



# PI MONAKHOS THE MONK

## ΠΙΜΟΝΑΧΟΣ

A monthly newsletter with monastic issues for today's youth

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### Published by

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the Archimandrite  
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## *The King Asks for a Blessing from abba Shenouda*

*By: Saint Wissa*



In a word, great signs and a multitude of miracles were worked by our father abba Shenoute, truly the true prophet and the bearer of the Holy Spirit. When they were spread abroad, they filled the face of the whole earth so that his renown even reached the ears of the pious kings. They were told: 'There is a man in the south of Egypt called Shenoute. Whatever he says truly comes to pass'. And the king said: 'He is obviously a holy man of the Lord'. So the king, who loved God, was not at all negligent, but instead wrote a letter to my father the prophet abba Shenoute written in this form:

*I, Theodosius the Younger, an unworthy king to whom the Lord God has given the kingdom despite my unworthiness, write to you, O holy abba Shenoute, truly the man of God! I salute you, O my holy father, and beseech you to hasten to come to us, so that we and all my citizens might be worthy of your blessing. The kingdom and the entire senate is looking forward to your holy visit to us. So do not be negligent, our holy father, but come to us. We thirst for you and your holy teachings, according to the things which those who have come to us tell us about the graces with which God has favoured you. Remember us in your holy prayers. Farewell in the name of the holy Trinity.*

He sealed the letter and gave it to his personal courier, who was called Eudoxius, and wrote another to the duke of the city of Antinoou. So the courier went to Egypt, and when he had gone south, he entered the city of Antinoou and gave the letters to the duke. They then arose and came to the monastery of my father the holy abba Shenoute, and after receiving his blessing, they sat down. The courier then brought out the letters of the king and presented them to my father abba Shenoute.



When my father received the letters and began to read, he reached the passage where it was written: 'Make haste to come to us in the royal capital'. He was then greatly grieved and deeply afflicted in his heart, and said to the courier: 'What does the king want with me? I am a monk living in this monastery for the sake of God, praying and supplicating for my sins'. The courier said to my father: 'My lord and holy father, he wishes to enjoy your blessing'. My father said to him: 'Look, perhaps you will be able to excuse me, for truly, I am an old man'. The courier said to him: 'My holy father, do not hinder this business. In truth, I will not be able to obstruct the command of my lord the king'. Our father the prophet said to him: 'Go now and rest for a little while, you and the men who came with you, and take what you need from the food which the brothers use'.

When evening came, our holy father abba Shenoute went into the sanctuary, stretched out his hands, and prayed to God that he would show him what he should do. And when he gave the 'amen', behold! a shining cloud snatched him up, flew away with him to the royal capital, and left him in the middle of the palace in the place where the king was; and there came a great light to where the king was sleeping.

The king leaped up and said to my father: 'What sort of thing are you, for I am much disturbed!' My father abba Shenoute said: 'I am Shenoute the monk, for whom you sent. What do you want with me, a sinner, that you trouble your soldiers to fetch me, a feeble monk?' The king said to him: 'How did you get here, my holy father, and how many days were you on the journey?' My father said to the king: 'It was Christ Jesus, the son of the living God in whom we believe, together with his good Father and the Holy Spirit, who brought me here to you ...'. The king said to him: 'My holy father, where did you leave the courier and the soldiers I sent with him?' My holy father abba Shenoute replied and said to the king: 'I left them sleeping in the monastery'. The king, with great faith, said: 'Truly, before this day I had heard with my ears of the miracles of your holy and blessed paternity, but today I have seen them face to face!'

Again my father said to him: 'And for what reason have you sent for me?' The king said to him: 'I sent for your holiness because I, together with the royal house and the whole city, want to enjoy your holy blessing and your blessed prayers'. My father said to him: 'May Jesus Christ bless you, O king who loves God, and all your city; may he establish your throne like that of your holy fathers Arcadius and Honorius; may he perfect you all in the faith of your fathers, confirming and guarding the precepts and faith of our fathers the apostles'.

The king said to my father: 'Stay with us a few days, my holy father, so that we may enjoy you to the full'. My father said to him: 'It is necessary for me to go. Of your charity, write a letter in your name which I can give to the courier so that he and those with him may return to you in peace, and not trouble me in trying to bring me to you yet again'. Then Theodosius the king wrote a letter in this form:

*I, Theodosius the king, write to Eudoxius the courier: as soon as you receive these letters from our father the prophet abba Shenoute, the priest, monk, and archimandrite, who, in a way which God alone knows, came to me this*



*very night to the place where I sleep, make haste to return, and do not try again to bring him to us.*

He also wrote to him on certain other secret matters which were just between the king and the courier, sealed the letter with his ring, and gave it to our father. Him he embraced, and after he had received his blessing, sent him away in peace. Thereupon, the cloud again lifted up my father and took him to the monastery the same night, and that same night, before the break of day, he was at worship with the brothers in the monastery. And no one knew that he had gone to the king and returned to his monastery.

