

True story of faith:

A Lady Arrests A Policeman

Years ago during the soviet rule over Ukraine, Christians were forbidden to celebrate Christmas in churches, or they will be severely persecuted. So a poor lady used to prepare her humble house and invite the congregation to celebrate the Christmas liturgy there. She stood by the door so that she would be able to warn them in case the police attacked.

One Christmas, as she was standing in her usual position from where she could hear the soft voices praying, she asked the Lord that He may be born in her heart too. Suddenly she felt strong hands on her shoulders; it was a policeman coming to arrest the congregation. All she cared about was to tell the man about Christ the Savior, so she asked God to help her and slowly began to tell the policeman about the salvation and how much God loved us. His stone heart relented and instead of giving the signal of attack he went inside to celebrate the Christmas.

My friend, this lady knew how to celebrate Christmas, and meet The Child born unto us, she opened not only her house but also her heart and invited others to Salvation. Jesus came because He cared for us and this lady was able to meet Him because she cared about the others more than she cared about herself.

+ *Jesus was born taking your image that he may give you his image.*

+ *He was born in a manger as if he doesn't have a house, He that is the creator of all.*

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Miracles of Jesus Christ:

(THE WEDDING FEAST AT CANA)

Jn 2:1-11

**REJOICE WITH THOSE WHO
REJOICE**



During the earthly life of Jesus Christ he went around doing good to all, healing the sick, opening blinds' eyes, purifying the lepers, and raising the dead.

Together now my friends we shall start an exploration to discover that Jesus didn't only provide health, nor only show His great glory, but in the first place He gave love and salvation to all those who came in contact with Him.

Let's now start with the first miracle and it is the wedding feast at Cana, which the church celebrates on the 13 of Tobah.

The invitation: Christ was invited with his mother and disciples to attend a wedding in Cana in Galilee, so why don't we invite Him to all our occasions, He will surly come and bless us all.

The Virgin's service: It is evident from the circumstances that St. Mary wasn't only one of the guests, but she also helped with the chores that is why she was one of the first to notice that there was no more wine.

The intercession of St. Mary: As soon as she noticed that there was no more wine she went directly to Jesus. The meaning of the lack of wine meant the end of the wedding. The wine wasn't prohibited in the O.T.

My friends our mother St. Mary sometimes sees that we are sad, and without telling her she goes and tells Christ about us. Yes, this is how she always intercedes on our behalf. If anything makes you feel sad ask her to intercede on your behalf saying, "They have no more wine"

Christ's service: "Why do you involve me my time has not come yet". 2:4. Jesus didn't mean to refuse his mother's request, but wanted to show that the time for his service hadn't come yet, but for her sake he will answer her petition.

The Virgin was sure of her son's power so she said to the servants "Do whatever he tells you". And that's what they did without questioning, and so St. Mary puts a very important rule in front of us, and that is to obey Christ in whatever he tells us and be sure that he will bring joy to our hearts.

Jesus the Creator: Lord Jesus asked the servants to fill the jars with water, and then with the power of his divinity he changed it to wine by adding a new component which is carbon. {Water contains hydrogen and oxygen only, while wine contains carbon in addition}.

The new joy: The servants gave the master of the banquet from the new wine, when he tasted he was surprised they had kept the good wine till the end.

Truly, the joy [wine] Christ gives us is much more beautiful than that the world gives us. The joy of Christ is spiritual, heavenly and does not end. It is given as a sample of the joy we will enjoy in Heaven.

My Lord Jesus,

Thank you for the joy of the Holy Spirit in my heart,

Which is much more fulfilling than all the worldly joys

Make me happy only with your gifts

Amen.

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My mother church learned me:

The Feast of Circumcision

The 8th day after Nativity, is the circumcision feast, it commemorates the circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the law. Its hymns are sung in happy tunes, as it is a minor Lordly feast.

What is circumcision? It is cutting off the foreskin.

*** Circumcision in the Old Testament:**

It goes back to the time of our Father Abraham when God made a covenant with him based on circumcision on the 8th day. It symbolizes starting the life with God and purifying the body. In the old it was performed using a flint knife, which is very sharp, so a small amount of blood is shed. This reminds us that God has prepared another covenant in which He will shed his own blood on the cross. The Jews kept this rite and named their children on the 8th day.

Circumcision in the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

The response of the psalm on the circumcision feast is "Jesus Christ accepted the circumcision unto Him". But why did he accept it? St Paul answers this in his letter to the Galatians chapter 4 saying that for Christ to save us He had to fulfill requirements of the law, including circumcision. Also, He had to prove to the Jews that He came from the line of King David, and so no one could deny the fact that He was the Messiah.

Circumcision in the church of the New Testament:

It is of no importance as it is replaced with spiritual circumcision, as it is written " Not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with Him in Baptism and raised in him through your faith". Colossians 2: 11. Circumcision meant pure bodies but baptism means pure hearts, souls and spirits.

Circumcision is now performed now for health reasons only.

Let's obey Our Lord's commandments keeping both our bodies and our souls clean.

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How

Does

Love



Grow In

The Heart!

By Fr. Youhanna Nassif

1. **Prayer is the key**, which opens the streams of Divine love. As much as we are connected to heaven our hearts become full of love, to all and without waiting for anything in return. When you feel that love has become weak in your heart, pray that God may recharge it again.
2. **Drawing closer to the altar:**

Nothing touches the heart more than the image of Christ crucified on the cross, for our sake. The Alter is the cross upon which Christ is crucified, so participating in the holy liturgy and partaking of the communion gives us power to love as He loved us.

3. Reading the Holy Bible:

The Bible tells us about the work of God, His love for every one of us. So when we read the Bible we discover how God saved us from condemnation. So we start to think about what we did to repay His love and gifts, so the heart is filled with love towards whom loved us so much. He who doesn't read the Bible will not know how much God did for us and so will be weak in love.

4. Acting with love :

Let's ask God to give us the chance to show love towards all, these small acts will grow by time and are appreciated both by God and men. For example: saying " thank you", visiting a sick person, asking about someone in trouble, helping the needy, comforting words, etc

May God fill our hearts with His love. Amen.

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The story of an icon:

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This is an icon from the 16th century showing:

+ A **cave** in a mountain through which the Jordan River flows.

+ **St. John the Baptist**, on the left, bowing with respect.

+ **The angels**, on the right, affirming that the heaven has been opened, waiting for Him to come out, carrying towels to dry His Holy Body.

+ **An angel**, on the right, looking at **the Holy Spirit** as it descends on Christ. Mt 3:17

+ **A dragon** under Christ's feet representing the crushing of the evil forces.



Until the 4th century the Coptic Church celebrated the Nativity with the Epiphany, this tradition is still practiced in the Armenian Church.

You who were baptized and came out of the water take our hearts off the world.

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