

# PART SEVEN

## THE SACRAMENT OF PRIESTHOOD



HIS GRACE BISHOP METTAOUS,  
Abbott of El Syrian Monastery

The Sacrament of Priesthood is a holy sacrament through which the bishop lays his hands on the head of the elected candidate, so that the Holy Spirit will descend on him and grant him one of the priestly ranks. He is then given the authority to officiate the Sacraments of the church, doctrines, and others.

The word ‘priest’ is designated for a clergyman who spiritually serves people and their needs. The Jewish people referred to the person who offered sacrifices and oblations as a priest. In Christianity, the priest is a member of the priesthood who performs religious rites. The word ‘priest’ is derived from the Hebrew word ‘Kohen’, meaning priest.

✠ The word  $\text{OYH}\beta$  (Ooab) in Coptic, meaning ‘priest’, is derived from the Coptic word  $\text{ETHOYAB}$  (ethoab), meaning saintly or righteous. Hence ‘Ooab’ is given to the priest to signify that he is a righteous man, adorned by holiness and purity.

✠ In Greek, the priesthood is called  $\text{IERATION}$  (Eration), and the word for priest is  $\text{EPREY}\zeta$  (Ereis), meaning minister (of the Sacraments and the congregation)

It is also known in Greek as the “Laying on of hands”, and in Syrian as “Ordination”, and in Arabic as “Anointment”, signifying the granting of the seal of the Holy Spirit on the consecrated person.

## Institution of Priesthood

This sacrament was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ when He chose the twelve of his followers, and consecrated them for ministry, ***“He called His disciples to Him, and from them He chose twelve whom He named apostles”*** (Luke 6:13)

These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them saying: ***“Preach saying, ‘the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons”*** (Matthew 10:5-8)

He gave them the authority of absolution and binding: ***“Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven”*** (Matthew 18:18).

After His resurrection He appeared to them in the upper room in Zion and said to them, ***“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven, if you retain the sins of any, they are retained”*** (John 20:22-23).

Only for them He said, ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”*** (Matthew 28:19,20)

Only to them He gave the mystery of His Holy Body and Precious Blood, ***“And when the hour had come, He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him...He took bread,***

*gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, ‘This is my Body which is given for you do this in remembrance of Me’, likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This is the new covenant in My Blood, which is shed for you’”* (Luke 22:14-20).

### **The honor of Priesthood:**

Priesthood is a great honor as it is a consecration of the work with God for the salvation of the souls of the people of God.

‡ Priesthood is a divine call:

*“And Jesus went up on the mountain and called to Him those He wanted, and they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out demons”* (Mark 3:13-15)

‡ Divine choice:

*“Now it came to pass in those days that Jesus went up to the mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God, and when it was day, He called His disciples to Him and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles”* (Luke 6:12,13)

*“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain”* (John 15:16)

‡ Appointment:

*“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also and sent them two by two before His face into every city*

*and place where He Himself was about to go” (Luke 10:1)*

‡ Selection:

*“As they (disciples) ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:2,3). That is why our teacher St. Paul boasted saying, “But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace to reveal His son in me, that I might preach Him among the gentiles” (Galatians 1:15,16)*

‡ Consecration:

*“And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth” (John 17:19). To sanctify means to consecrate. Christ consecrated Himself for the ministry and our redemption. All the ranks of the priesthood are consecrated for ministry, according to the example of Christ, the High Priest.*

‡ Faithfulness and stewardship:

*“Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes” (Luke 12:42,43)*

*“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the Mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:1,2)*

† Priesthood is a great honor:

No one takes this honor upon himself, this honour is granted and given by God, just as He granted the honour to Aaron. Likewise, Christ did not glorify Himself to become high priest, but the Father said to Him, ***“You are My Son. Today I have begotten You.”*** And also, ***“You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek”*** (Hebrews 5:4-6)

## Ranks of Priesthood

---

There are three ranks in Priesthood :

- 1. The order of Deacons**
- 2. The order of Priests**
- 3. The order of Bishops**

Deacons are servants,

Priests are teachers,

Bishops are overseers, and shepherds.

### **1- The order of Deacons**

---

‘Deacon’, pronounced as such in Greek, is a Syrian word meaning ‘servant’. The deacon’s responsibility is to help the priest or bishop perform the religious ministry. The first church appointed seven deacons who were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom to help in service, ***“The twelve summoned the multitude of disciples and said: ‘Seek out from among you***

*seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom whom we may appoint over this business”* (Acts 6:2,3).

*“When they were chosen, they set them before the apostles and when they had prayed they laid hands on them”* (Acts 6:6).

The apostles stipulated the following three conditions for nominating deacons :

1. They must be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.
2. They should be appointed by the apostles through the laying on of hands with prayers.
3. They should carry out certain responsibilities in the church.

Our teacher St. Paul also specified the requirements of a deacon, in his First Epistle to Timothy (3:8-13) : *“Likewise deacons must be :*

- *reverent*
- *not double tongued*
- *not given to too much wine(drunkeness)*
- *not greedy for money*
- *holding the mystery of faith with a pure conscience*
- *ruling their children and their houses well*
- *should be tested first, and then proved and found blameless, so they can be ordained”* (1 Timothy 3:10)

Although the rank of deacon is the most junior rank of priesthood, St. Paul praises it saying, *“For those who served well as deacons, obtain for themselves a good standing*

***and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”***  
(1 Timothy 3:13).

There are five ranks of deacons. In ascending order, they are:

1. Epsaltos (hymnist)
2. Ognostis (reader)
3. Epideacon (subdeacon)
4. Deacon (full deacon)
5. Archdeacon (leader of deacons)

We shall now discuss each rank in terms of responsibilities, conditions, clothing, and rites of ordination



## EPSALTOS

‘Epsaltos’ is derived from the Coptic word ‘Epsalmos’ meaning Psalm or hymn. Hence, ‘Epsaltos’ means ‘hymnist’.

According to his title, his responsibilities include learning and singing the hymns and praises of the church. This rank is

mentioned in some of the early Church Canons, *“Hymnists also must be blessed by the bishop.”*

Generally, it is the children who are ordained ‘epsaltos’ (from primary to high school). For as the Psalm says, ***“Out of the mouth of babes and infants You have ordained strength”*** (Psalm 8:2). The wisdom behind ordaining young boys is to instill within them at a young age, the faith and rituals of the church, so that they may taste of its sweetness, become steadfast on the Orthodox faith, and an active member of the church. Hence, he will grow in the church with spirituality and holiness : ***“But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God ... I will praise You for ever”*** (Psalm 52:8).

The Epsaltos is permitted to wear the tunic without the stole.

### **Rite of the Epsaltos**

After the Reconciliation Prayer of the divine liturgy, the archdeacon or hegumen takes the children who will be ordained Epsaltos, to stand before the altar in reverence and awe. The bishop then advises them regarding regular church attendance, the importance of learning hymns, attending Sunday School classes, and the importance of respectful and decent behaviour, whether in the church, home or in society. He advises them regarding obedience, and to take care not to insult, lie or swear. He also tells them regarding the importance of regular confession and receiving the Holy Communion.

He must be sure that those who are being ordained, are fasting, so that they may receive the Holy Communion after the holy Mass.

The bishop must receive a verbal undertaking from the children's parents, that they will help their children fulfill these commandments, and not forbid them from coming to church for any reason. The bishop then instructs the priest to care for them spiritually, and keep close watch on their spiritual life and regularity in confession. The bishop also instructs the older deacons to take the time to teach and explain, simply, to the young deacons, the rites and church hymns.

The bishop then begins the ordination for the rank of EPSALTOS.

### **The Rite of Ordination of Epsaltos**

✠ The prayer begins by saying the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Prayer of Thanksgiving. The bishop then prays :

*“Our good God, who raised Heman and Asaaf to sing in Your holy places, and who gave David the prophet the flute, harp and ten chords to praise, and who said, **“Out of the mouth of babes and infants You have ordained strength.”** You who placed praise in Your holy church, and Your congregation worships You by Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. We ask You Lord to grant Your servants Your grace to become Epsaltos in Your holy church and praise You with hymns, songs and spiritual praises, singing with their hearts*

*to the Lord ... through the grace and compassion of Your only begotten Son ...”*

*O Master, Lord, God the Pantocrator, the Father of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, we ask and entreat Your goodness, O lover of mankind, for Your servants standing before You, who came to Your universal, Apostolic church, to be worthy to start faithfully and adore You in purity. Enlighten them by the sweetness of Your holy words. Grant them to sing spiritual hymns with understanding. Sanctify them. Bless them. Fill them with Your fear. Protect them by Your angelical power. Enrich them by all good gifts and perfect talent, to live by Your holy, blessed will. May they grow into the perfection of Your Holy Spirit. By Your only begotten Son our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory honor, dominion and worship are due to You together with Him and the Life-Giving and consubstantial Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.”*

✠ The bishop then does the sign of the cross three signs saying without the laying on of hands, “...(name), *Epsaltos* for the holy church of God ...(name of parish) ...”

✠ On the first sign of the cross : “*Blessed is God the Father, Amen*”

✠ On the second sign of the cross : “*Blessed in His only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen*”

✠ On the third sign of the cross : “*Blessed is the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, Amen.*”

After the bishop completes the sign so the cross, the children are given their service tunics and stoles, which the bishop then

makes the sign of the cross over them three times before they wear them.

They then stand before the adult Epsaltos deacons, to share with them in the responses and hymns of the divine Mass, followed by them receiving the Holy Communion, after the older deacons. Their parents rejoice for them, and by coming to church regularly, they will grow in virtues and worship, and become righteous people..

## ARCH-EPSALTOS

Instead of being ordained in the rank of ‘Ognostis’ (reader), the church’s hymnist may be ordained in the rank of Arch-Epsaltos, especially if he is blind. Arch-Epsaltos is the leader of hymnists and leads the deacons’ choir outside the altar, in the responses and hymns of the divine liturgy or any other ritual services.

After the Prayer of Reconciliation the bishop stands at the altar’s door, facing west. The person required to be ordained as Arch-Epsaltos kneels before him reverently, while holding his tunic. The then bishop begins the ordination prayer as follows:

### **Prayer read for the ARCH-EPSALTOS, leader of hymnists**

✠ The Bishop prays :

*“O Master, Lord, God the Pantocrator, who is in heaven and accepts pure souls throughout the generations. Make a*

*sign with Your servant (...name) and make him one of Your righteous leaders of hymnists like David. Keep him undefiled to the end of ages.”*

*“Accomplish his offering. Grant him a blameless search for praises. Keep him in all deeds. Grant him purity in all good work, and may he conquer all the enemies. Nourish him by pure teachings and heavenly praises. Empower him at all times to fulfill Your will always. Grant him mercy and grace before Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Glory, honor, dominion and worship are due to You together with Him and the life-giving Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.”*

✠ All say *“Lord have mercy”*, three times.

✠ The Bishop continues praying :

*“We ask You our Lord, and God, the lover of mankind, send the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon Your servant standing before You, to become a leader of hymnists. Fill him with power and righteousness to become an example to all and present to Your divine majesty praises of joy and salvation. Spiritual praises from the heart not lips, adoring You in spirit, truth and understanding. Grant him wisdom to manage the rank of Epsaltos, a good, spiritual management.”*

*“Keep him from the traps of the devil and grant him to become a holy altar for You, to be accepted before You always. Grant him goodness and humbleness of heart, meekness, faith, hope and love so his heart may abide in grace and praises ...”* (Hebrews 9:11-13)

*“Bless him and his service, accept his praises and prayers as sweet incense.”*

*“Through the grace, mercy, and love of Your only begotten Son Jesus Christ. Glory, honor, dominion and worship are due to You together with Him and the life-giving and consubstantial Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.”*

✠ Without the laying on of hands, the bishop makes three signs of the cross on him saying, *“Arch-Epsaltos for the church (name of parish)...”*

✠ On the first sign of the cross : *“Blessed is God the Father, Amen”*

✠ On the second sign of the cross : *“Blessed in His only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen”*

✠ On the third sign of the cross : *“Blessed is the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, Amen.”*

✠ The bishop then makes the sign of the cross three times on his tunic, then dresses him.

The Arch-Epsaltos then stands in his place among the choir deacons, and receives the Holy Communion at the end of the holy Mass.



## OGNOSTIS

‘Ognostis’ is Greek word derived from two words : ‘Anagnosma’, meaning ‘reading’, and ‘Tis’, meaning ‘related to’. Thus ‘Ognostis’ means ‘the reader’.

### **Conditions of ordination:**

- Generally, not less than 18 years of age.
- Recognised for his good manner and deeds.
- Recommended (without objection) by the priest and congregation.
- Tested for his reading ability of the Holy Bible, and its comprehension.
- Regular in his spiritual life, such as Confession, Holy Communion, reading of the Holy Bible and coming to church.

- He must be ready for service and full of zeal.
- He must be humble, and not one to boast about his voice or service.

## Responsibility of the Ognostis

He must be fluent (English, Arabic and Coptic) in knowing by heart the responses said before and after the Epistle readings, and read the daily readings. He must read clearly and without mistakes to enable the congregation to hear and understand.

### Introduction to the Pauline epistles:

*“A chapter from the Epistle of our teacher St. Paul to the ...  
May his blessings be with us all. Amen.”*

Concluding the Pauline reading, *“The grace of God the Father  
be with you my brehren. Amen.”*

### Introduction of the Catholic (universal) epistles:

*“A Catholic Epistle from the Epistle of our teacher St. ...,  
May his blessings be with us all. Amen.”*

Concluding the Catholic reading, *“Do not love the world, nor  
things which are in the world. The world shall pass away  
and all its desires, but he who does the will of God shall  
abide forever. Amen.”*

### Introduction to the Praxis (Book of Acts):

*“A chapter from the Acts of our fathers the pure apostles,*

*may their holy blessings be with us all my fathers and brethren. Amen.”*

Concluding the Praxis reading, *“May the word of the Lord grow, and multiply, be mighty and be confirmed in the holy church of God. Amen.”*

After the reading, the Ognostis must prostrate before the altar and kiss the cross and the priest’s hand, showing his humility before God. The Ognostis must take care never to boast about his reading abilities.

Following the Commemoration, the deacon who stands inside the sanctuary, reads the names of our holy fathers who have fallen asleep in the Lord : *“Let the readers, name our holy fathers, the patriarchs who have departed; O Lord repose their souls and forgive us our sins.”*

The Ognostis must be familiar in all the church hymns and praises, and chanting them with the choir of deacons during the Liturgy and other occasions.

The Ognostis must be familiar with church doctrines and able to teach and give sermons. In the rite of ordaining Ognostis, it is said, *“Lord show Your face to Your servant standing before You, to know by Your holy words and preach Your laws to Your people, teach them Your pure words for their salvation.”*

In the commandment the bishop gives to the Ognostis being ordained, he says: *“You must learn chapter by chapter the books of the Holy Bible, which is the breath of God, for which you were entrusted with to teach the people.”*

However, the Ognostis must only give sermons, and so on, with the permission of the bishop or priest.

## **The Ordination Rite of Ognostis**

The deacon is ordained, following the Reconciliation Prayer.

He stands before the altar with the tunic, carrying his tunic, and kneel reverently before the Lord, ready to carry out the responsibility of the rank and service. The Bishop stands at the altar's door, facing west.

The priests and individuals, from the congregation, who recommended him, stand behind him before the altar, also kneeling on his behalf before the altar and the bishop, requesting his ordination, before God and the bishop.

✠ The bishop asks the congregation, “Do you witness that he is truly worthy of this rank?” They respond saying, “Yes we witness that he is worthy.”

✠ The Bishop takes scissors and makes five small cuts in his hair, in the sign of the cross, starting from the middle of his head. While clipping, the bishop says, “...(name), *Ognostis for the church* ...(name of parish) ...”

✠ “*Blessed is God the Father, Amen*”

✠ “*Blessed in His only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen*”

✠ “*Blessed is the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, Amen.*”

## NOTES:

The bishop questioning the congregation about the deacon's worthiness to be a witness for God and the Church, is a validation of the Apostle's words, "***And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also***" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Clipping of the hair signifies the cutting off, or the removal all evil thoughts and habits (for the head seats the senses).

Clipping the hair in the shape of a cross, while the bishop mentions the Holy Trinity is proof of the graces and talents that the deacon receives from the Holy Trinity by the worthiness of Christ's death on the cross.

The five crosses (hair clippings) symbolise the five wounds of Christ the Lord: the three nails, the crown of thorns, and the spear wound in His side. It is as I the deacon proclaims, "***That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death***" (Philippians 3:10).

The bishop clips the hair of each Ognostis, in the shape of five small crosses, whilst saying the three 'blessings' of the Holy Trinity. After completing this, all the newly ordained Ognostis stand in order to hear the prayers and the commandments given them.

✠ The bishop prays the Thanksgiving prayer, then raises incense in the four directions...

✠ He faces west and prays: “*We ask and entreat Your goodness O Lord God the Pantocrator, accept Your servant (...name) an Ognostis in Your house. Give him reverence in worshipping You. Make him worthy to touch the utensils and become an honorable Ognostis before You.*” \*

\* The Ognostis is authorised to touch the altar’s sacred vessels, in order to dry them after the Mass and place them in their specified place, but handling of the vessels must only be done by holding them in the white linen veil specified.

✠ The bishop faces the east and prays: “*O great God, rich in His talents ... Come and fill him with all wisdom and understanding keep him blameless in Your worshipping.*”

✠ Following the bishop’s prayer, the congregation respond, “*O Lord hear us, Lord have mercy upon us, O Lord bless us.*” This response is said at the end of each ordination prayer.

✠ The bishop, facing west, holds the temples of the Ognostis between his hands, whilst praying, “*O God, holder of all ... show Your face to Your servant ... to abide by Your holy sayings and preach Your commandments to Your people ... grant him a humble heart to read and study Your laws to edify himself and his listeners.*”

### NOTES:

The bishop’s hand denotes the hand of God that holds the human mind to open his intellectual ability and free his tongue to teach and preach the powerful living word of God.

✠ The bishop then faces east praying: *“O Master and Lord Jesus Christ, who chose His servant Ezra and gave him wisdom to read Your law to Your people ... grant him also, wisdom and the spirit of prophecy to recite Your holy sayings blamelessly to Your people.”*

NOTES:

It is very important that the reputation of the Ognostis be blameless, so that he may apply his words to his deeds, and not be the cause of a stumbling block. He must offer pure service, according to the example of Ezra the great writer.

✠ The bishop (or archdeacon if present) reads to the Ognostis, the following commandments:

. *“Learn chapter by chapter of the Holy Bible”*

. *“Read with understanding the Lord’s commandments”*

. *“Preach unto the people”*

. *“Your reputation must be pure, as a beacon giving light to all those around you, by your words and deeds.”*

✠ At the end of the prayers and commandments, the bishop makes the sign of the cross on the vestments of service. The Ognostis’ then wear them and take their place with the Epsaltos deacons, to share in the hymns and responses of the holy Mass.

✠ At the end of the Mass they receive the Holy Communion. After the bishop drinks of the precious Blood and before he

drinks water, he breathes into their faces one by one saying,  
“*Receive the Holy Spirit.*”

✠ A procession is made for them around the altar and the whole church rejoice.

### **The Ognostis' Vestments**

The Ognostis wears a white tunic as white is appropriate for the service of God. Christ is the one who is dressed in light, who was transfigured and His clothes became shining, and exceedingly white (Mark 9:3). The colour white signifies purity which must adorn every deacon and all other priesthood ranks.

He wears the stole crossing over the left shoulder and around his waist as a belt, and the ends of the stole hang from his shoulders.

#### **NOTES:**

‘Stole’ is a Greek word (Patrachelion) meaning ‘grace’, the rank of deacon is a grace which is taken by an individual and carried on his shoulders.

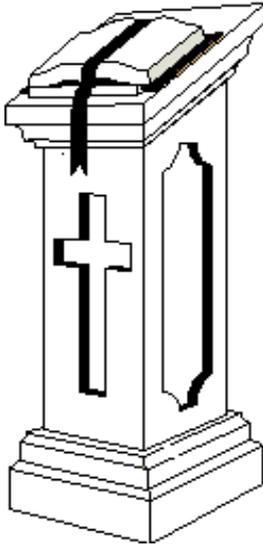
It hangs on the back like a cross to symbolise that he is sharing in carrying the cross, for the Lord says: “***If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me***” (Matthew 16:24).

The stole comes around the waist like a belt, as proof of preparation and readiness for service, like John the Baptist who wore a leather belt around his waist.

## **Rules for the Ognostis**

The bishop clips his hair, however, he does not lay his hands on him.

He may marry, and if his wife dies, he may remarry. This differs from other priestly ranks.



## **EPIDEACON**

Epideacon is a Greek word composed of two parts: 'Epi' meaning 'assistant', and 'Diacon' meaning 'deacon'. Hence, 'Epideacon' means 'Assistant Deacon'.

