

The Church of Alexandria and Preaching

2011



The Lord's command to Christians

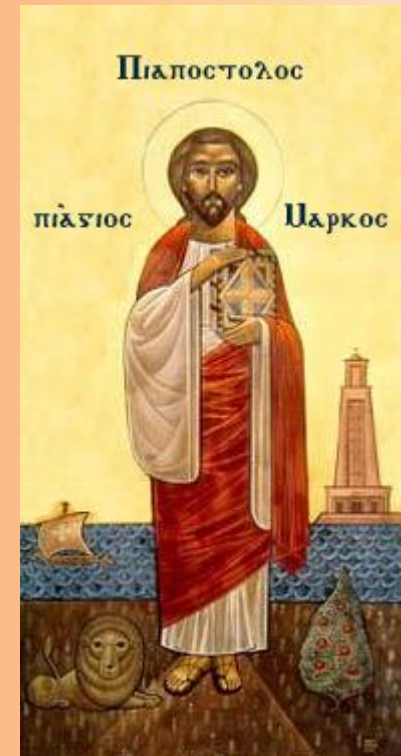
- “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” Mark 16:15
- This was Jesus command to his disciples.
- They started preaching in Jerusalem but the persecution has forced them to travel to other areas of the world where they spread the Christian faith.

Coptic Church of Alexandria

- Place: Alexandria
- Person: St. Mark
- Time: 42 AD
- Government: Roman Empire (Emperor Nero)
- People: Egyptians, mainly Pagans, few Jews.
- Christianity spread all over Egypt within half a century

The Church of Alexandria

- Established by St. Mark who preached in Alexandria then Libya.
- He started a **church** and a **school** for teaching theology and other academic subjects e.g. Mathematics and science.

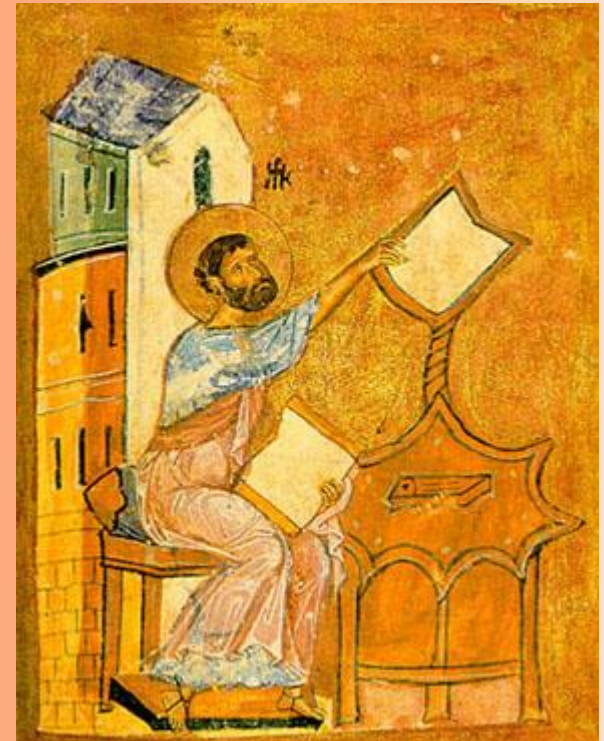


The school of Alexandria

- The school was initially aimed and teaching Christianity to those who wanted to get baptised.
- Later involved all academic subjects, mainly philosophy, and attracted philosophers from all over the world

