to the Son of David.



Hosanna in the highest;
again in the highest.

*In Coptic & English by Deacons in Mississauga at
the Church of Daniel and the Three Saintly Youths*



Hosanna to the King of Israel;
again to the King of Israel.

*Sung in English by Trinity
From the Album “Now I’ll Live”*

Let us praise saying: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.
Glory be to our God, and glory be to our God.



Taranīm (Spiritual Songs)

Hymns & Spiritual Songs compilation
Coptic Churches of Southern California

“Our Lord” song sung during Christmas Season



Our Lord, Our Lord
Came for us, Our Lord.
Born in the manger like us,
Because He truly loves us!

I am glad, I am glad
By your birth, O My Lord!
Your birth in Bethlehem,
A great joy to my soul!

Refrain:

He loves all of us;
He redeemed all our souls.
He loves all of us;
He redeemed all our souls.

The Virgin rejoiced
In the word of Gabriel.
Our hearts are happy
In the birth of Emmanuel.

Our Lord, Our Lord
Came for us, Our Lord.
Our Lord, Our Lord
Came for us, Our Lord.

In the East was His star,
Shone to the wise men.
Our hearts are candles
Lit for the Holy Lord.

http://tasbeha.org/mp3/Songs/English/Southern_California_Churches.html

http://media.tasbeha.org/mp3/Songs/English/Southern_California_Churches/06.Our_Lord,_Our_Lord.mp3

Taranīm (Spiritual Songs)

“Very Early Sunday Morning”

Communion Melody sung during Easter & Pentecost Period

Very early Sunday morning,
Before the dawn's light appears,
Jesus is risen declaring,
Victory no more defeat.

Refrain:

Resurrection is my song,
Resurrection gave me life,
Resurrection made me strong,
Jesus my Lord is alive!

Jesus is risen in glory,
Heaven & earth sang and praised,
And the angels told the story,
He is risen as He said.

Mary Magdalene was looking,
In the garden for her Lord,
While Jesus Himself was telling
Her to go and spread the word.

All the disciples were praying,
They were really in great fear,
When Mary came to them saying,
He is risen He is not here.

While the gathered in the room,
Jesus Christ Himself appeared,
Said “My peace I gave to you,
And my peace with you I leave.”

But Thomas did not believe,
What the disciples have seen,
So Jesus again appeared,
Showed him the place of the spear.

Tell the Marys no more mourning,
Among the dead do not seek,
For Jesus our Lord is living,
Giving power to the weak.

Jesus my victorious Lord,
Conquered the powers of Hades,
And the thorns of death He broke,
My salvation He declared.

The heavenly hosts were singing,
Welcoming our glorious Lord,
And joy is overwhelming,
He opened the doors of hope.

Alleluia Alleluia,
Risen is the Lord of peace,
Alleluia Alleluia,
Truly He is risen indeed.

*Chanted by Deacons of
the Los Angeles Diocese*





*Saint Mary's Coptic Church
Ottawa, Canada*

Crosses & Colours

The collage features several distinct crosses and religious items:

- A green woven cross on a light background.
- A red and blue patterned cloth with a white cross.
- A bouquet of yellow and white flowers.
- A gold cross on a wooden frame.
- A gold cross on a black background.
- A gold cross with Greek letters (ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ) on a white background.
- A gold cross on a gold background.
- A gold cross on a white background.
- A white cross on a white background.



Stained Glass & Embroidery



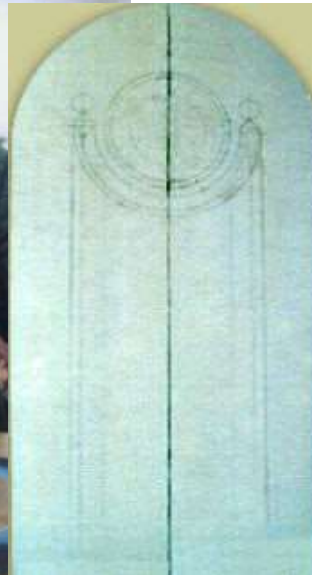
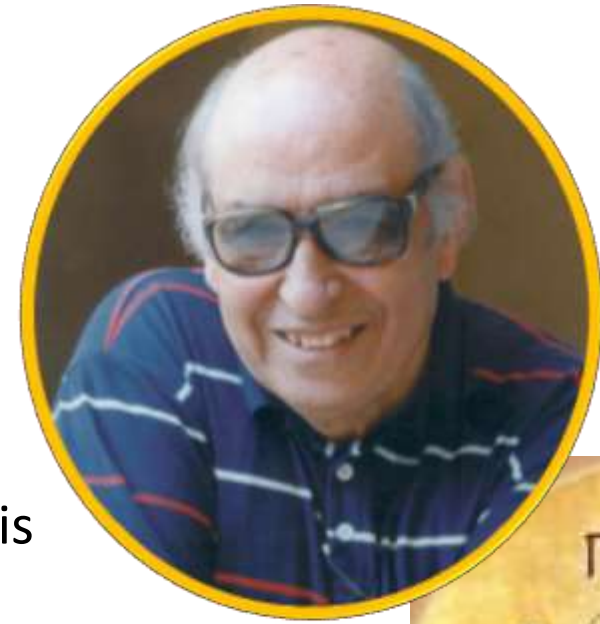
*The Coptic Museum in Cairo contains the world's largest collection of Coptic artifacts and **artwork**.*



Coptic Personalities

Dr. Isaac Fanous, Iconographer

Dr. Isaac Fanous (1919 – 2007) was an Egyptian iconographer, artist, scholar, and professor of Coptic art at the Higher Institute for Coptic Studies in Cairo. Dr. Fanous is credited with **Neo Coptic style iconographic movement**. He starts an Icon by using vertical and horizontal straight lines so that you can see and feel the symmetry in the image.





Virgin Platytera, Stéphane René, 2015



Christ Pantocrator, Stéphane René, 2015

Coptic Iconography

Distinctive Facial Features in Coptic Icons

- Large wide **eyes**, symbolize spiritual eyes that looks beyond the material world, for the Bible says, “**the light of the body is the eye**” (Matthew 6:22)
- Large **ears** are sometimes drawn, which listen to the word of God, for the Bible says, “**If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear**” (Mark 4:23)
- Gentle **lips** to glorify and praise the Lord, for the Bible says, “**My mouth shall praise You with joyful lips**” (Psalm 63:5). The **mouth**, which can also often be the source of empty or harmful words, is small.
- The **nose**, which is seen as sensual, is also shown as small.
- When an **evil character** is portrayed in an icon, it is always in **profile**, as it is not desirable to make eye contact, to dwell or meditate upon them.
- The **large heads** used for individuals devoted to contemplation and prayer.

