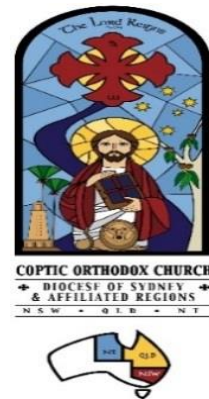


The Coptic Orthodox Church- See of Saint Mark- Diocese of Sydney, and its Affiliated Regions. Speech about: "Brief about the History of the Coptic Orthodox church, and its role in the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in the year 325 AD", according to official invitation letter from the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), with the theme of: "Echoes of Nicaea: Enduring Faith and Embracing Unity – Asian Ecumenical Responses, 24-29 October 2024, at WP Hotel, Chow Kit, KL, Malaysia

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The Coptic Orthodox Church- See of Saint Mark- Diocese of Sydney, and its Affiliated Regions. "Brief on the History of the Coptic Orthodox Church, and its role in the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in the year 325 AD", An Official Invitation to myself received from the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), to attend the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), with the theme of: "Echoes of Nicaea: Enduring Faith and Embracing Unity – Asian Ecumenical Responses, 24-29 October 2024, at WP Hotel, Chow Kit, KL, Malaysia

1= Greetings:

Dear members of the CATS and members of CCA,

- ✚ I greet you all in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ✚ I would like to express my deepest appreciation and thanks for inviting me to this significant gathering, it is a great blessing to me and to my Church. I wish all the success for our gathering.
- ✚ I bring to you the love and prayers of our Patriarch His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Pope and Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark 118, also I bring to you the love and prayers of the Heads of all Churches in Australia, asking for your prayers.

2= Brief history about the Coptic Orthodox Church since its Establishment and the Coptic Orthodox Church now:

2.1= Who established the Coptic Orthodox Church?

Saint Mark the Apostle was the one who established the Coptic Orthodox Church, Pope Shenouda III wrote: "No home had more fame than St. Mark's home. It was there where our Lord Jesus Christ observed the Passover with his pure disciples. There He washed their feet and gave them His Covenant, His Holy Body and Blood. That was where the disciples

I start preparing, designing, and printing this speech on Thursday 27th June 2024, also, I worked in this document in Friday 5th July 2024, and in Monday 8th July 2024, and in Wednesday 23rd July, I continue working in this document on Monday 15th July 2024, I continue working in this speech on Tuesday 16th July 2024, also, I worked in this document on Monday 9th September 2024 from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm, I also worked in this document on Friday 13th September 2024 from 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm, while I was in my office in Saint Anthony and Saint Paul Coptic Orthodox Church, Guildford, Sydney, NSW, Australia.
Page 1 of 13

hid before the resurrection. In it, the Holy Spirit filled the disciples, and they spoke in tongues. This great home was the first Christian Church, and its most upper room was the famous Zion chamber¹". Saint Mark preached Christianity in Alexandria and he ordained a bishop, priests and deacons as R. Morgan mentioned: "The pagans then began to conspire against him Saint Mark perceived the danger that was brewing, and he rapidly appointed Anianos as bishop, and appointed three priests and seven deacons from the faithful"²

2.2= Where was the Coptic Orthodox Church established?

The Coptic Orthodox Church was established first in Alexandria, Birger A. Pearson wrote: "While I think it is possible that Christian (and Jewish) Gnostics could be found in first-century Alexandria, it is more likely, *prima facie*, to suppose that other, more dominant, varieties of Christianity existed there, more reflective of the Jerusalem origins of the Christian mission and of the dominant varieties of Judaism in Alexandria at that time"³. In addition in the first-century a Jewish priest, scholar, and historian Flavius Josephus, mentioned that in the first Century, third of the Alexandrian population were Jews

2.3= What is the date of the establishment of Christianity in Egypt?

2.3.1: The history of Christianity in Egypt begins in the first century with the visit of the Holy Family to Egypt⁴ escaping from King Herod, the Coptic Orthodox church is celebrating this occasion on the 1st of June every year.

2.3.2: Christianity was introduced into Egypt on small scale⁵ before Saint Mark, it was mentioned in the Book of Acts 2:10 that there were some Jews of Egypt who were present at the Pentecost. Also, there is another evidence in the Book of Acts 18: 24-28, the Alexandrian Jew Apollos who became Christian and preached in Ephesus.

