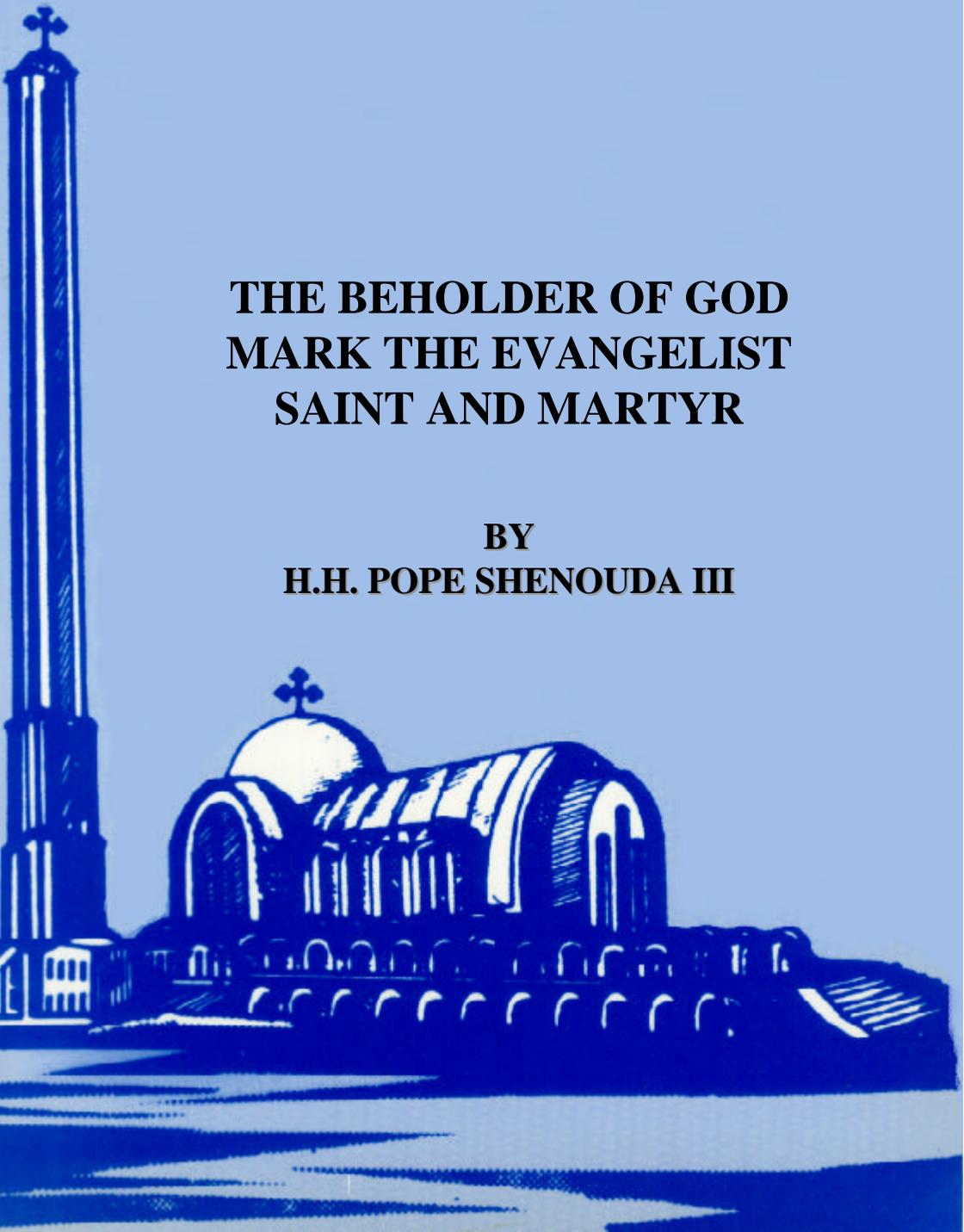


**THE BEHOLDER OF GOD  
MARK THE EVANGELIST  
SAINT AND MARTYR**

**BY  
H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III**



**THE BEHOLDER OF GOD  
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**BY**

**HIS HOLINESS**

**POPE SHENOUDA III**

**THE 117 Th. PATRIARCH  
OF THE SEE OF ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST**

**A CONCISE ENGLISH TRANSLATION  
OF THE FOURTH EDITION**

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*H.H. Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of  
Alexandria and the See of St. Mark*

## **PREFACE**

### **IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD AMEN.**

The first Egyptian Orthodox Church in the United States of America was named after Saint Mark. It was logical to the early Egyptians who came to the States to choose his name. for their first church in their new country. St. Mark was the apostle and the preacher and the first bishop to their church. He is the one who led their forefathers to accept the faith and to confess that Jesus Christ is the Savior, and the Son of God. They had always been appreciative to this great apostle.

The prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled and the Lord became known to Egypt.:

"In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. [Isaiah 19 - 19]

"Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people".[Isaiah 19 - 25]

Here in our church at Santa Monica, we felt obliged to let our children know about this great apostle and what he did for Egypt. Since they can't read our books written in Arabic about St. Mark and the See of Alexandria, it was necessary to translate to them in English so they can benefit from it.

The Church Board of Directors unanimously chose the book written by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III about St. Mark to be translated to the Egyptian Americans and for every one who is seeking the knowledge and education.

We feel proud to introduce a concise translation of the book written by H.H. Pope Shenouda III which was published in Cairo in 1968 and was reprinted several times. This is a book that the new Egyptian Americans will be keen to read about the church, whose fathers brought with them to USA when they came to the land of immigration and never traded it with another.

In our humble effort we want to thank the directors of the Church Board for the support to print this book and to all who contributed in that effort. Special thanks are in order to Mr. Hany and Mr. Nabil for their help in expediting the publication of this book.

We ask for God's blessing. We are thankful for the opportunity given to us to print this book in English. The scholar who wrote "The Beholder of God, Mark the Evangelist, Saint and Martyr", is no stranger to St. Mark, he is Pope Shenouda III, the 117 Patriarch in succession to our Saint. Let their prayers and blessings be with us, Amen.

**September 1995**  
**Santa Monica, California.**

**Father Paul**  
**Megally**  
**St. Peter & St. Paul**  
**Coptic Orthodox Church**

## INTRODUCTION

We are indebted to this great preacher, who came to our country to teach in the name of Christ. The Word of God reached us after his blood was shed on our land.

We appreciate this Saint, the first to write the Gospel registering the life of Lord Christ and His Works, so humanity can be saved.

We are grateful to the Saint whose name was given to the first church in our country, where his body was buried and after him our Patriarchs were chosen. Their first duty was to get blessed by his tomb and holding his skull and dressing it with a new garment.

The great Saint preached in the name of Christ in Egypt, Libya, Cyprus, some countries in Asia, Rome and other European countries. He is honored by Venice and other countries are seeking his blessings.

That is the apostle, the preacher, the evangelist, the martyr, the beholder of God, whose home was the first church in the world [Acts 12 - 12]. In this home, God instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist and His disciples were with the Holy Spirit.

He did many miracles and was symbolized by a lion. This lion is also the symbol of his Gospel and character.

Alas. we neglected the Saint in the past ! Now we will try, from our hearts to honor him, as a father for all of us.

We celebrated the return of his relics with enormous joy. A new cathedral was built and was given his name, so were other churches built every where carrying his name, in

Egypt and in the lands of immigration, where our sons and daughters proudly feel, that they belong to this great preacher.

His name was given to our first bishop in France.

His works, evoke the deep and cordial feelings in our hearts, whenever we celebrate his feast.

To follow his way, is the least to express our feelings towards this great preacher. It is nice to complete his work in preaching and teaching, and to remember his struggle for the faith. He took numerous trips, through the three continents, the ones known at his time. He walked along the long roads till his sandals were torn.

Let his spirit be with us and by the Grace of God, we can proudly follow his path .

This book is just a kind of expression of our gratitude towards the great teacher and to acquaint his sons and daughters all over the world, with his pure life, that suffered and struggled so the faith can reach us.

This book was written in 1968 on the occasion of the return of the relics of St. Mark to Egypt and the establishment of the Saint Mark Great Cathedral at Anba Ruweis in Cairo. The book was reprinted to satisfy the demands from the public for their benefit .

Thanks to those who contributed in issuing this edition, particularly the staff at the Printing Shop at the Great Cathedral in Anba Ruweis.

***Shenouda I I I***

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE UPRAISING OF SAINT MARK

#### **A Jew With A Gentile Character:**

St. Mark was a Jew from the Levite Tribe (1), he preached both Jews and Gentiles, but mainly among the gentiles. He had two names, "John", is the Jewish name and "Mark", is the gentile one. Mark became his distinctive name. He was born a Jew in Africa, thus he is an African born Apostle. His birthplace was in Gyréne, one of the Five Western Cities in Libya, in a small village called Aberyatolos.(2)

#### **Two Names:**

His Jewish name, "John", meant "The Kindness of God" (3) and it was mentioned twice in the Book of Acts. [Acts 13:5, 13]. His Roman name was "Mark" which meant a "hammer"(4), an unfamiliar name to the Jews. (5) Josephus, in his book, mentioned that he was the cousin of Philo. (6) Our Apostle was mentioned as Mark in all the epistles of St. Paul [Cor 4:10 ; Phi 24 ; II Tim 4:11] ; St. Peter in [1 Peter 5:13] and in the Book of Acts [Acts 15:39]

On three occasions, his two names were mentioned together. It was either said, John who was named Mark, or John who was known as Mark.

## **A Religious Family :**

Mark was raised in a religious family, many of its members were the acquaintance to Lord Christ Himself. His mother was one of the "Marys" who followed Christ. The believers gathered and prayed at her house, at the time of the Apostles. [Acts 12:12] She was a reverend woman and highly regarded by the early Christians. (7)

His father was Artistopolos, a cousin of the wife of St. Peter the Apostle.

St. Paul mentioned that he was also related to Barnabas, one of the seventy apostles (8) St. Paul told the Colossians, "Aristarchus my fellow prisoner salutes you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas." [Col 4:10]. However, some of the Greek, Latin and Coptic translations didn't mention the phrase "nephew of Barnabas" (9), may be due to the fact that some of the Greek words had more than one meaning. Bishop Yousab of Fouwa, in his book, "The History of The Patriarchs", wrote that St. Mark was related to St. Thomas the Apostle.

A religious family with such ties to the Lord Christ was a good environment for young Mark to grow up.

Anba Severus Ben Al Mokafaa, the Bishop of Al Ashmouneen, wrote in his book, " The History of The Patriarchs of Alexandria", that St. Mark the Apostle was born in Gyréne to religious parents who knew the Law and the Prophets.

His uncle Barnabas, or his cousin, was one of the first who sold property and lived a shared life with the Apostles, as mentioned in the Book, "And Joseph who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, a Levite,(10) from Cyprus", "Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet " [Acts 4:36.37]. The Book of Acts testified , "For he was a good

man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." The Holy Spirit chose him to preach with Paul, telling him, " Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" [Acts 13:2]

With Barnabas, who was filled by the Holy Spirit and faith and with Paul , John and Mark, served as the Book described, "And they had also John to their minister". [Acts 13:5]

### **His Birth and Upraising:**

He was born in Gyréne, in the Western Five Cities, where his father and uncle were rich. His mother was also rich and was capable of teaching him Greek, Latin and Hebrew. (11) He excelled in them, (12) and became well educated in religion. He studied The Law and the history of the prophets. Because of that wealth of knowledge, some thought he was a translator to Peter the Apostle during his missionary.

It was mentioned that some barbaric tribes attacked the family's properties in Gyréne, at the time of Augustus Caesar, that forced them to emigrate to Palestine. By the time Lord Christ began His teaching, the family was already settled there.(13)

That was how Mark met The Lord and became one of his disciples. His mother Mary also hosted Him in her house and was among the women who served Him. It was mentioned that Mark was at the Wedding of Cana of Galilee, where God did His first miracle, changing the water into wine. [John 2} He was among those who tasted it. (14)

## **ST. MARK'S HOME THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

No home had more fame than St. Mark's home. It was there where Lord Jesus Christ observed the passover with his pure disciples. There He washed their feet and gave them His Covenant, His Holy Body and Blood. That was where the disciples hid before the resurrection. In it, the Holy Spirit filled the disciples and they spoke in tongues. This great home was the first Christian Church and its most upper room was the famous Zion chamber.

All these facts were mentioned in our Coptic references as well as in books of the Catholics, Protestants and other churches.

In his book " Les Saints d'Egypte", Father Paul Dorliane Chineau testified that Mark was known as 'son of Mary', the neighbor and the hostess of Christ, and that Mary's home was where Christ celebrated the last Passover, (15) It was built on Mount Zion, on the big rock.

Another distinctive testimony was what Cardinal Bareaunios, a Catholic scholar in the sixteenth century, referred to St. Mark's home, "It was a destination for the Lord Christ and His followers, where He celebrated the Passover with them and where they hid after His death. In its upper room, the Holy Spirit filled them, thus it became the first Christian church. (16)

The same was mentioned by Theodosius, a Sixth Century writer, in his book "The Holy Land", and was published by Gildemeister in De Situ Terrae Sanctae ( 43 p. 20)

The British Encyclopedia (17) mentioned that St. Mark's home was the center of the Christian life in Jerusalem.

As The Lord Christ celebrated the Passover in St. Mark's home, all scholars concluded that he was the man who carried

the water pitcher, Our God talked about to His disciples and said, " Go you into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say you to the goodman of the house, The Master said, where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? " [Mark 14: 13-15] & [Luke 22: 10-12]

Alexander pointed to this in his book " Landatio Barnaboe " 13 p. 440.

The upper chamber in St. Mark's home, where the disciples of God assembled, was mentioned, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren." [Acts 1: 14]

In the same room where they were sitting, the Holy Spirit filled them, and it " Filled the house" ; "They began to speak with other tongues". [Acts 2:1-4] Accordingly, this house witnessed the establishment of the First Church.

Thus it wasn't surprising to honor this house as the first church. When the angel freed St. Peter from the prison, he went directly to this house, "He came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark ; where many were gathered together praying". [Acts 12:12] (18)

What a person he would be in such amazing spiritual environment ? A person who served the Lord. ! A person who was raised in the arms of his righteous mother, among relatives of Christ's Apostles, in a house which God entered, where He gave His Body and His Blood and filled them with the Holy Spirit.

Nobody within such an environment, would be, other than the Beholder of God, St. Mark the Evangelist, who joined His disciples, and became one of the selected Seventy Apostles.

## ONE OF THE SEVENTY APOSTLES

### A: Historian's Opinions:

Throughout the years, the Coptic historians professed that St. Mark was one of the seventy apostles, as mentioned by Luke the Evangelist. [Luke 10:1-12] Our contemporary writers, (19) as well as those in the Middle Ages. shared this fact. Severus Ben Al- Mokafaa, Bishop of Al-Ashmouneen, in the tenth century mentioned it in his book. (20) Ben Kabar included his name in both, the original Coptic and the Greek lists of the apostles (21)

This was also reported by Al Maqrizi, a Muslim historian from the Middle Ages, saying that he was among the seventy. Describing Mark as the Evangelist whose name was John, who spoke three "tongues", Foreign, Hebrew and Greek. (22)

Ibn Al Salibi, Bishop of Amad, in 1149, included him among the seventy two .(23)

St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus mentioned this fact in his book. Before him, Origen, a scholar of the second and third centuries, reported this in his book the "Faith in God", saying that Mark was among the seventy, who were chosen by God to be His messengers. (24)

Among the non Orthodox, we find Al Mushreki in an introduction, explaining the Gospel of St. Mark, included him among the seventy apostles and was named Theophoros, meaning the bearer of God.

Chineau, who is a Catholic, in his book " Les Saints d' Egypte ", called Mark an apostle. [ Apôtre]

## **In our Church's Ritual Books:**

Mark the apostle, (25) is the title given to this Saint, in all the prayers and praises. He has another title in the Doxlogies, as in the song of Watus,(26) referring to him as 'Christ's disciple'. That is the same title which is repeated in all the songs for the Saint, in the book for the Annual Praises. (27)

When we read his Gospel we say , "From the Book of St. Mark the preacher and the pure disciple"

He is always mentioned as a disciple and an apostle of God. On his feast day 30, Baramoda, the readings are about the selection of the apostles, their work and their authority. (28)

Among the very distinctive testimonies that support this belief, are the readings of his Gospel during the "Cross and Palm Processions".

In front of each icon, relevant readings are read. In front of the icon of the angels, the related readings are said, and so on for the icons of the martyrs. When the icon of St. Mark is reached, the verses from the Gospel according to St. Luke are read, beginning with, "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also and sent them two and two before His face...".

Our Catholic brethren confess his apostleship as an apostle, as shown in the Theotokion (29) where it is said:

a- "O Mark the apostle the evangelist... all earth's tribes are blessed by you. Your words reached everywhere." Probably the last phrase was taken from Psalms 18:4. that gives the idea that his service was more universal than regional.

b- "Three heavenly names you were awarded O Mark, the theologian, the evangelist and the apostle. You had been

awarded three crowns O belover of God : the crown, you had as an apostle, the crown of martyrdom and the crown of evangelism."

c- " Your fellow apostles are proud of you and we are proud of them and you." The words of his fellows made him on the same line of the apostles and that the fellowship bound them as equal.

All scholars agree that Mark was the young man who followed Christ at the time He was arrested, "And there followed a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." [Mark 14: 51-52]

The church, to protect her sons and daughters from any false assumption, insisted on calling Saint Mark with the title known to all of us, that is " The Beholder of God "

## **THE BEGINNING OF THE PREACHING OF SAINT MARK**

### **His First Miracle:**

Aristopolis, St. Mark's father, was the first to receive the faith through his son. On their way to Jordan they were faced by two beasts, a lion and lioness. The father realized that they would be eaten soon by the beasts. He urged his son to escape, and leave himself to the lions. Mark assured him that Christ would protect them and prayed saying, "O' Christ the Son of God, save us." Immediately the lions perished and they were saved.

Arstopolis accepted Christ immediately (30) through his son and confessed his faith. The father died later as a believer.(31)

### **St. Mark And The Lion:**

The lion's event led the artists to insert a lion in all of his pictures. It is possible also that because of the beginning of his Gospel, he described a roar of a lion, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness." Or because that his Gospel represented Lord Christ in His Majesty and His Kingdom, as He was "The lion of the tribe of Judea."

Always it is referred to the four Evangelists, as the four beasts, mentioned in the Book of the Revelation, [4 : 7]. The lion symbolized St. Mark the first among them.

We noticed that the people of Venice, took St. Mark as their Patron and intercessor, and adopted the lion as a symbol. They have a big statue for a winged lion in St. Mark Square in their city. The artists competed trying to show a tame lion with St. Mark as he extracted its cruelty and kept for it its courage.

### **Preaching With The Apostles:**

St. Mark began his preaching at a very early age. At the beginning he accompanied other apostles. In the Book of Acts, it is mentioned that he worked with St. Paul and St. Barnabas the Apostles, but before that he worked with St. Peter in Jerusalem and Judea. Severus Ibn Al Mokafaa stated that after Christ's resurrection, Mark accompanied Peter, preaching the multitudes in Jerusalem and went from there to Bethany to preach the Word of God. (32)

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **MARK THE EVANGELIST A UNIVERSAL PREACHER NOT FOR EGYPT ONLY.**

#### **1- A UNIVERSAL PREACHER**

Although St. Mark was particularly the preacher for Egypt, yet he was a universal preacher for all humanity. St. Severus, Bishop of Nastora (from the ninth century ) truly said that the great St. Mark, enlightened Egypt, and the world.

He was one of the seventy apostles, who were sent by God to serve.

He was one of the four who preached the world by the Gospels they wrote. The world still benefits from the books without limitation. They were meant for all the world and not for one particular church.

With his holiness, all the world benefited. He established The Theological School of Alexandria which enlightened the world with knowledge.

The only known continents at that time were limited to Asia, Africa and Europe. St. Mark preached in all of them to spread the Word of God.

#### **2- HIS PREACHING IN ASIA AND EUROPE**

St. Mark preached in Judea, Lebanon, Syria, Antioch and in Cyprus. He reached Paphos, Pamphylia, Rome, Colossi , Venice and Aquila.

### **Preaching in Judea:**

He preached with St. Peter in Judia, Jerusalem, Bethany and other places.