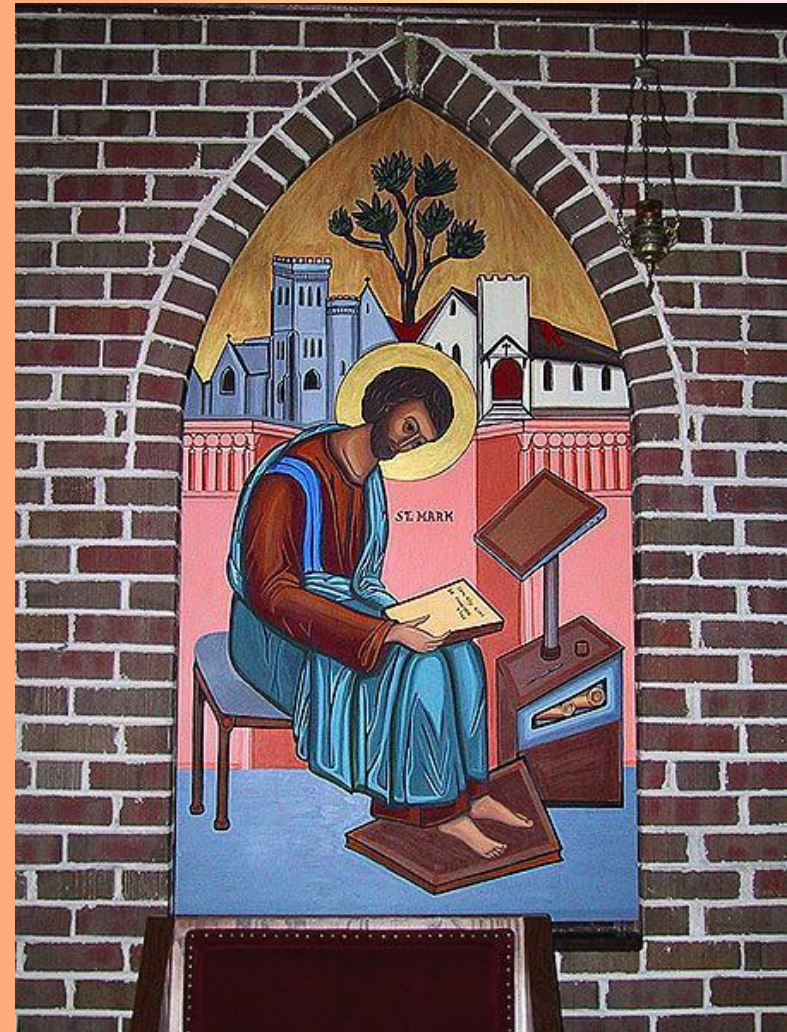
The Church of Alexandria

- One of the prophecies in The Old Testament, Isaiah 19:19 says ***"In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border."***
- *Later on writings from the new testament were found in Bahnasa (middle of Egypt) date back to the year 200 AD fulfilling the prophecy*



The School of Alexandria

- The Catechetical School of Alexandria is the oldest Catechetical School in the world.
- Its library contained hundreds of thousands of manuscripts in all branches of knowledge.
- Soon after its inception around 190 A.D. by the Christian scholar Pantanaeus, the school of Alexandria became the most important institution of religious learning in Christendom.



Church of Alexandria fathers

- Many prominent bishops from many areas of the world were instructed in that school under scholars such as Athenagoras, Clement, Didymus, and the great Origen, who was considered the father of theology and who was also active in the field of commentary and comparative Biblical studies.



St. Clement of Alexandria

The Coptic Alphabet

- St.Pantaenus – the dean of the school between 181 and ~190 AD- introduced the Coptic Alphabet , by using the Greek letters added to seven letters from the ancient Demotic letters.
- His aim was to translate the Holy bible to the language of the normal Egyptian so they are able to read their bible , understand it , and attract a lot of Pagans to faith.

Α α	Ι ι	Ρ ρ	Ω ω
Β β	Κ κ	ϸ ϸ	Ϡ Ϡ
Ϛ Ϛ	Λ λ	Ϛ Ϛ	ϣ ϣ
ϛ ϛ	Μ μ	ϛ ϛ	ϣ ϣ
Ϝ Ϝ	Ν ν	Ϝ Ϝ	Ϟ Ϟ
ϝ ϝ	Ξ ξ	Ϟ Ϟ	Ϡ Ϡ
Η η	Ο ο	Ϟ Ϟ	Ϡ Ϡ
Θ θ	Π π	Ω ω	

The Coptic alphabet

Preaching inside Egypt

- The Holy Bible was translated to the Coptic Language in the second century.
- Hundreds of scribes used to write copies of the Bible and other liturgical and theological books.
- Now libraries, museums and universities throughout the world possess hundreds and thousands of Coptic manuscripts.