2.4= How was the Coptic Orthodox Church established in Egypt?

Saint Mark the Apostle converted Anianus⁶ who was considered the first Converted person from the Pagans' worship to the worship of Christ and became Christian, later, Saint Mark ordained him as the second Pope of Alexandria, from then the preaching of Christianity continued in Egypt till now.

¹ H H Pope Shenouda III, "The Beholder of God Mark the Evangelist Saint and Martyr By the Beholder of God," *History - Religions*, 1995, 12.

² Robert Morgan, *History of the Coptic Orthodox People and the Church of Egypt*, History of the Coptic Orthodox People and the Church of Egypt, First, vol. First Edit (Victoria, BC: Robert Morgan, 2016), 10.

³ Birger A. Pearson, "Christians and Jews in First-Century Alexandria" 79, no. 1 (1986): 211.

⁴ Otto F. A. Meinardus, "Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity," *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity* 148 (2012): Introduction, <https://doi.org/10.5743/cairo/9789774247576.001.0001>.

⁵ Tadros Malaty, *Introduction to the The Coptic Orthodox Church*, 1993, 17.

⁶ Otto F. A. Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1999), 29.

2.5= What are the beliefs of the Coptic Orthodox Church?

The Faith of our Coptic Orthodox Church is : Apostolic, Trinitarian Mystical Sacramental and Ascetic .

2.6= What are the remarkable characteristics of the Coptic Orthodox Church?

2.6.1: The Coptic Orthodox Church is an Apostolic Church, as the founder of it was one of the Seventy Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, Saint Mark, also, Saint Mark is the one of the four Evangelists⁷, and Saint Mark is regarded by the Coptic Orthodox Church hierarchy as the first of our 118 unbroken Lineage

2.6.2: Some of the great Theologians⁸ were from the Coptic Orthodox Church, such as Clement of Alexandria , Origen, Athanasius, and Cyril, and this because of the amazing vision of Saint Mark who established the first ever Theological School in Alexandria.

2.6.3: The Coptic Orthodox Church is the church of Martyrs, Levi Joshua Klempner, wrote: " *The Coptic Church has long anchored itself to the rock of martyrdom. Its Coptic calendar constantly reminds the believers of the past examples set by martyrs. The first year of the Coptic calendar is pegged to the epoch of the enthronement of Emperor Diocletian in 284 AD70, who is known to have headed the last major wave of Roman anti-Christian persecution and who sent many martyrs to their deaths*"⁹.

2.6.4: The Coptic Orthodox Church is the founder of the Monasticism in the whole world, Saint Athanasius wrote: " *Saint Anthony, the ideal of monastic life, is presented as someone who literally fulfills what the gospel says. Anthony first hears when the apostles leave all to follow Our Lord and how the early Christians sold their goods and placed them at the apostles' feet. He does the same. In his early ascetic life, we have constant references to the gospel and scriptures and the first section concludes with him imitating Elijah and holding the prophet as an example for all hermits*"¹⁰.

2.7= What is the administrative system of the Coptic Orthodox Church?

2.7.1: The highest authority of the Coptic Orthodox Church is the Holy Synod headed by the Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark. There are ten

⁷ Malaty, *Intoduction to the The Coptic Orthodox Church*, 18.

⁸ Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years Coptic Christ.*, 1999, Introduction.

⁹ Levi Joshua Klempner, "Blessed Is Egypt My People RECONTEXTUALIZING COPTIC IDENTITY OUTSIDE OF EGYPT ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT" (Vrije Universiteit, 2016), 157.

¹⁰ Ateneo Pontificio and Regina Apostolorum, "Saint Athanasius ' Life of Anthony," no. November (2017): 5–6.

subcommittees from the Holy Synod that meets twice a year and study the assigned matters and raise their recommendations to the Holy Synod for discussion, and then approval, pending or rejection.

2.7.2: There is Metropolitan or Bishop in each Diocese and he is the head of the Diocese, and he is reporting to the Pope.

2.7.3: There is a Hegumen or priest in each church, and he is the head of the church managing the spiritual, administrative, and finance affairs of the church and reporting to the Bishop of the Diocese. There is a committee for each church consisting of men, women and youth managing the affairs of the church with the priest.

