2026-09-18: HS Girls Q&A

Witnessing to the World

> Jesus knew the world was difficult when he sent us as “sheep among wolves.” Knowing the world is a difficult place that needs to know the love of Christ He sent us. If, after the resurrection of Christ, the disciples had stayed in the upper room with their fellow Christians, all of us would not be Christian today, and the church as we know it wouldn’t exist.
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> If St. Mark hadn’t preached to the pagan Egyptians, the beautiful Coptic Orthodox Church would not exist today.
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> How can we constantly be told to avoid building deep relationships with people outside of the Church, such as friends at school? How can we witness to Christ unless we put ourselves out there without fear or prejudice?
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> Christ and the disciples went to places and talked to people that were considered shameful, but they were full of unconditional love, and that is what changed hearts in the end. Our Lord ordered us to witness to Him, it wasn’t a suggestion or a recommendation, He said, ”’Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’” (Mark 16:15) How can we give our testimony and witness to Christ if the only people we talk to beyond surface level are already in the Church?

1. Witness to the world by your actions first
   - "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

2. You will be asked about the reason for the hope that is in you. And when you are, you should be ready
   - "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;" (1 Peter 3:15)

3. The Ministry of Evangelism and the Ministry of the Word is NOT a calling for everyone, and NOT a calling for any time.
   - When Christ said "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15) this is called the Great Commission in Galilee after the Resurrection. We also read it in Matthew 28: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20)

- In both of these, the Lord is speaking to the Eleven. St Mary is not in this gathering. Mary Magdalene is not there. Even the rest of the followers of Jesus (in Acts 1, it says there are 120) are not there. Clearly, the Lord is speaking here to the disciples, and specifically in their ministry as priests.
- I need to distinguish the "preaching of the gospel" that is my role and the "preaching of the gospel" that is the Ministry of the Word.
  - All Christians are called the preach the gospel by their actions, within their family, within their friend circle or their community.
  - Not all Christians are called to the Ministry of the Word. Even in Acts 6 when they were choosing the deacons, they were doing it so that they could give themselves more to the ministry of the word. Because that was the part THEY were responsible for.
- Fr Mark story
  - Fr Mark was in college with his friend (who is now Fr Daniel) and they were walking in the parking garage and a guy pulled up and said "why don't you guys come drinking with me" and they were like "uhhh no thanks" but they realized that he was inebriated.
  - So they told him "we don't think you should drive. It's dangerous, you could endanger someone else. How about if you leave your car here and take the bus home." He said "no, no, no I'm good, I'm good. I'll be fine."
  - They said "okay, leave the car here and we'll take you home so you don't drive." He said "no, no no, I'm good, I'll be fine. I need my car with me."
  - So they said "okay look I'll drive your car, and I'll take you home and my friend will pick me up with his car." So he agreed.
  - So they start driving and they ask him where he lives and he says he lives at the church, he serves the church and lives in it. So Abouna looks around and sees the bottles everywhere in his car, so he's not sure what to believe. But they get to the church and the guy takes out his key and opens the church. So they're confused.
  - Then they go in with him and he says "today, I could have died. I could have killed someone. I could have been discovered and cause a scandal in the church... but God sent me two angels to carry me and drop me in the church and give me a second chance."

4. The Church and servants and parents are trying to PROTECT you
   - "Evil company corrupts good habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33)
   - It never says "good company fixes evil habits" in the Scripture
   - "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)
   - If you compare a friend in the Church who knows the commandment of God, who is struggling in the life of repentance, who has the same schedule as you! (Saturday Vespers and Sunday Liturgy) - this is a friend who (although she is NOT perfect) - can walk with you on the path of righteousness!

- But take a friend who is indifferent... there's nothing wrong with cursing, there's nothing wrong with having a boyfriend
- But take a friend who has opposite values... cursing lets out your emotions and it's healthy, having a boyfriend is good practice, etc.
- Will this person guide you on the path to salvation? Will she walk alongside you on your struggle?
- You might say "Well I'm eventually going to HAVE to mingle with people in the world..." yes... key word is **eventually**!

5. You are still a foundation
    - Imagine a building is being constructed. And they pour the foundation and a couple of walls and then say "okay let's test it with a hurricane."
    - https://youtube.com/shorts/Sp_Du_VlArM?si=FY1dywc3Adt4MMZU
        - Look at the houses all around it, none of them are affected by this storm... but this one crumbles. Why?
        - It's not ready yet!
    - Let's put up the foundation, let's put up the walls, let's attach the roof, let's put the hurricane ties, let's put the hurricane proof windows, let's close the doors, stucco the exterior, waterproof the roof, and THEN invite the hurricane.
    - Even the disciples themselves were instructed to STAY in Jerusalem and in the Upper Room until they were made ready by the Holy Spirit.
    - St Mark did not immediately go to Egypt, but first he traveled with St Paul, then he turned back, then he traveled with St Barnabas, THEN he was ready and called to go to Egypt.
    - It's not a matter of "DO NOT." It's a matter of "NOT NOW."