Egyptian scribe with papyrus scroll, a known old job in Egypt

The Role of The Church of Alexandria

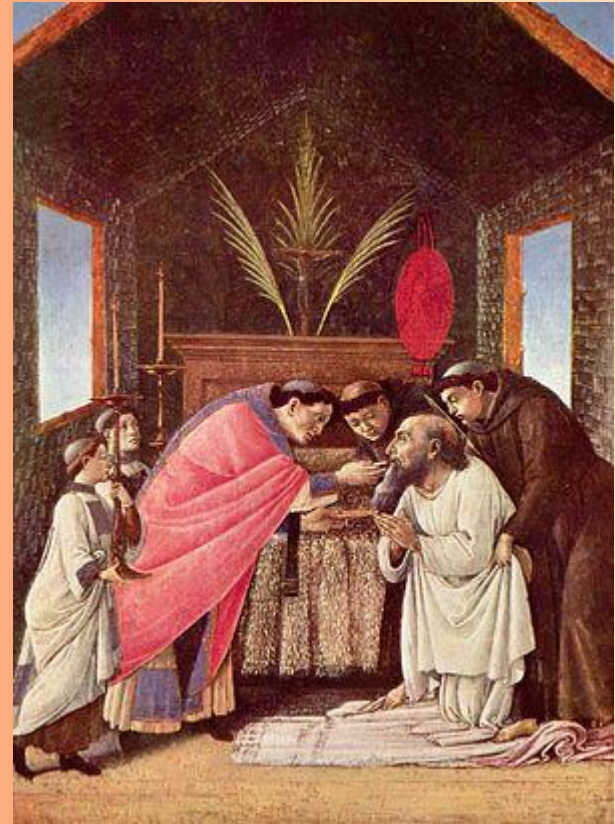
- The main role of the church was to preach Christianity to all Egyptians.
- Through advanced teaching in all subjects including philosophy the word of the Gospel has extended and attracted people from all over the world.



1820 drawing of a [Book of Gates](#) fresco of the tomb of [Seti I](#), depicting (from left): [Libyan](#), [Nubian](#), [Asiatic](#), [Egyptians](#).

World Scholars & school of Alexandria

- Many scholars such as Saint Jerome visited the school of Alexandria around the year 400 AD to exchange ideas and to communicate directly with its scholars.
- He translated the Bible into Latin. He left details of his experience about the school of Alexandria in his letters.



St. Jerome, s last communion

Different ways of spreading the word

1. Monasticism

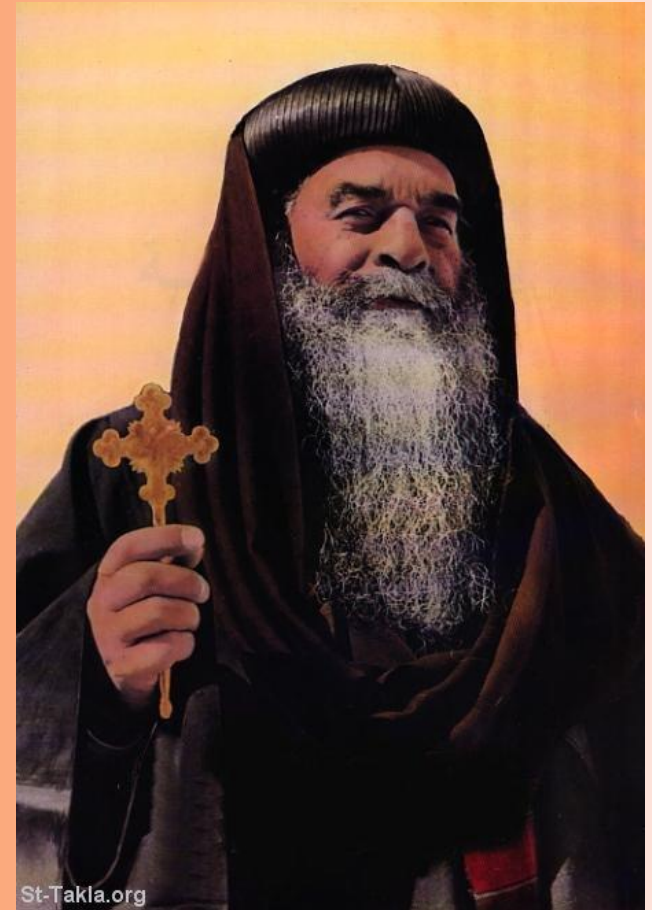
- Monasticism was born in Egypt and was instrumental in the formation of the Coptic Church's character of submission and humbleness, thanks to the teaching and writings of the Great Fathers of Egypt's Deserts. Monasticism started in the last years of the third century and flourished in the fourth century.
- **St. Anthony**, the world's first Christian monk was a Copt from Upper Egypt. **St. Pachom**, who established the rules of monasticism, was a Copt. And, **St. Paul**, the world's first anchorite is also a Copt.
- Monasteries moved to the dessert and south to the border with Sudan



