

THE CHURCH THAT IS IN YOUR HOUSE



ITS APPEARANCE

His Grace Bishop Paula

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1

ITS APPEARANCE

2

ITS ESSENCE

1 - Unity

2 - Love

3 - PRAYERS

4 - *THE SPIRITUAL
PRAYERS*

Marital Love

Paternal Love

Brotherhood Love

Filial Love

1 ITS APPEARANCE



**In the holy Bible,
we find the Apostle St Paul writing,
“Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers
in
Christ Jesus, who have risked their own necks
for my life, to whom not only I give thanks,
but also all the churches of the Gentiles.
Likewise greet the church that is in their house”
(Romans 16:3-5)**

And

**“Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and
Nymphas
and the church that is in his house”
(Colossians 4:15).**

*So What
Is The
Meaning OF*

**THE CHURCH THAT IS IN
THEIR HOUSE?**

During the Apostolic era, the 'church' consisted of the houses of the believers, where they would congregate to pray. We learn that the first church took place in the house of Mary, the mother of St Mark: "...he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:12). We also read that the believers congregated in the houses of Priscilla and Aquila, the house of Nymphas, and the house of Lydia the seller of purple (Acts 16).

If you cannot apply this verse literally, what are you doing in order that this verse be made effective in your life ?

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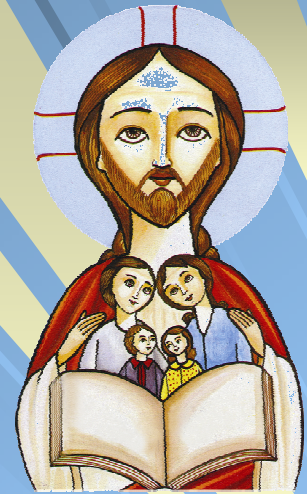
Once we enter a house, we are able to discern the personalities of those who dwell within, by the pictures and posters that are hung upon the walls. We are at once made aware of what their religion is (if any), and their hobbies and interests, as well as any personality, such as a sportsman or musician, they feel associated with, by what they display upon the walls in their house.

**Where is the church that is
in your house?**

**The Coptic Church gives much
care to icons and pictures, as a
source of spiritual benefit in the
house, rather than for decoration.**

1

The icons in the church symbolise the heavenly church present with us here on earth



When we see the icons of the **holy saints and angels**, our minds are uplifted and inspired to contemplate and learn from their virtuous lives. When we pray, we ask for their help and intercession.

2

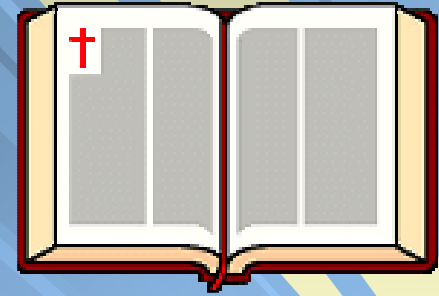
The icons are a reflection of the (message of the) holy Bible



Both literate and illiterate are able to comprehend its meaning, through the language of colours (and expression), rather than the language of literacy.

3

Icons, if portrayed accurately, are a representation of history.



In particular, Coptic art, for its simplicity and deep, symbolic significance, reveal the spiritual and historical aspects of whom it is portraying.



Holy pictures in our homes present the most effective visual aids, for through them, unity is created between the members of the family, and the saints portrayed in the pictures.

Is there a church in your house, which is adorned with holy pictures ? Do these pictures express your Christianity, as well as your Orthodoxy? For example, do you have pictures of God the Father, whom no one has seen? Do you have pictures of the Last Supper in which is portrayed a table filled with many types of food, and Judas being present, or is the picture simply portrayed with the single bread and chalice, and without Judas being present (for his great sin was the barrier which kept him from receiving Communion)? Do you display pictures of St. Mary sitting at the right hand of Jesus Christ, as mentioned in the Psalm: “At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir” (Psalm 45:9)?

Let us be very careful in choosing the pictures in which we display in our houses.