### **Preaching in Antioch:**

He accompanied St. Paul and St. Barnabas on their first trip. They went to Syria, and particularly to Antioch. [ Acts 11 : 27 - 30] ; " And took with them John, whose surname was Mark." Thus he handled with them the Word of the Savior to Antioch about 45 AD.(1) This was also mentioned by Josephus the famous historian. (2)

He went with them to Seleucia, [Acts 13 : 4] which was the port of Antioch. (3) St. Mark came again to Antioch with Barnabas the apostle, [Acts 15 : 37] after the council of Jerusalem. (4)

### **Preaching in Cyprus:**

In his first trip with St. Paul and St. Barnabas, they preached together in Cyprus. "They departed to Seleucia then they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were in Salamis,(5) they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews : and they had also John to their minister." [Acts 13 : 4-5]

Hasting mentioned in his book the " Dictionary of the Bible " (6) : that Mark was serving with them, meaning that he was assisting them in the preaching. This word was used with that meaning in Luke 4 : 20 . It is probable that Mark was known among his fellow Jews by the name of John, the servant [ who was in the service of God ]

We hear about St. Mark after the council of Jerusalem in the year 50 or 51 AD, when he went again to Cyprus with St. Barnabas. "And so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus." [Acts 15 : 39]

### **Preaching in other places in Asia:**

In his first trip with Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas, St. Mark preached with them in Paphos, then went together till Pamphylia. Later he left them and returned to Jerusalem. [ Acts 13 : 13]

We don't know the reason why he left them, but we know that his return saddened St. Paul the apostle, that he refused to take Mark with him when he returned to visit the believers in Syria and Selukia. Paul disputed with Barnabas that they left each other. Paul realized how important the service of St. Mark was, as we will see later.

The Lebanese believe that St. Mark was one of their preachers and that he was the first bishop in Gobayel. His Holiness Mar Aghnatius Yacoub, Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox, said that Mount Gobayel is proud of her first bishop John Mark. (7)

In the book "Antioch the Great, the City of God ", by Dr. Assad Rostom, (8) it is written that Mount Lebanon was reached by St. Mark.

St. Mark's seat was in Alexandria, and the five Western Cities belonged to this See.

### **His Preaching in Rome:(9)**

St. Mark and St. Paul established the Church in Rome. The relation between St. Mark and St. Peter was written in

Moraweg Al Akhyar book, [ He traveled with him to the blessed city of Rome and shared with him the effort,(10) also mentioned that when Peter left Rome for a long journey, he "ordered his dear disciple Mark to serve this church." (11)

### **His Preaching in Colossi:**

This was clear from the recommendation of St. Paul to the Collosians, "Aristarchus my fellow prisoner salutes you, and Marcus, son of Barnabas' sister, touching whom you received commandments: if he comes unto you, receive him." [ Col. 4 : 10]

### **His Preaching In Venice and Aquila:**

Other churches credited St. Mark for his preaching. The people of Venice stole the body of the Saint, took him as their intercessor and a Patron of their country.(12) They claimed also that he preached them, before going to the Five Western Cities.... If he had gone to Italy and preached in Rome, nothing could have stopped him from preaching Venice. Aquila, is near Venice, was claimed to be within the area that belonged to the preaching of St. Mark. It was said that St. Mark preached his Gospel in Akopla (14) and it had many antiquities. All the Italians appreciated his great services.

Away from Asia and Europe, the preaching of St. Mark continued in the Five Western Cities, Alexandria, the Egyptian regions and later after his martyrdom it was extended to Nuba, Sudan and Ethiopia..

Saint Mark's preaching wasn't limited to Egypt. The Coptic Church was his main work although his contributions were universal.

## **His Preaching In Africa:**

At the ordination of the Patriarchs in Egypt, they repeat, "The seat of St. Mark, the Evangelist, with the true knowledge that he called for in all the universe for the comfort and soul saving." His individual great work, was his Gospel, his Liturgy, and the establishment of the Theological School of Alexandria.

When we celebrate the feast of this Saint, the world shares the celebration with us , expressing the gratitude towards the Saint.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **ST. MARK AND ST. PETER**

#### **ST. MARK AND THE INJUSTICE:**

How much injustice did St. Mark receive from the followers of St. Peter ? They tried to rob him his apostolic dignity, and credit all his efforts to somebody else? I mean St. Peter.

#### **SUMMARY OF THEIR CLAIMS:**

- 1- Denying his fellowship to the Lord during the period of the Lord's ministry on earth and that he became Christian only after the resurrection at the hands of St. Peter.
  - 2- They claimed that St. Mark's Gospel was written by St. Peter.
  - 3- They attempted to credit all St. Mark's preaching, even that in Egypt and the Five Western Cities to St. Peter.
- Strange was the fact that they tried to falsify the history of our fathers and our church.

#### **A- The Attempt To Deny Him His Faith And Being An Apostle.**

They ignored the fact that Lord Christ used to enter his house, and ate the Passover with His disciples there, and that he was the one who was carrying the pitcher of water when the two disciples met him on the road and followed him according to God's plan. [Mark 14 : 13, 14] All the references pointed that St. Mark was the young man who followed Lord Christ the

night He was arrested, "Having a linen cloth cast about his naked body ;and the young men laid hold on him : And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." [Mark 14 : 51, 52]

In spite of all of that, they tried to rob the great apostle his faith. They claimed that St. Mark was one of those who accepted the faith by St. Peter after the receiving of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of Christianity. They claimed that St. Peter referred to him in his first epistle as his son, because he became a Christian by him. (1)

In the book " Moraweg Al Akhyar", accepted by Patriarch Meximos Mazloom, it was written that St. Mark didn't accept Christ except after His resurrection, through St. Peter, who took him in his entourage. Again that was why he called him, his son, in his first epistle.(2)

More strange, is the fact that they published what was referred to Papias, claiming that St. Mark, "didn't hear God nor followed Him"

They forgot that St. Mark was one of the seventy apostles as we mentioned earlier. (3) This was proven in the history books and rituals. The Coptic Catholics praise him in their own Theotokion, (4) saying "O the evangelist, the apostle, the theologian.evangelist, the apostle, you were awarded the crown of being an apostle, your fellow apostles were proud of you and we are proud of them and you."

So if he was an apostle to God, then how come he didn't hear God nor followed Him. ?! If he was one of the seventy apostles, then how come he didn't become a believer till the Pentecost by Peter, while his house was prepared for celebrating the Passover for God. St. Peter, we are sure wouldn't have approved what Papias wrote, in trying to diminish the credibility of Mark.

The fact that Peter called Mark his "son", didn't mean that he was a son in the faith, but as a father because of his age. (5)

In the Catholic history and liturgy books, Mark was described as an apostle.

The French Encyclopedia, with its Catholic publishers, stated, "The claim that Mark was a disciple of Peter was nothing other than stupidity based on some failed writers."

### **B- The Attempt to refer his Gospel to Peter:**

Some called it the "Book of St. Peter and His Follower Disciple". Father Chineau called him, " His dear secretary and translator" (7) [ Marc, son secretaire et son cher interprète.]

Others said that Peter dictated the gospel to Mark. Others claimed that Mark wrote from the collection he had when he heard Peter, or from what he knew from him. Some even dared to call this Gospel, "Peter's memoir."

Bizarre was the printing of these claims in our liturgy books when they published them in their countries. As in the case when Rene Basset published a Synaxarium in Paris about the Oriental Fathers, "Patrologia Orientales" and mentioned on St. Mark's feast on the 30 th of Baramoda, "He went to Peter in Rome and became his disciple. There he wrote his Gospel that Peter dictated to him, and preached in Rome."(8) That is what it appeared in French : "Marc, alla trouver Pierre à Rome et devint. son disciple. Ily écrivit son evangile que Pierre lui dicta et l' annonça dans la ville"

In order to express this wrong idea about the Book of Mark, they created an icon for St. Mark by the artist Angelico drawing Mark at Peter's feet, while preaching in Rome, with a caption in the book which read, : " Saint Marc assis au Pieds de Saint Pierre Prechant au Romains, note dans un livre ses paroles"

Here we may say that the Gospel was Mark's and it wasn't dictated by Peter, but was from the filling of the Holy Spirit. Mark the apostle had no need to know from St. Peter any information about Lord Christ, he knew it very well as he witnessed God and saw His miracles from the start, beginning with the first one at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, as one of the seventy apostles. He knew it all as his house was the place where the apostles assembled and with them was Saint Mary, the Mother of God.

### **C- The Attempt To Credit St. Peter For St. Mark's Preaching:**

According to their story, it was St. Peter who sent him to Egypt and the five western cities and he was the one to be reported to.

Father Peter Fermag, a Jesuit, in his book, "Moraweg al Akhyar" he wrote, " When King Kilouddos dismissed the Jews from Jerusalem, 49 AD (10) The Beloved St. Peter was sent to Egypt to preach the Holy Bible."

Maximos Mazloom, The Roman Catholic Patriarch, a Melchite, repeated the same words saying, "St. Peter sent St. Mark to Egypt in 49 AD,(11) to preach these people with the Gospel that he wrote."

In a bizarre words Father Chineau in his book, "Saints of Egypt" wrote that St. Mark, after preaching in the five western cities, went to see his distinguished teacher, Peter the apostle, to give him an account for the assignment that was given to him.(12)

It is known, that the Holy Spirit directed the apostles in their preaching. This was shown in the Book of Acts, where it was mentioned that St. Paul and his company, after going through

Phrygia and Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go to Asia. When they arrived to Mysia they tried to go to Bithynia, and the Holy Spirit stopped them. During the night, when Paul saw a man from Macedonia in a vision pleading to be reached for help, he realized that the Holy Spirit was guiding them, and God was calling them to go and preach. [Acts 16 : 6 -10]

What Chineau mentioned was strange. He said that St. Mark the apostle, went to St. Peter, his teacher to deliver an account about the assignment that was given to him. However himself in the same chapter in the Book of The Saints of Egypt, he referred to St. Mark, "By the guide of the Holy Spirit he sailed to Cyrene, then to Alexandria. These were his words in French, "Ensuite sur L'inspiration d'Esprit Saint, il s'embarqua à Cyrène et fit voilte vers Alexandrie" (13)

There is difference when one speaks guided only by his conscience, and when he speaks influenced by a fixed idea, trying to have the world to adopt his views.

Historians agreed of what Severus Ibn Al Mokafaa, Bishop of Ashmouneen, in the tenth century when he said, "The region of the world was assigned to the apostles with the guide of the Holy Spirit, to preach the Word of God...St. Mark's assignment was to go to Alexandria by the order of the Holy Spirit, so they listen to the words of the Gospel of Lord Christ." (14)

### **The Claim Of Being Ordained As A Bishop:**

Among the strange things mentioned about St. Mark was his appointment by Peter as a bishop in three different continents. It was said that Peter the apostle appointed him a bishop of Akoyla, near Venice in Italy, in Europe. It was also mentioned that he was appointed also by Peter as bishop for Gobayel (15)

in Lebanon, that is in Asia. This was beside the appointment as Bishop of Alexandria in Africa. That is, he was appointed as a bishop in the only known three continents of the world at that time.

With these claims, they confused every body. Probably they were trying to express their views about the Roman supremacy, at a time when Alexandria was on the top among the universal councils. At that period the pope of Alexandria was called as, "The judge of the universe".

### **The Works Of St. Mark With St. Peter:**

St. Peter was related to St. Mark. Peter's wife was the cousin of Mark's father. Thus St. Peter was like a father, age wise. St. Peter used to visit their home frequently and when he was freed from jail by the angel, he went directly to, "The house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying." [Acts 12 : 12]

It may be possible that Mark had accompanied his relative in his preaching in Jerusalem and 'Beth-Ania' and other Jewish places as was mentioned by Severus Ibn Al Mokafaa in his book "the History of the Patriarchs".

St. Mark was with St. Peter when he wrote his first epistle and he wrote, "The church that is Babylon, elected together with you salutes you and so does Marcus my son." [ I Peter 4 : 13] A big dispute among the historians occurred about this Babylon. Was it literally Babylon, or what meant was Rome.? Did St. Mark really preached in Rome with St. Peter.?

#### **DID HE PREACH WITH HIM IN ROME?**

It was proven in the history of the church and recorded in both the Orthodox and the Catholic books, even the Holy Bible, that Mark the apostle did preach in Rome.

**References:**

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- 2- Kinz Al Ebad Al Thameen fi Akhbar Al Kiddiseen (25 Nissan) p. 551.
- 3- Referred to it earlier.
- 4- From Theotokos month of Kihak p. 175-177.
- 5- Look the book : Love your parents.
- 6- part 16 p. 871 of The Rock 1951 p. 107.
- 7- Chineau : Les Saints d'Egypte I, p. 500.
- 8: Le Synaxaire Arab- Jacobite.
- 9- Louis Reau Iconographie de l'art chretien, III p. 871
- 10- Not agreed upon by most of the historians.
- 11-Look up the chapter for the five western cities in this book.
- 12- Les Saints d'Egypte, I p.500.
- 13- Ibid.
- 14- The History of the Patriarchs Part I.
- 15- Assad Rostom: The City of God, Antioch the Great. Part III p. 298.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ST. MARK AND ST. PAUL**

St. Mark accompanied St. Paul in his first journey, but he didn't finish the trip to the end. At the beginning St. Paul wasn't pleased that he left him, but later he realized the significance of his service and St. Mark became the closest person to St. Paul.

He worked with St. Paul and his followers like Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas and other pillars of the church. St. Paul mentioned St. Mark in his epistle to Philemon as his "my fellow labor" (Philemon 24). He then went to Colosse at the request of St. Paul, where he met St. Timothy in Ephesus.

St. Mark was called by St. Paul to come to Rome, as he was alone with St. Luke, to help in establishing the church there. He left Rome only after the martyrdom of St. Paul in about 67 AD, to return to Alexandria where he received his martyrdom, one year later.

### **ST. MARK AND THE CHURCH OF ROME**

St. Mark contributed in the establishment of the church of Rome. The Catholics mentioned that St. Mark wrote his book for Rome and the Romans and it was written in Greek

St. Paul wrote while he was in Rome, in his epistle to the people of Colosse, "Aristarchus my fellow prisoner salutes you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas,(touching whom you received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him.) And Jesus who is called Justus, who are of the circumcision.

These only are my fellow workers unto the Kingdom of God ...." (Colosseans 4 : 10, 11)

St. Paul wrote also to Philemon, while he was still in Rome, "There salute you Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus ; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow laborers." (Philemon 24)

Again St. Paul wrote from Rome in his second epistle to his disciple St. Timothy, "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with you: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." (II Timothy 4 : 11)

St. Paul found that his service with St. Luke in Rome needed St. Mark's help. St. Mark did go to Rome and stayed with St. Paul there and only returned to Alexandria after St. Paul was killed.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ST. MARK & THE FIVE WESTERN CITIES**

#### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE CITIES:**

1- St. Mark was born there before his family immigrated to Palestine.

2-He preached them the faith before coming to Egypt to preach in Alexandria in the name of Christ.

3- He went back and revisited them to ordain priests and deacons and to serve. Many miracles occurred through him.

4- These cities were represented at the time the disciples received the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost, "And in the parts of Libya about Cyrene." [ Acts 2 : 10] These cities belonged to the see of St. Mark for a long time.

We pray God that our church be blessed to be able to work in the Five Western Cities. We wouldn't be ashamed when we meet St. Mark, who may ask, what did we do with what he left us ?

As many don't know the names of these cities nor their history, we feel obliged to write concisely about them, as they represented an important role in St. Mark's preaching.

#### **Introduction:**

These cities are presently in Barka. It is one of the three present states of Libya. They were built by the Greeks between the seventh and the fifth centuries BC,(1) and were called the

"Pentapolis", but when it was conquered by the Arabs they were renamed as "Antapols".

Father Chineau called them "La Pentapole de Libye" in his book, "The Saints of Egypt."(2) "La Pentapole Libyque" means the Five Libyan Cities. La Rousse in his dictionary called them the same.

These cities were called the western cities to differentiate them from the other Five Eastern Cities, in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea [in Lebanon]. These were, Sodom, Gammorra, Adams, Segor and Seboim. (3)

These cities were built by the Greeks to accommodate their people who left their country because of poverty. The Greeks lived peacefully with the natives and spread their culture, education and their religion to them. They got involved in agriculture and breeding sheep, beside trading. This area became under Alexander The Great in the fourth century BC., then under Ptolemy till it was considered a property of Egypt.(4) In the year 56 BC, it was taken by the Romans. During this period, many Jews came to Barka and their number increased during the reign of Augustus Caesar and Octavius.(5)

## **NAMES OF THE CITIES:**

### **1-Cyrene:**

It is the first and the oldest city and was built in 631 BC on the Green Mountain, away from the coast, to be safe from the pirates. It is a different city, not to be confused with Cyrene of Tunisia.

Probably Simon from Cyrene was the one who carried Christ's cross, [Mark 15 : 21]; and Lucius the Cyrenian was from the prophets and teachers. [Acts 13 : 1]

The old Greeks called Barka as Sirenka. At the present time it is called Al Shahat or Ein Shahat.

## **2- Berenice:**

It is also known as Bernika. Its old name was Hesperis or Hesperides. During the era of the Ptolomey it was changed to Berenice, after the name of the wife of Ptolomais I. At the present time it is called "Beni Ghazi" and it is the capital of Barka.

## **3 Barka "Berce"**

It is the second or the third old city. It is in the middle of the Green Mountain and its contemporary name is "Al Marg". Its old port is called Ptolomais.

Ptolemais, port of Barka, is considered by many historians including La Rousse, that it was one of the five cities and known also as Tolomita.

## **4- Tauchire"**

Its present name is Tokra and was built in 510 BC by the Greeks on the coast and may have been used as another port for Barka.

At one time it was named as "Arsinoe" after the mother of Ptolomy III.

## **5. Apollonia:**

It is a port on the coast, known now as "Souzah". It may have been a port for Cyrene, before its present port "Darnis" This may be the place where St. Mark was born.

### **THEIR NAMES IN COPTIC:**

These cities, had different names in Coptic, except Barka and Cyrene which are similar.

It needs to be mentioned that in North Africa there was a Diocese named "Kartaganah" that didn't belong to St. Mark. History tells us that St. Keperyanos was its bishop.

St. Augustin was the bishop of Hippo, a small town in this diocese. In 419 AD, there was a council which was recognized by our church. Two hundred and seventeen bishops including St. Augustin, attended the council under St. Orilos.

### **THE CITIES AT THE TIME OF ST. MARK:**

These cities were prosperous at that time. They were politically stable till the time of the Romans. Their people were a mixture of Libyans, Greeks, Romans and Jews. They had their different religions too. Some tribes worshipped trees and mountainsand, some were influenced by the Egyptians and worshipped Isis, Osiris, the sun, the moon and Amun. The aristocrats worshipped the stars, like Mars etc..

The Greek language and culture were common. In the fourth century BC, a philosophical school appeared and was called " Cyranaica", by Arstipos,(6) a disciple of Aristocrat. Its

philosophy was based on the assumption that pleasure was the basis of man's behavior.

## **ST. MARK'S PREACHING:**

After St. Mark served with St. Peter, St. Paul and Saint Barnabas, he went to preach the faith in his native country, the five western cities.

The Saint didn't forget his place of birth or his own poor people and wanted to lead them to the light to save their souls.

When he arrived there, about 58 AD, he noticed that there was a glimpse of light among the darkness. He met many acquaintances, from Libya and Cyrene. [Acts 2 : 10] who were present during the Pentecost at his home when the Holy Spirit filled them. Probably some of them returned back to Libya as believers. Another factor was, that the aristocrats were rejecting at that time the idea of having many Gods, and began to conceive a new idea of the presence of one god only. (7)

The history books didn't mention much about his service during that time, but God blessed him by performing many miracles that attracted many to the faith. Severus Ibn Al Mokafaa, Bishop of Al Ashmouneen wrote in his book, "The history of the Patriarchs" the following:- [When St. Mark returned from Rome, he went first to the five cities and preached the Word of God. He showed them many miracles, the sick were cured, those with leprosy were cleansed and those with evil spirits were freed from them. Many believed in Lord Christ and broke down their idols. He baptized them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.]

Father Chineau confirmed these blessings in his book the "Saints of Egypt " (8) where he wrote: [St. Mark began first with the Five Western Cities in Libya, he comforted the people

during their suffering, and cured their sick. These miracles led them to accept Christianity.]

Ibn Al Mokafaa, wrote that the Holy Spirit guided him to go to Egypt, so he left his fellow believers and prayed for them to stay in the faith till he would come back to share with them the Divine joy.

They wished him well and they prayed together and again prayed for those who knew the Holy Name. (9)

He left Libya heading towards Egypt and arrived to Alexandria in 61 AD.

## **THE RETURN OF ST. MARK TO THE WESTERN CITIES:**

St. Mark left the Five Western Cities and went to Egypt, where he preached the faith. After he established the church in Egypt, he was advised by the believers to leave Egypt temporarily as they were concerned about his safety. The pagans were thinking of killing him. He accepted to leave and return after a while.

The Apostle came back to the Five Western Cities in 63 AD (10)and again met the believers and preached their people. He stayed in Libya two years preaching in the name of Christ, organizing the church, and ordaining bishops, priests and deacons.

