



Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
The Family of Alexandria College Graduates Seminar
Pope Cyril The Pillar of Faith Center for Theological Studies

In the Name of the Holy Trinity
"Pastoral Theology" Course

Day 1 – lecture 2
Server and Teamwork
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❖ **Introduction:**

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.” (1 Corinthians 12: 12-20)

❖ **How would the servant serve in a group?**

Any servant in any church he is serving in a team, group of servants, service supervisors, priest fathers, and a supportive team; Saint Paul the apostle assembled them as one body, and each of us is a member of this body.

- When God created man, He made him in his image; the Holy Bible described God as love, so we are Created in God's image, and we should live in love and integration; the Holy Bible talked a lot that the other is an image of the Christ, like in **Mathew 25** when the Lord Christ spoke about the judgment, he said that the sheep, meaning the righteous are on his right side, and when the disciples asked him why we came here? , He said to them **"for I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me , I was in prison and you came to Me."** (Mathew 25: 35-36) **" Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ' Lord when did we see You hungry and feed You , or thirsty and give You drink ? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and cloth You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'" And the king will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, in as much as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'** (Mathew 25: 37- 40). As if my dealing with any human, I am dealing with Christ, all glory to Him, and my dealing with my brother in service if I deal with him according to the principles of the Holy Bible, so my brother will be my way to the kingdom according to **Mathew 25**.
- They are talking in the world about **artificial intelligence: it is the human ability to deal with others, it is a group of skills that people learn**, but we, as Christians and servants, are moved by a thing which is more important than the skills, we are moved by the other who is my way to the kingdom, my way to heaven.

❖ **Some points helping us through the Christian principles for dealing in a team:**

- 1- Discover your defects (look to yourself); each one of us has what is called **the blind area**, one of the most beautiful expressions the Holy Bible used about the church angel who said about himself :
"I am rich have become wealthy," (Revelation 3: 17), Then God replied to him, saying: **"do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked" (Revelation 3: 17).** Sometimes I

don't see that I am moved by my selfness or being sensitive, especially with girls, so any word said to me, I create a subject of it, and those around me deal with me on that basis, but I don't see that at all; a person who is jealous of those around him, a person who deals with others with superiority, a very emotional person, and sometimes who is dealing with people with emotion is blinded for wisdom and mind and taking decisions in service, a stupid person who doesn't see that, a very nervous person and not see that in himself in spite that others see that defect in him, you should pray that God will expose your weaknesses for you as be able to deal with those around you, discover yourself, and find yourself looking for your specific blind area; the church taught us that in the sacrament of repentance and confession, a man discovers himself, like the fig tree that the lord Christ cursed because of its plenty of leaves without fruits, man needs to expose himself in the sacrament of repentance and continuous confession, learn to say you're mistaken (I'm wrong), Fathers say: "it is suitable for man to blame himself" don't let stubbornness and pride take you and think of the mistake in you, so why you are not able to deal with the service team, as every one of us has mistakes, don't drop your mistakes on others or church' capabilities or the service supervisors like what Adam did when God asked him why he ate of the tree? He said to him: **"The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." (Genesis 3:12)**

- 2- Deal with your brother in service as he is a human soul who is very precious to the Lord; his price is the blood of Christ; you're dealing with your brother will lead you to the kingdom of God; as fathers say, "there are two altars, the first is stony, where the Christ is put on it, and the other is fleshy moving which is the Christ" he means that the church altar. The other change is your brother, as man is created in the image of God and his likeness, so look to your brother as a temple of the Christ even if he is tiring. You cannot deal with him, or he has difficulty communicating with your brothers in the service and the service supervisor.

❖ **Some important points in dealing with the servants and service supervisor:**

1- Encouragement: there is no human, of us, whatever his spiritual rank, does not need encouragement, encouragement is a magic key, as we don't talk about encouragement being a social or human development, but encouragement is a biblical commandment **“comfort fainthearted”**

(1 Thessalonians 5: 14). We had seen when the Lord Jesus dealt with many categories in his incarnation, like the Samaritan woman, look to the admirable virtue of your brother in service and encourage him for that, as one of the five love languages is encouragement (you are active), so in spite, that he lacks the wisdom, for example, forget about that and concentrate on his strong points.

The story of St. Makarios (Abu Makar): He was with his disciples, and they found a pagan priest stacking stones to build an Altar. St. Makarios's disciples scolded him and called him an atheist and idolater. So, our saint did nothing but beat his disciples. It was strange what he said to this pagan priest. He said to him, “peace to you, O, a man of determination and activity.” The man looked at him in astonishment and said, “I see you dressed like them, but your language is different.” It is said that this man changed because of St. Makarios's words and became a Christian. Reach out to someone; when the mother sees the servant, she starts complaining about her son. Your response to her is nothing but “this son is one of the best children in the church and one of the best deacons. “Comfort the fainthearted.”

