

Welcome to the
Coptic
Orthodox Church

A Biblical Church...

An Apostolic Church...

An Icon of the Heavens on earth...

A worship-loving Church...

We hope that you would enjoy and participate in our love of God the Father who sent His Son Jesus Christ as the Savior of the whole world. He grants us His Holy Spirit to guide us in His royal way.

St. Peter and St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church
1245 4th St. - Santa Monica
California

What is the Coptic Orthodox Church?

It is one of the great early four Sees: that of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria (Egypt), and Rome. After the division of the Roman empire the See of Constantinople was added.

What did Isaiah the Prophet foretell about us?

He said: "Blessed is Egypt My people" (Isa. 19:25). He also referred to our church worship and our church role, saying that an altar to the Lord would be in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border (19:19).

What did St. Matthew tell about us?

Egypt is the only land in the world to be blessed and honored by a long visit of the Holy Family: "When Joseph arose, he took the young Child Jesus and His mother Mary by night, and departed to Egypt. And remained there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying: Out of Egypt have I called my Son" (Matt. 2: 14-15).

What is the meaning of the word "Copts"?

It is equivalent to the word "Egyptian." It is derived from the Greek "*Agyptos*."

What is the meaning of the word "Orthodoxy"?

It means "right way." It is the title of the Church, who throughout the ages defended

the right faith against the numerous attacked aimed at it.

Who was the founder of Christianity in Egypt?

St. Mark the Apostle and Evangelist, who is regarded as the first of our unbroken 117 Patriarchs, and also the first of a stream of Egyptian martyrs.

He also established the first Christian school in the world, called the School of Alexandria. It was able not only to defend Christianity against the famous philosophical school of Alexandria, "Museum," which was founded by Ptolemy, but also to convert many of its pagan philosophers. It also formed the first system of theology and the allegorical and spiritual method of Biblical exegesis (interpretation).

Why do the Copts have their own calendar?

The Copts insisted on starting their calendar at the beginning of the reign of Diocletian, in 248 A.D, for in his reign the church gained not less than 800,000 martyrs, who are now glorified in Paradise.

What is the role of the Coptic monastic movements?

In Egypt, all monastic forms started, in the fourth century, which had their role in the church life:

1. Monasticism attracted the heart of the church to the inner life, after the opening of

the gates of the emperor's palace to the clergymen.

2. It flamed the believers' longing for the heavenly Groom's advent.

3. For many believers, it was a new method to accept a new kind of martyrdom, looking to monasticism as a stragglng against Satan.

4. Monastic life was an angelic life, through which believers were praising God joyfully and unceasingly.

5. Monastic life does not mean an enmity to the body.

6. Women monastic movement started side by side with that of men.

What do you know about the Coptic pioneers?

1. **St. Clement of Alexandria** (2nd century) is the first Christian writer who made a marriage between faith and philosophy.

2. **Origen** (2nd century) wrote the Hexapala, or the six-fold Bible, and his exegetical works ranged over nearly the entire field of Scriptures.

3. In the first Ecumenical Council (Nicea, 325 A. D), **St. Athanasius**, Pope of Alexandria, defended the divinity of Christ, while he was a young deacon.

4. In the third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus 431 A. D), **St. Cyril of Alexandria** stressed on the unity of the divinity and humanity of Christ.

5. The Egyptian Church carried the cross of her Christ, offering a **countless numbers of martyrs and confessors**.

6. A Thebean legion arrived in Switzerland in 285, led by **St. Muritus of Garagos**, in Upper-Egypt, who was martyred there. His statue stands today in one of the public squares of the city of St. Moritz.

7. A **Coptic missionary** reached as far as the British Isles, a long time before the advent of St. Augustine of Canterbury (597).

8. Ethiopia, Sudan and Nubia accepted Christianity through Alexandrian preaching.

What are the main lines of the life of the Coptic Church?

1. **Dogmas and doctrines** are daily experiences each member of the church has to live, in his relation to himself, God, man, heavenly creatures and nature.

2. **The Trinitarian faith** has its effect on our daily life and on our eternal future.

3. Our **salvation** means:

- * the renewal of our nature so that we may become the icon (image) of Christ.

- * the participation in the heavenly worship.

- * the participation in the divine glory.

- * attaining the true knowledge.

- * attaining victory on sin, the evil world, death and Satan.

4. God sanctifies **man's freewill**, but man cannot be justified by his own righteousness.

5. The **Church** is the new risen life, the new creation in Jesus Christ, and His body. She is the bride of Christ, ever-virgin, first born, and heavenly community of love.

6. Our Lord grants us unity with the **heavenly creatures**.

7. Through love and unity, the **saints** prays for us for death does not separate them from us, nor abolish their desire for our salvation.
8. Church **Tradition** does not mean "imitation," but delivering the deposit of the practical faith and receiving it. Through it we receive the Bible.
9. Almost every day the Coptic Church celebrates **a feast**, to create an atmosphere of joy among sufferings.
10. Through **the sacraments** (Baptism, Chrismation, Confession [and repentance], Eucharist, Marriage, Priesthood, and Unction of the sick), believers discover the mystery of the Gospel, and attain the experience of the divine grace.
11. The source of the church's strength is her care for the children. We realize their membership in the church, therefore we encourage their baptism and receiving the communion.
12. In the 2nd of April 1968, **Virgin Mary appeared openly on the domes of the church after her name at Zeitoun**, a district of Cairo. This apparition occurred before thousands of Christians and non-Christians, for many years.



For more details read:

Fr. Tadros Malaty: Introduction to The Coptic Orthodox Church.

Aziz Attia: History of Eastern Christianity.