Then he left to go back to continue his universal ministry with St. Paul, before returning back to Egypt after the martyrdom of St. Paul.

## **THESE CITIES BELONGED TO ALEXANDRIA:**

Through the Christian era, these five cities belonged spiritually to Alexandria. (11) This was confirmed by the sixth canon of the council of Nicea in 325 AD where 318 bishops from all over the world assembled. This decision was based on " Let the ancient customs in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis prevail that the Bishop of Alexandria has jurisdiction in all these." (12)

### **References:**

- 1- Hassan Soliman : Libya Between The Past and Present p. 55-65.
- 2- Chineau : Les Saints d' Egypte I p. 464.
- 3- La Rousse, p. 1601.
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- 5- Dr. Zaher Riad : The Church of Alexandria in Africa. p. 30.
- 6- Dr. Zaher Riad : Church of Alexandria in Africa. p.22-35.
- 7- Ibid.
- 8- Chineau: Les Saints d' Egypte, I p. 500.
- 9- Ibn Al Mokafaa: The History of The Patriarch I
- 10- Possible in 65 AD [ Ibn Al Mokafaa.
- 11- Laws of Apostles, Universal and Regional.
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## **CHAPTER SIX**

# **ST. MARK AND THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA**

### **1-THE GREATNESS OF ALEXANDRIA THEN:**

Alexandria was the cultural capital of the world when St. Mark arrived there. Its famous School was the centre of science and philosophy with a library filled with hundreds of thousands of books.

The population of Alexandria was estimated to be from half to three quarters of a million,(1) who were Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, Romans, Ethiopians, Nubians and other races.

### **2-ITS RELIGIOUS STATUS:**

The people St. Mark faced were a complex of different religions. There was the old Pharaohnic religion, that had many gods like Isis, Oziris, Hirus, Amun, Abis, Hathur etc., under the great god Ra.

The Greeks had many gods under their supreme god Zius. At this period there was a movement calling to combine both the Egyptian and the Greek gods, as 'syncretism' to be under the god 'Sirabis', the great idol. The Romans too had many gods under Jupiter.

There was also the Jews, with their prophets, laws and the scriptures and the heresies that the Pharisees introduced. Their number in the city was huge, that they occupied one out of the five districts of the city.

At the same time some of the Jews who arrived recently from Jerusalem were already converted to Christianity before coming to Egypt.

The name of Christ had already arrived to many individuals, through Apollo of Alexandria. Apollo was mentioned in the Book of Acts, "An eloquent man and mighty in scriptures... He was fervent in the spirit ... For he mightily convinced the Jews and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ." [ Acts 18 : 24 -28]

It might be possible that some of the Jews of Alexandria had received the Word of God through St. Simon of Cana or through "dear Theophilus" who was close to St. Luke. But all of these cases were limited to some individuals only.

Beside all these religions, there were many wise men from India, Persia and Egyptian priests who were leaders in a pagan environment.

Accordingly, the city was a mixture of idol religions with an atmosphere of philosophical arguments and discussions, particularly at the school of Alexandria and its museum.

St. Mark stood alone to face all these religions and philosophies, but he was capable in defeating them with the power of God. He entered Alexandria with a torn sandal from walking the long way.

### **3- WHEN DID HE ARRIVE TO ALEXANDRIA ? :**

It is difficult to determine the exact dates for the journeys of the apostles. Usually calculated in relation to the events, and the time of the arrival of St. Mark was no exception.

Jesophus, the famous historian, mentioned that St. Mark came to Alexandria in 43 AD, while Mrs. Butler estimated it to be in 45 AD. Patriarch Maximos Mazloom suggested that it was in

49 AD. Selim Soliman, Francis Al Etre, Deacon Menassa Youhanna gave the date as 55 AD. For Ibn Akbar it was 58 AD and for Father Chineau it was 60 AD, when St. Mark was 50 years old. Abu Shaker Ibn Al Raheb, Anba Isedoros, Habib Guirgis, Kamel Saleh Nakhla and Iris Al Masri, said that his arrival was in 61 AD.

With such variations in dates, most of the ancient historians preferred not to guess and rather to stress on the events themselves. That was what the Book of Acts almost did.

We don't accept the earlier dates, as St. Mark was still a youth, in the company of other apostles. Certainly he didn't come before the Council of Jerusalem which was about 50 AD, as agreed by all the historians.

After the Council of Jerusalem, he accompanied St. Barnabas to Cyprus where both preached together. Later, St. Paul, appreciating the importance of St. Mark in preaching, he called him to work with him.

When St. Mark was alone on his own, he went to the Five Western Cities and stayed there for few years. He may have arrived there between 55-58 AD. It is most probable that he arrived in Alexandria about the year 60 or 61 AD and this was accepted by most of the Coptic historians who estimated his stay in Alexandria to be seven years or seven years and eight months.(2)

#### **4- ON THE WAY TO ALEXANDRIA:**

On his way to Alexandria, the words of Isaiah might have been on his thought, "The burden of Egypt. Behold, the Lord rode upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt and the idols of Egypt shall be removed at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it." "And that day shall there be an

altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord...And it shall be a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt...And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation, yes, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it..." " Blessed be Egypt my people." [Isiah 19 : 1 , 19 -21 , 25]

Also he might have been thinking about the journey of Christ with the Virgin St. Mary and the blessing they left to Egypt.

It was said that he entered Alexandria, coming from the Five Western Cities, passing through the oasis to Upper Egypt and from there to Alexandria where he entered it east to the port where there was an obelisk.(3)

## **5- THE PREACHING OF ANIANUS THE COBBLER:**

He was praying before entering Alexandria to God, to provide him with the spiritual needs for the success of his mission.

By the time he arrived, his sandal was already torn, so he went to Anianus, a cobbler, to repair it. While Anianus was holding the needle, it went through his finger and he screamed from pain and said, "O' the One God". St. Mark was delighted when he heard this phrase, which was an appropriate chance to begin talking to him about that One God.

It was also appropriate to ease him from his pain first, so he took some mud and spat on it and put it on his wound, saying, "In the name of Jesus Christ, Son of God, heal this hand." (4) It was healed on the spot as if nothing happened to it.

Anianus was surprised at the miracle which was done in the name of Jesus Christ and opened his heart to the Word of God. St. Mark asked him about the One God he called, but Anianus replied that he heard about Him, but didn't know Him. Then

St. Mark began to talk to him spiritually. When his sandal was repaired he was invited to go to Anianus' home to talk more about that God.

As St. Mark entered the house he made the sign of the cross and asked God's Blessing to fill it. (5) He stayed with this family talking about Lord Christ. When Anianus asked to see The True God, St. Mark assured him that he will. He talked with him about the scriptures, the prophets, the incarnation, the miracles, the crucifixion and the great sacrifice He provided to the world.

Anianus and his family became believers and St. Mark baptized them. This home was the first fruit in St. Mark's preaching in Egypt.

## **6- SPREAD OF THE FAITH IN EGYPT:**

St. Mark who is considered the, First Bishop of Alexandria, found that his first responsibility was to continue preaching from one place to another, challenging all the difficulties that he met. With great enthusiasm he was able to convert many to the faith in God, in spite of the different numerous religions of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Persians and the arguments of the Jews.

The Catholic Jesuit, Father Frermaj reported in his book "Moraweg Al Akhyar" referring to St. Mark, that " God blessed him for his unique enthusiasm. The land which was full of darkness of the filth among the unbelievers, was changed by St. Mark the Evangelist to a heavenly paradise, with justice shinning over it." (6)

Maximos Mazloom, the Patriarch of the Greek Catholic Melchites, wrote about St. Mark, " He pulled the inhabitants to the faith in Christ, in grooves, with God's blessing and the

marvelous miracles he did, that Alexandria became a second Jerusalem, similar to what happened when the Holy Spirit descended in the Chamber of Zion . (7)

The Word of God flourished forcefully and very fast despite the encountered difficulties, which were overcome. We understand what St. Paul meant when he said about St. Mark, "For he is profitable to me in the ministry." [2 Titus 4 : 11]

## **7-ALEXANDRIA AFTER ST. MARK:**

St. Mark had great impact on Alexandria. His success to convert large numbers to believe was due to his deep spirituality, and his strong relation with God.

Eusebius the famous historian, referred to this as such, "There were multitudes of believers, men and women, who gathered from the beginning and lived the extraordinary simple life, that Philo noted to be worthy to describe. Their efforts, gatherings, and their comfort in all the ways of their lives were tremendous. (8) Eusebius in a complete chapter in his book about the philosopher Philo admired the monastic life in Egypt.

Father Chineau in his book " The Saints of Egypt " wrote, "Life became marvelous in Egypt after accepting the faith and Philo, the famous Jew, confirmed that Alexandria brought back the memory of the early days of the Church in Jerusalem. (9)

Let us find what the philosopher Philo said about the believers in Egypt as stated by Yousabius, "They left their properties, under the influence of their faith and followed the path of the prophets" ; "There was a holy place in every house, to practice their religion in, in complete isolation. They didn't permit into it any food, drink or anything for the need of the body" ; "All day long from the morning to the night they were praying, reading the Holy Books".; "They created songs and

praises for God with different tunes and rhythms" ; "They ate only after sunset" ; "They enjoyed the wisdom, without limit, tremendously." He also referred to their purity and described their prayers, silence and services.

## **8- OTHER WORKS OF ST. MARK:**

St. Mark established a Theological School to stand against the school for the pagans and to combat their ideas. He designated St. Justus to manage the school who later became the sixth bishop of Alexandria.

He wrote the Holy Liturgy for St. Anianus and the priests to use in praying.

## **9- ANIANUS WAS ORDAINED A BISHOP FOR ALEXANDRIA AND ST. MARK'S TRAVEL:**

With the tremendous success and achievement for the faith in Egypt, the unbelievers were very angry and they decided to kill St. Mark. The believers advised St. Mark to leave Egypt for a while for the safety of the church. St. Mark, who preached other cities in Egypt, agreed to leave, to return back to the Five Western Cities. He then ordained St. Anianus to be the Bishop of Alexandria in 62 AD. He also ordained three priests, Milius, Sabinus, Sardenus, and seven deacons.(10)

It is noticed that Anianus was ordained a bishop while St. Mark was still living, which indicates St. Mark's apostolic universal authority to ordain bishops wherever he went, as he did in the Five Western Cities.

St. Jerome, mistakenly in his book, wrote that St. Mark was killed in 62 AD the year Anianus was ordained, assuming that

his predecessor must have died before such an event could be possible.(11)

## **10-THE RETURN OF ST. MARK TO ALEXANDRIA:**

St. Mark stayed for a few years among the church in the Five Western Cities and with St. Paul preaching in Rome. Then the two great apostles St. Paul and St. Peter were killed and St. Mark returned to Alexandria. On his return, he found that the church he planted, grew and became prosperous and the number of the believers increased tremendously. and a church was built in the eastern part of Alexandria, known as Pokalia. (12)

St. Mark kept watching his people grow and visited and preached other cities in Egypt. This annoyed the pagans to the extent that they named him as, " The exterminator of the idols".

### **References:**

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- 2- Refer to the numerous publications of Kamel Saleh Nakhla. p. 106 & 107.
- 3- Kamel Saleh Nakhla : The history of St. Mark p. 57,58.
- 4- Les Saints d'Egypte I p. 501.
- 5- This house became St. George Church, The History of the Patriarchs by Ibn Al Mokafaa.
- 6- Morawag Al Akhyar fi Taragem Al Abrar p. 233 [25 Nisan]
- 7- Kenz Al Ebad Al Thameen fi Akhbar Al Kediseen, Part 2 p. 552 [25 Nisan]
- 8- Eusebius: Ecclesiastical History, II 16, 2.

9- Chineau : Les Saints d'Egypte, I p. 502.

10- Chineau & Rene Basset: Le Synaxaire.

11- St. Jerome: Illustrious Men: 8.

12 - Pokalia meant place for the cows or place with plants for the cows to eat. It is the present site for St. Mark Cathedral in Alexandria.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **THE MARTYRDOM OF THE SAINT**

#### **THE PAGANS HATING ST. MARK:**

As the pagans watched the success of St. Mark, their hate towards him became profound. They were shaken by his success in preaching the name of Lord Christ. Even the Roman government saw him as a direct threat to them so they planned to kill him.

#### **HE WAS ARRESTED AND TORTURED**

In 68 AD, the 14 th. year of Niron's reign, on the 29 th. of Barmoda, while the Christians were celebrating Easter in the church in Pokalia, the Egyptians and the Greeks were also celebrating the national day for the idol god Sirabis.

On this day the pagans gathered to kill St. Mark. It was too much for the pagans to see many of their own people were converting to Christianity as well as the fact that St. Mark himself was harsh in his criticism to the pagans. This increased their rage. The people together with authority moved swiftly against St. Mark. The crowd attacked the church at the time St. Mark just completed the Eucharist. They pushed away the congregation and arrested him and with a long strong rope they put around his neck, they pulled him along the streets and the roads of the city.

With extreme cruelty they kept pulling him over the rough rocky surface of the streets that his flesh was cut into pieces

with the blood all over the roads. The Saint thanked God who made him worthy to suffer in His name.

By the end of the day, they got tired, and they threw him in a dark prison.

### **A VISION AND COMFORT IN THE JAIL:**

St. Mark spent that night with his terribly lacerated body, with a high spirit, and was looking forward to meet the Lord in His Kingdom. God didn't leave him alone.

At midnight, he saw an angel, who touched him and said, " O Mark, the good servant, the time has arrived to receive your award now ". " Be courageous, as your name has been written in book of life. " This comforted him and he raised his hand towards heaven and said, "Thank you my Savior Jesus, You never left me alone, You accepted me with whom You blessed with Your mercy."

As the angel left, the Savior appeared to him and gave him the peace and said. " O Mark, my disciple and my evangelist, peace be with you." The disciple screamed and said, "O' my Lord Jesus." When the vision ended, he became cheerful and comfortable, as his heart was ready to meet the Lord.

### **THE MARTYRDOM OF THE SAINT AND HIS BURIAL:**

The following morning, on 30 Barmoda, the idolaters came, to take him from the prison and again surrounded his neck with a thick rope and repeated what they did with him the pervious day. While he was pulled over the stones he prayed God to forgive them.

His soul left him for its Creator, to receive the crown of martyrdom.

As if his killing was not enough in the eyes of the killers, so they prepared a big fire to burn his body, but heavy stormy rain extinguished the fire and dispersed the crowds. Some courageous believers took the body of their father in the faith, and put him in a coffin and headed to the church in Pokalia. Anianus together with the clergy and the people prayed at this moment of their grieve.

They dug a tomb under the church, in the east side and buried the Saint. The church was named after him, as St. Mark Church. Ironically in the year 310 AD, and at the same site, the Patriarch of Alexandria St. Peter, the last of the martyrs, was killed.

The Holy Church celebrates his martyrdom on 30 Barmoda, while the Western Churches observe it on 25, April. [25 Nisan].

Chineau reported that St. Mark was 58 years old when he was martyred.

Patriarch Maximos Mazloom in his book , "Al Kenz Al Thameen fi Akhbar Al Kidiseen" wrote, "His tomb became to the Christians the place of respect with reverence and esteem, that they came from distant places to visit, as far as Galatia, as St. Philoromis, the priest did."

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **THE MIRACLES OF SAINT MARK**

#### **1- THE DEATH OF THE LION AND LIONESS:**

That was his first miracle, after which his father accepted the faith.

#### **2- HEALING THE FINGER OF ANIANUS:**

This was his first miracle in Egypt. When Anianus' finger was punctured by the needle and was healed, he became the first to believe in Alexandria. He later became the first bishop.

Many miracles followed which attracted the people and became believers accepting the Kingdom of God and supporting the Gospel.

Chineau described his miracles to be, "continuous and numerous".

#### **3- HIS MIRACLES IN THE FIVE WESTERN CITIES:**

Severus Ibn Al Mokafaa, in his book, "The life of Saint Mark", wrote, "He went first to the Five Western Cities preaching the Word of God and showed many miracles, healing the sick, cleaning the lepers, casting out the evil spirits by the blessing of God in him. Many believed in Lord Christ and destroyed their idols they worshipped".

In his book, "The Book of St. Mark" Al Mashriki, recorded the miracles done by the saint in the Five Western Cities.

Chineau, in his book, "Les Saints d' Egypte" on page 500, wrote, "He lessened their pain and healed their sick and benefited from that to represent Christ to them."

#### **4- HIS VISION IN THE JAIL:**

When the angel appeared to him for comfort and support.

#### **5- THE FIRE WAS DISTINGUISHED AND HIS BODY WASN'T BURNT:**

When the pagans prepared the fire to burn his body, a big storm with heavy rain extinguished the fire. That served two purposes, dispersing the crowds and giving the believers a chance to take his body for burial.

#### **6-THE MIRACLE TOLD BY THE PEOPLE OF VENICE:**

It was said that while he was preaching along the Adriatic sea, his ship was pushed into shallow waters along the coast by a strong storm. Mark, then saw an angel who told him that a big city will be established there and named after him. Four hundred years later, the people in this area came to these coastal islands and built Venice.

#### **7- SAVING VENICE:**

There is a great artistic picture in the museum of Venice by a great famous artist, Pari d' Bordeaux, expressing the protection of St. Mark in defending Venice. There was about a story that could be summarized as:, "Three persons asked a sailor to take them to Lido. One of them had a reverend look and the two

others were in uniform and were armed. As the ship began to sail into deep sea, they met a strong storm and saw many evil spirits hanging over them. The sailors were terribly frightened. The man who looked kind, looked towards heaven and prayed in humbleness, while the other two armed men were standing beside him. It wasn't long that the sea became calm and the saints expelled the evil spirits. The ship arrived safely to Piazza".

The sailors were astonished when they heard this kind looking man saying, "I am Mark, Christ's Apostle, take this ring and give it to the ruler of the city, to reward you for what you did for us during the night. I came tonight with the two martyrs, George and Theodore to save Venice from the evil. The people of Venice had fallen to the devil without shame, and no regret. I trust they would repent their sins."

The ruler received the ring and rewarded the sailors, who told him about the Saint. A celebration was in order for the safety of the city and its people.

Napoleon admired the painting and took it to Paris with him, however it was returned to Italy in 1815 AD.

The people in the West are interested in our Saint, they recorded his miracles in their books and expressed their impressions in artistic paintings. We find ourselves limiting his miracles which occurred during the apostolic time only. We hope that we declare his miracles of our time and ask that he continues to show us his miracles by the power of The Spirit in him.

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- 6- Habib Guirgis: St. Mark The Evangelist, p. 60 [ after La  
Rousse ]

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **"ST. MARKS HEAD AND BODY"**

#### **1- BOTH THE HEAD AND THE BODY TOGETHER:**

Both the head and the body were buried in the church at Pokalia in his coffin till the year 644 AD, This church was known as the Cave or the Subterranean Monastery . It was in the eastern part of Alexandria, near the huge rocky area, where he was killed.

During the (Chalcedonian) dispute, in 451 AD, St. Discoris the 25 th. Pope was sent into exile. The Coptic church was subject to severe persecution. The Melchite's persecution extended for 190 years. [two natures] The Roman Melchites confiscated our churches. Many of our Patriarchs never sat in Alexandria. The Church of St. Mark in Alexandria fell to the hands of the Roman Melchites. As mentioned the remains of St. Mark were safe and complete till the year 644 AD.

#### **2- THE HEAD WAS STOLEN AND RETURNED:**

History recorded that the head [skull] of St. Mark was stolen or a sailor attempted to steal it during the Arab Conquest in 644 AD.

In our Synaxarium on Toba 8, this was mentioned as : "the captain of the ship entered the church and put his hand in the coffin of St. Mark and touched the body of St. Mark. Realizing that it belonged to a great person, he took the head and hid it in his boat."

Ibn Al Sabaa, a historian from the thirteenth century reported this in a different version. He said that one of the sailors went

at night to the church of St. Mark the Evangelist, on the Mediterranean, known as the Cave. As he entered it, he found the coffin of St. Mark and he thought that it might contain gold. He put his hand and picked the head and hid it in the ship.

Both references stated that when Amr Ibn Al Aas proceeded to Alexandria, all the ships left the port except one. This was the ship that had the Holy head. The ship failed to leave the port despite of the sailors' effort. Ibn Al Sabaa in his version said that Amr Ibn Al Aas gave an order to search the ship and found the head. After the head was removed the ship was able to sail. The sailor who stole the head was brought to Ibn Al Aas and, confessed his crime and was beaten.

Amr Ibn Al Aas inquired about the Pope who fled earlier from the persecution and when he knew that he was hiding in upper Egypt, he sent him a hand written letter assuring his safety. The Pope returned to receive the head. When Amr was told about the saint's miracles, he gave the Pope ten thousand dinars to build a church for the Saint.