### **Conditions of ordination**

- . Unless he shows excellence in ecclesiastical subjects and wisdom, and faithful in his deeds, generally, the Epideacon should not be ordained younger than the age of 20.
- . He must be recommended by the congregation and the (chorus) deacons.

- He must be known for his righteousness and faithful deeds.

### **His Responsibility**

- He must keep watch of the church doors to forbid the entry of heretics and false teachers.
- He is responsible for organising the seating in the church, that is, the place allocated for men, women, nuns, and so on.
- He is responsible for lighting the church lamps.
- He is responsible for keeping in order, the church books, and the priestly and servants vestments.
- He is responsible for preparing the censors
- He is responsible for helping the other deacons, and replacing them if necessary.

### **NOTES:**

These responsibilities are additional to the responsibilities he had as an Ognostis. He must still fulfill the responsibilities of Ognostis, in case he needs to step into that role at any time.

### **The Rite of Ordination of Epideacon**

After the Prayer of Reconciliation, he kneels before the altar (without the tunic).

- ✠ The bishop prays the Thanksgiving prayer, then raises the incense in the four directions

✠ The bishop, facing the east prays, “*O Almighty Lord ... accept the Epideaconship of Your servant (...name) standing here awaiting Your heavenly talents.*”

✠ The archdeacon says: “*May Your grace, Lord Jesus Christ, perfect our weakness, and come upon the brother whose name was mentioned for epideaconship ...*”

NOTES:

The ordination rite is done specifically by bishops only, however, priests or archdeacons may share in some of the prayers.

The bishop facing east prays, “*Yes Lord make him worthy of the invitation for Epideaconship.*”

✠ The congregation responds: “*Lord hear us, Lord have mercy on us, Lord bless us.*” This response is said at the end of every supplication of the ordinations, or alternatively, “*Lord have mercy*” said three times in the same tune, may be said.

✠ Facing west, the bishop holds the Epideacon’s temples between his hands whilst praying: “*O Lord, Master and Pantocrator ... show Your face to Your servant (...name) to become an Epideacon. Fill him with Your Holy Spirit to become worthy to touch the sacred vessels of service.*”

NOTES:

The Epideacon may only touch the altar vessels to dry them after the Mass, with the white linen veil specified for that purpose.

✠ The bishop faces east and prays: *“Lord look to our service ... give Your servant (...name) Your grace to be worthy to complete his Epideaconship blamelessly.”*

✠ The bishop anoints his forehead with his right thumb, saying: *“We call you in the holy church of God. Amen.”* And the congregation respond: *“Amen.”*

The archdeacon then says: *“...(name), an Epideacon for the holy house of God, Amen.”* The congregation respond: *“Amen.”*

The bishop makes the sign of the cross on the Epideacon’s forehead three times, with his thumb, (but without the laying on of hands), whilst saying: *“We call you (...name) an Epideacon for the church ...(name of parish), in the name of the Father ...”*

✠ *“Blessed is God the Father, Amen”*

✠ *“Blessed in His only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen”*

✠ *“Blessed is the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, Amen.”*

During these signings of the cross, the Holy Spirit dwells upon the Epideacon and gives him the gifts of service required of him.

✠ The bishop then faces east and prays the Thanksgiving Prayer, giving thanks to God for fulfilling this ordination, saying: *“I thank You O Master Pantocrator .... give him reverence and purity to become perfect in all works of service ...”*

✠ After making the sign of the cross on the tunic and stole, he

dresses the Epideacon whilst saying, “*Glory and honor ... peace and edification ... Amen.*”

- ✠ The bishop then instructs him with the specific commandments for Epideacons: “*My son you are entrusted with a righteous rank ... help the deacons in service, and guard the doors of the church and keep order within it ...*”
- ✠ At the end of the Mass the Epideacon receives the Holy Communion, and the bishop breathes into his face saying, “*Receive the Holy Spirit*”. They then make a procession for him in church, to rejoice in his ordination.

### **The Epideacon's Vestments**

The service vestments, including the stole, are the same and worn the same way as the Ognostis. The stole bound around his waist as a belt signifies an obligation of duties and services and dedication to the church rules which he must follow and behave accordingly. (If there is no stole during the ordination the Epideacon may tie a red linen waist band around his waist instead.)

### **The Rules**

- During his ordination, the bishop does not lay his hands on him, but rather makes the sign of the cross on his head.
- An Epideacon is permitted to marry.

## DEACON

'Deacon' in Syrian, or 'Diakon' in Greek and Coptic, mean 'servant'.

### Conditions of Ordaining a Deacon

- He must be no younger than 25 years of age.
- He should undergo a period of testing, whereby his maturity is tried, according to the service he will be responsible for. The Apostle says, ***“Let these also first be proved, then let them serve as deacons, faithful in all things”*** (1 Timothy 3:10).
- He must be an example unto others in his speech, attitude, love, purity, and caring for his spiritual and eternal life.
- He must be of humble mind, not greedy for money, content, able to bear tribulations of the service without any complaint, he must be a man of principles, and not one to show favouritism to some and not others.
- He must be consistent in his Bible reading and reading of spiritual books, in order to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- He must be a witness for others in his chastity, honesty and love of peace.
- He must be recommended by the church's congregation as being worthy of this rank.

All the above conditions are necessary, especially if the deacon will be ordained as a full time consecrated person for church service.

## **The Responsibilities of a Deacon**

- He is responsible for saying the responses of the litanies prayed by the priest during the raising of incense and Liturgy.
- He is responsible for starting prayers with the congregation.
- He is responsible for maintaining order and quiet in the church, to ensure that the congregation stand with reverence and respect.
- He is responsible for helping the priest in visiting the church's congregation.
- He is responsible for recording the names of the people who have offered gifts and oblations to the church, so that the priest can remember them during the Litany of oblations. In the Apostolic Canons (Diaskolia), it is written : *“The deacons write every day the names of those who have given offerings, whether they are alive or departed, so that they may be remembered during the readings and prayers”* (Diaskolia 35)

In the old days, there would be a private room located at the western door of the church called the ‘deacon’s room’, where the deacon sits and receives the gifts and offerings of the congregation in private, before they enter the church. He would write the names of those who offered gifts, including the names of those who have departed in whom the gifts are being offered,

and the deacon would then give these names to the priest, who would mention them, silently, one by one after the Litany of Oblations during the divine Liturgy.

- He is responsible for cleaning the altar and putting in order the tabernacle. He must ensure the cleanliness of the altar and its coverings, before the priest comes.
- He is permitted to read the Holy Gospel of the divine Liturgy. During the deacon's ordination, the bishop says: "*... he is honored to read the Gospel.*"
- He is permitted, when necessary, to carry the chalice and give the congregation the Precious Blood, by permission from the priest.

During the deacon's ordination, the bishop says to him: "*... Understand the extent of honor given to you to carry it, which is the Precious True Blood giving salvation to the world.*"

- He is responsible for the service of widows and orphans, needy, sick and imprisoned. The bishop says to him: "*... visit the Lord's congregation, and widows, orphans, the oppressed, and help whoever you can, paying their needs and becoming an example for them by your good deeds ...*"
- By the permission of the bishop or priest, the Deacon has the responsibility to teach and preach.
- He is responsible for saying the liturgical responses, inside the altar - which are specific for the deacon and archdeacon. In

the past, no one was able to enter the sanctuary except the bishops, priests and deacons (that is, the deacons and archdeacons). Christian King, who were anointed by the Myron, were also permitted entry.

- He is responsible for sharing with the bishop or priest, in all the ritual prayers, such as Baptism, Myron, Lakkan, Consecration of the church, Ordinations, and the ritual celebrations of feasts and others.

### **The Rite of the Ordination of Deacon**

- ✠ The ordination takes place after the Reconciliation Prayer.
- ✠ After proof and documentation from the priest and congregation that the elected person is worthy, the deacon stands before the altar, without a tunic, and bows his head reverently.
- ✠ All say the Thanksgiving Prayer, followed by the bishop raising incense in the four directions.
- ✠ Facing east, the bishop prays, *“O Almighty Lord ... accept the deaconship of Your servant (...name) standing awaiting Your heavenly gift.”*
- ✠ The archdeacon then says this declaration: *“May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect our weakness, and come upon ... (name).”*
- ✠ Facing west, the bishop places his right hand on the Deacon’s head while praying, *“O Master Lord the Pantocrator, show Your face to Your servant (...name) who came*

*forward to the diaconship ... Fill him with Your Holy Spirit, wisdom and power ...”*

✠ Facing east, the bishop prays, *“Yes Lord make him worthy for the call of diaconship ...”* followed by, *“Lord look upon us and to our service, purify us from every blemish and send from heaven Your grace to Your servant (...name) to become worthy to accomplish Your service blamelessly.”*

✠ Facing west, the bishop makes the sign of the cross on the Deacon’s forehead, with his thumb three times, saying, *“...(name) Deacon for the altar of the church (name of parish)...”*

✠ *“Blessed is God the Father, Amen”*

✠ *“Blessed in His only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen”*

✠ *“Blessed is the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, Amen.”*

At this point, the Holy Spirit dwells upon him and gives him gifts of the service.

✠ The bishop faces east and prays saying: *“Thank You O Master Lord ... for the mystery of diaconship (the laying on of hands) which is given to Your servant (...name) through the dwelling of Your Holy Spirit upon him. Straighten the call of his election by purity and the grace of Your goodness.”*

✠ Facing west, the bishop makes the sign of the cross on the service vestments, the tunic and stole, then dresses him, placing the stole on his left shoulder, while saying: *“Glory*

*and honor to the all Holy Trinity: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Peace and edification for the one, holy, universal and apostolic church of God. Amen.”*

- ✠ The bishop then gives the commandment for him saying:  
*“My son you are entrusted for this service, so you must fulfil what is given to you ... ”*
- ✠ The deacon enters the sanctuary, prostrates before the altar, and stands on the right side of the altar, while the deacons are singing the ‘Worthy’ hymn.
- ✠ He shares with the responses of the divine Liturgy, from inside the sanctuary, then at the end of the Mass, receives the Holy Communion.
- ✠ After the bishop receives the precious Blood, he breathes into his face saying: *“Accept the Holy Spirit.”*

A procession is made for him in joy of this grace.

### **The Deacon’s Vestments**

The complete Deacon (Diacon) and Archdeacon (leader of deacons) wear the tunic and a red stole signifying the cleansing by the Blood of Christ. The stole must hang on the left shoulder which denotes carrying the cross. The hem of the stole symbolises the angel’s wings, as St. John Chrysostom said: *“Notice the spiritual joy, you who resemble angels by wearing the nice stoles that is placed on your left shoulders.”*

The deacon and archdeacon may wear special head coverings which are decorated by crosses and images of Christ and the Saints. Whilst there are still some deacons who maintain his tradition, it is not quite so common nowadays. However, its is preferable for the Deacon to wear this covering, for it is an old church tradition.

### **Rules for Deacons and Archdeacons**

- If he is unmarried before his ordination, he must remain unmarried afterwards.
- If he was married before his ordination, and his wife passed away after his ordination, he is not permitted to re-marry, just like in the case of the priest. Should he re-marry, he will lose his rank as Deacon.

### **The Ritual and Spiritual Duties of Deacons**

All deacons, regardless of rank must :

- Care to study the Coptic language, for it is paramount in all church rites, readings, hymns and praises. It is much better for the edacons to be able to read the Coptic language, instead of reading Coptic written in English/Arabic letters.
- They must take care to learn the hymns, and recite them continually.
- Discipleship should occur with a church's hymnist under the direction of a capable and experienced deacon.
- They must partake in all liturgies and praises (tasbeha).

- They must attend the Mass early. Any deacon who comes after the Servants Absolution has no right to wear the tunic and serve. If he comes after the Liturgy's Gospel, he must not receive the Communion.
- Deacons, whether they are serving outside or especially inside the altar, must wear the tunic every mass. If a deacon has served in the Mass and wore his tunic, he must receive Communion. It is a grave mistake for a deacon to wear the tunic, serve in the Mass and not receive Communion.
- Before the deacon wears the tunic, he must take it to the priest who will make the sign of the cross on it. This sign of the cross, made by the priest, is important for the following reasons:
  - ✦ It is considered as the priest granting permission for the deacon to serve in the Mass.
  - ✦ It is considered as permission granted for the deacon to receive Holy Communion.
  - ✦ It is a declaration that this deacon abides by the church laws (that is, has not been excommunicated).

If reflects an image of the obedience of the deacon to the priest, ***“The lesser is blessed by the better”*** (Hebrews 7:7).

- During the blessing, the deacon bows his head, or kneels, holding his tunic and stole, awaiting to accept the sign of the cross, and blessing from the priest.
- The deacon then kisses the cross and the priest's hand.

- While dressing in the service vestments, the deacon says Psalms 29 and 92: ***“I will exalt You O Lord”*** and ***“The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty”***
- The deacon is not to wear the tunic outside, for it is for church service only.
- The tunic may only be taken off at the end of the Mass, following the dismissal of the sacrifice’s angel, and not before.
- While taking off the service vestments, the deacon says Psalm 47: ***“O clap your hands O you people!”***.
- All deacons must take care to attend the vespers and Midnight Praises (Tasbeha).
- Every deacon must have a confession father, and practice confession once a month. They should receive Holy Communion in every Mass they serve in.
- During the distribution of the Holy Communion, the choir deacons must alternate to give each other a chance for receiving the Holy Communion.
- Deacons must hold candles during the following occasions:
  - ✦ While the priest is choosing the Lamb, until the chosen Lamb is placed on the paten, and the wine is poured into the chalice.
  - ✦ While reading the Gospel of the Liturgy.
  - ✦ From the moment when the priest says, ***“The Holy Body...”*** to the end of the Confession.

- Following the commemoration of saints, the deacon must not take the censor full of incense out amongst the congregation and blow incense in their faces, for this distracts them from worshipping and concentrating on the sacrifice upon the altar.
- No deacon is to talk to fellow deacons during the divine Liturgy or enter and exit the sanctuary for no reason.
- In every church, there must be an archdeacon, or senior deacon (according to his ordination), who is responsible for the organisation and orderly service of deacons.
- A weekly meeting must be held whereby deacons learn and study the church rites, dogmas, hymns and spiritual matters. The readings and service inside and outside the sanctuary must be distributed amongst the deacons according to their ranks and ability of service and reading.
- The deacon who is absent from the Mass, or does not wear the tunic, must wait his turn the next time he participates as deacon during the Mass.
- Under the direction of the archdeacon or senior co-ordinator, the readings during feasts and major occasions should be distributed, as a reward, amongst deacons who regularly attend Masses and church services, all around the year.
- If, for some reason, penance was imposed on a deacon, he must be obedient and comply without complaint or pride, and so hence learn the ethics of the service of deacons, its value and spirituality.
- The deacon must not be boastful with his voice when saying

the responses of the liturgy, or hymns, or the readings, but rather, he must respond reverently and humbly.

- The deacon must not be boastful or dominating over his fellow deacons, but deal with all in love.
- The deacon must not smoke or drink alcohol, or be a stumbling block unto others.
- The deacon must take care not to committ sins of the tongue, such as insulting, swearing, lying, and gossiping. For in taking care, God will accept his service and prayers, for, ***“Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and curses. My brethren, these things ought not to be so”*** (James 3:10). Blessing is praising and praying, while cursing is insulting, swearing and so on.
- Every deacon must be committed to all the conditions and duties of his relevant rank, whether it be the style of wearing the stole, or service inside and outside the santuacy, and the recitation of readings.
- Apart from his service as deacon must in involved in other spiritual services in church, such as service in Sunday Schools and other meetings, for a deacon is a servant full of the Holy Spirit, wisdom and knowledge, and not some sort of parrot mechanically reciting responses and hymns.
- Every deacon must try to perform the social and spiritual advises that our teacher St. Paul ordered all ranks of deacons (1Timothy 3:8-12) ***“For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and***

*great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”*  
(1Timothy 3:13).

- 32-The deacon must be knowledgeable about various ecclesiastical subjects, not only ritual matters.
- The priest, or archdeacon, or senior co-ordinator must care to perform all these duties and abide by the conditions so that the deacons may offer a blessed service which is useful and their prayers acceptable : ***“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth”*** (John 4:24).

## **ARCHDEACON**

‘Archdeacon’ is a Greek word composed of two parts : ‘Arch’ meaning ‘leader’, and ‘Diakon’ meaning ‘deacon’. Hence, ‘archdeacon’ mean ‘the leader of deacons’.

### **Conditions of Ordination of an Archdeacon**

- To be well knowledgeable and experienced in reagrds to the holy books, and totally learned and experienced concerning the work of the Psaltos, Ognostis, Epideacon, and Deacon, for all these ranks are lead by the archdeacon.
- He must be well learned concerning church Rites and hymns for all church occasions.
- He must be no younger than 28 years of age.
- He must be known for his virtues, good conduct, and good deeds.
- He must be recommended by the choir and the congregation.

### **The Responsibilities of an Archdeacon**

- He must lead all the ranks of deacons, specifying their roles and responsibilities, and managing their needs.
- He must become like the ear and eye of the bishop, informing him about the situations of the congregation, day by day.
- He presents those who have been chosen for the various ranks of deacons.

## **The Rite of Ordination of an Archdeacon**

- † The ordination takes place after the Reconciliation Prayer.
- † He kneels before the sanctuary, bowing his head.
- † The bishop hears the recommendation of the congregation concerning the elected.
- † The bishop prays, “*O great and merciful God ... send the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon Your servant (...name), who is called for the leadership of deacons ... fill him with wisdom and power like Stephen the first leader of deacons.*”

In being an Archdeacon, he has the permission to:

- ✎ Hold the chalice of the Precious Blood of the Blameless Lamb.
- ✎ Serve the orphans and widows.
- ✎ Care for the believers. Teach those who need to be taught, rebuke those who need rebuking, scold the disobedient, bring back to the church those who are lost, and organize the service of deacons.
- ✎ Serve the strangers.
- ✎ Become an example for everyone in the church.
- † The deacon responds, “*Let us pray,*” and the congregation reply, “*Lord have mercy.*”

- ✠ The bishop prays, “*Now also our King we ask and entreat Your Goodness, O lover of mankind, for Your servant (...name) to make him worthy for the call of leadership of deacons by the dwelling of Your Holy Spirit upon him ...*”
- ✠ The bishop makes the sign of the cross on him three times, then dresses him with the service vestments, which are the tunic and stole, as he did at the ordination of the deacon.
- ✠ The Archdeacon then enters into the tabernacle and attends the Mass, partaking in the responses.
- ✠ Finally, he receives the Holy Mysteries.
- ✠ A procession is made for him in the church, for rejoicing in this eminent rank.

**His Vestments:** Same as the Deacon’s vestments.

**The Rules:** Same as the Deacon’s rules.

### **The Rite of Undoing the Deacon’s Waistband (stole)**

There is a specific rite for undoing the waistband for deacons, done at the end of the Mass and procession in church for the new deacons.

- ✠ The bishop prays the Thanksgiving Prayer, raising of Pauline incense, and prays Psalm 50. Then the deacons chant the hymn “Censer of Pure Gold”, followed by a deacon reading the first Pauline epistle to the Bishop Timothy (3:8-10).

- ✠ The hymn “Holy God” is sung, followed by the Litany of the Gospel.
- ✠ ***“Praise the name of the Lord, O you servants of the Lord! you who stand in the house of the Lord”*** (Psalm 133:1), followed by the gospel reading from St John. It tells about love which is the foundation of every service and every rank established for the service (17:24-26).
- ✠ One of the priests says the Litanies of Peace, and Fathers, then the bishop says the Litany of Gatherings.
- ✠ This is followed by the Orthodox Creed, then the supplication: *“We ask and entreat Your goodness O lover of mankind, to make Your servant worthy of the community of deacons ... bless him ... abide in him ...”*
- ✠ After the commandment is read, the bishop unties the deacon’s waist band.

Unfortunately this rite is no longer performed, and most fo the time, the deacon’s waist band is now undone without any prayers.

## **DEACONNESSES IN THE CHURCH**

---

In the early church there were deaconesses helping the Apostles, and later they served with the bishops and priests in various services. Initially, the service was only available to wiowed women over the age of sixty. The Apostolic Canons

imposed a condition that deaconess must be virgin, or widow, and over the age of sixty.

St. Paul cared about the subject of widowed deaconesses in the first church and wrote about them in the fifth chapter of his first epistle to his disciple Timothy. According to our teacher St. Paul, the conditions for a successful deaconess are :

- A widow who has been the wife of one man (1 Timothy 5:9), or virgin.
- If a widow, she must not be under sixty years, so that she not become a stumbling block in the service, because of her youthfulness, or intention of remarrying.
- She must be recognised for her virtuous deeds, manners, and previous service. *“If she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she diligently followed every good work, with a reputation for good works, if she has brought up children.”*

Examples of these successful deaconesses are : Phoebe, who was commended by St. Paul for the church of Rome, ***“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church of Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also”*** (Romans 16:1,2).

She wrote the epistles to the Romans, as dictated by our teacher St. Paul, and carried it to the believers in Rome.

