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The Divine Liturgies
Of Saints
Basil, Gregory, and Cyril

PREFACE

This edition of the Divine Liturgies of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria is the culmination of efforts that began when His Grace Bishop Serapion and His Grace Bishop Youssef met with several priests and laymen in San Antonio, Texas, in late 1997 and early 1998 for the purpose of reviewing the English text of the Liturgy of Saint Basil to improve its elegance and accuracy, and to produce standard English texts of the liturgies of Saint Cyril and Saint Gregory. Since then, the Coptic and Arabic texts have also been examined and revised to conform to the standard texts accepted by the holy synod of the church of Egypt.

As a guide for accuracy and appropriate vocabulary, phraseology, and idiomatic expression within the English Biblical and liturgical tradition, we consulted three English Bibles in the King James tradition, namely, the King James Version itself, the New King James Version, and the Revised Standard Version. The RSV is the only English Bible that contains the entire text of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament produced in Egypt in the third century before Christ. The early Church used the Septuagint as its Old Testament, as do the Orthodox churches today. The RSV has attained wide acceptance and endorsement in Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant circles for its scholarship and elegant English.

Vocabulary

For the sake of consistency, we attempted as much as possible to render each word of the Liturgy by a single word in English. At times, however, this one-for-one principle did not adequately reflect the use of different words in the original text, various meanings of Coptic words, or requirements of English.

For example, the standard translation of *agios* and *ethouab* is "holy." When both words are used in close proximity in the original, it is better to render one word as "saintly" and the other "holy" to reflect the use of two different words in the Coptic text: *His saintly, honored disciples and holy apostles.*

Another example is the Coptic *ouosht*, which is generally translated "worship," a word that is reserved almost exclusively for God in contemporary

English. Therefore, in reference to the Holy Gospel, we render *ouosht* as "venerate." This differentiates the honor we ascribe to the Gospel from the honor we ascribe to God.

There are a handful of words that could have been translated, but for which the original words in the ancient tongue are also available in English. These original terms either retain a sense of historical significance, a specialized meaning, or avoid confusion resulting from the choice of one English word over another.

- *Pantocrator*. Although this word has been universally translated for centuries as Almighty, some believe that by emphasizing God's power, Almighty does not adequately convey the meaning of ruler or governor of all. Because God is all-powerful, however, one can easily interpret Almighty as meaning Ruler of All. The English word Pantocrator is used primarily for the icon of Christ enthroned in majesty.

- *Logos*. This is the word Saint John uses for Christ at the beginning of his Gospel and which was used by the Fathers, especially Saint Athanasius, to defend the divinity of the Son of God against the heretics. Although usually translated into English as "Word," Logos has a wide range of meaning, not simply that which is spoken by God. As used by Saint John and the Liturgy, the Logos is the *person* of the eternally begotten Son of God who is the "expression" of the Father's very being (cf. Heb. 1:2-3), His "word," "speech," or "reason" by which He makes Himself known to man.

- *Paraclete.* This word comes directly from the Greek *parakletos*, meaning "one who is called alongside," which is variously translated in the Bible as "advocate," "comforter," "counselor," and "helper." As a title for the Holy Spirit, perhaps "Counselor" best captures the meaning, since one who provides counsel can act as advocate, helper, guide, and comforter.

- *Theotokos*. This Greek word is difficult to translate into good English, as it means "one who gives birth to God," from *theo-* (God) and *-tokos* (gives birth to). Theotokos is a title for Saint Mary in addition to "Mother of God." Led by Saint Cyril the Great, the two hundred fathers at Ephesus in A.D. 431 taught that Theotokos is necessary as an affirmation of the

divinity of Christ, because it identifies the *person* that Saint Mary bore to be God the eternal Logos who had become flesh in her womb. In other words, to fail to accept the title Theotokos is to fail to understand the Incarnation, the *perfect* union of God and man that occurred when the divine Logos was conceived in the human womb of the Virgin. Since some heretics taught that Jesus became the Son of God after His birth, they could not call Saint Mary the "Birth-giver of God," but they could still call her the Mother of God on the basis that she was always His mother.