St. Anthony, first monk

Monasticism and preaching

- The more contemporary desert fathers include the late [Pope Cyril VI](#) and [his disciple Bishop Mina Abba Mina](#).
- By the end of the fourth century, there were hundreds of monasteries, and thousands of cells and caves scattered throughout the Egyptian hills.
- Many of these monasteries are still flourishing and have new vocations till this day.



Preaching In Europe

- Under the authority of the Eastern Roman Empire of Constantinople (as opposed to the western empire of Rome), the Patriarchs and Popes of [Alexandria](#) played leading roles in Christian theology.
- They were invited everywhere to speak about the Christian faith. Saint Cyril, Pope of Alexandria, was the head of the Ecumenical Council which was held in Ephesus in the year 430 A.D.

Preaching in Africa and Middle East

- Throughout the last century, the Coptic Church has played an important role in the ecumenical movement. The Coptic Church is one of the founders of the World Council of Churches. It has remained a member of that council since 1948 A.D.
- The Coptic Church is a member of the All African Council of Churches (AACCC) and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC).
- The Church plays an important role in the Christian movement by conducting dialogues aiming at resolving the theological differences with the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Presbyterian, and Evangelical Churches.

2. Preaching under persecution

- Copts take pride in the persecution they have sustained as early as May 8, 68 A.D., when their Patron [Saint Mark](#) was slain on Easter Monday after being dragged from his feet by Roman soldiers all over Alexandria's streets and alleys. His relics were taken to Italy and were placed in a cathedral for hundreds of years until brought back by Pope Kyrillos the IV.
- The Copts have been persecuted by almost every ruler of Egypt.



The church through the centuries

- For the four centuries that followed the Arab's conquest of Egypt, the Coptic Church generally flourished and Egypt remained basically Christian. The Copts were allowed to freely practice their religion and were to a large degree autonomous, provided they continued to pay a special tax, called "Gezya", that qualifies them as "Ahl Zemina" proteges (protected). Individuals who cannot afford to pay this tax were faced with the choice of either converting to Islam or losing their civil right to be "protected", which in some instances meant being killed .

The church language

Throughout that period, the Coptic language remained the language of the land, and it was not until the second half of the 11th century that the first bi-lingual [Coptic-Arabic liturgical manuscripts](#) started to appear. One of the first complete [Arabic](#) texts is the 13th century text by Awlaad El-Assal (children of the Honey Maker), in which the laws, cultural norms and traditions of the Copts at this pivotal time, 500 years after the Islamic conquest of Egypt were detailed .

New church language

- The adoption of the Arabic language as the language used in Egyptians' every-day's life was so slow that even in the 15th century al-Makrizi implied that the Coptic Language was still largely in use. Up to this day, the Coptic Language continues to be the liturgical language of the Church .

ا	ب	ج	د	ه	و	ز	ح	ط	ي	ك
ʾ	b	ǧ	d, ǧ	h	w	z	ḥ, ḥ	ṭ, ṭ	y	k
ل	م	ن	 	ع	ف	ص	و	ر	س	ن
l	m	n		ʿ, ǧ	f	ṣ, ḍ	q	r	s, š	t, ṭ

