# CVANSEIST OF THE WEST



Hegumen Marcos Marcos

Under the auspices of

His Holiness Pope Tawadros II

## Saint Mark Coptic Orthodox Cathedral Markham - Ontario

Is honoured to publish this book on the occasion of the first annual commemoration of the reposal of

our beloved father

Hegumen Marcos Marcos

of blessed memory

December II, 2021

## Table of contents:

1. Bibliography

2. Preface

3. Chapter One: Tributes by clergy, government

officials, institutions, and

organizations

4. Chapter Two: Photo album

5. Chapter Three: Tributes by the 1970's congregation

6. Chapter Four: Tributes by the 1980's congregation

7. Chapter Five: Tributes by the 1990's and 2000's

congregation

## Bibliography:

Name: Hegumen Marcos Marcos

By birth: Wagdy Elias AbdelMassih Marcos

Date of birth: August 21, 1929

**Place of birth:** Sohag Egypt

**Education:** 

May 1957: B.Th. Coptic theological seminary, Cairo, Egypt

May 1960: B.D., Hartford Theological Seminary, Hartford, Conn. May 1961: M.A., Hartford Seminary Foundation, School of Religious

Education, Hartford, Conn.

Ordination: Aug 9, 1964

Vatican: Sep 12, 1964

The Coptic church's representative at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican

council in Rome

Arrival to Canada: Nov 25, 1964

Elevation to hegumen: Aug 7, 1971

Reposed in the Lord: Dec 9, 2020

## Preface:

I have known Father Marcos since shortly after I immigrated to Canada in the 1970's. I came to know His Reverence even closer when I moved from Montreal to Toronto in 1980. He entrusted me with several ministries at Saint Mark's Church. In 1987, he presented me, with HG Bishop Reweis of thrice blessed memory, to HH Pope Shenouda III of thrice blessed memory, for ordination in the Priesthood. Even though I was serving outside Canada from 1988 to 2008, I kept a close relationship with Father Marcos, as my Father of Confession, always learning from him. In 2008, my health caused me to return to Canada, serving in St. Mark's with Father Marcos and my fathers. I summarise my relationship with His Reverence as follows:

Father Marcos taught me...

He taught me how to serve, not by giving a lecture, but by serving in an exemplary way.

He taught me who to serve. He served everyone who needed his service, whether they knew it or not, whether they wanted it or not, because he was a physician of human spirits who detected the needs, whether the wants existed, or the needs were ignored.

He taught me how to value those I serve. "I am a servant of my Master's children" was a statement he repeated often; and he meant it.

He taught me how a calm demeanour was stronger than the armour of battle, just as David's sling was mightier than Saul's armour in defeating Goliath.

He taught me to serve my peers as fathers and my children as brothers and sisters.

He taught me by his example, his wisdom and his humility what cannot be taught in courses and a book is not sufficient to contain.

He taught me and he still teaches me, for a man who possesses such treasures cannot be silenced by merely passing to the other life, for his presence is stronger than his passing; his memory is a presence to be reconned with.

This is why this publication is been made available to you, so you also can say: Father Marcos taught me...

By a spiritual son, Father John Ramzy, Hegumen

## Chapter One

Tributes by clergy, government officials, institutions, and organizations





## His Holiness Pope Tawadros II

Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and the see of St. Mark

In the name of The Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God Amen.

I give my heartily condolences in the repose of this reverent priest Father Marcos Marcos. I give condolences to you all for his repose after he served Christ, the church, and the nation sincerely and

honestly for decades. He served in God's vast field for more than 50 years.

Father Marcos was the first priest sent by Saint Pope Cyril to serve in the land of immigration. Immigration was still at the beginning. In the year 1964, he ordained him as a priest to be the first priest in North America. He started his service relying fully on faith. He also served with honesty, sincerity Perseverance and hard work as well as his love for the Church, the love of the Christ that was in his heart that he wanted to offer to everyone. His presence was the first experience of the Coptic Church to work in the new world countries in America. He started his service with zeal, and it did not only cover Canada but also expanded to many places in the United States of America. He succeeded in his service in the years he served during the era of Pope Cyril the sixth. His success expanded more and more through his work and service during the era of the late Pope Shenouda III. He worked a lot, and he was an honorable, effective, and active servant. He represented the Coptic Church in many conferences and spoke on her behalf about many subjects. He introduced to the Western communities the Coptic church with her roots, history, legacy and all her traditions that started to be transmitted from the east in Egypt to the West in America. He started this service in 1964 and after fifty years, God gave me the chance to visit Canada in 2014on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of his ordination as a priest. I was so happy to visit this country for the first time and meet with this father who represented the Church wonderfully and sincerely. We all rejoiced happily celebrating the Golden Jubilee of his ordination as a priest. It was a memorable day at Saint Mark's cathedral in Toronto.

I have known Father Marcos for a long time since whenever he visited Egypt, he would have a chance to visit the city of Damanhur. His sister Mrs. Elaine and her children used to serve with us, and they grew up with us in the service in the city of Damanhur. I remember them both in their work and service. His talk was so sweet. Therefore, He was invited several times by his Grace Metropolitan Pachomius, the Metropolitan of Behira and Matroh to serve in the youths and service conventions held by the diocese of Behira and its affiliates. I always noticed his nice smile and talk as well as the experience that would in kindle the soul to serve and work in God's vast vineyard.

On this day, I give condolences to you all: the fathers the bishops in Canada, His Grace Bishop Mina in Western Canada and His Grace Bishop Polos in Eastern Canada. I also give condolences to all the priests all over Canada, particularly in the city of Toronto. I extend condolences to the servants and elderly in the churches of Canada who enjoyed the discipleship at the hand of this honest servant and who enjoyed serving with him and to whom he delivered the Coptic Church with all

her history. He delivered to them this glorious legacy that the Church lives in Canada. I give condolences to you all and give condolences to Tasony [sister] Suzy whom I know to be the companion of the late father. She was his companion in serving, laboring, and sacrificing. She was with him since the beginning. Father Marcos told us many stories about the difficult beginnings of the service and how Tassoni Suzy helped and supported him till they went ahead successfully in the work of the Lord and that of the great service. I give condolences to his dear children and his spiritual children everywhere. I take part with you and relay to you the condolences of all the members of the Assembly of the Coptic Church: Metropolitans and bishops as well as all the priests in Egypt and the Coptic lovers of Christ.



## H.E Metropolitan Pakhomious

Metropolitan of Behira, Matrouh, Pentapolis, The Five Western Cities Abbot of St. Macarius the Alexander Monastery

Our beloved, we mourn the passing of our blessed Fr. Marcos Elias Marcos, the Priest of St. Mark's Church, Toronto, Canada. With whom, we coincided during the Sunday School service in

Giza, and he was a model of the zealous servant who seeks to attract many souls. He was distinguished by attraction of souls, and his lasting blessings that were winning many to Christ. He diligently served the church internally as well as externally and left a good legacy in the history of sacrificial service. We pray for comfort to his soul, and condolences to all the loved ones, the blessed family and all the congregation of the church who lived among him. The Lord be with you.



## H.E Metropolitan Jadros Metropolitan of Portsaid Fr. Marcos' father of confession

My dear fathers in the congregation of Saint Marks Church and all the churches in Toronto everywhere, those who loved Fr. Marcos: I extend all my condolences on the departure of our beloved father, Fr. Marcos Marcos, who is not only very special to you but very special to many others everywhere in the world.

I have known Fr. Marcos more than 52 years ago, it was very special to me since I was a young man, an immigrant in the United States in Los Angeles, Fr. Marcos used to come and visit us frequently. He was the only priest who would come to serve the liturgy for us. So, we were very thirsty to see Fr. Marcos every time he comes to do holy mass and holy communion. And they loved him that much that he gave all his time and effort to tour everywhere

in USA and Canada preaching the word of God and spreading the love of God to everybody. Fr. Marcos was a very cheerful person, I always saw him smiling, give everyone a very special attention to the point that everyone knows and feels that he is very special to him. Fr. Marcos is very patient, very keen, he is always smiling, and this is really something very new unique in Fr. Marcos. He's always trying to find a place for God in the hearts of everybody. I have a lot to talk about Fr. Marcos, but I will leave it for others.

I just want to pray to the Lord to repost his soul in the paradise of joy and gift comfort and peace to everybody who loved him. His wife, his family, and all the clergy and all the people who love him everywhere in the world. May God bless all of you now and forever, Amen.



## H.E Metropolitan Serapion Metropolitan of Los Angeles, South California & Hawaii

May our Lord propose his blessed soul in the paradise of joy and grant His heavenly peace and comfort to his family and his people everywhere.

My heartfelt condolences.



## H.E Metropolitan Antonious Marcos Metropolitan of South Africa

I wish to share the voice of my heart towards Father Marcos Marcos with all those who have known and loved him and his service, including his personal sacrifice since the 1960s in the land of immigration. Fr. Marcos has been a true good shepherd in Canada and the United States, even when the numbers of church servants were minimal, and he carried the heavy loads. This enabled the number of churches in Canada and the United States to expand into the hundreds. Fr. Marcos would go from one airplane to the next, planting churches, often using only his

resources and neglecting his own personal care. It is no wonder that our Lord gave him a long life. May Blessed Fr. Marcos be rewarded in heaven for the great deeds he has done for the love of the Lord, the sacraments, prayers and liturgies which have benefited the tens of thousands of Faithfull in North America. May our Lord bless his soul and give him according to his sacrifice as a real light in the church. Fr. Marcos' family will take consolation knowing that Fr. Marcos lived by this: the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve. Blessed Fr. Marcos is dedicated service remains

our hope- "God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them"

(HebrewsII:13- 16).

H.G Bishop Mousa
The General Bishop of Youth
H.G Bishop Raphael
The General Bishop of Cairo

Our heartfelt condolences on the passing of a lifetime friend and founder of service in Canada and the Diaspora, our father Marcos Marcos, with whom we had ten strong love, successful

service, and an exemplary father. I knew him as a dear friend since his early youth by the name of Professor Wagdy Elias, and I saw in him an example of who could become a distinguished priest, and I knew his own family closely. There is no doubt that his historical role in establishing our churches in the diaspora will be recorded in letters of light in the history and we will break our glorious church. My heartfelt condolences and with me His Eminence Bishop Raphael, the priests, consecrated men and women, and the young episcopal family to his dear wife, his private family, the church, and the public. Farewell to our father Mark, the dear Mark, in the world of saints and the sky of glory with the Lord Jesus and his angels and saints. The Lord is with you and with us and comforts and takes care of everyone.



## H.G Bishop Youssef Bishop of Southern USA

An Excellent Spirit

Today, as we are gathered to celebrate the heavenly birth of our beloved Fr. Morcos Morcos, I find it hard to find words that can illustrate a blessed long journey of 56 years of toil in ministry. Nevertheless, I would like to quote a biblical description of Daniel the prophet that says, "Inasmuch as *an excellent spirit*...was found in this Daniel" (Daniel 5:12). Likewise, I can boldly say, "Inasmuch as *an excellent spirit* was found in Abouna Morcos"!!

These three words, an excellent spirit, are very powerful concise conclusion of what Fr. Morcos is. His reverence patience, humbleness, courage, wisdom, perseverance, and total surrender to God's will equipped him for the pioneer great mission of establishing the first ministry in the land of immigration more than 50 years ago. His reverence followed in the footsteps of St. Mark the evangelist ending up taking not only his name but also a lot of his spiritual characters, virtues and may be same heavenly rewards!!

When St. Mark wanted to describe the kingdom of God in his Gospel, he said, "It is like a mustard seed, which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; but when it is sown, it

grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade" (Mark 4:31-32). In fact, this also applies to the ministry of Rev. Fr. Morcos. He sowed the very first seed in the land of immigration walking in faith, not by sight; and the tree of his ministry sprouted, and is still sprouting out, large branches that all of us, immigrants to North America as well as the citizens, are nesting under its shade.

My deepest condolences to Fr. Morcos' family and children, physical and spiritual. May the Lord repose his reverence's soul in the paradise of soul through the prayers of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II and His Grace Bishop Makar. Glory be to God forever and ever. Amen.

> H.G Bishop Sarabamon Bishop of Atbara, Omdurman & North Sudan

H.G Bishop Elia Bishop of Khartoum & The Republic of South Sudan

Their graces Bishop Sarabamon and Bishop Elia, the deacons, and all the

congregation of the church in Sudan, send their sincere

condolences to the clergy of Saint Mark's church in Toronto Canada, and all its congregation, on the passing of our beloved father hegumen Marcos Marcos. May God reposes his soul in the bosom of our Holy Fathers and gives heavenly consolation to his family and all his loved ones.



H.G Bishop Angaelos Bishop of London, UK

Today we mourn the loss of a faithful servant who has worked tirelessly in God's field for over half a century. Fr. Marcos was the first #CopticOrthodox priest to serve outside Egypt, sent by the late St #PopeKyrellosVI. He was also a friend and inspiration. #RIP dear brother.



