

# 2022-01-12 - Subdeacons & Saturday Altar

## Spiritual

### Acts 6-7: Contemplations on the Life of St Stephen

- First of seven men to be chosen and ordained as a deacon
- Ordained because the apostles needed to give their time to Spiritual work
- The spiritual work is for apostles, bishops, priests. So the deacons are serving in the administrative work
- The role of deacons in the church is big. It's not just serving in the altar:
  - Making orban
  - Cleaning the church and its facilities
  - Preventing the heretics from entering the church
  - Serving on the board
  - etc.
- The apostles gave qualifications and criteria for those servants (Acts 6:3)
  - Good Reputation (inside and outside the church)
  - Full of the Holy Spirit (having the fruits of the spirit)
  - Full of Wisdom
- The Apostles, Bishops and Priests have a different role (Acts 6:4)
  - Ministry of the Word (i.e. sermons and preaching)
  - Prayers
- If the deacons didn't do their part, it ends up falling on the Apostles... And this happens sometimes now with Abouna
- The Result of the Deacons' Service (Acts 6:7)
  - The service multiplying
  - The word of God spreading
- When the service is organized and everyone is doing their part, the Church of God will grow and the Word of God will spread

### Lessons from the Life of St Stephen

#### Brave Enough to Say Yes to the Call of Service

- "Speak O Lord, your servant hears"

- Christianity was not easy or popular in those days. The environment of service was martyrdom. It was a great risk
  - St Stephen and the deacons took a risk and showed great courage.
  - He didn't shy away when the times got rough, but received martyrdom
- We don't have risk of martyrdom, but we have many inconveniences and difficulties in our life and service. Schedule, tired, family, work, etc.

## Filled with Faith and the Holy Spirit

- How could the apostles measure faith or holy spirit? It was manifested in their life and actions
- St Luke mentions St Stephen full of the Holy Spirit four times in these two chapters
- Conduct in our lives, in our business dealings, in daily transactions, etc.

## Handled Opposition and False Accusations with Grace

- He did not defend himself but simply shared his faith with grace and love, seeking their salvation
- Be strong in the faith and stand up for the Truth

## Good Knowledge of the Word of God

- No one would dare have this conversation unless he knew the Word of God
  - Acts 7 is a good A-Z summary of the Old Testament
  - "Be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15)
- This is shown in how you read the word of God. Someone who reads well can deliver a message to the hearer.
  - Sometimes the reader can delivery a clearer message than the sermon.
  - Every deacon should be **ready enough** to give a sermon in a moment's notice

## Pray for those who Persecute You

- Many will stand against us and oppose us - Good intentions or bad, with knowledge or without
- How do I handle this?
  - Do I carry a grudge?
  - Do I speak evil of them?
  - Between deacons should be care and love, but we all still can grow
- Pray for those who treat us badly

## Strive to be of Good Reputation

- When you have the urge to respond in a secular way, remember who you are and Who you are serving

# Administrative

- Deacons' Meetings
  - These are important and require commitment
  - If you have a valid reason to miss it (i.e. sick, traveling, work, school), please communicate it with Abouna
  - The service of the Reader and Subdeacon is **as important** as Sunday School - both are services for TEACHING
- You should wear your Tonia even if it's not your day for service
  - "There's already a lot of people" is a reason sometimes, but if that's the case why would the Lord make thousands of thousands of angels?
  - To stand and serve as a deacon is the service you are ordained for, and you will greatly benefit from it
- Scheduling
  - Sending availability in a timely manner on the group every two months
  - Sending availability on groups for weekday liturgies (see Jonah in February)
  - Sending a message when you will be unable to make it to your service
- Attending the Tasbeha and standing with the deacons or in the front rows - especially during Kiahk
- Father of Confession and regular confession
- Proper Vestments (including Tonia, Badrashel, Taleeg) and respect for them
- Arriving 15min before the Liturgy Starts, regardless of your position

## Announcement - New Adult Deacons Class

- Every Wednesday at 8:00-9:30pm
- **Arabic and English**
- Rituals, Dogma, Hymns, and the Deacons Service in General
- Purpose:
  - To remember things that were forgotten from lack of use
  - To be in harmony with the rituals and practices in our church
  - To serve the adult deacons
- Jan Guirguis will be responsible for and serving that class
- **Required attendance for Saturday Altar Servants**
- **Required attendance for Friday Altar Servants who are not already attending the Advanced Hymns**
- *It's okay if you don't know, but what is more important is a willingness to learn*
- **Starting Feb 2, 2022**