Coptic Icons - Eyes

- Large wide **eyes**, symbolize spiritual eyes that looks beyond the material world, for the Bible says, “**the light of the body is the eye**”



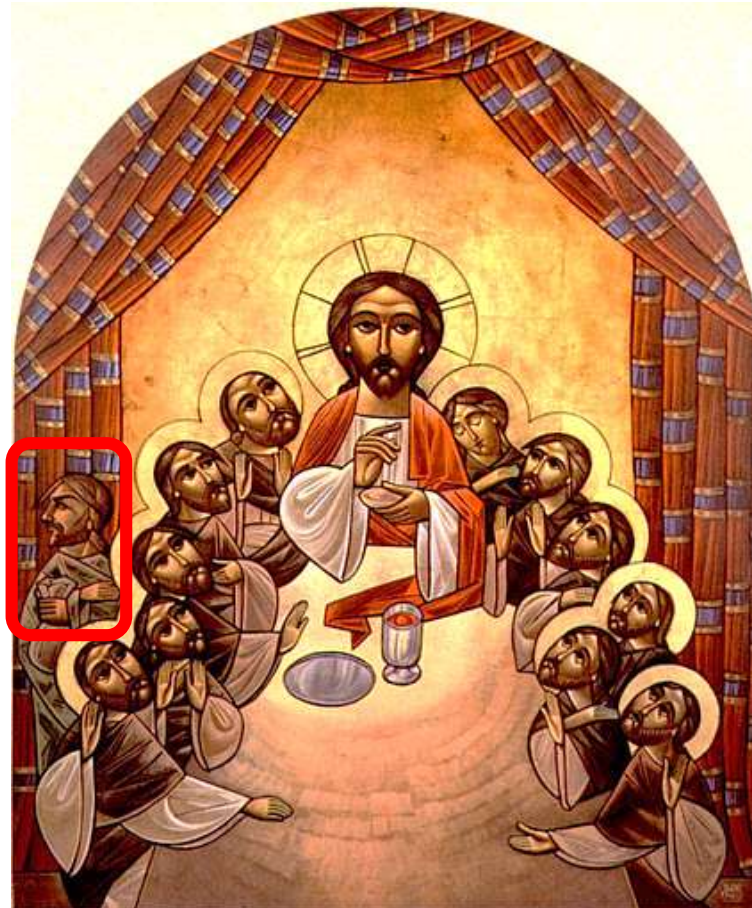
Coptic Icons - Mouth

- Gentle **lips** to glorify and praise the Lord, for the Bible says, “**My mouth shall praise You with joyful lips**”. The **mouth**, which can also often be the source of empty or harmful words, is small.



Coptic Icons - Eye Contact

- When an **evil character** is portrayed in an icon, it is always in **profile**, as it is not desirable to make eye contact, to dwell or meditate upon them.

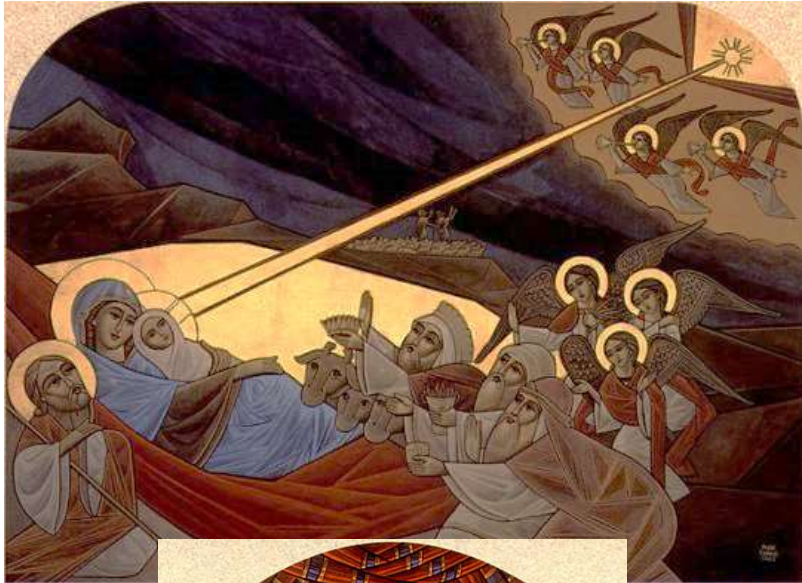


Coptic Icons - Large Head

- The **large heads** used for individuals devoted to contemplation and prayer.



Coptic Icons are worth a thousand words ...





1. Christ Crucified
2. Saint Mary, John the Beloved, Salome & Mary Magdalene
3. Christ being offered gall
4. Christ's side being pierced
5. The chief priests mocking
6. Soldiers casting lots for His garments
7. Two thieves crucified (left-hand thief's face drawn in profile)
8. Soldier proclaiming that this is truly the Son of God
9. Abraham carrying Isaac looking forward to Christ
10. Moses with the bronze serpent looking forward to Christ

