



True Knowledge and Love:

"True knowledge is that which consists in the doctrine of the apostles and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout the entire world. It also consists in the distinctive manifestations of the body of Christ according to the succession of the bishops.

For by this they have handed down that Church which exists in every place and which has come down even unto us. She is guarded and preserved without any forging of Holy Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine. She neither receives any addition to, nor does she allow any diminishing of, the truths which she believes. True knowledge also consists of reading the Word of God without falsification but with a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures but without danger and without blasphemy. Above all, it consists in the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all of the other gifts of God." (Irenaeus c. 180)

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III loves God, the Coptic Orthodox Church, and the people that comprise the blessed church. There is a profound understanding of this love throughout his teaching

and preaching. To be capable of giving sound answers to theological questions and to threatening heretical situations requires great theological understanding; but this understanding predisposes a great love for the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a surrendering type of love that relinquishes all that is in the world to desire a spiritual union with the Holy Spirit; His Holiness cooperates fully with this union, and consequently this type of love.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III has demonstrated his infinite capacity to love his children in many exemplary ways. The first is by teaching us, through knowledge and a spiritual example, how to stay far away from sin. While one sins, one cannot love our Lord nor follow His teachings. His Holiness Pope Shenouda, living the virtues of the monastic way of life while overseeing the See of St. Mark, has maintained his papal residence at St. Bishoy Monastery, where His Holiness "over sees" papal work, along with focused prayer time away from the worldly calls of life. His Holiness' admiration for saint St. Bishoy and his endearing St. Mary Monastery nearby, known as El-Sourian Monastery, called him to choose to be surrounded by those who enjoy the simplistic way of life, those who dedicated their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ and none else. When we surround ourselves with the lives of the

saints, both those who preceded us and those who are familiar to us, who love the Lord, and stay away from evil, we engage in True Love.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda is very sincere in his work. As a hard working Patriarch, devoted to his people, he is in constant meditation and prayer regarding those of the Coptic faith. When one is in constant meditation over spiritual matters it is difficult to give heed to the worldly nature of the world. When he is not in meditation and prayer, he is in spiritual work mode which makes him fly to multiple countries, encouraging us to strengthen our faith and spread the Coptic Church throughout the land. This is not just for the Copts but for the converts as well, noting that conversion of souls is equal in importance – equally needed for the Coptic Church to grow.

"Look for a spiritual solution to a problem" is the anthem in many of His Holiness' sermons and teachings. How are we taught this?

St. Anthony taught, "Tire yourself in the reading of books as it saves you from impurity."

Mar Isaac said, "Diligently read books and the lives of the saints. Because continuous study, looking in books, and reading about the manners of the fathers will improve the quality of your thoughts, and it

becomes easy to do what fears God in your eyes, and difficulties are solvable."

His Holiness has authored countless books and given an infinite number of sermons aimed at helping a person prevent thoughts of sin. His Holiness' gift is, not only that his teachings seek a solution to a problem, but also that His Holiness draws his audience's thoughts and attention to understanding what they hear in a Christ-like manner. It abides with us, in us, and throughout our lives.

"Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father" (I John 2:24).

Education and Leadership:

"No other teaching will have the right of being received as apostolic than that which is at the present day proclaimed in churches of apostolic foundation." (Tertullian c. 207)

As a youth, His Holiness was very active in the church. His foundation was laid at St. Anthony Church in Shoubra. As a servant, he grew in knowledge and wisdom. He also entered the theological college, where he was intimate with the

teachings of the deacon and teacher Habib Guirguis. His progression of knowledge and understanding gained during the seminary years cannot be fathomed by even the most intelligent among us.

Moving forward from St. Anthony Church he continued in his desire to worship the Lord wholly and dedicatedly without interruption from the world. In the El-Sourian Monastery he quietly became a monk, and was later elevated, through the will of God, to the predestined role of Bishop.

Not only did His Holiness serve as Bishop of Education for the Coptic Orthodox community of believers, but during his papacy he established a Bishop of Youth whose focus of service would be the children and youth of the Coptic Orthodox Church. His role as Bishop of Education had become an integral part of his spiritual nature, and his desire to constantly improve upon the role has greatly pressed him to this day.

"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

One of my fondest memories during medical school was of His Holiness attending our Coptic Medical Society meetings every other week. The St. Stephen

Medical Society was active in the way and preservation of the Coptic Orthodox, so it became somewhat routine for His Holiness to come speak. One particular afternoon we learned that the Pope was coming to speak about the topic of love. As a young male adult, I longed to hear of complicated topics, philosophical issues, or early church fathers, nonetheless, hearing a lecture from His Holiness was welcomed no matter the topic. Leaving this lecture on love, so vast was its impact upon us fellow aspiring physicians, that many of us departed in tears. So great was the Pope's love, and so introspective was His Holiness to spiritually know the need of such a topic to those who had chosen healing as a profession. It was not enough to study medicine, and His Holiness made this point penitently clear.