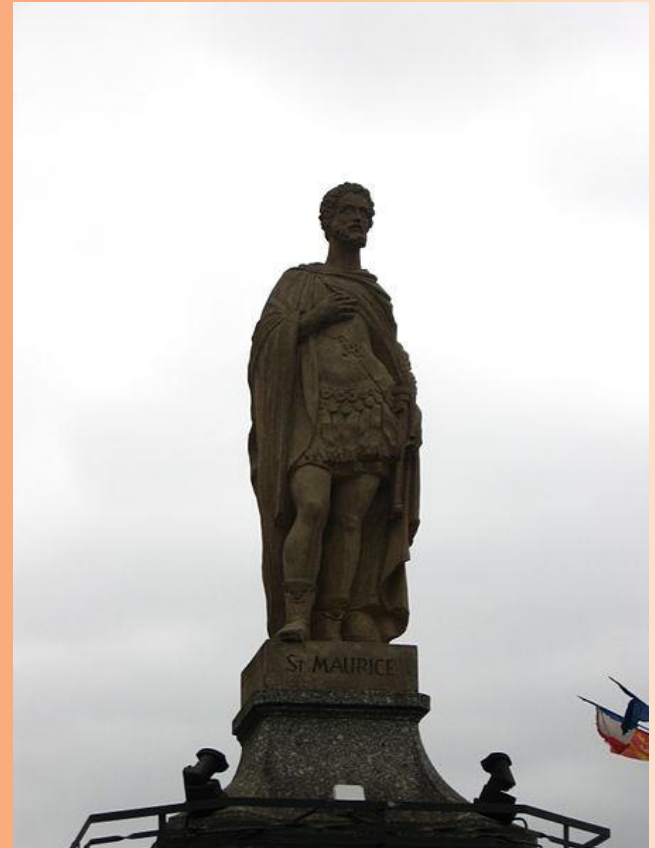
Preaching in Africa and Asia

- The normal people by their true Christian behavior and love attracted many Pagans to faith as we know from the story of conversion of Saint Bakhomios.
- People escaping persecution in Egypt, made sure they serve the Lord by Preaching in other places in Africa like Sudan and Ethiopia, then from there to India and other parts of Asia.



Preaching in Europe

- St. Mauritius from the Theban legion, served under the Roman army, went to Switzerland in 285AD. He taught Christianity in the Swiss Alps.
- He refused to sacrifice to the idols and earned the crown of martyrdom His statue stands in one of the public places in France.