Menstruation and the Mysteries

> How does the church determine which laws of the Old Testament are still relevant and which are not applicable anymore? For example, how come the laws or instruction about discharge are still used even though they are not mentioned by Christ or any of the Apostles while other laws are “discontinued” such as circumcision? Christ’s death for us on the cross started a new covenant, but how come some Old Testament laws remained and others were left behind?

> Why are women not allowed to be anointed during their period, for example in the sacrament of the Unction of the Sick? We are told that because it is an “invocation of the Holy Spirit” we should not partake in it while on our period, but if we are baptized and confirmed don’t we have the Holy Spirit always? The Holy Spirit does not go away from us when we are on our period, so why should we not be able to be anointed once again in the presence of the Holy Spirit? 1

> Corinthians 3:16: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

> “Why are women not allowed to take communion during their period? I understand the Old Testament talks about discharge but period discharge is something natural and unlike any other type of discharge. Most healthy women are on their period for around 65 days per year, it is not a discharge that happens in special cases. I don’t think that periods fit into the general category of “discharges.” For example, whatever applies to someone with occasional headaches does not apply to someone with chronic migraines. If we are not “clean” during this time then how can any woman be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit if she will be “unclean” once a month for a majority of her life? 1 Corinthians 3:16: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" How can we, having the Holy Spirit in us, not be “good enough” to receive any of the sacraments?

> “Why can’t you take communion when you are on your period? I don’t understand how eating the Body and drinking the Blood is affected

https://notes.morcous.com/books/leviticus/page/leviticus-15-the-law-concerning-bodily-discharges

IVF

> “Does our church accept IVF? If not why?

Yes, IVF is acceptable. But it should be noted that ANY fertilized egg is considered to be a baby. So when a couple undergoes IVF, they should expect that they will implant ALL recovered Embryos.

The difficulty now is that doctors will recover ALL eggs that they can to maximize success. Another difficulty is that every time the embryos are frozen and thawed and frozen and thawed, the viability of the embryo decreases. Things like genetic testing which help give an estimate of viability, needs to be done by thawing and freezing an egg.

The Church allows IVF, but also prays that the technology improves.

Overcoming Sin

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> Why do I keep falling into the same sin even though I don’t want to or try to avoid it?

1. Confession
   - Go and sit with Abouna and confess out loud your sin

2. Root Cause of sin
   - If the sin is cursing - what kind of media do I consume? What kind of movies do I watch? Who do I surround myself with and how do they speak?
   - If the sin is cheating - what access am I giving myself? Put up guardrails (like blocking AI tools for example)
   - If the sin is habitual - why do I have free time to do it? How can I stay more busy?
3. Ask the Lord for His strength and to walk with you
   - In the morning, "Please, Lord help me to overcome"
   - In the evening, "I thank You, O Lord because today I did not fall" or "I ask for Your mercy, Lord, and Your strength tomorrow."

4. Address the Root Cause
   - Learn some strategies

> How do I pray when I find myself not wanting to or procrastinating?

"But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:27)

In the beginning it will be difficult but once you develop a habit, it will be easier and you will enjoy it

This is also something to be brought up in confession, to find the root cause, to ask God to give you strength, and to address with some strategies.

- Accountability partner/notebook
- Alarms
- Speaking out loud
- etc.

Civic Duty

> is it wrong for us as christian’s to be judges in a court room or to serve jury duty because we are literally judging someone’s actions and in the most extreme cases it be the reason someone is sentenced the death penalty

It is acceptable, but we need to understand the legal system and our role in it. What does it mean "reasonable doubt?"

The legal system hopes to discover the truth. Actually, by serving on a jury, I can be the one who saves an innocent man from death penalty - if he is innocent.

Even in the extreme case of the death penalty, the main part of the death penalty is not even the execution, but it is the "waiting time" before execution. That's why no one receives the death penalty and is killed immediately... he is given a chance to repent and to regret his actions.

Moving for College

> Why is it considered such a bad thing at our church to move away for college? Even if I am going to a place with a church around me and the place i am going is better for my future

1. This is only true for undergraduate studies. When it comes to graduate school, it's different.

2. You say "better for my future" but what future are you talking about? Only your educational or career future? What about your spiritual future? What about your future in the life of service? What about your future with your family?
   - Even with the educational or career future, it is not true. Who has been to a doctor? Who knows where that doctor got their undergraduate degree?