## H.G Bishop David Bishop of New York & New England, USA

In the second epistle to his disciple St. Timothy, St. Paul says "where I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

I cannot think of anyone better upon whom these verses apply, more than the great spiritual giant, who has just departed of our

perishing world. The new St. Paul of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or as his name indicates Saint Mark of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century; that is the very reverend hegumen father Marcos Marcos. I would like to highlight three aspects of Fr. Marcos service: I. him has a history maker, 2. as a true father, and 3. as a great teacher and preacher.

- I. As a history maker: some people read history well others write history, but Fr. Marcos made history. as we all know that Fr. Marcos was ordained in 1964 and he was the first permanent priest to be ordained to serve in North America. he retained the title for many years during which to travel to many parts of the continent baptizing, taking confessions, celebrating crowning ceremonies and praying the liturgies...etc. For that, he rightly earned the title "the flying priest". I cannot imagine how many churches he has established during these years. I hope that he has written the early history of the Coptic Orthodox Church in North America which no one else would know, better than him.
- 2. As a true father: fatherhood is a gift from God, and Fr. Marcos was a true father for many. thank God I was one of his spiritual children who enjoyed his fatherhood during the eight years I spent in Toronto prior to my entry into the monastery in 1992. He lifted me up during times of weaknesses, showed me the love of God and guided me on the path as a loving father. I can never forget the impact he made on me personally as my first father of confession and spiritual guide. his continuous smile always filled everyone with heavenly peace, and his genuine love always embraced all his children equally.
- 3. As a great teacher and preacher: Fr. Marcos was very knowledgeable and well-versed in the Bible, the history of the church, theology and dogma. as a young man I personally learned a lot from him, especially the lessons he taught us about church history which I still remember vividly. he was truly a great teacher and a preacher of Orthodoxy to the many people who joined the church. His disciples became fathers and even bishops, so he was the father of many fathers.

Finally, I want to pray, may our Lord repose his blessed soul and reward him for his decades of labor in the holy church. May He grant peace and comfort to his immediate family Tasony Suzy, his companion along the way throughout the many decades of service, his children Gregory and Dina, his son- and daughter-in-law. As well as his grandchildren, together with his extended family whom he truly loved and sincerely served for many decades. through the intersection of our lady

the lady of us all Saint Mary the holy Theotokos who is commemoration of her entry into the temple is today and St. Mark the Evangelist, and through the prayers of our holy fathers, our holy father his holiness pope Tawadros the 2<sup>nd</sup>. glory be to God forever amen.



## H.G Bishop Daniel Bishop of Sydney, Australia

His Holiness Pope Tawadros II,

The Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark in Egypt and all the countries of the Diaspora. We kiss your pure hand and offer the supplication of submission, asking for your apostolic prayers for my weakness and for your children in the Diocese of Sydney and its affiliates.

On behalf of the board of priests, and the congregation of the Diocese of Sydney, Australia, and its affiliated regions; we would like to share our heartfelt condolences on the passing of the

reverend and devout father Hegumen Marcos Morcos, the angel of St. Mark's church in Toronto, who reposed on Thursday December 10, 2020. Your holiness, as we convey to you our heartfelt condolences, we are comforted by the Holy Spirit who dwells in you. We pray to God, with the intercessions of your holiness, that the soul of His servant hegumen Marcos Marcos, be reposed amidst our fathers, the great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. May he enjoy the companionship of angels and all the righteous saints who perfected the faith which was delivered to us by our fathers the holy apostles.

We are confident that God will remember the holy priestly service of our pious father Marcos Marcos. The faithful and sacrificial service, in every field, whether in the service of the Seven Sacraments of the Church, or the means of grace such as fasting, prayer, the service of the word, visitations, and many other specialized services. Thus, we are confident that his service will be like a scent of incense that the Lord God smells as a sweet aroma.

And as we supplicate to the Lord God for the mourning of this righteous soul, we ask God to pour out of His Holy Spirit the grace of heavenly consolation, upon the family of our devout father, Hegumen Marcos Morcos, and on his brothers in the priesthood, the fathers and honorable priests, the priests of the Church of St. Mark in Toronto, Canada; Hegumen Ammonious Girguis, Hegumen John Ramzy, Hegumen Pishoi Atalla, Hegumen Misael Ataalla, Fr. Bolis Amin, Fr. Marc Markos, and Fr. Kyrillos Fakhouri. May God's comfort console his relatives, congregation and all his children everywhere. We ask the Lord, with the blessing of the intercession of the Mother of God, the pure Saint Mary, and the intercession of all the angels and saints, and the prayers of your holiness, that the Lord complete the days of our sojourn with peace, fear and trembling, watching for the salvation of ourselves at all times.



## H.G Bishop Youssef Bishop of Bolivia

"So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house" Lk I:23. We pray for the reposal of the righteous elder, our father, hegumen Marcos, in the bosom of our holy fathers. He served faithfully, taught generations everywhere, and left us an example of the faithful servant and loving shepherd. Condolences to his dear family and all his congregation, and the consolations of the Holy Spirit to all the venerable Fathers of the Church.



## H.G Bishop Makar Bishop of Sharkia & 10th of Ramadan City

Indeed, this situation is so hard for me. It is hard for me to stand and talk about this reverent priest, Fr. Marcos Marcos. Actually, I have known him personally once I started my new service. I started to meet him and talk to him. We had so many meetings. If I want to talk about him, I shall talk about two main points: the stage of foundation and that of growth and fruitfulness. The first point was the stage of foundation when Father Marcos started his service in North America as he was establishing a service in a field that was never planted before. He had the credit of founding many places from New York to Los Anglos and from Toronto to

Vancouver. He went and traveled and prayed in all places He once told me that his luggage was ready at all times and at any time, he would take the plane and travel. This stage was among the most difficult stages to the extent that it happened in one of the cities that they told him: "We can afford the salary of a priest". He told them: "Are you not 30 families? I shall spend one night at each family's home and my wife and me will eat whatever you eat. Yet, I shall continue my service whatever are the circumstances." How harsh, tiring and overwhelming this stage was!! Of course, we cannot imagine that planes at that time were as easy or frequent as the current time. Flying was to some extent primitive and very tiring. However, he tolerated all sufferings and founded many places that became later churches and dioceses. Regarding this stage, I personally saw the first translation of the Liturgical book. At the beginning, the translation was in handwriting and then in typing. He watched and labored to translate the liturgical and service prayer books to the English language. I can imagine how difficult this stage was and how poor the capabilities in his hands were at that time.

The second stage was that of growth and fruitfulness. All the places in North America where Fr. Marcos prayed became churches. Some servants and deacons who served with him became priests and even bishops. He was a father for all. He was the tree to which all those who wanted to live with

God would resort. Try to count the number of the priests and servants who were discipled by him! It is difficult to determine how many bishops, priests, servants and deacons were influenced by him and learned from him and became his disciples. The fruits were abundant and manifold 30, 60 and 100. There were churches everywhere and priests and deacons were ordained everywhere. The tree bore many fruits. Among the best stories in the *Orchard of Monks* was the story when Saint Antony said to someone: "You have been coming to meet me and stay with me for three years and you never say anything." He answered: "It is enough for me to look at your face my father." Indeed, it was enough for us to look at this reverent father to learn from his humility, love, silence and even from his nice smile. It is true that he had a smile that gave comfort to those suffering. Whatever the person had of suffering and many problems when he would go to him, once he met Fr. Marcos and sat with him, you would find peace entering his heart. He was a comprehensive fatherhood.

He was a true teacher indeed, a teacher of rituals and dogma. He undertook on himself to love everyone. He undertook on himself to be a helper for all. Who met Fr. Marcos would know quite well his love, sacrifice and giving? Whoever dealt with Fr. Marcos would know what true humidity is and see love in him as he always put his brethren ahead of him. When you would talk to him about something, he would answer saying "In fact my opinion is such and such. However, we have to ask the opinions of the fathers." He never followed his own opinion alone and he was never fanatic to his own opinion. He would never give the priority to his opinion. On the contrary, if he found that most of the fathers had a different opinion, he would lovingly think again about the matter. We can look around us and see the cathedral. It was the desire of his life that we would have a cathedral in Toronto. It is the largest Cathedral as our church is the greatest and oldest church. He always used to say that this cathedral would be a landmark in Toronto, testifying to the Coptic Church, her authenticity, rituals, dogma, and history. The cathedral was his dream that came true. His Holiness the pope came and consecrated it.

Truly the time does not suffice me to talk about the virtues of this man, his labor, love, and humility. However, among the best things that were written about him was an article written by one of his grandchildren where he mentioned how he feels proud and blessed that his grandfather was Hegumen Marcos Marcos, the founder of the Coptic Church in the land of immigration and North America. It is saddening for us to stand in this situation to talk about this righteous man, his service, life, and sacrifice. Yet, we have hope that he has become an intercessor for us to intercede on our behalf and for our service helping us in our life. We have gained a man to pray for us in Heaven who knows our needs and everything about our life.

Today, I convey to you the condolences of His Holiness Pope Tawadros the 2<sup>nd</sup>. As for myself and due to the circumstances of Canada, I could not come to attend. I had to be present personally to pray on this righteous man. Unfortunately, that was not possible due to the restrictions by Canada. However, this father is a father for the whole of North America. We pray for condolences for his immediate family, his wife, children, and grandchildren as well as to his children everywhere. My condolences extend to the Church, the Cathedral: board, priests, deacons, and congregation. May all get condolences from the Holy Spirit. All Glory and Honor be to our God forever, Amen.



## H.G Bishop Abraham The General Bishop of Los Angeles, USA

My heartfelt condolences on the passing of our father Marcos, Marcos. May God repose his soul in the paradise of joy and comfort the family, and all his spiritual children everywhere. May He reward him for all his hard work in the service of the churches in North America and Canada for more than fifty years.



## H.G Bishop Seraphim Bishop of Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana, USA

The repose of a Coptic Evangelist

His reverence Father Marcos, who is dear to the hearts of us all, "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." [Rev: 14: 13].

You found your rest in serving. This is what I heard about your reverence before I saw you. This is the wonderful definition of rest in our Christianity: that our Holy Christ is the one who gives relief for the suffering and comfort to souls. The faith of His children is

that the Kingdom of God is inside them. God's merciful decision "Enter into the joy of your lord." Is the most important thing that man can hear from the mouth of the Holy God.

My first meeting with your reverence was in 1998 when I had the honor, which I do not deserve, to serve as a secretary of Late His Holiness Pope Shenouda the third, May God repose his pure spirit and accept his prayers on our behalf. Immediately when I started my conversation with you, I remember the great Saint Mark the apostle whose name you carry. As God entrusted him to be the first evangelist in Egypt and Africa, He entrusted your reverence to be the first evangelist Coptic priest in North America.

I was also happy during my second meeting with your reverence at the end of 2012 when I was honored to serve as the secretary for the land of Immigration affairs for His Holiness Pope Tawadros the 2<sup>nd</sup>, May God give him a long life and accept his prayers on our behalf. At that time, I noticed the same quiet smile and the humble spirit of Father Marcos Marcos. I could read in your eyes the experience of priesthood and decades of evangelism which set an example for us.

After your repose at the age of 91 [He was ordained by His Holiness Saint Pope Cyril the sixth in 1964], You obtained the reward of our Merciful Mighty God to your pure spirit to be now in the place where the righteous and saints wait. When we perform any service or evangelic work and remember your great biography, we feel that the way is still long compared to those who labored, and we entered to their labor.

The Word of the Lord still grows mightily and prevails in the Holy Church of God in this generation through the prayers and care of His Holiness Pope Tawadros the  $2^{nd}$ . Remember us our beloved father so that He who helped you and granted you fruits, and joy may help us to do His Holy blessed will. Your story and love will ever remain in our hearts.



#### **ՅԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԵԱՅՑ ԱՌԱԶԵԼԱԿԱՆ ՍՈՐՐԲ ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻՈՅ ԳԱՆԱՏԱՅԱՅՈՑ ԹԵՄ**

#### DIOCESE CANADIEN DE LA SAINTE ÉGLISE APOSTOLIQUE ARMENIENNE

#### ARMENIAN HOLY APOSTOLIC CHURCH CANADIAN DIOCESE

Տ. Աբգար եպս. Ցովակիմեան, Առաջնորդ

Évêque Abgar Hovakimian, Primat

Bishop Abgar Hovakimyan, Primate

December 11, 2020 №1-94

His Grace Bishop Anba Makar, Papal Vicar Archdiocese of Toronto Coptic Orthodox Church

Beloved Brother in Christ,

Our Lord has called His beloved servant Reverend Father Marcos Marcos, Archpriest of Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Toronto to His Eternal Kingdom.

Father Marcos will be remembered as the person by whom Our Lord materialized His divine will to have our sister Coptic Orthodox Church be present in North America.

On behalf of the clergy, the Diocesan Council, the faithful, and from myself personally, I express our deepest sympathy to Fr. Marcos' wife Susan, son Greg, and daughter Dina, and the extended family at Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church and the entire Archdiocese of Toronto of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

May Our Lord grant peace and consolation to everyone mourning.

Fr. Marcos will be remembered in our prayers.