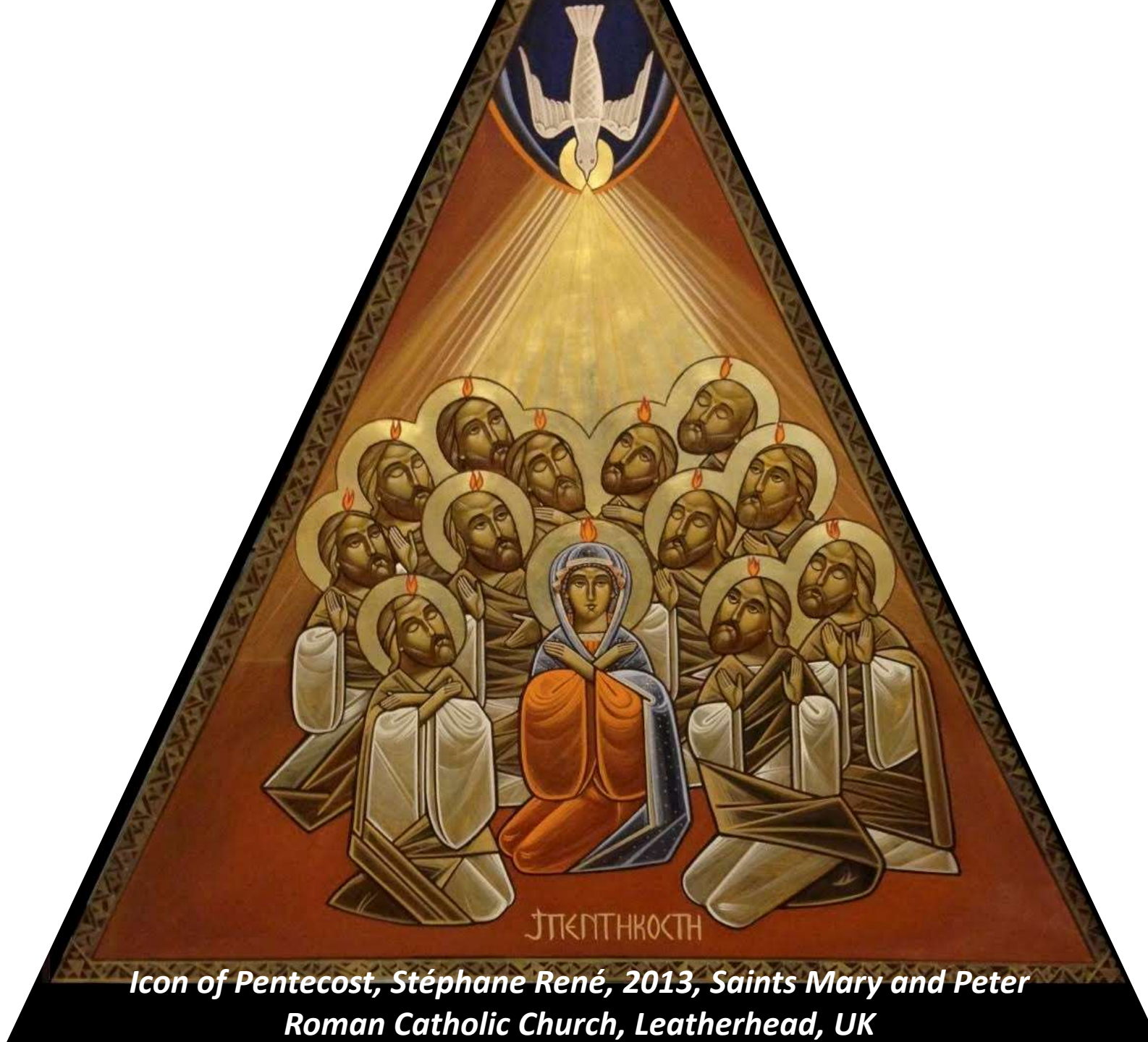


1. Baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes
2. The Holy Family
3. The Star in the East
4. The Angels rejoicing
5. The Shepherds caring for the sheep in the field
6. The animals of the Manger
7. The Three Kings offering gifts of Gold (symbolizing royalty), Frankincense (symbolizing priesthood) & Myrrh (symbolizing sacrifice)

Nativity, Isaac Fanous, 1991, Holy Virgin Coptic Church, Los Angeles, CA



1. Our Lord Jesus Christ
2. Take this all of you and eat it ... this is My Body
3. The cup mixed of wine and water ... this is My Blood
4. Saint John the Beloved leaning on the Lord
5. The disciples asking, "is it I, Lord?"
6. Judas Iscariot with the money box
7. The upper room decorated
8. The table depicted as if protruding out of the icon towards the faithful in all generations to come ... take this all of you



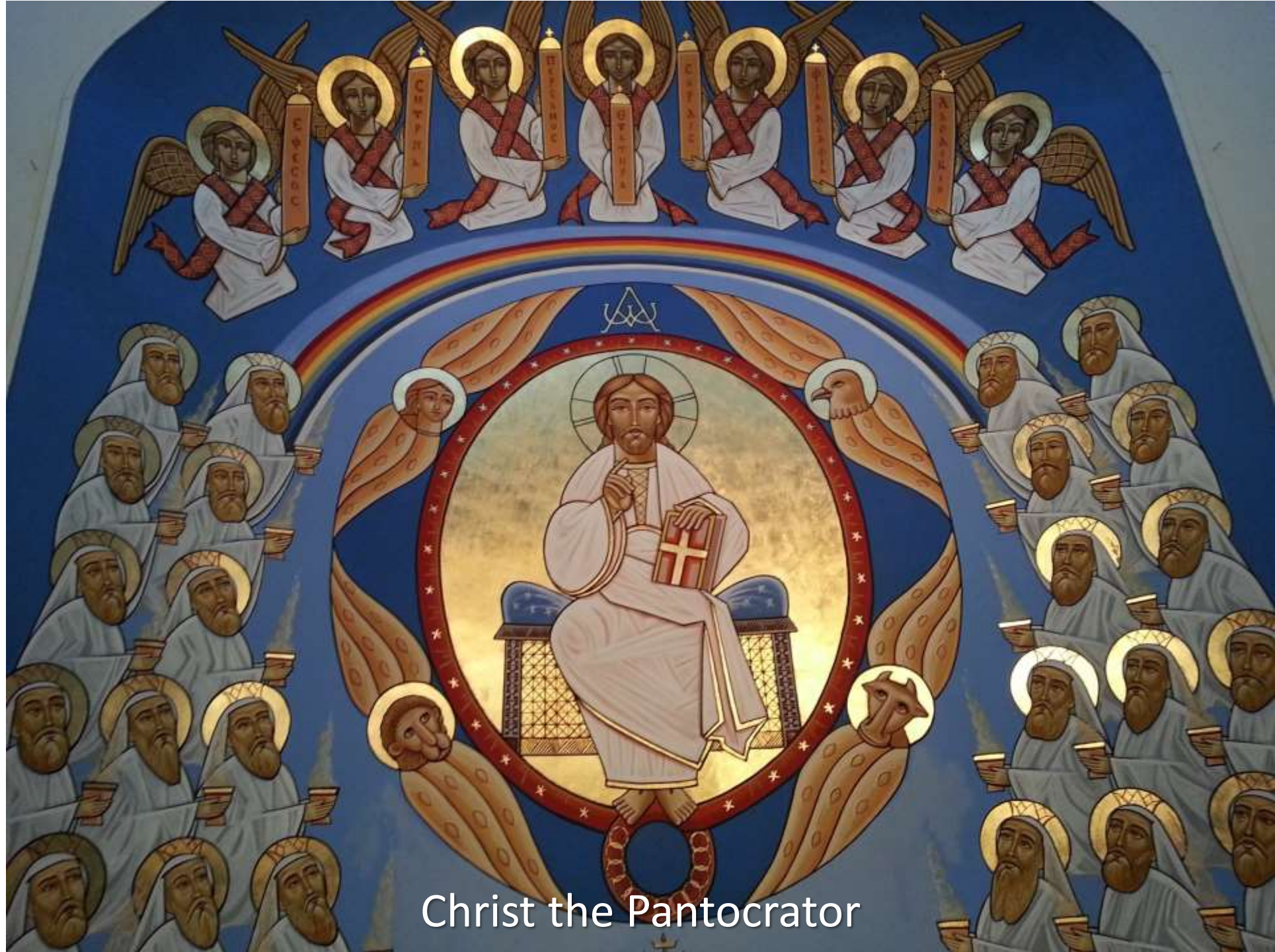
*Icon of Pentecost, Stéphane René, 2013, Saints Mary and Peter
Roman Catholic Church, Leatherhead, UK*



