

Coptic Orthodox Church

The Coptic Orthodox Church is an Apostolic, biblical and sacramental Christian church. The word *Coptic* is derived from the Greek word meaning *Egyptian*. The Coptic Church is one of the most ancient churches in the world, having been founded in the first century by St. Mark the Apostle, the writer of the second Gospel.

Throughout the years, the Coptic Orthodox Church has stood firm and remained faithful to the Lord through Her Apostolic traditions and Orthodox faith. She is noted for Her profound spirituality and many contributions to the Christian faith, including the Theological School of Alexandria, Monasticism and Martyrdom, as well as Her pivotal role in the Ecumenical Councils.

Today, there are thousands of Coptic churches throughout the world, in Egypt, the United States, Canada, South America, Europe, Africa and Australia. The Coptic Orthodox Church is also the largest church in the Middle East and Africa. She continues Her Orthodox heritage under the leadership and care of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark.



Coptic Orthodox Church
Archdiocese of North America



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BLESS USA



"Stretch out your
hand to the poor,
so that your
blessings may be
complete."

(Sirach 7:32)

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Mission Statement

To raise the standard and quality of living for needy and disadvantaged Copts residing in Egypt, and to aid in alleviating their suffering.

BLESS USA is an official nonprofit charity organization of the Coptic Orthodox Church. It extends monetary aid from the United States to needy Copts in Egypt. BLESS USA is under the supervision of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, along with Their Grace Bishop Youannes and Bishop David. It is headquartered at the Archdiocese of North America in Cedar Grove, New Jersey.

BLESS USA serves under BLESS (Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services), which is located in Egypt. Contributions made to BLESS USA are sent to BLESS' Charity Department in Egypt for distribution to those in need.

Mission Goals

1. Promote Christian concepts of love, unity and service.
2. Raise awareness in the United States about the conditions of needy Copts in Egypt.
3. Build a community in the United States that supports the service and programs of the Charity Department of BLESS in Egypt.

Activities

BLESS USA accomplishes its mission goals through the following:

- Publishing spiritual material such as monthly newsletters and lesson plans/activities.
- Communicating information through presentations, website updates, e-newsletters, informational pamphlets, and other various media such as videos and CD's.
- Pursuing grants and monitoring trends in the nonprofit sector.
- Cultivating relationships with members and local communities through participation in Matching Gift Programs, In-Kind Programs, and umbrella charities such as the United Way.
- Developing leadership and promoting spiritual growth among the volunteer staff.

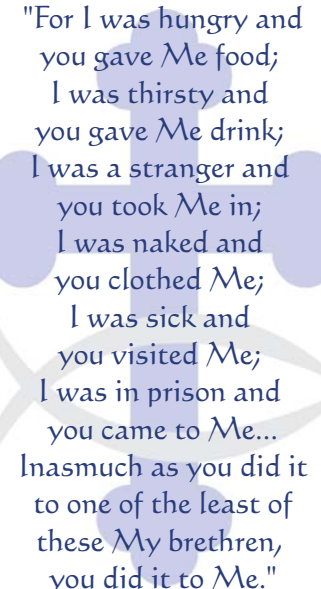
Programs

Funds from BLESS USA are forwarded to BLESS' Charity Department in Egypt for distribution among the following ten programs:

1. **Family Assistance** offers aid to families living in extreme hardship as a result of the death, absence or terminal illness of the head of the household.
2. **Medical Assistance** provides for a variety of medical necessities such as, hospitalizations, surgeries, emergencies, x-rays, medications, dialyses.
3. **Assistance for People with Disabilities** provides for the many needs of adults and children with mental and physical disabilities.
4. **Education** assists students with significant expenses associated with every level of education such as books, supplies, uniforms and private tutoring.
5. **Housing** provides for the homeless, for those migrating from rural areas, and for people living in overcrowded or mixed housing.
6. **Roofing** builds or restores roofs for homes in poverty-stricken villages that contain an overwhelming number of "houses" that have no roofs.
7. **Outreach** seeks out *Those Who Have No One to Care For Them*, such as the sick and the elderly, and attends to their needs, such as food distribution.
8. **Marriage Expense Assistance** assists women with marriage-related costs such as apparel, furniture and household appliances.
9. **Assistance for the Underdeveloped** offers training and provisions to help individuals develop a trade, enabling them to establish an income-generating business and become self-sufficient.
10. **Emergency Relief** operates as a relief fund when the *Brethren of the Lord* require immediate aid for expenses such as debts, rent, utilities, and repairs.

Biblical Foundation

BLESS USA is a service rooted in the scriptural teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our compassionate Lord greatly loves all people, and showed us through His life that loving others means attending to their needs, both spiritual and physical. Our Lord comforted people, nourished them spiritually, fed them, healed their sicknesses and treated sinners kindly. He also taught us to show love to those in need, and gave them the honor of being called His brethren. Our Lord considered a charitable act of love done towards one of His needy brethren as one done directly towards Him (cf. Matthew 25:35-36,40). It is through serving the *Brethren of the Lord* that BLESS USA seeks to respond to Christ's call to love and to serve.



"For I was hungry and you gave Me food;
I was thirsty and you gave Me drink;
I was a stranger and you took Me in;
I was naked and you clothed Me;
I was sick and you visited Me;
I was in prison and you came to Me...
Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

~ Matt. 25:35-36, 40