The church was built in Alexandria, and was located at the Missalla Street and is still present to this day. The "head" stayed there till the 13 th. century.

### **3- THE SEPARATION OF THE HEAD FROM THE BODY:**

This information shows us that the Head of the Saint was returned to the Copts and that Pope Benjamin kept it, till the church was built. At the same time his body was in the hands of the Roman Melchites in the Pokalia church. Thus the head and the body were in separate places at that time. Here is what history tells us:

All the churches were in the hands of the Romans including the church that contained the body of this great Saint. Regardless of the order given by Amer Ibn Al Aas to enable Pope Benjamin to get back all the churches, this order was never executed. Thus the Pokalia church with the body in, was not returned to the Copts.

Was it that the Romans insisted to keep the Saint's body, at that time or were the Copts helpless? Or did they reach an understanding with Amr? Or did they reach an agreement with the Copts? We don't know. Abu Al Makarem reported that the churches were divided so were the Jacobites, [The Copts with the one nature] who took the church of "Kamha" with the head of St. Mark in it and the Melchites [The Roman Melchites with the two natures ] took the body and the Subterranean Monastery. Later the Venetians stole the body. (This monastery was the church of Pokalia where St. Mark was martyred and pulled with a rope.) [ Fol. R. V. ]

Accordingly, the Roman Melchites had the body in Pokalia church, that is the church which was taken by them with force in the sixth century. Abu Al Makarem falsely said that the Copts let the Romans have the body when the churches were divided among the Copts and the Melchites.

The word Melchite come from the word " Malek " meaning a "King" and here it stood for authority which was the Roman government then.

#### **4- THE STOLEN BODY:**

Ibn Kabar reported that the body of St. Mark was still buried in the eastern church on the Mediterranean till some Venetians stole the body leaving the head, which was then with the Copts. They took the body with them to Venice. This was confirmed

by Bishop Yusab of Fouwa, who stated, " The body was taken by the Romans to Venice." Abu Al Makarem didn't mention this in detail, but wrote, " The body was stolen and now it is in Venice. They put it in a hollowed marble pillar, secured with iron belts."

The stealing of the body happened between 828 and 829 AD, or may be in 815. This was mentioned by Butler referring to Bernre the wise French monk who visited Egypt in 870 AD. He said, " Beyond the eastern door there was the Monastery of St. Mark where the monks were living. In the church the body was buried, and the Venetians came by sea and carried the body to their Island."

Mr. Radamis Sani Al Lakani, treasurer of the Archeological Society in Alexandria, wrote in the, 'Progres Egyptiene', and was reprinted in Watani on 27 June 1965 : "During the reign of Duke Justinian Partisipatio who was appointed and transferred to Venice, in 823 AD, the body of St. Mark the Evangelist was transferred to Venice. The body was in Alexandria under the custody of two Greek priests in one of the churches there. "

There were ten Venetian ships in the port. The captain of one of these ships contacted the two Greek priests who agreed to give him the relics of the Saint. They carefully opened the coffin and removed the cloth that covered the body without disturbing the seals and took it to the ship. The Saint's relics was carried to the church of the Dukedom with enormous enthusiasm and they adopted his name as their national inspiration."

Guirgis Philothaus Awad, wrote in detail about St. Mark, and added more information. He wrote, " The two custodians of the relics of St. Mark were, Astergios, a monk and Theodore a priest. Two sea captains or merchants named Woresticos and Triponos, from Venice tricked the priests saying that the

government was about to take the churches and they were afraid that the holy relics of Saint Mark would be lost. They promised to take it to a safe place till the waves of the persecution stop. The priests agreed. When they reached Venice, the people received the relics with extreme joy and celebrations, and put their republic under the protection of the lion of St. Mark, in appreciation to his work in Italy."

## **5- THE BODY IN THE CHURCH IN VENICE:**

When the relics reached Venice in 828 AD, Duke Justinian , the ruler, built a splendid sanctuary for the relics. The sanctuary was burned in 977 AD to be rebuilt by Duke Peter Orsillo.

Another church again was built, one of the most splendid churches of the world for St. Mark and was named after him. They began to build it in 1052 AD during the reign of Duke Demonico Contarini and was completed to its present shape in the eighteenth century. Top architects and engineers competed to make it a landmark for the art in Lumbardo.

The church is on the south-eastern side of the city, on one of its famous canals. It is distinguished by its buildings, marbles, gold, pillars and decorations.

Its corridor has many oriental pillars and leads to five doors. On its walls, many events, taken from the Old Testament, like the early creation to Moses time, are painted. In the first floor, there are golden decorations representing the history of the transfer of St. Marl's relics. The domes and the walls are decorated with the most beautiful paints.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, some repairs were done in the domes which took about ten years to complete. On the day the dome was consecrated, April 25, 1912 AD. a big

ceremony was attended by a deputy representing the King of Italy.

The Popes in Rome always showed their care for this church and the relics. It was mentioned that Pope Leo IX visited the place and knelt at the tomb of St. Mark the Evangelist.

## **6-HONORING THE HEAD BY THE PATRIARCHS:**

It was a tradition that every newly appointed Patriarch, had to go on the second day of his ordination, to where the head was placed, accompanied by the bishops, priests and the people. He would kneel and bow before the holy head, then pray and raise incense, reading from the Book of Mark, and ending the prayers by asking for God's mercy.

Then he would exclude himself from the clergy and puts the skull on his lap, changes the cloth on it with a new one and restore for it, then appears to the public who would kiss it one after the other according to their ranks. The Pope is named the successor of St. Mark, since St Mark was the one who established its see.

In the book of the Ordination of the Patriarchs, it is mentioned that he embraces the head of the Saint as he became his successor.

## **7- TRANSFERRING THE HEAD:**

### **A- At The Matra Monastery And The Church Of St. Mark**

Pope Benjamin, [38 th.] received ten thousands dinars from Amr Ibn Al Aas to build a church to contain the head of St. Mark. He began to build the church which was later known as the "Suspended" or " Al Moalaqa" or " Al Kamha", but he

never completed it. Pope Aghatho [39] completed it according to the Maqrizi, p.44.

Thus it appears that Pope Benjamin kept the head with him at Matra monastery, where he was staying, as mentioned by Abu Al Makarem. This monastery was called "Episcorpion" meaning Bishopric .

When the church of St. Mark " Al Mualqa" was built, they put the head there. It was not the church of Poklia which was taken by the Romans. Ibn Al Sabaa said, "This church was built in Alexandria and was known as 'Al Mualqa' in Missalla Street in Alexandria, till this day. ( the Thirteenth Century).

### **B- The Head In The Monastery Of St. Macarius!**

Shortly later, the Romans tried to take the head, it was considered valuable also to the rulers as they realized that they can take money from the Copts under the threat of taking it or putting it for sale. In the Book Of the History of the Patriarchs, along with mentioning the life of Pope Zacharias [64] it is written that a Turkish Prince during time of the persecution by the ruler, Al-Hakem Be- Amr- Ellah took it till Bakira Al Rashidi the bearer of the cross retrieved it after paying 300 Dinars. He carried it back to Pope Zacharias, who was then in hiding in the Abu Makar Monastery.

The head was taken later to the Monastery of St. Macasrius in the wilderness of Sciety in about 1013 AD. It remained there during the time of Pope Zacharius [64] who was in hiding. This was mentioned also by Abu Al Makarem. It is probable that the head was returned to the church of St. Mark [Mualqa] in Alexandria.

## **C- The Head With The Eminent Copts Pillars In Alexandria:**

From the Eleventh Century and through the Fourteenth , the head was moved between the homes of the rich Copts. This plan probably was designed to keep it away from the rulers who were actively interested in taking money from the Copts or selling the head to the Roman Melchites. These homes were much safer, and not known. The churches were well known targets.

During the time of Pope Christotholo (the 66 th)[1077 AD], Mawhoob Ibn Mansur wrote, " The head of the Evangelist St. Mark was in the house of Abu Yehya Zakaria. When he became sick, ten Copts came to my father to tell him that Abu Yehya was too sick that he may die, and were afraid his house may be confiscated and were worried about the head which was in this house at that time. He left with them to see the sick man who was dying, and took the box containing the head to the house of Gabriel Ben Kozman which was not far from Abu Yehya's.

At night they carried it to my father's house [father of Mawhoob Ben Mansur Ben Farag Al Iskandarani] and told him that they we afraid to put it at Ben Kozman's house, as it was near that of Abu Yehya, and asked him to keep the head. My father refused as he was afraid from the Sultan who earlier punished him and had problems with him.

As Sorour Ben Matrouh took it to his house, Simon the priest, who later became a bishop of Tanaithis, was willing to take it and to look after it with his brother. Then they went and took it.

The ruler ordered that my father be arrested with all who were with him. He said he wanted the head and the 10,000

dinars, as ordered by the Sultan. He told them that Ibn Bashir wrote to the Sultan that the Romans were ready to pay him 10,000 Dinars . My father denied that he saw or took the head. My father regretted and blamed himself as he didn't take it and was put in prison for 37 days."

His father was then released from prison after he had seen a vision of St. Mark telling him that he would be released from the prison after three days, and he was, after paying 600 Dinars to the ruler. He arrived to Alexandria and took the head with him to his house.

According to the different sources, the head was taken to five or six different houses during this period.

Bishop Yusab of Fouwa wrote in his book, "The head of St. Mark was taken from a family that became afraid to keep it, so they put it in between two walls and built around it. By the end of the war, they put it back to its previous place and they lit candles around it as they used to do. Many miracles happened through the blessing of the head."

During the time of Pope Mark III [73], in between 1166-1189 AD, it was mentioned, "After the ordination of Pope Mark Ben Zaraa he entered the city to the house where the head was, spent the night there and in the morning, he opened the box with the key and put the head on his lap, praying and praising."

During the thirteenth and the fourteenth Centuries, the head was in the house of Al Sukari, according to the History of the Patriarchs.

During the life of Pope Cyril, Ben Laklak, III [75] (1235 - 1243 AD ) He rode to the house of Ibn Al Sukari where the head was, and put it on his lap and covered it with a new cloth as was the custom.

This coincided with what Ibn Kabar wrote in 1334 AD that the head was moved to a house in Alexandria, that belonged to Al Sukari's sons.

#### **D- Between The Houses And The Church "Mualaq"**

It was proven that the head was moved from one house to another. This was different from what Ibn Al Sabaa's recorded that it was in the Mualaq Church (St. Mark Church] till his time, in the Thirteenth Century.

Probably the head was in the church except during the periods of persecution when they were afraid that something may happen to it, so it was transferred to a house. When it was peaceful it would be returned to the church where it belonged.

#### **ITS LAST DESTINATION:**

It is probable that at a later date, a special tomb for the head was built in the eighteenth century. In reference to St. Yuanis XVI [103] that he went to Alexandria and stayed in St. Mark Church and visited his tomb.

The last of what was reported about the head was in reference to the life of Pope Peter VI [104]. It was stated that he went to Alexandria, kissed the head of St. Mark the Evangelist. When he was about to leave Alexandria, he heard that some people from Alexandria, or possibly from Venice were planning to take the head, so he hid it in the monastery, may be in the church in eastern Alexandria which was called then as the monastery.

After Pope Peter [104], at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, 250 years ago, the custom of holding the head by the

patriarchs after their ordination and changing the cloth had stopped. Since then we heard nothing about the head.

Kamel Saleh Nakhla, a deacon, in his book " St. Mark" on page 122, wrote, "I learned from the elderly Coptic Orthodox in Alexandria, according to what they were told by their ancestors, that the holy head was put among other skulls particularly of the saints, in a marble space, located in the north eastern part of the Church of St. Mark and known today as " Al Maksura". This served the purpose that nobody would be able to recognize it and would be immune from being stolen. That was during Pope Peter VI [104] era.

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- 4- Synaixre, the thief confessed before the search.
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- 7- Other publications, St. Mark, was known also as Al Moalaka and Archangel Michael.
- 8- Ibn Kabar: Mosbah Al Zolma: fourth book.
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- 10-Guirgis Philothaus Awad: Article about St. Mark, Al Yalaza 1929.
- 11-Butler, Arab Conquest into Egypt, Trans. by Farid Abu Hadid, p.322.

- 12- From other translated books.
- 13- As # 10.
- 14- Attia Bey Wahba: Al Ather Al Zahabi, 1915, p:189-192.
- 15- As # 3.
- 16- After Bishop Mikhail, of Tanases , 1051 AD. He himself had the head in his house for a while.
- 17- History by Abu Shaker Ben Al Raheb.

## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **MARK THE APOSTLE THE CHURCH'S PRAISES, PRAYERS AND LITURGY**

#### **1- THE PRAYER FOR BLESSING:**

There is hardly any prayer in the church that doesn't mention his name , glorifying him or requesting his intercession and asking for blessing.

His name is mentioned in the blessing prayer at the end of our meetings. It is said after the Matin Raising of Incense, at the end of the Eucharist, after Partaking and at the end of every prayer or gathering. We begin, by asking our Lady The Mother of God The pure Mary, then we ask for the blessing of St. Mark, saying " The beholder of God, the Evangelist, St. Mark, the Saint and Apostle" In this phrase, the five titles of St. Mark are mentioned.

#### **2-THE MINISTERS' ABSOLUTION:**

The priest asks for forgiveness for the priests, the ministers, the deacons, clergy and all the people " From The Holy Trinity, the church, the twelve Apostles and from the Beholder of God St. Mark the Apostle, the Saint and Martyr." The same titles which are mentioned in the blessing of the "Grace prayer". Thus we ask for his blessing and absolution.

### **3- OTHER PRAYERS IN THE LITURGY:**

a- For his intercession, we say, " Through the prayers of Beholder of God, the Evangelist, God forgive us our sins."

b- In the [Praxis], we say, " Peace be with you O martyr, peace for the Evangelist, peace for the apostle and peace for the Beholder of God."

c- In the prayers for commemoration of Saints, we say, " The beholder of God,the Evangelist, Mark the apostle, the saint and the martyr."

d- In the songs the deacon adds to these titles another one, "The head of thebishops" saying : " St. Mark , the evangelist, head of the bishops and martyr "

### **4-IN THE AGPIAH BOOK: (Book of Prayers)**

At the end of the prayers of midnight Absolution of the Priests, it is mentioned, "By the intercession of the intercessor, the source of purity, blessing and giving, our Lady the Virgin, the pride of our race St. Mary, and the compassionate martyr St. Mark the evangelist the apostle and the preacher of Egypt and all the angels, the fathers, the prophets, the saints, the anchorites ,the worshipers and the struggling monks.."

### **5- IN THE DOXOLOGY:**

a- In the praise for midnight : "Ask God O the beholder of God the evangelist Mark for forgiveness of our sins." Also

b- At the Vesper & Matin Raising of the Incense, it is said after the prayer of thanksgiving : "Through the prayers of the beholder of God the evangelist Mark the apostle, forgive us God our sins." Also it is said, " Peace for you O martyr, peace

on you O evangelist, Peace O apostle Mark the beholder of God."

c- In another song said after the Litanies in raising the incense at evening or that for the sick and for the traveler in Matin raising of the incense, "Peace for our father Mark the evangelist who demolished the idols " this is usually said after the matin's Psalm is read, and this is another title for him, " The great preacher, in Egypt, Mark the apostle, that denotes efforts to get rid of idol worship."

## **6- SONGS AND PRAISES: "PSALTIS"**

a- Two songs in 'Doxology' for his feast if it falls on a Sunday, Monday or Tuesday, in Adaam's tune is said. On the other days of the week the Watus song is performed. In these versions, Mark is called the, "disciple of Christ, Mark the apostle. The Lord our God chose you to be the preacher of His Gospel." In Adam's he is described as the priest and preacher.

b- in the book of Doxologies, there is a song for St. Mark, " O St. Mark the evangelist , the disciple of Christ and the Patriarch of Alexandria." Referring to him as a Patriarch of Alexandria is an added title, and of course it wasn't known in the apostolic era, as there was no higher rank over a bishop other than an apostle.

Another description was " The shinning torch"

## **7-THE KATAMAROS :**

The church celebrates his feast on 30 Barmoda. The readings on that day are focused on preaching, choosing the apostles and their work.

Referring to the preaching among the great congregation with success and firmness

" O come, let us make a joyful noise on the rock of our salvation."

The Gospel: all chosen from the Book of Mark, how the apostles were chosen, and what advice given to them, their authority and their rewards.

When Jesus Christ called the twelve disciples and sent them to preach [ Mark 6 : 7 - 13]

" Verily I say unto you, there is no man that had left house, or brethren, or sisters or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, for my sake, and gospel. But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." [ Mark 10 : 17 - 30]

" The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God..... Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [ Mark 1 : 1 - 11]

## **IN THE EPISTLES AND PRAXIS :**

**From The Pauline Epistle** St. Paul tells Timothy, "Take Mark and bring him with you, he is profitable to me for the ministry." [II Timothy 4 :10 -18]

**From The Catholicon** , " The church that is in Babylon, elected together with you, salutes you and does Marcus my son." [ I Peter 5 : 1 - 14]

**From The Praxis** : " And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus." , " And so were

the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." [Acts 15 : 36 , 16 : 5]

## **8-DURING THE PROCESSIONS OF THE FEASTS OF THE CROSS & PALM SUNDAY**

The priest, standing in front of the icon of St. Mark, reads the part referring to the choosing the seventy disciples, sending them for the ministry and the punishment for those who reject them. This confirms that St. Mark was one of the seventy.

## **9-IN THE SYNAXARIUM:**

The church celebrates the occasion of his martyrdom on 30 Barmoda; and on 30 Baba for the finding [appearance of] his holy head, beside some other events during the year

## **10- IN THE ORDINATION OF THE PATRIARCHS:**

a- It is stated in the nomination of the Patriarch election, "Anba ... the Saint, the Patriarch, who is worthy of the seat of St. Mark the evangelist, with the good knowledge that was expanded over the universe for comfort and the saving of the souls." This shows that his work was universal and wasn't limited to our church.

It continues to mention, ' which was preached , implanted and strengthened in the apostolic universe, by our pure father Mark the evangelist, for the coming of its true groom, The only-Begotten Son Jesus Christ The Perfect Savior Who fulfills everything.

b- On seating the Patriarch, " We seat Anba... the chief bishop to the holy apostolic seat of our father the blessed Saint Mark the beholder of God, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen."

After the Patriarch is seated, with the Book of St. Mark on his chest, (The bishops kiss him in the mouth, the priests on his chest and all the deacons kiss his hand.)

The patriarch kisses the Gospel of Mark embraces the apostolic head of the beholder of God, as he becomes his successor and is ready to follow his foot steps.

A song saying, " in succession of Mark the honorable apostle the speaker of the Divinity", another title known for him, would be chanted.

c- The intercession of the Saint is asked for, at the end of the ceremony, " By the intercession of our Lady The Mother of God the ever-Virgin, Saint Mary and by our father the Saint the pure apostle Mark the evangelist."

## **SUMMARY:**

In our church's ceremonial customs, we find the following :

1- The name of St. Mark is in every prayer, song and church readings etc.

2- We ask in our prayers, his blessing, absolution and intercession...

3- The church gives him the many titles : Saint, martyr, beholder of God, the evangelist, the speaker of divinity, the

apostle, the disciple of Christ, one of the seventy and the pure apostolic seat.

4- As for his preaching, the church mentions his universal work for the great multitudes, where he called the name of God among the gentiles. He preached daily for the salvation and comfort of every soul.

5- The church cares for his gospel.