*Three Youths in the Furnace,
Stéphane René, 2014,
Saints Mary and Abraham Coptic Church,
St Louis, Missouri*



*Saints Sophia, Elpis, Pistis and Agape by
Stéphane René, 2014,
Saints Mary and Abraham Coptic Church,
St Louis, Missouri*

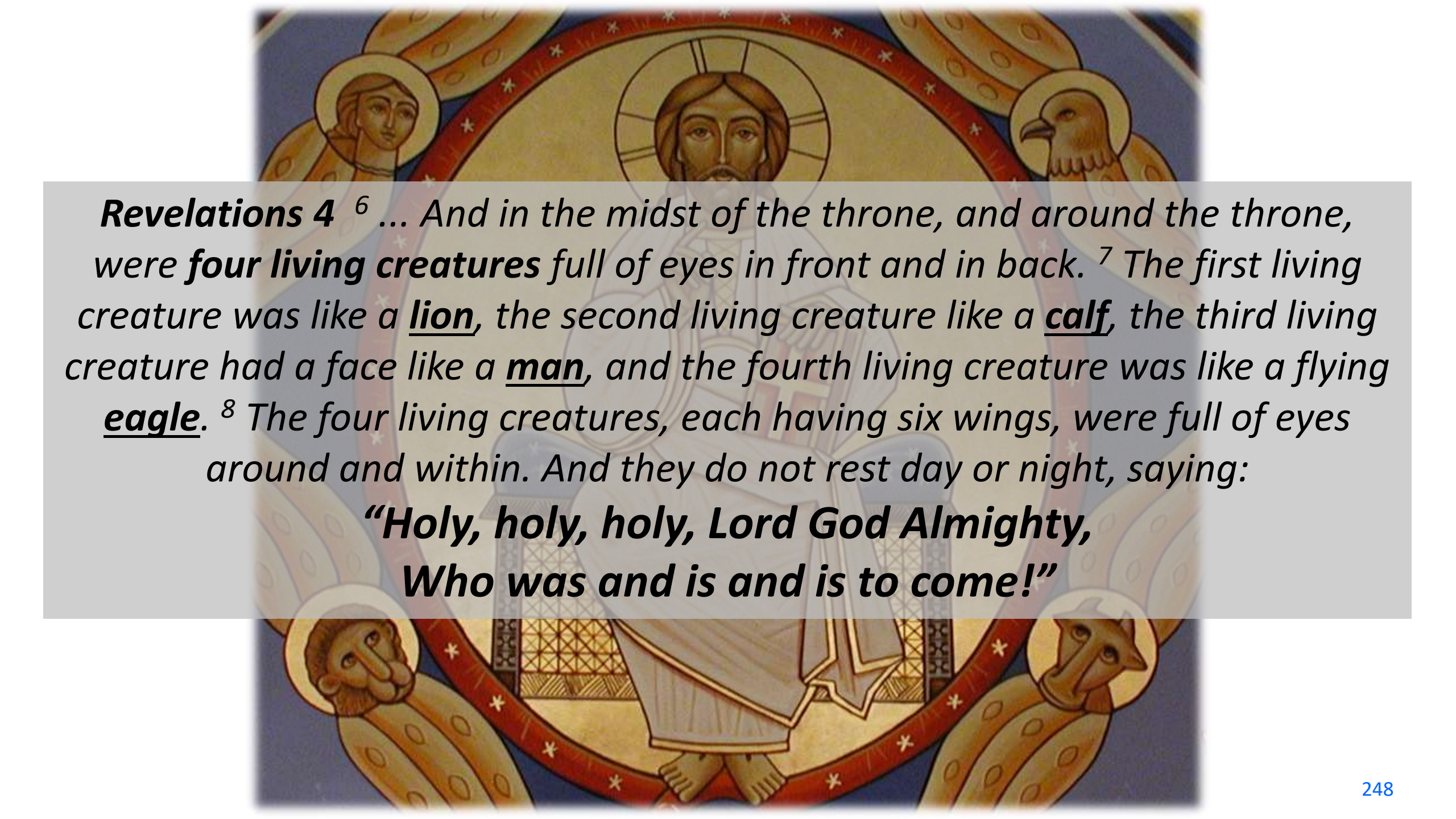


Christ the Pantocrator





The Four Living Creatures



Revelations 4 ⁶ ... And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were **four living creatures** full of eyes in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸ The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

