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***Who are the Copts?***

***To what race or races do they belong?***

***Are they the descendants of the Ancient Race of Egypt, or a heterogeneous mixture of the several nations that successively governed Egypt or made it their home?***

***Who established the Coptic Church?***

***What is the Coptic Church's belief?***

***What is the Coptic Orthodox Creed?***

### **The Copts and Their Beliefs**

The above questions are perhaps among the most important questions that face any visitor of our church. To answer these questions, let us start by saying that the name "Copt" is derived from the ancient Greek name of Egypt "Aigyptus" which is written with an "Epsilon". If the prefix and the suffix are removed, the stem "Gypt" remains and is transformed into "Copt" in modern language. So the name Egypt as it is Hellenic, is believed to be derived from Ha-Ku-Ptah, the sacred appellation of Memphis the capital in the ancient hieroglyphic language of Egypt.

Copts have often been styled as the modern sons of the Pharaohs. "Cipto" or "Copto" is only the European corruption of the root, which remains in the word Egypt that indicates nationality and not creed. The genuine Egyptians of today, are the Christian Copts who trace direct descent from the ancient Egyptian races to whom the civilization and culture of the ancient world were so largely due. Owing to this fact, the Egyptian Church has been known among foreigners as the Coptic Church and the Copts have been largely and widely identified as the Christian Egyptians.

The Coptic Church is rich with her evangelistic and ascetic life, her genuine patriotic inheritance, her heavenly worship, her spiritual rituals, her effective and living hymns, her beautiful icons, etc. She attracts the heart towards heaven without ignoring actual daily life. We can say that she is an apostolic, contemporary church that carries life and thought to the contemporary man without deviation. One finds in her life, sweetness and power of Spirit, with appreciation to and sanctification of arts, literature and human culture.

The Coptic Church was the first to start monastic movement in all its forms and it is well known for her numerous saints: ascetics, clergymen and laymen. She offered many saints throughout the ages and is still offering the same today. ***The church believes that practicing the sanctified life and communion with God, the Holy One, is prior to satisfying minds with solid mental studies.***

### **Who Founded the Coptic Church?**

The Coptic Orthodox Church was founded by St. Mark, one of the seventy Apostles (Mark 10:10) and one of the four Evangelists. The church is known as the Church of Alexandria and it is called the "***See of St. Mark***". It is one of the earliest four sees: Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. St. Mark is regarded by the Coptic hierarchy as the first of their unbroken 117 patriarchs, and also the first of a stream of Egyptian martyrs. St. Mark was a broad-minded Apostle. His ministry was quite productive and covered large field of activities including: (i) preaching in Egypt, Pentapolis, Judea, Asia Minor, and Italy during which time he ordained bishops, priests, and deacons, (ii) establishing the "***School of Alexandria***" which defended Christianity against philosophical school of Alexandria, and (iii) conceived a large number of great Fathers, and writing the Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist which was modified later by St. Cyril to the liturgy known today as the Liturgy of St. Cyril.

### **Beliefs of the Coptic Church**

The Coptic Church has kept all the practices as set by the Apostles and the earlier fathers of the church from liturgies, order of prayers, and rites. In short, all aspects of the early Apostolic church without any variation. The British historian Butler wrote in the preface of his book about the old Coptic churches saying "no fair and an unbiased person concerned with the teachings of the early church can compare between the order of our Western church today and the order of a church that has undergone no changes like the Coptic Church, without regretting the desertion of its rites and dogmas".

***The Coptic Orthodox Church believes*** that the ***Holy Trinity***: God The Father, God The Son, and God The Holy Spirit, are equal to each other in ***one unity*** (Deut 6:4, Isaiah 44:6-8, 1Cor 8:5-6, Matt 28:19, 1John 5:7, Matt 3:16-17); and that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world. Little changes have taken place in the Coptic Church than in any other church whether in the ritual or doctrine aspects and that the succession of the Coptic Patriarchs, Bishops, priests and Deacons has been continuous.