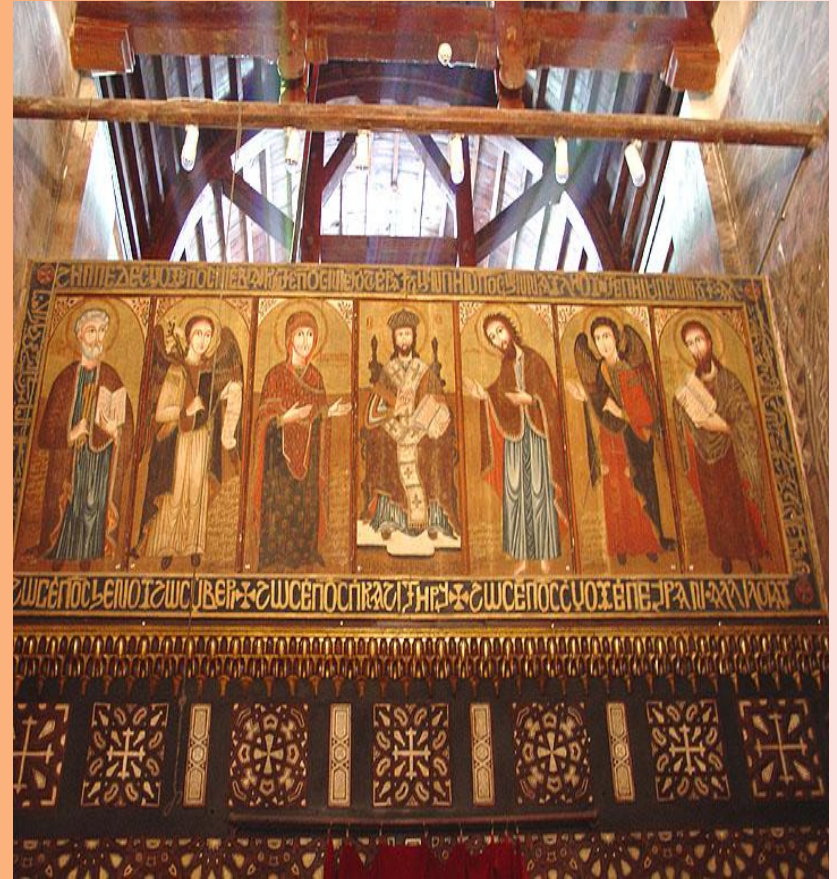
St. Maurice, Egyptian soldier

The Egyptian Church under Arab rulers

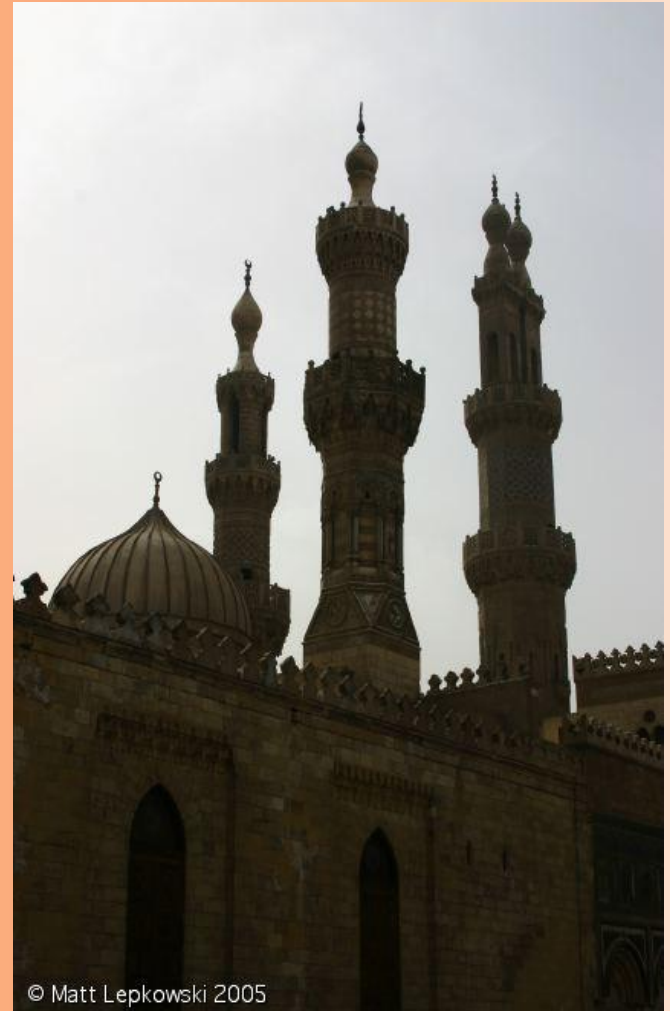
- The Christian face of Egypt started to change by the beginning of the second millennium A.D., when Copts, in addition to the "Gezya" tax, suffered from specific disabilities, some of which were serious and interfered with their freedom of worship.

Difficulties facing the church

- There were restrictions on repairing old Coptic Churches and building new ones, on testifying in court, on public behavior, on adoption, on inheritance, on public religious activities, and on dress codes.



- By the end of the 12th century, the face of Egypt changed from a predominantly Christian to a predominantly Muslim country
- the Coptic community occupied an inferior position and lived in some expectation of Muslim hostility, which periodically flared into violence



Challenges facing the Coptic church

- The position of the Copts began to improve early in the 19th century under the stability and tolerance of Muhammad Ali's dynasty.
- By 1855 A.D., the main mark of Copts' inferiority, the "Gezya" tax was lifted, and shortly thereafter Copts started to serve in the Egyptian army .
- Terrorist groups still subject Christians in Egypt to persecutions, modern day martyrs serve as reminders of the miracle of Coptic survival.



Preaching in the 20th century

- The Theological college of the Catechetical School of Alexandria was re-established in 1893.
- Today, it has campuses in Alexandria, Cairo, New Jersey, Los Angeles and Sydney where priests-to-be and other qualified men and women are taught Christian theology, history, Coptic language and art---including chanting, music, Iconography, tapestry etc.



Coptic church
in Israel



Coptic church
in Canada



Coptic church
in Germany



Coptic church
in Austria

Preaching in the 20th century

- The Coptic Church has now extended to Singapore, Japan; Thailand and West and South Africa.
- Copts live nearly everywhere in the world these days, Coptic Churches are built in Every country and people from different nationalities are attached to our church, so all of us have a responsibility in preaching.



Coptic church in Jordan



St. Mark Church in Sydney



St. Mark church in Texas



Coptic church in New Zealand

Continuing preaching under persecution

- The word of God has spread via the blood of Martyrs from the beginning of the church in the first century till today in the 21st century.
- Men and women, Young boys and girls are killed, kidnapped and tortured and raped to change their religion till today but the strong ones are setting example to us and showing the whole world the Lord they believe in.