2.7.4: There is a Constitution for the Holy Synod, and also, there is a constitution, bylaws, and policies for each diocese abroad, it must match with the Law of the Land in which the Diocese exist.

2.8= The Coptic Orthodox Church now:

According to the latest information I got from Fr. Rafael Tharwat¹¹ dated 29th June 2024,

2.8.1: The number of the members of the Holy Synod to the date of this document is **133** Metropolitan, and Bishops, it is important to mention that the Chairperson of the Holy Synod is the Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark.

2.8.2: The total number of the Coptic Orthodox Dioceses are **114** Dioceses, **75** Dioceses are inside Egypt, and **39** Dioceses abroad.

2.8.3: The total number of the Coptic Orthodox Monasteries for monks are **46** Monasteries, **26** Monasteries are ancient, **7** modern Monasteries, and **13** Monasteries abroad.

2.8.4: The total number of the Coptic Orthodox Monasteries for nuns are **20** Monasteries, **7** Monasteries are ancient, **7** Monasteries are modern, and **6** Monasteries abroad.

2.8.5: There is One High Coptic Institute in Cairo and many Theological Colleges inside Egypt and abroad.

¹¹ Member of the technical committee working under the General Secretary of the Holy Synod, His Eminence Metropolitan Daniel of Madie Diocese in Egypt.

3= The First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in the year 325 AD in points:

3.1= What were the reasons of the assembly of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea?

3.1.1: There were many reasons, but the main reason was the heresy of Arius (Born c.250, or 260¹² Libya – died 336, Constantinople {now Istanbul, Turkey} i.e. his age was 86 or 76 years old)¹³, a Christian Priest in Alexandria, who believed that: "The Son of God (Christ) is not equal to the Father, he went further and said that the Son of God, is not co-eternal or co- existing with the Father¹⁴. Arius also, claimed that Christ was created rather than being Divine¹⁵.

3.1.2: Arius also denied that Christ was:" of one substance with the Father"¹⁶

3.1.3: The reason behind the heresy of Arius was his previous studies under Lucian of Antioch, who introduced him to suspicious teachings of a Gnostic nature¹⁷.

Arius based his teachings on a number of Biblical texts including:" The Father is greater than I {**John 14: 28**}, and, He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of creation {**Col. 1:1**}.

3.1.4: Arius believed that God created the Son, because God wanted to create the world, and as the Nature of God can't create the material world directly, so, God, created the Logos to create the world, and according to Arius the Son is a mediator being between God and the world¹⁸.

Based on Arius's teachings, a great division arose which shocked the whole church and the Roman Empire¹⁹.

3.2= Where was the First Ecumenical Council convened? And why?

¹² James M. Drayton, "History or Hagiography?," 2003, 84, papers3://publication/uuid/74A93EE5-6DD2-45EA-85C2-6F761AF7CF69%5Cnpapers3://publication/uuid/C8799470-AEC0-462D-9B0A-F55D2D478780.

¹³ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arius>

¹⁴ Morgan, *Hist. Coptic Orthodox People Church Egypt*, First Edit:64.

¹⁵ Nicene and Post- Nicene Fathers, volume 4, second series, P. 70.

¹⁶ Robert K. Ritner, "Egypt under Roman Rule: The Legacy of Ancient Egypt," in *Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume 1: Islamic Egypt 640-1517*, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 27, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cho19780521471374.002>.

¹⁷ Drayton, "History or Hagiography?," 84.

¹⁸ The Divine Doctrine of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Morries Tawadros, Professor, first volume, first edition 2005, P. 536.

¹⁹ Arianism. Prof. B. K. Kristo, Tessaalon University, Greece, The three Articles against Arianism, by Saint Athanasius, translated by Saint Anthony Association, 2025, P. 34.

3.2.1: The First Ecumenical Council –FEC – was convened in Nicaea, Bithynia on 14th June 325, as decided by Constantine I the Great , the Roman Emperor (27 February 272 – 22nd May 337AD at his 65 years Old. He was polytheism till the age of 40 years and then converted to Christianity in the year 312²⁰. He spent the last 25 years of his age as Christian.