**“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!”**

MAN

EAGLE



LION

CALF



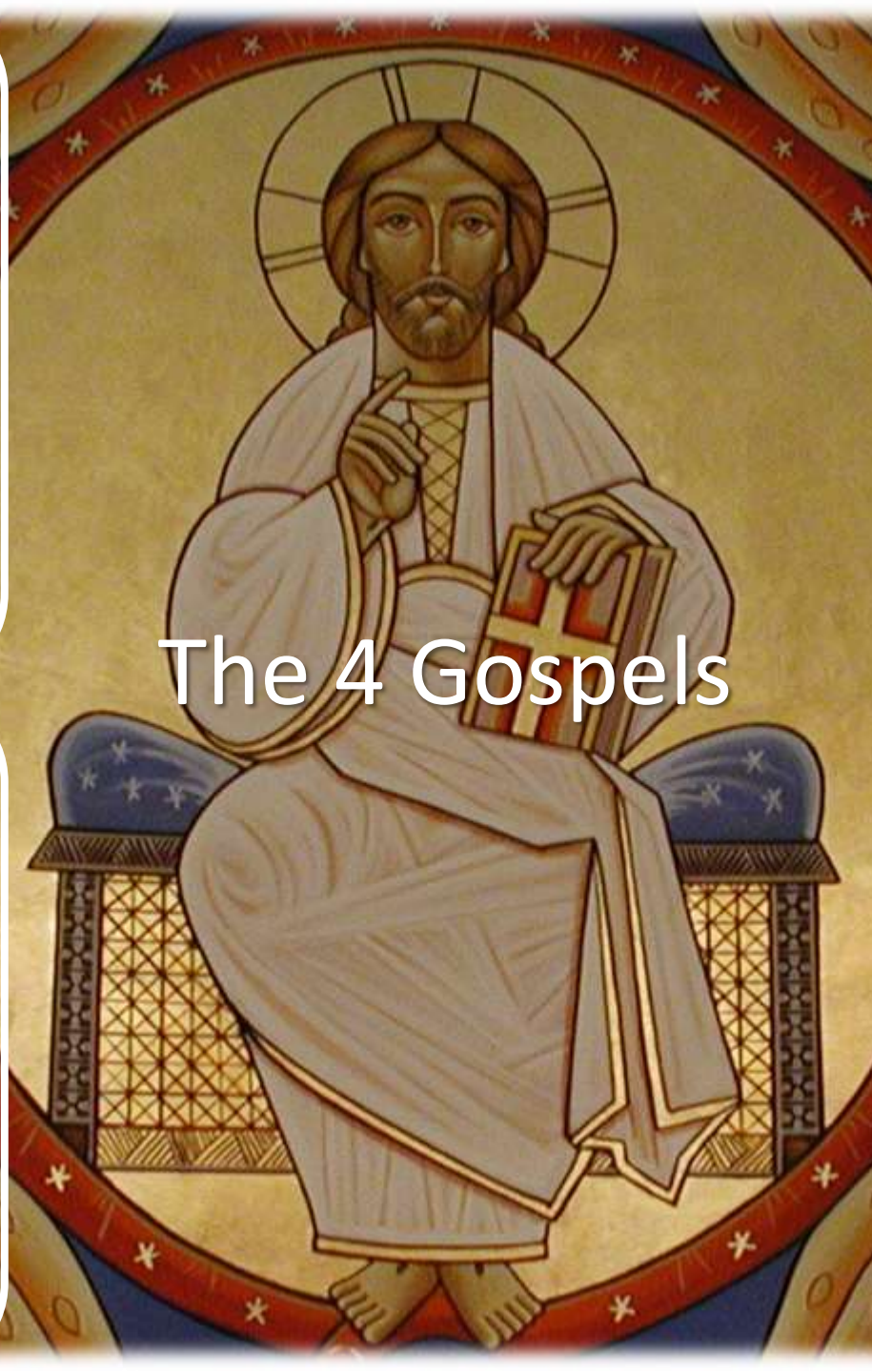
MAN

Matthew



Mark

LION



The 4 Gospels



EAGLE

John



Luke

CALF





MAN

1. Incarnation

EAGLE

4. Ascension



4 Stages of Our Salvation

3. Resurrection

LION



2. Crucifixion

CALF





4 Stages of our SALVATION

1. INCARNATION

The Son of God became Man

2. CRUCIFIXION

Christ died for us

3. RESURRECTION

Christ rose from the dead

4. ASCENSION

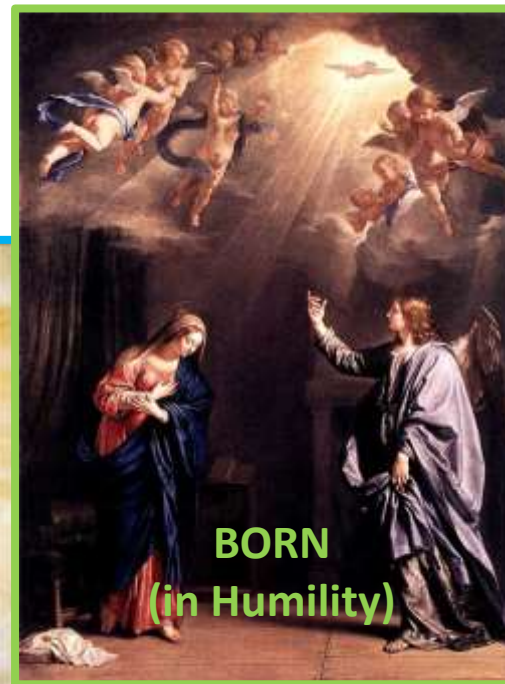
Christ ascended to heaven

4 Stages of our Salvation

1. **Incarnation** (born)
Annunciation Feast
Christmas Feast
2. **Crucifixion** (crucified)
Good Friday
3. **Resurrection** (risen)
Easter Sunday
4. **Ascension** (ascended)
Ascension Feast
(40 days after Easter)



RISEN
(in Glory)



BORN
(in Humility)



CRUCIFIED
(in Humility)



ASCENDED
(in Glory)



Church Architecture

- Coptic churches can be built in the form of a **ship**, symbolic of **Noah's ark**: as those in the ark were saved from the flood, likewise the Church of God alone has the ability to save.
- Churches could also be built in the form of a **cross** (sign of our **salvation**), and sometimes in the form of a **circle** (sign of God's **eternity**).
- Church design is derived from **Egyptian, Roman and Greek** architecture
- The innermost part of the church behind the **iconostasis** is the **sanctuary**
- Outside the sanctuary, the central part of the church was originally reserved for baptized Christians, while a third section at the entrance was left for (unbaptized) Catechumens.
- At an unknown date, that third part began to disappear, and with it the divisions of the church gave way to sections of nave and aisles.
- According to the Apostolic Constitutions, "**the church must ... point to the East.**" This tradition was mentioned in the writings of many early Church Fathers including St. Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian. During the Liturgy, a deacon reminds everyone praying to look towards the East.