My dear brethren

let us now take a walk through a Christian Orthodox house, in order to see what pictures lie within

Upon entering the house, we find the picture of **the Archangel Michael**, in order that he may guard the house and prevent any evil from entering, for it is a church and a place for the Lord's comfort. Hence, the Archangel Michael, who is the chief of the heavenly hosts, **guards the door** from which the Lord enters to live with the family who dwell in the house.



In the entrance or foyer of the house :

We may find a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ stretching out His arms, as if calling out to us: “Come to Me all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Hence the Lord is inviting all who enter the house, to cast their burdens and temptations and problems upon Him, and to embrace Him and so find peace.





We might also find a picture of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, in which was bestowed great blessing upon the land of Egypt. In having such a picture at the entrance, I can imagine Christ entering into this house, with His mother and Joseph the Carpenter, and bestowing upon it and those who dwell within, the same blessing He gave to Egypt: "Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, 'Blessed is Egypt My people'" (Isaiah 19:25). Let us enter our houses full of peace, awaiting the blessing of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.



In the Living Room

We may find a picture of our Lord preaching to the multitudes on the mount. When we see this picture, we will remember Christ's words, and so control ourselves so that our lives reflect His teachings. The family may even use this room as the place where they meet, as a family, or with guests, to talk about the Lord's commandments.





In the kitchen

We may find a picture of the Lord feeding the multitudes with five loaves and two fish. When seeing this picture, we remember the great blessing of the Lord that does not weary with increase. Whilst preparing the meal, let the parent remember that Jesus first spoke to the multitudes about the Kingdom of Heaven, before feeding them, hence, He provided them with spiritual nourishment before giving them bodily nourishment.

You must ask yourself, what spiritual nourishment have I given my children? Or do you only give concern to their bodily nourishment? Do you spend time reading the Bible and learning from it in order that you may prepare a daily spiritual meal for your children, in the same way that you spend time preparing bodily food?

In addition, we might find in the kitchen also a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ in the house of Mary and Martha. When seeing this picture we remember Jesus' words to Martha: **“Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her”** (Luke 10:41). In like manner, the parent must realise that before doing anything else, they must first deepen their relationship with God, and sit at His feet, just as Mary did. Therefore it is important for the parent to be the combination of both Mary and Martha.

In the Dining Room



Instead of decorating the dining room with portraits of fruits or flowers, let your Christian Dining Room be adorned with the picture of The Last Supper, for in it is portrayed our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Bread of life: “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me” (John 6:57). When looking at this picture, we may be reminded that we are neglecting Holy Communion, and when noticing that Judas is not present in the Last Supper, we are reminded of our sins, and how they prevent us from receiving the sacraments, and having a share in the inheritance with the saints. While we eat, we see this picture and so our hearts partake of the food of the spirit.

In the Couple's Bedroom

We may find a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ blessing the wedding in Cana of Galilee. Likewise, the Lord will bless this room so that the couple feel His presence, and Him blessing their thoughts, and binding them in love