3.3= Who was the chairperson of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea?

3.3.1: The FEC was opened by Emperor Constantine I himself²¹, Bishop Hosios of Corduba in Spain presided the FEC²².

3.4= How many churches representatives attended the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea?

3.4.1: Constantine invited all 1800 bishops of the Christendom: 1000 Bishops from the East and 800 Bishops from the West, but only between 250 to 350 attended, and there were two opinions on the exact number of the attendance: Eusebius of Caesarea believed they were 250, Eustathius of Antioch mentioned they were 270, however according to Athanasius the assistant of Pope Alexander I number (the 19th Pope) the attending bishops were 318 Bishops²³.

3.5= What was the duration of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea?

3.5.1: The FEC was officially opened on the 20th of May and ended on 25th August in the year 325 A.D. in Nicaea.

4= The role of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea:

4. 1= Before the assembly of the First Ecumenical Council:

4.1.1 = The heresy of Arius started in Alexandria, Arius started to gather on his side Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons²⁴. This was mentioned in the letter of Pope Alexandar the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch 19 in his letter to the fellow ministers of the universe church in every place.

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_the_Great

²¹ Morgan, *Hist. Coptic Orthodox People Church Egypt*, First Edit:69.

²² <https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2018/08/saint-hosios-bishop-of-corduba-359.html>

²³

https://www.google.com/search?q=How+many+churches+attended+the+First+Ecumenical+Council+in+Nicaea+%3F&rlz=1C1GCEA_enAU1040AU1040&oq=How+many+churches+attended+the+First+Ecumenical+Council+in+Nicaea%3F&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIB

²⁴ Nicene and Post- Nicene Fathers, volume 4, second series, P. 69.

4.1.2 = Pope Alexander of Alexandria gathered a Council in Alexandria in the year 319 A.D. and examined the teachings of Arius and warned him and his followers of their wrong teachings about the Divinity of Christ, but Arius did not listen, the Pope Alexander then gathered another Council from the Bishops of Egypt and Libya²⁵ in Alexandria in the year 321 A.D. and anathematized Arius and those on his side from the Church ²⁶.

4.1.3 = In the year 322 A.D. the followers of Arius gathered a council in Bethenia and then another council in Palestine in the year 323 A.D. and rejected the anathematization of Pope Alexander against Arius²⁷.

4.1.4 = Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia supported the teachings of Arius²⁸ and he got a very close relationship with the Constancia the sister of the Emperor Constantine, and through her, the Emperor was convinced that the teachings of Arius were right. Then the Emperor sent in year 324 his close friend Hosius, the Bishop of Cartage to Alexandria to try to mediate between Arius and Pope Alexander. However, the mediation failed because of the violence of the followers of Arius. Hosius the Bishop was convinced of the decisions of Pope Alexander and told the Emperor the wish of Pope Alexander to call for an Ecumenical Council under the supervision of the Emperor to offer an apologetic response against Arius. Hosius. the bishop was supporting the request of Pope Alexander, and the Emperor agreed²⁹.

4.2= Some Challenges before the gathering of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea:

4.2.1= The administration of Council:

4.2.1.1= Who will be the Chairperson of the Council? According to what Saint Athanasius³⁰ mentioned, Bishop Hosius of Cartage was the one who Chaired the sessions of the FEC.

4.2.1.2 = The bishops objected to the attendance of Athanasius the secretary of Pope Alexander, as he was a deacon. So, to solve this issue Pope Alexander ordained Athanasius Priest³¹. Athanasius who became the 20th Patriarch of The Coptic Orthodox Church and wrote a very valuable Book against Arianism and said: " If The Logos did not exist eternally with the Father, then, the Holy Trinity will not be Eternal as well"³².

²⁵ Nicene and Post- Nicene Fathers, volume 4, second series, P. 70.

²⁶ The history of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Manasa Youhanna, Priest, 2013, P. 112.

²⁷ The history of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Manasa Youhanna, Priest, 2013, P. 114.

²⁸ Nicene and Post- Nicene Fathers, volume 4, second series, P. 70.

²⁹ The history of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Manasa Youhanna, Priest, 2023, P. 114,115.