Prayerfully,

Bishop Abgar Hovakimyan

Apgeorp linghulpongon

Primate

December 15, 2020

H.G. Anba Makar, Bishop of Goshen, Egypt Papal Vicar in the Archdiocese of Toronto The Coptic Orthodox Church in Canada 455 Ferrier St, Markham ON L3R 5Z2

Beloved Brother in the Lord:

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

I express to you my sincere condolences for the falling asleep in the Lord of Fr. Marcos.

I pray that Fr. Marcos is in the bosom of God and the company of the Saints in Heaven. I ask God to keep him in His love and care forever.

Please extend my condolences to the parishioners of St. Mark's Coptic Church, Scarborough and to all the Coptic Orthodox that knew him and loved him.

I keep him and you in my daily prayers.

I wish you a very joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours with brotherly love in Christ,

Archbishop Soliving

Archbishop Sotirios Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Canada

## Fr. Jadros Yaccoub Malaty

To the soul of my beloved father, the reposed man of God, Father Marcos Elias Marcos, priest of Saint Mark's Church in Toronto. Your departure to paradise counts as a precious asset for your church before the throne of God, and your constant smile in all circumstances sends us a spirit of hope in our Christ, the leader of the church and the Savior of the world, through his cross, his resurrection, and his ascension to his heavens. The touches of your love for me since 1970 will not be erased by time. I remember your joyful conversations in the Lord, your holy zeal, and the breadth of your heart to all.

- I will never forget what you did for the church since you started your ministry in Canada.
   You were the best representative of the Church to the officials in Canada. With your blessed talents, you presented a wonderful picture of the Coptic Church.
- Your relationship with the youth of the Church, which is filled with love, has won many people.
- I will never forget the first meeting of the priests of the Diaspora in 1971 at the Monastery of the Holy Trinity on the borders of America and Canada. The late Father Raphael in Montreal, the late Father Gabriel Amin in Jersey City and my weakness participated in it. We all felt the mutual love between us.
- Your heart was spacious, and your mind was filled with jealousy for the church in the diaspora. I do not forget that you were the first priest in the diaspora who requested a partner priest in the diaspora.
- Your soul set out to the bosom of the Lord and met with your beloved, HG Bishop Rewiss, for whom you requested the opening of the office for accepting Canadian citizenship over the weekend.

Pray for us all.

## Fr. Shenouda Maher Ishag - New York

"So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house" (*Luke* 1:23).

On behalf of the Coptic Monastery of Saint Shenouda in Rochester, NY, I would like to express our heartfelt condolences for the departure of the beloved Hegumen Father Marcos Elias Marcos in the hope of the resurrection.

I knew Fr. Marcos from my childhood in the late 1940s when I would travel to visit my family in Suhaj and he was a servant. Little did I know that the years would pass, and I would be serving in Rochester, NY, the last Coptic congregation that Fr. Marcos had been responsible for besides St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Toronto. By God's grace, Fr. Marcos labored and traveled for long hours regularly for many years in order to establish St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Rochester. It was a great blessing for me when several years ago, Fr. Marcos visited Rochester and

I took the blessing of celebrating the divine liturgy with him and experiencing the love between him and many Coptic families and individuals here in Rochester.

We ask God through Fr. Marcos' prayers before His throne that He continue to work in this area so that the foundation that He laid through Fr. Marcos' service will produce fruit thirty, sixty and a hundredfold. To our God is due all the glory now and forever. Amen.

## Fr. Dawood Gabra - Sohag, Egypt

The Church in North and South Americas, the Diaspora, and all over the world, processes the soul of our venerable father Marcos Marcos, the evangelist of the Americas, after a long journey of service for more than fifty years. We bid him farewell, remembering his labour and love, and we parade him into Paradise, after he took off the earthy body and put on his luminous garments to live with the Lord. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Congratulations my father on the inheritance of the kingdom. The consolations of the Holy Spirit include us all. May our Lord console the blessed wife, his partner in service, and all his physical and spiritual children. The grace of God be with you all.

## Fr. Surial the Syrian - St. Mary's Monastery (Sorian)

Our father, the evangelist, the servant and saint, Hegumen Mark Morcos

We bid him farewell today while he rejoices at his arrival in Paradise. We bid farewell to him as a faithful servant who labored in his service tirelessly and traveled for the sake of his people. We bid him farewell today to Paradise because he heard that voice filled with joy and blessings, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord". You are worthy my father to stand before Christ today without blame, because you were a father, a servant, a lover, a faithful and a simple one, and you served faithfully among the people of Canada and America with devotion and resilience. You endured many hardships during the construction of the largest Cathedral named after St. Mark in Canada, and perhaps all North America. Silence, love, and humility were your virtues, and though you were the first priest in Canada, you always put yourself last. I lived with you for a few months in Canada, watching God's work through you, and you were the image of Christ before me in all our dealings and all your loving service to everyone.

Today I bid you farewell with tears, but they are tears of parting and joy, and your immaculate mouth saying: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness. Congratulations to you on entering Paradise, my father, the priest of the most high God. May God help us as He helped you and remember me before the throne of grace.

## Fr. Silwanis Ava Mina

Hegumen Father Marcos Marcos, the clever and sincere shepherd,

The psalm teaches us about David the king saying: "He also chose David His servant and took him from the sheepfolds; From following the ewes that had young He brought him, to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So, he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands." [Ps: 78:70-72]

When we talk about Father Marcos, commemorating his first annual memorial, we find that his life and biography is parallel to that of King David's, because "he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands." His service and care for his people were remarkable and sincere. He guided them to the spiritual strife and his purpose was that all would inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

In few words we remember:

#### I. His shepherding for his congregation:

We must remember what the Holy Bible teaches us about the shepherd. His duty is to take care of the sheep, feed them, protect them against enemies and guide them. Thus, Shepherding means feeding, guidance and protection. This is what characterized the life and service of the Late Father Hegemon Marcos as he took care of those whom God put in his way to shepherd. When he went to Canada, he saw people as sheep without shepherd. His heart moved to shepherd his people, feed them spiritually, guide them and protect them from the evil one as well as lead them to defeat the evil one. He exerted great efforts to reach the lost sheep and restore them to the barn.

#### 2. The uprightness of heart:

There was an integration in his life. His own life was not separate from the teachings of the Holy Bible or what he used to teach his congregation. This made of him an example for all. He lived among his congregation and taught them how to live according to the teachings of the Bible with upright hearts. His private life was not different from his public life. When he was hurt or sad, he would not say a bad word about anyone in secret as well as openly. He never said anything negative about anyone. However, when he guided someone, he would talk to him openly and honestly. He always looked for what was positive in the lives of others to guide them to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. He was persistent, and keen exerting all efforts to live the Bible in his life despite going through difficult times. Yet, he never gave up his honesty in obeying the Bible.

#### 3. He was a leader:

Therefore, he exerted all effort to care for his congregation. He was steadfast and it was clear in his life what our Lord Jesus demands from us saying: "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all." "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Mark: 10: 43-45]. Thus, great leadership is founded upon sacrificing services. He was clever and successful in his leadership. The Book of Ecclesiastes teaches us by saying: "If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength. But

wisdom brings success." [Ecclesiastes: 10:10]. Throughout the era of his service, he never gave up the basics of services and care. So, he could, through humility, integrity and passion, love, feed, and lead those whom God called and ordained him to serve. Love, spiritual feeding, and spiritual leadership of the congregation were the living characteristics evident in the life of Father Marcos. He lived loving everyone and hence he attained creditability to feed them through preaching and biblical teaching. Hence why he was a clever leader who led them to enjoy the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven and to live the Bible in a living way in their practical and family lives.

The shepherding service is a teaching one in the first place. His main responsibility was to preach God's word and applying the Holy Bible. Therefore, his congregation could live the Holy Bible in their own lives. He never lingered in visiting his congregation and managing the church meetings and activities to lead the congregation to live the Bible in all aspects of their life.

#### 4. He was an inspiring preacher:

He was interested in studying the Holy Bible and reading the father's interpretations and teachings. He dedicated enough time for this to be able to preach and teach the congregation about all this is realistic, true, and deep. This was a cause of the congregation's spiritual satisfaction. He really realized that God called him to serve His people. This is why he used to pray deeply in his private prayers so that God may work in the life of the flock. So, he deserved to hear the Voice of the Lord Jesus Christ saying to him: 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' [Matthew: 25:21]. Upon the commemoration of his repose, I ask him to remember me and to remember his congregation that he served with purity and righteousness before the Lord Jesus so that He may help us as He helped him, and we may all reach the harbor of salvation enjoying the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven.

## Tr.Athanasius Iskander

I knew Fr. Marcos for 52 years, as a father in confession, spiritual guide, and a friend. In 1968, I immigrated to Canada, four years after Father Mark established the first Coptic church in the land of immigration: St. Mark Coptic Orthodox church in Toronto. Fr Marcos was my first "real" father of confession. In Egypt, as an adolescent, I confessed to a priest in the church I grew up in, he used to listen to my confession and tell me, "Go home and recite our father ten times!". In a short while, I knew the price list for the various sins and stopped going to confession. I remember the first time I confessed to him (Fr. Marcos), he listened to me, then he would ask questions about my spiritual practices: prayer, fasting, tithes etc., then he gave me some spiritual advice.

As I continued confessing to him, I felt that under his guidance my confessions turned to discipleship. After a few months, he asked me if I had served in the church in Egypt and the answer was "no". I have been ordained a reader by the late Pope Macarious the third, when his holiness visited our church in Shubhra, but never wore my Tonya after that! He brought me a tunia and asked me to serve with the "deacons". Another time he asked me in detail about my knowledge of the Bible. Having ascertained that I am an avid reader of the Bible, he asked me if I could give a talk in English to the youth, which I did. A few weeks later he surprised me by asking me to prepare a sermon! He told me, "I will give you a month to prepare, just read the readings, meditate on them, and write down your meditations!". A year after I landed in Toronto, I confided in him that I had some feelings towards a fellow female servant and he told me, "Good choice! I know that she is not taken, why don't you ask her out?" When he saw the puzzled look on my face, he explained, "in

Egypt, it is customary to go to the parents first and ask them if they would allow you to court their daughter, but young woman here abhor this, telling me "I am not a piece of merchandise, if someone is interested, he should ask me first!". He was a man ahead of his time. I did as he told me and, a few months later we had an engagement. He came late (as usual), and he brought with him a stranger! a young man from USA, who taught in one of the universities. It turned out that he was trying to recruit him to become the first priest to be ordained in New Jersey by the late Pope Kyrillos, Fr. Gabriel Abdelsayed of blessed memory. We got married a year later by Fr. Marcos who held the service in a rented church. My wife and I continued to serve under the guidance of Abouna Marcos, who later baptized our children and became their father of confession, then celebrated their weddings.

In the 70s there was a TV series called "the flying nun", Abouna Markos was known as the "the flying priest". In the early years, when there was no other priest except him, he flew to Los Angeles for a wedding, drove to the Buffalo for a baptism, then flew to Chicago to pray the liturgy. Over the years he kept pushing me to take more positions in the church. In addition to serving as a deacon, giving sermons and talks to the youth, I became a member of the board twice. One of them as a treasurer. It was then that I learned how little he was paid. He had no benefits, not even life insurance. I asked him if he had any private life insurance and he cried. He told me that he couldn't afford it, and I told him "I know". I quietly spoke to a few people in the congregation, and we purchased life insurance for him privately without telling him! Our relationship evolved to friendship, he considered me a "confidante" and told me that he would not tell anyone else. It was then that I became acquainted with his trials and tribulations. In spite of his selfless service to people all over North America, many people hated him! Strangely, people, both priests and lay coveted his position! Had they known him as much as I did, they would not have been envied him. One priest (from Egypt), he used to visit Canada during the summer to replace Abouna Markos during his annual vacation (to Egypt), used the few weeks in Toronto in campaigning among the congregation to write to pope Shenouda complaining about Abouna Marcos and asking the pope to either replace him by this visiting priest, or allowed the visiting priest to start a rival church! He even published a book attacking Abouna Markos without mentioning his name. Another "deacon", who claimed falsely that he was ordained Archdeacon started telling people that he would be a better priest than Fr Marcos. False information was spread about him, one that gained much popularity, was the Pope Kyrillos sent him directly to Toronto without spending the forty days in the monastery. In fact, he did not go to any monastery because Pope Kyrillos asked him to stay with him in the patriarchate the forty days in order to give him the instructions personally.

In the mid 70s, two important things happen, the first is that the church was given I acre of land as a gift from a Canadian developer. Fr. Marcos phoned me to tell me the good news (I was the first to know), then he told me "I want you and Odette (my wife) to be in charge of building the church!". My wife graduated in civil engineering from the University of Toronto and had a master's degree from another university, so she was qualified, but I wasn't! I was an emergency physician, but I obeyed my spiritual father. It was a tumultuous year, after which I told my wife, "I will never again have anything to do with building a church!". Later, I learned never to say never. The second event was the coming to Toronto an obscure monk named Abouna Metias Alsouryanni, who was sent by Pope Shenouda to study church administration at the university of Toronto. He started a revival in Toronto, with his valuable down to earth sermons that touched the everyday life of new immigrants. He was a God-sent gift to the congregation of Toronto as well as Kitchener, a city one hour to the west of Toronto with the congregation of seventy Coptic families. Once a month, on a Saturday, I would drive up Abouna Metias and another deacon (currently Abouna Tawadros Anba Bishoy) to Kitchener to celebrate the liturgy. Abouna Metias was ordained Anba Reweiss by Pope

Shenouda and used to visit us twice a year, once during the holy fifty days, and another in the feast of the Neyrouz.