## **A HYMN OF ST. MARK**

**WRITTEN IN COPTIC AND TRANSLATED TO  
ARABIC  
BY DR. EMIL MAHER**

Come o believers, the Orthodox folks  
To honor our father St. Mark  
In the cities in Egypt, and also in the villages  
People glorify their intercessor , our father St. Mark  
One thousand and nine hundreds years were completed this year  
Since the martyrdom of our father St. Mark  
Worthy are you o Apostle  
The great martyr our Father St. Mark  
For your confession and declaration  
You accepted the martyrdom, O father St. Mark  
Truly you declared freedom and salvation  
In Jesus Christ, O our father St. Mark  
The Egyptians and other gentiles  
Became believers by, our father St. Mark  
The lord Christ chose you a disciple  
And Evangelist too, our father St. Mark  
Your Gospel forever  
Lightens the way, our father St. Mark  
You established for us our church  
In Alexandria, our father St. Mark  
Also the other holy Church  
In Libya, our father St. Mark  
Didn't your church reach Ethiopia  
And the rest of Africa, our father St. Mark

You are the universal Apostle  
You preached the Romans O St. Mark  
Truly blessed o my Lord Christ  
As you chose our father St. Mark  
You gathered with your apostles  
In the house of our father St. Mark  
Save the church to the end  
By the intercession of our father St. Mark  
Truly we received your blessing  
In our Church, O father St. Mark  
Your Church is in Alexandria  
It is the beacon, our father St. Mark  
With the virtues and theology  
Was the theological school our Faather St. Mark  
The ideal man the lover of Christ  
That is the apostle our father St. Mark  
Peace for the Virgin, peace for the Apostle  
Peace for the martyr our father St. Mark  
The souls of the believers in the highest  
Blessing you our father St. Mark  
Same as the believers in the world  
Celebrate for you our father St. Mark  
This is the humble, deacon Peter  
Chants for you our father St. Mark.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **LITURGY OF ST. MARK "KNOWN AS ST. CYRIL LITURGY"**

St. Mark put the Holy Liturgy, he used it in his prayers and gave it to St. Anianus to use it for praying together with the three priests who were ordained with him

At first It was in Greek then was translated into Coptic. It is one of the oldest Liturgies made by the church. The other three liturgies used were taken from it. It is very rich of its contents. The holy Liturgy was learned by heart till 330 AD when Pope Athanasius the apostolic [20] put it in writing and gave it to Afromentius the first bishop of Ethiopia.

Pope Cyril the great added many additions and wrote it in its present form, and since then, it was known after him.

The Oxford Dictionary reported that in 1928 AD a papyrus paper was discovered among a collection in Strasbourg belonging to the fourth and fifth centuries, on which this Coptic Liturgy by St. Mark or St. Cyril was recorded. There was also another copy of it in Ethiopian language. The library of the Vatican has three copies.of:

The God Rossanensis [ Vat. gr. 1970 sacc XIII]

The Rotulus Vaticanus [ Vat. gr. 2281, Sacc XIII]

The Rotulus Messanensis [ Cod Mes. gr. 177. sacc XIII ]

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### ST. MARK, HIS EFFECT ON THE ARTS

St. Mark had a marked expressiveness on architecture, sculpture and painting. There are numerous churches, schools and institutions that carry his name. Statues were built, and many paintings showed him in person or about his miracles.

His paintings in Egypt: (1)

The oldest paintings belong to the Tenth and the Thirteenth Centuries. There are three paintings from each century

#### **Of the Tenth Century :**

Two are found in the church at Al Syrian Monastery in the . Natrun Valley.

One of them is located on the Iconostasis of the Sanctuary, known as the door of prophecy which dates back to the year 913 AD. It is the fifth painting, to the left on the veil.

The second painting stands between the [ first and second choires ] and dates back to 929 AD.

The third one that goes back to the Tenth Century, is located at the Mualaq Church in old Cairo, on its southern wall. It has a touch of the Byzantine and Greek arts.

#### **Of the Thirteenth Century :**

One of them dates back to 1220 AD and is placed in the library of the Al Syrian Monastery in Wadi Al Natrun under # 21 . It is a manuscript of the four Gospels that has on one of its pages, the pictures of the four evangelists.

The second one, is in the church of St. Anthony at St. Anthony Monastery in the Eastern Desert. It probably goes back to 1233 AD and was discovered by the American Byzantine Institute Expedition in 1931 AD.

The third one is under # 5/196 'holy' in the Patriarchal Library on the cover of the four Gospels and goes back to 1291 AD.

There are many other paintings, of more recent dates, as in the church of St. Mina in Fom Al Khaleeg, the church of the Virgin in Haret Zewela, the church of the Virgin in the Haret Al Rum, the Botrossia church in Abbassia, the Cathedral of St. Mark in Alexandria and the Cathedral of St. Mark in Cairo.

### **St. Mark ICONS in The Churches and Museums in Europe:**

**Monte Pellier Museum in France:** (2) Has some of the most traditional paintings representing St. Mark sitting, writing his book, looking towards heaven or to the book with a pen in his hand.

**Florence, Italy:** There is a painting that goes back to the year 1507 AD by Fra Bartolomeo in the Monastery of St. Mark for the Dominican Monks.

**Louvre Museum in Paris:** There is a painting with the lion appearing with him. It is by Peniez a famous painter who was one of Durer students. There is also another painting for him with the lion, in Venice by Bonifazeo.(3)

In general the artists painted him as a young looking person when they showed him writing the Gospel, and looking older, when he was writing something else.

The Saint was also painted with others saints, as a symbol to his blessing to them, as in a portrait by Giovanni Martini in 1501 AD with St. Hermagoras. (4)

Another painting that goes back to 1511 AD is found in the church of Saint Mary Lady of Peace in Venice, by Titan, representing St. Mark on a throne , shown at his feet, some famous saints like St. Quzman and others, who were known of their power in healing the sick. This is a confirmation from the West of his power of healing , that was given to him by the Holy Spirit during his preaching. (5)

In Munich, the artist Durer in 1526 AD, painted the four apostles, Paul and Mark together and Peter and John together, indicating that the ministry of St. Mark was with St. Paul rather than with St. Peter. (6)

### **Unique paintings :**

In Venice there is a painting representing the martyrdom of St. Mark, his torture, while receiving death with a peaceful spirit . It also showed how his body was brought to Venice. In Dar El Kutub in Cairo, there is a painting showing St. Mark baptizing Anianus, his successor.

Another beautiful painting by Pari de Bordeaux, represented a story about a war fought by the Saint against the evils in Venice. This wasn't an imagination, but true events recorded by the people of Venice, among the numerous miracles of the saint.

One is by Nantorol from The Institute of Arts in Venice and was painted in 1648 AD. It stayed in Venice till the year 1799 AD, then was transferred to Paris by Napoleon. It showed a slave at the time of his execution, with his hands cut in front of a big crowd of people. In the painting it showed St. Mark

descending from heaven and replacing the miserable slave's hands, who was also fleeing from his enemies with joy.

### **Reference**

1-Coptic Museum Guide 1932, Part 2 p. 81.

2- Habib Guirgis: St. Mark History, p. 57 - 60.

3- Abid.

4- Iconographie di l'art Chretien, III, p. 871.

5- Ibid.

6- Ibid.

## **CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

### **THE SEAT OF ST. MARK**

We don't mean the literal meaning of the word ' seat ', as St. Mark didn't have one. He kept going, preaching from one place to another, seeking the believers, till his sandals were torn from traveling!

What it means is the apostolic succession to the Saint, in completing his work, preaching and spreading the Kingdom of God on earth.

#### **1-THE FAME OF THE SEAT OF ALEXANDRIA AND ITS SERVICES**

##### **A- Alexandria Seat And The Universal Councils:**

The Seat of St. Mark was known as the Seat of Alexandria, which attained a great fame in the early centuries.

It was abreast in the holy councils, whether by presiding them or conducting theological and church studies.

Nicea Council or the Ecumenical Council meeting in 325 AD was under the supervision of the Seat of St. Mark. The most important personality in it was Athnassius the Deacon of Pope Alexandros of Alexandria. He was the most distinguished personality among the 318 saintly bishops who attended this council

The Holy Council of Nicea established the Creed, for all the Christian world that was put undoubtedly, by Athanasius of Alexandria himself.

St. Athanasius became the Pope of Alexandria in about 328 AD. He attacked the Arius doctrine and forcefully defended the faith. He resisted all the opposing thoughts, standing alone, and wasn't defeated. Once he was told that the world was against him and he replied that he was also against the world. Thus he was called the " Contra Modum".

Without Athanasius' effort, with God's help, the faith might have been lost. That is why he was called 'Athanasius The Apostolic' a title that was never given to other popes in the world.

Pope Thimothos of Alexandria similarly excelled in The Ecumenical Holy Council in Constantinople, in 381 AD. When this great saint arrived to the council, he was asked about all aspects of religion and his reply was taken as the legal edict within the church laws all over the world. This was published in the " Nicene & Post -Nicene Fathers, Vol. 14." (1)

The Ephesus Holy Council in 431 AD, it was chaired by Pope Cyril of Alexandria, and was successful to defeat the teachings of the Nestorians. He was the most effective personality of his days.

During his time, the Theological School of Alexandria was the beacon of learning.

## **B- Its Fame In Monasticism:**

Monasticism which was established by the great St. Anthony who was born in upper Egypt in the middle of the Third Century. was extended from Egypt to the rest of the world. St. Pachomius established 'the sharing life' in monasteries which was soon adopted all over the world. St. Basilus and the Benedictism followed the same style.

People, from the West as well from the East came to Egypt to visit the monks to receive their blessing and to write about their lives.

Peladius wrote about them in his famous book, "Historia Lausiaca" Others like John Kasian, in his books, "Institutes" & "Conferences", Rouvinos in the " History of the Monks ", Jerome, St. Paul the First Anchorite and St. John of Assuit; etc. The holiness of the Egyptian monks and their fame, attributed to St. Mark's preaching, were acknowledged by Philo in his book, about the School of Alexandria.

## **2- THE POPES AND BISHOPS OF THE SEAT OF SAINT MARK:**

One hundred and sixteen patriarchs sat on that seat before the our present Pope. St. Mark was considered their first. The first to succeed him was St. Anainus, about whom the Catholic Patriarch Maximus Mazloom wrote, " St. Anainus the reverend man whose heart was as God's Heart, knew all His desires and fulfilled them." (2)

At the beginning, the word ' Pope ' was not known and the successor of St. Mark was called the ' Bishop of Alexandria '. (3) There were no other bishops, but in the Second Century, Pope Dimitrius [12] ordained other bishops with him. (4) It may be Pope Omanius [7] who ordained bishops and sent them to other cities in Egypt, Nuba, Libya and the Five Western Cities.(5) Thus the successor of St. Mark was given the title of Archbishop, Patriarch and Pope.

Later the number of the bishops increased in the church and in the Fourth Century, by the time of "Arius" when Pope Alexandrus of Alexandria [19] called for a regional council it was attended then by 100 bishops from Egypt and Libya. (6)

During Pope Simon I time, who died in 700 AD a council was called to discuss ' marriage ' and was attended by 64 bishops. (7)

At the end of the Eleventh Century a council was called to judge Pope Cyril II [67] and was attended by 47. Five bishops didn't attend because of their old age or because of the distance, among them were Anba Fam and Anba Kozman of the Oasis. Those who attended were 52 and among these, 22 were from lower Egypt. At the time this book was written, in 1968 , we had only five metropolitans and bishops in lower Egypt.

The Dioceses of the seat of St. Mark needs to be studied and further research is encouraged. History (8)mentioned that Pope Mark VII ordained one Metropolitan for all upper Egypt, named Anba Peter.

### **The Decency in The Coptic Church:**

The seat was occupied by others than from the Coptic Bishops.

Some Syrians were ordained patriarchs to the church: (9)

Pope Simon I [42] who died in 700 AD, was a Syrian who came to Egypt to become a monk in Al Zogag Monastery. He was a saintly man that many miracles were performed through him.

Pope Abram Ben Zaraa [63] who died in 978 AD, was also a Syrian who worked at the beginning in trade. During his time the famous miracle of moving Mokattam mountain , occurred.

Pope Mark III who died in 1189 AD was also a Syrian

Pope Yoannis X [85] who died in 1369 came from Damascus, "Al Sham" and was called [The trusted from Al Sham.]

### **3- THE DURATION OF OCCUPYING THE SEAT: (10)**

Pope Cyril V stayed the longest as a patriarch, 52 years, 9 months and 6 days. Pope Athanasius the apostolic [20] stayed for 45 years, followed by Pope Gabriel VII [95], who stayed 43 years. Four other Popes stayed more than forty years. These were : Pope Dimitrius Al Karam [ 12] Pope Yoannis XIII [94], Pope Yoannis XVI [103] and Pope Peter Al Gawly the [109].

Six patriarchs stayed for 30 - 40 years these were : Pope Cyril the great [ 24], Pope Theodore [33], Pope Damianus [35] Pope Benjamin [38 ], Pope Christotholus [ 66], and Pope Matthew I [ 87]

Those who stayed for a short period were : Pope Arshilaos [18] who stayed 6 months, Pope Simon II for 5 months, or possible seven and half months. Pope Mikhail [71] occupied the seat for eight months.

### **4- VACANCY OF THE SEAT:**

At the beginning the seat was to be occupied as soon as it became vacant. Pope Theophans departed on 6 December 956 AD. Pope Mina II succeeded him on 7 December 956 AD. Pope Cyril the great followed Pope Theophilos after two days. Pope Khael III followed Pope Shenouda I after six days. Pope Kisma III followed Pope Gabriel I, 14 days after his departure.

Occasionally, the seat became vacant for several months. Sometimes it extended to years. The first time that happened was after Pope Simon I. The seat was empty for three years and nine months. The longest time this seat was vacant in the history of the church was after the departure of Pope Yoannis

VI [74] and it was for 19 years, five months and ten days. There were disputes and political reasons.

### **The Location Of The Seat:**

1- Its first location was the house of Anianus then at St. Mark Church in Pokalia where St. Mark was buried. It became known as the Seat of Alexandria. Alexandria remained to be the site of the patriarchs during the early centuries.

During the periods of persecution, the Popes used to flee and hide, particularly at the time of " Chalcedon ", when the Melchite patriarchs took all the churches of Alexandria. Their hiding place was usually in a monastery by the name of Al Sagas near Alexandria.

2- With the Arab conquest in 644 AD, Pope Benjamin was called from hiding by Amr Ibn Al Aas, when his safety was assured. The church in Pokalia was still in the hands of the Romans. The Pope took St. Mark Church, known also as Al Kamha or Al Muallaqa as a place for the seat in Alexandria.

Other favorite places for refuge were in Demira, Mehallet Daniel and the monasteries in the Sciety in the Natrun Valley.

3- Pope Christozolo [66] in the Eleventh Century was the first to relocate St. Mark's Seat to Cairo, to the Muallaqa Church in old Cairo.

4- The seat was again transferred to Abu Sefyn Church (St. Mercurius) in old Egypt by Pope Gabriel [70] and kept returning back and forth between the two churches till the beginning of the Fourteenth Century.

5- Then to The Church of the Virgin in Haret Zewela by Pope Yoannis VIII who departed in 1320 AD. It remained there till the Seventeenth Century.

6- Again transferred to The Church at Haret Al Rum during Pope Matthew IV [102] (1660 - 1670) till the early Nineteenth Century.

7- In 1809 AD, Pope Mark VIII built St. Mark Church in Azbakia and the seat was transferred there. When the new Cathedral of St. .Mark was completed in Anba Ruweis Monastery in Abbassiah, it became Pope Shenouda III's residence.

## **5- THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ST. MARK'S SEAT AND MONASTICISM:**

### **A: Before The Seat Was tied to monasticism:**

St. Anianus was the first to succeed St. Mark. He was followed by the three priests ordained by St. Mark. St. Yustus who was appointed to head the Theological School, was elevated to this seat, among the many who taught in that school, became patriarchs.

Graduates of this school also became bishops, and priests. At that time, monasticism was not yet known, nor flourished.

When monasticism was established, it was essentially to live a life totally full of prayers, away from the world, in solitude and silence. Occasionally, some of the monks accepted to be priests to serve the Eucharist Liturgy in the monasteries and the wilderness.

When it began, monasticism was far away from having any authority over priesthood. It was only in the Fourth Century,

after it had flourished, that many great men like Anba Anthony, Anba Pachonius, Anba Macarius and Anba Shenouda who established monasticism that things changed. None of the patriarchs was a monk in this early period. St. Athanasius who was chosen to be a patriarch, was a deacon and a disciple of Anba Anthony.

### **B- When did the monks become patriarchs ?:**

The first monk to become a patriarch was Pope Cyril [24], in 412 AD. He followed his uncle Pope Theophilus [23], who used to visit the monasteries and benefited from the monks' services. His uncle sent him earlier to the Sciet desert, to call him later to assist him. After his uncle passed away he replaced him. He was a monk from Anba Makar Monastery.

Between the time of Pope Cyril [24 ] and Pope Benjamin [38] there were 14 patriarchs, only five of them were monks. They were from the monasteries of Anba Makar, Al Zogag, Tabor and Kabrius.

Pope Yoannis III [ 40 ] was from Abu Makar Monastery, selected in 680 AD, after whom it became customary to choose the patriarchs from the monks, to the extent that otherwise was considered odd..

### **C- The relation of the monasteries with St. Mark seat:**

The first and largest monastery was the Monastery of Abu Makar, out of which many monks were elevated to the seat of St. Mark, that it was called, "The father of the patriarchs and bishops". Traditionally at that time the first visit of the new patriarch was to go to this monastery in Sciet. Out of this monastery 28 were elevated to the seat of St. Mark. The first

patriarch from this monastery was Pope Cyril the great [24], or possibly Pope Yoannis I [ 29 ]. The following patriarchs : 40, 41, 44, 46, 47, 49, 50, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 76, 83, 98, 100, 111 were from this monastery. Their last was Pope Dimitrius II, who died in 1870 AD.

**Al Zogag Monastery:** is second to Abu Makar Monastery. Four were selected there from : the 30, 34, 42, 43 rd. Their last was Pope Alexandrius II who died in 729 AD.

**Al Baramus Monastery:** From it there were six patriarchs. Their first was Pope Christotholus in 1046 AD [66] then the popes : 96, 102, 112, 113 and Pope Cyril VI [116]

**Al Muharaq Monastery:** Four were selected from it, their first was Pope Gabriel IV [86], then the popes 87, 90, 93. and their last was Pope Yuannis X II who died in 1480 AD.

**Anba Anthony Monastery:** Is the second largest contributor for the patriarchs. Twelve patriarchs were chosen from this monastery. Pope Gabriel VI [91] was the first , then the : 99, 101, 103, 110 popes and their last was Pope Yusab II [ 115] who died in 1956.

**Al Syrian Monastery:** from it were Pope Gabriel VII [ 95 ] (from 1525 - 1568) and Pope Shenouda III [ 117] on 14 November 1971, the present pope.

**Anba Bishoy Monastery :** Had two,: Pope Gabriel VIII [97] in 1587 and Pope Macarius III [114] who departed in 1945 AD.

Other monasteries not presently existing : Eight patriarchs came from them, like the Monastery of Tamora in Marietta, the Monastery of Abu Yehnes, the Monastery of Pofanah (Epiphanius), the Monastery of Shahrān, the Monastery of Mount Tora and the Monastery of Al Qalamon.

There were eight patriarchs whose monasteries were not identified.

#### **D- Laymen who became Patriarchs:**

There was a time when the church, selected laymen. It was a deviation from the established tradition of selecting the patriarchs from monks. Among these were Pope Gabriel Ben Treek [70] in 1131, Pope Abram Ben Zaraa [73] in 1166 AD and Pope Yoannis VI [74] in 1189 AD.

#### **E-.Popes from among the priests:**

Some of the patriarchs were priests as, Pope Zakharius [ 64] in 1004 AD, who was one of the priests at the Church of the Angel in Alexandria. The other was Pope Yuannis XI [89] in 1427 AD. He was a priest at Abu Sefyn Church in old Cairo.

#### **Reference:**

- 1-Nicene & Post Nicene Fathers. Vol. 14.
- 2-Kinz al Abad Al Thameen Part II p. 553.
- 3- And so Bishop of Rome. [ Law of Council of Nicea 325 AD].
- 4- Concise History of The Coptic Nation.
- 5- Anba Isithirus .
- 6- Ibid.
- 7- Ibid.
- 8- Series of History of Patriarchs, 5th Part p. 34

## **CHAPTER FOURTEEN**

### **ST. MARK AND THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE**

#### **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FAMOUS SCHOOL :**

At the time St. Mark came to Egypt, Alexandria was already an important center for education in pagan worshipping. Through its library and school, many philosophers and scientists were well known. It was proper for the new church to have a theological school to support the faith in the hearts of its believers. A school had to stand up against the idolatry. St. Mark, who himself was fluent in Hebrew, Latin and Greek, noticed the danger of the idolatry on the faith. He established a Christian Theological school and appointed Yustus, a scholar, to manage it.

The new school was based on the "Catechism method", where education was received through questions and answers. Beside spiritual and religious subjects, medicine, engineering and music were taught.

The pagan philosophers studied the Holy Bible, not to believe, but to be able to criticize and to fight it. It was also the responsibility of this school to be able to argue their claims and to respond to them.

Amonius Al Sakat the top of the idyllic philosophers used to listen to the lectures and enjoyed it.

## **THE RELATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE SEAT OF ST. MARK:**

Justus was the first to manage the school and later became the sixth patriarch. Others who attended this school and were distinguished to have high caliber, were also selected to the seat. St. Mark. At that time monasticism was not yet known. St. Eumenius succeeded Justus at the school and later was elevated to the seat to become the seventh patriarch. The same happened with Mark, who first followed Eumenius at the school then to be the eighth patriarch.

