2023 Winter Spiritual Day - Thanksgiving

- Outline

Outline

Theme: For Everything, Concerning Everything, and In Everything

Objectives:

- The Life of Thanksgiving

Key Verse:

- "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Resources

- The Life of Thanksgiving: HH Pope Shenouda III
  - https://www.dropbox.com/s/e4u98i1ilt1tmpc/The%20Life%20of%20Thanksgiving%20-%20HH%20Pope%20Shenouda%20III.pdf?dl=0

- Contemplations on the Prayer of Thanksgiving: HH Pope Shenouda III
  - https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/9enq37x6bbjkl4ncdnnp4/Contemplation-on-the-Prayer-of-Thanksgiving-and-Psalm-50.pdf?rlkey=arqacd6qwcdkd57ybdougzhb2&dl=0

- Christ in the Eucharist: Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty
  - https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/pp9uii15dup27m4lcsn7v/The-Eucharist-Fr-Alexander-Schmemann.pdf?rlkey=cu05e0tcu9vqkdkirvnxr5eu5&dl=0
  - There is a chapter called "The Mystery of Thanksgiving - 'Eucharist'"

- Sacrifice of Thanksgiving: Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty
  - https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/g02kcfy5kf61foprqu33q/08_Sacrifice_of_Thanksgiving.pdf?rlkey=2oykbctn4z8k7gw7e62xwayae&dl=0
  - It's a single page pamphlet where Fr Tadros tells a story of the power of thanksgiving from the 3rd Century BC

- The Spirituality of the Praise: HG Bishop Mettaous

    - https://www.dropbox.com/s/jsarurx90oid61o/The%20Spirituality%20of%20The%20Praise%20-%20HG%20Bishop%20Mettaous.pdf?dl=0
    - Specifically, the chapter about the Second Canticle since that is a Psalm of Thanksgiving

- The Eucharist: Fr Alexander Schmemmann
    - https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/pp9uii15dup27m4lcsn7v/The-Eucharist-Fr-Alexander-Schmemann.pdf?rlkey=cu05e0tcu9vqkdkirvnxr5eu5&dl=0
    - There is a chapter called "The Sacrament of Thanksgiving"

Stations:

Introduction - Levels of Thanksgiving

- The Theme: **For everything, concerning everything, and in everything**
- Introduction to Giving Thanks
- What are the levels of thanksgiving? (HH Pope Shenouda Book)
    - Giving Thanks for Miracles, Gifts, Great Pleasures and Plentiful Things
    - Giving Thanks for the Little things that we take for granted
    - Giving Thanks for the Hidden
    - Giving Thanks over Tribulation
- The hand motion for giving thanks (kissing the front of the hand and then the back of the hand) is an indication of our giving thanks for those things that we have (front of the hand) and those things that we don't have (back of the hand). Those things that we see (front of the hand) and those things that we don't see (back of the hand).
- In the first half of the day, we will focus on what to give thanks for:
    - Our first station will focus on the front of the hand - the things that we see whether big or small
    - Our second station will focus on the back of the hand - the things that we do not see or do not have
- In the second half of the day, we will look at two major prayers that are both called "Thanksgiving" so we can understand the role of Thanksgiving in the Church Prayers and Liturgy
    - Our third station will focus on the Thanksgiving Prayer
    - Our fourth station will focus on the Eucharist

Resources

- The Life of Thanksgiving: HH Pope Shenouda III

Station 1 - Level 1, 2: What We See/Have

- Giving Thanks for the Big Things
    - These are the big miracles, gifts, talents, things that make us happy, etc.

- Giving Thanks for the Small Things
  - These are the things we take for granted

Resources

- The Life of Thanksgiving: HH Pope Shenouda III

Station 2 - Level 3, 4: What We Don't See/Have

- Giving Thanks for the Hidden
  - I thank God that I was not hit by a bus this morning
  - His Protection and His Support
- Giving Thanks in Tribulation
  - What does it mean to give thanks for sickness, or for persecution?
  - Is there a logic behind that?
  - What will I benefit from that?