When morning came, the courier said to my holy father the superior: 'Of your charity, arise and let us go, so that you do not bring upon me a grave offence and the anger of my lord the king'. My father said to the courier: 'Look, my son, will you go to the king and say to him: "He is an old man"?' The courier said to him: 'If you do not come willingly, I will take you against your will'.

When my father realised that he would take him by force and that he would not go back to the king leaving him there, he then put his hand in his habit, brought out the king's letter and handed it to the courier. When the latter took it and looked it over, he recognized it as the king's, and looked at the face of my holy father abba Shenoute. My father said to him: 'Open it and read it!' And when he began to read it and came upon the matters which were a secret between himself and the king, he went out of his mind. My father immediately made the sign of the cross over him until he regained his senses.

*( From: The Life of Shenoute By Besa, Trans By: David N. Bell)*



A Group of boys from St Mark's Church Spending a retreat at the monastery



## *St Shenouda's Leadership*

*Youth Article  
By: Daniel Ayad*



St Shenouda was an abbot of the White Monastery of Atripe in the desert of Thebes for more than sixty five years during the fourth-fifth century. He is called Archimandrite for he used to practice the solitary life from time to time, and encouraged some of his monks to withdraw to the desert after a few years of coenobitic life. Being a leader he was incredibly the head of 2200 monks and 1800 nuns.

Surely you must wonder how he possibly could have been such a successful leader of these monks and nuns. There must have been some very special characteristics in the life of St Shenouda. Undoubtedly he was deeply spiritual. He was a man of prayer, as can be verified by his solitary life. He had a great relationship with God, so deep that God would send righteous men such as King David to him.

Certainly St Shenouda was a true teacher who could present the divine image of Christ to the people. He presented the people with the spiritual life in an entirely practical way. His contemporaries could learn from not only his words as he gave regular talks to the people of the village, but also through his life. He presented the image of Christ before his people, and this beautiful image brought many monks and nuns to the monastic life. This is how his disciple and successor St Besa described his prayer rule and ascetic practice.

“He adorned his life gloriously with the perfection of monastic labours, great asceticism, and a multitude of ascetic practices, for he would pray twelve times a day, making twenty-four prostrations each time. At night he would not sleep at all until day-break; afterwards, for the sake of his body, he would sleep just a little so that it would not perish too quickly. There were many times when he did not eat from Saturday to Saturday, and again, for the forty days of holy easter, he would not eat bread; his food instead was edible vegetables and moistened grain, and as a result of this, there was hardly any flesh upon him.”

St Shenouda cared for all people and all believers. So many monks and nuns joined the monastic life because of his great love and care. He invited all to the monastery and ministered to them both spiritually and socially. This is highlighted in the following practice; he opened the monastery doors to all people on Saturday night to attend Vespers, pray the midnight prayer and participate in the Holy Liturgy on Sunday morning with the monks. He would then deliver the sermon to strengthen the people in the Orthodox faith. Then the multitudes enjoyed a meal prepared by the monks and departed. I bet you that many lay people experienced this great spiritual



atmosphere and enjoyed this love that they decided to be ordained into the monastic life.

I have no doubt that 2200 monks and 1800 nuns joined the monastic life because they saw the example of St Shenouda. They saw a deeply spiritual man, a deeply caring man, and a deeply loving man. They not only saw his love, but experienced it themselves. They saw his special care to the sick, elderly and children. They saw his devotion to the word of God and just wanted to be like him in some way.

These characteristics of prayer, love, and special care are definitely key aspects to a successful leader. His great leadership of 2200 monks and 1800 nuns must remain an all time memory.



A Group of Youth from St Anthony's Church spending the day at the monastery

Below: A Group of Boys from St Abanoub Church spending a retreat at the Monastery



Above: A Sunday school group from St Anthony's Church Spending the day at the monastery





## *St Shenoute's Life and Times*

*By: Stephen Emmel*

When Shenoute was born in the middle of the fourth century C.E., Coptic literature barely existed. Only a century had passed since a writing system began to be standardized for the notation of Coptic, and although translations of the Christian Bible and a variety of other religious works were being disseminated, original compositions in Coptic were few. Greek was still the dominant language in Egypt in both politics and literature, as it had been since Alexander the Great's conquest seven centuries earlier, and the Greek-speaking Christian patriarchate in Alexandria was thoroughly Hellenistic in tradition and international in its outlook and aspirations.

Yet, by the time Shenoute died in the middle of the fifth century, he had solidified a strong foundation for a literature composed in the Coptic language: during his long life as head of a large monastic community in Upper Egypt, he produced an extensive corpus of more than seventeen volumes of original works in Coptic. What survives of his works are mostly the texts of sermons that Shenoute preached publicly in his monastery's church, letters written on specific occasions to the nuns and monks under his care, and letters written to correspondents outside the monastery. Only a few of the extant works show signs of having been conceived as treatises, but there is evidence in these same works that this part of his corpus was originally more extensive than what has survived.