Pope Julian [ 11 ] was a student of the theological school. During the Papacy of Pope Dimetrios [12] Yaroclus was appointed as a director of the theological school after Origen and became the 13 th Pope. During his Papacy Dionesius was teaching at the school, then became the 14 th Pope. Both Yaroclus and Dionesius were students of Origen. Also Pope Peter [17] the seal of martyrs, Pope Archilaus [18] and Pope Timothy [22] were graduates of the school.

## **THE SCHOOL AND OTHER SEATS:**

Many graduated from the school and became bishops outside the seat of St Mark. One of them for example was St. Gregory, known as the wonder-maker. He was the one who taught Origen and led him to accept the faith. He wrote extensively about the school and the benefits he acquired studying there.

Others received the benefit of its education through the books written by its eminent teachers. Among those was St. Basil the great , Gregory, the Theologian, John Chrysostom, [ who read Origen's books, defended him ]. St. John Chrysostom was tried and suffered in defending Origen.

## **SOME OF ITS DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS AND PHILOSOPHERS**

Athenagoras was one of the most eminent among them, who defended Christianity and its apologists.

St. Pentinus preached in India, and in the Arab Peninsula. He was known of his excellent command in the Coptic language. St. Clement of Alexandria accepted the faith at his hands and became one of the famous scholars in Christianity. He wrote many books, including the well known " Stromata ".

St. Origen became a famous writer through the ages. He authored many books, studied the Holy Bible for 28 years and made a comparison between the different translations. He wrote the "Hexabla" and explained most of the books of the Bible. Among his famous books were, " Principles ", "Answering Calsus " and " The Prayers."

Pope Damian [14] became an authority on theology.

Pope Athanasius who attended the school, was considered to be the father to the scholars. He was credited to be the one who wrote the Christian Creed. He defended the nature of the Son in the council of Nicea and throughout his life. He wrote many books in reply to Arius, the "Incarnation of the Word", "A message to the idolatry", "Messages about the Holy Spirit" and the "Life of Anthony". The last four books were translated to Arabic by Reverend Fr. Morcus Dawoud.

During the era of St. Athanasius, the head of the school was a great blind scholar named St. Didimus. His fame attracted St. Jerome to study under him. He translated his book, "The Holy Spirit" to Latin. St. Anthony the great praised him, saying, "Don't mourn that you lost your sight, the animals and the insects have eyes, but rejoice because you have the spiritual eyes that can see the light of Divinity." He was very effective

in convincing the others, and was decent in his arguments that many of the pagan philosophers came to study under him. He left for us many books on Divinity, dogmas and interpretation.

Theugust Piraeus [ known also as the new Origen ], Serapes, Makar, Rodon were some of the eminent names among the school philosophers.

The greatness of the school was in its teachers and not in its buildings. It didn't have a fixed place at the beginning. The students followed the teachers where ever they were. Origen used to rent a place to preach during the time of the persecution. The places were destroyed from time to time and they had to seek alternative places.

### **THE SCHOOL'S CREDIT AND IMPORTANCE :**

As there was prosperity and growth in the church, the school was equally successful. The school unfortunately was neglected gradually with the pressure on the church. Ultimately it was closed and that was a catastrophe to the church.

Pope Cyril V , feeling the importance of such school, established a new school on November, 29 1893.

The new Theological School provided the church in our recent times with hundreds of priests and preachers. The Holy Synod, after appreciating its benefits, limited the ordination of the priests to its graduates only.

Mr. Youssef Mancarius became the first director of the school, followed by the Archdeacon Habib Guirgis and after him the Hegomen Attia Ibrahim Attia.

## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN**

### **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK**

#### **THE FIRST GOSPEL:**

It is agreed among scholars that the Book of Mark was the first of the Gospels, however they differed about the time it was written. Ibn Akbar estimated it to have been written in 45 AD. St. Irenaeus stated that it was written after the martyrdom of both St. Peter and St. Paul, that is after 67 AD.

St. John Chrysostom said that it was written in Egypt, that is about 61 AD. It was written in Greek, which was a spoken language in both Egypt and Rome at that time and later it was translated to Latin and Coptic.

#### **PRECISION AND DETAILS:**

He wrote it in detail regarding the names, the time, the place the numbers, the colors, with such an inspiration, proving that he was present in all its events.

Examples: In the names, he referred to Matthew to be a Levi, the son of Alphae, [Mark 2 : 14]. For the blind Bartimae, he said, he was the son of Timae [Mark 10 - 46]. About Simon, he described him as a Cyrenian and the father of Alexander and Rufus [Mark 15 : 21 ] and so. on.

As for the places, these are some examples: "And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis." [Mark 7 : 31] and his saying "He entered into a ship and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea." [Mark 4 :1]

He wrote about the miracle of the five loaves in a marked detail, "And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties." [Mark 6 : 39, 40] Other examples in describing Christ when he slept in the ship on a pillow, or when He was transfigured before Peter, James and John saying, "And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." [Mark 9 : 3]

The same is true when he described healing the sick, [Mark 8 : 7 ; 7 :28 ; 1 :13]

He described the feelings and expressions and here we have some examples like : Jesus moved with compassion, [Mark 1 : 41] ; and strailly charged him, [Mark 1 : 43] ; when Jesus perceived in his spirit, [Mark 2 : 8] ; looked round about on them in anger being grieved, [Mark 3 : 5] ; that virtue had gone out of Him, [Mark 5 : 30] ; He sighed,[Mark 7 : 34], have compassion on the multitude, [Mark 8 : 2] ; and sighed deeply in His Spirit, [Mark 8 : 12] ; then Jesus beholding him loved him, [Mark 10 : 21] ; and began to be sore, and to be very heavy, [Mark 14 : 33] ; and he took them up in his arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them, ( the children) [Mark 10 : 16]

## **ST. MARK WROTE FOR THE GENTILES, "THE ROMANS":**

His gospel wasn't written for the Jews , as St. Matthew did. He addressed the Gentiles and particularly the Romans, as he shared in the establishment of the church in Rome with Paul. Following are some proofs:-

**a-** He translated the Aramaic words in his writing, like the name of Boanerges, which meant the sons of thunder. [Mark 3 :17] At the same time he didn't translate the name of Peter or other Latin words. He mentioned that ( Talitha cumi is interpreted, Damsel, I say unto you , arise) [Mark 5 : 41] ; that "Corban meant "Gift" [Mark 7 : 11] and " Ephphatha" is be opened. [Mark 7 : 34] He followed after the word "hell" an explanation that it was the fire that never be extinguished. [9 : 43] ; and the word "Abba", was followed by father. [Mark 14 : 36]. He explained that " Eloi, Eloi, lamasabachthani", meant "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?". [Mark 15 : 34].

He had no need to translate, if he was writing to the Jews.

**b-** Explaining the customs of the Jews and their places.

He explained what was meant by (defile), " And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed, hands, they found fault.... as washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." [Mark 7 : 2 - 4] He explained , "The first day of unleavened bread, when they slaughtered the Passover." [Mark 14 : 12] ; and explained, " And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is the day before the Sabbath." [Mark 15 : 42]

He explained the value of the " two mites which make a farthing" and he didn't do that for the dinar which was Roman. [Mark 6 : 37]

When he talked about "Sadducees", he explained its meaning to the Roman readers, that they were the people who said 'no resurrection'. This was known of course to the Jews. When he spoke about the "Syrophenician", he said "The woman was a Greek, 'a Syrophenian by nation'. That was the style the Romans understood.

As for the places, the Jews had no problem in understanding them. He defined the 'Jordan' as a river, [Mark 1 : 5], that 'mount of Olives' was over against the temple. [Mark 13 : 3] and both 'Bethphage' and Bethany were near Jerusalem. [Mark 11 : 1]

**c: Little reference to the Old Testament:**

The Book of Matthew quoted many references from the Old Testament, as it was written essentially to the Jews. On the other hand, St. Mark wrote his Book to the Gentiles with very limited little reference to the Old Testament compared to Matthew's and Luke's.

## **INTRODUCING LORD CHRIST TO THE ROMANS "GENTILES":**

St. Mark, realizing the fact that the Romans were people of action, he introduced Christ to them with His work and power. He concentrated on His deeds more than His speech. The Romans were the rulers of the world and people of authority, thus he showed them the powerful Christ, the Son of the Almighty God, Who has the authority on every thing.

### **1-BRIEF REVIEW:**

Without introduction, he gave his message. They were people who were on the move, they travel, trade, and go to war. He didn't say who Christ was, nor gave a preparatory preface such as the annunciation, Baptism, St. Mary's visit to Elizabeth, the Nativity and His birth etc., but he began directly to pronounce His work.

He began his Book saying : "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" , versus St. Matthew who began his with "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

The road was prepared for the kings, so he described it that way , "I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before." [Mark 1 : 2] The voice of one crying in the wilderness. [Mark 1 : 3] For the remission of sins. [Mark 1 : 4 - 5]

John the Baptist said, "The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." [Mark 1 : 7] , "And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Mark 1 : 11] The evil spirits confessed that He was "The Holy One." [Mark 1 : 24] , "And was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." [Mark 1 : 13]

As Matthew began to record Lord Christ's miracles of healing and casting out the unclean spirits in his 8 th. chapter, we find St. Mark recording them in the first chapter, showing the overall authority of Christ.

He mentioned his authority over the evil, the unclean spirits, ordering them to obey him. [Mark 1 : 27] His power on sickness, [Mark 1 : 34], with authority, not like the scribes. [Mark 1 : 22] He mentioned His popularity and how the people came to Him from every quarter. [Mark 1 : 45] and how he had disciples who came after Him and followed. [Mark 1 : 16 - 20]

All these were mentioned in the first chapter, where he put it forcefully and effectively. In effect, he showed them that the strength of Christ and His Kingdom, were greater than the Romans and their admired country.

## **2- CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD:**

With this fact, he began his gospel. When the Roman centurion saw the crucifixion, he cried and said that "He was truly the Son of God". [Mark 15 : 39]

The Father said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Mark 1 : 11], and at the transfiguration, [Mark 8 : 7]. When Jesus was asked by the high priest during His trial, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. And Jesus said, I am.." [Mark 14 : 61] and confessed knowing the last day. [Mark 13 : 32]

Even the unclean spirits, " Fell down before Him, and cried saying Thou art the Son of God. [Mark 3 : 11] Legion, cried and said, " What have I to do with thee Jesus , thou Son of the most high God." [Mark 5 : 6]

When Christ took for Himself the name "Son of man" , he said that the Son of man had the power to forgive sins. [Mark 2 : 10], that He was also the Lord of the Sabbath. [Mark 2 : 28], that He also will be sitting on the right of power and coming in the clouds. [Mark 14 : 62 , 13 : 26]

That was the truth, that St. Mark showed to the Romans, who realized the unlimited authority of Christ.

## **3- HIS AUTHORITY ON DEVILS:**

St. Mark told them about God's authority to cast out unclean spirits that obeyed Him. They all were amazed. [Mark 1 : 27] He cast out many devils. [Mark 1 : 34] The unclean spirits screamed and said, "What have we to do with You. ... You came to destroy us." [Mark 1 : 24] They even fell down before him. [Mark 3 : 11 , 5 : 6] Legion, who had many unclean spirits,

was in the mountains, often bound with fetters and chains and no one could tame him except Christ. [Mark 5 : 4]

Christ cleaned the people from their unclean spirits, even without seeing them as when He told the Phoenician woman, to go her way as the devil had left her daughter. When she went home, she found the devil had gone out of her daughter. [Mark 7 : 24 - 30]

He gave the same authority to his disciples to cast out the devil. [Mark 3 :15 , 6 : 7] He didn't stop any one from casting them out in His Name. [Mark 9 : 39]

#### **4- HIS AUTHORITY ON SICKNESS:**

St. Mark recorded His healing of the sick and the disabled with chronic problems. He healed the blind, [Mark 8 : 22 - 26], [Mark 10 : 46 - 52] , the deaf and mute, [Mark 7 :31 - 37], the leper, [Mark 1 : 42], cured the sick with palsy, [Mark 2 : 11], the man with the withered hand, [Mark 3 : 5], and the woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years, [Mark 5 : 25 - 34].

The people were amazed and glorified God by saying that they had never seen something like it. [Mark 2 : 12]

The miracles were so numerous to the extend that the people carried their sick on beds and went to where He might have gone. [Mark 6 : 55 , 56]

The power of healing was so obvious that they, "might touch if it were but the border of His garment: and as many as touched Him were made whole." [Mark 56 :6]

This power was given by Him to His disciples too. [Mark 16 : 18]

## **5- HIS AUTHORITY ON NATURE AND DEATH:**

He controlled the wind and the waves, "He arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." [Mark 4 :39 - 41] On another occasion, He came walking upon the sea, "And He walked up into the ship and the wind ceased, and they were amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered." [Mark 6 : 48 - 54]

Equally He had authority on the plants, and He cursed the fruitless fig tree, and the tree became dry. [Mark 11 : 12 - 20]

St. Mark mentioned His authority on death, as he held the hand of daughter of Jairus, who was dead and asked that He may lay hand on his dead daughter so she "may heal and live" and she did. [Mark 5 : 22 - 43]

He mentioned also the resurrection of God Himself, [Mark 16 : 6] and His Ascension to heaven and sitting on the right of God.

At the time He was on the cross, nature responded, "And when the sixth hour came, there was darkness over the whole land, "And the veil of the temple rent in twain from the top to the bottom." [Mark 15 : 33 - 38]

## **6- OTHER AUTHORITIES:**

St. Mark explained how Christ reasoned what others had in their heart (thoughts). [Mark 2 : 8] He was able to prophesy about the temple, Jerusalem and the end of the world, [Mark 13] and about His Own death, His Resurrection and the second coming. [Mark 8 : 31 , 38]

He explained how He fed five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, that they were filled and what remained was twelve

baskets full of the fragments and of the fishes. [Mark 6 : 23 - 44] A similar miracle happened again. [Mark 8 : 1 - 9]

With the power of His purity, He entered the temple leaving the high priests helpless in resisting his authority. [Mark 11 : 33]. St. Mark stated that Lord Christ said that He was the Lord of the Sabbath. [Mark 2 : 28] ; that He was the Lord, [Mark 11 : 3] and He has the power on earth to forgive sins. [Mark 2 : 10]

## **7- THE PEOPLE FOLLOWING HIM:**

Beside the wonderful power that St. Mark portrayed Jesus Christ with, he recorded how the multitudes followed Him and said , "Immediately His fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee. And all the city gathered at His door. [Mark 1 : 28-33].

When He left with His disciples to the sea, "And a great multitude followed Him from Judea and Jerusalem and from Dumaea and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him. And He spoke to His disciples, that a small ship should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him." [Mark 3 : 7 -9]

"And He began again to teach by the sea side and there gathered unto Him a great multitude, so that He entered into a ship and sat at the sea, and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land." [Mark 4 : 1 , 2]

Even when He went with His disciples alone to a deserted place, "And the people saw them departing and many knew Him and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and out went they, and came together unto Him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward

them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." [Mark 6 : 32 - 34]

Many people followed him, [Mark 5 : 24] " And all the people, when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed and running to Him saluted Him. [Mark 9 : 15] Each time that He "Entered a house , and would have no man know it; but He could not be hid." [Mark 7 : 24]

## **8- CHRIST THE TEACHER:**

St. Mark mentioned that whenever the multitude gathered around him He taught them. His gospel mainly mentioned Christ's work more than His teaching, yet he stated His greatness as a teacher and the people's admiration.

He was preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. [Mark 1 : 14] He was teaching them differently. They asked Him about His wisdom and how He got it? [Mark 6 : 2] , "and the common people heard Him gladly." [Mark 12 : 37], "All the people were astonished at His doctrine." [Mark 11 : 18]

All the people called Him "Master". This was repeated twelve times in the Book of Mark. He was called the same by His enemies, the Pharisees, the Herodians and the Sadducees, [Mark 12 : 14 , 19, 32] and also by the people, [Mark 5: 35 , 9 : 17 , 10 : 17 , 20]. He Himself called Himself the same. [Mark 14 : 14]

## **9- CHRIST THE KING:**

St. Mark introduced Him as a King of a Spiritual Kingdom, preaching the Kingdom of God. In the gospel there was a great difference between Herod the King with his commanders living in fun and the King Christ who gathered the people teaching

them the path to God, healing and filling the hungry .... [Mark 6 : 1 - 29]

## **10 THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TRUTH AND THE FAKE:**

St. Mark recorded all Christ's services that made the leaders of the Jews jealous. They fought Him, but were unable to stop him from convincing the people in His Ministry, so they killed Him. It was He Who was peaceful, but they worked against Him.

As much as the people gathered around Him and were pleased with His teaching, the more the leaders of the Jews were annoyed because of His fame and popularity. They didn't benefit from His teaching, nor His miracles. They followed Him and even invited Him to their homes, just to watch and were ready to catch a wrong of Him.

In the case of the man with the Palsy, the scribes reasoned in their hearts, "Why does this man speak blasphemies", He replied "Why reason you these things in your hearts." [Mark 2 : 6 , 7] When they began to reason again they asked His disciples, "How is it that He ate and drank with the publicans and the sinners ?" He replied " They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick." [Mark 2 : 16 , 17] Gradually the Jews began to speak and asked His disciples why they didn't fast? Why they had to pluck the ears of the corn on the Sabbath ? He replied from the Book so they held their peace. When He healed the man with the withered hand on a Sabbath, He looked at them with anger for the hardness of their hearts, he healed the man and "The Pharisees went forth and straightway took council with Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him." [Mark 3 : 1 - 6]

St. Mark with his style, clearly and speedily explained in the third chapter, how the relation between Christ and the leaders of the Jews changed from doubt to a plot to destroy Him. Lord Christ too, changed and became angry, as it was impossible to make peace with those who wanted to stop the work of God.

They later accused Him that He was the prince of the devils with Beelzebub, but He replied that a kingdom if divided against itself, that kingdom would not stand. [Mark 3 : 24]

At one point they thought that He was caught by a mistake, that His disciples ate without washing their hands. He replied, "Well Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites...as it is written the people honored me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." " For laying aside the commandments of God, you hold tradition of man. That they broke the fifth commandment for that tradition, [Mark 7 : 6 - 23] and stopped honoring their fathers and took the money from the temple.

We notice here that the Lord Christ began to attack them and He warned His disciples, " Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod." [Mark 8 : 15] . He then entered the temple without fear, " And sought how they might, for they feared Him. [Mark 11 : 18] He resembled them as the bad men of the vineyard, who killed the prophets and the messengers of God and they wanted to kill his son also. They knew that He meant them. " And they sought to lay hold on Him, but feared the people." [Mark 12 : 1 - 12]

They entered with Him in another phase and asked a question to embarrass Him. He replied the Pharisees and the Herodians by His famous reply " Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." 12 : 13 , 17] Then came the Sadducees asking Him about resurrection and marriage and He replied that in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but like angels who are in heaven. He

ended by saying "You therefore do greatly err." [Mark 12 : 28 - 33]

As they were unable to reason they began to plan to destroy Him. He was killed not through weakness but because He came "To His life a ransom for many." [Mark 10 : 45]

## **11- THE CROSS AND REDEMPTION:**

With tremendous power St. Mark represented Christ to the gentile nations as The Son of God with all His Might, yet He accepted the cross without shame. It took him half the book to explain its purpose. He mentioned His journey to Jerusalem, His crucifixion, His resurrection were to him equivalent to the rest of the Christian Ministry as a whole. The Redemption is the basis of the Christian faith. The effect of crucifixion was reflected in the Book of St. Mark, beginning in its third chapter. [Mark 3 : 6] The struggle with the leaders was only the first step to crucifixion.

St. Mark described how the Lord Christ walked with extreme courage to be crucified. He went with His own will to Jerusalem knowing that the Jews were plotting against Him. He went to [Jesimanee] knowing that they will arrest Him there.

St. Mark didn't picture Him to the Romans as a weak person. Neither that He was finished by His death. He had risen and appeared to many. He said that He will come "In the glory of the Father with the holy angels." [Mark 8 : 38] ; "Sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heavens." [Mark 14 : 62." ; " And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory .. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." [Mark 13 : 26 , 27]

## **12- A WORD TO ENCOURAGE THE GENTILES "ROMANS":**

The mere fact that he mentioned about the struggle between Christ and the Jews was in fact an encouragement to the Gentiles. St. Mark pointed that Christ came for the Gentiles. He went to Tyre and Sidon to the extent of the ten cities. He healed the daughter of the Phoenician woman [Mark 7 :24 - 30] ; and said " My house shall be called of all nations." [Mark 16 : 15]

His advice to the Gentiles and the Romans:

St. Mark introduced Lord Christ to the Romans as the powerful, authoritative man with work, knowledge and miracles. That was the picture they like as lovers of power and action. He attracted them also to Christ's teaching which is full of spirituality and humbleness, picturing Him as the King with a Spiritual Kingdom.

