

2026-07-31: Delight in the Lord (Priest Family Convention - HS & College Youth)

“Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)

In this Psalm, the word “Delight” is the Coptic word ⲁⲓⲁⲓ ⲙⲓⲁⲓ which means “Rejoice.”

The word "Delight" reminds us of a specific hymn: ⲁⲓⲁⲓ ⲙⲓⲁⲓ ⲙⲓⲁⲓ

“Delight is the Church. Delight is the people assembled in it. Delight is the image of this martyr, Saint (...) the martyr of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Here, the Coptic word ⲙⲓⲁⲓ ⲙⲓⲁⲓ means “Sweetness” and in Arabic حلاوة.

Delight in the Church

The Church, Herself, gives us many avenues for experiencing this sweetness and rejoicing. In the Sacraments, the Scripture, the Hymns of the Church, the Iconography of the Church, the Lives of the Saints, Church History, Patristics, Dogmatics, Apologetics, etc.

For everyone, there is something. I know some youth really love hymns and because of hymns they are attached to the Church. Some youth really love iconography and because of iconography, they are attached to the Church. Some youth fall in love with the Lives of the Saints, or with learning Church History, or with reading the Fathers, or with studying Apologetics... there is something for everyone in the Church to find sweetness and delight in the Lord.

Delight in the Hymns of the Church

St Augustine, a great saint in the Church had such an experience when he was visiting Milan and he heard them singing the hymns of the Church. Hearing the hymns gave him an emotional response, and he shed tears... but they also gave him a spiritual response. Truth was distilled into his heart – he learned something from the hymns. A feeling of piety welled up from it – he was driven to humility and repentance.

How many tears did I shed, as I was deeply stirred by the voices of Your Church sweetly swelling in the singing of Your hymns and canticles! Those voices flowed into my ears, and truth was distilled into my heart, and a feeling of piety welled up from it. The tears poured forth, and I was happy with them.

St Augustine - Confessions Book 9 Chapter 6

- Learn the hymns of the Church
- Learn their meanings
- Learn how to chant them
- Learn and Pray with the Praises - Canticles and Theotokia

Delight in the Saints of the Church

“Delight is the Church. Delight is the people assembled in it. Delight is the image of this martyr, Saint (...) the martyr of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Delight is your holy name, O chosen one of Christ, the strong and courageous and blessed one, O Saint (...).”

The stories of the saints and martyrs of the Church give us a model, give us hope, and give us an intercessor.

Today is the Feast of St Marina

- St Marina was born to pagan parents, who entrusted her to a Christian nanny.
- “She narrated to her the biographies of the martyrs and what they receive from happiness in the eternal life. Marina longed to be martyred in the name of the Lord Christ.”
- The governor saw her, admired her, and desired to marry her. But when finding out she was a Christian, he told her to worship the idols. She refused. So he tortured her:
 - Iron combs
 - Lime and Vinegar on the wounds
 - Imprisonment
 - Hinbazeen to squeeze her
 - Cauldron full of molten lead
 - The angel of the Lord consistently healed her wounds
- “Many believed because of her and received crowns of martyrdom.”
- Then she was beheaded and received the crown of martyrdom

The stories of the martyrs BEFORE St Marina were the reason she desired to live a life of Christ. She delighted in the lives of the saints and martyrs.

Now, when we read her story, we can delight in the Lord who NEVER forgot her and would send His angel always to heal her. We can delight in her bravery and ability to stand up for her faith and not

deny her Christ. We can delight in the crown that she received.

Delight in Serving Others

Acts of Mercy

We also delight in serving others. When we go and visit the sick, sit with the elderly, serve the children of the Church, serve our community in nursing homes, homeless shelters, orphanages, etc. we see the Lord Jesus Christ, and we come back with that sweetness.

“for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” (Matthew 25:35-36)

St Pishoy is the perfect example of this. St Pishoy ministered to strangers - when a man came to his door, he sat him down and washed his feet and in this, he saw the Lord Jesus Christ. When an elderly monk was trying to climb the mountain, he carried him on his back, ministering to him - and in this, he saw the Lord Jesus Christ. And all of the other monks are even jealous of the sweetness that he experienced.

