

The Virgin's Fast

The Church celebrates the fast of our Lady the Virgin beginning with the first of Misra (the 7th of August). It is a fast for which people care very much, and they practice it with forceful ascetism. Some add days to it, in regard to the great love that people have for the Holy Virgin. The fast of The Virgin is an occasion for spiritual renaissance in the majority of churches. They prepare a spiritual program for daily sermons, and some churches have daily liturgies as well, even the churches which are not in the name of The Virgin.

There is a great feast for our Lady the Virgin, which is celebrated in her ancient church in Mostorod. Feasts of other saints are also celebrated in these days: the feast of Saint George, at the monastery in Mit Damsis, is celebrated in the second half of August, and also the feast of saint Abba Macarius the Great, and the feast of Saint George in his monastery at Ruzeykat. Around the same fast of The Virgin, we celebrate the feasts of reknowned saints:

Saint Baïssa (2 Misra, 6 August), Saint Julita (6 Misra, 12 August), and Saint Marina (15 Misra, 21 August). During the fast of The Virgin, we also celebrate the feast of the glorious Transfiguration (13 Misra, 19 August). In the same month (7 Misra, 13 August), we celebrate the Feast of the Announcement by the angel Gabriel to Joachim regarding the birth of the Virgin Mary.

The feast of the Virgin is not the only occasion on which the Church celebrates the feasts of the Virgin, but more is celebrated in the month of Kiahk, which is full of hymns, doxologies, and psalms for the Saint Virgin Mary. Copts in Egypt take part in the fast of The Virgin in a manner that exceeds description.

There are many who fast it ascetically, eating only water and salt, or without oil.

Many add a third week to it, as a kind of vow. There are also those who vow to fast this fast without eating or drinking until nighttime, until the appearance of the stars in heaven.

What then is the secret behind this care?

First: The love of Copts for the Virgin who had visited and blessed their country, and left her traces in numerous places where churches have been built.

Second: The multiple miracles that happened in Egypt through the intercession of our Lady the Virgin, made many people optimistic to build churches dedicated to her name. The apparition of the Virgin in her church at Zeitoun, and the many miracles that accompanied this apparition, have certainly increased the affection of the Copts for the Virgin, and for the fast which bears her name.

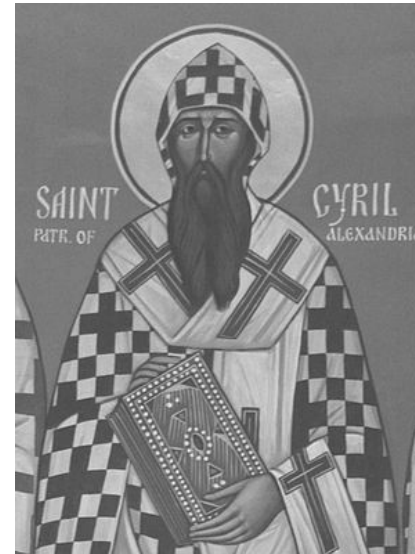
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St. Cyril the Pillar of Faith

On the Transfiguration
of Christ



“I say to you, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste of death until they have seen the kingdom of God.” Does

he mean that the measure of their lives will be so greatly prolonged as even to reach to that time when he will descend from heaven at the consummation of the world, to bestow upon the saints the kingdom prepared for them? Even this was possible for him, for he is omnipotent, and there is nothing impossible or difficult to His all powerful will.

But by the “kingdom of God” he means the sight of the glory in which he will appear at his revelation to the inhabitants of earth. He will come in the glory of God the Father and not in a humble condition like ours. How did he make those who received the promise spectators of a thing so wonderful? He goes up into the mountain taking three chosen disciples with him. He is transformed to such a surpassing and godlike brightness that his garments even glittered with rays of fire and seemed to flash like lightning. Besides, Moses and Elijah stood at Jesus’ side and spoke

On the Transfiguration of Christ, cont.

with one another about his departure that he was about, it says, to accomplish at Jerusalem. This meant the mystery of the dispensation in the flesh and of his precious suffering upon the cross. It is also true that the law of Moses and the word of the holy prophets foreshadowed the mystery of Christ. The law of Moses foreshadowed it by types and shadows, painting it as in a picture.

The holy prophets in different ways declared beforehand that in due time he would appear in our likeness and for the salvation and life of us all, agree to suffer death on the tree.

Moses and Elijah standing before him and talking with one another was a sort of representation. It excellently displayed our Lord Jesus Christ as having the law and the prophets for his bodyguard. It displayed Christ as being the Lord of the Law and the Prophets, as foretold in them by those things that they proclaimed in mutual agreement beforehand. The words of the prophets are not different from the teachings of the law.

I imagine this was what the most priestly Moses and the most distinguished of the prophets Elijah were talking about with one another.

Questions? Concerns? Comments?
Please email us at TheVineJC@Gmail.com

Book Review

The Screwtape Letters (C. S. Lewis)

ISBN: 978-0060652890

Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* gives a beautifully elaborate and believable portrayal of the diabolic plots of demons in corrupting the human soul and leading it to damnation. The fiction revolves around an inexperienced demon named Wormwood and the council that he receives from his more experienced uncle, Screwtape. Each chapter of the book consists of a brief letter written by Screwtape in response to Wormwood's progress in tempting one of his "patients", a human soul that he has been assigned to. The fiction depicts the struggles faced by man in this life on Earth, portraying a cunning seduction demons employ to corrupt and prevent man from ever rising out of sin and ignorance and knowing Christ. We see Lewis' portrayal of the elaborate and insidiously cunning wiles of demons in their ultimate mission to win over human souls. A *fiction* created by the brilliant mind of Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* gives the reader an insightful and entertaining perspective into the struggles and temptations faced by man. It instills in the reader a tangible sense of urgency and an awareness of the seemingly unseen warfare of the spiritual realm.



Contemplation Verse

For a righteous man may fall
seven times,

And rise again...

Proverbs 24:16

