

2025-11-07: New Priest Reception - Spiritual Atmosphere

Greetings

I'm very thankful to the Lord for:

- Back home safely and in peace
- Abouna Ephraim and Abouna Reweis - their constant prayers and follow up and checking on me and of course continuing to take care of the congregation
- The congregation that was praying for me, asking about me, waiting for me, supporting my wife and my kids
- Lisa
- For the 40 Days in General and all my fathers the monks and my brothers the novices - they taught us much, served us and took care of us, and modeled the monastic life. It is so clear in the monastery that they are all children of HE Metropolitan Youssef, and that they have the same mind.

And that's what I wanted to talk with you about today - my experience in the 40 days.

Many of my fathers the monks at the end of my trip would ask me "tell me something you learned in the monastery" or "tell me five things you learned in the monastery" or "tell me how you benefitted from the monastery."

And I have many answers - I learned a lot and benefitted greatly, but one answer really stood out for me.

The Spiritual Atmosphere (El Gaw el Ro7ee)

In the 40 Days, I was engulfed in the Spiritual Atmosphere. I felt that my mind was completely clear. And I had no idea what was going on outside the gate of the monastery - is there still a war happening in the world? What did President Trump do, or didn't do? Is there a new Android phone or iPhone that came out? I had no idea. Someone told me that a big portion of the internet went down for a whole day because of Amazon's Web Services... I didn't notice. It was amazing. And my mind was clear. I could think clearly. When I read a book, I didn't have to read the same sentence four times to understand it, or to hear it. My mind was clear.

And I completely attribute this to the Spiritual Atmosphere. El Gaw el Ro7ee.

But of course, those 40 days are over now. And for most, if not all, of you, you will NOT get 40 days in the monastery. So how can I replicate for myself these 40 days? Or how can we try and bring our life closer to life in the monastery? I reflected on this for a while and that's what I want to share with you today, God willing.

A Holy Place

- In the Monastery
 - Churches
 - Surrounded by God's creation, undisturbed
 - The trees, the lake, the sunset, etc. everything
 - "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork." (Psalm 19:1)
 - The creation gives you a chance to meditate
 - Yesterday, walking out of St John Kame and it's a narrow sidewalk with thorns on the right and left. If you go left or right, you will get poked. To be safe you have to walk straight on the narrow path. And you can meditate and see it as an analogy of our life.
 - The animals
 - Cats & Dogs
 - Birds
 - Deer
 - What is it that makes this a holy place?
 - The answer is prayer.
 - Every day at every hour of the day, there are prayers being offered. The Lord is being called upon. And He is there.
 - Landscaping
- In the World
 - What kind of places do I go to? Are they places where God is? Or am I hanging out at restaurants where I know the Lord is not welcome.
 - How about my home? Is my home a house of prayer? Are prayers offered in my home morning and evening?
 - How about my car? How about my workplace or my classroom?
 - Let me make my home and my car and my workplace and my classroom a holy place by offering up prayers as is in the monastery.

Holy People

- In the Monastery
 - Priests, Monks, Novices
 - What makes these people holy or spiritual? We are all sinners, and they sin too - so what's the difference?
 - They are concerned with spiritual matters. Their mind is on God.
 - Greetings
 - Peace and Grace
 - Aghapy

- Pray for me
- I'm in need (ana me7tag)
- In the World
 - Who are my friends that I surround myself with?
 - What do I talk about with my friends? Gossip?
 - What language am I using? What language am I hearing? When I scroll through IG Reels or YT Shorts, what language am I okay with? How far does it need to go? How desensitized am I to the language?

Spiritual Activities

- In the Monastery
 - Pray without ceasing - how the brothers and monks pray while doing anything
 - Taking a walk
 - Reading
- In the World
 - Sinless Leisure Time
 - Even the non-leisure time can be spent in prayer

Spiritual Routine

- In the Monastery
 - 3:30am - Wake up
 - 4am - Midnight Praises
 - 6am - Liturgy
 - 8am - Personal Time
 - 1pm - Lunch
 - 2pm - Lesson
 - 5pm - Vespers
 - 7pm - Dinner
- In the World
 - Don't have to have every minute of my day planned out. Actually, it's better NOT to. But to have general buckets of time and goals for those buckets of time.
 - But need to be organized with my time
 - Routine is a GOOD thing!!

Conclusion - Intentionality

- Let me be intentional about the places I go, the things I watch or listen to, the activities that I do. Let me dedicate them to the Lord