



# PERFECTION OF LOVE

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

Vol. 9 No. 7

## Assistance for the Underdeveloped Program

Egypt's population faces a set of employment problems that greatly impedes self-sufficiency and often prevents individuals from being able to adequately support their families. This is particularly true in the country's rural areas, where the general economic livelihood is largely dependent on agriculture. As a result of the limited opportunities in these regions, there is significant migration from agricultural areas into urban ones driven by the uneven availability of employment and income. Internal migration is responsible for the redistribution of nearly 25% of Egypt's population and for the rapid growth of Egyptian cities – especially, Cairo and Alexandria. The resulting overpopulation has also negatively impacted employment rates in the cities.

The unemployed feel pressured to accept any work available to them. Unfortunately, the jobs that are most often available are of very limited durations. The type of work that is most widely offered is only for the extent of a particular task or even for a single day. These jobs usually involve heavy lifting such as unloading and lifting sacks of cement or sand, or loads of bricks. Groups of migrant workers also tend to develop into very tight communities and, when there's not enough work to go around, ration it among each other.

Most of the unemployed migrant population is young and either has no education at all or a technical secondary certificate. These young people settle where they find work – regardless of its insufficiency – and are faced with the challenges of raising families in a situation where they are unable to earn consistent incomes. The training and provisions offered by the Funding for the Underdeveloped program help individuals develop a trade, enabling them to generate income for their families and become self-sufficient.

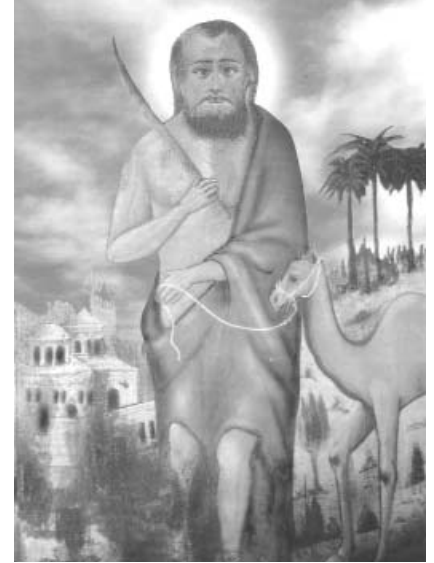
## Dear Member

United Way's Annual Campaign in the workplace is organized in many companies. If you are a United Way participant, please direct your contribution to help improve the lives and communities of our brothers and sisters in need in Egypt-the Brethren of the Lord. You may do so by indicating "BLESS USA" on your pledge card or form.

Also, if your company participates in "matching gift program," then your contribution to the Brethren may be doubled. In order to do so, please authorize your company to match your United Way pledge to BLESS USA. If you are interested in learning more about how to do so, please call the office.

## Service Update

Through God's Grace the Annual Servants' Orientation has just concluded. We are happy to welcome 10 new servants to the BLESS USA family. We ask you to continue to pray for the growth of the service.



## Sayings of the Fathers

"They were all of one heart and of one soul." Behold, heart and soul are what make the "together." "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power the Apostles rendered their testimony (apedidoun) of the resurrection." (v. 33.) The phrase betokens them to be as persons put in trust with a deposit: he speaks of it as a debt or obligation: that is, their testimony they with boldness did render, or pay off, to all. "And great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked." (v. 34.) Their feeling was just as if they were under the paternal roof, all for awhile sharing alike. It is not to be said, that though indeed they maintained the rest, yet they did it with the feeling that the means whereof they maintained them were still their own. No, the admirable circumstance is this, that they first alienated their property; and so maintained the rest, on purpose that the maintenance might not come as of their own private means, but as of the common property. "For as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (v. 35.) A great mark of honor this, that "they laid them at the Apostles' feet."

St. John Chrysostom Homilies on Acts ch 4, v.32-35. Homily XI

## 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 were contemplating on the twenty-sixth blessing:

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

This is one of the blessings that the merciful experience clearly. 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). That means God will make the merciful successful, joyful and prosperous.

In previous messages, we mentioned our teacher David the prophet, Job the Righteous and Tobit the Righteous as examples. We also started speaking about:

#### El-Moaaalem Ibrahim Al-Gohary:

The Lord blessed this merciful and righteous elder on the earth. He made him successful, joyful and prosperous.

#### ◆ Successful

He successfully obtained higher positions, beginning as a scribe for one of the mamlouks Amirs and, ultimately, becoming the head of the Egyptian scribes - the utmost position in the Country at the time, comparable to that of present-day Prime Minister.

Moaaalem Ibrahim Al-Gohary was very successful in his life. He was considered universally trustworthy, especially by Ibrahim Bek - the Governor of Egypt and Pope Youannes the 18<sup>th</sup>. The famous historian "Al-Gabarty" commented on Moaaalem Ibrahim's success: "He reached a higher level of greatness, authority and renown than any other Copt. He was involved in every small and large matter. He was clever and a genius." Al-Gabarty continued, "Ibrahim Bek was deeply saddened by his departure. He went that day to *Elkasr-Eleny* hospital and remained there until the procession to the graveyard. He was very sorrowful about his early departure."

*Moaaalem Ibrahim Al-Gohary was a very merciful man, so the Lord made him both successful and joyful on the earth.*

#### ◆ Joyful

He was certainly joyful concerning his success at work

as well as the relationships he built with people. We read in his biography that even when the Lord permitted the trial of his son's departure he was consoled. The Lord gave him a son, Yousef, and a daughter, Demiana. It happened that Yousef suddenly departed from this world immediately prior to his wedding day. Moaaalem Ibrahim and his wife were distressed. Yet, St. Antony the Great appeared to his wife in a dream and consoled her saying: "My daughter, know that God loved your son so He took him young. He loves his father too, and he took him for the purpose of keeping Moaaalem Ibrahim's name pure. This was a perfect reward from God to your husband for his righteousness." His wife was very relieved. When she woke up, she told her husband about the dream. He answered saying that he had had the same dream. They surrendered to God's will and exchanged their black garments for bright ones because their hearts were filled with consolation.

*Moaaalem Ibrahim Al-Gohary was a very merciful man, so the Lord made him successful, joyful and prosperous on the earth.*

#### ◆ Prosperous

God really blessed Moaaalem Ibrahim's life. Moaaalem Ibrahim manifested the verse, "But you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand." (Deut. 15: 8,10). He was born of poor parents and started his life with a small salary as a scribe for one of the mamlouks' Amirs. He used to devote a quarter of his salary to almsgiving so the Lord blessed him in all his works and in all to which he put his hand. He became the head of the Egyptian scribes and the Lord blessed his money and it multiplied increasingly.

*Believe me, my beloved, as much as we consider the poor, the Lord will bless us on the earth. (Ps.41: 1-2). The Lord will make us successful, joyful and prosperous on the earth. There are many among us now who are like Moaaalem Ibrahim.....may the Lord bless them.*

+ In the next newsletter, my beloved, we will start our contemplation of the twenty-seventh blessing of the merciful: "The Lord will not deliver him to the will of his enemies." (Ps. 41:2).

+ 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