"Study therefore, to be established in the doctrines of the Lord and the apostles." (Ignatius c. 105)

Preaching and Teaching:

"At that time after the Ascension, His apostles were eleven in number. To them was added Matthias, in the place of the traitor Judas. And afterwards Paul was added. Then they were dispersed throughout all the earth to preach the Holy Gospel as the Lord their Master had commanded them. For the next twenty-

five years until the beginning of the reign of Emperor Nero, they busied themselves in laying the foundations of the church in every province and city." (Lactantius c. 320)

Neither our beloved Pope's advancing age, nor its associated medical conditions, have hindered His Holiness' love of the Lord Jesus Christ; he continues to minister, consecrate altars, and bless retreat centers and schools to this current day. It is true; those who age, grow old in human years not in spiritual years. It is also true that an increase in age is an increase in life's trials, which produce greater wisdom. To further the Holy Church, His Holiness flies millions of miles away from His centralized papal residence — His Holiness' beloved St. Bishoy Monastery.

Evangelism has frequently been acclaimed as one of His Holiness Pope Shenouda's overflowing gifts and talents. It is the spiritual nature out of which His Holiness is comprised. To the present day, His Holiness has established the Holy and Apostolic Church throughout the world. Coptic Churches have altars blessed in countries never before having a Coptic Orthodox altar consecrated. Africa, Austria, England, France, Greece, Holland, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, and Switzerland are among

these countries now with a Coptic Orthodox presence.

It must be said that the United States and Australia, once countries with a few scattered Coptic Orthodox churches in a few major metropolitan cities, have hundreds of Coptic Orthodox churches within their continents.

Coptic Churches, Coptic monasteries, Coptic theological colleges, Coptic retreat centers, Coptic hospitals, Coptic schools, and Coptic university clubs are coming to the forefront in many countries outside the motherland of Egypt through the faithful and fruitful prayers of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III. All of them carrying their Coptic heritage through the names of the beloved saints, beloved fathers, and of course beloved popes – many of which bear the name of St. Shenouda.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda has authored hundreds of books in different languages, from the lives of the saints to how orthodoxy impacts our lives. His Holiness' books teach love, provide knowledge of church history, illustrate the life of the early fathers as well as the saints, and foremost, cement Biblical interpretation and sound doctrine. Favorites among many in the Southern USA diocese are Salvation in the Orthodox Understanding and What is Man?

Organization and Order of the Church:

"Our Lord...describing the house of a bishop and the order of His Church, speaks in the Holy Gospel and say to St. Peter, "I say unto you, 'You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.'"...From there, through the changes of times and successions, the ordering of bishops and the plan of the Church flow onward. So that the Church is founded upon the bishops. And every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers." (Cyprian c. 250)

It must be said that, as the Coptic Orthodox Church grew in dimensions throughout the continents, and through evangelism, the Holy Synod also grew in number throughout our beloved His Holiness Pope Shenouda's papacy, and it continues to grow in numbers today.

Large dioceses throughout the motherland of Egypt were divided into smaller dioceses so that bishops could function and serve more efficiently. While this productivity could be said to enlarge the number of bishops, the bishops in turn could pray to the Lord for additional priests to serve the congregations. A cycle of a more personal nature was developed to help all stay firmly grounded in the Coptic faith,

particularly during times of upheaval and persecution.

Order of the Church is not inclusive within the faith; it requires those of other religions to understand the Coptic Orthodox way of life. In essence, it entails sowing the seeds of our faith with the leaders of other religions. His Holiness Pope Shenouda has brought this predilection to the public's eye with a spiritual grace all his own. There have been declarations of understanding with the Roman Catholic Pope, the Patriarch of the Russia Russian Orthodox Church, and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

Recognizing that without constant prayer and worship the nature of man's existence is for naught, our beloved His Holiness Pope Shenouda furthered the establishment of the monastic way of life. Many monasteries have been erected both in Egypt and in countries abroad, including St. George monastery in El Khatatba and Archangel Gabriel in Fayoum. Our country, the United States of America, has two monasteries: St. Anthony in California, and St. Mary and St. Moses in Texas.

Summary:

Being the namesake of the monk St. Shenoute of Atripe of the White Monastery and his way of life,

Pope Shenouda III, the 117th Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, bears many of the same gifts and talents. Pallidus in the Lausiac history and John Cassian in the Conferences make no mention of Shenoute of Atripe. St. Shenoute's name is not recorded in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* or in the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*. What was the reason for such an omission? These were Greek writings and most readers were of Greek descent.

This is important to know about His Holiness' namesake. St. Shenoute of Atripe was fluent in Coptic, a language at the time not fluently used among those considered most educated, particularly in nations outside Egypt. He was a Copt. His way of thinking, reasoning, and speaking was Coptic. The monks he led in the monastery were Coptic. All his surviving letters and sermons were written in Coptic. He developed and continued to propagate Coptic literature. His writings were not Coptic translations of Greek exegeses of Holy Scripture, but were original Coptic interpretations. One could appreciate his thoughts, his contemplations and his character by simply reading what he wrote. St. Shenoute was an original, not a copy.

In many aspects His Holiness Pope Shenouda carries the likeness of his namesake. His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, the 117th Pope of Alexandria and

Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, is a sacred deposit of spirituality from the Church of the apostles themselves. His Holiness is an original in his own spiritual right.

"If that doctrine has existed from the beginning which has the apostles for its authors, then it will certainly be quite evident that the doctrine which comes down from the apostles is that which has been kept as a sacred deposit in the churches of apostles."
(Tertullian c.207)

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, the 117th Pope of Alexandria and See of St. Mark, is so like a disciple of Christ.

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