He mentioned that Jesus asked those who were healed and saw His miracles not to tell others or to point to Him. [Mark 3 : 12 , 4 : 44 , 5 : 43 , 7 : 36 , 8 : 26 , 9 : 9] He also asked His disciples to be humble and to carry the cross.

The disciples disputed among themselves, "Who should be the greatest?" He told them "You know that they which accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their greatness exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister. But whosoever will be great among you shall be servant of all . For even the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." [Mark 10 : 35 , 45]

If Christ the Son of God was as such, so it was fair for the Romans to be humble.

Thus, he wrote about Christ's saying, "Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market places. And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at the feasts... and for a pretense make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation." [Mark 12 : 38 - 40] He asked them to leave the wealth and every thing for God and to be satisfied with small things. [Mark 10 : 17 - 30]

## **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK BELONGS TO ST. MARK**

Some of the Westerners tried to claim that the Gospel written by St. Mark was dictated to him by St. Peter, discrediting him of that honor. This is absolutely untrue and they ignored facts and history.

**A-** Does it mean to them that the great Saint Peter lost the gift given to him and other apostles by the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost to speak to the people of, "every nation under heaven." (Acts 2 : 5) St. Peter was capable to do that and didn't need to ask someone else to speak for him. He didn't need to have a translator.

**B-** Papias claimed that St. Mark didn't hear nor followed the Lord, however, he did not take the following into consideration:-

**1-**St. Mark was the young man who followed the Lord, the night Jesus Christ was arrested, "And there followed Him a certain young man, having linen cloth cast about his naked

body; and the young man laid hold on him." (Mark 14 : 51 & 52)

**2-** His mother was one of the Marys.

**3-** Jesus Christ celebrated the Passover in his home.

**4-** The Lord washed His Disciple's feet in his house.

**5-** In his home God gave them His Holy Body and Blood.

**6-** Almost one quarter of the Gospel according to St. John, recorded what the Lord said and what He did at St. Mark's home. (Mark 13 to 17)

**C-** The claims by Papias are contradictory to what was written by the Fathers and the Saints.

**D-** St. Mark recorded what he personally witnessed in detail. His home was the destination of the Virgin Saint Mary and the Apostles, where they gathered in the famous Chamber of Zion. (Acts 1 : 13 & 14) His home was the first Christian Church in the world.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### THE NAME OF ST. MARK

Many churches, monasteries and schools were named after St. Mark. Many Popes, bishops and saints were given the name Mark.

There was a city in Nuba named after St., Mark, " Morcosa" which was submerged under water because of the High Dam. In Ethiopia there is a city called " Debra Morcos" meaning Mount Mark.

The name 'Mark' meant a 'hammer'. St. Mark was the hammer that broke down idols. The church called St. Mark "The breaker of idols"

#### **POPEs NAMED AFTER ST. MARK:**

**1- Nineteen popes were named as John**, which in Hebrew is Youhanna and pronounced in Coptic or Greek as Yoannis. That is the largest group among the popes with the same name, only followed by the Latin name of St. Mark.

Eight popes were named Mark, including St. Mark himself.

#### **2- Pope Mark II [ 49 ]**

He is named as New Mark and was ordained between 20 -23 AD. He was the only Patriarch whose name was mentioned in the Synaxarium. He died on April 17, 819 AD. His feast is celebrated on 23 Barmoda.

He was born in Alexandria, went to Abu Makar Monastery, His seat was at St. Mark Church in Alexandria. Died and was

buried in Nabroa, but his relics were transferred later to Alexandria.

### **3- Pope Mark III [ 73 ]**

He was called Ibn Zaraa, ordained and remained a Patriarch for twenty years and half, till he died on January 1189 AD. He was a Syrian and before his ordination he was a layman. His seat was in Al Mualqa church in old Cairo. He was buried in Abu Makar Monastery.

### **4- Pope Mark IV [ 84 ]**

He remained a Patriarch for fourteen years and five months. Died on January 31, 1363 AD. He was born in Kaliub and became a monk at the Shahran Monastery. His seat was in The Church of the Virgin at Haret Zewela. He was buried in the Shahran Monastery. His period was full of stress and struggle.

### **5- Pope Mark V [ 98 ]**

He was a patriarch for sixteen years and two months. He died on the First day of the Coptic year " Al Nayrouz" [ September 1619 AD.] He was born in Bayadia and became monk at Abu Makar Monastery. He was ordained at the Church of St. Marcurius "Abu Sifyn" in Old Cairo. His seat was The Church of the Virgin in Haret Zewela. He faced many problems during his life. One of the problems was the practice of taking more than one wife. Another problem was the attempt by the Catholics to take over the church in Ethiopia. He was buried at Abu Makar Monastery.

### **6- Pope Mark VI [ 101]**

He remained on the seat of St. Mark for ten years and died on April 20, 1656 AD on Good Friday. He was born in Bahgorah and became a monk at Anba Anthony Monastery. His seat was

The Church of The Virgin at Haret Zewela. He built an upper prayer hall which is in existence to this day. He was not on good terms with some of the pillars of the church and some monks. He lived a stressful life. He was buried at Abu Sifyn Monastery in Old Cairo.

### **7- Pope Mark VII [106]**

He was the holiest of the six, selected to the seat and remained for twenty four years till he died on May 18, 1769 AD, 12 of Bashans [St. Demianah's day]. He was born in Kolosna and went to Anba Anthony Monastery. He made frequent visits to the Monastery of St. Paula . He liked to stay alone and was said that he was pressured to accept his ordination as a patriarch. His seat was at Haret Al Rum.

He ordained a Metropolitan for Ethiopia and another one for Upper Egypt. During his period there was an attempt from the Catholic Church to take over the Coptic Church. They ordained a monk from Jerusalem to be a Catholic Bishop in Egypt, but he was unable to come to Egypt and stayed in Jerusalem. They also ordained Raphael Al Tokhi as their bishop for Upper Egypt, but he was unable to stay there, so the Pope of Rome called him to Rome to stay there . He kept writing books about the Coptic Church.

He was faced with many difficulties and he was a saintly man. At the time of his death, he saw a vision of Anba Paula and Anba Anthony, supporting him at that moment.

The people honored him with a big funeral. Anba Yusab, Metropolitan of Ethiopia and Anba Peter of Upper Egypt attended the funeral. His body was transferred to the monastery of Abu Sifyn where he was buried in a special tomb for the patriarchs.

## **8- Pope Mark VIII [108]**

He occupied the seat of St., Mark for thirteen years and two months. He died on December 21, 1809 AD. Was born in Tema and became a monk at the Anba Anthony Monastery. His seat was at Haret Al Rum, then transferred it to Al Azbakia. During his time the St. Mark Church was built. He was the first Patriarch to be buried in it.

The Mamlukes, rulers of Egypt then, caused him many problems. During his time the French invasion to Egypt happened. After they left, he sent a humble papal message to the people full of compassion asking them to repent. He attributed the difficulties they face to the corruption for staying away from God. He was not criticizing them, but said that he was equally human like the rest of them, asking them to receive his message without burden and that he was bitterly obliged to send it as their kind father.

He asked them to live in purity and with virtues and to pray for anyone who had deficiency, asking for the mercy of God. He resembled the situation with the sheep surrounded by wolves with no shepherd.

During that era, Anba Yusab Al-Abbah, Bishop of Girga and Ekhmeem was one of the most eminent scholars of the church.

## **BISHOPS NAMED AFTER ST. MARK:**

Many bishops were named after St. Mark along the years. It was mentioned that when Pope Benjamin [ 82 ] was preparing the Chrism[ Myron] out of the 12 bishops who were present four were named Mark. They were Bishop Mark of Beheira, Bishop

Mark of Fouwa, Bishop Mark of Sedfa and Al Benwaneen and Bishop Mark of Abyar.

During the period of Pope Demetrius II [ 111 ] , his deputy was Bishop Mark of Beheira. At the same time the Bishop of Abu Teeg was also called Mark.

Our Bishop of Marseilles and Toluene in France was ordained by Pope Shenouda III as Bishop Mark on the Pentecost day in June 1974.

In the present Holy Synod, we have Bishop Mark the Bishop General for Africa. We have also a Sub bishop [ Khory Episcopes] with the same name, in Shoubra Al-Kheima, Kalubia.

### **SAINTS NAMED AFTER ST. MARK:**

Mentioned here as examples only, are some martyrs, anchorites, monks and writers who were named after St. Mark.

#### **a- Martyrs;**

The father of St. Demianah who was called Mark, was the ruler over Al Borollos and Zaafaran. Once he denied the faith due to fear, and his daughter rebuked him. He came back to his religion and confessed Jesus Christ and he was martyred.

#### **b- Anchorites:**

It is reported that at the time of Mark Al Tarmaki's death, God sent him St. Serapion to see him, bury him, and to write about his life. This was published in Al Kiraza.

#### **c- Hermits:**

St. Mark, a hermit at Anba Anthony Monastery, contemporary of Pope Matthew I [87]. He had a life full of virtue, education

and wonders. This was mentioned in the third part of History of Patriarchs.

**d- Monks:**

Mark, the aseetic and his colleague Nilos were disciples of St. John Chrysostom. Mark published many books. among them a work about the "Acts"

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### CHURCHES AND ANTIQUITIES CARRYING THE NAME OF "MARK"

[Written by Mr. Nabih Kamel Dawoud]

An extensive research was done regarding places named after St. Mark. They are classified as :-

A- Beth "Home" of St. Mark.

B- Churches and monasteries not existing now.

C- Churches present to this day.

#### **A- Beth ST. Mark**

His Holiness Mar Aghnadius Yacoub, Patriarch of Antioch for the Syrian Orthodox(1) wrote under the title " Beth John Mark, The First Christian Church" :

His mother had a house in Jerusalem, through tradition and documented history it is confirmed that in it God gathered His apostles, celebrated the Passover, washed the feet of His disciples and gave them the mystery of His Body and Blood. There He talked to them. The apostles waited in it till the Lord came back to them after His Resurrection, while its doors were closed. There He gave them the ecclesiastics, and the priesthood authority. and filled them by His Holy Spirit. (2)

Later the house was consecrated to be a church with the name of Mother of God.... It became the seat of Jerusalem. St. James, became the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and stayed there.]

At the present time, the place is known as the Monastery of St. Mark, or the house of Mary, mother of Mark. It is not far

from the Church of Resurrection and is controlled by the Syrian Orthodox.

It is mentioned in the visit and tour guide brochure of the Jerusalem League [the Society of Rabtat Al Kods], printed in 1966 some detailed information is inserted. :-

The place at one time was a Coptic property. By agreement, the Syrian Orthodox Bishopric in Jerusalem looked after the interests of the Copts in Jerusalem, while the Coptic Metropolitan in Ethiopia, looked after the interests of the Syrian Orthodox there. The Syrian Orthodox Bishop in Jerusalem used the place as his permanent residence in Jerusalem, but when the Copts ordained Bishop Bacillius in 1237 as the Coptic Metropolitan in Jerusalem, the Syrian bishop kept staying in it and claimed the place for himself. The Copts traditionally when they visit Jerusalem, they go to the place and praise St. Mark the preacher of Egypt.

### **The Holy places in it: (3)**

- 1- The door on which Peter knocked on, after the angel freed him from the prison and went to this house.
- 2- The Seat of St. James the apostle, the first bishop of Jerusalem.
- 3- The first baptismal place, the first in Christianity.
- 4- An icon for the Virgin, said to be painted by St. Luke the Evangelist.

In the book, "History of Jerusalem" (4), It is mentioned that the Monastery of St. Mark, is in the alley of Al Gawa'anah, between the allies of the Armenians and the Jews. In the monastery there is a Byzantine church by the name of the Virgin and a bishopric. The church was ruined during the rule of Al Hakem Be Amr El lah Al Fatimi. in 1009 AD. The monastery was abandoned during the Turkish rule, but the Syrians renovated it in 1855, and also extended it in 1880 AD.

### **B-Churches and monasteries not in existence now**

There were seven churches which were mentioned by Abu Al Makarem [1208 AD ] and by Al Maqrizi [1441 AD ]

#### **St. Mark The Evangelist, South to Alexandria:**

The believers, secretly built this church in the western part of Alexandria, a place called Al Sawari. It was there where the pagans tried to burn the body of St. Mark. Both Pope Theodore and Pope Andronicus [37] stayed in this church.

The Melchites succeeded in taking the church during the time of Pope Mark [49] as was mentioned by Al Maqrizi [ page 47 ]. It was also mentioned that the Patriarch of the Melchites, who had good medical knowledge traveled to Bagdad to treat one of the Khalifa's harem and when she was cured he was awarded by an order to take all the churches from the Jacobites and he did.] This church disappeared with time.

#### **2-St. Mark Church ( Al Mualaq)**

Originally it was a temple built by Cleopatra in Alexandria. It was later converted to a church by the name of Archangel.

Michael. It was originally known as Al Caisaron during the time of Pope Alexandrus [19] or King Constantine or the Caisaria Church. (6)

It was still in existence during the Arab conquest, but was burned during the invasion. It was built on the wall of the city near one of its towers. Butler (6) wrote about it, " It was near the port, well built and was important that it replaced the larger church. It had two obelisks in its yard and was over the wall of the city."

It was also called "Al Mualqa church" and sometime was known as Al Kamha Church.

At one time it was rebuilt and named after St. Mark. The head of St. Mark was kept there after it was stolen in 644 AD. It was the church, Amr Ibn Al Aas asked to be built to house the head of St. Mark. Probably, Pope Aghathon [39] ] was the one who completed it as was mentioned by Al Maqrizi.(7) This church was destroyed during the 5th battle by the Crusaders, as it was near the port.

It is the same church where Pope Peter VI [ 104] hid the head of St. Mark. .

The church was ruined during the French invasion in 1798. They destroyed it so the British wouldn't use it. The priests carried the icons, its books and every precious item to another church in Rosetta. An antique icon for Archangel. Michael, is still there. Some other items were taken to the Coptic museum on a later day.

The place of the church was easily recognized by Butler because of its two obelisks. One of these needles was sent to London in 1877 AD and the other in Central Park in New York since 1879. We can locate its place in Alexandria which would be the right side of the end of Al Nabi Daniel Street, between the sea and Sultan Heissin and Safia Zaghlol Streets.

### **3- St. Mark the Evangelist in Giza:**

It was built by Ibn Soliman, the scribe during the Ayubian's Dynasty (1171 - 1250 AD) as was recorded by Abu Al Makarem (1209 AD page 75,76). It was built with wood taken from a house on the river he owned and other wood taken from another church called Martyr Boktor Church. [this was expanded with a better design.]

Al Maqrizi ( 1441 AD) recorded that it was destroyed between 1397 - 1398 AD and was rehabilitated during the 15 th century. This church does not exist now and had no relation to the present St. Mark Church in Giza.

### **4- Church of St. Mark in Bahnasa:**

It was 12 kilometer to the west of Beni Mazar. Abu Al Makarem mentioned it twice in his book on pages 93 & 95.

### **5- St. Mark Church at Sakiet Mahfouz:**

Also mentioned by Abu Al Makarem. Its present site is Sakiet Dakook near Matay, in Minya Governorate.

### **6- St. Mark Church The Evangelist in Taha Al Madina:**

It is near Samalout, province of Minya, also mentioned by Abu Al Makarem.

### **7- St. Mark Church in Ashmouneen:**

Near Malawi, was mentioned also by Abu Al Makarem.

## **C- Existing Churches named St. Mark:**

By the year 1975 AD there were 31 Coptic Churches named after St. Mark. Most of them were recently built.

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century there were only 5 churches after his name. These, beginning with the oldest, were in : Alexandria, Rosetta, Azbakkia, Cairo, Ben Ady in Manfalout, and Giza.

Between 1900 -1950, 13 new churches were built.

Since 1950, another 13 churches were added.

Among the provinces, Minya had nine churches, Cairo had 6, and four in Assuit.

### **First - The Churches in Alexandria:**

**1- St. Mark Cathedral in Alexandria: [at the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate].** It is located at 19, Coptic Street, Al Messalla, district of Al-Atareen... It can be reached from Al-Naby Daniel Street and it isn't far from Al Ramla Tram Station and Saad Zaghlol Square.

The site of the church was known by different names at different times. It was called one time or another as Beth Anianus, Pokalia, Subterranean , St. George Church. Now it is called St. Mark Church.

Its history began at the days of St. Mark preaching, beginning with Anianus. Anianus invited him to his home, accepted the faith and was baptized together with his family. This house became a church in between 60 - 68 AD. When St. Mark was martyred, he was buried under this church. Since then the tradition began to bury the patriarchs beside St. Mark.

Emperor Justinian took over all the churches in Egypt [539 to 540 AD ]. The churches were taken from the Coptic Egyptians

and were given to the Chalcedain followers. When the Arabs invaded Egypt by Amr Ibn Al Aas in 644 AD, he ordered Pope Benjamin to return from hiding and guaranteed his safety. He also ordered the return of the churches back to the Copts. At that time, Pope Benjamin had been in hiding for 13 years.

Abu Al Makarem, recorded that the churches in Alexandria were divided between the Copts and the Romans. The Al Kamha church [called also Archangel Michael, Al Mualaq or Caisaron] was given to the Copts. The Romans [Rum] got the subterranean church [the site of the present St. Mark Church today.] This was returned back to the Copts and Pope Christozolus consecrated it in 1046 AD and was renamed as St. George Church. This name was in circulation in all the books and scripts up to 1800 AD. Probably that name was chosen because there was another church with St., Mark's name [ Al Mualaq], or to protect it from being taken again by the Romans. Al Mualaq Church was located in the northeastern side of Alexandria and served to be the Great Cathedral for the Copts in the city of Alexandria in the seventh century.

During the French invasion in 1800 AD, the three churches on the site of the St. Mark Church were destroyed. The churches were transferred to Rosetta with their precious items. Alexandria remained without a Coptic church for a while. Then what is the history of the St. Mark Church from 1800 AD to the present time ?

a- In 1804 Pope Mark VIII renewed the church.

b- In 1818 AD, Pope Peter Al Gawli [109] reconstructed St. Mark Church, replacing the church built by Pope Mark VIII. at its present site. Mu'Allem Saleh Attalla, obtained a decree from

Mohammad Ali the Great to build it. Pope Peter Al Gawly consecrated it with Saint Anba Serapion, Bishop of Al Monofia and Al Beheira.

c- In 1869 AD, some church eminent members from Alexandria, with the cooperation of Anba Mark, Bishop of Al Beheira during the time of Pope Demitrius [111] began to build the St. Mark Cathedral in Alexandria replacing its previous small building. It was completed in 1870 AD. but was demolished in 1960 AD(8) and the tombs of the early fathers the Patriarchs were discovered.

d- The church which was built in 1870 AD, became unsafe, and on January 19, 1950 a permit was granted to replace it. It was rebuilt during Pope Yusab's time. On September 25, 1950 they put the new foundation and by November 9, 1952 Pope Yusab II consecrated it in a big celebration.

e- During the time of Pope Cyril VI, another altar was added in its upper floor towards the southern wing of the church and was consecrated in June 1963. In 1968 a touristic area was designated, leading to the tombs of the patriarchs under the church.

f- Further improvements were done by the direction of H.H Pope Shenouda III.

**2- The Church of St. Mark and St. Peter The last of the Martyrs in Sidi Bishre in Alexandria:** is located at Cultural Center Street that off Khaled Ibn Al Waleed Street in the Sidi Bishre, Al Montaza. The first service was celebrated on July 12, 1971 AD.

## **Secondly- The Saint's Churches in Lower Egypt:**

**3-St. Mark the Apostle, in the city of Rosetta:** It belongs to the Diocese of Al Beheirah at the Army Street, Rosetta.

It has three altars, the eastern is for St. George, the middle is for St. Mark- and the northern is for Archangel Michael. It has an old wooden iconostasis with ivory inlets.

Some of the icons in the church were brought from the Church of St. Mark in Alexandria when it was destroyed during the expedition of Napoleon in 1800 AD. They are fixed to the wall in such a way to prevent anybody from stealing them.

There are two very old icons there, one is for St. George and the other is for the resurrection.

The church was refurbished in 1673 AD. At the end of the Eighteenth Century, during the rule of Murad Bey, a decree was issued to remove all the churches in Rosetta.[1785 AD] The church was renovated by Metropolitan Yoannis of Beheira and again in 1933 and 1956.

**4- Church of St. Mark The Martyr At Zenara, near Tala, Province of Menofia:** Zenara is to the east of Tala between Shebeen Al Kom and Tanta. It was built in October 1965 at the time of Metropolitan Dioscoris Bishop of Monofia.