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)

St Paul says - you have free will! You have freedom! But don't use your freedom as an opportunity to serve yourself, but serve others. Sometimes we think that when I do “whatever I want” or even to satisfy my own desires, then that is sweetness, rejoicing, delight... no. The real sweetness and delight is using my freedom to serve others.

E.g. I may have money - and I can use this money to buy myself exquisite meals, hundreds of dollars at a steakhouse, my favorite restaurants, big buffets, etc. and there are people in my community that can't find more than one small meal per day. Although I am free and it is my money to use however I want, let me use my freedom to serve others.

Delight in my Family

Here I am mentioning this point SECOND on purpose, although it actually comes FIRST.

I cannot serve my community or serve outside unless I first serve in my own home and my own family.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

The disciples were commanded to serve in Jerusalem FIRST - the inner circle, the family. Then in Judea and Samaria - the church and community. Then in the ends of the earth.

And when I serve my family faithfully, I will taste the sweetness of the Lord. Delight in your family! God chose our family for us. It is important for me to serve my family - to help around the house, to offer my talents to my parents and my siblings, to be obedient to my parents. Any “One Another” commandment - love one another, pray for one another, bear with one another, be kind to one another. All of these apply to my family FIRST, before to others.

And here we can take a special note to talk about being in the family of a priest. The Lord chose for you these parents, and chose for you to be the son or daughter of the priest... and this is for your salvation! This is a great blessing that you have:

- Your dad is the one whose hands hold the Body and Blood of Christ. And while his hand is on the Body of Christ on a daily basis, he is praying for you by name.
- Your dad has experience with the issues of many people your age before you and he can give you wise advice based on all of this experience
- Your home is a place where sermons are listened to and prepared, where the Scripture is constantly open
- Your house is where Abouna takes quiet time, and reads the Scripture and spiritual books
- You have access to Abouna at the times when no one else in the congregation does! He dedicates specific time for you!
- You can support your parents and this will serve the congregation and will be accounted to you!

Delight in your family! Faithfully obey and submit to your parents! Support them in their ministry!

Delight in My Spiritual Life

Delight in the Scripture

“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; **But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.** He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.” (Psalm 1:3)

The law of the Lord *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord *is* sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the Lord *are* right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord *is* pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the Lord *is* clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord *are* true *and* righteous altogether. More to be desired *are they* than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; **Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.** Moreover by them Your servant is warned, *And* in keeping them *there is* great reward.” (Psalm 19:7-11)

“Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.” (Jeremiah 15:16)

- Spend time with the Scripture
- Meditate on the Scripture
 - It's better to read one chapter with understanding than 20 chapters without
- Instead of setting for yourself a chapter goal, set a time goal. And minimize the chapters you read in that time.
- Read interpretation for verses you don't know
- Ask the six questions:
 - Is there a commandment? - Something I should start doing
 - Is there repentance? - Something I should stop doing
 - Is there a promise? - Something the Lord told me I will get
 - Is there a benefit? - Something I have already from the Lord
 - What does this passage tell me about God? - His attributes, His characteristics, His mercy, etc.
 - What character can I relate to?
- Write a contemplation
- Memorize a Verse

Delight in the Psalms

Acts 16 - after Paul and Silas were jailed in Philippi: “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” When the jailer woke up he despaired, and drew his sword to kill himself. But St Paul called him and said “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16)

“be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:18-20)

In both of these verses, the Psalms and singing “make melody in my heart to the Lord” or “sing with grace in my heart to the Lord.”

Delight in the Psalms!

St Athanasius writes a letter called “The Letter to Marcellinus on the Psalms” where he goes through the psalms and categorizes them:

“The book of Psalms is like a garden containing things of all these kinds, and it sets them to music, but also exhibits things of its own that it gives in song along with them.” (Ch. 2)

- The Psalms can be an aid to me to examine myself

“And it seems to me that these words become like a mirror to the person singing them, so that he might perceive himself and the emotions of his soul, and thus affected, he might recite them.” (Ch. 12)

- The Psalms can give me words to express my own emotions and feelings
- The Psalms reassure me that someone else (e.g. King David) has felt what I feel or gone through what I’m going through

When I am sad, there are psalms of rejoicing. When I am thankful, there are psalms of giving thanks. When I am persecuted, there are psalms of comfort.

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