Iconostasis

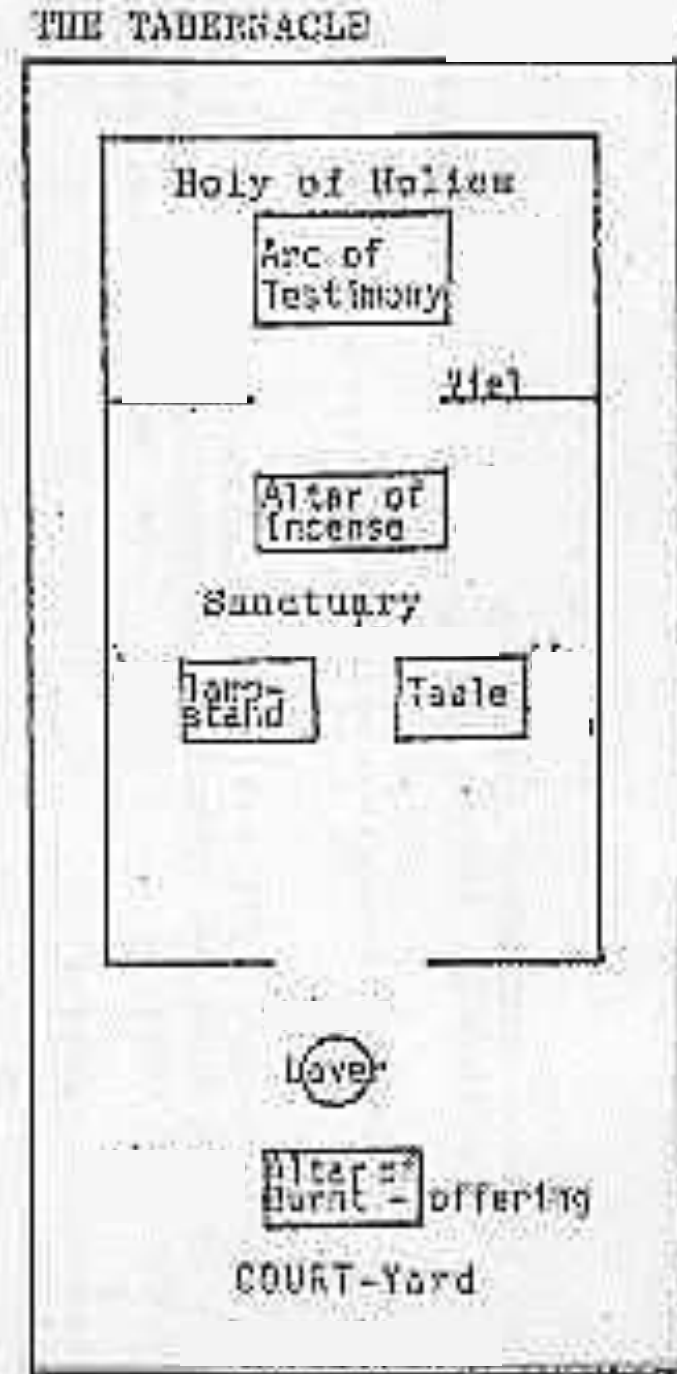
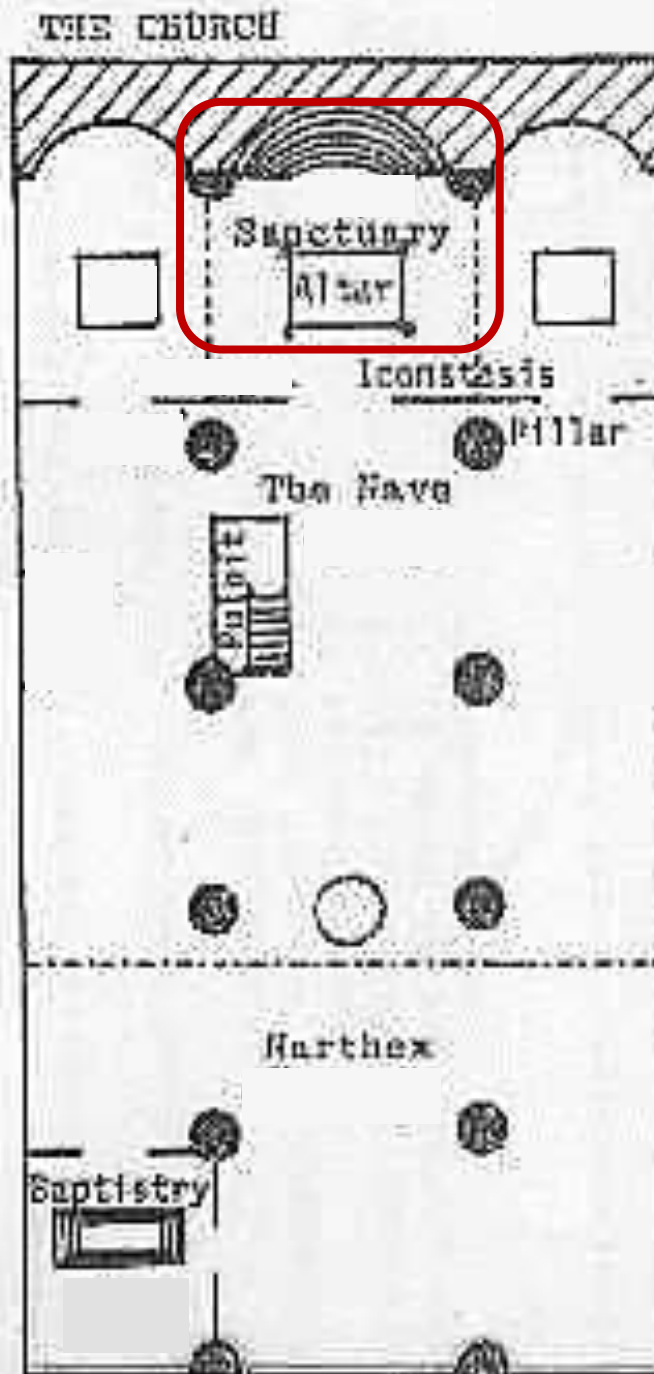


Iconostasis, Stéphane René, 2012, St Mark's Coptic Church, St Thomas, US Virgin Island

The Sanctuary

The **Sanctuary** containing the Altar, is the most holy place in the church and is to be built higher than the level of the Church Hall so that eyes can gaze at it.

The top of the door can bear the inscription, **“This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter”** (Psalm 118:20); the lower part can bear the inscription, **“Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.”** (Psalm 24:9).



Inside the Sanctuary

It is customary that one takes off shoes in the sanctuary, as the Lord states in Exodus 3:5, “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.”



Church Domes & Towers



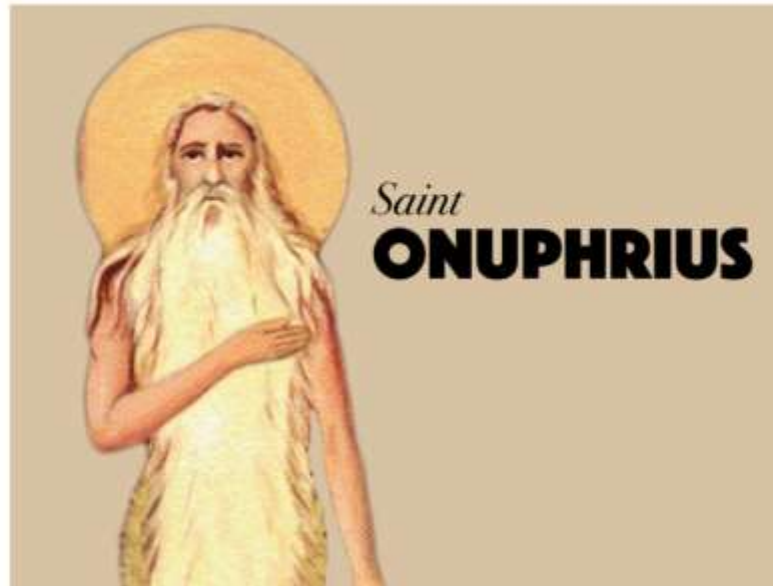
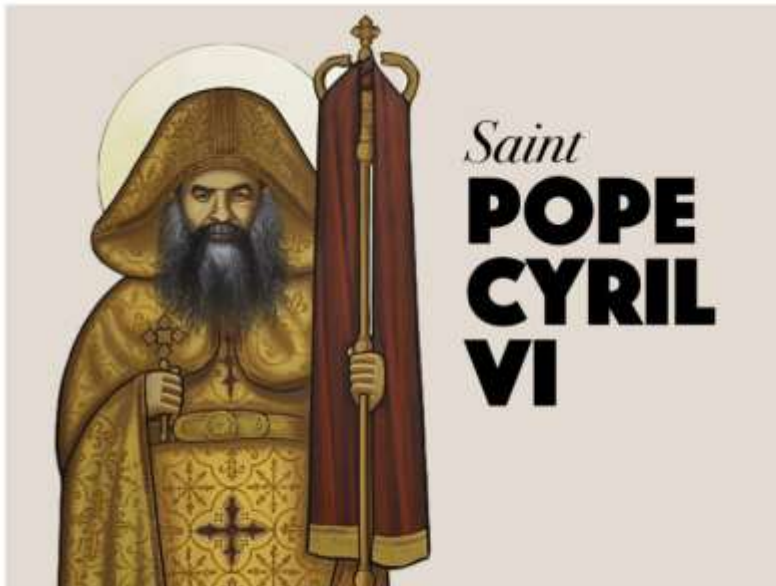
- Some churches have **one dome**. The dome interior is typically painted with the icon of our Lord or in a bright blue decorated with angels and stars. This resembles Jesus Christ seated in the heavens as the Head of the Church.
- Some churches have **three** domes, which represent the **Holy Trinity**.
- Other churches have **five** domes. The larger one is located in the center representing our **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the four smaller ones surrounding it represent the **four evangelists**: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- Often, Coptic churches have two **towers**, particularly Coptic monasteries. As ships have a watchtower, the church's towers represent the Lord's ship voyaging towards heaven.
- The church towers include a **belfry** where the bells are hung. Bells may be rung during the offertory, during communion, and on feasts. The bells were also used to call the faithful to go to church.