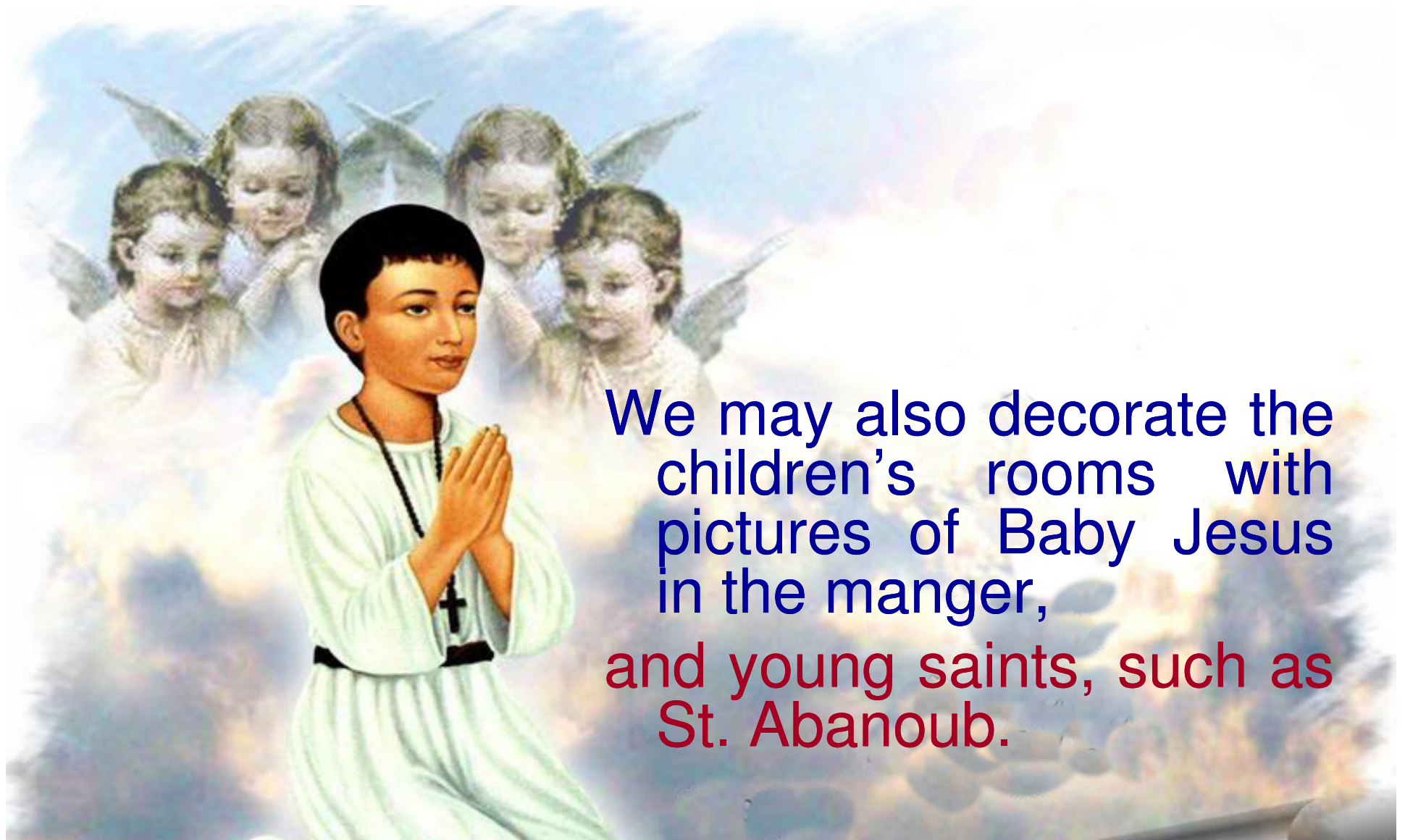
In the Children's Rooms

Usually, we would find a child's room containing pictures of Mickey Mouse type characters, animals or birds.



But within a Christian house, we would find a picture of the Guardian Angel above the child's bed, and on another wall, a picture of Jesus Christ lovingly embracing the children surrounding Him, saying:

**“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven”
(Matthew 19:14).**



We may also decorate the children's rooms with pictures of Baby Jesus in the manger, and young saints, such as St. Abanoub.

In this way, our children will always feel their close association with Jesus Christ, and His saints, from their childhood years.

My dear brethren

not only is a Christian house to be decorated with holy pictures, but also crosses that may come in various designs. For those who are nature lovers, they may even choose natural pictures which may inspire them to spiritual contemplation





“The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon” (Psalm 92:12).

In this way, they may relate, for example, a picture of the palm tree (which is visible) to its supporting roots (which are not visible). In like manner, God, (who is not visible), supports, feeds, and strengthens humankind (who are visible), making them greater than all Creation. In addition, the inside of the palm tree is white, which symbolises the purity of the righteous person’s heart, **“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”** (Romans 12:21)

And in the same way that the palm tree releases its fruits when it is shaken, or rocks thrown at it, so too does the righteous person release prayers for those who deal cruelly with them, in the same way that St. Stephen prayed for those stoning him: **“And he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin’”** (Acts 7:60).

There might even be a picture of the stars and moon, for example, and so allowing the opportunity for meditating on the words of David the Psalmist: **“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork”** (Psalm 19:1).



My dear brethren

My dear brethren,
when a person
visits you, do they
find a church
within your
house?

Are there spiritual
pictures from
which the family
members may
benefit?