We also hear about other deaconesses, and a disciple of St. Paul, called Tekla. She believed, was baptized and became a disciple of St. Paul who assigned her for service in Iconia, her original homeland. She faced many tribulations and torture, but the Lord saved her every time, she spent all her life in service. Then when she was eighty years old, she secluded herself for meditation, then peacefully passed away in old age, after a long and faithful service.

The Greek Sixaxarium praised her saying, “*Hail to St. Tekla who was martyred without shedding blood!*” The Coptic church celebrates her death on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Tut every year. The blessing of her prayers may be with us. Amen.

From the thirteenth century, the service of consecrated deaconesses in church was abolished, but due to the urgent need for the service of women in church, His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, decided to revive this rite, on the Feast of penetcost in 1981, by consecration of a large number of deaconesses for the service of Cairo churches. Today, many bishops have also consecrated deacnesses for the service within their dioceses.

During the Holy Synod meeting on the feast of Pentecost in 1992, the Synod established certain rites and conditions, pertaining to the order of Consecration for the Conecrated Deaconess. The following are some points:

- It is well known that the rank of deaconess in church is not a priestly rank. There is no Priesthood for women. St. Mary the mother of the Incarnated God and the Lady of the heavenly and earthly did not have any priestly rank, although

she was a spiritual mother for the apostles and was accompanying them in service.

- The ranks of deaconesses are similar to those of deacons, that is Ognostis, Epideacon, and Deacon, corresponding to Consecrated, Assistant Deaconess, and Deaconess.
- The rite is called the ‘Rite of Consecration of the Consecrated.’
- The consecration, which is done by a bishop, is performed without the laying on of hands, which is different from priestly ordinations.
- These prayers take place in a private mass for women as their service is not for all the congregation, but for a specific sector of them.
- Unlike the deacons, their prayers do not take place after the Reconciliation Prayer, so they are not considered as priestly dedication.
- Consecration takes place after the morning raising of incense, and starts by the bishop saying, “...(name), *Consecrated / Assistant Deaconess for ...* “
- The consecration of a Deaconess is accomplished by the bishop saying: “*We call you (...name) a deaconess for the Holy Coptic Orthodox Church of God.*” But for the rank of Consecrated and Assistant Deaconess, the words “*We call you*” are omitted.
- The signs of the cross are done without mentioning their

consecration for a particular church.

- If there is a meeting for children or women, she may teach, but cannot teach men in church or a common meeting attended by men. This is according to the commandment of our teacher St. Paul, “*And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man but to be in silence*” (1 Timothy 2:12).
- In private masses for nuns or consecrated women, they are not permitted to read the epistles, only the priest or deacon may do so.
- Consecration of the consecrated is done by the bishop, and the priest has no right for consecration in his church without the knowledge of the bishop, as the bishop is responsible for the consecration, not the priest.

### **The Rite of Consecration of the Consecrated Women in the Coptic Orthodox Church**

The person approaching for consecration reads the appropriate undertaking, then stands before the sanctuary bowing her head humbly.

#### **1. Undertaking of the Consecrated and Assistant Deaconess**

✠ *“I the weak ... request my acceptance in the way of consecration for the Coptic Orthodox Church, undertake before the altar of God, and before our father His Holiness Pope ... / His Grace the Metropolitan / His Grace the Bishop, to commit to the commandments of*

*the Holy Bible and the Coptic Orthodox dogma, practicing the Sacrament of Confession and Communion, striving in spiritual life, faithfulness in responsibility, good dealing with others and submission to church leadership, represented by His Holiness Pope ... / His Grace Metropolitan / His Grace the Bishop ...”*

✠ *“For as I receive the blessing of being dressed in this garment, ... today, the ...(date) do undertake that the continuation of my dressing is conditional to my commitment to the way of consecration to the end, by the grace of God.”*

✠ Bowing her head, she asks, *“Please pray for me. Absolve me, and bless me, my master Your Holiness Pope ... / Your Grace Metropolitan / Your Grace Bishop.”*

✠ This is followed by the Lord’s Prayer and the Thanksgiving Prayer.

✠ The bishop then says the following prayers:

## **2. The Prayers**

✠ *“O Lord, wise in His counseling, who created human beings in Your likeness and image: male and female, He created and blessed. We ask You Lord hear us and have mercy upon us.”* All respond, *“Lord have mercy.”*

✠ *“Lord who granted sonship to Mary the sister of Moses and Aaron, and to Deborah, Kalda, Anna daughter of Phanuel, and allowed Philip the preacher to have virgin*

*daughters who prophesy, we ask You Lord hear and have mercy upon us.” All respond, “Lord have mercy.”*

† *“You who poured Your Holy Spirit on men and women altogether and gave them talents of the Spirit ... We ask You Lord hear us and have mercy upon us.” All respond, “Lord have mercy.”*

† *“Lord who permitted Mary Magdalene to tell Your saintly Apostles about Your glorious resurrection and who allowed Phoebe to become a deaconess in Your Holy church ... as You allowed in the past, Lord allow today, those in Your service, and make us worthy to fulfill this service without falling into condemnation before You, and pour the grace of your Holy Spirit upon them by the grace and compassion ...”*

† *“Lord God who does not reject women who come forward by the divine will to serve with good intention, and call them Your servants. Grant the grace of Your Holy Spirit to Your maid servants, these who will to give themselves to You, to fulfill Your service, as You granted the grace of this service to Your servant Phoebe, whom You called for work in Your church, so she was a helper to Your servant St. Paul the apostle ... Pour on them Your holy gifts, by the grace and compassion...”*

† *“O eternal Lord, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, look now to Your maid servants, those called for the service of consecration. Give them the Holy Spirit and purify them from all blemish of body and soul, to be worthy to fulfill the work which You give them.”*

- † *“Glory and worship are due to You and Your Only Begotten son and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.”*
- † *“O Lord, Holy Almighty God, who sanctified women by the birth of Your Only Son from the Virgin St. Mary, we ask You Lord ...”. All respond, “Lord have mercy.”*
- † *“You who granted the grace of the Holy Spirit, not only to men but to women too. Now Lord look unto Your maid-servants, call them to service and pour upon them the gift of Your Holy Spirit. Keep them in the Orthodox Faith to accomplish Your service continually, without blame according to Your joy. Glory, honor and worship are sent to You O Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” All respond, “Lord have mercy.”*
- † *“O Holy God on high, looking to the humble, You who chose the strong and weak, and dignified those in humbleness, Lord send the grace of Your Holy Spirit to Your maid-servants empower them by Your righteousness, so that if they act by Your commandments, and serve in the house of Your holiness, they become Yours, vessels gifted for Your glorification. Grant them power O Lord, to act joyfully according to Your teachings that You drew as a rule for their service. Lord give them the Spirit of meekness, power, praise, bearing and patience, so if they carry Your yoke with joy and struggle patiently, they will be granted the crowns of service.”*
- † *“Yes, O Lord who knows our weakness, perfect Your maid-servants to serve women, visit the patients and*

*those who do not come to church, serve the poor and needy, help on the Baptismal day of adult women, teach the catechumens, organize women in church, empower them for edification and good example. Sanctify them and enlighten them. Give them wisdom, as You are blessed and glorified O Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” All respond, “Lord have mercy.”*

✠ *“Lord listen to our prayers and send the blessing of Your Holy Spirit to them, to accomplish Your service without falling into condemnation, and become an example of holy life. Bless them Lord whom You bought by Your Precious Blood ...” All respond, “Lord have mercy.”*

✠ The deacon begins, *“From the Lord we ask ...”*, and the Bishop completes the prayer, *“For the peace of the holy, universal. Apostolic church”*, followed by the response, *“Lord have mercy.”*

✠ Deacon: *“From the Lord we ask...”*, Bishop: *“For the service of women in church, and poor sick and catechumens”*, all respond, *“Lord have mercy.”*

✠ Deacon: *“From the Lord we ask...”*, Bishop: *“For those coming forward for the service of consecration, commanded from those presenting them, for the Lord to grant them grace and power, bless their service as He blessed Phoebe before”*, followed by the response, *“Lord have mercy.”*

✠ *“And finally, make us worthy to pray thankfully, ‘Our Father who art in heaven ...’”*

✠ Then the bishop makes the sign of the cross (without laying of hands), three times, saying each time: “(*...name*) consecrated for the holy Coptic Orthodox Church of God, In the name of the Father ...”, then blesses the service garments (making the sign of the cross on them three times) for them to be clothed.

✠ The Bishop then says the following commandment :

*“Blessed daughter know that the Lord chose you for the service of consecration for the Holy Church, keep the commandment. Watch always to be blameless, to keep the consecration garment undefiled. Fill your mouth with praise, be always in the fullness of grace through the Holy Sacraments. Be obedient to your father the bishop, and whoever guides you into the way of God. Keep faithfully the dogma and the service to which you are entrusted from the church and may the Lord empower you by His grace, and count you amongst the wise virgins, the blessed brides of Christ.”*

✠ At the end of the Mass, they receive the Holy Communion.

### **Assistant Deaconess**

The consecrated person may be promoted to an Assistant Deaconess after at least five years from the date of the Rite of her consecration. Her good manners, obedience, dedication, service and experience are considered with the extent of the efficiency of her work and readiness for the completion of the way of consecration.

If her promotion to an Assistant Deaconess is approved, the following Rite is performed for her:

### **Rite of Consecration of an Assistant Deaconess**

- † Consecration prayers are performed after the matins (morning raising of incense in a private mass attended by women only.
- † Those called for consecration read their special undertaking, previously noted, before the door of the sanctuary, bowing their heads humbly. The bishop prays a thanksgiving prayer, then they stand together while he raises the incense, then starts the prayers of consecration as follows...
- † *“O Master, Almighty Lord, wise in His counseling, powerful in His deeds, who created man in His image and likeness, created them male and female and blessed them.”*
- † *“We ask and entreat Your goodness O lover of mankind, to accept and bless Your maid-servants coming forward to You humbly, and make them worthy for the service of consecration for the rank of assistant deaconess to help the deaconess with several services specified for them, to serve You with faithfulness and purity to the last breath... By the grace, compassion and love of mankind ...”* All respond, *“Lord have mercy”* three times.
- † *“O God who gave sonship to Mary the sister of Moses, Deborah and Kalda and Anna daughter of Phanuel, and poured on them the talents of the Holy Spirit and made them worthy to serve You an acceptable service. Accept*

*Your maid-servants and pour upon them the talents of Your Holy Spirit, to live a life of consecration and community with all love, peace and faithfulness, and help the deaconesses in the women's service. Accept their service as a fragrance of incense before You, as You accepted the service of wise women dedicated for the service of the tabernacle, whom You arose their hearts by wisdom so they waved by their hands and brought blue and purple scarlet yarn and fine linen thread necessary for the tabernacle (Exodus 25:37). Keep them by Your right hand from the tribulations and traps of Satan, enemy of all righteousness... By the grace, compassion and love of mankind..." All respond, "Lord have mercy" three times.*

† *"O Master Lord Jesus Christ our God, who was incarnated from the Virgin and holy saint Mary and made her Queen of the heavenly and earthly. You who accepted the service of the women who followed You, believed in You like Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jacob and Joses, the mother of Zebedee's sons, Joanna the wife of Chuja, and Susanna and many others who provided for You" (Matthew 27, and Luke 8).*

† *"You who accepted the service of the spikenard, that was made by Mary the sister of Lazarus, and You praised her and defended her" (John 12).*

† *"You who accepted the two mites of the poor widow, and praised her as she faithfully gave all that she had, her whole livelihood" (Mark 12).*

- † *“You who sent Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to preach Your Sainly apostles of Your Glorious Resurrection.”*
- † *“You who filled the daughters of Philip the preacher by Your Holy Spirit and granted them the grace of sonship and accepted the service of Phoebe, the deaconness of the church of Canchrea, and Tekla the disciple of Your great apostle Paul.”*
- † *“Accept the service of Your maid-servants, grant them the grace of the Holy Spirit, purify them from all blemish of body and soul to accomplish reverently the service that the church gives them.”*
- † *“Keep them in the Orthodox faith to fulfill Your service blamelessly according to the joy of Your goodness as glory and honor are due to You for ever Amen.”* All respond, *“Lord have mercy”*, three times.
- † *“O Holy God living on high and looking to the humble, look now from the loftiness of Your heaven to Your maid-servants. Empower them by Your truth. Keep them by Your grace. Bless them by Your Holy Spirit to walk in Your service faithfully and joyfully according to Your goodness.”*
- † *“Grant them the spirit of humbleness, chastity, purity, power, endurance, bearing, meekness, to endure joyfully Your holy yoke, and fight patiently in the struggle placed before them. And when they have fought the good fight, finished the race and have kept the faith, finally there is laid up for them the crowns of righteousness that are*

*incorruptible and undefiled and that do not fade away...  
By the grace, compassion and love...*” All respond, “*Lord  
have mercy*” three times.

- ✠ The bishop then makes the sign of the cross on them three times (without laying of hands), saying “...(name) an assistant deaconess in ... In the name of the Father ...” He then makes the sign of the cross on her garments three times before she dresses in them.
- ✠ They then receive the Holy Communion at the end of the Mass.

## **THE DEACONESS**

The assistant deaconess is promoted to deaconess after five years of her consecration as assistant deaconess. This promotion is done according to her good manners, obedience, dedication, experience in service, the efficiency of her work and her readiness to complete the way of consecration to the end, with the commitment for the life of virginity or widowhood to the last breath. The promotion to the rank of a complete deaconess is decided by the high committee of affairs of consecrated women.

If the bishop and the committee of affairs of consecrated women agree to promote her to a deaconess, the following Rite is performed for her:

### **The Rite for Consecration of a Deaconess**

- ✠ The prayers of consecration are performed after the morning raising of incense (matins) in a private mass attended only by women.
- ✠ Those called for the rank of deaconess read their special undertaking, then stand before the Sanctuary reverently and humbly.
- ✠ The bishop prays the Thanksgiving Prayer and raises incense, before beginning the following prayers from the Apostolic Canons ...
- ✠ *“O Eternal God Father of our Lord and God Jesus Christ, Creator of man and women, who filled Mary, Deborah, Anna and Khelda by Your Holy Spirit, and did*

*not disdain that Your Only-Begotten Son Jesus Christ is born of a virgin”*

† *“Now look upon Your servant standing before You, chosen for deaconship. Fill her with Your Holy Spirit. Purify her from every blemish of body and soul.”*

† *“Honor unto You and Your Christ who is with You, and the Holy Spirit, glory and worship forever, Amen”\**.

(\*The words put together by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III when he consecrated some deaconesses at Pentecost on 14/6/1981).

† *“O Lord wise in His counseling, who created humans as male and female, created both of them in His own image and likeness and gave them the same blessing and authority over all creatures.”*

† *“Lord who granted sonship to Mary sister of Moses and Aaron, Deborah, Khalda and Anna daughter of Phannuel, and allowed Philip the preacher to have ten virgins who prophesy.”*

† *“You who poured Your Holy Spirit upon men and women together and gave the woman spiritual talents like men.”*

† *“O Lord who sent Mary Magdalene to preach Your saintly apostles of Your glorious Resurrection and allowed Phoebe to become a deaconess in Your Holy church.”*

† *“As You allowed in the past Lord, please allow the*

*woman to share in Your service today and make us worthy to accomplish this service without falling into condemnation before You, and pour the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon Your maid-servants. By the grace and compassion ...”*

† *“O Lord God who does not reject women who give themselves - by the approval of the divine will – to serve in Your holy places, but allowed them to be called Your servants. Give the grace of the Holy spirit to Your maid-servants, those who will to give themselves to You to accomplish Your service, as You gave grace of this service to Your servant Phoebe whom You called to work in Your church, so she became a helper to Your servant Paul the apostle.”*

† *“Pour upon them Your holy talents, by the grace compassion and love ...”*

† *”O eternal Lord Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of man and woman, who filled Mary, Deborah, Hanna and Khalda of the Holy spirit, who did not disdain for Your Only Begotten Son to be born of a woman. In the tabernacle and the temple You appoint women to guard Your holy doors. Look now upon Your maid-servants, those called for the service of deaconship. Grant them the grace of the Holy Spirit, purify them from every blemish of body and soul, to accomplish worthily the work given to them. Glory and worship are due to You and Your Only Son and the Holy Spirit for ever, Amen.”*

- ✠ *“O Lord, Almighty, Holy God who sanctified women by the birth of Your Only Begotten Son from a virgin.”*
- ✠ *“O Lord who granted the grace of the Holy Spirit not only to men but to women too.”*
- ✠ *“Now Lord look at Your maid-servants, call them to the service and pour unto them the rich talents of Your Holy spirit. Keep them in the Orthodox Faith fulfilling Your service continually without blemish according to Your goodness. Glory, honor and worship are due to You O Father, Son and Holy Spirit. O Holy God looking towards the humble, who chose the weak and strong and dignified those in humbleness. Send Lord the grace of Your Holy Spirit to Your maid-servants. Empower them by Your truth, so if they obey Your commandments and serve in the house of Your holiness, they become honorable vessels for Your glorification. Give them power, O Lord, to rejoice according to Your teaching that You made as rules for their service. Grant them Lord, the spirit of humbleness, endurance, power and patience so if they carry Your joke with joy and enduring the fight, they may have the crowns of service.”*
- ✠ *“Yes, Lord who knows our weakness, perfect Your maid-servants to praise in Your house and serve women, visit the sick and those absent from church, serve the poor and needy, help adult women for Baptism, teach the catechumens and organize women in church. Empower them for edification and good example. Sanctify them. Enlighten them. Encourage them. As You are blessed and glorified, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”*

- ✠ *“Lord listen to our prayers and send for them blessings from the Holy Spirit to accomplish their service without falling into condemnation, and give an example for holy life.”*
- ✠ *“You who gave Anna daughter of Phanuel to spend eighty four years in her widowhood serving blamelessly in the temple. Give Your maid-servants to keep their vows before You, to live in chastity and purity, in obedience to Your commandments and in faithfulness to the service. Grant them to live as brides for You only by the grace of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.”*

**From the Lord we ask:**

- ✠ *“For the peace of the Holy, Universal, Apostolic church (from the Lord we ask), for the service of women in church, the poor, the sick and the catechumens.”*
- ✠ *“For those widows and elderly virgins coming forward for the service of deaconship, commended by their churches, for the Lord to grant them grace and power, bless their service as He blessed the service of Phoebe before (From the Lord we ask)”...*
- ✠ *“At last make us worthy to pray thankfully, ‘Our Father who art in heaven....’”*
- ✠ Then the bishop makes the sign of the cross three times on each deaconess (without laying of hands), while saying: *“We call you (...name) a deaconess in the Holy church. In the name of the Father...”* , then blesses the specific service garments (by making the sign of the cross on them three times

before they wear them). They then attend the mass and receive the Holy Communion.

## **Service of Deaconesses in the Church**

The deaconess can perform many services in the church, such as:

- Helping the priest during the Baptism of elderly adult women (not in the Rite or Prayer but in caring) as the priest has only to place his hand on the baptized woman's head while she is in the Baptismal font, dipping her thrice in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, then after she gets out of the font, she gets dressed. The priest then comes back and gives her the Sacrament of Myron, anointing only those parts of her body which appear. The presence of a deaconess during the process of a female adult being baptised is preferable, because she may assist her with what should be done before and after Baptism.
- Organizing the seating of women in church
- Organize those coming for Communion, that is, the deaconess must ensure that they must be Coptic Orthodox Christians who practice confession regularly, also modestly dressed for appearance must be carefully regarded if coming to have the Holy Communion. A woman must cover her head and hold a linen veil in her hand as preparation for Communion. Thus she helps the priest for Communion of women.
- Helping in the service of young girls and women in church meetings.

- Visiting young girls and women to encourage them to come to church for masses and meetings.
- She can help in Sunday School Service by attracting children to come through her tenderness.
- She can serve in the church's child care center, for she would be the best person to endure a child, cherish them and help in their upbringing.
- She can work and serve in various church social services, such as serving widows, needy and poor.
- She can serve the orphans..
- She can work and serve in nursing homes, looking after the needs of the elderly, whether it be food, health, cleaning or nursing.
- Visitation of sick women, whether at their houses or hospitals, giving them a word of comfort, as well as speaking the word of God. She represents the church in caring for them and tells the priest about cases in need of Communion or visitation.
- Supervising women's activities in church, such as sewing, and so on.
- Supervising the cleaning of the church and organizing its furniture – except for the sanctuary where no woman can enter.

- Supervising administrative departments at the church's or bishopric's clinics.
- Supervising youth (girls) houses who are in desperate need of accommodation and care. Their supervision is for their protection and success.
- Service of wayward girls who need spiritual care and guidance.
- Service of handicapped girls or women, to help them live a normal, spiritual and psychological life.



## 2 - R A N K   O F P R I E S T H O O D

---

The word 'priest' or 'presbyter', is derived from the Syrian word 'Kashisho' meaning elder, and the Greek word 'Epresvateros' also meaning 'elder'. It is so called due to the significance of his work and reverence given unto him even if he is not yet an old man.