In 1980, on the eve of Neyrouz, Anba Reweiss suggested priesthood for me. I've became very emotional, and defensive to no avail. I left Anba Reweiss and saw Abouna Marcos in front of me and I told him with tears in my eyes "can you believe this? he wants me to be a priest!". Abouna smiled and told me "I agree 100%!". At this moment I felt angry with him. I was hoping that he will come to my help rather than siding with them better ways. Abouna Marcos traveled to Egypt to attend my ordination and ever since he had been my father of confession and spiritual guide. I took his council about everything, before buying a new house or making a major decision in my church. This went on until illness prevented him from continuing.

As soon as the news about his departure came to the congregation in Kitchener, I started getting emails and phone calls of condolences. He started the church in Kitchener (the second oldest church in central Canada after Saint Mark in Toronto). Many of our people reminded me that he conducted their weddings, baptized their children, gave them guidance and counseling during their problems. I am sure that many people all over North America feel the same. he was a pioneer who taught me and many others how to give ourselves to the service we were entrusted with. One last thing I want to share with you: I made the very difficult decision of not attending the funeral. I am not afraid of Covid, God knows that my heart's desire is to be with a Anba Reweiss and Abouna Markos. I made this decision out of concern to my congregation. If I catch the virus and bring it to my congregation, I will not forgive myself. I know that if he were with us and I asked him what to do? (As I always did before making any important decision) his answer would have been "thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God". May his prayers be with us All amen.

## Fr. Daniel Rizh - Halifax

On the memory of the departure of our beloved father, Hegumen Marcos Elias Marcos. "The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. "Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord". Christ is risen, truly He is risen.

I bid farewell, in the hope of the resurrection, a lifelong companion in service in Canada, Father Marcos Marcos, a servant of Christ. When I was ordained by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III on October 7, 1984, he sent me in December 1984 to start my service at the churches of Western Canada. Fr. Marcos had already planted the seed within the dispersed Coptic families at I. Edmonton and Calgary (province of Alberta) 2. Vancouver (province of British Columbia), 3. Manitoba (Province of Winnipeg) and 4. the city of Saskatoon and the city of Regina (Saskatchewan). All these provinces had very few families and father Marcos would travel to them, even if they were only one or two to baptize their children and pray for them liturgies so that they would partake from the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone was talking about the great grace that the Lord gave them through our beloved Father Marcos. my father, you truly planted the seed for the establishment of many churches in western Canada, and it was Father Marcos who encouraged and guided me when I faced multiple obstacles. He would either travel to me or I to him, despite the distances, to help me in serving all those provinces. He helped me, with the power of God, build the first church in western Canada in 1987. After that, the establishment and construction of churches in those cities continued, and the seed grew and sprouted and became a large fruitful tree.

From west to east, His Holiness Pope Shenouda III assigned me to serve Eastern Canada in August 2001. Since my arrival to the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, I saw, and heard about the beginning of the seed of service for two families by Father Marcos. This seed has now grown and has had many fruits, people and a church, and there are more churches now in eastern Canada, including the province of Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and King Edward's Island.

My father, I see that your pure and selfless soul stands before the Lord of glory and is happy with this fruit, and you hear his joyful voice saying to you, O good servant, you were faithful in a little, I made you over many. Enter into the joy of your master. Remember me, my family, and my service before the divine throne to support us. May God strengthens us so that we may complete His good will and complete our days of sojourn in peace.

## Fr. Marcos Farag - Winnipeg

On behalf of myself, the priests of the Church, the board, and all the services, we pray for the repose of our beloved father Morcos Morcos. My condolences to the fathers, the family and the congregation of the Church.

## An excerpt from Fr. John Ramzy's eulogy for Fr. Marcos:

An extremely humble individual, he has the gift of letting everyone around him feel very special. He always calls himself "the servant of my Master's children" خدام أو لاد سيدي". And he does practice it. I know many people who try to be humble. In so doing, they show us what I call "the pride of humility". With Fr. Marcos, humility shines from inside. It comes out naturally.

I remember in June 1999, at a Canadian priests' retreat, I was delivering a talk entitled "The priest and the sacrament of confession". To my amazement, Fr. Marcos was taking notes! More than anyone else. My father of confession, who taught me all I know about it, was taking notes as I spoke. You can imagine how small I must have felt. But this is Fr. Marcos. He can very naturally take on the role of a disciple to his disciples. That is how humble he genuinely is.

Fr. Marcos also never holds a rancor against anyone. He refrains from even criticizing. His Master's in Theology paper was in Comparative Theology. He developed a method of presenting the difference between Christian denominations based to a timeline of Church History which offends no one, while clearly underscoring the dogmatic differences between the major Christian denomination groups, with plenty of love. It was such a refreshing approach that I found myself [I was still a layman at the time] (I found myself) adopting it in my Comparative Theology presentations. And, by the way, he came to attend my first presentation of the subject, not to scrutinize my presentation, but to supply me with a stamp of approval in the eyes of my audience.

## Fr. John Sarkis - Markham

Father John Sarkis had the blessing of visiting Abouna Marcos during his stay at the senior home. To Father John's surprise Abouna Marcos greeted him by the name he had before his ordination (John) and asked him why he had grown a beard. Father John explained that he was ordained as a priest because Abouna Marcos had nominated him. Abouna Marcos congratulated him and said, "You deserve it." Father John asked Abouna to pray for him and he recited the absolution. Amazingly, not only did Abouna Marcos recite the absolution word for word, but he also placed his hand on Father John Sarkis' shoulder as opposed to touching his head. This is customary when priests read the absolution for each other.

## An anonymous priest - Canada

We first came from Montreal to Toronto in 1989. My father didn't have a job yet and was eagerly seeking work, since God granted him to be successful in his career back home and eventually here in Canada as well. We could never forget how Abouna Marcos got him his first job here in Canada. He told the owner of the place (where my father did come to work later) that if he has a job available, he was looking for someone so dear to him, like his son. We could never forget how kind and loving Abouna Marcos was. Though he was a priest dealing with many people, not just in the city where I serve, but all over Canada, as well as in the states. A great number of these people share the same feelings towards Abouna Marcos, full of gratitude because of how he helped everyone from their early days here, as a true father who cares.

I can only say that there is no one like Abouna Marcos whom I have seen, that would trust his sons and give them the chance to lead the way. You cannot imagine how much appreciation I hold in my heart towards this holy man. He is not like any other in his trust and open- Mindedness. Such adjectives are of a true leader (not a ruler) and a divine gentleman.

## Mother Theolipty -St. Demiana Monastery in Egypt

To my beloved and most revered father Marcos Marcos,

Eternal peace and joy to you, our father Marcos, you now meet your bridegroom and our bridegroom, Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God in the paradise of joy. It saddens me to hear of your departure. I would like to remember your loving kindness and fatherhood to me that began in October 1993 when I met you at St. Mark's Church in Scarborough, Toronto, on the recommendation of my friend Shereen Amin. My first and following meetings with you were always joyful and blessed, as I felt the grace of God emerging from your features, as well as your advice and loving kindness to me, none of which I deserved. You have always raised me spiritually in every meeting, whether it was a liturgy, a celebration, private consultations, my baptism, or meetings with others. I have always felt the grace of your fatherly presence, and your love piercing my heart and soul. You have taught me Christianity not only through your vast wisdom and experience, but also through your actions which were full of love. Christ occupied the center of your life and showed His grace through your presence, face, smile, laughter, and your tender care.

The day of my baptism was truly the happiest day of my life. I was blessed with an indescribable spiritual joy that I had never felt before. I am truly indebted to your loving kindness and service to my weak and broken self. I am sure that God will reward you father, for all your trouble with me and with countless others, and for this I feel consolation.

The last time I saw you was during your visit to our monastery headquarters in Cairo, Egypt in 1999 (if I remember correctly). And as usual I got a great blessing from your visit. I wish I had seen you again before you left for the paradise of joy, but God did not allow that. I ask for your prayers, Father, so that God may have mercy on me and allow us to have our next meeting before Him in Paradise with Saint Mark and Saint Demiana and the forty virgins and the countless number of saints.

I pray that the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and Prince of Peace comfort your family, relatives, spiritual sons and daughters with peace and supreme consolation as your 56-year priestly ministry (1964-2020) has impacted countless souls on the international level. We mourn your departure from our mortal world, but we have joy and hope in our Lord to meet you all at the appointed time in Paradise and eternally in the heavenly Jerusalem later. All praise, glory and honor to our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ forever, Amen.



### Pope Shenouda III Theological Seminary @PSIIICOTS · Dec 9

000

We extend our most heartfelt condolences to the family of the Very Reverend Fr. Marcos Marcos and the congregation of St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, Toronto, Ontario, Canada at the repose of a true father, humble teacher, and faithful servant of Christ and the Church.



### StGeorge & StRueiss @StGRChurch · Dec 10

000

May the Lord Jesus Christ repose the pure soul of Abouna Marcos.

Abouna Marcos built for his reverence a great treasure in heaven. May the Lord accept his reverence's prayers for us. - @FrRueissAwad



### St Mary & St Joseph @smsjchurch · Dec 9

. . . .

"As soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house" (Luke 1:23). In hope of the resurrection we bid farewell to our beloved Hegumen Fr. Marcos Marcos the angel of St. Mark's Church, Toronto Canada. May his prayers be with us all.



### SMSV Coptic Church @smsvchurch · Dec 10

\_\_\_\_

The founder of the Coptic Church in North America celebrates the 10th year anniversary of his daughter church, SMSV. It was the vision of Fr. Marcos to see a culturally integrated Coptic Church in North America. His love & support will always be felt. May his memory be eternal.



### Justin Trudeau 🕗 @JustinTrudeau · Dec 10

000

The first-ever Coptic Orthodox priest in North America, Father Marcos Marcos was dedicated and devoted - and he spent his entire life in service of others. My thoughts are with his family, friends, and the Coptic community as they mourn this tremendous loss.



### Erin O'Toole @erinotoole · Dec 11

000

Great loss for the Coptic community in Canada. Father Marcos was a pioneer who established the first Coptic Church in North America. His legacy will forever be remembered. My sincere condolences to the family and all Canadian Copts.



### 

000

So sad to learn of the passing of Fr. Marcos. As the first Coptic Orthodox priest in North America. He touched the lives of so many people throughout Canada. I was honoured to meet this wise, kind man of sincere faith during many liturgical events in the GTA.



## **Doug Ford ⊘** @fordnation · Dec 10

000

Saddened to hear about the passing of my friend and the first Coptic Orthodox priest in North America, Father Marcos Marcos. My condolences to his family and the Coptic community.



### Mayor Frank Scarpitti 🔮 @frankscarpitti · 11h

00

Father Marcos was a gentle, kind & devoted member of our community. As the first Coptic Orthodox priest in North America, he dedicated his life to service & his vision for a cathedral was realized. His legacy to Markham & St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Cathedral will never be forgotten



## Bob Saroya, MP 📀 @BobSaroya · Dec 11

000

Saddened to hear about the passing of Father Marcos Marcos this past Wednesday. Fr. Marcos Marcos was the first Coptic Orthodox priest in North America. My condolences to his family and the entire Coptic community.



### Aris Babikian 🔮 @Aris\_Babikian · Dec 10

000

Great loss for the #Coptic Orthodox community in #Ontario and #Canada and for our entire province. The death of Fr. Marcos is not the end of his great legacy. My condolences to the St. Mark Coptic Church in #ScarboroughAgincourt and his family and loved ones. @stmarkscoc



## Omar Alghabra 🕗 @OmarAlghabra · Dec 11

000

I rose in the House of Commons today to offer my sincere condolences to the Coptic community for the passing of Father Marcos, who was the first Coptic Orthodox Priest in North America



### Ahmed Abu Zeid @egyptincanada · Dec 9

00

أتقدم بخالص العزاء لجميع آباء الكنيسة القبطية الأرثوذكسية في كندا، و أعضاء الجالية المصرية القبطية، في وفاة القمص مرقس مرقس، مؤسس الكنيسة القبطية الأرثوذكسية في أمريكا الشمالية وأول كاهن قبطي يتوجه الى بلاد المهجر منذ عام ١٩٦٤.



### **Mary Ng**

On behalf of Mary and our entire office, we would like to extend our deepest condolences on the passing of Father Marcos. He was kind and devoted member of the community and has accomplished some incredible things on behalf of St. Mark Cathedral. Please let us know if there is anything our office can do to support your congregants and members during this time.

### بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



#### Embassy of the Republic of Sudan Ottawa

## سغارة جممورية السودان أوتاوا

### 12 ديسمبر 2020م

## الإخوة الكرام في مُجمّع كهنة كاتدرائية مارمرقس بتورونتو

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،،، ،،، ،،،

أتقدّم لكم وأبناء كاتدرائية مارمرقس بتورونتو ولجميع أبناء الجالية القبطية في كندا والولايات المُتحدة الأمريكية بخالص التعازي وصادق المواساة في وفاة جناب الأب المُوقر القُمص مُرقس، الذي سخّر حياته من أجل خدمة الآخرين.