Optional Homework Reading 😊

Visit this web site to learn about one of these Coptic Saints

<http://mycorchurch.ca/about/patronsaints/>

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." - Hebrews 12:1



St. Pope Cyril VI of Alexandria also called **Abba Kyrillos VI**, born **Azer Youssef Atta** (8 August 1902 – 9 March 1971; 2 Messori 1618 – 30 Meshir 1687), 116th Pope of Alexandria & Patriarch of the See of St. Mark from 10 May 1959 (2 Pashons 1675) to his death on 9 March 1971 (30 Meshir 1687).

Pope Cyril VI was born in Damanhour, Egypt, into a Coptic Orthodox family. He resigned a civil service position to become a monk in July 1927. He passed his probationary period and, on 24 February 1928 (21 Meshir 1644), took his monastic vows at the Paromeos Monastery, assuming the name of Father Mina el-Baramosy (Father Mina of the Paromeos Monastery). He was also known as Father Mina the elder.

In 1947, Father Mina built the Church of Saint Mina in Cairo. He also used to pray in the Church of the Holy Virgin in Babylon before assuming the papacy.

Father Mina became Pope of Alexandria on 10 May 1959 (2 Pashons 1675). In accordance with the old Coptic church tradition, Pope Cyril VI was the only monk in the 20th century A.D./17th century A.M. to be chosen for papacy without having been a bishop /Metropolitan first. Before him, there were three bishops / Metropolitans who became Popes of Alexandria: Pope John XIX (1928–1942), Pope Macarius III (1942–1944) and Pope Joseph II (1946-1956). After him, Pope Shenouda III was also a bishop before becoming Pope.

Pope Cyril VI elevated the Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church to the title of Patriarch–Catholicos. Abuna Basilios, who was the first Ethiopian to be appointed Archbishop of Ethiopia by Pope Joseph II, became Ethiopia’s first Patriarch. Pope Cyril VI was awarded the Grand Cordon of the Star of Solomon by Emperor Haile Selassie in gratitude. In November 1959 he laid the foundation stone of the new Monastery of Saint Mina in the Desert of Mariout.

In January 1965, Pope Cyril VI presided over the Committee of Oriental Orthodox Churches in Addis Ababa, the first ecumenical and non-Chalcedonian synod of these churches held in modern times.

In June 1968, Pope Cyril received the relics of Saint Mark the Evangelist and Apostle, which had been taken from Alexandria to Venice over eleven centuries earlier. The relics were interred beneath the newly completed Cathedral of Saint Mark in Cairo, which was built under Pope Cyril and was inaugurated in a ceremony attended by President Nasser, Emperor Haile Selassie, and delegates from most other churches.

Cyril’s papacy also saw marked the Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Zeitoun, Egypt (starting on 2 April 1968 / 24 Paremhat 1684).

The Seat of Pope Cyril VI was initially located in Saint Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Azbakeya, Cairo. However, during his papacy he built the Saint Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Abbasseya, also in Cairo, which then became the Seat of the Coptic Orthodox Pope.

Pope Cyril departed on 9 March 1971 (30 Meshir 1687), after a short illness, and was succeeded by the late Pope Shenouda III. Pope Shenouda spoke about his predecessor: “There is no man in all the history of the church like Pope Cyril VI, who was able to pray so many liturgies. He prayed more than 12,000 liturgies. This matter never happened before in the history of the Popes of Alexandria or the world, or even among the monks. He was wondrous in his prayers.”

On 20 June 2013 (13 Paoni 1729), 42 years after his death, he was canonized as a saint by the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Onuphrius or **Onoufrios** (Greek: Ὀνούφριος), venerated as **Saint Onuphrius** in both the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Catholic Churches; **Venerable Onuphrius** in Eastern Orthodoxy and **Saint Nofer the Anchorite** in Oriental Orthodoxy, lived as a hermit in the desert of Upper Egypt in the 4th or 5th centuries.

Onophrius was one of the Desert Fathers who made a great impression on Eastern spirituality in the third and fourth centuries, around the time that Christianity was emerging as the dominant faith of the Roman Empire. At this time many Christians were inspired to go out into the desert and live in prayer in the harsh environment of extreme heat and cold, with little to eat and drink, surrounded by all sorts of dangerous animals and robbers.

It is uncertain in which century Onuphrius lived; the account of Paphnutius the Ascetic, who encountered him in the Egyptian desert, forms the sole source for our knowledge of the life of Saint Onuphrius. Even the authorship is uncertain; “Paphnutius”, a common name of Egyptian origin in the Upper Thebaid, may refer to Paphnutius of Scetis, a 4th-century abbot of Lower Egypt, rather than Paphnutius the Ascetic. “But Paphnutius the Great [i.e. Paphnutius the Ascetic],” Alban Butler writes, “also had a number of stories to tell of visions and miraculous happenings in the desert, some of them in much the same vein as the story of Onuphrius.”

The name Onuphrius is thought to be a Hellenized form of a Coptic name Unnufer, ultimately from the Egyptian: wnn-nfr meaning “perfect one”, or “he who is continually good”, an epithet of the god Osiris.

A tradition, not found in Paphnutius’ account, states that Onuphrius had studied jurisprudence and philosophy before becoming a monk near Thebes and then a hermit.

