



# PERFECTION OF LOVE

A B L E S S U S A N E W S L E T T E R

Vol. 7 No. 4

## Leftovers !!

There is an answer that no one wants to hear when they ask the question, "What's for dinner?" Answer - "Leftovers." It is true - no one gets very excited about leftovers. Including God. Unfortunately, that is what many of us give Him.

"Of all your gifts you shall offer up every heave offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the consecrated part of them." Numbers 18:29. God asks us for the best part of everything we give, our time, our mind, our worship. Unfortunately, sometimes we are tempted to give God something that is not worth too much, and keep the best for ourselves. In the Book of Malachi, we find them making offerings to God of sick and lame animals, wondering why God is not pleased with them.

Malachi 1:8

Obviously, God is not interested in our leftovers. He wants the best and Holiest part of everything He has given to us. We all have very busy lives. Is the Lord getting prime time in our schedule - or is He getting whatever we have left over? Does He get us when we can "squeeze Him in," or, is our time with Him, our time for Him, non-negotiable? Is the Lord getting the leftovers of our energy - is most of our energy spent on our agenda instead of His? Jesus gave us a reminder on how we should consult each new day - "Seek first the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33). Are we? Or are we seeking first our own kingdom?

God is not interested in our leftovers. If that is what He has been getting, this would be a great time to turn that around. Why? Because God gave His Holiest and His best for us . . . His beloved Son.

## Kid's CORNER

**Go with Anthony as he learns about the Brethren of the Lord and some people who took care of them.**

Anthony: "Who's that over there?"

The Mother: "That's St. Zaccheus, he did something so great, why don't you go ask him to tell you about the things he did for the needy?"

Anthony: "Ok" "St. Zaccheus, can you tell me how you helped the brethren of the Lord?"

St. Zaccheus: "Well, I was a very rich man but I owed a lot of needy people money. After I visited with Jesus and He had dinner with me at my house, I decided that I needed..."

Anthony: "wait, I know your story, my mom told it to me, you decided to pay all the people back and I gave them four times more than what you had taken."

St. Zaccheus: "Yes, that's true!"

Anthony: "I can't believe you gave all those things away. You know, I remember in Sunday School they taught us to give half of all you have to the needy, is that true too?"

St. Zaccheus: "That's true too, you see

Anthony, there's nothing that feels better than helping people. For example, when you see a little boy needs a coat to keep warm in the winter, and you give him or buy him a coat, it makes him so happy. And what makes you happy is when you know that when you gave the boy the coat, it is like you gave God Himself that new coat to keep warm from the winter." Anthony: "So God likes to see me help his brothers and sisters, and I feel this love when I see the people I help out. Right?"

St. Zaccheus: "Exactly"



## Sayings of the Fathers

By almsgiving and faith sins are purged." Not assuredly those sins which had been previously contracted, for those are purged by the blood and sanctification of Christ. Moreover, He says again, "As water extinguisheth fire, so almsgiving quencheth sin." Here also it is shown and proved, that as in the layer of saving water the fire of Gehenna is extinguished, so by almsgiving and works of righteousness the flame of sins is subdued.

Giving alms to the poor and hospitality to strangers are traditional virtues encouraged by all religions. A relationship to the Highest Good naturally builds a bond among all members of the community--for all people are as brothers and sisters with the absolute value of (potential) Enlightened Beings or God's children.

Giving alms and charity is a concrete expression of this spiritual bond. Along with admonitions to practice charity, texts such as the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats from the New Testament, liken helping a poor man to giving offerings to God or the highest saints.

## Cyprian of Carthage

## Spiritual Message

Reverend Fathers and beloved brethren, friends of BLESS USA

The peace, love, and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. I would like to express my gratitude for the generosity and kindness of heart that you shown towards your less fortunate brothers and sisters in Egypt.

My beloved brethren, we continue our contemplation on:

The Blessings of The Mercy to the Merciful  
The Divine Inspiration mentions many blessings that are bestowed upon the lives of the merciful. In the last several newsletters, we contemplated on twenty-one of them. And in the last three newsletters we started contemplating on the twenty-second:

"The Lord answers the merciful prayer, and when they cry, He will say ' Here I am."

The Divine Inspiration says: "Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh...Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am'" (Is58: 7,9).

This is one of the blessings, which the merciful experience clearly in their lives. In the previous newsletter, my beloved, we mentioned six examples of the lord answering prayers of the merciful, and they were:

- 1.) Our teacher David the prophet.
- 2.) The Apostle St. Paul.
- 3.) H.H. the late Pope Mattaos 1.
- 4.) The family of St. Takla Hemanot the Ethiopian.
- 5.) St. Abraam, the late bishop of Fayoum and Giza.
- 6.) St. Sarabamon Abutarha, the late Bishop of Elbehera and Elmenoufy.

Now, We also remember, my beloved:

- 7.) A Merciful Widow from upper Egypt:

Mrs. S. A. is a blessed woman from a town in Upper Egypt. She became a widow after a very short marriage, during which the Lord had given her two daughters. This widow was working as a clerk in one of the government offices, which pays a salary that is hardly enough for her and her daughters. She was not complaining but rather paying, gladly, the tithe every month. So many times it happened that she gave from her needs, like that poor woman who had been praised by our Lord in the Bible saying, " Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she

had to live on." (Mark 12:41-44).

One day, my beloved, the two daughters got engaged and they set the crowning day to be the same. The poor widow realizing that she is in real need for money to assist her daughters, she did not ask from anybody. On the contrary, she started to pray more and more to our merciful God to sustain her needs. And He answered.

Approximately, forty days before the wedding day her manager at work called her. He said to her that he received a formal letter granting her a bonus of several thousands of Pounds. She answered saying, "how come?" " My salary is so low and they gave me this huge bonus it must be a mistake". The manager answered, "Here, take the letter and see for yourself". Amazingly, She took the letter and found her name and the amount of the bonus is several thousands of Pounds. With tears in her eyes she said, "Thank you O lord who sustains me and coordinates my entire life". The widow took the bonus and arranged everything for the wedding day and it passed in peace and happiness.

Twenty days passed after the wedding, her manager called her again. With a sorrowful voice he told her, "dear... sorry the bonus was not yours it belongs to another employee and your name was written mistakenly instead of hers". The widow was so annoyed and said, "what should I do now, I spent all the money on the wedding of my two daughters". The manager kept silent for a while and then said, "I shall write a memorandum to the chairman of the board explaining to him your situation and circumstances and ask him to allow us to deduct just a small portion of your salary every month for ten years". Few days passed and the manager called the widow to tell her that the chairman of the board agreed. Again with tears in her eyes she lifted up her face to heaven and said, " I thank you my God, for you took care of me and managed my life.

This is the blessing of mercy to the merciful, my beloved. The Lord answers their prayers, and when they cry, He will say ' Here I am.'

In the next newsletter, my beloved, we will continue with more examples from the lives of the merciful. May our Lord compensate you with the incorruptible instead of the corruptible, the heavenly instead of the earthly and the eternal instead of the temporal.

**Bishop Youannes**

General Bishop and Secretary of H.H. Pope Shenouda III