The word 'elders' (priest) is mentioned frequently in the New Testament: ***“They had appointed elders in every church and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed”*** (Acts 14:23)

***“For this reason I left you in Crete that you should set in order the things that are lacking and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you”*** (Titus 1:5)

***“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord ...”*** (James 5:14)

An elder is a priest of God and a minister of the mysteries of God. He has the authority to administer the Church Sacraments except for the sacrament of ordination (which only the bishop has the right to do).

Usually, the ordination of an elder takes place from the age of thirty, for this is when Christ the Lord started His service. At this age a person will have reached intellectual maturity to help him to manage the service respectfully.

He must be husband of one woman and his marriage correct and legal.

If he is widowed, he should not remarry another woman, for being the father of all women, he cannot marry one of his daughters.

Our teacher St. Paul mentioned in his first epistle to his disciple, Timothy the Bishop (chapter three), many conditions for bishops that also apply to the elders (priest) as their priestly work is one and their pastoral specifications are similar. Of these conditions are, he must be :

- Blameless, commended by others
- The husband of one wife according to the first divine law.
- Sober-minded not lazy.
- Self-controlled to serve without trouble, “**he must be sober-minded, just, holy, self controlled**” (Titus 1:8)
- Modest: distinguished by his simplicity in all things; his food, clothing, and so on. The same principle must also apply to his wife and children who must be modest, not extravagant, not known for their disobedience, and not a cause of stumbling for others.
- Hospitable to strangers, merciful with the poor and needy who are brothers to the Lord.
- Able to teach: as a minister is a teacher and must explain the word of truth rightly, well learned in the Holy Bible and

ecclesiastical subjects to nourish his congregation by sound Orthodox doctrine, and fill them by his knowledge, ready to answer any question correctly and exhort all.

- Not given to wine as ***“wine is a mocker, intoxicating drink arouses brawling and whoever is led astray by it is not wise”*** (Proverbs 20:1). As drunkenness opposes wisdom and fullness of the Holy Spirit and causes mockery and lack of reverence.
- Not violent, for a priest must gather people through fatherly love, not dominate them by terror.
- Not greedy for money: the minister must not care to strive in collecting money by any means, for in so doing, he degrades himself amidst people, and leads himself to serve the rich and disregard the poor. Hence, his service is unacceptable before God and blamed by people who will spread rumours against him, and this will destroy the dignity of priesthood, for, ***“Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts, which draw men in destruction and perdition. For the lover of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”*** (1 Timothy 6:9,10).
- Like his master Jesus Christ, he must be gentle, not quarrelsome. For Christ, ***“will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruise reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench”*** (Matthew 12:19,20).

- Must be gentle and considerate while dealing with the congregation and servants. he must not be proud and a generator of troubles and strife, for these qualities do not suit a common christain, let alone a minister, who is to have a gentle spriit. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, with patience and humility, correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God will grant them repentance that they may know the truth
- He must rule his own house well, for if a man does not know how to rule his own house how will he take care of the church of God? For the house is a small church and the father is the head of the family and its first provider and guardian. If he runs his household efficienmtly, and his family live in the fear of God, fulfilling the Biblical commandments and church teachings, his family will become content, and so he will prove his ability as a leader, which is an important quality of a successful minister.
- His children should be obedient and revering, for children are a mirror image of their parents and proof of their ability (or inability) for correct, ecclesiastical, evangelical, and christian upbringing. If the children live righteously in obedience to their parents, holding fast Christian principles as they have learned from their parents, this is proof of the success of their father who is being recommended for priesthood, ***“having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination”*** (Titus 1:6).
- He must be faithful and not puffed up with pride. He must be known and experienced in his service in the church. He must be able to carry the yoke of Christ humbly and patiently, so

that he does not fall into condemnation and become a stumbling block in the service, but rather, contribute to its growth and progress. He must be a source of comfort and joy for the people, rather than a cause for worry. He must bring people back to the church, instead of driving them away.

The difference between the bishop and the minister is that the bishops have the right to appoint priests (right of laying on of hands). Our teacher St. Paul says to his disciple Titus, the Bishop of Crete: “*...that you should set in order the things that are lacking and appoint elders in every city as commanded you*” (Titus 1:5).

He also says to his disciple Timothy, the Bishop of Ephesus: “*Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins*” (1 Timothy 5:22). The church canonical laws mentions that the priest is to be appointed by one bishop, but the bishop is to be appointed by the laying on of hands of no less than two or three bishops (headed by the Patriarch of course).

The bishop has the right to judge priests, as St. Paul said to his disciple Bishop Timothy to justify such judgements, “*Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses*” (1 Timothy 5:19).

The bishop has the right to reward elders, as St. Paul said to his disciple Timothy in the same epistle: “*Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine*” (1 Timothy 5:17).

## **RANKS OF PRIESTHOOD**

---

There are three ranks of priesthood:

1. Priest
2. Archpriest (hegomen)
3. Khoori Episcopos

### **The Priest**

This is the first and essential priestly rank.

Priest means elder and also an intercessor in the holies of God for the congregation.

He is a presbyter who has the right to administer all the church sacraments except the laying on of hands and appointing priestly ranks, which is the right of a bishop or overseer or someone above him.

He is a teacher who teaches the people the word of God and leads them to the way of God, virtues, mysteries of the religion, and explains the dogmas and rites and details the word of truth, ***“For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts”*** (Malachi 2:7).

He is a father who pastors his children compassionately, visits them with tender care and love as he is zealous for the salvation of the souls of his people and leading them to Christ, as his salvation is related to their salvation, ***“For now we live, if you***

*stand fast in the Lord*” (1 Thessalonians 3:8). He humbly serves them as a servant to a master as Lord Christ washed the feet of His disciples, so his service is successful and acceptable before God and people too.

### **The Rite of Ordination of the Priest**

If a servant, who was not previously a deacon, is recommended for the rank of a priest by the elders and congregation, and is commended for his humility and manners, successful service and good deeds, and being learned in doctrine, and married according to the law of the Gospel, then he is ordained for this rank as it is a perfect rank of deaconship.

After the Reconciliation Prayer, he stands before the sanctuary, faces the congregation and recites, after the priest, the specific undertaking of the priest. The text follows :

### **Undertaking of the new priest**

*“I, the weak ... called for the grace of priesthood for the altar of the church of ... in the suburb ... of the city ... undertake before God the Lord of hosts and the Pastor of all pastors before His angels and saints, and before my father, His Holiness Pope ..., and the clergymen and congregation, to stand fast in the Orthodox Faith till the last breath, and to respect the canonical rules of the Holy church, and to keep its Tradition, Rites and Teachings. I undertake to love the flock, deal tenderly and wisely with them. I will sacrifice myself to visit and care for the congregation to the best of my ability, to seek the lost and return them, to gather the sheep of God who are scattered. I shall not neglect the disabled and push aside those who*

*have no one to remember them, I will be patient and cheerful in dealing with people, I shall have no selected group but I shall care for all.*

*I undertake to place the benefit of the church above every other consideration, and to avoid love of possession and love of the greater share. I will not pride on the congregation, nor neglect them or ask them beyond their endurance, or order them to disobey God's commandment, I shall not reject a returning repentant or fall short of serving any of them.*

*I undertake to submit to the leadership of priesthood represented by His Holiness Pope ..., with my respect and reverence to his partners in the apostolic service the fathers the Metropolitans and Bishops.*

*I ask the Lord to grant me power by your prayers, to fulfill this serious responsibility and perform faithfully all the work of the grand priesthood required of me.*

*Pray for me my fathers and saintly brothers.*

*This is a prostration for all of you."*

- ✠ Then he stands before the sanctuary facing east and wearing the robe of deacons and bowing his head before the altar and the bishop.
- ✠ The bishop prays the Thanksgiving Prayer with the attendants together, then raises incense in the four directions, after saying the mystery of the Pauline incense.

✠ He prays this prayer while facing the east: *“O Lord of hosts who gave us entry to this service ... accept before You the perfect priesthood of Your servant (...name) standing awaiting Your heavenly gifts.”*

✠ The archdeacon says, *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ perfecting our weakness come upon (...name).”*

✠ The bishop prays facing the east: *“Yes Lord make him worthy for the call of priesthood ...”*

✠ The bishop looks towards the west and places his right hand on his head and prays saying: *“O Master Lord Pantocrator ..., look at Your servant (...name) who came to priesthood by the recommendation of those who brought him, fill him by the Holy Spirit, grace and counseling to help and provide for Your people with a pure heart.”*

He then continues saying: *“Yes Lord hear us, grant him a spirit of wisdom to be filled by healing deeds and doctrinal words to teach Your people meekly and adore You purely ...”*

✠ Then he looks towards the east praying, *“Lord look upon us and our service, and purify us from all blemish and send Your grace from heaven upon Your servant to be worthy to accomplish Your priesthood straight forwardly.”*

✠ The bishop looks towards the west, makes the sign of the cross on the ordained with his forefinger while saying, *“We call you to the Holy church of God. Amen.”*

✠ The archdeacon says this declaration: *“(...name), the new*

*priestly name, a priest for the Holy altar of the church of ... , at the city (or village) that love the Lord Christ.”*

NOTES: It seems that the archdeacon used to have a prominent position, as he was the first one to pronounce the newly-ordained priest by name.

✠ The bishop makes the sign of the cross on the new priest three times, and each time saying, “*We call you (...name) a priest for the Holy altar of the church of ... in the city of ...*”

The first signing: “*In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God. Blessed be God the Father the Pantocrator. Amen.*”

The second signing: “*Blessed be His Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*”

The third signing: “*Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. Amen.*”

✠ The bishop makes the sign of the cross on the priestly vestments and dresses him in them amidst the cheer of the congregation and the ‘Worthy’ (Aksios) hymn sung by the deacons.

NOTES : The priest’s cloak has no rear fold, different from the bishop’s cloak that has a rear fold.

✠ Then the bishop looks towards the east and prays the following for thanksgiving: “*We thank You Master Lord Pantocrator ... walk with this ordination which is for*

*Your servant through the dwelling of Your Holy Spirit upon him, straighten the call of his selection in purity by the grace of Your goodness.”*

‡ The bishop reads the commandment for him which is very important. It explains to him his priestly duties and every priest must carefully listen to it and practice every word. It is preferable to keep a copy of the commandment to look at it frequently, to remember his priestly duties, so as not to forget it and deviate from the straight way.

### **The Priestly Commandment includes:**

- To teach people by good example and inspiring sermons.
- Caring for the congregation as a father not a hireling.
- To offer a faithful service and so receive the wages of a faithful steward.
- To work for achieving the food of eternal life which does not perish, rather than that which perishes.
- Is diligent in his virtues, and so becomes an example for his congregation.
- Continuous growth in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- He must escape from the love of money which is the source of all evil deeds.

- He must be aware of drunkenness and bodily lusts as it darkens the enlightened mind and converts a man to a lustful animal.
- He must avoid envy and strife, unkindness, mockery and pride, so that he does not lose and destroy his service.
- He must avoid gossip, boasting, hypocrisy and pretence, for they are terrible vices which cause problems and make people stumble.
- He must avoid being double faced, double tongued, and false witnessing.
- He must not frighten or dominate people, but rather, be compassionate and patient.
- He must love God and all creation with all his heart and soul.
- He must possess the virtues of righteousness, mercy, chastity, humbleness, content, contrition, endurance and patience, resembling his master and teacher Christ Jesus in His virtues and good behavior.
- He must not deviate from the true faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who is the foundation of religion and by whom all Christians are saved.
- He must persevere in studying the Holy Bible, and other ecclesiastical books, canonical rules of the church in all areas.

- He must treat the congregation of God with compassion and skill, leading them by the tenderness of Christ, endurance and compassion.
- He must care to acquire the first Christian virtue, which is love, by the sincerity of conscience and true witnessing, ***“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience and from sincere faith”*** (1 Timothy 1:5).
- He must care for the Holy Mysteries, especially the sacrament of Communion which are the Holy Body and Precious Blood of Christ Lord, and watch these treasures and gems as the cherubim guarded the tree of life (Genesis 3:24).
- He must not give the Holy Communion except to the worthy and ready and repentant, whose conscience is pure.
- He must refrain from giving Communion to an evil person so that he does not become guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, and eats and drinks judgement to himself and (the priest) becomes a partaker in this sin and its penalty.
- He should distribute the Holy Body and Blood in order and quietness, must examine the paten carefully and asks one of the deacons or the partaking priests, with good vision, to look at the paten after the distribution of the Mysteries, wiping the paten with extra care to ensure there are no remaining jewels.
- He must have an elderly confession father who is well

experienced in spiritual life, to become his disciple, asks for advice and guidance so he may be able to discipline others and teach them out of experience.

- He must treat every one of his congregation adequately, so that he who is sick with sin is healed and reaches spiritual health.
- Hence, he will be worthy of double reward from God for his love and service, and so will hear at the end of his days, the joyfully voice of Christ saying: ***“Enter into the joy of your Lord”*** (Matthew 25:21).

*This ends the commandment of the priest*

- ✠ After the ordination and recitation of the commandment, the new priest enters the altar with his right foot first, prostrates before the altar, stands and kisses the cross and the hand of the bishop, then stands at the right of the altar.
- ✠ The bishop starts the prayer of the Mass and allows the new priest to partake with one of the liturgical prayers like the commemoration or others.
- ✠ At the recitation of the last confession in the Mass, which contains the essence of the Orthodox Faith about the nature of Lord Christ, the mystery of incarnation and redemption, the bishop lets the new priest to partake with him in the recitation of this confession, so the new priest washes his hands with water, but the bishop takes the central part of the Holy Body on his left palm and places his right palm over it, then tell the new priest to place his hands around the bishop’s palms that carry the Pure Body of Jesus Christ.

Then the bishop recites the last confession quietly, sentence by sentence, and the new priest repeats after him until the end of recitation of the confession.

The bishop here hands over to the new priest the true faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, His incarnation, nature and redemption by the cross, then the sacrifice of His Holy Body and Blood which is an extension of the sacrifice of the cross, and His Body and Blood are given for us as salvation and forgiveness of sins and eternal life to whoever worthily receives them.

✠ The new priest receives the Holy Body and Blood from the bishop.

✠ After receiving the Precious Blood, and before he drinks from the dismissal water the bishop gives the new priest the breath of the Holy Spirit as follows...

The bishop says to the new priest: ***“Receive the Holy Spirit”,*** just as the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, ***“He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them, if you retain the sins of any, they are retained’”*** (John 20:22,23).

Some sources say the bishop says to the priest: ***“Open your mouth wide and I will fill it”*** (Psalm 81:10) and the priest responds, ***“I opened my mouth and panted”*** (Psalm 119:131), and opens his mouth so the bishop breathes into it the breath of the Holy spirit and repeats these words and this breath three times.

The breath of the Holy Spirit is used by the priest in all the Sacramental prayers and other prayers, such as praying on a

sick person, or blessing oil or water. By the authority of the Holy Spirit, the priest manages the Church and officiates the Sacraments, teaches the congregation and is granted the authority of binding and loosening.

✠ After the Mass and the angel of the Sacrifice is dismissed, the deacons make a procession for the new priest, in the sanctuary and church according to the common procession Rite, while he is still dressed in the white service vestments and holding the cross with a candle in his right hand and the gospel in his left.

NOTES:

He holds the cross for blessing and for officiating the sacraments, and he holds the gospel because he is granted a rank of teaching the Holy Gospel which is the good news, but he holds the candle for the priest is to become a light and enlightenment for his congregation through his teaching and example, then to sacrifice himself for his congregation as the candle sacrifices itself to shed light unto others.

✠ After the procession, the priest undresses the service vestments and the bishop makes the sign of the cross on the black garments and priestly hat, and dresses the priest. The priestly hat is a sign and symbol of priesthood and the priestly's crown and honour of his priesthood.

✠ After he accepts the congratulations, he goes to one of the monasteries for retreat and fasts for forty days (as our fathers the apostles fasted after the Holy Spirit descended upon them).

In the monastery, he receives the Rites of the Liturgy and other Sacraments. He learns the Mass and partakes in it daily, he receives the sacrifice, then prays daily Masses to practise the Mass efficiently.

The benefit of fasting and prayers during the retreat, is to stir and kindle the gift of the priesthood and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the new priest, as our teacher St. Paul advised : *“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying of my hands”* (2 Timothy 1:6).

✠ After the forty days, a delegation from the church goes to the monastery to take their new priest to the church where he will be serving, during the time of Vespers. The Rite of Reception of the new priest is performed, where he receives his church and service, to serve with righteousness, zeal and enthusiasm for the salvation of the souls of his congregation.

### **The Rite of Reception of the New Priest**

- ✦ Upon his arrival to the church, the deacons lead the procession chanting the hymn “O King of Peace”, until he stands before the sanctuary.
- ✦ The new priest wears the cloak and prays the Thanksgiving Prayer. Then the senior priest hands the censer to him to raise the incense as usual, proceeding around the altar, praying the mystery of the Vesper’s incense, then Litany of Peace, Fathers and for the Congregation.
- ✦ The deacons meanwhile sing the Verses of the Cymbals according to the order on ‘Adam’ days by the ‘Amoini-marin

oosht' tune, and on 'Watis' days by the 'Ten oosht emeviot' tune.

- ✦ The priests leave the sanctuary and the new priest remains standing facing east. The new priest offers incense, and then the elder priest takes the censer from him, faces east and raises incense toward the altar, and then toward the new priest.
- ✦ The priest now prays the Litany of the Deceased, then proceeds into the sanctuary, stepping first with his right foot. Adding one spoonful of incens into the censer, he proceeds around the altar once before leaving the sanctuary and offering incense to the gospel and priests. He then proceeds around the church with the incense and before him two priests carry candles. Meanwhile the deacons sing the doxologies as usual, including the doxology of the twenty four elders, followed by the introduction to the Creed, "*We honour you, Mother of True Light*" and finally the Orthodox Creed.
- ✦ The new priest prays "*Evnooti-Nai-Nan*", and the deacons sing "*Kerye-Eleyson*". Then they chant the hymn of "*Ti-Shoori*" and the hymn of the Intercessions then the hymn of "*Tenoo-osht emmok*".
- ✦ The Pauline Epistle is read in Coptic, followed by the hymn "*Pi-Ehmot-Ghar*", meaning 'the grace of God the Father be with you all'. Then the Pauline is read in Arabic, from the readings of 24 Hatoor, the commemoration of the twenty four elders (1Timothy 5:17 - 6:2). "***Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially***

*those who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture says: "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and "the labourer is worthy of his wages.". Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins, keep yourself pure. No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities. Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgement but those of some men follow later. Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise can not be hidden. Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things". The grace of God the Father be with you all. Amen.*

- ✦ Then the hymn of the dwelling of the Holy Spirit, "Pi-Epnevma-Em Paracleton" is chanted.
- ✦ The hymn "Agios" is said and the new priest prays the Litany of the Gospel and the Gospel is read in Coptic and Arabic (Psalm 132 : 9,10,18 & John 1 : 1-17) and these are from the readings of 24 Hatoor ...

*“Let our priests be clothed with righteousness. For Your servant David’s sake I will prepare a lamp for My anointed, but upon Himself His crown shall flourish”*  
(Psalm 132) Alleluia.

