



# 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. 5

## Announcements

### Congratulations to HH Pope Shenouda III

The servants of BLESS USA would like to congratulate His Holiness Pope Shenouda III on the 50th Anniversary of His Holiness's monasticism. We pray that the Lord keep for us the life of our venerable father, our Patriarch abba Shenouda III, and keep him in his See for many peaceful years.

### Wedding Dresses Needed!!!

As you know many young couples get married in Egypt during this time of year. One of the major expenses in the wedding is the wedding dress. Previously, BLESS USA has sent to BLESS in Egypt new and used wedding dresses for the brides to use on their special day. If anyone has a wedding dress that they would like to contribute to the brethren of the Lord in Egypt, please contact us at 973-857-4299.

### New Office Hours !!!

BLESS USA office hours have changed. The office is open from Monday thru Thursday from 7pm to 11pm. If you have any questions please contact us during office hours by phone at 973-857-4299, or anytime by email at [info@blessusa.org](mailto:info@blessusa.org).

## Giving in the early church

The first Christians understood the idea of sharing with people who didn't have things. It was part of what made them so magnetic to the unbelievers around them. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. Acts. 2:44-45 We've got it . . . they need it . . . We're going to share it. See how this worked out. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. Acts. 2:46-47 This selfless sharing attracted a lot of people to Jesus!

This basic principle is still supposed to be at the heart of how a Christian views everything he or she has - I don't have this just for me . . . God gave it to me so others can have it, too. Those original believers basically erased the words "my" and "mine" from their vocabularies. How about you and me?

If God has given you transportation - like a car, for example - God is expecting you to let that car help someone who is without one when it comes to transportation. If you own a place to go and rest, it could be an answer to prayer for someone who can't afford a place to get away. Some of that closet full of clothes could really encourage someone whose closet isn't very full. Your home isn't just meant to be your castle - it should be a refuge for someone who needs a place to stay.

You may be able to share your encouragement with someone who doesn't have much . . . your knowledge in area where they could use some help. The point is that you look around at what you can give - you keep your eyes open for people who need it. You have some . . . they have a little . . . if you share what you have, you could both have enough.

This philosophy works for the good things we have, but also works when we share in another's burden with them. It could be that you share in someone's grief or mourning about a death or sickness, anything that they are going through.

When we share the good things that we have then everyone will have more, when we share in the burdens of others then the load will be lightened.



## Sayings of the Fathers

Let us consider, beloved brethren, what the congregation of believers did in the time of the apostles, when at the first beginnings the mind flourished with greater virtues, when the faith of believers burned with a warmth of faith as yet new. Then they sold houses and farms, and gladly and liberally presented to the apostles the proceeds to be dispensed to the poor; selling and alienating their earthly estate, they transferred their lands thither where they might receive the fruits of an eternal possession, and there prepared homes where they might begin an eternal habitation. Thus the day equally enlightens, the sun gives radiance, the rain moistens, the wind blows, and the sleep is one to those that sleep, and the splendour of the stars and of the moon is common. In which example of equality, 64 he who, as a possessor in the earth, shares his returns and his fruits with the fraternity, while he is common and just in his gratuitous bounties, is an imitator of God the Father.

Cyprian of Carthage,  
Powerful Exhortation

## 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. Also, I would like to congratulate you, my beloved, on the Coptic New Year. My beloved brethren, let us continue to contemplate on:

### The Blessings of Mercy to the Merciful

The Divine Inspiration mentions many blessings that are bestowed upon the lives of the merciful. In the previous newsletters, we contemplated on twenty-one different blessings. In the last four newsletters we contemplated on the twenty-second blessing bestowed on the merciful:

*"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).

The Lord answers the call of those who are merciful; this is a blessing that the merciful experience in their lives. In the previous four newsletters we mentioned seven examples of the Lord answering the prayers of those who showed mercy to others:

1. Our teacher David the prophet.
2. The family of St. Takla Hemanot the Ethiopian.
3. The Apostle St. Paul.
4. H.H. the late Pope Mattaos 1.
5. St. Abraam, the late bishop of Fayoum and Giza.
6. St. Sarabamon Abutarha, the late Bishop of Elbehera and Elmenoufya.
7. A Merciful widow from Upper Egypt.

Now let us remember, my beloved:

### A Very Merciful Widow of a Priest from Upper

#### Egypt:

Mrs. M. E. was the widow of a Priest from Upper Egypt. Her husband was a righteous man, who prayed many Liturgies and prayer services. The priest and his wife lived in a very poor village, and because they were merciful towards others, their house was always opened to everyone who needed help. Everything they received, they immediately gave to the needy. As for the priest's family, they were living hand-to-mouth, that is they never saved anything. Despite their financial condition, they felt extremely rich because their hearts were filled with God. Seven years ago, this righteous priest suddenly departed to the Lord when he was only in his fifties, leaving his wife and two daughters behind with no money. Mrs. M. E. continued in his path, never closing her door in front of anyone in need, and God

continued to bless whatever little she had. Days and years passed, and the eldest daughter was engaged. The day of the crowning ceremony drew nearer and nearer, and the mother did not have any money to give her. She would wake up very early, go out of her house in the quietness of the dawn, and lift up her eyes in faith saying, "O, Lord the eyes of all look to you, and You give them their food in due season. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." (Ps. 145:15,16). "My Lord, it never happened before in my life that I stretched out my hand to anybody. You are capable, O Lord, to get the girl married, and I do not know how." The blessed widow prayed this prayer with faith and tears daily as the days passed and the wedding day drew near. Just before the wedding day, and with a mysterious act of God, she met two Bishops. One Bishop asked her, "How much do you need for your daughter's marriage expenses?" The blessed widow would not answer, and the Bishop gave her a sum of money, which was more than what she needed for the wedding. After taking the money and kissing his hand, she raised up her eyes saying in tears, "Thank you O, Lord. I was so confident that You would provide me with my needs in the proper time." With tears filling her eyes she kissed the Bishop's hand again and he also started to tear. Before she left, the other Bishop asked her to tell him her story. So she started to tell them about her righteous husband and how they lived with their daughters. She told them about how they would distribute everything they received, immediately to the needy and the poor in their village. She told them that she kept doing the same even after her husband went to heaven. She told them, also, how she prayed when she needed the help for her daughter's wedding and how God answered her prayer in front of his eyes. The Bishop smiled and said, "rest assured you blessed one, that the gates of heaven shake in front of the merciful prayer. And when they cry, the Lord answers saying, 'Here I am.' For 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). And that is what happened with you, blessed one."

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 of 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