علمنا سيرة الفقيد الكبير كأول كاهن يُنشئ الكنيسة القبطية في أمريكا الشمالية عام 1964م. وكذلك دوره الأبوي في رعاية كل أبناء السُّودان المهاجرين واحتضانهم منذ ذلك التاريخ، فهو يُعتبر بمثابة الأب والراعي والمُعلِّم والصديق لكثير من السُّودانيين في كندا والولايات المُتحدة الأمريكية.

وإذ أعبر عن مُشاركتي لكم الأحزان إزاء هذا المُصاب الجلل، ألتمس تقديم خالص عزائي وصادق مُواساتي لأسرته وأبنائه ولكل مُحبيه.

السفير طارق حسن أبوصالح وأسرة السفارة

354 Stewart St. Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6K8, Canada Tel. (613) 235-4000 Fax: (613) 235-6880

E-mail: ottawa@mofa.gov.sd www.sudanembassyottawa.com



## Saint Matthew Coptic Orthodox Christian Charity

7357 Woodbine Avenue, Suite 116 Markham, Ontario L3R 6L3 Canada

Blessed is he who considers the poor; The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.. Psalm 40 (1-2) E-Mail: president@stmatthewcharity.org Tel.: 416-930-7446 Fax: 905-615-9329

December 10, 2020

St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Cathedral 455 Ferrier St, Markham, ON L3R 2Z5

We are lost for words at this sad time, **Fr. Marcos Marcos** gentle soul will always be in our hearts and we will never forget him.

We would like to express our heartfelt condolences to Tasony Suzy and the family, all priests, deacons and congregations of St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church as well as the Coptic Community.

May Fr. Marcos' soul be at peace with our Heavenly Father. May God give him eternal rest.

Please accept our sincere condolences. We pray that our Lord blesses and comforts you and your family during this difficult time.

Sincerely



St. Matthew Board of Directors Bishop Sarabamon Bishop Elia

My deepest condolences to you and St Mark's Coptic Church community on the passing of a great leader and inspiration to the Coptic Church in Canada.

I know that he will be greatly missed by your community, he was a great man. While I knew him years ago and most recently he was the leader that everyone needs in their faith.

Please extend my personal condolences to his family, the priests and the community. All the best to you and your family.

Regards from all of us at NORR.

#### Silvio Baldassarra

Chairman



#### CYC TV @cycnow · Dec 10

CYC offers its sincere condolences to the congregation of St. Mark Coptic Orthodox church in Toronto #Canada and to the #Coptic people in North America for the departure of Hegumen Rev Father Marcos Marcos.

@stmarkscoc



### CIJA O @CIJAinfo · Dec 11

CIJA joins the Coptic community & the Marcos family, in mourning the loss of Fr. Marcos Marcos, a visionary leader who built bridges between faith communities. May his memory be for a blessing. His legacy is carried on by his son Greg, a good friend to CIJA& the Jewish community.

Blessings in the name of our Lord and Savior whose Advent comes! I heard of the death of Father Marcos Marcos and I am so grieving his loss in our midst. I know that you and all the Coptic people are both grieving but also assured of his place in heaven with our Lord. I watched part of the funeral service yesterday. Please know my prayers are with you all!

#### Karen Hamilton

Formerly, the general secretary of the Canadian Council of churches.

#### FATHER MARCOS' CULTURAL LEGACY



A Witness
I feel that upholding our
heritage is a ministry
that we all should share for
the glory of God.

The above statement was written in Father Marcos's carefully scripted handwriting, in red ink, on the back of the agenda of one of our regular monthly meetings — dated December 20, 2006 — on the management of the Museum. I don't remember the conversation that inspired him to write these words (with some of them being scratched out and replaced as he was doing so), but it captures succinctly his understanding of the role of the Coptic Museum, which was inaugurated by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III on November 27, 1996, and the importance he placed on his role as President of the Board of Directors, a position he held until his retirement in 2017.

It is impossible to write about the Coptic Museum of Canada without honouring Fr. Marcos's vision and his pivotal role in its history. I refer the reader to the recent publication (July 16, 2021) of the Claremont University Digital Coptic Encyclopedia, which covers the history of the Museum, its collection, and its activities (https://ccdl.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/2171). In this chapter, I put myself into the picture as a witness to his vision and dedication.

#### On First Meeting Father Marcos

In 2000, I returned to Canada from Geneva, Switzerland, where I had been living and working for the World Council of Churches Refugee Desk. I had decided that I would not seek employment because I felt I would never find something that could match the incredible ecumenical experience and ministry for and with refugees at the World Council of Churches (little did I know!). I was unsure of what I would do with my time, but I had to be "involved" in a worthwhile project. I had heard about the Coptic Museum and decided to look into it a bit more. When I asked to meet Fr. Marcos, I was forewarned by a friend that he would certainly ask me how I could serve the Church.

Fr. Marcos welcomed me with open arms and, sure enough, asked me how I could serve the Church, now that I was not seeking employment. I came prepared! I suggested that the Coptic Museum would be ideal, since I'd had a passion for culture and the arts all my life, and I was an

avid visitor to museums since my early teens. I always found a way of expressing the significance of culture and identity in my teaching and professional work, but I had never had museum work experience, and had only a casual knowledge of Coptic art. I would have to learn. I still remember the gleam in Fr. Marcos's eyes and that special smile he gave me, which I later came to learn meant something had piqued his interest and he was paying attention. In this case, it meant that I had touched on something very meaningful to him: his vision for the Coptic Museum.

Fr. Marcos selected six members of the congregation to become the first guides of the Museum. I recall Fr. Marcos's words at our first training session when he described the Museum's collection as representing "a colourful tile" in the Canadian multicultural mosaic. He went on to say that we held the important educational ministry to introduce our culture to all who visited the Museum. In this respect, Fr. Marcos modelled how one can remain rooted in one's faith and, at the same time, express genuine respect in different inter-denominational and inter-religious cultural contexts and relationships. He was a genuine ecumenist!

In 2002, he asked me to coordinate the work of the six guides and the Museum's programming. As I did so, he would offer me his ongoing mentorship. He had a unique gift of presence that could make me feel that at that moment no one else counted, no matter how small or big my "issues" were. It was okay not to know, as long as I wanted to learn. He never judged; instead, he offered understanding with a gentle yet challenging guidance by helping me draw on my experience and skills as gifts to be shared in this ministry.

The questions and expectations of the Museum's visitors soon made me realize that we needed to know more about Coptic art so we could interpret our collection with confidence, and we especially needed to learn more about how to manage a museum. As a trained sociologist, my research skills were put to good use. And, though I did not need another academic degree, I enrolled in a museum studies program offered by the Ontario Museum Association (OMA) and connected with the international Coptic Studies network to learn about current scholarly research by attending conferences. Despite all his knowledge, Fr. Marcos himself was a lifelong learner. At our monthly meetings, he clearly enjoyed hearing my updated reports on my research into the study of Coptic art and what we would need to do to meet expected museum standards in Canada. After I completed the OMA Certificate in Museum Studies Certificate, Fr. Marcos named my function in the Museum as "Volunteer Curator." I took on the role and responsibility of curating a collection in the public trust with great humility and awe. This started the ongoing administrative and curatorial development of the Museum.

#### **Curating the Museum**

Fr. Marcos had a distinctive decision-making leadership style. I clearly remember that, in 2005, when the Board of Directors was discussing the creation of a logo for the Museum, Fr. Marcos insisted that the board seek the input of volunteers and other people who were directly or indirectly involved with the Museum. He knew the logo had to be a unique symbol that communicated the essence of the Museum's collection and mission and that reflected the concept of Coptic art as a living tradition. He participated fully, listened, and was able to guide the board to make the final choice without imposing his opinion on what the logo should be. Although, as we shall read in the example below, he could take a decisive position when necessary.

It would take many more pages than I have in this chapter to describe Fr. Marcos's ministry in the Museum and the breadth of his cultural legacy. In an effort to do so, I have selected four examples

to illustrate Fr. Marcos's dedication to the Museum as a cultural institution and his contributions of introducing Coptic art and history to Canadian culture.

# I. Collection Development

What is most distinctive about a museum as an institution is its collection.

While Fr. Marcos was serving the Copts and establishing churches across North America, he was simultaneously collecting the initial artefacts for the Museum. In 2000, the Museum's collection consisted of IIO objects. Today, in 2021, the Museum's collection of artefacts has reached 1,400 objects, including clay works, coins, crosses, ecclesiastical vestments, icons, jewellery, metalwork, paintings, papyrus fragments and manuscripts, stamps, tapestries and textiles, and woodwork objects — all of which range in dates from I331 BC to AD 2021.

As Copts heard about Fr. Marcos's vision and efforts to build the collection, they began to donate their personal artefacts to the Museum. However, he also took the initiative to seek out artists and their works, often travelling across the continents in his searches. He began to live up to his nickname "The Flying Priest" (after the late-1960s TV show *The Flying Nun*), which he had acquired during the first years of his ministry when he travelled extensively to minister to Coptic communities. Below is one such example of how Fr. Marcos lived up to this description.

In the 1960s, artist Marguerite Nakhla's name was very much in the Egyptian media, and members of the congregation urged Fr. Marcos to try to acquire one of her paintings for the Museum. His research led him to Nakhla's brother, who was living in Montreal, and who in turn recommended that Fr. Marcos meet with Fr. Pierre du Bourget, the head of the Egyptian Antiquities Department at the Louvre Museum and the first scholar to publish a book on Coptic art. Coincidentally, before his ordination to the priesthood, Fr. Marcos had assisted Fr. du Bourget on one of his archaeological trips to an ancient Coptic church. When Fr. Marcos met him again at the Louvre Museum, he found that Fr. du Bourget's praise of Marguerite Nakhla exceeded anything he had previously heard about her. Fr. du Bourget gave Fr. Marcos a copy of a letter that he had written to Nakhla after she showed him two of her biblical scenes. In this letter he underscored that she had expressed early Coptic art in modern form. On one of his trips to Egypt, Fr. Marcos met with Nakhla at her Alexandria studio. He explained his vision of founding a Coptic Museum in Canada and guaranteed her that the congregation could pay for one of her biblical scenes over a period of several years. She was reticent at first, but eventually was convinced of his desire to create a museum and offered all six paintings as a gift! She did this with one exception: he would ensure that people would learn about the revival of early Coptic art in her modern style.

True to his word, the Museum has mounted three exhibitions on Nakhla's works to date, offered several workshops on her art, and published a book in 2009 on her life and works — *Marguerite Nakhla: Legacy to Modern Egyptian Art* — that continues to be in demand. Because of the Museum's growing archival resources on Marguerite Nakhla, it has also become a centre for researchers of Nakhla's art and modern Egyptian art. A recent publication by Egyptian art historian Fatenn Mostafa Kanafani, titled *Modern Art in Egypt: Identity and Independence, 1850–1936*, devoted one chapter to Nakhla as one of five leading artists (and the only woman) of the modern period. Many of the Museum's archival resources and publications on Nakhla were referenced for this chapter. In 2015, the Museum also received three of Nakhla's paintings as a gift from a private donor — two of her still lifes and one of her French scenes.

Similar stories can be told about many of the artefacts Fr. Marcos collected, and those collected to this day. While other museums may have similar artefacts, many of the artefacts, like the Marguerite Nakhla paintings, are unique to the Coptic Museum. The concept of continuity of Coptic art throughout the centuries, as expressed by Fr. du Bourget and Marguerite Nakhla, is to this day a guiding principle for the acquisition of artefacts and the stories we share about the collection. The challenge ahead is to ensure the preservation and conservation of this valuable collection.

### 2. Valuing Art as a Profession

Fr. Marcos's deep-seated appreciation of art was more than just a hobby; it came with an equal amount of respect for the artist and art as a profession. This was central to his storytelling about the collection and the people "behind" the creation of each object, as well as his relationship with artists in the Coptic community.

Since 2002, with Fr. Marcos's encouragement, the Museum has offered art workshops, both to nurture hands-on interest in Coptic art and to acknowledge the instructors who chose the arts as a profession. As well, the Museum has offered university internships to students preparing for a career in museums or art galleries. One of these interns mounted an exhibition in 2011 featuring the works of twelve Coptic artists titled *Canadian-Coptic Visual Artists in Southern Ontario*. The Museum's 2018 exhibition, *Arrivals and Departures: The Journey of Copts and Their Artefacts*, included a panel display of twenty-two Copts practising their art in the Canadian culture sector, highlighting their achievements, the challenges they faced, and their determination to work in the arts or in museums/galleries as volunteers or for their livelihood. Many of these artists had to overcome the initial objections from their families and community over their choice to be artists, which is often viewed as a financially fraught career if compared to careers in medicine, law, or architecture.