*“In the beginning was the Word and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through Him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the True Light which gives light to every man who comes into the world.*

*He was in the world, and the world was made through Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His Name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying” “This was He of Whom I said: ‘He Who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ ” And of His fullness we have all received and grace for grace.*

***For the law was given through Moses but, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1)***

*Glory be to God for ever, Amen.*

- ✦ Candles are lit by the priests who proceed with the deacons around the altar thrice while singing the hymn “*Ni-Ethnos-Teero*”.
- ✦ They then proceed around the church thrice while the new priest carries the Holy Gospel wrapped in a white silk veil, with his wife and priests around him. When they complete the hymn, they say: “*Thok-sa-patri...*”, followed by “*Ek-ezmaroot*”, and “*Sheri-pi-goot-Efto-ambers-veveteros*”..
- ✦ The following declaration is said in the Palm Sunday tunes :

*“Honour the Lord with me and exalt His Name together. For the grace that you accepted our reverend father ..., guarding us by his prayers, to watch us from the enemy and devil. May you enjoy peace and exaltation our father ... (Name).*

*Good that you come to us to comfort us by your enlivening words, our father (Name). It is good that you came to us today O chosen by Christ, who resembles angels, our father (Name) to forgive us our sins. (A praise for our dignified father and entrusted presbyter).*

*Exalt the Lord and glorify His great Name for the grace that is accepted by our blessed father, the priest (Name). Whom God chose and made a teacher and guide and gave*

*him the great priesthood to serve the divine mysteries and gather the congregation for teaching as a mother to her children. Truly our blessed father, the priest of God, you received this great grace and high rank from the High Priest to teach the flock of Jesus Christ the words of life like our teachers and masters the pure Apostles, because you accepted the Holy breath and became a teacher and guide for the salvation of souls, that is why we praise you saying:*

*“AKSIOS (thrice), ... Pi-Epres-Vateros” (chanted by the congregation).*

*The rank of Aaron, Zachariah and Simeon, the priests. Truly this eminent priesthood is better and greater as those fathers and priests had fleshy sacrifices that does not benefit eternal life and the heavenly Father, because what you have been entrusted to, you and your fellow priests, can not be looked at by the angels as our glorious Lord said in His pure Gospel, **“Many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. But blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear”** (Matthew 13:17 & Luke 10:24).*

*Today the children of this church and the Orthodox congregation attending here, are rejoicing, for your pure priesthood that performs prayers and supplications for the forgiveness of the sins of the congregation. Truly great is your lofty rank for Christ who chose you for the service of His pure sanctuary and He entrusted you with His Pure Body and Precious Blood, for this we bless you and say: **“AKSIOS (thrice) ... Pi-Epres-vateros.”***

*We praise you with the pure Apostles saying: “**And no man takes this honour to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was**” (Hebrews 5:4.)*

*You became a partner with St. Paul who said in his epistle: “**Elders who are among you I exhort. I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed. Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly, nor as being Lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away**” (1Peter 5 : 1-4).*

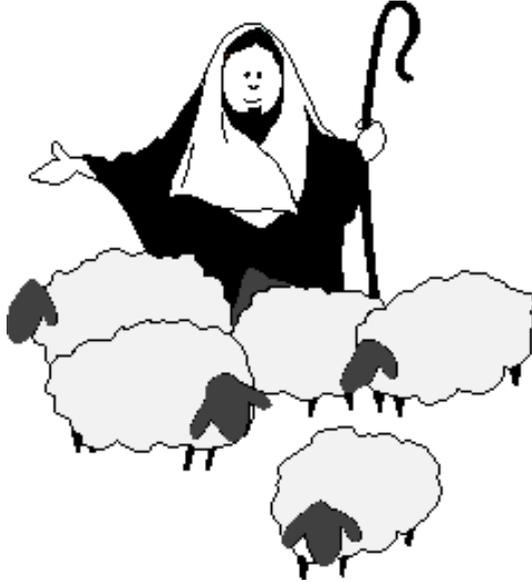
*You, beloved of Christ, do not boast over the congregation of God, but stand fast in perfect love to the congregation of God and be humble as pride is detested before God. Follow the Lord’s words in His holy Gospel, when He said: “**Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant**” (Matthew 20:25), and St. Paul the teacher of the church saying: “**For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus**” (1 Timothy 3:14.)*

*Be very careful in handling and distributing the divine mysteries and do not give it to whoever is unworthy, otherwise if you do give it to an unworthy person, you will be condemned, for the penalty of negligent priests is very grave.*

*Stand fast with purity , without which no one can see God, so if you fulfill this you become worthy to hear the splendid voice saying: “Well done good and faithful servant, you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21). And God will help you, exalt you and keep us by your prayers, through the intercessions of the pure Virgin Mother of Light and all the heavenly hosts and the twenty four elders who shine and all the saintly martyrs and by the prayers of all who please the Lord. Amen.”*

The congregation responds chanting “*Khen Evran*” followed by “*AKSIOS ... Pi-Epres-veteros.*”

- ✦ The new priest then gives a sermon.
- ✦ The priest prays the Litanies of Peace, Fathers, the Church, the Plants, and Congregation, and concludes with the Lord’s Prayer.
- ✦ One of the senior priests read the three absolutions at the sanctuary’s door and meanwhile the eldest priest places his hand, holding the cross on the head of the new priest and his wife while they are sitting on the chairs at the right of the sanctuary’s door.
- ✦ Conclusion is as usual, “Amen Alleluia”, followed by the blessing and dismissal.



## The Hegomen

The word 'Hegomen' or 'Egomenos' is derived from the Greek word meaning 'provider' or 'presenter', and the 'Egomenos' is the 'senior' or 'leader' priest in church. If there are a number of hegomen in the church, then they must consider he who is the oldest in ordination, or the most active and knowledgeable in the rank of hegomen, as the church's provider and the first responsible person in the church.

During the raising of incense, the priest is given one spoonful of incense, the hegomen two spoonfuls, and the bishop three spoonfuls of incense.

## **The Rite of the Rank of Hegomen**

Hegomen is only a promotional rank from a priest to a hegomen, within the rank of priesthood, and is not considered as a new ordination.

The rite of hegomeny takes place after the Reconciliation Prayer of the Divine Liturgy, as follows ...

- ✠ The priest selected for the rank of hegomen stands before the sanctuary, dressed in the priestly vestments, bowing his head in submission and reverence.
- ✠ The bishop prays the Thanksgiving Prayer, raising the incense in the four directions after praying the prayer of the Pauline mystery.
- ✠ The bishop facing east prays: *“O Lord God of hosts who gave us entry to the share of this service ... and accept the perfect hegomeny of Your servant (Name) standing here awaiting Your heavenly gifts ...”*.
- ✠ The archdeacon says the following declaration: *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that perfect our weakness ... dwell upon (Name) ... the grace of the Holy Spirit to dwell upon you.”*
- ✠ The congregation say *“Amen”* thrice.
- ✠ The priest faces east and prays saying: *“Yes Lord make him worthy for the call of hegomeny ...”*
- ✠ The congregation says: *“Lord hear us, Lord have mercy on*

*us, Lord bless us.”*

✠ The bishop faces the west and places his hand on his head saying: *“O Lord God the Pantocrator ... You chose Your servant (Name) to become a father and to provide for Your servants ... Look upon him and bless him and purify him by the dwelling of Your Holy Spirit upon him ... Grant him, our Master, a leading spirit and humbleness, love, endurance and goodness to become acceptable to You.”*

NOTES:

The bishop asks God to grant the hegomen a leading spirit to become a leader of priests and provider of the church and a confession father and provider for the congregation, but at the same time asks for love, as leadership and responsibility do not prevent a person to be loving and meek, or does not take responsibility for domination and giving orders proudly.

✠ The bishop faces east and prays saying: *“Look upon us Lord and upon our service, and send Your grace from heaven to Your servant ...”*

✠ The bishop faces west and makes the sign of the cross, with his thumb, on the hegomen saying: *“We call you (Name) a hegomen for the holy house of God, Amen.”*

✠ The archdeacon says this declaration: *“(Name) Egomenos (hegomen) on the holy altar of the holy, universal, Apostolic church of God, in the city (.....) beloved of Christ.”*

- ✠ The bishop, with his thumb, makes the sign of the cross on his forehead three times, each time saying: *“(Name) hegomen for the church ... in the city ...”*
- ✠ The congregation respond each time saying: *“Amen”*, then chant the *“AKSIOS”* hymn.
- ✠ The bishop faces east and prays saying: *“We thank You O Lord God the Pantocrator ... walk with the consecration of this hegomeny of Your servant through the dwelling of Your Holy Spirit upon him.”*
- ✠ The bishop then reads the following commandment which is specific for hegomens:
  - ✦ *“May you have greatness of care for the words of teaching to manifest it first by your good deeds.”*
  - ✦ *“May you be vigilant for the souls of your congregation and guide them to good deeds.”*
  - ✦ *“Rebuke the sinners meekly and cheerfully.”*
  - ✦ *“Suffer with them as they are your members.”*
  - ✦ *“Be aware not to let the devil touch the flock (church congregation).”*
  - ✦ *“Endure the weakness of the weak as St. Paul’s advice: **“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself but***

*as it is written “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me” (Romans 15:1-3).”*

✎ *“To hear that voice saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant, you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21).”*

✠ After the commandment, he enters into the sanctuary with his right foot first, prostrates before the altar, then stands and kisses the cross and the hand of the bishop. Then the bishop permits him to partake in the Liturgical Prayers, and distributing the Holy Mysteries, and finally, a procession for him takes place, for joy of this rank.

NOTES:

The hegomen fasts for one week after his ordination.

This is for respect of the gift of the Holy Spirit for being granted this rank, as the apostle said: *“I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands” (2 Timothy 1:6).*

## Khoori - Episcopos

KHOORI-EPISCOPOS is a Greek word meaning 'bishop' or 'villages' or 'fields'. He helps the bishop or metropolitan of the diocese in the service and visitation of the villages.

The rank of Khoori-episcopos (or the bishop or overseer) came to existence by the end of the third century AD in Asia Minor when the dioceses extended and their division was not preferred, so there existed an utmost need for the presence for the bishop to visit and care for them.

Members of the Nicene Council in 325 AD included 15 Khoori-episcopos from Asia Minor and Syria.

The rank of Khoori-episcopos disappeared from our Coptic church a long time ago, and was then revived by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III when he ordained some monks to the rank of Khoori-Episcopos to become assistants to some metropolitans and bishops who required them to care for the needs of the service in their large dioceses. His Holiness promoted most of them later on, to general bishops and bishops of dioceses.

The rank of Khoori-Episcopos is unclear in features and specifications, as some consider it a bishopric rank, and it is nearer to the bishopric rank than to priesthood.

- ✦ Khoori-Episcopos is a word meaning 'villages'.
- ✦ The candidate of this rank bears the title 'Anba' which is given to bishops or higher.

- ✎ His choice is fulfilled among monks, just like the bishops.
- ✎ His crown is like the bishop's with a very slight difference.
- ✎ He has authority to ordain various ranks of deacons.
- ✎ He is a member of the Holy Synod of the church, like the bishops.
- ✎ His name is mentioned like the bishop, in all prayers and church hymns.

Before the Nicene Council, this rank was for the married, but the Nicene Council restricted it to monks, just like the bishops.

It seems that the rank 'Khoori' or 'clergy', present now in other fellow churches, which is equal to the rank of hegomen in our church, is derived from 'Khoori-Episcopos.'

The fathers Khoori-Episcopos ordained by His Holiness Pope shenouda III, are ordained after the Reconciliation Prayer.

The Rite of ordination of Khoori-Episcopos was not found in the Ritual Books of the Coptic church, it was borrowed from the fellow Syrian church and needs to be Coptitized.



## The Lord Christ and the Church Ranks

The Lord Jesus Christ practised during His service on earth, certain services and practices that became the essence of the church ranks, like:

1- Ognostos:- \*\*\*\*\* The most important work of an ognostis is reading the Acts of the apostles in church during the Mass, the Lord Jesus practised the work of an ognostis (reader) when He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ***“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord”***.

Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him (Luke 4:16-20).

Then He began to explain to them these words and clarify to them the fulfillment of these prophecies.

2- Epodeacon:- Most important work is keeping the doors of the church from entry of heretics or false teachers. Lord Jesus practiced this work when {Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of

those who sold doves. And He said to them “It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves”} *Matthew 21:12,13*, so He organized the temple and quietness of prayer in it.

3- Deacon (or servant):- Most important work is the service inside the sanctuary during the Divine Liturgy, like responses of the deacon, washing hands of the priests upon choosing the Lamb and at start of Mass.

Lord Jesus practiced the work of the deacon (servant) when “He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciple’s feet and wipe them with the towel with which He was girded” *John 13:5* and said to them: “He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger and he who leads as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the one who serves” *Luke 22:26,27*, as also He said to them “Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant (deacon) and whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” *Matthew 20:26-28*.

4- Archdeacon (leader of deacons):- The most important work is managing the rank of deacons and distributing the deeds for service among them.

Lord Jesus practiced the work of an archdeacon when He distributed the service among His disciples, saying in the first mission: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not

enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying ‘The Kingdom of heaven is at hand’” *Matthew 10:5-7*. “The Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before his face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.” *Luke 10:1*. Then He sent His pure apostles to the whole world saying: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature”. *Mark 16:15*.

5- The presbyter (elder or priest):- The most important work is performing the Mass, sanctification of the Mysteries, giving the congregation of the Holy Body and Precious Blood. Lord Christ practiced the rank of a presbyter when He sanctified the Bread and Wine and transubstantiated them into His Holy Body and Blood and gave them to His disciples on covenant Thursday few hours before His arrest and crucifixion “Jesus took bread, blessed it and gave it to them and said, ‘Take, eat, this is My Body’. Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them” ‘This is My Blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many .....’ and when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” *Mark 14:22-26*.

6- The hegomen or egomenos:- The most important work is providing the church matters and organizing its various services with spiritual provision of the church congregation and servants. As the word hegomen means provider.

Lord Christ practiced the rank of hegomen or provider when He managed all the matters of the first church, and provided for living matters of His disciples and their service too.

As the disciples had a money box of donations to spend for their needs of the service, supervised by the Good Teacher. When the Lord said to Judas Iscariot “What you do, do quickly. But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that had said to him: ‘Buy those things we need for the feast’, or that he should give something to the poor.” John 13:27-29

As Lord Christ was guiding him in common circumstances as the money box was with him.

2- 7- Bishop (overseer and pastor):- Most important work of the bishop is pasturing the congregation, teaching them and keeping them in the church and Faith.

Lord Christ practiced this work as He was wandering through cities and villages teaching guiding and visiting people who “were weary and scattered like sheep having no shepherd” *Matthew 9:36*.

He raised them by His sermons and guidance “He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” *Acts 10:38*.

He cared physically and spiritually for people, teaching them and healing their sickness, and does not let them go away hungry lest they fail in the way but feeds them miraculously by five loaves and two fish (*Luke 9:13*). He said “I am the good Shepherd and I know my sheep and am known by My own ..... gives his life for the sheep” *John 10:14,11*.

And our teacher St. Peter says: “For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. (Means Christ Lord)” *1Peter 2:25*.

### (8) THE PATRIARCH

He has the high leadership of priesthood. He ordains bishops to become his partners in the Apostolic Service. The ordination is usually by the laying on of hands and the breath of the Holy Spirit.

Lord Christ practiced this work of the patriarch when He “Lifted up His Hands and blessed them (the pure apostles).” *Luke 24:50*. And when “He breathed on them and said to them Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them: If you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” *John 20:22,23*. And also He said to them: “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” *Matthew 18:18*, so He gave them the authority of binding and loosening in the church.

So we find Lord Christ practiced all the priestly ranks and jobs despite their variation to establish and bless them, and so that every person may find in any priestly rank of Jesus Christ, a good example to follow its light and resemble His Master and Teacher Jesus Christ, and knows that however small his rank is, it is not lowly as Lord Christ practiced it by Himself, so he cares for his rank and service, and does not neglect the gift taken by him to serve as the faithful steward who awaits the good reward from Lord Christ in His second dreadful and glorious coming.

Glory, be to Him in His church. Amen.

### (3) RANK OF BISHOP

+ This is the highest rank of priesthood and its owner has the perfection of priesthood and leadership of priesthood.

+ The word EPISCOPOS is a Greek word that means supervision or looker from above

+ The Bishops are chosen among celibates who were not previously married.

+ Our teacher St. Paul mentioned in his first epistle to his disciple bishop Timothy in the third chapter, some important qualities for the bishop, saying that the bishop must be:-

(1) Blameless: -

Every virtue is engulfed in this quality. In the Old Testament, the law says: “For any man who has any defect shall not approach to offer the bread of his God” *Leviticus 21: 17-21*. He must be completely blameless.

(2) The Husband of One Wife:

St. John Chrysostom said: “The apostle did not place this order as a basis that he must be a husband of one wife, but he forbids from this rank the individual who married more than one woman, as he wanted to choose the most pure and modest for a bishop rank, but as the door of celibacy and monasticism is opened, so the bishop is ordained among the celibate monks who never married at all.

This order has started since the Council of Nicea on the year 325 AD when a decision was made that priests must be married as according to the nature of their service, they enter houses and solve family problems but the bishops must be celibate and this was according to the request of St. Pafnotius, Bishop of Luxor who was attending the council with Pope Alexandros of Alexandria.

(3) Temperate: -

Cautious and attentive to his service and has many eyes around him from the priests and deacons, long sighted as the bishop is the guard of the Church and the congregation of God. He must have an acute enlightenment and care for the salvation of his soul and the souls of his congregation.

He must not be confused by administrative matters or preoccupied by various problems from his spiritual mission. St. John Crysostom says: “The bishop must be vigilant and zealous, very committed and careful more than a leader towards his army”<sup>1</sup>

(4) Sober – minded:-

Behaving moderately and wisely, dealing adequately with every one of his congregation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Explanation of the first epistle of St. Paul, by Rev. Hegenmen Tadros Yacoub.

#### (5) Of Good Behaviour:-

In clothing, attitude and words as these flows out of the heart and reflects on the behaviour.

#### (6) Hospitable:-

As a sign of generosity, love and giving and Hermas says in his book: “The Shepherd” that the bishop must be hospitable with strangers, welcoming with joy at all times, the servants of God.

#### (7) Able to Teach:-

In the Dioscolia is written: “Bishop take heed to doctrine, and explain the Holy Books. Feed your congregation and fill them from the light of the law so they care for your teachings”. Our teacher St. Paul advises his disciple Timothy saying: “Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Take heed to yourself and to doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you”. *Timothy 4: 13, 16*. In the apostolic teaching, they say to the bishop: “Take care of every one to save him”. In the apostolic canons we find this text: “A bishop satisfied by the minimum of doctrine, is not a bishop but a lire (a canon from the apostolic canons).

#### (8) Not Given to Wine:-

Applying the apostolic advice: “Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation but be filled with the Spirit” *Eph: 5: 18*. Drunkenness by wine excites physical lusts, that is enjoying bodily pleasures, thus he is dead, <sup>1</sup>*Tim. 5:6*, it leads a person to misery, mockery and disrespect, “Who has the woe? Who has

sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly, at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper”. *Proverbs 23: 29-32*.

(9) Not Violent:-

Does not beat any of the congregation for the purpose of fear or domination by force or imposing an opinion by violence.

(10) Not Greedy for Money:-

Does not love money as love of possessions is the source of all evil it corrupts the conscience of any responsible person and fails in many sins like simony, bribery, and hypocrisy which stumbles others.

(11) Gentle, not Quarrel some:-

Has the spirit of his Master who “will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets” *Matthew 12: 19* to present the good example of love and endurance to the congregation of God, so he conquers evil by good, and strife by love and patience.

(12) Must have a Good Testimony among Everyone:-

With a good reputation without any mistakes that affects others and distract them away from Christ, as our teacher St. Paul says: “We give no offence in anything that our ministry may not be

blamed, but in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God". <sup>2</sup>*Cor 6:3,4*.

+ Our teacher St. Paul repeated these qualities necessary for a bishop in his epistle to Titus in the first chapter, urging for them.

+ Sometimes after reading the Pauline Epistle in Coptic, during the presence of the Patriarch or bishop, they mention twelve virtues in the hymn of virtues. They ask God to dwell upon him with the following virtues:-

The first: Love, The second: Hope  
The third: Faith The fourth: Purity  
The fifth: Celibacy The Sixth: Peace  
The seventh: Wisdom The eighth: Righteous  
The ninth: Meekness The tenth: Patience  
The eleventh: endurance The twelfth Asceticism

If the bishop gains these great virtues he becomes an ideal bishop whom resembles his Master, the source of virtues and holiness.

+ Lord Christ made overseers in the Church to shepherd the Church whom He purchased by His own Blood. *Acts 20:28* and to be stewards of the mysteries of God <sup>1</sup>*Cor 4:1* and to be guards on faith, dogma, Tradition, Rites and all the other doctrines of the Church to keep them, and to stand against the heretics, false teachers and contradictors of faith and dogma.

+ So you find the responsibility of the bishop before the throne of God is much more awesome than any leader in any position in the world , so that our teacher St. Paul was trembling from the

burden of its responsibility , he says “but I discipline my body and bring it into submission, lest, when I have preached to others<sup>1</sup>. I myself should become disqualified” *1Cor: 9:27*.

+ Lord Christ was called an Overseer as here our teacher St. Peter says: “For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” *1Pet 2:25* , as the overseer must resemble Christ the Good Shepherd Who gives his life for the sheep.

+ The overseer is called an angel in the book of Revelation as Lord Jesus says to John the apostle: Write to the angel of the Church of Ephesus.... And to the angel of the Church of Pergamos write *Rev. 2* so the overseer or bishop must be angelic in his life, behaviour words, management, service, love, humbleness, purity...etc.

+ The bishop is distinguished from the priest by having the perfection of priesthood , and the authority of laying on of hands and ordination of all the ranks of deacons and priesthood in his diocese, also the authority of punishing the wrong doers and rewarding the active and committed persons.

+ The bishop is a priest and sacrifice at the same time. He gives his life and service as an offering acceptable before God the High Priest, when he gives his life as a living, acceptable sacrifice well pleasing to God on the altar of service , consecration , effort and offering for the comfort of the congregation as our teacher St. Paul said: “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls” *2Cor. 12:15*

---

<sup>1</sup> Overseer in Church, El Noor Publications, Page 23

+ The ordination of the bishop is accomplished on a Sunday after the reading of the Praxis or Acts of the Apostles, as his service is an extension to the service of the Apostles.

+ The bishop has a blessing or offering from the cities and villages, following the diocese, according to their ability, given to him each year to help him in his living and expenses of his diocese, guests, the poor and the needy who come to him.