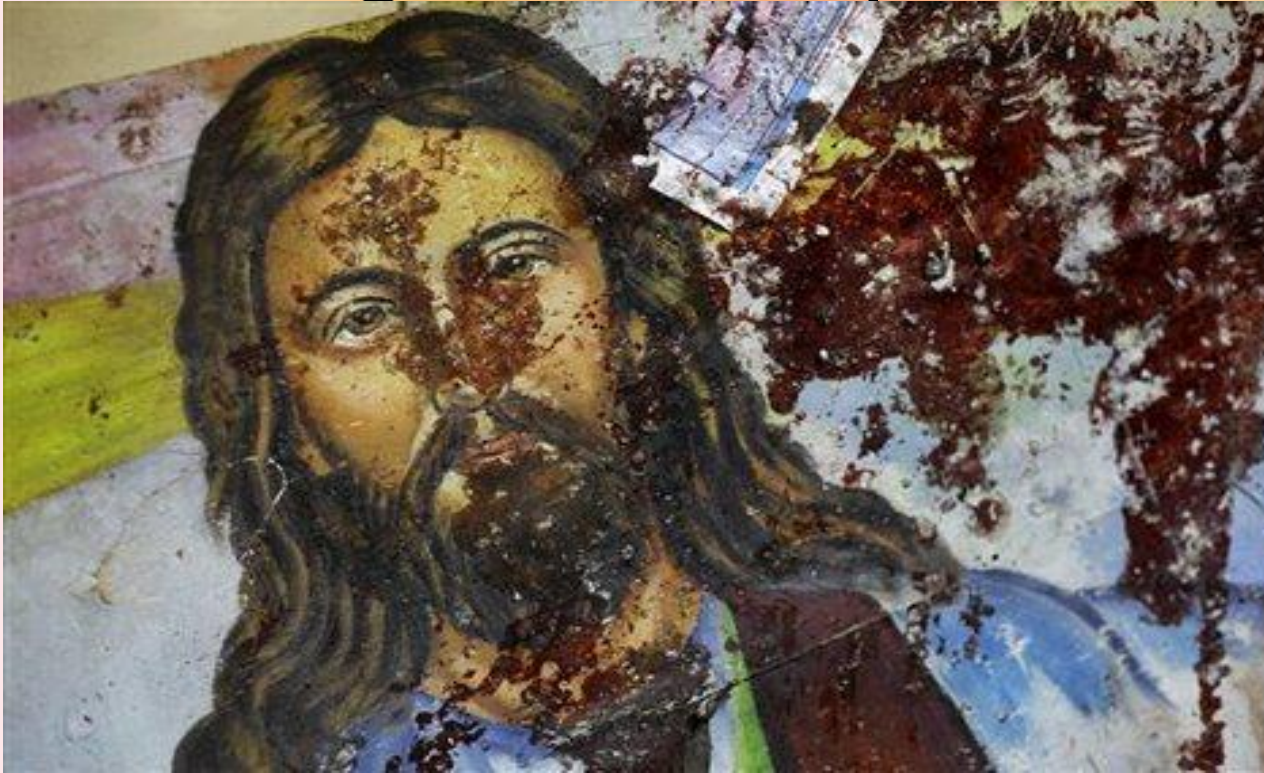


Martyrdom in Egypt in 2011



At the door of the Saints coptic church in Alexandria on 1/1/2011 after bombing the church.

Preaching in the Coptic Church



Blood-spattered poster of Jesus Christ is seen inside the Coptic Christian Saints Church in the Mediterranean port city of Alexandria, Egypt Saturday, Jan. 1, 2011. A car exploded in front of the church early Saturday as worshippers emerged from a New Year's Mass, killing at least 21 people.

The Coptic Church in 2011



In the Saints church in Alexandria after the bombing, Christians will continue to go to church and pray.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” Matt 28:19,20,21

The Coptic Fathers in 2011



Today, there are over 90 Coptic Bishops governing dioceses inside Egypt as well as outside Egypt, such as in Jerusalem, Sudan, Western Africa, France, England , Australia and the United States. Pope Shenouda and the Bishops of Egypt

“you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, as a testimony to them and to the gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” Matt 10:18-20

The Coptic Church and preaching



- Coptic courage , Sunday of the martyrs demonstration, 2011.