**5- Church of St. Mark in Talkha, province of Dakahlia.:** It was built in 1971 AD.

**6- Church of St. Mark in Met Mohsen, near Met Ghamre, province of Dakahlia.** The building was completed about 1959

**7- Church of St. Mark, in Al-Mansheya Al Gadida, in Shoubra El Khema** in the province of Qaliobia. It is on the road leading to Bahteem. Its first service was on January 13, 1968 AD.

### **Thirdly- The Churches of St. Mark in Cairo, and Giza:**

**8- St. Mark Cathedral in Azbakia, Cairo. St. Mark Church Street, near Ramses Square, Cairo.** The project to build this church began in 1795, Mu'alleem Ibrahim Al Gawahri obtained a decree from the Sultan in Turkey . The land was purchased and it was designed to have a church and a residence for the patriarch.

On Sunday, September 15, 1800 AD Pope Mark VIII [108] consecrated the church and it was named St. Mark Church to compensate for the loss of St. Mark Church which was destroyed during the French invasion in Alexandria. It became the residence of the Patriarchs.

This church continued to exist till Pope Cyril IV [110] replaced it with the St. Mark Church in its present site now. They began building it on 28 Barmoda 1575 i.e. May 5, 1859 D. It is still in existence.

The church was completed at the time of Pope Demitrius II [111] and Pope Cyril V [112]. Some improvements were completed by Pope Yuannis XIX [113] and Pope Cyril VI in 1965 AD.

**9- The New Cathedral of St. Mark at the Monastery of Anba Ruweis in Abbassiah:** It is located on Ramses Street near El Demerdash [Ein Shams University] Hospital. The project began during the time of Pope Cyril VI [116]. The celebration for the foundation stone for this cathedral was

attended by the Late President Gamal Abd Al Nasser on Saturday July 24, 1965. In August 1967 breaking the grounds started. Late on Monday June 24, 1968, the Relics of St. Mark arrived to the cathedral, in the company of the Egyptian Church Delegation that received it from the Vatican.

On Tuesday morning, July 25, 1968, there was an official celebration of inauguration of the Cathedral, which was attended also by President Gamal Abd Al Nasser, the Ethiopian Emperor and many dignitaries, headed by H. H. Mar Aghnatonius Jacob II, Patriarch of Antioch for the Syrian Orthodox and His grace Anba Theophilus Metropolitan of Herrer representing the Church in Ethiopia, Cardinal De Val representing H. H. Pope Paul VI.

On Wednesday June 26, 1968 the Liturgy was celebrated on the altar of the new Cathedral. At the end of the service Pope Cyril carried the relics of St. Mark to its present location under the main altar in the eastern side of the cathedral.

H.H. Pope Shenouda III [117] who became the first pope to be ordained in the new cathedral on Sunday November 14, 1971.

During his papacy a tower [Minaret], with its bells rooms, and offices were added. Under the cathedral there are two churches, one is on the northern side, called the Virgin and Anba Ruweis, the other called after Anba Pishoy towards the south. In 1973 the floor was covered with marble.

St. Athanasius Hall was opened in commemoration of the 1600 years since the departure of the Saint.

**10- St. Mark Church in Heliopolis:** At 35 Cleopatra Street , Heliopolis, Cairo. It was completed in 1925.

**11- St. Mark Church at the gardens of Shoubra, " Hadayek Shoubra in Ard Sheriff"** It began as a temporary building in 1953. The Friends of The Holy Bible Society, completed the present building.

**12- St. Mark Church in Maadi:** Its first service was on December 29, 1970. in a temporary building. A presidential decree # 1105 for the year 1973 was granted to build the church. The decree was published in the official journal for Governmental Documents.

**13- St. Mark Church in Helwan:** H.G. Bishop Yuannis of Helwan celebrated the beginning of the project on May 10, 1972. It has a hall under it called Cana of Galilee.

**14- Church of St. Mark in Giza:** It goes back to 1883, when Salama Bey Agami built it beside his house. He was the chief clerk at the Province of Giza, a prestigious job at that time and he has determined in his heart to build this church.

#### **THE CHURCHES OF THE SAINT IN UPPER EGYPT:**

**15- St. Mark Church in Beni Suef.** It was built in 1952 AD, during the Late Anba Athanasius the previous Metropolitan.

**16- St. Mark Church in Maghagha,** province of Minya. It belongs to the Diocese of Beni Suef and Bahnasa. The liturgy service started in November 1972 AD.

**17- St. Mark The Evangelist Church in Obbad Sharuna,** Near Maghagha, province of Minya, within the Diocese of Beni Suef and Bahnasa. It was established in 1929 AD.

**18- St. Mark Church in Beni Samet,** Near Beni Mazar, province of Minya, and belongs to the Diocese of Beni Suef and Bahnasa. It was established in 1927 AD.

**19- St. Mark Church in Menshat Abu Aziz,** Ezbat Hanzal :Near Al Faroukiya, in Beni Mazar. Also within the Diocese of Beni Suef and Bahnasa.. It was established in 1945 AD.

**20- St. Mark Church in Kom Matay.** near Matay, province of Minya and also belongs to the Diocese of Beni Suef and Bahnasa.

**21- St. Mark Church** in Maasarat Samalout, Samalout , province of Minya. It was consecrated in 1947 AD.

**22- St. Mark Church, in Minya.** It dates back to 1935 AD.

**23- St. Mark Church in Nazlet Beni Ahmad,** near Minya. It goes back to 1950 AD.

**24- St. Mark Church in Malawi,** province of Minya. Was built by the late Father Menassa Youhanna in 1927 AD.

**25- The Old Small St. Mark Church in Beni Addi Al Bahria,** near Manfalout, province of Assuit and it goes back to 1835 AD. It belongs to the diocese of Manfalout.

**26- The new Great St. Mark Church , near Manfalout,** province of Assuit. It goes back to 1909 AD.

**27- St. Mark Church in the old Bishopric Building in Assuit ,** was established in 1909 AD.

**28- St. Mark Church In Abu Teeg,** province of Assuit. It belongs to the diocese of Abu Teeg and was established in 1952 AD.

**29- St. Mark The Apostle in Al Darb, Sugar Factory,** near Nagh Hamadi, province of Kena. It is on the Western side of the Nile. It was established in 1932 AD.

**30- St. Mark Church in Kena,** Al Hameeddat Street, Kena. Was established before 1927 AD.

**31- St. Mark Church in Aswan.** Belongs to the new diocese of Aswan. It is near the High Aswan Dam. It was establishment in 1971 AD, as a temporary Altar for praying, till a presidential decree, # 1130 was issued and published in the official government documentary paper on July 17, 1973.

#### **ALTARS BY THE NAME OF ST. MARK:**

**There are three altars:**

**a- St. Mark Altar in the Mualqa Church in Cairo.**

It is placed over one of the old Roman towers. The Holy Chrism used to be made in it. Its iconstasis goes back to the Tenth Century.

**b- An Altar in the Church of the Virgin in Dakados, near Met Ghamre.** It is named after St. Mark and is located on the Northern side of the church. It is relatively recent.

**c- St. Mark Altar at the church of the Virgin in the bishopric of Luxor.** It was consecrated on February 25, 1934.

### **Churches Outside Egypt:**

#### **In Sudan:**

**1- The Old St. Mark Church. It is in Om Dorman.** It is located near the present church in the Bishopric in the district of Al Mosalma, in Om Dorman. It was established in about 1910 AD at the time of Bishop Sarabamon. Nowadays it is used as site for the burial for the bishops.

**2- St. Mark and St. George Church in Khartoum,** in one of the elegant districts in the Sudanese capital on an extensive area of land [2400 square meter] and was donated as a gift by the Sudanese Government during the rule of Ser Al Khetm, Khalifa. The celebration for laying the foundation, was attended by the Sudanese ministers and the Chief Judge. The Coptic Society arranged for the collection of donations to finish the building. The late Anba Yuannis the Metropolitan of Khartoum consecrated the church on Saturday April 6, 1968. The first Holy Liturgy was celebrated on the following day, Sunday the 7 Th.

## **In Libya:**

**St. Mark Church in Tripoli.** Anba Bakhomius, Bishop of Al Beheirah visited Algeria, Libya in January and February 1972, and met with the Copts in Tripoli and Beni Ghazi. Following this visit, H.H. Pope Shenouda sent Father Wisa Al Syriani to Tripoli to serve them spiritually. On Monday, March 27, 1972, H. H. the Pope visited the Libyan Republic and prayed in the new church at Gomorra Street, Zawyet Al Dahmani, Tripoli, on March 31, 1972, the last Friday of the fast.

## **In Kuwait :-**

**St. Mark Church in Kuwait** H.H. Pope Cyril VI, delegated Fr. Angelos Al-Muharaki [later Metropolitan Maximus of Qalyobia] to be the first Priest to serve at St. Mark Church in Kuwait in 1961. Then Fr. Timothaus Al-Makary served for 9 years. [At present Bishop Timothaus].

The Arab Gulf Churches became under the supervision of H.G. Late Archbishop Basilios, Metropolitan of Jerusalem and the Near East. Several churches in the area were founded later in Basra, Iraq, also in Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Duha and Oman.

## **In Lebanon:**

**The Virgin and St. Mark Church in Beirut.** It was established by some of the Copts who settled in Beirut. A Monk from our church in Jerusalem used to visit them monthly to pray with them in the Church of Lady of Al Wardia, in Forn El Shebak. Bishop Basilios of Jerusalem, bought 1063 M2 land near the presidential palace in an area called Sen El Pheel in 1966. On Sunday October 29, 1972 the first Eucharist was

celebrated by H.H. Pope Shenouda III, and was attended by many bishops.

### **In France :**

**1- St. Mark Church in Paris.** Since 1972, the Copts attended the Holy Liturgy in a church they called St. Mark. In 1973, they had a permanent place that belonged to the Christian Council in the Sorbonne in the Place de Sorbonne, near the university. " Communaute cheretienne de sorbonne 8 Place de la Sorbonne, Paris 5e Metro; Luxembourg."

**2- Monastery of St. Mark in Le Revest Les- Eaux.** It is the seat of The Coptic Orthodox Church in France. H.H. Pope Shenouda ordained Anba Mark, Bishop of Marseilles and Toulon and all France on Sunday July 2, 1974, assisted by 'Khory Episkopos' Anba Athanasius. This monastery has a church named after the Mother of God, that has a museum with Coptic, Greek and Russian icons, chalices crosses and relics of some saints. Its address : Fontanieu - 83760 - Le Revest Les Eaux.

### **In Canada:**

**1- St. Mark in Toronto.** The first to be ordained, was Father Mark Elias on August 9, 1964.

**2- St. Mark in Montreal** Father Raphael Yonan was also the first priest to be ordained for the church in March 1967. The first service in the church was in June 1967.

## **In The United States of America**

**1- St. Mark Church in Jersey City.** The Copts in New Jersey and New York bought an old church, built in 1882 and changed it to a Coptic Church. Father Raphael Yonan served the first Liturgy on March 22, 1970. On Tuesday August 1970 the late Father Ghobrial Ameen was ordained and on Sunday September 13 he celebrated the first Eucharist. Its address is:  
Coptic Orthodox Church of Saint Mark, 427 West Side Ave, Jersey City, N. J. 07304, USA.

**2- The Coptic Saint Mark The Apostle Church in The City of Los Angeles.** It was on the feast of St. Mark, Friday May,8, 1970 that the Copts celebrated the Eucharist at the Church of Mar Afram , a Syrian Orthodox church. The first Liturgy in St. Mark Coptic Church was on the Pentecost day, Sunday June 14, 1970. Many priests from Cairo and Alexandria served in this church till Father Antonious Lateef Henein was ordained.

## **In Australia:**

**St. Mark The Apostle Church in Sydney.** It began as a large hall, which was opened by The Late Bishop Samuel, Bishop of Public, Ecumenical and Social Services, on Saturday, July 8, 1972. Later a permanent church was established and many priests from Egypt came to serve.

## **In Ethiopia**

There are many churches in Ethiopia named after St. Mark. The main Church is in Addis Abbaba. There is also the

Monastery of St. Mark in Addis Abbaba, headed by Abba Wed Gabriel.

In Ethiopia there is a city by the name of Debra Marcus, which means " Mount Mark".

## **ST. MARK CHURCHES IN OTHER DENOMINATIONS**

### **1-THE GREEK ORTHODOX "AL RUM"**

There is a historic church in "Haret al Rum" in Cairo. It became the seat for the Melchite Patriarchs after it was transferred from Alexandria to Cairo. At one time their large library, was brought from Alexandria to Cairo, to be returned back to Alexandria again.

At the present time the church functions as a nursing home for the old Greek people. It is possible that this is the church, Al-Wakdy, referred to as, the Monastery of Mount Mokattam or the Monastery of St. Mark.

They have another church in Port Sudan, Sudan called St. Mark Church.

### **2-THE COPTIC CATHOLICS:**

They have one church named after St., Mark in Ismailiah, at the Monofia and Dakahlia Streets.

### **3-THE ROMAN CATHOLIC :**

They have three churches by the name of St. Mark.

**1- St. Mark Church, Shatby, Alexandria.** This is near St. Mark School that replaced St. Katherine School.

**2- St. Mark Church, Shoubra, Cairo** at Al Be'atha Street. It belongs to the African Mission and was built in 1907.

**3- St. Mark Church within the Jesuit School in Minya.**

#### **4- ANGLICAN BISHOPRIC**

They have two churches named after St. Mark:

1- One in Alexandria, Midan Al Tahrir. It was established in 1839 AD and was completed in 1855.

2- The other one is in Al Ibrahimia, Hermopolis Street, Alexandria.

#### **MONASTERIES NAMED AFTER ST. MARK:**

There were three monasteries named after him, that do not exist at this time:-

**1- The monastery which was known as The Subterranean,** originally was the site of the present St. Mark Church in Alexandria. At one time it was in the hands of the Melchites, but it was returned back to the Copts.

Abu Al Makarem [1208] reported that the churches were divided between the Copts and the Melchites in 644 AD. The Melchites took the Subterranean Monastery that contained the "body" of St. Mark. It is possible that it was called Pokalia where St. Mark was martyred.] (9)

This monastery was mentioned also by Bernard The Wise, a French Monk about 870 AD. He said that behind the eastern

door was the Monastery of St. Mark. The monks lived in the church where his tomb was. (10)

Pierre Biloun de Manz, a French tourist who visited Egypt in 1527, recorded : [There was a Coptic monastery and a patriarchal building beside their church. This was the place where the body of St. Mark was placed before it was stolen by the people from Venice.] (11)

In the Coptic Museum there is a cover for the Altar, on which it is written, that it belonged to the Monastery of The Great Saint Mark The Evangelist of "Morcussia", and was made in 1173. (12)

It was mentioned about Pope Peter VI [106], that, "he went to Alexandria, in 1722 AD, and kissed the head of St. Mark The Apostle. When he returned, he learned that some gang members were after the " Head of St. Mark" so he hid it in the monastery at that time." (13)

In the book written by Tawfik Eskaros, an eminent Copt of the nineteenth century, this was reported in Part 1, on page 284, showing the deeds of ownership of the monastery, and the fact that it belonged to the Copts. including the building and the fences.

The latest renovation of the monastery was done in 1818 AD. In the book, "Making the Chrism" it was mentioned about Pope Peter Al Gawley, [109]. " The news about the repair of the Monastery of St. Mark, reached him. This monastery was destroyed earlier by the French. Later Mohammed Ali Pasha issued a decree to Mu'alleh Saleh Attalla, a rich Copt, to rebuild it with some assistance from the government."

## **2- THE MONASTERY OF ST. MARK, ALSO KNOWN AS "MOUNT MOKATTAM MONASTERY":**

It belonged originally to the Copts, and was mentioned by Al Wakdy [823 AD] in his book, "Conquest of Al Sham [Syria]" He said : "Al Mokawkas forced the Jacobite Monks to accept a Melchite from Syria, to manage the monastery."

## **3-THE MONASTERY OF ST. MARK IN LUXOR:**

This monastery was recently discovered by the Scientific French Institute for Oriental Antiquities in Luxor. It is about 4000m2 and consists of a church and small buildings, that goes back to the Fifth and Sixth Centuries. The excavations began in 1971 and they recovered about two thousand historic items.

## **ALTARS NAMED ST. MARK**

Here we report only on the most important three altars, in the church history:.

### **1-IN MAHALET DANIEL:**

This was mentioned in the History of the Patriarchs by Severus Ibn Al Mokafaa. Abu Al Makarem [1208 AD] said , " Pope Mina, [61] [956 - 974 AD] established an altar by the name of St. Mark in Mahalet Daniel, where the patriarchs lived and made the Chrism".

Mahalet Daniel was a part of Tina, near Kafr Al Sheik. It does not exist anymore. It was used by the patriarchs as their residence, during the rule of Al Khalifa Al Mo'ez, [972, 974]. During this period there were many difficulties and hunger. The

Patriarch himself had to live in lower Egypt, where a rich woman supported him and his staff.

## **2- IN THE MONASTERY OF ABBA MAKAR:**

It was mentioned in reference to the making of the Chrism in the days of Pope Mark III in 1167 AD. It may be related also, to the time when the head of the Saint was brought to the Monastery of Abba Makar, when the churches were raided in 1013 AD. Pope Zacharias [64] lived in this monastery.

This altar was renamed later as 'The Altar of John The Baptist', underneath it, the bodies of both Isaiah, the Prophet and John the Baptist were buried, after their church was destroyed in 1321.

## **3- ST. MARK ALTAR AT THE CHURCH OF ST. ANTHONY IN THE EASTERN DESERT:**

This altar was discovered by Professor Wattimoore in 1930. A wonderful portrait of St. Mark was found there.(14)

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- 11- Watani News Paper, 26-6-1966. p. 5 : St. Mark Church in Alexandria.
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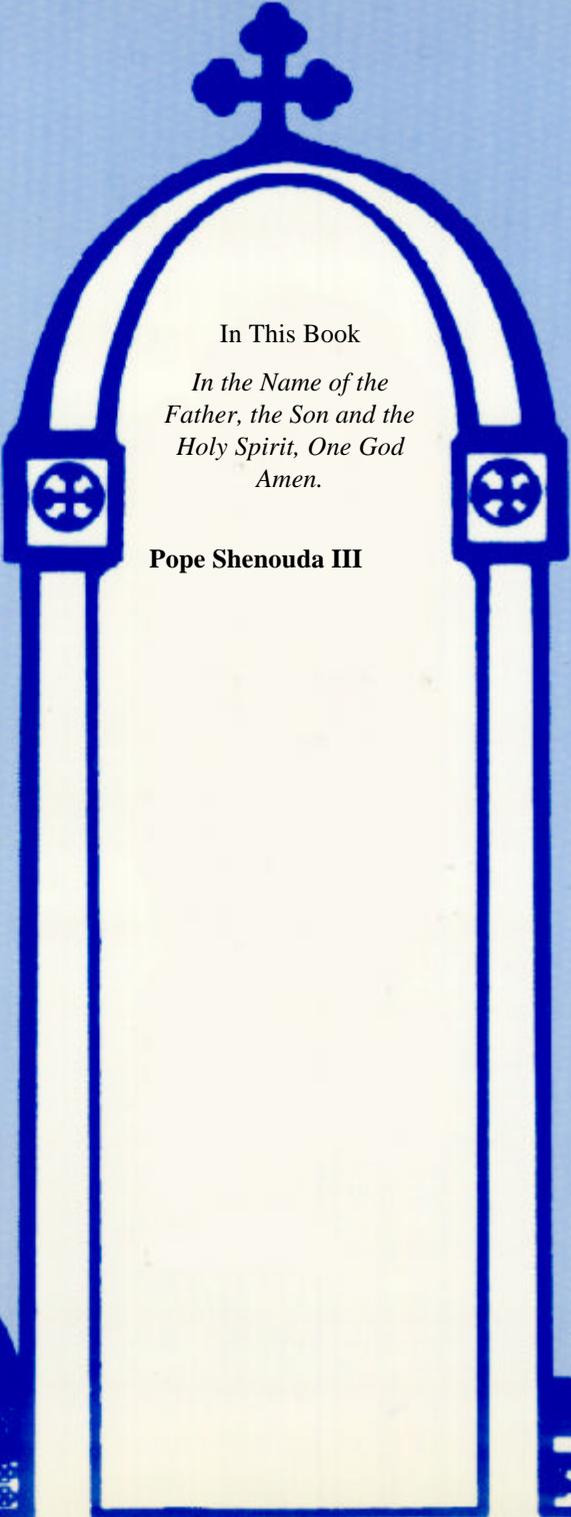
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In This Book

*In the Name of the  
Father, the Son and the  
Holy Spirit, One God  
Amen.*

**Pope Shenouda III**