+ The bishop takes from the money of the diocese an amount to cover his need for clothing, food and others. It is inappropriate for the bishop to wear silk or linen, or decorate his table with all kinds of food while the poor of his congregation are hungry or naked<sup>1</sup>

+ The bishop must not lay hands on anyone hastily but carefully after his goodness is testified.

+ Does not accept any complaint about a priest or a deacon except from two or three witnesses.

+ Judges rightly among his congregation without hypocrisy.

+ May reward or punish any deacon or priest in his diocese after he assures his deeds and attitude and service, and after hearing the witnesses and giving him a chance to defend himself.

+ Does not absent himself from his diocese except by a

---

<sup>1</sup> Lamp for the darkness, for clarifying the service, by Bin Kabr, Part 1, Page 403

permission from the Patriarch and for a period no more than six months.

+ Does not transfer from his diocese because it is small or due to poverty, draught or small number of congregation, to another richer or larger diocese .

+ The bishop does not occupy himself with any worldly work like trade or industry so that he is free to shepherd his congregation.

+ The bishop reads the Gospel of the Liturgy in Coptic, facing the west, and standing before the door of the temple.

+ In the presence of the Patriarch, the bishop does not hold a stick or a cross in his hand for blessing, also the priests and hegomens do not hold crosses or bless anybody in the presence of a bishop.

+ If the Patriarch is sitting on his seat in Church outside the temple, the bishops sit on his left side. If the Patriarch is sitting on his seat inside the temple, the bishops sit on his right.

+ Bishopric is not inherited or willed for. The bishop must not write his will recommending a priest or deacon or any matter concerning the shepherding of his succeeding bishop.

+ The bishop may not contact timely authorities without the permission of the Patriarch.

+ The bishop has to follow the invitation of the Patriarch to attend the Holy Synod, and if he has a health problem or others,

he must contact the Patriarch about it, or else he falls under the sentence of the Church Canons.

+ Whatever applies on the bishop from rules, specifications and responsibilities, it also applies on the metropolitans as they have the same bishopric rank.

## Rite Of The Vesper Of The Bishop's Ordination

---

+ He is recommended by the priest, deacons and congregation of the diocese where he will become a bishop, as the congregation has the right to choose their shepherd.

+ If the patriarch accepts the recommendation and is definite about its correctness and the absence of any defect in the recommended person , then he specifies a day for ordination and it must be a Sunday.

+ Night of the Ordination Sunday:- at the night before ordination, His Holiness the Patriarch descends from his dwelling place, wearing his priestly vestments, walking in an ecclesiastical procession to the Cathedral, preceded by the deacons with Church hymns, then the bishops. The recommended person for the bishopric walks between two bishops holding his hands until the temple of the Cathedral , where all kneel before the temple and every one takes his place.

+ Prayers of Vespers start as usual and His Holiness the Pope prays: “Eleyson – E mas” .. Then the Thanksgiving prayer, raises incense around the altar and before the temple.

+ Prayers continue for the vespers as usual until the Arabic reading of the Gospel.

+ The recommendation is presented from the choir and congregation of the diocese before all the attendants and the recommended person standing in the middle, facing the people.

+ He goes down amidst two of the bishops, deacons in front of him singing Church hymns, walking among the congregation, so every one is sure that he is the recommended and selected person to become a bishop for them and they identify him.

+ When he returns to stand before the temple facing west towards the congregation, bowing his head , the Patriarch asks the diocese choir and congregation: Is this the person you accepted to become your bishop?

They respond: Yes our Master.

+ The selected person for bishopric reads the specific undertaking for the bishop behind one of the metropolitans who reads it quietly with an audible voice.

The text of the undertaking as used in ordination of bishop at the time of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III is as follows:

I, the weak, unworthy, called by the grace of God for the eminent bishopric work, undertake before God the Lord of

Lords and Pastor of Pastors, the unseen head of the Church, and before His Holy Altar, and before my father His Holiness Pope ....., and before my fathers the metropolitans and bishops and the remaining members of the Holy Synod and choir and all the congregation, to stand fast in the Orthodox Faith to the last breath, and to respect the Holy Church's Canons founded by the pure Apostolic fathers, and established by the three Ecumenical Councils assembled in Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus, and also the Canons approved by the Church for the provincial councils and the great fathers, teachers of the Church, as I also undertake to spread the preaching of the Gospel as best as I can.

I undertake to keep the Traditions of our Coptic Orthodox Church, its rites and teachings, and toil in teaching the true faith to the congregation, and their leadership into the life of holiness and righteousness and try to become an example in every good deed. I undertake to love the flock and treat them kindly and wisely, and do not have a selected group but I care for every one, and do not judge anyone by hearing or in anger, but I give him a chance to defend himself.

I undertake to continue to live in asceticism which I vowed, and do not consider the church's money as my own.

I undertake to submit to the high authority of the Church represented by His Holiness the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of our Coptic Orthodox Church.

I ask the Lord to grant me power by your prayers to accomplish this dangerous responsibility and shepherd very carefully this flock, whose blood will be required from my hand.

Pray for me fellow saint fathers and brothers.  
This is a bowing for all of you

+ He bows humbly before all of them.

### The general bishop's undertaking:-

The general bishop has another undertaking which varies slightly from the undertaking of the bishop of a diocese, as the general bishop is considered as an assistant to the Pope in missionary matters , and does not need a recommendation from the congregation.

### This is the text of the undertaking of the general bishop:-

I, the weak, unworthy, called by the grace of God for the eminent bishopric service.

Undertake before God the Lord of Lords and Pastor of Pastors and invisible head of the Church, and before His Holy Altar, and before my father His Holiness Pope ..... and before my fathers and brothers the metropolitans and bishops and the remaining members of the Holy Synod and all the congregation, to stand fast on the Orthodox Faith till the last breath , and to respect the Canons of the Holy Church founded by the pure fatherly Apostles, and established by the three Ecumenical Councils assembles in Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus, and also the Canons approved by the Church for the provincial council and the great fathers, teachers of the Church.

I also undertake to spread the preaching of the Gospel as best as I can. I also undertake to keep the Traditions of our Coptic Orthodox Church, its rites and teachings and do my best in teaching the congregation the true faith, and lead them into the life of righteousness and holiness and become an example in every good deed.

I undertake to continue in the life of asceticism which I vowed and struggle to achieve the virtues adequate for the bishopric rank. And I undertake to submit to the high leadership of the Church, represented by His Holiness Pope ..... and in the Holy Synod of our Coptic Orthodox Church, and to walk in my work as a general bishop according to the directions of His Holiness the Pope and his guidance.

I ask the Lord to empower me by your prayers to accomplish this dangerous responsibility and honestly do all the work required from me.

Pray for me my saintly fathers and brothers.  
This is a bowing for you all .

+ Then he bows humbly before all of them.

+ During the reading of the undertaking, the special service vestments of the new bishop, (bishop of a diocese or a general bishop) are placed on a small table besides the chair of His Holiness the Pope.

+ Then The candidate recommended for the bishopric rank finishes the recitation of the undertaking ,while bowing his head facing east.

+ His Holiness the Pope signs the vestments with the first sign saying:- (In Coptic)

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, One God” Blessed be God the Father the Pantocrator”.

+ The singers respond: Amen.

+ Every one of the attending bishops come forward, according to the order of their ordination and he signs the second sign saying:-

“Blessed be His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ, our Lord”.

+ The singers respond: Amen.

+ His Holiness the Pope signs the vestment with the third sign saying:-

“Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete”.

+ The singers respond: Amen.

+ The recommended candidate for the bishopric rank stands before His Holiness the Pope, while the Pope stands on the steps of his Apostolic seat to give him the three signs as previously done, with pronouncing the name of the new bishop at every sign saying: “We call you...a bishop on the cities (City) lover of Christ.... and other cities and villages.

+ His Holiness holds the cloak from the table and dresses up the

new bishop saying: “ Wear the divine pure vestment of the Apostles”. Enlighten your feet by the preparation of the Gospel to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and accompany and follow our Lord and God our Saviour Jesus Christ, glory be to Him forever Amen.

Then His Holiness says a sermon to the congregation for this happy occasion.

+ Then they complete the vesper (evening raising of incense), so the five litanies are said, and Our Father Who art in heaven, then the Pope prays the absolution while every one is bowing his head before him. Then they rise up and say the conclusion of prayers of raising incenses. So the vesper rite is concluded. The new bishop accepts the congratulations from the bishops, priests and congregation.

### RITE OF ORDINATION OF THE NEW BISHOP

---

+ The choir and congregation gather in the Cathedral to attend the ordination prayers and the Divine Liturgy.

+ His Holiness the Pope descends from his location, wearing his priestly vestments, also the metropolitans and bishops wear their priestly vestments, and walk in an ecclesiastical procession to the Cathedral, preceded by the deacons in two rows, with the new bishop in their middle, wearing his black monastic clothing, then two bishops, one with the lamb and the other with the wine bottle, then His Holiness the Pope holding the Cross and Copper serpent. The procession walk till the Cathedral’s temple and all kneel down before the temple.

+ The new bishop with his black clothing stand inside the temple on the right of the altar.

+ His Holiness the Pope washes his hands and chooses the Lamb, lifts it on the altar, prays the Thanksgiving Prayer, reads the absolution and raises the Pauline incense.

+ Prayers continue as usual until the Praxis reading and the Synaxarium.

+ Some bishops bring the new bishop who bows for His Holiness the Pope and stands with a bowing head, in submission, before the temple, and the ordination prayers start as follows:-

+ His Holiness the Pope stands before the temple and prays the Thanksgiving Prayer and raises the incense.

+ His Holiness the Pope prays this prayer”-

“O Lord God of hosts Who gave us entry to the share of this service, Who arouses human understanding, Who examines hearts and minds, accept the perfect priestly leadership of Your servant standing here awaiting Your heavenly gift. As You are merciful and gracious ....

+ The bishops partaking in the ordination surround him, and must not be less than two, and at extreme necessity there must be one bishop with the fatherly Patriarch “Every word .... From two or three witnesses”. *Timothy 5:19*

+ The archdeacon says: “Let us all scream saying: Lord have

mercy”. So the congregation says: Lord have mercy.

+ The bishops complete these supplications saying: “Ask for the peace of the one, holy universal, Apostolic Church, and the salvation of people. Lord hears us. The congregation responds: Lord have mercy, and so on till the end of this supplication.

+ Then the congregation says: “Lord have mercy” (Kerye’ Eleyson) fifty times.

+ The archdeacon says: O bishops lift your hands, so they lift up their hands and place them on the shoulders and arms of the new bishop.

+ The Patriarch prays facing west, while placing his hand on the head of the new bishop and says: “O Lord God the Pantocrator and Lord of all ... because You are the Leader of Leaders and Lord of lords and Master of masters and King of kings. You gave the authority to the one whom you preceded and chose and granted him to loose and bind accordingly .....

NOTE:-

If the bishop is a Patriarch, God is the High Priest Who granted him this authority so he must live in humbleness to Him and His law, to keep His Church which is His Bride that He Purchased by His Blood.

+ One of the bishops says this prayer facing west:-

“The grace giving salvation to the weak ... comes upon (Name) the servant of God, the presbyter and monk who is from the

monastery of (.....) to be a bishop for the holy church in the city (.....) that loves Christ instead of Anba (.....) who passed away to the Lord and left us a good memory. Ask all of you, and pray to the Lord, you attendants, so the grace of the Holy Spirit may dwell upon him by our saying ..... :

All the congregation and attendants say: Lord have mercy.

+ The Patriarch looks towards the east and prays saying:<sup>1</sup>

“Yes Lord make him worthy for Your priestly call to serve Your Name and Your Holy Altar, and shepherd Your people by purity and justice, to gain the inheritance of the saints, by the grace and compassion ....”.

+ The Patriarch faces west and places his right hand on the candidate chosen for the bishopric rank and the archdeacon cries out saying: “Stand well, stand with reverence, stand quietly, stand humbly, stand fearfully”.

Pray all of you with the gathering bishops.

+ The Patriarch places his hand on the chosen candidate and prays:

O existing Master and Lord God the Pantocrator .... Pour now the power of Your Holy Spirit Whom You granted to Your Holy Apostles in Your Name. Grant this same grace to Your servant (.....) whom You choose as a bishop to shepherd Your Holy flock and become a servant for You without blame and supplicate to Your goodness day and night, and gather the number of the saved, and offer oblations in the Holy Churches.

---

<sup>1</sup> From the manuscript of Ordination of Bishops by Aryan Farag on 1929

Yes O Father the Pantocrator grant him through Your Christ, the unity of Your Holy Spirit to have the authority to forgive sins as a commandment of Your Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, make the choir by his authority of priesthood, loosen all the church ties, make the new houses, churches, sanctify the altars, and pleases You by meekness and humbleness of heart as he offers you blamelessly and without blemish, a holy unbloody sacrifice of the New Covenant”.

+ The archdeacon says: from the Lord we ask.

+ The Patriarch completes: “Fill him Lord with the gifts of healing, and doctrine to become a guide for the blind and an enlightenment for those in darkness, teacher for the ignorant and a lamp stand for the world. Decides by the word of truth and resembles the True Shepherd who gives His life for His flock, to prepare the souls entrusted to him, and also become ready to do Your Holy Will and find the means to stand in liberty before Your awesome throne to await the great reward that you prepared for those who struggle in the missionary of the Gospel... etc”.

+ The Patriarch faces east and prays saying:-

“Look upon us Lord and upon our service, and purify us from all blemish. Send the grace of leadership of the priesthood upon Your flock without blemish and become responsible for Your Church as You are still merciful.... etc”.

+ The Patriarch faces the west and signs the candidate’s head thrice saying: “We call you (Name) a bishop for the Holy Church in the city ( ..... ) that loves Christ and its suburbs –

Khen Evran ...Evezmaroot – Enje – Evnooti – Pi –Pantocrator.

Then he repeats the same words for the second and third signs.

+ The Patriarch signs the priestly vestments of the new bishop and dresses him up, piece by piece, by the help of the attending bishops, while saying:-

Honour and glory to the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Peace and edification for the one, holy universal, Apostolic Church of God, Amen.

+ The singers say the Holy Spirit hymn (Pi – Epnevma.....).

+ The archdeacon says some supplications and the congregation answers him saying Kerye – Eleyson, then Aksios hymn to the new bishop.

+ The Patriarch prays a thanksgiving prayer facing east and says:-

“O Lord God the Pantocrator ... bless this ordination of the leadership of priesthood which became for Your servant (.....). Straighten the call of his selection by purity and grace of Your Holy Spirit and choose us with him for goodness to please You, and take the reward of stewardship..... etc”.

+ The Patriarch recites the following commandment to the new bishop to hear it and become committed to it.

“Dear blessed brother. This bishopric rank is great and eminent and it is shepherding God’s people and His Holy flock whom He bought by His Precious Blood and the leadership of priesthood and its rank and its offering”<sup>1</sup>

+ And God made you faithful over His Church and people, you must know the value of this grace and continue in gratitude to its gift and accomplish its duties and deeds.

+ Be humble, cheerful, merciful having peace and love.

+ Visit your congregation and shepherd them in fertile pastors or by divine spiritual doctrine.

+ Do not worry or get angry.

+ Do not get drunk or boas.

+ Do not love money but be compassionate to widows, orphans and strangers and comfort them by visitation.

+ Judge truthfully as if you stand before God and avoid hypocrisy.

+ Rebuke the sinners and teach him cheerfully.

+ Accept the repentant and do not let the weak perish.

---

<sup>1</sup> From the Book of Holy Prayers for the ordination of the selected for the ranks of clergy, printed in Rome on 1761, page 78.

- + Carry peoples' sins like Lord Christ Who died for every one.
- + Count your sheep and return the lost.
- + Do not be lazy in teaching your congregation.
- + Do not take simony for ordination of a priest or others<sup>1</sup>  
*Act 8: 18-21.*
- + Do not be dissipated and preoccupied by worldly pleasures and do not care for delicious foods.
- + Do not take a bribe to respect the sinner as bribery blind judges.
- + Do not waste the Lord's money and use it as if it is yours, but spend only what you need and become a faithful steward knowing you will account to God.
- + Give the orphans, needy and oppressed.
- + Do not follow your ideas in any of your matters.

---

<sup>1</sup> Simony is bribery to get a priestly rank unworthy. It is related to Simon the Sorcerer who when he saw that through the laying on of hands, the Holy Spirit was given, he offered Peter and John money saying: "Give me this power that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit". But Peter said to him: "Your money perish with you because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money. You have neither part nor shared in this matter".

To get the blessedness and hear the joyful voice saying: “Well done, good and faithful steward. You were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord” *Matthew 25:23*. And the glorious God will bless you, prosper and save you and the poor miserable souls through the intercessions of the Pure Lady and all saints Amen.”

+ The new bishop bows before the temple, then enters the temple by his right foot and kneels before the altar, then kisses the altar and stand at its right.

+ The Patriarch says: Eshlil, Irini Pasi. Then the Litany of the Gospel, then the Psalm and Gospel are read. The Patriarch composes a sermon and completes the Mass as usual, and the new bishop receives the Holy Mysteries.

+ After the Patriarch receives the Holy Body and the Precious Blood, and before he drinks the dismissal water, he gives the new bishop the breath of the Holy Spirit as follows:-

1- He says to him: “Receive the Holy Spirit, or open your mouth wide and I will fill it” *Psalm 81:10*.

2- The new bishop says: “I opened my mouth and panted” *Psalm 119:131*

3- The fatherly Patriarch breathes into the mouth of the new bishop the breath of the Holy Spirit.

4- This is repeated three times.

+ After the Mass, a procession is made for the new bishop according to the known rite of the procession, while he is wearing the priestly vestments so his congregation may rejoice for him.

+ After the procession he undresses the white service vestments and stands before the Patriarch who is standing on the steps of his Apostolic See, to dress him the black garment and black turban specific for the bishop, and hands him the pastoral rod and cross.

+ The new bishop accepts the congratulations from the Patriarch and his fellow bishops, priests, the congregation of his diocese and it is a day of joy for everyone.

+ They celebrate a spiritual festival for three days by performing divine liturgies for three consecutive days.

+ The new bishop fasts for one whole year after his ordination, but he may unfast only in the major Lords' feasts like Christmas , Epiphany and Easter (Resurrection)<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Lamp for the darkness for clarifying the service, by Bin Kabr Part 1, Page 403.



### THE RITE OF SEATING THE NEW BISHOP

---

+ The new bishop stays a while with the Patriarch (the minimum is seven days) until he learns the means of shepherding, and the limits of his specifications as a bishop and what is to be read to the congregation of his diocese at the festival for seating him.

+ The Patriarch signs on this tradition by his signature and stamps it by his seal.

+ His Holiness the Pope elects a number of bishops<sup>1</sup> to accompany the new bishop to his diocese to seat him on the diocese seat at the Cathedral of the bishopric. The festival of seating is usually performed on a Saturday evening at evening raising of incense, so that the new bishop may pray his first Mass in his diocese on Sunday morning. But the previous rite for seating the bishop was on Sunday morning Mass. It was a tedious long

---

<sup>1</sup> As above

rite that resembles to a certain extent the rite of seating the Pope on his ordination. (Look at the Book of Holy Prayers for ordination of the selected for ranks of clergy, Part 1 page 230 to page 285).

+ Upon arrival of the bishops at the bishopric Cathedral, bells are rung to rejoice for the new bishop and welcome the accompanying bishops.

+ Upon arrival of the new bishop to the Church's door, he wears the cloak and walks into the Church in an awesome procession, preceded by the deacons by their white vestments and holding the crosses of the procession, while singing by the cymbals the appropriate hymns followed by the priests and bishops, then the new bishop.

+ When he reaches the temple, he kneels before the temple.

+ The new bishop starts the prayer of evening raising of incense as usual, so he opens the curtain of the temple while saying: Eleyson – Emas, ... Our Father Who art in heaven.... Then he prays the Thanksgiving Prayer, raises incense on the altar after he and the bishops share placing incense into the censer with the known rite.

+ One of the attending bishops or priest prays the litany of the deceased as usual for the vesper, then does the usual round in the Church.

+ The new bishop prays Evnoti – Nai – Nan. The congregation responds Kerye – Eleyson thrice.

+ He says: Eshlil – Irini Pasi, then lets one of the priests recite the Litany of the Gospel.

+ The new priest reads the Gospel in Coptic before the temple facing west, and one of the deacons carry the Bible for him.

+ One of the deacons read the Gospel in Arabic.

+ Then the Rite of seating the new bishop starts as follows:-

+ The eldest bishop takes him to his seat where he gets seated.

+ The attending bishops start to sign their names on the special tradition of the new bishop signed and stamped by His Holiness the Pope.

+ After the signatures end, the bishops start reading the tradition audibly before the congregation. Every bishop reads a paragraph and at its end the deacons say: AKSIOS – ABBA ... PIE POSCOPUS, means: Worthy ANBA ... the bishop.