However, perhaps the most striking testament to Fr. Marcos's passion for Coptic art is best expressed by Kirollos Kilada, who describes himself as an "emerging artist, illustrator, and Coptic iconographer." (See his interview from the Museum's newsletter included in this publication, titled "Father Marcos's Cultural Legacy Lives On.") Kilada had minimal personal interaction with Fr. Marcos, yet he was so moved when he heard of the passing of Fr. Marcos that he found himself painting a canvas that he titled *The Flying Priest*. Kilada realized "that it was none other than Fr. Marcos who created the atmosphere and the place that could produce, not only generations of [church] servants, priests and deacons, but the next generation of Coptic artists."

Kilada offered the painting to the Museum, as it seemed to him "that there is no better destination for the painting than the museum which Fr. Marcos founded as a manifestation of his passion for Coptic culture and history." The painting was showcased for the first time at the Museum's exhibition on December 9, 2021, commemorating the one-year anniversary of Fr. Marcos's passing and celebration of his life.

### 3. Coptic Studies at the University of Toronto

In 2004, I met with a group of Coptic university students who were visiting the Museum. After hearing several references to the scholarly discipline of Coptic Studies as the source of information about the history of the artefacts in the Museum that represented Coptic art and civilization, they challenged me with the observation that in none of their university courses, whether in history, theology, art, or any other discipline in the arts and humanities, had they heard about Coptic civilization. Then one of them turned to me and asked, "What are you going to do about this?"

At a complete loss, I shared this challenge with Fr. Marcos, who informed me that early in his ministry in Canada, St. Mark's Church had offered financial support to one of the theological colleges at the University of Toronto to teach the Coptic language. However, with the demands of the growing church ministry at the time, Fr. Marcos regretted that he was unable to follow up after the first year. Since our youth were now raising this challenge, he felt we must take action. He asked me to survey the possibilities of how such a course of studies could be offered at the University of Toronto. During the search for the most appropriate location for such studies, we determined it should be the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (NMC). The NMC has an internationally recognized Egyptology program of studies, as well as studies in Syriac and Islamic civilizations in the Near and Middle East. The NMC faculty members were very receptive to the outreach from St. Mark's Church and the Museum because offering courses on Coptic civilization and language would bridge their Egyptology and Islamic studies curriculum. However, due to significant cuts to funding for Canadian universities, they were unable to establish new course programs. In his usual visionary response, Fr. Marcos got the approval of St. Mark's Church to contribute toward the salary of a lecturer to teach two courses per academic year. The first set of courses in Coptic language were taught in 2006. With the arrival in Ontario of well-known Coptologist Dr. Ramez Boutros, course offerings the following years alternated with Coptic Language (I & 2), Introduction to Coptic Studies, Coptic Art, and Archaeology (I & 2), and Coptic Monasticism.

With the exception of one year, when Fr. Marcos sought the financial contribution of Coptic churches in the GTA and southern Ontario, St. Mark's Church continued to fund courses until 2012, when Fr. Marcos expressed decisively to the NMC that he felt it was now time for the University of Toronto to take over the total financing of these courses. While the NMC continues to offer these courses today, funding does remain difficult. In an effort to secure ongoing funding, an endowment campaign was initiated in 2013 with the goal of raising funds for a permanent, full-time professor position in Coptic Studies. Collecting the necessary funds, however, has proved to be a major challenge.

Around this time, in 2008, a group of individuals (including from the Museum) set out to establish the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies (CSCS), modelled after a several regional and country research and public education societies at the NMC. The CSCS was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in 2009, with Fr. Marcos and the Coptic Museum as founding members. The CSCS complements the courses offered at the NMC by organizing annual Coptic Studies symposiums (co-sponsored with the Museum) on a wide range of topics. Scholars from around the world are invited to present papers, and over the years the CSCS has encouraged doctoral students to present papers on their research. The papers presented at each symposium are published in the official journal of the CSCS and refereed by international specialists.

The outcome of Fr. Marcos's pioneer initiative was best expressed in a tribute titled "Tribute to a Visionary" offered by the CSCS Board of Directors when Fr. Marcos passed away in 2020. The full text of the tribute is posted on the CSCS website (http://cscopticstudies.weebly.com/tribute-to-fr-marcos-marcos). I quote a section here that refers to the first CSCS symposium held in 2008:

At the First Annual CSCS Symposium, Fr. Marcos expressed his desire to see Coptic Studies flourish.

"The response [from students being interested in Coptic Studies at the University of Toronto and future annual symposiums are...] significant steppingstones towards the long-term vision, we can perhaps allow ourselves to envision that in 10 years we will have young

Canadian scholars presenting their research, not only in Canadian academic settings but also [internationally]."

Fr. Marcos' vision has been actualized with a number of young Canadian scholars pursuing graduate degrees and holding university positions across many disciplines such as anthropology, ethnomusicology, history, patristics, religious studies, and theology, all of whom engage in Coptic Studies.

## 4. From St. Mark's Coptic Museum to the Coptic Museum of Canada

On July 20, 2018, the Museum's name was officially changed from "St. Mark's Coptic Museum" to the "Coptic Museum of Canada." This action by the Museum's Board of Directors affirms Fr. Marcos's vision that the Coptic Museum would become a "colourful tile in Canada's multicultural mosaic," promoting educational outreach programs to Copts and Canadians; programs that continue to be offered to this day. The new name also reflects the current vision statement of the Museum — "to be recognised as a Canadian cultural institution respected for its vital role in preserving, researching and celebrating the unique collection and rich cultural heritage of the Copts."

When there was just one Coptic church, the designation of St. Mark's Coptic Museum was fitting, but with the growing number of Copts immigrating to Canada and the increasing number of Coptic churches across the country, the name needed to embrace this wider community. While it continues to be the only Coptic Museum in Canada, the new name establishes that it is a community museum with a national mandate. The challenge for the leadership of the Museum is to carry Fr. Marcos's vision forward into a new era.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Father Marcos always looked beyond the present moment to what the Museum could become as a Coptic cultural treasure in Canada for generations to come. He never pretended that the road would be easy. And, as in the Parable of the Sower, he also knew some people may not be able to accept this ministry, at this moment. Time and time again, he not only expressed but modelled the importance of *persevering* and, at the same time, he maintained a sense of hope focused on the mission of the Museum's ministry.

Fr. Marcos's ministry as a teacher, together with his knowledge and passion for Coptic art and culture, opened a door for me that led to a journey enriched with knowledge about our cultural heritage to be shared with people of various backgrounds and ages. My life has been blessed in immeasurable ways by the wisdom, knowledge, encouragement, mentorship, and trust that Fr. Marcos extended to me as he showed us how to uphold the Coptic heritage as a ministry to be shared with everyone in the Glory of God.

A person can be a visionary, but Fr. Marcos's preeminent quality, or gift, was his quiet, humble, steady, persistent, hard-working, and persevering leadership style. Using these qualities, he was able to realize his vision of creating the Coptic Museum, and, as he did so, gathering disciples he may not even have known who now uphold the Coptic heritage and the mission of the Museum. To remember his legacy, I quote the biblical verse that appeared in the message of condolence from the Museum's board:

Proverb 13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children.

Helene Moussa October 1, 2021



NMC was saddened by the passing of Father Marcos A. Marcos on December 9, 2020.



Fr. Marcos was ordained in 1964 as the first Coptic Orthodox priest in North America. He was born in Egypt in 1929 and attended Hartford University in Connecticut where he received a bachelor's degree in Divinity and then went on to receive a master's degree in Psychology. Fr. Marcos returned to Egypt where he taught at the Coptic Theological Seminary.

In 1964, he went to Canada to establish St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in

Toronto, the first Coptic Orthodox Church in North America. He was a pioneer, as a founder of the Coptic Museum of Canada in 1996, and the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies (CSCS) in 2010.

Fr. Marcos played an active role in supporting the cause and dissemination of Coptic Heritage many years before the foundation of the CSCS. Under his leadership, the Coptic Museum of Canada initiated discussions at the University of Toronto, which led to the offering of Coptic Studies courses in NMC at the University of Toronto. The Canadian Society for Coptic Studies' Tribute to Fr. Marcos can be found on the CSCS website.

# Father Marcos A. Marcos (1929-2020)



# TRIBUTE TO A VISIONARY

"It takes a noble man to plant a seed for a tree that will some day give shade to people he may never meet."

David E. Trueblood, Theologian & Writer

"It takes a noble man to plant a seed for a tree that will someday give shade to people he may never meet." David E. Trueblood, Theologian & Writer the Board of Directors and Members of The Canadian Society for Coptic Studies (CSCS) join hundreds of people around the world to mourn with grief and sadness the loss of a man with a great vision. Father Marcos A. Marcos departed from our world on December 9, 2020, after a long tireless life of service. This note is not enough to serve his memory rightly, nevertheless we wish hereby to pay tribute to the breadth and scope of his vision and accomplishments in the field of Coptic Heritage. Fr. Marcos was a pioneer par excellence. Beside his fastidious endeavours in the field of pastoral services, he believed genuinely in the cause of dissemination of Coptic Culture. Being an ingenious mastermind and initiator, he remarkably ensured and nurtured "local" leadership. He was never keen to accredit personal honour or glory but rejoiced in seeing initiatives growing and flourishing no matter their size. Fr. Marcos is best known as the founder of the Coptic Orthodox Church in North America. His deep-seated understanding and knowledge of the significance of Coptic cultural heritage led him to establish the Coptic Museum of Canada, the only Coptic Museum outside of Egypt (1996). Furthermore, he is also a founding member of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies, established in 2010. We attach the first volume of the Society's Journal where in his own words we published his talk at the First Annual Coptic Studies photographer: Sarah Asaad Symposium at the University of Toronto (2008) http://cscopticstudies.weebly.com/tributeto-fr-marcos-marcos.html. In 2020, thirteen years later, CSCS mounted the 13th Annual Coptic Studies Symposium and twelve journals have been published representing the papers presented at each symposium! At the First Annual CSCS Symposium Fr. Marcos expressed his desire to see Coptic Studies flourish. "The response [from students being interested in Coptic Studies at University of Toronto and future annual Symposiums are...] significant steppingstones towards a long-term vision, we can perhaps allow ourselves to envision that in the next 10 years we will have young Canadian scholars presenting their research, not only in Canadian academic setting but also [internationally]." Fr. Marcos' vision has been actualized with a number of young Canadian

scholars pursuing graduate degrees and holding university positions across many disciplines such as anthropology, ethnomusicology, history, patristics, religious studies, and theology, all of whom engage with Coptic Studies. Indeed Fr. Marcos played an active role in supporting the cause of dissemination of Coptic Heritage many years before the foundation of the CSCS. Under his leadership the Coptic Museum of Canada initiated discussions at the University of Toronto that led to the offering of Coptic Studies courses in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the same university. In addition, he was able to secure funding from St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church to allow the university to offer Coptic Studies courses from 2006 to 2012, at which point the university took over the financial responsibility. In 2012, the University of Toronto also launched an Endowment campaign for a permanent Coptic Studies faculty position with an initial funding support from St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church, again with Fr. Marcos' stamp of approval. Fr. Marcos, the sower, and noble man who planted the seeds of Coptic Studies in Canada will be missed for his humble spirit, his humour, his love, and profound dedication to serve a cause he deeply believed in. He left our world, but the tree he planted will always bear fruits. Board of Directors 18 December 2020

The Canadian Society for Coptic Studies (CSCS) c/o Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations 4 Bancroft Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1C1 CANADA Phone: 416 946 3412

Email: cscopticstudies@gmail.com Website: http://cscopticstudies.weebly.com

# Chapter Two

# Photo Album

















# ination rdination





Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

PAPAL RESIDENCY

Cairo, Eghpt [U. A. R.]

Secretary Tel. 909180

Date 9 /2 / 1681

# TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr. Wagdy Elias Abdel-Messih was ordained a full Canonical Priest on August 9, 1964 with the name of Father Marcos Elias Abdel-Messih. This gives him the right to administer all the Sacraments.

Gen. Vicar of the Patriarchate

Bishop Athanasius
Bishopric of Beni-Sueif
and Bahnasa.

Bp. alhanasuis

# BISHOPRIC OF PUBLIC, ECUMENICAL & SOCIAL SERVICES

ANBA RUEIS BUILDING RAMSIS STREET ABBASIYA, CAIRO U. A. R.

BISHOP SAMUEL

CABLE : ELANBRUEIS CAIRO

TELEPH. : 822920

# Ordination Certificate

This is to certify that Deacon "Wagdy Elias Abdel-Messih" has been ordained a canonical priest of the Coptic Orthodox Church on Sunday the nineth day of August 1964 in the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral of Saint Mark in Cairo. By this act of or dination his name became:

Father Marcos Elias Abdel-Messih.

He has the right to perform and administer the Sacraments. That is to officiate the liturgical services, baptise, hold marriages, teach, preach, and offer pastoral care for the Copts in the U.S.A., in Canada, ad in any other place.

