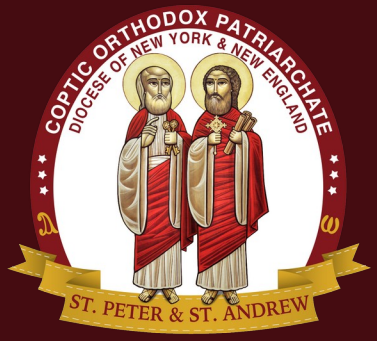


# Filled to Overflow

A word to our servants

John 21:15–17 · Servants' Meeting · November 1, 2026

St. Peter & St. Andrew Coptic Orthodox Church

*Prepared and presented by Hegumen Fr. Andrew Awad*

# The question Christ asks

**“Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?”**

*“Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”*

**“Feed My sheep.”**

John 21:17 (NKJV)

# Commitment is the fruit, not the root

A servant who is not committed is almost never a lazy person. He is usually an empty person, and you cannot command an empty well to give water.

### What we see

Late, missing, preparing in the car, leaving right after class

### What is really happening

A heart that has been giving from an empty cup

### What Christ asks

Not “Can I count on you?” but “Do you love Me?”

# Two kinds of servants

## A teacher of religion

- Passes on knowledge
- Repeats a word as he heard it
- Prepares a lesson to cover material

## A servant of the spirit

- Builds the soul
- Gives birth to the word from within
- Overflows like a spring from the earth

*Fr. Matta El-Meskeen, Al-Khidma (Service)*

# Tonight: three movements

1

## Why we run dry

The servant who takes only in order to give

2

## What is in our hands

Guardians of souls, not teachers of lessons

3

## Stay under the yoke

The cost of service, and its joy

1

# Why We Run Dry

The servant who takes only in order to give

# Pipes or wells?

*“The successful servant does not feed on God for the sake of others. He receives and is filled for himself, and then out of his fullness he gives. The servant who takes only in order to give is always empty and exhausted.”*

**Fr. Matta El-Meskeen, Al-Khidma**

**Ask yourself**

When did I last open the Bible or pray for my own soul, and not to prepare a lesson?

# Service is an overflow

*“Spiritual service is not a teaching profession but a spiritual overflow, and overflow needs continual filling.”*

**Fr. Matta El-Meskeen, Al-Khidma**

### A cup under a fountain

You never push water out of it. It spills over by itself.

### Stand close to the Fountain

So close that you cannot help spilling onto the children.

### Not squeezing yourself dry

Service should not cost you your last drop every Sunday.

# Why the yoke feels heavy

## Negligence

We stopped praying, confessing and receiving, and now we pull the plow on our own strength.

## Pride

We need the class to go well for our sake, we want thanks, we compare ourselves with others.

## The cure

Double your prayer.

Turn to humility at once.

*“For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”* **Matthew 11:30**

If His yoke is easy and ours feels crushing, we are carrying something He never gave us.

# A servant’s rule for his own soul

### Pray the Agpeya
At least on waking & before sleep

### Keep the Church’s fasts
Fasting gives strength to prayer and discipline to the heart

### Pray the Liturgy, do not only attend it
Stand with your children and let them see you pray

> *“The teacher seems to build his students, but in truth it is God who is building him.”*
>
> **Fr. Matta El-Meskeen, Al-Khidma**

*This rule is for the servant, not for the lesson.*

2

# Guardians of Souls

Not teachers of lessons

# A guardian before a teacher

*“The priest or the servant is a guardian of sheep before he is a preacher or a teacher. From his hand the lost one will be required.”*

**Fr. Matta El-Meskeen, Al-Khidma**

*“The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling… sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees.”*

**John 10:11–12 (NKJV)**

## The wolves today

- The phone
- Social Media
- Loneliness and pressure
- Voices saying faith is for old people

# What children keep for life

## A lesson about the Liturgy

- A diagram, a qurbana and two candles
- Costs an hour of preparation
- Gives us a youth who knows the Church but is not touched by her

## Leading them inside the Liturgy

- Standing beside them in church
- Your own reverence and prayer
- Gives us a youth who lives in the Church

*“What stays in the depths of a child into adulthood is what he takes in with his heart, not his mind.”* **Fr. Matta El-Meskeen**

# Your faithfulness is the lesson

When you show up every week, on time and prayed up, and you know every child by name, you teach them that God…

**does not leave**

**keeps His word**

**knows your name**

### No favorites

Leaning toward the strong, the good-looking or the easy child is “a serious sign that the servant is sick.”

### Never give up on anyone

Not the quiet one, not the eye-roller, not the one who stopped coming. Those are the ones He sends you after.

3

# Stay Under the Yoke

Better to fall under the yoke than to throw it off

# Fall under it, not away from it

*“How splendid is the soldier who falls on the field, his wounds bleeding, and his hand still gripping his weapon!”*

**Fr. Matta El-Meskeen, Al-Khidma**

*“God’s mercy toward you while you lie fallen under His yoke cannot be compared with His mercy toward you while you run away from it.”*

**Fr. Matta El-Meskeen, Al-Khidma**

**A tired servant who keeps showing up is more precious to Him than a gifted servant who walks away.**

# Weakness is not a disqualification

## Look at St. Peter

The Lord did not choose a man who had never failed. He chose the one who denied Him three times and gave him the sheep.

*“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”*

**2 Corinthians 12:9**

*“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”*

**2 Corinthians 4:7**

# The joy of the Bridegroom's friend

*"The friend of the bridegroom… rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice… He must increase, but I must decrease."*

**John 3:29–30**

*"There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons."*

**Luke 15:7**

## Your power is your joy

Can a family walk a bride to her groom while weeping? Then a servant cannot explain salvation with a frown.

They will forget your outline. They will never forget that you were happy to be with them.

# Three things for this week

## Fill before you pour

One fixed daily prayer time for your own soul, not for the lesson: the Agpeya with the Gospel open.

## Call every child by name

Contact every child or youth in your class before next Sunday, and pray for each by name. Start with the one who stopped coming.

## Come early and stand with them

Arrive before class and the Liturgy, and pray beside your children.

# Do you love Him?

Then come and be filled, until your life is filled to overflow and it spills onto every child He has placed in your hands.

**“Follow Me.” John 21:19**

# Final Blessing

May the Lord bless us and transform us — that our homes may stand on the Rock, our hands may serve in the harvest, and our hearts may long for Heaven. Through the intercession of our Lady, the Theotokos Saint Mary, and the prayers of Saint Peter and Saint Andrew. Glory be to God forever. Amen.

*Prepared and presented by Hegumen Fr. Andrew Awad*