- *Economy.* One of the definitions of this English word is the same as the Greek *oikonomia*, which is used by the apostles and Fathers to refer to God's plan, administration, system, stewardship, or management regarding His governance of man and history.

We do translate some important terms, however, following the tradition of the Fathers. For example, in some prayers, God is addressed as THE BEING, which is how the Fathers translated into Greek and Coptic the name by which God chose to identify Himself to the people of Israel and to be "remembered throughout all generations" (Ex. 3:14). God's ineffable name, related to the verb "to be," was not used in the generations preceding Christ. The Fathers chose instead to substitute LORD, universally rendered in capital letters in English Bible translation. THE BEING, likewise in capitals, signifies that, unlike all creation, God's being (or essence) simply *is*—in and of Himself. Unlike us and the rest of creation, God's being is neither from nor dependent upon any other. Strictly speaking, only God can say I AM (Ex. 3:14; Jn. 8:58; 18:5-8). We, however, *owe* our existence to God; we *have* our being from Him and in Him. As Saint Paul teaches us, "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Some English words, such as "begotten," "incorporeal," "ineffable," and "meet," although rarely used in conventional speech, are necessary to retain here for theological and liturgical reasons. For example, not only does tradition require the use of "begotten," there is simply no acceptable alternative.

In the anaphora, when the priest asks the people to give thanks to the Lord, the people respond by exclaiming *axion*; they are not exclaiming "worthy" or "deserving," as *axios* means in other contexts, for neither the priest nor the people are claiming their worthiness to give thanks to God. Rather the people

declare that it is fitting, proper, or meet (*axion*) and right (*dikeon*) to give thanks to God. We have retained "meet" in accordance with universal English liturgical practice.

Throughout the Liturgy and its rubrics, reference is made to deacons, which are not the readers and chanters whom, collectively, we now commonly call deacons. The deacon referred to here is the lowest of the three priestly orders. Since few churches have an actual deacon, his place is taken by a reader or chanter.

Rubrics

Since rubrics are guides to liturgical practice and are not part of the liturgical text itself, they can vary among editions. The rubrics of this edition follow those of the edition edited and published by hegumen Abd Al Maseeh Al Massoudi and recently published by Al Moharek monastery.

Liturgical Seasons

In many places, the words "for You have come" (je aki) appear in parentheses, which mark words that change according to the liturgical seasons. These words are changed as follows.

- From the Nativity Paramoun (Kioahk 27) through the Feast of the Circumcision (Tobe 6): "for You were born" (je aumack).

- From the Theophany Paramoun (Tobe 10) through Tobe 12: "for You were baptized" (je ak[iwmc).

- On the two Feasts of the Cross (Thoout 17 and Paremhotep 10), during Passion Week, and the Prayer for the Reposed: "for You were crucified" (je auask).

- From the eve of the Feast of the Resurrection through the end of the Holy Fifty Days, on Sundays of the Fast of the Apostles through the fourth Sunday of the month of Hathor, and on the commemoration of the

Annunciation, Nativity, and Resurrection (29th of every month): "for You have risen" (je aktwnk).

Regarding the prayers for the air of heaven, the waters of the rivers, or the herbs and plants, the holy synod has determined that these prayers may be combined to accommodate the lands of immigration in the event that the seasons differ from those of Egypt. If the seasons are in accordance with those of Egypt, however, then this change is not necessary.

Reading the Gospel

Most of the churches in the lands of immigration have grown accustomed to reading the Gospel in both English and Arabic, but not Coptic. As a result, after the Litany of the Gospel, "Alleluia" is chanted without reading the Psalm. This practice is improper. Therefore, in these instances, we recommend the following order be observed.