³⁰ Features of the Coptic Orthodox Civilization, Meritorious, Bishop, First Edition, 2022, P.45, according to Alfoses El Manoon, History, P. 59.

³¹ Ibid, P.46.

³² The Three Articles against Arianism, Athanasius, translated by Saint Anthony Association, 2015, Church fathers' sayings 189, P. 66.

4.2.1.3 = Who signed the decisions of the FEC? At the beginning 300 agreed to sign and then another 18 Bishops were convinced, and 2 Bishops refused, so, the total number of bishops signatures were 318³³.

4.2.2= The threat of the spirit of divisions that Arius did before the gathering of the FEC:

4.2.2.1 = Arius started to publish many false letters to deceive the simple people with his teachings.

4.2.2.2= Eusebius Bishop of Nicomedia started to convince the Emperor about the big divisions between the Bishops concerning the teachings of Arius.

4.2.2.3 = Arius started to spread his teachings among the consecrated sisters in Egypt and he gathered around him 700 sisters³⁴.

4.2.2.4= The teachings of Arius also, reached the monks, the thing that made Saint Anthony the Great to warn his monks from following the teachings of Arius³⁵.

4.3 = How many members from the Coptic Orthodox Church attended the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea?

Pope Alexander the Pope and Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark number 19th, accompanied with 20 Coptic Orthodox Bishops³⁶, other opinion is saying that the number of the Bishops representing the Egyptian Church was 15 Bishops³⁷ and the deacon of the Pope, Athanasius attended the FEC. Athanasius was between 20 to 25 years old and it was said that he was the most strong personality³⁸ that attended the FEC.

4.4 = From which places in Egypt the members of the Coptic Orthodox Church attending the First Ecumenical in Nicaea?

Pope Alexander the 19th came from Alexandria, Bishop Bavnoty came from Luxor, - Upper Egypt- and Bishop Butanone came from Heraclea- This city was demolished³⁹ and now its place is in Tel El Sahreeg, Facos Center, Eastern Province in Egypt-.

³³ Ibid, P. 47.

³⁴ Looking, Mina Fouad, researcher, 2020, p. 200, according to the history of Theodore.

³⁵ Ibid, P. 223,225.

³⁶ It is significant to mention that one of those twenty Coptic Orthodox Bishops was Botamon the Bishop of Heraclea, who was killed later in the year 341 A.D. by the hands of the followers of Arius.

³⁷ John Binns, *Otto F. A. Meinardus. Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, article, *Studies in World Christianity*, vol. 23 (UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 9, <https://doi.org/10.3366/swc.2017.0197>.

³⁸ Hefele, the History of the councils, Part 1, P. 265

³⁹ https://www.facebook.com/story.php/?story_fbid=904209371737953&id=100064466961639

4.5 = What are the roles of the representatives of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea?

4.5.1: Pope Alexander the 19th and the twenty Coptic Orthodox Bishops and deacon Athanasius played a significant role in defending the sound faith even before the FEC. Pope Alexander together with 36 Bishops and 44 deacons including Athanasius, called a Synod for the church of Alexandria in the year 320 A.D, and the Synod unanimously agreed on the condemnation of Arius⁴⁰ and signed a document to this effect.

4.5.2: Because of the Solid, sound and strong faith of deacon Athanasius in addition to his past experience, the followers of Arius objected to the Emperor about Athanasius attending the FEC, the Emperor did not listen to them, because of what he saw and heard from the strong answers of Athanasius concerning the claims of Arius.

4.5.3: When Athanasius became the 20th Pope of Alexandria, the whole world was against him, and he said his famous statement: " I am against the world"⁴¹.

4.6= What was the official offices of the members of the Coptic Orthodox Church attending the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea?

4.6.1: Three were elected members of the FEC to write the Canons of the FEC, two of them were from the Coptic Orthodox Church: Pope Alexander the 19th, and his deacon Athanasius. It is significant to mention that the style of the writings of the Canons of the FEC was a similar style of the writings of Athanasius⁴².

4.6.2: The famous Athanasius of Alexandria helped formulating the original version of Nicene Creed⁴³ (325 C.E.).

5= What was the final outcomes of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea?