2- Know every character's keys: (Encouragement, confrontation, not reprimanding). Since you were chosen to be a servant, you must deal with humility, as it is suitable for all characters. Deal with others according to the principle of "washing the feet" that we have learned from our Lord Jesus Christ. One of the Holy Fathers says: **“If you want to advise someone, do not advise him harshly because a demon does not cast out another demon.”** That means, if there is a problem between you and another servant and you cannot harmonize and serve in a team, everyone has his own opinion and adheres to it,

hence don't advise any one of them with stubbornness and cruelty as this will not solve the problem and the other will not accept this advice.

3- Accept the other: Even if he differs from you in thought. God has put you together and has intended for you two to be different. Imagine the presence of two priests in one church who have a lot of humility and love between each other in service; one loves discipline and order, and the other loves to embrace and contain others. Thus, when someone is late for church, the one who loves order will say to him: "It is not right to take the Holy Communion since you are late." So, he goes to the other priest, who tells him to obey what was said to him and that the other priest loves him so much, resulting in him embracing him. For example, two servants, one of them love melodies (alhan) and the other loves hymns (spiritual songs). So, either they intensify the discussion, which leads to accusations and disputes because everyone supports his point of view and adheres to it, or we seek to complete each other and teach the children melodies and hymns in harmony and equivalence.

A story: St. Moses (an Egyptian speaker) and St. Arsenious (a silent Roman). A visitor sat and talked with both of them; when people asked which one benefited him more, he answered them together. So, we should unite (keep shoulder to shoulder) and integrate. If you are a friendly servant loved by the children, and you celebrate occasions in a Christian atmosphere filled with love, but you can't reach out to the serving, and you have a servant skilled in reaching out to the serving, then you completely each other.

4- Try not to make your dealings just a mere reaction: If a situation occurs from your brother in service, don't react immediately but rather calm down first and think slowly. Find an excuse for your brother for what he did. When there is a servant whom I can't deal with or who is tiring in his service, I ask of God:

- To give me the grace to understand and deal with him.
- To understand that I receive blessings through dealing with him. Pray for him to receive grace from God to enable him to integrate into Communion and the one body in the church.

❖ **Some diseases to beware of as a servant:**

1. **Beware of withdrawing to the back rows and criticizing:** I can't integrate with the team, so I step back and take the role of a critic. (The service doesn't benefit- the service supervisor is very harmful- the priest doesn't care- they don't choose the servants carefully....) Unfortunately, the devil inflicts the servants in this way. **I'm deeply impressed by the Prophet Samuel, who was brought up in a corrupt atmosphere filled with negativity and many outrages committed in front of him in the Temple by the sons of Eli the Priest. A person like him in his position would be critical of their deeds. Yet, he focused on God and his life with Him. He focused on the positives and didn't look at the negatives. Then, he established the school of prophets in which generations were brought up and learned the Law and the fear of God and the Law.** Be likewise and focus only on the positives.
2. **Gossip:** Refuse to listen to gossip. The Holy Bible says, “**And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.**” (Proverbs 26:20). Be brave and don't listen to what people say.
3. **Judging people:** This person doesn't fit for this particular thing; he was given a chance. It is possible that at the beginning of his service, it applied to him, for example, that he went with a servant and did not continue with him and disagreed with him, or that he used to say the lesson in different ways, so even despite that, do not address the people, for God is, He gives us many opportunities. We do not give each other options. Even if that person changes, this picture we drew for him is engraved in our minds. So-and-so is nervous; it may have happened in a particular situation; so he is stubborn; he may have worked on himself and changed. We are full of weaknesses and failures.
4. **Biblical principle:** “**We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.**” (Romans 15:1). When you withdraw from dealing with your brother in service, you are only satisfying yourself, nothing more. “**Let each of us please his**

neighbor for his good, leading to edification.” (Romans 15:2). For the edification of the church, we have to please others, not ourselves.

5. **A principle from the Holy Bible:** “Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” (Matthew 7:5). For example, you are a supervisor servant, so you are responsible for the service and the servants. Yet, if you are a servant, then you are like the rest of the servants, not responsible for them as there is a supervisor servant, Father of confession, and the Father responsible for the full service; those are the responsible ones, not you. Therefore, on dealing with your brother, please remove the plank from your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

6. **Be busy with your sins:** “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8). St. Moses the Great says: **“Is it reasonable that there is a dead person in your house, and you leave him to cry over your neighbor’s dead?”** May the Lord give us grace that our life in the service is by the idea of working with one body; each one of us has a prominent role; May God Bless us all.

Glory be to God Forever Amen.

