



# PERFECTION OF LOVE

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

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## Education Program

A good education is one of the most effective weapons against poverty. In its efforts to alleviate the suffering of the brethren of the Lord, BLESS USA works to develop this tool by enhancing both the access to, and quality of, education available to the brethren in Egypt.

Although free, education in Egypt is not as readily available as you may think. Many of the brethren of the Lord reside in Egypt's poorer villages where students are often encouraged to discontinue their education in order to work and help support their families. The objective of the BLESS Education program is to keep these youth in school. To this end, it assists many brethren directly by subsidizing their educational costs.

Students seeking to enter college are in particular need. Admission into the free public colleges requires the achievement of a very high comprehensive score in the last year of secondary school. When students do not attain this required score, BLESS encourages them to continue in their education by offering

to partially assist with the costs of private college. However, the student must also agree to invest in and become responsible for their own education by financing a portion of the costs as well.

Students in primary and secondary schools also face challenges in meeting their education costs. These costs often include textbooks, supplies and uniforms that are essential to an adequate education. In addition, BLESS supports the various tutoring programs of churches throughout Egypt that aim to assist students in their academic performance. Tutoring is often a necessity at every stage of instruction, regardless of the school that the child attends. The costs of tutoring vary from grade to grade, but can amount to over 500 L.E. per subject or 50 L.E. per lesson for students in public secondary schools.

As a cornerstone of BLESS work against poverty in Egypt, education provides opportunities to the brethren of the Lord that can lift them out of the conditions in which they currently live.



## Sayings of the Fathers

It is the poor man who holds out His hand but it is God Himself who receives whatever you give to the poor.

St. John Chrysostom



He who gives to no one is truly poor!

St. Clement



Love is nothing more than desiring to do good to one's neighbor, for the sake of the neighbor.

St. Clement



Make Christ a partner with you in your earthly possessions, so that he may make you a fellow-heir with Him in His heavenly Kingdom.

St. Cyprian

## Dear Member

Did you know that BLESS USA has a video further discussing the mission of the service to the Brethren of the Lord? To receive a copy of the "Community of Love" video, please contact our office. Please keep the service in your prayers.

## Service Update

We would like to invite those who would like to share in the blessings of serving at BLESS USA to the annual servant orientation which will be held at the Archdiocese located in Cedar Grove, NJ. The orientation will be held on the week-ends of September 16th and 17th and September 23rd and 24th. Servants must be at least in their second year of college or 19 years of age and must attend the two day orientation sequentially. For more information please e-mail BLESS USA at [info@blessusa.org](mailto:info@blessusa.org) or call 973 - 857 - 4299. May our Good Savior grant us a fruitful service for the glory of His Holy Name.

## 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 - *the brethren of the Lord*. 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. We previously contemplated on the twenty-sixth blessing:

#### The Lord will bless him on the earth

This is one of the blessings which is experienced clearly by the merciful. As our teacher David the prophet sang, "Blessed is he who considers the poor...he will be blessed on the earth." (Ps. 41: 1,2). This means God will make the merciful successful, joyful and prosperous.

In the last four messages, we mentioned our teachers, David the prophet, Job the Righteous and Tobit the Righteous, as examples. We also can mention:

#### El-Moaaalem Ibrahim El-Gohary

He was born in the Eighteenth Century to parents who were poor and yet full of faith and grace. His father, Yousef El-Gohary, was a tailor in Kalioub (near Cairo). His parents raised him on the love of God and the Church. In the town kottab (local school) he learned to read, write and calculate.

In the beginning of his career, he worked as a scribe for one of the mamlouk's princes. He spent one quarter of his salary on good deeds such as scribing church books and giving them to the churches at no cost. He used to bring a lot of newly scribed books to the late Pope Youhanna the 18<sup>th</sup> (1769 – 1796). When the Pope wondered about the quantity of the books and their cost, Ibrahim revealed his modest condition. The Pope, pleased by the good deeds of Ibrahim, blessed him saying, "may God exalt your name and bless your work."

Afterwards, Ibrahim was appointed as a private scribe for Moaaalem Rizk, the head of the scribes' office. When Mohammed Bek Abu El-Dahab was appointed as the head of the elders of the country, Moaaalem Rizk resigned. Moaaalem Ibrahim assumed his place due to his honesty and dedication. From this time, his star began to shine. When Abu El-Dahab died and Ibrahim Bek took over, he appointed Moaaalem Ibrahim as the head of the Egyptian scribes. It was the utmost position in the country at that time, equal to that of the Prime Minister presently. However, this high position did not affect his personality; on the contrary, it made him more humble and generous.

The Lord bestowed richness on Moaaalem Ibrahim, so he

contributed much to the building of new churches, restoration of old monasteries and almsgiving to the brethren of the Lord.

◆ *As for the building of new churches and the restoration of old monasteries, we can mention some examples like:*

The building of the northern wall of St. Antony Monastery (known until now as "El-Gohary wall"), the building of St. Mercorious Church in St. Paul Monastery, the building of St. Apollo & St. Abib Churches in El- Baramos Monastery, the building of the guest houses in both El- Baramos and El- Sourian Monasteries, the building of St. Mercorious Church in the northern part of St. Mary at Zwelah Alley (old Cairo) and the restoration of The Helping Virgin Church at Roum Alley (old Cairo). Add to that the offer of many properties to the churches and monasteries. The total number of properties he offered was about 238.

◆ *As for giving the brethren of the Lord:*

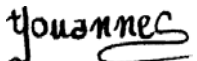
Moaaalem Ibrahim was very kind to the poor and needy. Anba Yosab (known as the voiceless) in his book "The Believers' Peace" mentioned that Moaaalem Ibrahim "loved God, was interested in building the churches and distributed all his money to the poor and the needy...he did not consider it his own, and he used to have a huge banquet every feast, especially for the poor and the needy, that was in addition to his care for them during the whole year. He also arranged monthly contributions for widows and orphans."

◆ *He did not treasure any money here on earth, but rather he treasured it in heaven (Matt. 6:19-20).*

A story tells us of the evil persons who told the Governor that Demiana, the daughter of Moaaalem Ibrahim, was keeping money he took from the government before he died. The Governor asked Demiana. She asked him for a couple of days to prepare an answer for him and went through the streets of Cairo gathering every poor and needy person to bring in front of the Governor. She said to the Governor, "my father's money is in the bellies of these poor people and on their shoulders." The Governor was moved and remembered her father's deeds with fondness.

*How consoling and beneficial is the biography of this blessed and merciful elder of the church. In the next message we will continue with how the Lord blessed him on earth. As David the Prophet said, "Blessed is he who considers the poor...he will be blessed on the earth." (Ps. 41: 1,2).*

+ 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