3. Living at home is better for:
   1. Moral Upbringing - your parents raised you, your church raised you, your father of confession is here. Stay close.

   2. Ecclesiastical Upbringing - your parents who wake you up for liturgy, who encourage you to go to Youth Meeting, who meet with you at Vespers. Your Church that is waiting for you in the Youth Meeting

   3. Financially - it is a wiser decision. Between the costs of room and board, food and grocery, etc. it is better not to go into debt in undergraduate studies.

   4. Life of Service - the Church invested many years in preparing you for the life of service... these undergrad years are the best years for the life of service. Serve the generation after you. Serve the church that served you.

Sunday School Lessons

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> A lot of the lessons we have do not address stuff we are experiencing currently they are just general topics with the same repeated information from every year, is there any way we can have block days where we tell a servant a topic we would like to learn about? Even if it is an anonymous link like this one

God willing, we will have more days like this with Abounas. Every couple of months. You are always welcome to tell the servants or Abounas about topics you want to discuss - they may be good for Sunday School, they may be better suited for a Spiritual Day, or they may be better suited for 1:1 discussion.

Priests/Rites

> Why can priests cut their hair but not their beard

The beard is the sign of consecration. Continuity with the apostolic and patristic tradition. Sign of renouncing vanity - constant exercise of humility and self-denial. Visibly distinguishes the priest. Reflects respect for the body as God created it.

The Long hair is specifically mentioned by God in the Nazirite Vow (taken by Samson, St John the Baptist, and St Paul for a time). This is the equivalent to monasticism in our modern day and monks live by this rule.

> What is Abouna reading when using the censer while the other priest reads the Gospel during the liturgical services?

1. The Mystery of the Gospel (Make us worthy to hear the Holy Gospel + collection of all the litanies - sick, travelers, seasons, salvation of men, safety of animals, salvation of the world, leader, captives, departed, oblations, those under hardship, catechumens)
2. The Litanies Inaudibly

3. Silent Gospel Conclusion "You are He to whom praise is due from everyone with one voice, along with glory, honor, majesty, and worship, with Your good Father and the Holy Spirit, the Life Giver, who is of one essence with You, now and at all times and unto the age of all ages. Amen."

> Do we consider saints recognized in the Catholic church as saints for us too?

Most saints that are recognized by the Catholic Church before the year 451 AD is recognized by us as well. Many saints that are recognized after 451 AD are specific to the Churches they are

recognized in.

The Catholic Church recognizes the Egyptian Martyrs of Libya and has their relics and has (or was going to have) an altar in their name in the Vatican.

> Why have there been minor changes in the words in the doxologies?
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> for example Saint Rebekah's doxology recently, and "of which Noah was a type —> according to the type of Noah", etc.
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> Is this a coptic reader thing?

Doxologies are originally composed in Coptic. The initial translations for them were done in Arabic in Egypt. When the Church started in the USA, primitive translations were done from the Arabic to the English. Most people did not know Coptic. Now, as more people are learning Coptic (as a grammar and a language), they are noticing some differences in the prayers from the established translations.

Any ticket that is submitted to Coptic Reader is reviewed by the team:

- A Coptic Scholar makes sure that the translation is sound with Coptic and offers a recommendation
- The Coptic Hymns In English team makes sure the translation works musically, and they prepare to record the hymn (if applicable)
- If it's a drastic change, or a change to a commonly chanted hymn, then the final approval is from HE Metropolitan Youssef

"According to the type of Noah" was a change recommended by HEMY, himself. □□□□ □□□□□□ □`□□□ - □□□□ is always translated "according"

St Rebekah Doxology

- The changes were recommended by someone not from our church
- They are actually good changes!
- "They rejected their offers" makes more sense than "offerings" - "offerings" implies like sacrifices, but this is St Rebekah and her children rejecting the offers of the governor to deny their faith.
- "On the lap of their mother then took her head" - this phrase is awkward in general in English, but I believe this phrasing is easier to understand than "and then her head"

Christian Life

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> What is the line for how “Christian” we should be? For example we always hear stories about the saints and how they were so humble and accepted insults and accusations with defending themselves, even the Lord did this as well, yet are we supposed to do this as well? Even in large-scale situations? Another example would even be the monks and nuns today, we see how they live, and we praise them for living this way, are we then supposed to strive to be like them? If we are why don’t we? What is that line of “no, they are special cases and we are only supposed to act the regular way.” What is that regular way? Where is that line drawn of how we should be? We say to always try to take the saints and these saintly monastics as examples for us yet we’ve also heard that we can’t “put our expectations that high.” Does that mean there’s a certain line? For example the shows and movies we should and shouldn’t be watching. We know having a boyfriend/girlfriend is not right, yet almost every film has some sort of romantic reference, even if it’s not necessarily “impure” just the general concept of having a romantic interest. But this is wrong just as watching something impure or lustful, or things including LGBT, does that mean we should cut off secular shows completely, or at something least something we should strive for? Social media too. We’ve heard “good job” as a response to not having social media yet those same people have it. If we say it’s not good to have social media why do we have it? Even though social media can be beneficial and not used for bad things. But so then where is that line of “this is okay, this is not” if there even is a line, for how could there be a line? Are there certain things that are just “out of our league (spiritual level)” almost, as regular people?