This is the text of the tradition of the bishop:-

## BISHOPRIC TRADITION

On the day...  
By the providence of God and His good choice, the ordination of the blessed brother, ornamented by spiritual virtues and experienced in ascetic life, knowledgeable in wisdom, ecclesiastical and pastoral matter, is accomplished.

The monk hegomen....

From the monastery ..... famous ..... to become a bishop on the diocese..... .

In the Great Cathedral of St. Mark in Anba Rowes, Cairo, by the laying on of my hands, I Anba ....., called by the grace of God: Pope of Alexandria in succession of the Apostles and by the sharing of a number of ( ..... ) from my beloved brothers the metropolitans and bishops, members of the Holy Synod of St. Mark's missionary and by the attendance of abbots of monasteries, to bless this choice and supplicate to God for the dwelling of the Holy Spirit upon this blessed father. This was done after I enquired about the opinion of the congregation through representatives of the diocese, headed by the diocese priests, servants and members of the Coptic Charity Committee, deacons and official Coptic organizations , all the rulers and sober minded persons and all decided for the selection of the monk hegomen ..... to become their bishop and after recommendations were given specifically to choose him, I ordained him with the fathers metropolitans and bishops, by name:-

Anba .....

Bishop....

By his ordination as a bishop, he has the perfection of priesthood, and from his mouth and hand the authority of the Holy Spirit and laying on of hands and ordination of priests and deacons, with all their ranks shepherding, guiding them and checking their deeds. It became his authority to anoint the temples, altars and churches, with all their vessels and icons, he also has the authority to loose and bind every matter as a steward of God. He is the provider of all Church matters in all the diocese, as he is responsible about the souls of all people, managing their spiritual matters and behaving wisely with their donations and offerings. He is the supervisor of every pastoral work in all his churches, and has to carefully organize them through the teachings of the Holy Bible and Church Canons and Tradition, so their matters continually improve.

Peace, grace and Apostolic blessing is to you, blessed sons, hegomens, priests, deacons and the congregation who love Christ in the diocese ... and all its suburbs.

God responded to your prayers and accepted your tears and contrition before Him, and did not wish to leave you as orphans after the passing away of our beloved brother Anba ..... Your previous bishop.

Now you have a new bishop, his grace Anba .... The great elder of the diocese, the high priest and your father, leader, and judge to whom you go for counseling your problems and hurry for all matters, you show him love and confidence surround him

and listen to him, obey him with all what he commands you according to the Christian law which he speaks in secret and in public, as his lips keep knowledge and from his mouth you request the law as he is the angel of the Lord of hosts and His apostle to you. Love your bishop, obey him and submit to him and revere him as a father to all of you and a ruler from God, as the Holy Bible says: “Obey those who rule over you and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable to you”. *Heb 17:13*, as our Saviour Lord Jesus Christ said to His pure Apostles : “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him Who sent Me”. *Matthew 10:40*, and also He said: “He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you, rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him Who sent Me”. *Luke 10:16*

So blessed sons you have to accept him with joy and awe, as sons accept fathers and know the extent of spiritual dignity which he has got, do not neglect your duty towards him, remember to share with him in prayers and supplications and persevere in attending to Church, listening to Masses and sermons. Do not neglect confession of your sins and receive the Holy Mysteries. Do not forget acts of charity, tithes and vows as “with such sacrifices God is well pleased” *Hebrew 13:16*.

The Great Pastor of all pastors, our Lord and God and King Jesus Christ may bless your bishop and all of you. Blessing is for obedient children and keeps your souls, spirits, and bodies perfect without blame on the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and you grow in all virtue and spiritual knowledge.

Through the intercessions of the Pure and Blessed our Lady and

pride of our humankind the Virgin and Saint Theotokos, and the honourable martyr St. Mark the apostle, and all the angels, martyrs and saints.

To our God Glory, honour and worship now and forever Amen.

Pope .....

(Signature) (Stamp)

We , the delegates of His Holiness Pope .....our blessed father, to seat our honourable beloved brother Anba ..... on his seat in the diocese .....

Bishop's Signature

.....

NOTES:-

(1) The bishopric tradition is considered like a letter from His Holiness the Pope to the priests and deacons – congregation of the diocese to accept the bishop, cooperate with him in all the burdens and responsibilities of the service.

(2) The bishopric tradition includes three important points:-

(a) The bishop's authority: he has the perfection of priesthood and authority of laying on of hands, loosening and binding and managing the matters of the churches of the diocese, its priests and deacons.

(b) The bishop's duties and responsibilities: Solving the

people's problems and caring for their spiritual life.

(c) The congregational duties towards him: To surround him, listen to him, love him and obey him.

(3) The tradition urges the congregation to care for spiritual lives, attendance of masses and meetings, perseverance in Confession and Communion, praying the tithes, charity deeds and others.

+ After the recitation of the tradition the attending bishop folds it and hands it over to the new bishop.

+ Then the attending archbishop hands the copper serpent to the new bishop, and it is a symbol of priestly ruling and shepherding.

+ Then the diocese priests come forward according to their ranks and give incense to the new bishop. The bishop composes an adequate sermon.

+ Then the special five litanies of raising of incense are recited, followed by Our Father.

+ The new bishop stands at the temple's door and prays the absolution, while holding the copper serpent.

+ All pray the Canon of conclusion of prayers saying: You have gained grace.

+ The new bishop says the blessing O King ... Christ our God, and Our Father.

+ He dismisses the congregation peacefully saying: “Go in peace, the peace of the Lord be with you all.”

+ The new bishop accepts the congratulation from the attending bishops , priests and congregation, then undresses the cloaks.

+ The new bishop goes with his guests of the attending bishops, invited and responsible persons to the diocese reception to accept the congratulations from the responsible persons and congregation, and it is a day of joy for every body.

+ He starts his pastoral duties for the diocese.

+ They celebrate three consecutive masses for him and the congregation rejoice.

---

## 2- METROPOLITAN

---

**T**his is derived from the Greek word: Metropolitans which means the mother city or the major city of the diocese<sup>1</sup>

Metropolitan is the bishop of the progressing Mother City.

+ Metropolitan is progressing the bishops in all Church Rites.

+ Rank of metropolitan is only a promotion from bishop to metropolitan on the same diocese with the same name.

---

<sup>1</sup> Diocese: Greek word, derived from the work Eparchos or Eparshos which means ruler or governor. It is translated as province, and the name ‘diocese’ is applied for every province with a bishop or metropolitan.

+ Dwelling place of the metropolitan is called bishopric. This is the common name used even for dwelling places of bishops. May be because in the past eras the selected candidate was ordained bishop and metropolitan at the same time as Ritual books witness, then he goes to his bishopric as a metropolitan and lives there. The name bishop was not famous, as all were metropolitans.

---

### Rite Of Ordination Of The Metropolitan

---

+ It takes place during a Sunday Mass.

+ Ordination is after the Praxis and Synaxarium, like the bishop.

+ His Holiness the Pope prays the Thanksgiving Prayer and raises incense.

+ His Holiness the Pope prays this prayer facing east<sup>1</sup>

“O existing Master, Lord, God the Pantocrator, Father of Compassion and Comfort, the Father of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who created all things by His Power and Wisdom. He fixed the whole universe by His counseling, Who knows things before their existence, Who adorned crowns for His upright, Who gave fear to all creatures to submit to His power, Who granted us true understanding to know the Spirit of His goodness, Who made Churches with luminous brightness of

---

<sup>1</sup> Book of Holy Prayers for ordination of the selected for the clergy ranks, printed in Rome in 1761 – Page 79-84.

His Only Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Who chose Abraham His beloved for the inheritance of faith and transferred Enoch His Saint to the treasurer to light because he pleased Him, Who granted Moses meekness and Aaron the perfection of priesthood. Who anointed kings and rulers to rule His people with justice. Who did not leave His holy heavenly Altar without service since the foundation of the world. You also founded Your service in Churches to be perfected by priests and deacons, who are examples of the heavenly, so that earthly and the heavenly creation agree in service to bless Your Holy Name , O true God with Your Only Son and the Holy Spirit, by whom we ask and entreat Your Goodness for Your servant ( .... ) whom You choose and glorified as a metropolitan for You and a father for Your Church, to become a ruler and representative of Your congregation. O Lord enlighten him by the light of Your countenance so his heart illuminates by the spring of Your Glory to truly know Your hidden mysteries.

Fill him with Your knowledge by Your Holy Spirit,  
Whom You poured over Your Holy Church to renew in every generation to be pleasing to the Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth, Spirit of Perfection, and the Comforter Whom You gave to Your saintly Apostles and pure prophets.

Lord grant him the Rod of your power that sprang from Jesse, “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his rods. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom, and understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord” *Isaiah 11: 1-2*.

God fill him with Your Fear to judge your congregation truly and

stand fast in the right faith without blemish. Dress him in the holy garment of Your Glory. Anoint him by the oil of joy to become a faithful shepherd of Your house which is the Holy Church, serving You blamelessly all the days of his life, day and night without delay by pure sacrifices and pure hearty prayers, a caring soul, by pure fast and deeds, love, meekness and faith without hypocrisy. By prophecies and spiritual declarations, with pure offering all the time, raising a pure incense for You for the weakness of Your congregation, grieving for the sinners, and lack of understanding as they are Your holy flock, to attract them from traps of sin to Your worshipping O Holy God.

Grant him and Your congregation peace, and give him Lord the authority of Your Holy Spirit to untie the bonds tied by the enemy.

Grant him to gather the scattered members of the Church to unity, and keep his priesthood without blemish to the end, to serve You by spiritual sacrifices always, like the rank of the Great Heavenly High Priest Jesus Christ.

Glory, honour, dominion and worship are due to You with Him and the Living, Consubstantial Holy Spirit now and to the end of ages, Amen.

After this long touching prayer for the bishop selected to be ordained a metropolitan standing before the temple, facing east, with a bowing head and wearing his priestly vestments, the Patriarch signs him thrice saying:-

(1) (...) Metropolitan for the seat..... “In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God, Amen.

Blessed be God the Father the Pantocrator”. The deacons and congregation say: “Amen.”

(2) “Blessed be His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord”. The deacons and congregation say: Amen.

(3) “Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete”, and the deacons and congregation say: “Amen.”

Then the singers say:-

Worthy Anba (.....) the Metropolitan.

He kneels before the temple then enters the temple, kisses the altar, stands at the right of the altar and shares in the Mass, receives from the Holy Mysteries and a procession is made for him and he accepts the congratulations. It is a day of joy.

### 3- THE POPE: PATRIARCH

---

+Patriarch is a word derived from Greek word “Patriarchies”, composed of two parts: Patria: the tribe & Arches: ruler, so it means ruler of the tribe.

+But the word ‘Pope’ is said to be derived from Greek word Papas, which means father. Others say it is a compound word from father of fathers, then simplified to Pope for ease of pronunciation. It is historically known that this surname is specified for the Pope of Alexandria first, since Pope Yarakloos (the thirteenth Pope) and from Alexandria it conveyed to Rome.

+ There were only five Patriarchs in the Christian world after division:-

(1) Patriarch of Jerusalem:- the City of our God where incidences of salvation took place and there is the tomb of our God Saviour.

(2) Patriarch of Alexandria:- the owner of the See of St. Mark the Evangelist , and still the Patriarch of Alexandria is the official surname of the Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church although his location transferred from Alexandria to Cairo, the capital of the country since the tenth century After Christ.

(3) Patriarch of Rome:- the capital of the Western Roman Empire.

(4) Patriarch of Constantinople:- which is the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. The first location was in Ephesus seat, and the preaching site of John the Apostle and Timothy Bishop of Ephesus, then it transferred to the king's capital Constantinople.

(5) Patriarch of Antioch:- it is the See and preaching site of St. Peter the Apostle and St. Ignatius the adorned by God. Now the See of the Patriarch is in Damascus, capital of Syria. But the surname of Patriarch of the Syrian Church is still Patriarch of Antioch and the East.

+ The Patriarch is the highest rank in the bishopric level and has the highest or greatest ruling of priesthood.

+ Patriarch is the leader of the Church, bishops and all metropolitans.

+ Patriarch is the successor of the Apostles and first father of the Church.

+ Patriarch is entrusted by Christ for all the congregation and the souls of the flock in his ordination. The archbishop says to him, after he places the rod of pastorate on the altar:- “Receive the rod of pastorate from the hand of the Great Shepherd Jesus Christ, the Ever Living Son of God, to shepherd the flock, nourish it by living doctrine as He entrusted you on the soul of His flock, and from your hands their blood will be asked.” So it is a great and difficult responsibility, and needs its carrier to pray a great deal for God to help him to carry it and accomplish its many serious duties.

+ Patriarch is symbol of unity of Church:- around when priests, deacons and bishops gather with all the congregation. Any one who behaves different to this basis, is condemned by the Church canon to isolate him or dispossess him from his rank.

+ Patriarch has the right to ordain bishops. Two bishops or at least one bishop must accompany him. No ordination of bishops takes place if the Patriarchal See is void.

+ Patriarch has the right to promote the bishop to the rank of metropolitan.

+Patriarch has the right to make Myron whenever it approaches depletion, while the bishops and metropolitans share its making.

+The Patriarch is distinguished from the bishop or metropolitan by these two rights:- right of ordination of bishops and their promotion, and the right of making the Holy Myron for the whole Church.

+The Great Cathedral is the location of the Patriarchal See where bishops are ordained and promoted by the Patriarch.

+Patriarch is the first guard of the Church's faith dogma, canons and rites, to keep them from every heretic, or deviant.

+Patriarch heads the sessions of the Holy Synod of the Church.

+Holy Synod is the highest authority in the Church, composed of the Patriarch, metropolitans, bishops, khoeri-epis-copos, abbots of monasteries and stewards of the Patriarchate.

+Patriarch heads the Common Denominational Council and all the official Coptic organisations like the organisation of Endowments and others.

+His age must not be less than forty years upon his ordination.

+Patriarch must be chosen from among scholar, spiritual, capable monks for leadership and rightly defining the word of truth, or from among common bishops who have no dioceses, as the Church Canon forbids transfer of bishop from one diocese to

another for whatever reason.

+ In the Coptic Church, there is a specific list now, approved by the State, including basis and conditions of selection and election of the Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church. It is the list approved by the President of the Republic on 2 November 1957.

+ Included in the articles of the list is that the age of the recommended candidate for the Patriarchate, no less than forty years , and years of his monasticism no less than fifteen years.



## RITE OF ORDINATION OF THE PATRIARCH

---

+ After the official procedures for the selection of the Patriarch, whether nominations, elections and temple lot and others, the Rite of Inauguration of the winner of patriarchy if he is a bishop , or Rite of Ordination if he is a hegmon, is as follows:

+ His ordination must be on a Sunday.

+ Rite of Ordination of the Patriarch is considered an ordination and an inauguration at the same time.

+ One of the bishops performs the offertory of the Lamb as usual. Chapters for 17<sup>th</sup> Hatoor are read (commemoration of repose of St. John Chrysostom Patriarch of Constantinople) and chapters of reading of this whole day is about shepherhood and service.

+ Pauline: <sup>2</sup>Tim 3:1 – 24, 4: 1-22

This chapter is about the struggle of our teacher St. Paul in service and shepherhood and includes pastoral advices to his disciple Timothy, bishop of Ephesus.

+ Catholic Epistle: -I Peter 5: 1-14

Our teacher St. Peter advises the shepherds: “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by

constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly, not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock”... etc.

+ Praxis: - Acts 20: 17-38

Includes examples of the struggle of our teacher St. Paul in the service.... “serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me ..... And how I kept nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you..... But none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus..... For three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears..... I have coveted neither one’s silver nor gold or apparel.... I have shown you in every way, by labouring like this, that you must support the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive”.

The chapter includes many commandments to Shepherds, ..... “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His own Blood.... Therefore WATCH .....”.

+ Psalm 73: 23, 24, 28

“You hold me by my right hand, You will guide me with your counsel and afterwards receive me to glory, but it is good for me to draw near to God, I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all your works”.

NOTE:

This is the Patriarch's impression at the start of his ordination, asking God to hold his right hand, Who holds the seven stars (seven bishops) in His right hand, walking in the midst of the seven lampstands (seven churches). He also asks God to guide him and lead him by His blessed good Counseling in managing His Church and shepherding his holy flock, and accept him in His Eternal Glory at the end of his life, with the Apostles and Pastors who served the Lord faithfully. "As if the New Patriarch says: "as for me it is good for me to stay to the Lord and rely on Him to help me in this difficult task, and I do not rely on my power or wisdom to shepherd the congregation of God....etc."

+ Gospel: John 10: 1-16

Gospel of the Good Shepherd as the Patriarch has to resemble Christ the Good Shepherd since the day of his ordination.

+ "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep".

+ "I am the Good Shepherd, and I know My sheep and am known by My own".

+ "I am the door of the sheep".

+ "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture".

+ "I lay down My life for the sheep".

+ “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; then also I must bring and will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd”. As if the Church places a comprehensive program of shepherhood and service before the new Patriarch, through the readings of the ordination day.

+ After the Praxis reading (Book of Acts of the Apostles) and Synaxarium (Saintly stories), they start the ordination procedures. As the Patriarch’s service is a continuation of the apostolic service recorded in the Book of Acts of the Apostles, so you notice the Book of Acts does not end by the word Amen. This is a proof that it is open to comprise the service of Patriarchs, successors of the Apostles everywhere, at all times, and the procession is continuous and does not stop until the Second Coming of Christ. Also the Patriarch’s service is a continuation of the saintly Patriarchal service, whose manners are recorded in the Synaxarium.

+ The priests come out to the Patriarchal location with their censers, and the deacons with the crosses of the procession, where there are the metropolitans and bishops, with the selected one for the Patriarchal See, to bring them along in an ecclesiastical joyful procession to the Cathedral.

+ The Cathedral door is closed and the keys are given to the archdeacon, to stand by the door awaiting the new Patriarch to give him the keys.

+ The procession starts from the Patriarchal location, preceded by the deacons, priests, then metropolitans and bishops by their

priestly vestments, surrounding the new Pope who wears his black monastic vestments.

+ While walking in the procession, the deacons say the hymn of Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord...Hosanna (Save us)... Before the archbishop, one of the archdeacons walks carrying the Gospel, and the procession walks to the door of the Cathedral, then the archdeacon precedes the new Pope and gives him the Cathedral keys.

His Holiness opens the door of Cathedral while saying: “Open to me the gates of righteousness, I will go through them and I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous shall enter. I will praise You for You have answered me and have become my salvation” *Psalms 118: 19-21*. The gates of the Church is the gate of righteousness and the gate of the Lord through which we enter to the Church to thank the Lord and praise Him for His uncountable blessings.

+ Upon opening the door, the Cathedral bells are rung to welcome the new Pope and rejoice for his arrival.

+ The procession enters to the Cathedral and the deacons say the hymn of “O Only begotten Son of God” until the procession reaches the gate or door of the temple and all kneel before the holy temple.

+ The Pope stands before the temple between two bishops while the metropolitans and bishops ascend to the temple and the priests and deacons take their specified places.

+ The archbishop stands before the temple’s door, facing east

and prays the Litany of the Gospel, specifically this one: “O Master Lord Jesus Christ our God who sent His saintly disciples and pure Apostles to all the world, to preach His Kingdom and teach all nations the true knowledge. We ask You Our King to open our hearts to hear the words of Your Holy Gospels through the prayers of Your saints.”

The deacon says: “Pray for the Holy Gospel.”

The congregation says: “Lord have Mercy”.

The archbishop completes: “Open the senses of our souls, bodies and spirits to become worthy not only to hear but to act according to Your Holy commandments according to the Will of Your Good Father....etc”.

NOTE:

The archbishop begins the ordination prayers by this Litany, as the new Patriarch is an example of the Apostles, whom Lord Jesus sent to the entire world to preach the Kingdom and teach all nations the knowledge of God and His worshipping. As He said to them: “Go into the entire world and preach the Gospel to every creature”. *Mark 16:15*, and also “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” *Matthew 28:19, 20*. He also asks God to open his heart and all the attendants and the senses of their souls, bodies and spirits to hear and act according to the Holy Commandments of God, which are the constitution of our salvation and the light that guides our feet in the way of peace.

+ The archbishop hands over the recommendation signed by all the metropolitans and bishops and all the members of the Holy Synod, to one of the archdeacons to read it on the pulpit (now the metropolitans and bishops read it).

This is the text of the recommendation:- In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The inseparable Holy Trinity One God Our Lord, we the Orthodox Christians.

We rely on Him to the last breath, and send to Him on High Glory and honour forever.

We the metropolitans and bishops and priests and deacons and the entire congregation who love Christ, in the cities of Alexandria, Cairo and all provinces of Egypt.

After we were stricken by the affliction of the orphanhood by the passing away of His Holiness Pope..... to the heavenly paradise, who gained all the holy promises and passed to God Who loved him so he heard the joyful voice saying: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."

