



In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate  
**St. Mary and St. Joseph**  
COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

**Deacons Meeting – Sunday, May 01, 2011**

+ Abouna stresses the spirit of love, dedication, humility that was seen in the Passion Week which affects the spirituality of the congregation. Abouna emphasized these qualities in the deacon which is an important influence on the people.

**+ Three points about deaconism were addressed:**

**1- Spirituality of the deacon:**

+ Deaconate is not about the hymn, it's serving the altar and the glory of God. This is the job of the angles and we have the likeness and the work of angels. Hypocrisy annoys God. God will tolerate sins and will give chances, but hypocrisy is not tolerated and this is demonstrated in the gospels where we see sharp words "*whoa to you!*"

+ We cannot wear a tonia and act differently because this is hypocrisy. This will be similar to Christ saying to me "*whoa to you!*"

+ How can one be like an angel? It is done through deep spirituality. One main part of practicing spirituality as a deacon is practicing the spirituality of hymnology. This is rich traditions and these hymns are rich in spirituality which was passed from inspired saints.

+ Each hymn has spirituality. It has a certain tunes, meanings, certain times it is said. There is a reason for all this.

+ A deacon should study what he practices. Singing a hymn without meaning is almost hollow. And when we sing in a manner where we are praying, that changes the spirituality of the church. Deacons, like Moalem Mikhail El-Batanoni was crying during his hymns.

+ In the Orthodox Church, we have so much richness and we care much about the rites in the church. The reason for this consistency and systematically is that it allows us to focus on the meaning, interpretation and depth of the hymns. For instance, when giving the censer to Abouna, one can think of the incarnation, the mystery of God's divinity become one with His humanity in the Virgin's womb. This can be done when the rites become second nature and it frees you to think and contemplate in prayer. So we must benefit through learning the rites.

+ The deacon is a role model. If we are not spiritual deacons this puts the kids in danger. We should not be a stumbling block! Imagine a deacon outside of the church who is violent, with no sign of meekness or humility; one who is loud and jokes inappropriately. These kids will take this as an acceptable behavior for a deacon - hypocrisy.

## 2- Responsibility of the deacon:

- + A deacon who knows the hymns and rites is good for a hymnist – psaltos. If deacon interprets and describes the bible, he is an anagnostos. The bible is a part of his life - at all stages of deaconism.
- + A deacon who is serving in the altar should come early and make preparations for the liturgy. When a deacon see things which may need to be cleaned or adjusted in the altar, regardless of his turn or his responsibility, he should have it addressed or get someone to fix it. For instance, if the altar is not tidy or if the storage boards are open, a deacon should address these issues. These responsibilities should not be asked for.
- + The deacon is helping Abouna during the Divine Liturgy. There is a lot of attention to organize the deacons outside during communion. Those who are free should help in organizing kids during communion which becomes very hectic. For instance, an older deacon and a younger deacon (for encouragement) can help in organizing the kids or cleaning the altar.

## 3- Practices of the deacon:

- + Laughing during the Divine Liturgy is not acceptable.
- + Sharing the cymbals is good, and it is done in humility, but for the sake of time, don't reach to the point where invitations to play cymbals end up affecting the time and the hymn.

## Questions and Answers:

- + Q: What do we do when an older experienced deacon comes to our church? How do we treat him?
- + A: We have to make them feel welcomed and respected but that does not mean he should lead. No bishop would come to another diocese that is not his without an invitation.

**Glory be to God forever and ever. Amen**