



PERFECTION OF LOVE

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

Vol. 8 No. 6

Education

Proverbs 9:9 "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning."

The luxury of educational advancement is not available to some of our brothers and sisters in Egypt. Those in need are suffering from the lack of education. This lack of education promotes additional problems, one of which is poverty. There is a direct link between the lack of education and poverty in Egypt. In a study on the progress of Egypt performed by the World Bank (2000), it was found that more than 46 percent of people living in poverty were illiterate, and 40 percent enjoyed only a basic education or less. Many studies suggest that poverty rates decrease significantly when education levels rise. Accordingly, it is imperative that education access and quality become cornerstones of the campaign against poverty in Egypt.

In many cases, the Brethren of the Lord are forced to adopt alternative lifestyles to make ends meet. For instance, they work longer hours or take on second and third jobs. Their children are often made to leave school and are forced to work at a young age. This continues the lack of education, which, in turn, perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

BLESS has set up the Education Program because education is an important factor in reducing the poverty rate and positively impacting individuals' lives. Although education in Egypt is free, there are significant private expenses associated with it at every stage of instruction, making education unattainable for the Brethren of the Lord.

Education brings freedom and renewal to each individual, an opportunity to unlock potential and realize dreams, and prepares each individual to contribute to the development of their society as a whole. May the Lord bless you for supporting the education of our Lord's brethren.

Dear Members,

Did you know that BLESS supports our needy students in the following ways?

1. University fees
2. Stationary, school clothes & shoes for
 - primary students amount to approximately 100 LE
 - preparatory school students amount to approximately 150 LE
 - secondary school students amount to approximately 200 LE
3. Scholarships (monthly assistance for some students)

Service Updates...

H.H. Pope Shenouda III greeted the servants of BLESS USA on August 14th at the papal residence and gave them his blessings.

H.G. Bishop Youannes met with the servants of BLESS USA on August 13th and also on August 27th. His Grace discussed in great detail many examples of saints and modern day servants who have received the blessings of serving the brethren. His Grace also meditated on our eternal life and the importance of focusing on the eternal instead of the earthly.



Sayings of the Fathers

Let us consider everything as secondary to the provident care we should take of our children, and to our "bringing them up with the training and instruction benefiting the Lord" (Eph 6:4). If from the very beginning they are taught to be a lover of true wisdom, then they have acquired a wealth superior to all other wealth and a glory superior to all other glory..If you desire to make them rich, do this. For the rich man is not he who desires many riches and is encircled with abundant wealth, but he who has need of nothing. Discipline your children in this, teach them this. These are the greatest riches. Do not seek how to give them reputation and high fame in profane learning, but consider deeply how you will teach them to despise the glory that belongs to this present life. In this way they will become more distinguished and more truly glorious. This is possible for the poor man and the rich man alike to accomplish...

St. John Chrysostom
Homily XXI. 2,
On the Letter to the Ephesians

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 have shown towards your less fortunate brothers and sisters in Egypt ~ the Brethren of the Lord.

The Blessings of Mercy toward the Merciful

The Divine Inspiration mentions many blessings that are bestowed upon the lives of the merciful. We have contemplated on twenty-four blessings, and in the last four newsletters we started contemplating on the the twenty-fifth blessing:

The Lord preserves the life of the merciful

Our teacher David, the Prophet and King, the sweet chanter of Israel, chanted and said, "Blessed is he who considers the poor; The Lord will protect him and preserve his life." (Ps. 41: 1,2). This blessing ("the Lord will preserve his life"), which is experienced by those who are merciful, carries two meanings:

The first meaning:

"The Lord will fill his heart with life..." As Archangel Raphael said to Tobias and Tobit, "Those who give alms will enjoy a full life" (Tob. 12:9.)

The second meaning:

"The Lord will save him from death..." This is what Archangel Raphael said to Tobias and Tobit, "for almsgiving saves from death." (Tob. 12:9.) We mentioned several examples:

I. **Tobit the righteous** and how the Lord saved his life from the trap of death which was prepared for him.

II. Our teacher David the prophet and how the Lord preserved his life and delivered him many times from death.

We also can mention, my beloved:

III. Our teacher St. Paul the Apostle:

Our teacher St. Paul the Apostle who had a very merciful heart full of compassion toward the poor and the needy said to the Ephesians, "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35) St Paul himself experienced this blessing in his life, and saw how the Lord preserved his life and delivered him from death.

In Acts 23, for example, we read about how the Lord preserved his life from more than forty Jews who formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. (Acts 23:12)

Also, in Acts 27, we read how the Lord preserved his life from death when he was sailing for Italy: "But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon. So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let her (ship) drive" (Acts 27:15).

And in 2 Corinthians, we read how the Lord preserved his life from death many times as he said, "Are they ministers of Christ? -I speak as a fool-I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the

deep." (2Cor.11:23-25) These, my beloved, are the blessings of mercy to the merciful.

IV. Bishop Sarabamon (Abu -Tarha), the late bishop of Elmenoufeya:

This Saint was famous for his kind heart toward the poor and the needy. We read in his life story that one day he rode his donkey going to visit one of the villages. He was carrying with him what God had given him to give to the poor and the needy. On the road at night, a thief stopped him in order to take what he was carrying. After Anba Sarabamon gave him what he had, the thief raised his hand to attack Anba Sarabamon with a stick. The great saint then said with a calm voice, "You raised your hand...well, let it be raised all the time." The robber stood still in his place and his hand could not be lowered. The Bishop continued on his way. The thief tried to move, but could not until the next day when everyone in the village saw him and entreated Anba Sarabamon, on his behalf, to let him move. Blessed are you O Lord who saved Your saint from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence, (Ps 91:3) ...who does not let the scepter of the wicked remain over the land allotted to the righteous, (Ps.125: 3)...who preserves the life of those who consider the poor and the needy.

V. A secluded merciful elder:

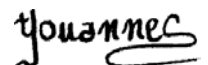
In "The Paradise Of The Desert Fathers," we read:

"It had been told to us about an elder that he was very merciful. And it happened that a great famine started. Yet, he did not stop his actions of mercy until he lost every single thing he had, except three loaves of bread. When he wanted to eat, God wanted to test him by sending a hungry man to knock on his door. He said to himself, 'it is good for me to be hungry rather than to leave Christ's brother hungry in this great famine.' So he took two loaves of bread and gave them to the man. Then he returned to pray and sat to eat the last loaf of bread. A second hungry man knocked on his door. Bad thoughts started to bother him for he was very hungry. But he jumped to the door, giving the bread to the poor man and saying, 'I do believe in Christ my Lord. . . that if I fed his servant in this hardship, He will feed me from His goods which haven't been seen by anyone which have been prepared for those who do His will.' And he slept hungry. He stayed without food for three days, thanking the Lord. As he was praying midnight prayers, he heard a voice from heaven saying to him, 'For you have completed my testament, forgetting yourself, and feeding your hungry brother. There will be no famine during your whole days on earth.' In the morning, he found several camels carrying plenty of goods and food. He praised God and thanked the Lord Jesus Christ. From that day, there was no famine in the whole land, until his last day on earth.

My beloved, this was just one example. God willing, in the next newsletter, we will explore additional examples of how God preserves the life 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