THE COMENCIAL STREET

Bishop Samuel

Bishop Samuel

Ecumenical

Bishop of Public, Social, and

Social Services of the Coptic

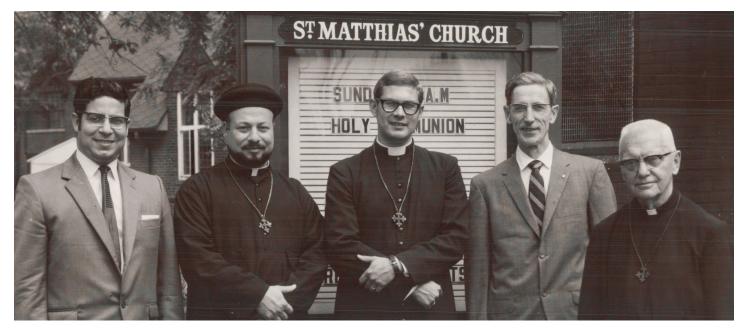
Orthodox Patriarchate.



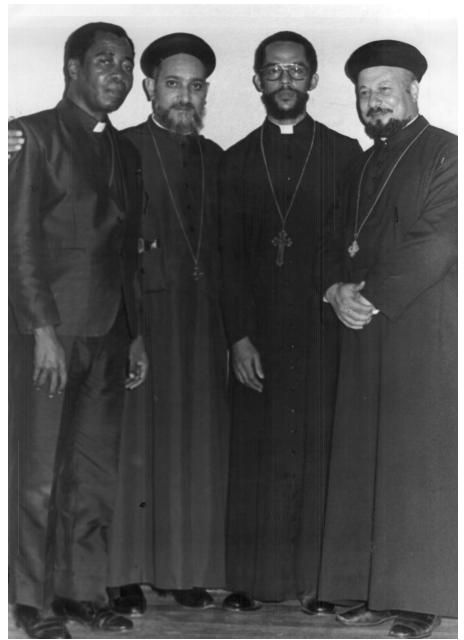
















NOPOOZO3OC THE

القاهرة في إلى المات ور سنة ١٩٨٥

المان الله المانوى وبطرك الكارة

الابن البارك القسمرقس الياس الياس المارك الرب

بعد منحكم البركات وامدادكم بصالح الدعاء نتعشم ان تكونوا وجميـــع ابنائنا البباركين بطرفكم في صحة كاملة ورعاية شاملة من الله سبحانه وتعالى تلقينا بالسرور خطاب بنوتكم المؤرخ ٢٠/٩/٢٠ الذي ابديتــــم في عند نشاطك المحمد اخد تالك تراد الكارد التاريخ الماد الما

فيه عن نشاطكم الروحى لخدمة الكنيسة ما سرنا كثيرا سائلين القدير ان يبارك حياتكم ويبارك مجهوداتكم وخدمتكم الروحيه ما يرفع شأن الكنيسة وثقوا ان الله سبحانه وتعالى لا ينسى تعب محبتكم وتقدير خدمتكم التى نأمل ان تذدا دوادشاطا فيها بما يسر خاطرنا ويسمعنا عنكم وعن شعب الكنيسة ما يسر خاطرنا ايضار ونأمل ان يصلنا دواما ما يطمنا عنكم ونعمة الرب تشملكم ولعظمته تعالى الشكر



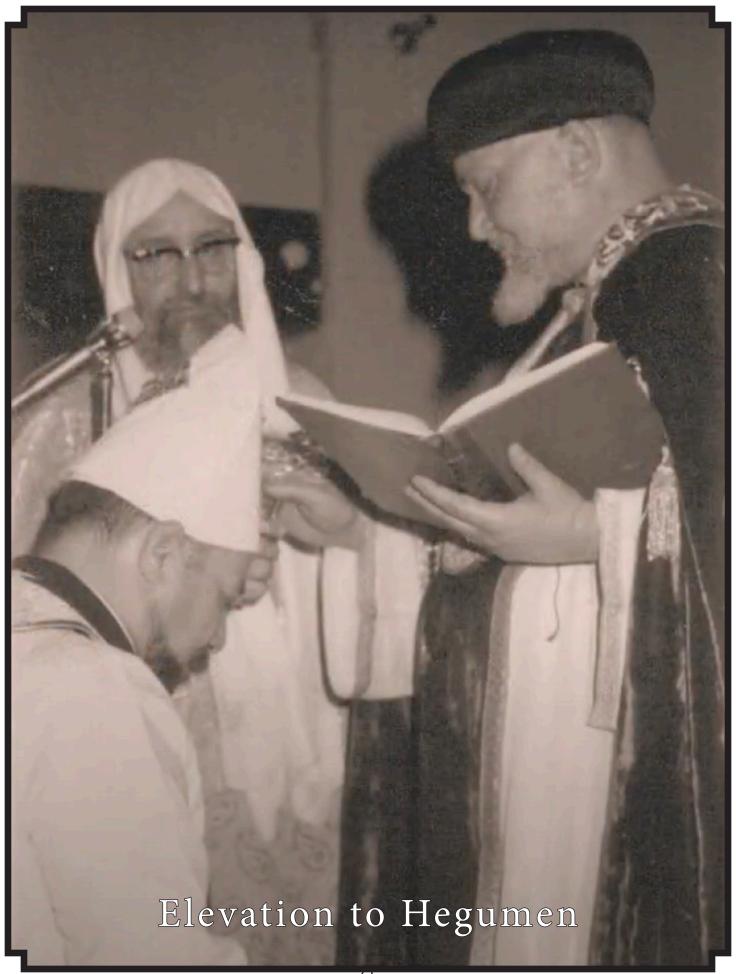
































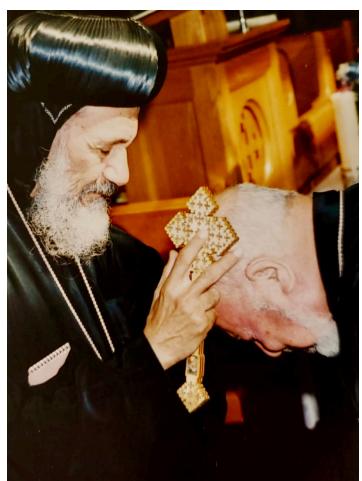








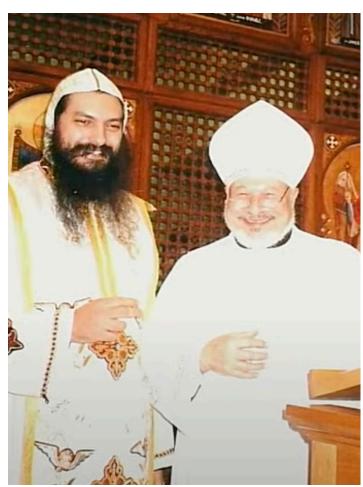


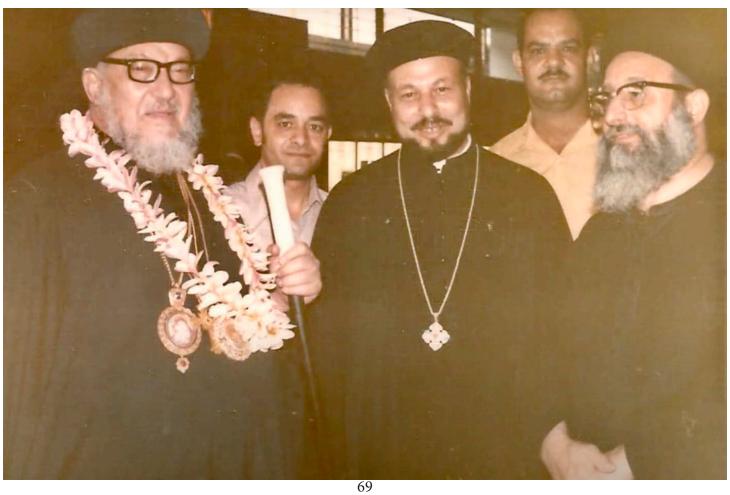












# ignitaries































FATHER MARCKOS-SALIB . . . during the solemn service.

# THE COPTIC RITUAL

By AUBREY WICE

I was a stranger and ye
took me in. (Matt. 25:35)

The old spiral staircase creaked with each step as I climbed to the upper room of the Church of the Holy Trinity on a drizzly morning in downtown Toronto.

The sweet smell of incense floated toward me at the doorway and nearby, white-robed young men chanted in ancient languages.

There are perhaps a dozen pews and high above, dark beams coming to a peak.

The brick walls, though painted gray, did not intrude into my fascination of this worship scene.

#### FLAMES

Two high wooden candlesticks with flames atop flanked an altar, also lit with candles.

A tall brass cross, a brass tabernacle, and other holy objects were set on the white linen.

By the altar, Rev. Marckos Salib, priest of the Coptic congregation performing the ritual of his church in this Anglican chapel.

He wore an ankle length white robe with a mitre of the same cloth, but covered with gold symbols, on his head

Also white-robed with a scarlet sash across his shoulder was Edward Habib, deacon for the service. He is a CBC producer.

Pews are almost unnecessary because the 100 or more worshippers who had crowded into the chapel stood for most of the two-hour service.

#### BEAUTY

The chanting in Coptic and Arabic was pure drama that deeply involved me, as I followed step by step its beauty and inspiration.

The frequent clanging of small silver cymbals, especially when praise was offered the Lord, heightened the excitement.

The ultimate was the changing of the bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood.

Then the worshippers in humbleness and in awe removed their shoes and in stockinged feet stood in line to receive the Sacrament. The priest, deacon and choir were without shoes the whole service.

The Body (bread) was placed directly into each worshipper's mouth as he said: "I believe."

Father Marckos spooned the Blood (wine) from a deep silver chalice.

A small boy approached and the priest dipped his finger into the chalice and touched the youngster's tongue.

In a homily in English, Father Marckos reminded us of our call as Christians to spread to the faith.

Most of the Coptic congregation here are professional people, extremely kind and friendly. The priest, at the close of service, publicly introduced me.

I was told that the Coptic church, spoken of as the most ancient Christian church, was founded by St. Mark in 63 AD and that its tradition, worship, and singing, have not changed.

The church has its own pope and there are 25,000,000 Coptic followers in Egypt and Africa including Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

The Toronto Coptic congregation is one of two in North America. The other is in Montreal.

However, other U.S. and Canadian cities have small groups.

# The Toronto Star



SECTION B - PAGES B1 to B12

MONDAY, MAY 2, 1977 

# Coptic Pope blesses site

It's not very often a pope. visits Scarborough so His Holiness Shenouda III, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark received a royal welcome Friday.

He came to Scarborough to dedicate the Agincourt building site of North America's first Coptic Orthodox Church.

The ceremony was one of pomp and splendor amid the humbling surrounding of a muddy field just off Pharmacy Ave. near the borough's

northern border. The spiritual leader of more than 500,000 copts blessed the cornerstone of what will be St. Mark's Cop-

tic Orthodox Church. Heads turned on the street as a motorcade containing Shinouda, and his entourage of bishops, priests, church officials and Scarborough Mayor Paul Cosgrove made its way from the church site to the Scarborough Civic Centre around noon:

He was given a tour of the building by Cosgrove, signed the mayor's guest book and was treated to a reception.

He marvelled at the build-ing calling it "a work of art" and kidding Cosgrove that such a place invited people to come out and meet their politicians.

Shinouda's church, which is based in Egypt, is one of the oldest Christian churches, founded in 48 AD by St. Mark. He is the 117th successor to St. Mark.

He said he found the area where the church will be "gentle and calm . . . a good place for a church."

It will not be like that for long, however. The site is in the middle of the Steeles community which is just being developed. There will be a shopping plaza next door to the church and hous-ing all around it in the future.

Rashad Messih, chairman of the building fund for the new church said about \$230,-000 of the \$500,000 cost of the church has been raised already. The new church will of Orthodox design and will seat about 500.

Construction is expected to start in June with completion



CORNERSTONE OF FIRST Coptic Orthodox church in North America is blessed by Shenouda III (right), Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, the spirit-

ual leader of more than 500,000 Copts around the world. The site is just off Pharmacy Ave., near Scarborough's northern boundary. Church members, officials look on.

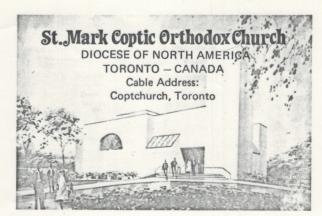




January 1980: CBC TV broadcasted the feast of the Epiphany

CHURCH
24 Innes Ave., Tor.
Tel: (416) 651-6334
P.O. Box 280, Station 'D'
Toronto, Ontario

Press Release



FR. MARCOS 35 Bedle Ave., Willowdale, Ontario Tel: 494-5055

For Immediate Release
April 24, 1979

Toronto- St. Marks Coptic Orthodox Church in Toronto will celebrate the Second anniversary of laying its corner stone on Saturday April 28th, 1979 at 12:30 p.m.

The Church, the first to be built in the traditional Coptic style in North America, will mark the occasion by inviting the membership to participate in the tree planting and landscaping of the new building in Scarborough.

On April 29th, 1977 His Holiness Pope Shenouda of Alexandria — the spiritual leader of 40 million Christian Copts concentrated in Egypt, Africa and the Middle East — layed down the corner stone for the one acre site in a historical celebration to mark the event. Since that time, the Toronto congregation — approximately 700 Egyptian coptic families — with the financial and moral support of other Egyption & Coptic communities in North America embarked on over half a million dollar construction program that resulted in the completion of this unique building on Glendenning Avenue near Pharmacy and Steeles in the northeast part of Metro.