*The Coptic Orthodox Church also believes* that the Lord Jesus Christ is God Himself, *the Incarnate Logos* Who took to Himself a perfect manhood. His Divine nature is one with His human nature yet without mingling, confusion or alteration; a complete Hypostatic Union. As this union is permanent, never divided nor separated, we pray in the Coptic Liturgy that *His Divinity parted not from His Humanity for a single moment nor even for a twinkle of an eye*. The Divine nature (God the Word) was united with the human nature, which He took of the Virgin Mary, by the action of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit purified and sanctified the Virgin's womb so that the Child to whom she gave birth would inherit nothing of the original sin; the flesh formed of her blood was united with the Only-Begotten Son. This Unity took place from the first moment of the Holy Pregnancy in the Virgin's womb. As a result of the unity of both natures—the Divine and the human—inside the Virgin's womb, one nature was formed out of both: "The One Nature of God the Incarnate Logos" as St. Cyril called it. After the schism, which took place in the year 451 A.D., when the Coptic Orthodox Church rejected the motions of the Council of Chalcedon and its theological struggles, we were wrongly called Monophysites. However, the union in which the non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches believe differs essentially from the union, which the Eutyches believe. Eutyches said that our Lord is one nature, but His union is based on a notion that the humanity of Christ is totally absorbed in His Divinity and vanishes completely like a drop of vinegar in the ocean. In this way, the Eutyches in fact, deny the real existence of the human nature of Christ. *The Coptic Orthodox Church condemns the absolute monophysitism of Eutyches as heresy.*

*The Coptic Orthodox Church also believes in seven holy sacraments* exercised by the fathers of the church (priests) who have been ordained by the prayers and the placing of hand of their bishops on them. They are unseen blessings given to the believers under seen signs and they have their utmost importance since they are necessary for the salvation and the receiving of the benefits of the Holy Spirit. These sacraments are: Baptism, Al-Myron (The Holy Chrism), Confession, Communion, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage,

and Priesthood.

***The Coptic Orthodox Creed is stated as follows:***

We believe in one God, God the Father, the Pantocrator, creator of heaven and earth, and of all things seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not created; of one essence with the Father by whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried; and on the third day He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures. Ascended into heaven, He sits at the right hand of His Father; and He is coming again in His glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father; who, with the Father and the Son, is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And in one holy, catholic (universal), and apostolic Church. We confess one Baptism, for the remission of sins.

**For more information, please contact:**

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**Services Schedule**

**Weekly Liturgies**  
 Sundays: 8:30 – 12:30 PM  
 Wednesday: 10:30 – 1:00 PM

**Sunday School Service**  
 Sundays: 12:30 – 1:15 PM

**Vesper Prayers**  
 Saturdays: 7:00 – 7:45 PM

**Prayer Meetings**  
 Tuesdays: 7:30 – 8:00 PM

**Bible Study**  
 Tuesdays (English Meeting): 8:00 – 9:00 PM  
 Fridays (Arabic Meeting): 7:30 – 9:00 PM

**Confession Schedule**  
 Tuesdays and Fridays: 6:00 – 7:30 PM

**Aghapy Team Meeting**  
*(Learning of church history and doctrine)*  
 Saturdays: 5:30 – 6:30 PM

**Alhan and Hymns for Deacons**  
 Every other Sunday: 1:00 – 2:00 PM

**Servants Meeting**  
 Every other Sunday: 1:00 – 2:00 PM

**Hymns and Choir for Children**  
*(concurrently with Arabic Bible Study)*  
 Fridays: 8:00 – 9:00 PM

**Tasbeha (Praises)**  
 Saturdays (Vespers Praise): 6:30 – 7:00 PM  
 Saturdays (Midnight Praise): 7:45 – 9:45 PM

**Couples Meeting**  
 Sundays (last Sunday of every month): 1:00 – 2:00 PM

**General Meeting for Congregation:**  
 Sundays (Second Sunday of every month): 1:00 – 2:00 PM