When we were orphaned, and the Holy Church of God which he shepherded by His teaching, was widowed, we supplicated to God to lead us to a person worthy of the great leadership of priesthood, to shepherd us into the Way of the Lord and guide us to the harbour of salvation. So by heavenly love and the Holy Spirit's work, we all agreed in good heart to elect the worshipper of God... From the monks of the monastery of... a Pope and Patriarch and ruler of bishops for the Apostolic See of

St. Mark the Evangelist, preacher of Egypt, Ethiopia, Nuba, Sudan and five Western cities (Pentapolis) and all the provinces of the Markan preaching in Africa, Asia, Europe, America and Australia.

We selected him because he worships God, loves strangers, with understanding and knowledge, pure, perseveres on keeping the Church Rites, Faith, Dogma and tradition, and we present him as a ruling pastor, Pope and Patriarch for Holy House of God to shepherd it with meekness and compassion.

That is why we wrote this recommendation and have signed it with gratitude to the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit One God Amen.

+ Then the metropolitans and bishops stand before the temple for the ordination of the Patriarch, so the elected person kneels on his knees and the archbishop prays the Thanksgiving Prayer, raises the incense and says this prayer:-

“O Lord God of hosts who qualified us for this holy service.... We approach You and supplicate to you to grant the grace of the high leadership of Priesthood to Your servant ... standing here awaiting your heavenly gifts....”.

+ The archdeacon says the following supplications:<sup>1</sup> and the singers respond after every supplication saying: “Lord have mercy: -

Let us all say ,God answer us and have mercy on us for the reign of peace in the Holy House of God.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Now metropolitans and bishops say them

+ There are five supplications and the singers say Lord hear us by the tune, Lord have mercy Lord bless us, or Kerye-Eleyson, Kerye-Eleyson, Kerye-Eleyson, at the end of each supplication.

+ The archbishop says this prayer:- O Master Lord God the Pantocrator, Lord of all.... Grant Your servant....grace. Grant him wisdom to shepherd Your Church purely in justice, Dominion and honour due to You..... .

+ The archdeacon says: From the Lord we ask and the singers say: Lord have mercy.

+ The archbishop places his hand on the chosen candidate (if he was a hegomen) and does not place it if the candidate was a bishop.

+ The archdeacon says this declaration:-  
The divine grace that heals sickness and accomplished deficiencies, and gathers the scattered led us to know the worshipper of God... to present him Pope and Patriarch for the two cities of Cairo and Alexandria and all provinces of Egypt and all the Markan preached areas instead of the late blessed .... Who passed away in blessed age and left to God.

Let us pray then begging the Lord of grace to dwell on him the grace of the Holy Spirit and let us all say: Lord have mercy.

+ The singers say: Lord have mercy.

+ Then the archbishop places his hand on the chosen candidate's head (if he is a hegemon) saying: Yes Lord make him worthy for

the call of high priestly leadership, to become worthy to pastor Your congregation with purity and righteousness to win the share of the saints. By the mercy of Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, blessed art You with Him and the Consubstantial Holy Spirit, now.....

Then says: Peace be with all. Irini-pasi. And the singers respond: and with your spirit.

+The archdeacon says: Stand well. Stand in purity, Stand in reverence and quietness and let us all say: Lord have mercy.

The singers say: Lord have mercy thrice.

+The archdeacon says: Come on gathering metropolitans and bishops and place your hands on our father chosen by God (if he was a hegomen), or pray for our father chosen by God (if he was a bishop).

+ If he was a hegomen, the metropolitans and bishops place their hands on his shoulders and ,arms but the archbishop places his right hand on his head . If the chosen candidate is a bishop who was already laid hands on, then the metropolitans and bishops stand around him without laying on of hands, even the archbishop does not lay hands on him.

+The leader of metropolitans prays this prayer of ordination:- O Master Lord God of all, source of all compassion.... We ask and entreat Your goodness O Philanthropic One for Your servant..... Whom You chose a high priest for Your Church to become ruler over Your congregation and a pastor for them. Shine on him Lord by the light of Your Countenance to enlighten

his heart by the spring of Your glory, to know Your Holy Mysteries.

+ Pour on him the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, the spirit of perfect comfort whom You gave to Your saintly Apostles and pure prophets. Lord grant him the spirit of wisdom, understanding, power and counsel, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. God fill him with Your fear to judge Your congregation with justice and defend the True Orthodox Faith. Adorn him by the vestment of Your Holy Glory and place a crown on his head and anoint him by the oil of joy, of Your Goodness to become Your high priest, faithful over Your House, to glorify You without blame all the days of his life. By pure sacrifices, and faultless prayers and a bright spirit, by fasts and good deeds, love, meekness, faith without hypocrisy, and offers oblations for the ignorance of Your congregation and rescue them from the traps of sin and return them to Your holy fold. God grant Your congregation peace and grant Your servant... the Spirit of Your Holiness to undo every bond of the enemy, and gather the children of the Church to become one flock for one pastor, and keep his priesthood blameless to the end, to serve You by spiritual sacrifices at all times like the rank of the Great High Priest in heaven Jesus Christ our Lord, Glory and dominion due to Him.....

NOTE:

This is a very important prayer that includes all the responsibilities of the Patriarch who is:

- (1) Spiritual ruler of the congregation.
- (2) Pastor of pastors.
- (3) Judges the congregation in justice and uprightness.

(4) Protector of the True Orthodox Faith against heresies and deviations.

(5) Offers oblations and prayers to intercede for the congregation before God.

(6) Rescues sinners from fire of sin and evil.

(7) Returns the lost to the holy yard of faith.

(8) Works and prays for the salvation of the congregation.

(9) Gathers the scattered, children of God to one.

(10) Gives absolution and forgiveness to all repentants who are tied by the devil by sin and its horrific bonds.

+ The leading metropolitan faces west praying: “Lord look upon us and upon our service, purify us from all blemish and send Your grace of leadership of priesthood of Your servant.... To be worthy to please You and shepherd Your congregation without blame, because You are merciful and righteous ... glory ....due to You ....

+ Then he turns his face and faces west towards the chosen candidate and signs his forehead by his thumb (if he was a hegomen) saying: “We call you Anba ..... Pope and Patriarch and leader of bishops of the Markan See.

Likewise he says the three signs and the hymnists say Amen, every time.

#### NOTE:

By these three signs and pronounciation the ordination is

accomplished actually and the chosen candidate becomes the Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark by the dwelling of the Holy Spirit upon him.

+ Then they dress him the tunic and seat him on a small chair in the middle while the metropolitans and bishops sit around him and the deacons chant St Mark's doxology.

+ The archbishop read the tradition specific for the Patriarch Pope. This is a text of the tradition<sup>1</sup> of Anba ..... Head of bishops of the great Alexandria. From the bishops gathering to all those who love God:- hegemons, priests, deacons, epodeacons, ognastoses, hymnists, the fatherly monks and all the believers and the Orthodox congregation in the great city of Alexandria which loves Christ and the congregation of Cairo and all Egypt and all the congregations of the See of St. Mark that love Christ.

We (the metropolitans) and bishops who gathered by the mercy of God, say to you:- sing by the harp in a festival day for you, how exceedingly rich is God

and His wisdom and knowledge , as He is our Master and true God Jesus Christ Who knows everything before existence, Examiner of hearts, Who still is with the Father and the Holy Spirit the counseling true Judge, Who has the hidden treasures of wisdom, the True God, and God accepted the spirit of the good works our father the Patriarch Anba ... who gained the

---

<sup>1</sup> From the book of Holy Prayers for the ordination of the chosen of the clergy ranks and monks and sanctification of Myron and Church page 213 – 224.

inheritance of the saints and the share of the righteous. Necessity obliged us to gather according to the Apostolic Canons by one agreement, we the metropolitans and bishops of Egypt and the clergy and all the congregation of the great city of Alexandria and leaders of Egypt. So we counseled supplicating to God to manifest His good will in the choice of whoever is worthy of the great leadership of priesthood, to shepherd us in the Lord's way and guide us to the harbour of salvation. So we decided to fulfil the Will of God and supplicate His Providence and entreat His Compassion and Goodness, perseveringly asking Him to guide us to the worthy person for the greatest leadership of priesthood rank and the grace of God led us to the worshipper of God ... from the monastery of .....

Who was brought up by saintly fathers and gained their grace like Elisha with Elijah the Tishbite regarding the angelical eskeem, as written by the apostle: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined ... these He also called, whom He called, these He also justified, and whom he justified, these He also glorified". *Rom 8: 28-30* and He said also: "And no man takes this honour to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was" *Hebrew 5:4*. So we promoted him to this eminent rank of the greatest leadership of priesthood to become a father and shepherd to shepherd us in the fertile meadows of true knowledge, that is why we lifted him to the succession of the evangelist theologian St Mark the apostle, full of all spiritual graces, when he gained the gift of the Paraclete by apostolic voices, as we dressed him the vestment of the greatest leadership of priesthood from God and His pure apostles, and became a high priest, shepherd and teacher.

As he gained this authority from God the King of heavenly and earthly creation, it became his right to loose and bind, ordain bishops and clergy, sanctify altars and consecrate new Churches, practise the authority given by our Lord Jesus Christ to His pure apostles and sanctify the Myron. As he is filled by the grace of the Holy Spirit and become a new man by the great rank bestowed upon him by God, Who exalts the lowly and raises the poor and seats him with His congregation. We are filled by joy bestowed on us by Jesus Christ, the Word of God Who incarnated from the Virgin St. Mary, became man, suffered, physically died and rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father and sent the Holy Spirit the comforter to His pure apostles and fulfilled them , holy by the heavenly rank, so they organised the church every where by the unity of faith and gathered the scattered, those worthy by the providence of His goodness.

God Who chose him, bless him by speech on opening his mouth as a benefit for ourselves and become peace for the Church and salvation for all Orthodox people in his time and may He bestow upon us all mercies. By the intercession of our Lady and Queen Theotokos St. Mary and the prayers of our father the beloved St. Mark the pure evangelist ... and all the saints acceptable before our Lord Jesus Christ, glory and dominion are due to Him with His good Father and the living consubstantial Holy Spirit, now.....

This is a message of the tradition of Anba ..... Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of the St. Mark decided by us, metropolitans and bishops, gathering here and performed his blessed ordination and seating him on the See of St. Mark the apostle and evangelist and theologian in the Church of ....

according to the canonical tradition and approved it by our handwriting Glory be to God, Amen.

+ Then signatures of all the metropolitans, bishops, abbots of monasteries members of the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

+ The archbishop folds the tradition after reading it and hands it to His Holiness the Pope Patriarch and says audibly:-

“Receive the tradition of Greatest leadership of priesthood for many peaceful, glorious, dignified years to come”.

The hymnist say: Doxology of His Holiness the Pope. Then the archdeacon says the following supplications<sup>1</sup> “for the peace and harmony and organisation of the Holy Church of God. To the Lord we ask”.

The hymnists say: Lord have mercy.

For the congregation of God...etc. at the end, the congregation says: Aksios.

+ The leading metropolitan places the four Gospels on the head of the Pope<sup>2</sup>.

The hymnist chant the Aksios hymn. Then the Gospels are lifted from his head while the metropolitans and bishops come forward and kiss them.

---

<sup>1</sup> Metropolitans and bishops say them now

<sup>2</sup> Placing the Gospels on the head of the Pope replaces the breath given to lower ranks.

+ The archdeacon says:-

Pray O father's righteous metropolitans and bishops. The leading bishops say this prayer on their behalf:

We ask for the beloved by God and his servant Anba ..... Eminence of the rank and steadfastness in worshipping on one, holy universal apostolic Orthodox Church of God that He purchased by His Precious Blood, to establish just judgements, splendid gifts and faithful teachings, to pray for the support of the Church and victory of rulers.

Then the three signs, and the hymnists say Amen at every sign, then they say the hymn of Aksios.

NOTE:-

It is nice for the Church to be patriotic with a strong national belonging so it ordains the Pope Patriarch to pray for the victory of the ruler of state and his success in politics and plans for the welfare of the country and happiness of people. In the Church there is a special litany called Litany for the King (chief, where we say: Remember O Lord the ruler of our land, Your servant keep him in peace and justice and power. Let all nations wanting war, submit them to him. Talk to his heart for the peace of Your one, holy universal Apostolic Church. Grant him to think about us in peace, in Your Holy Name so we too may live quietly and abide in righteousness and purity.

+ One of the priests come forward and places the rod of

shepherdhood on the altar, near the cross-folded in a linen veil<sup>1</sup>  
The hymnists say the hymn of Ni-Saf-if-

+Metropolitans and bishops starts dressing the Pope Patriarch  
the vestment of leadership of priesthood:-

(1) When they dress him the sticharion (.....) the  
archdeacon says<sup>2</sup> “Let Your priests be clothed with  
righteousness, and let Your saints shout for joy” *Psalm 132:9*.

(2) Then they dress him the stole (Epitrachelion)  
and the archdeacon says:-

“God be blessed, Who poured of His grace upon His  
priests like oil upon the head, running down on the beard. The  
beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is  
like the dew of Herman” (*Psalm 133*).

The hymnists say: Now and until the end of all ages,  
Amen.

(3) Then they dress him the waistband (or belt) and the  
archdeacon says: “God be blessed Who girded my waist by  
power and made my ways blameless always” The hymnists say:  
Now and for all.....

(4) Then they dress him the right armlet sleeves and the

---

<sup>1</sup> In the Old Tradition the cross and rod of shepherdhood were placed on  
the altar since the disposal of the Pope until the new Pope receives them  
at his ordination.

<sup>2</sup> Now said by metropolitans and bishops.

archdeacon says: “Your right Lord is glorified by power. Your right hand Lord crushed the enemies and by the power of Your arm You perished the deceivers. The right hand of the Lord is exalted. The right hand of the Lord made miracles always” *Psalms 118*. The hymnists say: Now and forever..... .

(5) Then they dress him the left armlet sleeves and the archdeacon says: “Your hands have made me and fashioned me. Give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments. Those who fear You will be glad when they see Me *Psalms 119:10*. The hymnist say: Now and forever .....

(6) Then they dress him with the girdles, and the archdeacon says: Gird Your sword upon your thigh, O Mighty One, with your glory and your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility and righteousness and your right hand shall teach me some things” *Psalms 45: 3,4* – they hymnists say: Now and forever.....

(7) Then they dress him with the phelonion (Bornos) and the archdeacon says: “My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour as He dressed me the garment of salvation and joy always” *Luke 1: 47*. The hymnists say: now and forever.....

(8) Then they place for him the crown and the archdeacon says: “The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty ... He has girded Himself with strength, *Psalms 93:1* “and adorned my head by precious crown.

The hymnists say: “Now and forever

+ After the placement of the crown on the Pope’s forehead, the

metropolitans and bishops lift their crown and wear the SHEMLAH and ascend with him to the altar to receive the cross and rod of shepherdhood from above the altar. The leading metropolitans looks at him saying:-

Receive the rod of shepherd from the Hand of the Great Shepherd of shepherds Jesus Christ the living Son of God , to Shepherd His flock and nourish it by living teaching as He entrusted you to the souls of His flock and from your hands, their blood will be asked for”. The Pope comes forward to the altar and receives the rod of shepherdhood, signs it and places a handful of incense into the censer, and the bishops and metropolitans share with him in the second handful.

Then he signs the third sign and places incense into the censer.

+The archbishop faces east and prays: “We thank you Lord Pantocrator on every occasion, in every condition and for all things, and we praise and glorify Your Holy Name as You made great things with us and poured Your rich gift onto Your servant Anba .....

We ask and entreat You Lord hear us with the multitude of Your mercy and walk with the ordination of leading great priesthood that become to Your servant Anba.... The righteous leader of bishops by the dwelling of Your Holy Spirit upon him. Straighten the call of his selection by purity, and choose us with him to work and win the profit of the mites , and get the wages of the wise faithful steward with whoever fulfilled Your will, at the coming of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, for whom is glory... .

+ Then they ascend the Pope to the seat of leadership (having three steps) and while he is ascending the first step, the archbishop says: “We seat the leader of bishops on the seat of the apostle and evangelist Mark in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”, then says the first sign in Coptic: “Blessed be God the Father, the Pantocrator.” and the hymnists say: “Amen.”

While ascending the second step, the archbishop says: “We seat the leader of bishops, called from God Anba .... Patriarch on the See of St. Mark. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Then says the second sign in Coptic: “Blessed is His Only begotten Son.” And the hymnists say: “Amen.”

+ Then they seat him on the seat and the leading archbishop says:

“We seated Anba ... Pope and Patriarch on the Apostolic See of St. Mark the Evangelist, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Then he says the third in Coptic: “Blessed is the Holy Spirit....” The hymnists say: “Amen.” Then the hymn of AKSIOS.

+ Then they forward to His Holiness the Pope, the Gospel of St. Mark, he kisses it and holds it so all metropolitans and bishops come and kiss it in his hands, while the deacons are chanting the hymn of: the censer (Tai-shoori ) then the hymn of: Blessed the great, then one of the priests reads a chapter of epistle of our teacher St. Paul to the *Hebrews 4:14 – 5: 1-6* “Seeing then that we have a great high priest.....”.

NOTE:

It is an appropriate text for the ordination of the high priest to resemble Christ the Great High Priest.

- + The hymnists and congregation say the Trisagon .
- + One of the priests says the Prayer for the Gospel.
- + The archdeacon says the Psalm in Coptic with a tune.
- + Then the archdeacon says: Stand in the fear of God. Let us listen to the Holy Gospel from His Holiness Anba...., then His Holiness the Pope says the introduction of the Gospel.
- + Then the archdeacon says this warning:-

Stand in the fear of God and listen to the Holy Gospel from the mouth of our righteous honourable blessed, father of fathers, shepherd of shepherds, leader and high priest, successor of St. Mark the Apostle, the great of patriarchs, beloved of Christ, our pure father Anba...., the Pope of the great city of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of the Apostle St. Mark. May God in heaven abide him on his seat many years and peaceful times, and may all his enemies submit to him and give him peaceful and joyful times and grant us grace and mercy by his prayers and supplications.

The Holy Gospel, a chapter from the Gospel of our teacher St. John the evangelist and pure disciple may his blessing be upon us all. The hymnists respond: Amen.

+ His Holiness the Pope says in Coptic: “Our Father and our God...”. Then recites the Gospel in Coptic from John 1: 1-16, while standing and at its end, the congregation say: Glory to You O Lord.

+ Then His Holiness reads the Psalm in Arabic *Psalm 73: 23, 24 & 28*, and its introduction is:-

A Psalm of our teacher David the prophet and king may his blessing be upon us all, Amen.

Then he recites the Psalm: “You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel and afterwards receive me to glory. But it is good for me to draw near God. I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all your works. Alleluia” *Psalm 72: 23, 24 & 28*.

Then the archdeacons says: “Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders. He makes their families like a flock. The righteous see it and rejoice” *Psalm 107: 32, 42* and “ The Lord has sworn and will not relent. You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. The Lord is at your right hand, our father the saint Pope and Patriarch Anba .... May the Lord keep your life. Amen. Alleluia”. *Psalm 110: 4, 5*.

#### NOTE:

When his Holiness the Pope recites the Psalm: “You hold me by my right hand as if he supplicates to God saying: “Hold my right hand and lead me in the right way, guide me by Your good,

divine, blessed counsel to perform this great responsibility with righteousness and uprightness. Lord let me abide in You, trust in You and do not put confidence in men, or my power or my understanding or knowledge or any one else except You. Help me to praise You by prayers and spread the correct teaching in all the Church (daughter of Zion)".

+ His Holiness the Pope recites the Gospel in Arabic while standing. It is the Gospel of the Good Shepherd, to resemble Christ the Good Shepherd Who gives His life for the sheep, Who knows His own sheep by name, and Whose voice the sheep know and follow Him, to shepherd then in green pastures which are the evangelical teachings and they drink His living teaching.

+ Every time the Pope says: I am the good shepherd when he reads the Gospel. The hymnists say: Amen.

+ After the end of reading the Gospel in Arabic, the metropolitans and bishops come and kiss the Gospel while the Pope holds it and the hymnists chant the tune of Pi-Epnevma.

+ Then the Pope or whoever delegates for him, says an appropriate word about the Gospel of the Good Shepherd and for that festival.

+ After the sermon the hymnists say the response of the Gospel with the joyful tune characteristic of that day<sup>1</sup> .

---

<sup>1</sup> If the Pope's ordination is on a fast, the hymns of ordination only is joyful except the tunes of the mass and distribution.

+ The Pope, metropolitans, bishops, priests and the archdeacon enter the altar and pray the mass as usual, and all receive the Holy Mysteries and all happily rejoice for this joyous anniversary.

+ At the end of the mass , His Holiness the Pope undresses the service vestments, wears his black vestments and descends in an ecclesiastical procession, preceded by the deacons by tunes to the tomb of St. Mark, preacher of Egypt, and the first of her patriarchs, to follow his steps in the faithful shepherdhood.

+ All are peacefully dismissed, glorifying God and rejoicing for this blessed ordination and the Pope starts practising his pastoral responsibilities directly.

+ He fasts for one year after the ordination except for the major Lordly feasts.