Lesson

Love

> “What are the different kinds of love? What does it mean to love strangers and acquaintances versus to love your friends versus to love your spouse versus to love your siblings and parents? What does that look like?

Love is caring for the salvation of others.

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

When we think of strangers and acquaintances, then friends, then siblings parents and spouse, we are thinking of concentric circles. Each circle contains everything in the level above it.

- Strangers and Acquaintences

    - Not to judge them
    - Treat them with kindness
    - Bear their unkindness
    - Pray for their salvation
    - Be ready to answer them when they ask for a reason for the hope that is in you
    - Do not see yourself as better than them

- Friends
    - Same as above
    - Responsibility to rebuke them if they do something wrong
    - Carry their burdens with them (struggles)
    - Let them carry your burdens with you

- Siblings, Parents, Spouse
    - Same as above
    - The web of "sharing" is a little bit higher
    - Bear their faults
- Children
    - Same as above
    - Responsibility to discipline with love
    - Responsibility to say no

Validity of the Resurrection

> Some people say that Our Lord Jesus Christ could not have risen from the dead, since the Romans typically didn’t allow people to be taken down after crucifixion and left them to rot. They also state that the disciples must have had hallucinations of Our Lord Jesus Christ. How do we respond to this?

1. It was uncommon for Jews to be crucified in the first place. Although the execution was carried out by Romans, it was not for a Roman crime, but rather a crime judged by the Jews. The Romans had no reason to leave the body of Christ to rot.

2. The body of Christ was specifically requested by Joseph and Nicodemus (wealthy and influential)

3. Hallucinations
    1. See Chapter 13 of "The Case for Christ" - Lee Strobel
    2. "Hallucinations are individual occurrences. By their very nature only one person can see a given hallucination at a time. They certainly aren't something which can be seen by a group of people. Neither is it possible that one person could somehow induce an hallucination in somebody else. Since an hallucination exists only in this subjective, personal sense, it is obvious that others cannot witness it." 13 in chapter 13

3. "The disciples were fearful, doubtful, and in despair after the crucifixion, whereas people who hallucinate need a fertile mind of expectancy or anticipation. Peter was hardheaded. James was a skeptic. Not good candidates for hallucinations
4. Hallucinations are comparably rare. Do you know anyone who has hallucinated? They are usually caused by drugs or bodily deprivation. So what are the statisticial chances that over the course of many weeks, people from all sorts of backgrounds, all kinds of temperaments, in various places, all experienced hallucinations? And basically the same hallucination?
5. Christ walked with them, touched them, ate with them
6. What about the empty tomb?

Marriage

> “ Is it a sin to reject the idea of marriage.

Yes. Because Marriage is an institution by God from the very beginning...

- "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)
- "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled" (Hebrews 13:4)
- "It is not good for man to be alone."

To "reject the idea of marriage" is against the teaching of the Scripture and the design of the Lord for humanity.

What about the desire to not get married?

1. What will you do instead?
   - Consecrated Life? Sure
   - Monastic Life? Sure
2. What intention?
   - Selfishness
     - "I want to travel"
     - "It's too much work"
     - "Children are a burden"
     - "I want to focus on my career"

   - Don't want to have children?
     - "So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:27-28)
     - "Behold, children are the inheritance of the Lord, the reward of the fruit of the womb." (Genesis 127:3)
   - Negative view of marriage or of men or of husbands or of fathers

    - Needs to be addressed
    - A good husband will be

3. Don't close doors on yourself for no reason.
    - When I put it in my mind that I don't want to get married, then when the opportunity arises, and the Lord sends me the right person, it might even be my pride that rejects God's will in my life
    - To be a good wife gives satisfaction in my life
    - To be a good mother gives satisfaction in my life
    - In my later life (retirement from career, less mobility, widow, etc.) who will take care of me? Who will I talk to? Who will bring me joy? My children and grandchildren.

Conspiracy Theories

> Where does our church stand on controversial topics against the government for example the moon landing?

The Church in general doesn't engage with things that are not pertinent to our salvation

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