5.1: The teachings of Athanasius were upheld, declaring Christ to be consubstantial and co- eternal with God the Father⁴⁴ , and The Creed was promulgated by the Council⁴⁵ .

⁴⁰ Morgan, *Hist. Coptic Orthodox People Church Egypt*, First Edit:63.

⁴¹ Klempner, "Blessed Is Egypt My People RECONTEXTUALIZING COPTIC IDENTITY OUTSIDE OF EGYPT ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT," 49.

⁴² Hefele, the history of the Councils, Part 1, P. 286.

⁴³ Nelly van Doorn-Harder, "Copts in Context : Negotiating Identity, Tradition, and Modernity," 2017, 7.

⁴⁴ Binns, *Otto F. A. Meinardus. Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, 23:52.

⁴⁵ Binns, 23:46.

6= Echoes of Nicaea: Enduring Faith and Embracing Unity:

6.1= The enduring faith since Nicaea till now, and ways of economizing this faith for the generations to come.

6.1.1: As Darius the king made a decree that all people must fear before the God of Daniel, for He is a living God and steadfast forever as mentioned in ***Daniel 6:26***, So, as the teachings, the doctrine and commandments of our God as mentioned in ***Matthew 24: 35: " 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."***

6.1.2: Our Lord Jesus Christ gave the authority to His disciples and their descendants to bind the wrong teachings on earth as mentioned in ***Matthew 16:19: " whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."***. So, to endure the faith we received from our Fathers, we need to prepare the second line of good teachers and servants who will be capable to continue the journey of enduring the faith, as Saint Paul said in ***2 Tim. 2:2: " And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.***

6.1.3: As churches we need to abide in the faith that agreed upon in Nicaea by enduring anything rather than to put obstacles in the way of the Gospel of Christ, as mentioned in ***1 Cor. 9:12***. Doing this requires the churches to obey the truth of the sound faith as Saint Paul said in ***Gal. 5:7***.

6.1.4: Our running as churches for the truth, is for the salvation of the world's elected people as mentioned in ***2 Tim.2:10***.

6.1.5: As churches to keep the sound faith of Nicaea, we need to endure anything even the external persecution against us, as mentioned in ***1 Cor. 4:12***.

6.2= Ways of embracing Unity of Churches now as the Churches were in Nicaea:

6.2.1: The churches leaders' role locally:

6.2.1.1: Embracing the unity of the churches is the desire of the Lord Jesus Christ who said in *John 17:11: " 11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.* Also, The churches need to know that it is good and pleasant to God when the churches work towards the Unity, as it was mentioned in *Psa. 133: 1: " Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!*

6.2.1.2: The churches leaders need to consider the utmost cautiousness in choosing the Bishops generally, either the Diocesan Bishops or the General Bishops, and priests as well, the Bishop or the priest must have the sound doctrine and must be strong in faith to the degree of Martyrdom. Bishop Meletus of Lycopolis, now Assiut in upper Egypt, denied the sound faith in the time of persecution⁴⁶, then Arius followed him.

6.2.1.3: The Churches leaders must pay a very significant attention to have a very strong monasticism movement and educate the monks the sound doctrine. Saint Anthony the founder of the Monastic movement, went to Alexandria two times⁴⁷, to support the sound doctrine, and to support Pope Athanasius against Arius.

6.2.1.4: The Churches leaders must pay substantial efforts to have a very strong monasticism movement for Nuns, and also consecrated sisters, and educate them the sound doctrine. Arius convinced 700 virgins⁴⁸ and consecrated sisters to follow his wrong teachings.

6.2.2: The Churches leaders' role Ecumenically:

6.2.2.1: For the unity of the churches, it is very significant for the churches leaders to have a direct and continuous communication with each other. Pope Alexander of Alexandria number 19th, send a message to Pope Alexander of Constantinople about the heresy of Arius⁴⁹. As the Arius heresy started the division in the church. And the church must be united and live in peace, as saint Paul said in:

Eph. 4:3:"³ endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace".

6.2.2.2: The churches leaders must be united and not to allow the heretics to serve in their dioceses. Eusebius the Bishop of Nicomedia, Bishop Eusebius Bishop of Casarea, Ossias Bishop of Basidia, Bolus Bishop of Sour, and Gregory Bishop of Beirut, allowed Arius to open a religious organization⁵⁰ in their dioceses. Saint Peter said in **1 Peter 3:8:"⁸ Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another"**.