Shenoute's main concerns were pastoral in a broad sense, but his works display an interest in a wide range of subjects, including biblical exegesis, theology, ethics, natural history, and physics. His achievement, as reflected in his writings, was both to continue the specific cultural tradition of Egyptian monasticism founded by Anthony and Pachomius, and to enhance it under the influence of Alexandrian theology and Greek rhetoric. Because of his library contribution, Shenoute was Coptic Egypt's first outstanding author and his literary preeminence was never eclipsed.

Despite this preeminence as an author, however, Shenoute was, first and foremost, a monk. He had been called to lead the members of his monastic community along the path ordained by God, and along the way he developed a literary sensibility that was extraordinary in that time and place, and thus he turned a new page in the history of Egyptian literature. As a result, his writings are of fundamental importance not only for the study of Coptic literature, but also for the study of the Egyptian language as such, representing as they do a large homogenous corpus composed in Coptic by a native speaker, one who could brilliantly combine oratory and colloquialism. He was deeply inspired by the Coptic version of the Bible, especially the prophetic and poetic books, and his numerous quotations are important evidence for the Coptic version, which pre-dates most of the surviving Greek biblical manuscripts.



Shenoute's works are particularly promising as historical sources per-mining to a place and a time for which such documentation is otherwise scarce, and offering detailed glimpses at an unusual personality. He was still a youth when he entered a monastery near the Upper Egyptian village Atripe on the western side of the Nile, across from Panopolis (modern Akhmim), and he remained a member of that community until he died. It can be surmised from what is known of his later life that it was the force of Shenoute's character, as well as his intelligence and education, that led to his taking charge of the monastery sometime around 385 AD. For eighty years or more he presided over a complex community of monks and nuns, ministering also to the people living in the vicinity of his monastery, especially the needy and oppressed. He was in contact with at least four successive archbishops of Alexandria, Timothy I (380-385), Theophilus (385-412), Cyril (412-444), Dioscorus (444-451), and probably also Timothy II Aelurus (457-477), all of whose causes he championed in Upper Egypt. In the region around Panopolis, he was an implacable foe of heresy and paganism, opposing the enemies of his faith with both words and deeds and the self-consciousness of a prophet. His influence was acknowledged even by high-ranking officials of the civil government, including governors, dukes, and counts who paid him formal visits and listened to him preach.

The archbishop Cyril held Shenoute in high respect and tried to persuade him to become a bishop. Shenoute refused, but later when Cyril asked him to join his cause against Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus in 431, Shenoute undertook the long journey with eagerness. The journey to Ephesus was a major event in Shenoute's life. The theological cause at stake aroused his considerable passion, and Cyril's summons occasioned Shenoute's only clearly recorded trip out of Upper Egypt." His written statements about the council and its concerns provide most of the few firmly datable points of reference in his writings.

*(From: Stephen Emmel, Shenoute's Literary Corpus Vol.1)*



A group of girls from St Anthony's Church spending time at the Monastery



## St Shenouda Feast Celebrations

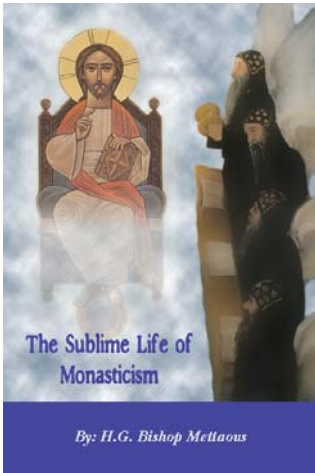
The celebration of St. Shenouda's Feast , will be on Saturday (16/7/2011) & Sunday (17/7/2011) instead of Thursday 14/7/2011 (*The Actual feast day*) So we can give better opportunity for many to attend.

Saturday 16/7/2011		Feast of St. Shenouda.
9:00 am	12:00 pm	The Holy Liturgy. ( Giving of Presents).
12:00pm	1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	2:00 pm	Procession around the Monastery
5:00 pm	6:30 pm	Vesper Prayers.
11:00pm	3:00 am (Sun)	Vigils, Hymns, Midnight Praises.
Sunday 17/7/2011		Feast of St. Shenouda cont.
3:00 am	6:00 am	The first Holy Liturgy.
9:30am	12:00pm	The second Holy Liturgy. ( Giving of Presents).
12:00pm	1:00 pm	Lunch
5:00 pm	5:30 pm	Sunset prayers

MONASTERY PUBLICATION

## The Sublime Life of Monasticism

By: H.G. Bishop Mettaous



The funeral prayer is prayed on the monk during his ordination so as to raise him from The earthly life to a heavenly life. For this reason many people left the world and their family and lived in the deserts and caves longing for this life, the life of Christian perfection.

Today many books are published about the lives of these monks which drew many youth to the monastic life, yet one question is repeatedly asked "what are the signs of the Monastic calling?"

In this book there are many spiritual experiences of a monk who tasted the sweetness of this life in the wilderness of scetis and i hope that through this book you will find the answer to this question.