- After the Litany of the Gospel, the Psalm should be read in Arabic or English followed by "Alleluia" or the Response to the Psalm.
- The deacon chants, "Stand …." (Ctay/te), and the priest, "Blessed be …." (Fcmarwout), followed by the deacon saying, "Stand in the fear of God ….," and the priest, "Our Lord …." (Pen[oic).
- The Gospel is then read in Arabic or English.
- The Psalm is now read in the other language (English or Arabic) and the deacon says, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord …."
- Then the Gospel is read in the other language.

Calendars

Since prayers that change according to liturgical seasons are mentioned in the rubrics, many will find helpful the following comparison between the ancient Egyptian calendar and the Gregorian calendar used throughout the West. The Egyptian calendar preceded the church by thousands of years and is the only calendar that our church has ever used. The Gregorian calendar takes its name from Pope Gregory XIII of Rome, who adjusted and added several days to the Julian calendar in 1582 based on scientific findings that revealed the solar year to be slightly shorter than previously thought. The Julian

calendar is an adaptation of the Egyptian calendar that was introduced by Julius Caesar, with the aid of an Alexandrian astronomer, in 46 B.C. Several Orthodox churches continue to use the Julian calendar, including the church of Russia.

The original Coptic texts contain several variant spellings of all the Coptic months, with Sahidic Coptic having a different set of spellings than Bohairic Coptic. Since we are most familiar with the Arabic forms of the Coptic months, which are based on the Sahidic, we have chosen as our standard here the Sahidic spellings preferred by both W. E. Crum's *A Coptic Dictionary* and *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, along with their English transliterations. Since Sahidic has no name for the last five days of the year, we use the Bohairic designation "Little Month."

	Egyptian Calendar		***Gregorian Calendar***
Yoout	Thoout	Tout	September 11/12 – October 9/10
Pawpe	Paope	Babah	October 11/12 – November 9/10
Haywr	Hathor	Hatour	November 10/11 – December 9/10
Koiahk	Koiahk	Kiahk	December 10/11 – January 8/9
Twbe	Tobe	Tubah	January 9/10 – February 7/8
Msir	Meshir	Amshir	February 8/9 – March 9
Parmhotp	Paremhotep	Baramhat	March 10/11 – April 8
Parmoute	Parmoute	Baramoudah	April 9 – May 8
Pasonc	Pashons	Bashans	May 9 – June 7
Pawne	Paone	Baounah	June 8 – July 7
Ep/p	Epep	Abib	July 8 – August 6
Mecor/	Mesore	Misra	August 7 – September 5
Kouji nabot	Little Month	Al-Nasi	September 6 – 10

Style

Finally, a few words are in order regarding matters of style, such as punctuation and capitalization. We have followed in the main the preeminent standard in the field, *A Manual of Style*, 12th Edition, published by The University of Chicago Press.

Capitalization has been kept to a minimum based on the principle that fewer capitalized words enhances the significance of those words that are capitalized. Generally, words that are descriptive are not capitalized, whereas titles are. For example, "Paul, apostle to the Gentiles" but "the Apostle Paul." For similar reasons, it was decided not to capitalize "orthodox," since in the ancient Church "orthodox" was used to distinguish those Christians adhering to correct worship and doctrine from the heretics. Lower case "orthodox" retains this original meaning, which is not to be confused with the common current use of the word to distinguish eastern European and Oriental Orthodox Christians from western Catholic and Protestant Christians. "Church" is capitalized only when referring to the universal Church, not a particular church. Also, key events in God's redemptive work, including Christ's Passion, are capitalized.

In a few places, English words appear in brackets. These are words that do not appear in the original text, but are necessary for clarification or to serve as an alternative or addition because of changed historical circumstances.

As with matters of style, we have attempted in all respects to produce an edition of our Divine Liturgies that follow a consistent pattern and reflect the best in English usage, grammar, and elegance while adhering rigorously to the meaning of the original texts.

Glory be to God forever.