Resources

- The Life of Thanksgiving: HH Pope Shenouda III

Station 3 - Prayer of Thanksgiving

- Usage of this prayer:
  - This prayer starts all prayers whether it is a wedding or a funeral, a Liturgy or a home prayer, a communal prayer or a personal prayer
- Components of this prayer:
  - Thanksgiving at all levels (covered us, helped us, guarded us, accepted us to Himself, spared us, supported us, and brought us to this hour)
    - Some of these are big things that we can see - "Covered us"- "Helped us"
    - Some of these we take for granted - "Brought us to this hour"
    - Some of these are hidden - "Guarded us" - "Spared us"
    - Some of these are in tribulation - "Supported us"
  - Requests to God (We ask and entreat You to grant us to complete this holy day and all the days of our life in all peace with Your fear. Take away all evil from us and provide for us those things which are good and profitable)
  - Glorifying God (Beneficent and merciful One; through whom the glory, the honor, the dominion, and the worship are due unto You)
- Giving Thanks to God is not just starting a sentence with "Thank you God for..." - but comes with all of the different kinds of prayer
  - For example, when I make my requests known to God and ask Him for something, it is a form of giving thanks because I am recognizing that He is the One who provides for me, and because I am placing my faith in Him to provide it for me.
  - For example, when I glorify God and offer words of praise and worship, again, I am recognizing that He is Good and the Source of all Good which is a form of giving thanks
- How can I use this prayer

Resources

- Contemplations on the Prayer of Thanksgiving: HH Pope Shenouda

Station 4 - The Eucharist

- The word "Eucharist" which has been used since the 1st Century (see Didache) to refer to the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ, and to the Divine Liturgy, comes from the Greek εὐχαριστία meaning "Thanksgiving"
- Why are the Liturgy and the Mysteries called "Thanksgiving?" What components of Thanksgiving are inherent to the Divine Liturgy and the Mystery of the Eucharist?
  - The Eucharist is an anamnesis (remembrance) and partaking in the Economy of Salvation that the Lord performed for us
  - This is why we say "Therefore, as we also commemorate His holy Passion, His Resurrection from the dead, His Ascension into the heavens, and His Sitting at Your right hand, O Father, and His Second Coming from the heavens, awesome and full of glory, we offer unto You Your gifts from what is Yours, for everything, concerning everything, and in everything."
    - AS WE COMMEMORATE xyz, WE OFFER YOU THESE GIFTS for everything, concerning everything, and in everything
    - Here we see again these words "for everything, concerning everything, and in everything" - these are words of Thanksgiving
- You can go back to the words of the Divine Liturgy according to St Gregory (starting from □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□)
  - The Creation of the World and of Mankind - "You have brought me into existence when I was not. You have raised heaven as a roof for me, and established the earth for me to walk upon. For my sake, You have bound the sea. For my sake, You have manifested the nature of animals. You have subjected all things under my feet. You have not left me in need of any of the works of Your honor. You are He who formed me, and laid Your hand upon me, and inscribed in me the image of Your authority. You have placed in me the gift of speech, and opened for me Paradise to enjoy, and have given to me the learning of Your knowledge. You have manifested to me the tree of life, and made known to me the sting of death."
  - The Fall of Man - "Of one plant have You forbidden me to eat, that of which You have said to me 'of it only do not eat.' But according to my will, I did eat. I put Your law behind me by my own counsel, and became slothful toward Your commandments. I plucked for myself the sentence of death."
  - The Old Testament - "You O my Master, have turned for me the punishment into salvation. As a good shepherd, You have sought after that which had gone astray. As a true father, You have travailed with me, I who had fallen. You have bound me with all the remedies that lead to life. You are He who sent to me the prophets for my sake, I the sick. You have given me the Law as a help. You are He who ministered salvation to me when I disobeyed Your Law. As true light, You have shone upon the lost and the ignorant."
  - The Incarnation and Ministry of Christ - "O You, THE BEING throughout all time, have come to us on earth. You have come into the womb of the Virgin. You, the Infinite,

being God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Yourself and took the form of a servant, and blessed my nature in Yourself, and fulfilled Your Law on my behalf. You have shown me the rising up from my fall. You have given release to those who were bound in Hades. You have lifted the curse of the Law. You have abolished sin in the flesh. You have shown me the power of Your authority. You have given sight to the blind. You have raised the dead from the tombs. You have established nature by the word. You have manifested to me the economy of Your tender mercy."

- The Passion - "You have borne the oppression of the wicked. You have given Your back to the scourge. Your cheeks You have left open to those who smite. For my sake, O my Master, You have not hidden Your face from the shame of spitting."
- The Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension - "You have come to the slaughter as a sheep, even to the Cross. You have manifested the greatness of Your care for me. You have slain my sin in Your tomb. You have brought my first fruit up to heaven."
- The Second Coming - "You have shown me the manifestation of Your Coming wherein You shall come to judge the living and the dead, and give each one according to his deeds."

Resources

- Christ in the Eucharist: Fr Tadros Yacoub Malaty
- The Eucharist: Fr Alexander Schmemmann