6.2.2.3: For the Unity of the churches, the Churches leaders need to meet in a regular basis, in a round table, to share the challenges facing the churches. The chairmanship can be rotated. Bishop Hosius of Cartage⁵¹ was the one who chaired the FEC, not the Bishop of Nicomedia nor the Bishop of Rome.

⁴⁶ The history of the Coptic Church, Manasa Youhanna, priest, 2013, P.107.

⁴⁷ Ibid, P. 80

⁴⁸ Coptic Civilization, Martyrous, Coptic Bishop, 2022, P. 54.

⁴⁹ The History of the Coptic Church, Manasa Youhanna, Priest, 2013, P. 112.

⁵⁰ Ibid, P. 113.

⁵¹ Coptic Civilization, Martyrous, Coptic Bishop, 2022, P. 46

6.2.2.4: It is significant to have regular meetings between the churches and their representatives, to have one mind in the topic that divides the churches, the Ecumenical Councils can help in this dimension as well it is worthy to note that the representatives of the churches must include the youth, there is small number of youth involvement in the Ecumenical Movement⁵² .

6.2.2.5: The world is now full of many Atheists, Agnostics and non-believers, it is the order of our Lord Jesus Christ to us to preach as united churches for the sheep from other fold and bring them to the bosom of Christ so that there will be one flock and One Shepherd, this what the Lord Jesus Christ mentioned in **John 10: 16:**”
16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

6.2.3: Churches leaders and the civil authorities:

6.2.3.1: For the Unity of the Churches, there must be a church well, supported by political influence, to solve any doctrinal dispute. Pope Alexander number 19th, of Alexandria, requested Emperor Constantine I, through Bishop Hosius of Cartage⁵³, to conduct the FEC in Nicaea to solve the heresy of Arius and other matters. It happened.

6.2.4: The Churches leaders and the Media:

6.2.4.1: It is very remarkable that the churches leaders must update the congregation continuously about the news of the churches. Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea claimed that only 250 Bishops⁵⁴ attended the FEC; to prove the indifference of the FEC, the actual number of the attending Bishops was 320 Bishops.

7= Conclusion:

7.1: I would like to Quote what Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios⁵⁵ Chair of the School of Gandhian Thought & Development studies, who wrote: *“We need to seek three things: shed some light on how we came to be where we are? Suggest some changes in the present picture and propose some goals to orient us towards tomorrow”.*

⁵² Ecumenism in Aisa, Prospects and challenges, Matthew Geroge Chunakara, 2014, P. 39.

⁵³ The history of the Coptic Church, Manasa Youhanna, Priest, P. 114-115.

⁵⁴ Coptic Civilization, Martyrous, Coptic Bishop, 2022, P. 47.

⁵⁵ Philosophy and the quest for meaning, Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorious, second Edition, November 24, 2022, P. 256.

The Coptic Orthodox Church- See of Saint Mark- Diocese of Sydney, and its Affiliated Regions. Speech about: " Brief about the History of the Coptic Orthodox church, and its role in the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in the year 325 AD", according to official invitation letter from the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), with the theme of: " Echoes of Nicaea: Enduring Faith and Embracing Unity – Asian Ecumenical Responses, 24-29 October 2024, at WP Hotel, Chow Kit, KL, Malaysia

7.2: It is the duty of each church to encourage both priests, servants and the youth to study the sound Theology and the sound Doctrine to help in the unity of the churches eventually. This can be done through reading the valuable books of early Church Fathers and Scholars like Saint Athanasius.

7.3: It is not only our hope but also our responsibility in front of God, to understand and empower the Ecumenical movement on all levels, to enable the churches to continue enduring the sound faith and embrace the unity between the churches, through effective and continues dialogues between the theologians of each church.

7.4: At the end, I would like to express my gratitude and sincere thanks for having me and I pray to our Lord Jesus Christ to guide, help and protect all of us and grant us His Power to serve Him to end of our lives in all honesty.



+ Bishop Daniel

With the Grace of God

Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church – Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions

Sydney, NSW, Australia, on Friday 13th September 2024.