According to Paphnutius’s account, Paphnutius undertook a pilgrimage to study the hermits’ way of life and to determine whether it was for him. Wandering in the desert for 16 days, on the 17th day, Paphnutius came across a wild figure covered in hair, wearing a loincloth of leaves. Frightened, Paphnutius ran away, up a mountain, but the figure called him back, shouting, “Come down to me, man of God, for I am a man also, dwelling in the desert for the love of God.”

Turning back, Paphnutius talked to the wild figure, who introduced himself as Onuphrius and explained that he had once been a monk at a large monastery in the Thebaid but who had now lived as a hermit for 70 years, enduring extreme thirst, hunger, and discomforts. He said that it was his guardian angel who had brought him to this desolate place. Onuphrius took Paphnutius to his cell, and they spoke until sunset, when bread and water miraculously appeared outside of the hermit’s cell.

They spent the night in the prayer, and in the morning Paphnutius discovered that Onuphrius was near death. Paphnutius, distressed, asked the hermit if he should occupy Onuphrius’ cell after the hermit’s death, but Onuphrius told him, “That may not be, thy work is in Egypt with thy brethren.” Onuphrius asked Paphnutius for there to be a memorial with incense in Egypt in remembrance of the hermit. He then blessed the traveler and died.

Due to the hard and rocky ground, Paphnutius could not dig a hole for a grave, and therefore covered Onuphrius’ body in a cloak, leaving the hermit’s body in a cleft of the rocks. After the burial, Onuphrius’ cell crumbled, which Paphnutius took to be a sign that he should not stay.

One scholar has written that Onuphrius’ life “fits the mold of countless desert hermits or anchorites... [However] despite its predictability, Paphnutius’ Life of Onuphrius is marked by several unique details... the years of Onuphrius’ youth were passed in a monastery that observed the rule of strict silence; a hind instructed him in Christian rites and liturgy. During his sixty years in the desert, Onuphrius’ only visitor was an angel who delivered a Host every Sunday...”

Both the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Churches traditionally mark his feast day on 12 June. A Life of Onuphrius of later Greek origin states that the saint died on June 11; however, his feast day was celebrated on June 12 in the Eastern Orthodox calendars from an early date.

Onuphrius’ way of life spread across the Middle East, Eastern Europe (including Russia), and Western Europe.

The legend of Saint Onuphrius was depicted in Pisa’s camposanto (monumental cemetery), and in Rome, a church, Sant’Onofrio, was built in his honor on the Janiculan Hill in the fifteenth century.

Antony, the archbishop of Novgorod, writing around 1200 AD, stated that Onuphrius’ head was conserved in the church of Saint Acindinus (Akindinos) (Constantinople).

For several decades Orthodox seminarians in Poland have begun their spiritual training in the monastery of St. Onuphrius in Jablechna. It is said that the saint himself chose the place for it, appearing nearly four hundred years ago to fishermen and leaving them an Icon of himself on the banks of the river Buh.

There is a monastery in Jerusalem dedicated to him. The monastery is located at the far end of Gai Ben Hinnom, the Gehenna valley of hell, further it is situated within the site of a Jewish Second Temple cemetery and is built among and includes many typical burial niches common to that period. The monastery also marks the location of Hakeldama, the purported place where Judas Iscariot hanged himself.

Saint Onuphrius was venerated in Munich, Basel, and southern Germany, and the Basel humanist Sebastian Brant (who named his own son Onuphrius) published a broadside named *In Praise of the Divine Onuphrius and Other Desert Hermit Saints*.

His name appears very variously as **Onuphrius**, **Onouphrius**, **Onofrius**; and in different languages as **Onofre** (Portuguese, Spanish), **Onofrio** (Italian), etc. In Arabic, the saint was known as *Abū Nufir* (Arabic: ابو نفر) or as *Nofer* (Arabic: نوfer), which, besides being a variant of the name Onuphrius, also means “herbivore.” The English given name **Humphrey** has also been derived from the name of the saint, although it is usually given a Germanic etymology.

St. Youannis (Wanas) was martyred when he was barely 12 years old. He was the only child born to a pious Christian couple, who brought him up in the Christian faith. Despite his young age, he was ordained a deacon by the bishop of the city because of his love for Christ and his spiritual maturity.

He stayed in church pretty much all the time and although he was young, he fought the spiritual war faithfully. During the days when there was liturgy, he ate from the holy bread (Orban), and during the days that had no liturgy, he asked the neighboring women to make him some bread (called Hanoun) to sustain him. He walked around the church and did everything that was necessary without ever being lazy or bored. His face shone, and it attracted the attention of everyone who saw him.

When the devil waged war on the church through persecution, the saint desired to shed his blood for Christ's sake. In a dream, God showed him that he will receive the crown of martyrdom. St. Wanas went and told the bishop about his dream and asked the bishop to bury his body in Om Qoraat cemetery in Luxor where his ancestors were buried.

The Roman commander came to the saint's town with his soldiers and looked for the believers. They heard about the deacon Wanas, and set out looking for him. They found him after he had encouraged the believers, and he did not flee from the commander or his soldiers when they found him. The commander was very angry with St. Wanas because of his courage, and the soldiers began to try a series of torture methods with the saint. They were creative in torturing him, having no mercy on his young age. During all this torturing, St. Wanas glorified God and called out for God to help him.

Finally, he was martyred on the 16th day of Hatour (third Coptic month), at the beginning of the fourth century. After the soldiers separated his head from his body, they threw his head far from his body. God guided some believers to his body, which they recognized because of his distinct outfit which he always wore (a white gown with a distinct cross on it), and they joyfully took the body to the bishop, who asked them to go search for the saint's head.

They went back and searched for the head until they found it under a palm tree and brought it back to the bishop, who respectfully put perfumes on the body, wrapped it in a shroud, and buried it in the cemetery St. Wanas asked to be buried in. The townspeople passed down by mouth the location of the saint's body in the cemetery.

When the late Metropolitan Marcos (previous metropolitan of Luxor, Esna, and Armant) was alive, the location of the cemetery was in the middle of the city, buildings were starting to appear in the cemetery, and the idea of removing the cemetery arose. The metropolitan wanted to find the body of St. Wanas and move it to a worthy place. He started fasting and praying liturgies, asking God to lead him to the place where the body was buried.

After fasting for three days without eating or drinking anything, the Lord sent an angel and showed him in a vision the location of St. Wanas' tomb inside the cemetery. The next morning, Metropolitan Marcos went to the cemetery and saw the place that the angel showed him in the vision. He then took the body of the saint amidst the deacons' singing of hymns and praises, and placed it in its current location.

In the Coptic Church, St. Wanas is known as the patron saint of lost things.

His icon shows him in a deacon's outfit, holding a cross and a Gospel like a deacon circling around the altar. This is how people who he appeared to have seen him. Behind him in the picture are Luxor's Obelisks, a sign of St. Wanas' patriotism and connection to the city of Luxor.