Each member family will be allocated a tree to plant in the front, side and back yards of the site according to plans put forward by the Church. The purpose of this new concept is to encourage members to feel the future results of their own physical participation in the building and landscaping of the Church in addition to the spiritual and financial support already given to the Church.

The occasion will be marked by special thanksgiving prayers, the social outdoor event followed by a B.B.Q. to be held on the site.

Reference: Father Marcos A. Marcos

St. Marks Coptic Orthodox Church 41 Glendenning Ave., Scarborough

494-4449

Economist & Sun . Stouffville Tribune

# FAITH

# A new beginning

# MEMBERS OF ANCIENT FAITH PLAN TO CREATE 12-ACRE COPTIC VILLAGE IN MARKHAM

BY MIKE ADLER

hen he arrived here in 1964, he was the only Coptic priest in North America.

He had been ordained that same year and given a new first name that exactly matched his last — Marcos.

Toronto was a long way from Suhag, the hot provincial capital in Southern Egypt where he was raised, but Fr. Marcos Marcos knew Copts lived here too.

They were scattered through this foreign continent, but he was going to find them, gather them together and establish new churches.

Starting with 19 families in

"I came armed with a list of names all over North America. But the numbers we were given were very few compared to what we found later on," recalled Fr. Marcos, chosen for his unique mission because he spoke "engosa" and knew the customs of North America, having studied on a scholarship in the United States.

"This one gives me the names of three friends and so on. Wherever I go, I was adding to the list."

For years, he travelled with a portable liturgy set to meet Copts (the word Copt is an English Version of Arabic Gibt or Gypt, meaning Egyptian) in rented churches or their homes for counseling, confessions, baptisms, Sunday school lessons — anything that was needed.

"I was living out of a suitcase, practically."

Those Copts were encouraged to live near each other and Fr. Marcos saw the first churches founded: Toronto in 1964, Montreal in 1967, Los Angeles in 1970, Jersey City in 1971

"But we have not forgotten the places where we have only two Copts."

#### FAITH HAS BLOSSOMED

In just one generation, the Coptic faith has blossomed in Canada. In Southern Ontario alone, there are 12 Coptic churches, including one in gented premises in Richmond Hill, but the first, St Mark's in Scarborough, is still North American headquarters for Copts.

Fr. Marcos, living in Markham and married with a son, daughter and three grandchildren, still leads its congregation of 1,000 families, most of whom also live in Markham. "Our people feel more secure when they find a church close by."

St. Marks is crowded these days but local Copts are preparing to build a larger church — domed, as all Coptic churches are — plus a great cathedral capable of holding 2,000 to 2,500 worshippers inside a 12-acre Coptic village in Markham.

#### SCHOOL PART OF VILLAGE

The village, designed by an international competition, will be just blocks away from the present St. Mark's on Steeles Avenue at Ferrier Street. It will encompass a school, a community centre, professional offices, seniors' apartments, a nursing home, a bishop's residence (although there is, as yet, no North American bishop) and a

manuscripts, icons, ancient coins, work and folkloric paintings.
Like Fr. Marcos's family and ordination n a m e, t h e name of the new Coptic village will honour St. Mark, who it is believed brought Christianity to Egypt

around 49 to 54 A.D.

museum containing

Orthodox Patriarchate is one of the oldest sects of Christianity, one that has changed little over the long centuries. St. Mark's conducts all its services in Arabic and Coptic (ancient Egyptian spelled in an expanded Greek alphabet), as well as English.

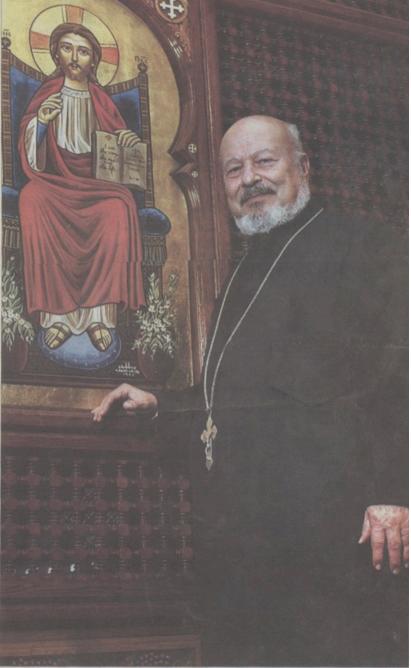
All three languages adorn a halftonne granite box, the time capsule and village cornerstone blessed this month by the visiting Pope Shenouda III, patriarch of the See of St. Mark, as about 2,000 of the faithful gathered for a festival.

#### PASSED THROUGH WAVES

Christianity flourished in Egypt until the 7th century — Suhag, on the Nile 470 kilometres south of Cairo, sthe site of early Christian monasteries and churches — when it was conquered by Muslim Arabs. Coptic was banned in the 10th century and Copts in Egypt have endured periods of persecution.

"We passed through waves, according to the whim of the ruler," Fr. Marcos said. "When the ruler is tolerant, we have a more peaceful time."

More on the Copts and their history is available from the St. Mark's church website, sthark toronto on cogtorthodox ca.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILL

In just one generation, the Coptic faith has blossomed in Canada. There are currently 12 Coptic churches, including one in Richmond Hill. Fr. Marcos Marcos and other York Region Copts are planning to create a Coptic village on a 12-acre property in Markham.

#### **M** GREATER TORONTO

# 'Now I feel a little closer to God'

# Pope Shenouda lays foundation for Coptic village in Markham

By LESLIE FERENC YORK REGION BUREAU CHIEF

Bishoy Anees had been practising for weeks, singing his little heart out as he prepared for the performance of his young life.

But when the wide-eyed 11-year-old stepped on to the stage, within arm's reach of Pope Shenouda III, the shepherd of more than 20 million orthodox Copts around the world, the choirboy was overwhelmed.

"I was nervous, I thought I was going to faint," said the soloist for the St. Mary and Archangel Michael children's choir at Toronto's St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church, moments after singing a hymn welcoming Pope Shenouda yesterday.

"It was scary at first, but I got great courage because I like the Pope. It felt wonderful to meet him. Now I feel a little closer to God."

Bishoy was among more than 2,000 of the faithful who came to Markham yesterday to receive blessings from the 80-year-old Pope of Alexandria, who was in town to lay the foundation stone for St. Mark's Coptic Canadian Village. There are about 35,000 orthodox Copts in the GTA.

The village will be built on 4.9 hectares at Steeles Ave. and Ferrier St. and will include two churches, Sunday school classrooms, day care, recreation and community centres, a school, a seniors' residence and the first Coptic museum in Canada.

A time capsule placed inside the foundation stone included yesterday's edition of The Toronto Star, among other artefacts.

The celebration also marked the 25th anniversary of the laying of the first foundation stone of St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Scarborough, and was like a dream come true for The Reverend Father Marcos Marcos. He helped establish 120 Coptic churches in North America, 12 of them in Ontario.

Marcos described the village as a



MICHAEL STUPARYK/TORONTO STAR

MAN OF THE PEOPLE: More than 2,000 people attended a ceremony presided over by Pope Shenouda III yesterday to bless and lay the foundation stone of a new Coptic community village in Markham.

"monumental endeavour," which will be located in a park-like setting at the gateway to Markham. An international competition is to be held for the design for the landmark.

Wearing black robes richly embroidered with gold thread, his gold-tipped staff encrusted with semi-precious gems, Pope Shenouda sent a message of hope to the faithful, saying that through "co-operation and faith," the long-awaited project will become a reality.

He also urged his adoring congregation to pay special heed in caring for the children of the community.

"They are the future of your church, in Canada and everywhere," he said. "It is the responsibility of this generation to form the spirituality of the next

generation."

Like a kind, gentle grandfather, Pope Shenouda interrupted his speech to bless a tiny child who had wandered in front of the stage. She stopped crying after he blessed her and placed a chain with a silver cross around her neck.

He also praised the community for helping care for the elderly by providing a seniors' home at the new village.

The Pope's words and blessing touched Mary Jacoub deeply.

"He is kind and gentle and I feel blessed," she said outside one of the massive tents set up at the village site for the historic celebration. "I feel a sense of lightness and happiness. I felt God's presence in his face."

Described as a man of the people,

Pope Shenouda walked among the crowd as the throng pressed closer to the man who has been their religious leader since 1971. He is the 117th Pope of Alexandria and patriarch of the See of St. Mark.

Amir Hanna, a member of the Church of Archangel Michael and St. Tekla in Brampton, was awestruck when Pope Shenouda visited his kiosk in a neighbouring tent, where he was selling religious artefacts to raise money for the Care in Action mission in Africa. Hanna presented the Pope with a hand-carved statue.

"I had no idea he would stop. I feel pretty special that he did."

Pope Shenouda was to celebrate a liturgy today at the village site, starting at 8 a.m.

تحقيق صحفي نشرته جريدة الـ TORONTO STAR في عددها الصادر يوم ٨ سبتمبر ٢٠٠٢ عن زيارة قداسة البابا شنودة الثالث

التاريخية لمباركة حجر أساس قرية مارمرقس بمركهام والإحتفال باليوبيل الفضي لوضع حجر أساس كنيسة مارمرقس بتورنتو.

An artical published by the TORONTO STAR in its issue on September 8, 2002 covering the historic visit of H.H. Pope Shenouda III to bless the corner stone of St. Mark's Coptic Village in Markham and to celebrate with us the 25th anniversary of laying the corner stone of St. Mark's Church of Toronto

# Coptic community to build complex in Markham

BY MICHAEL VALPY
RELIGION AND ETHICS REPORTER

A very Toronto story: Forty years ago, 23 families from one of the world's most ancient societies settled in the city — and today the community is about to make a \$200-million architectural statement redefining its culture in an adopted land.

A cathedral, a community centre, school, office building, retirement residence, nursing home and museum built on five hectares on the Steeles Avenue boundary between Markham and the Toronto suburb of Scarborough — shaped in architectural language designed to speak to past millennia in the Middle East and to the 21st century in Canada.

21st century in Canada.

The project belongs to Toronto's Coptic Orthodox Christians, mostly descendants of Egypt's 6,000-year-old pharaonic culture. There are maybe 5,000 families in the Greater Toronto Area — a close-knit community many of whose members are successful business and professional people.

Design of the project was put



PATTI GOWER/THE GLOBE AND MA

Mofeed Michael, left, and Father Marcos A. Marcos, at the Coptic priest's apartment building yesterday, discuss the planned complex.

out for international competition. There were 64 submissions from 20 countries. The 12 finalists were announced vesterday.

What makes the Coptic project so quintessentially Toronto is that it follows a model that has been surfacing in the suburbs over the past few years.

"The city centre carries on in the same old way," said architect and planner Roger du Toit, who advised the competition jury. "But new things are happening on the outskirts of the city centre."

As ethnic groups arrive in To-

ronto, they build their own centres of community in new residential areas, often around religious buildings — mosques, Hindu temples, Orthodox churches and now a Coptic cathedral.

"So there is nothing new in the sense that many cultures have evolved that way, with the church at their centre," said planning consultant Mofeed Michael, a member of Toronto's Coptic community and former planning commissioner for Durham Region on Toronto's eastern flank.

What is special about the project is that Toronto's Copts — the word derives from the Arabic Kibt, meaning Egyptian — asked architects to consider how Coptic architecture would have evolved if history's treatment of the culture had been different.

Coptic language has been submerged under Greek, Roman, Turkish and Arabic conquest. The Copts have used other people's religious architecture. They periodically have suffered religious persecution, from a third-century Roman emperor to modern Egypt's Islamic nationalists.

"But a culture of 6,000 years just doesn't stop. We kept minor little things and we kept our spirituality intact," Dr. Michael said. "That's the core of the culture, notwithstanding the form. But what would we have done today [with the project] had the culture remained intact? How would we have moved over time?"

No mandatory requirements were put to the competitors, except they were told that Coptic churches traditionally have a dome, an expression of heaven on Earth. Thus among the final designs are true domes, half-domes, a wavy roof with a dome, a triangular, pyramidal form of dome and an ethereal virtual dome formed by lights.

The community — based in St. Mark's Coptic Christian Orthodox Church in Scarborough — sees the development as a 15-year project, beginning with the 2,500-seat cathedral and community centre.

Father Marcos A. Marcos, protopriest of St. Mark's, said the community centre, school, retirement residence and nursing home will be open to all Torontonians.

## H.H. POPE SHENOUDA BLESSES THE CORNER STONE OF ST. MARK'S COPTIC VILLAGE IN MARKHAM

AND CELEBRATES WITH US SILVER JUBILEE OF ST. MARK'S BUILDING IN TORONTO



# icilergy in the second of the



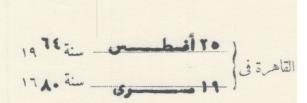












السيد مدير ادارة الجوازات والجنسية

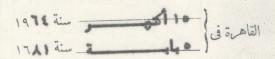
تحية طيبة معصادق الدماء

نرجو التكرم بتجديد جواز سنر القسمرقس الياسجد المسيح (المولود السيد / وجدى الياسجد المسيح) الذي رسم كاهنا للرطاية الدينية لمواطنى الجمهورية المربية المتحدة الآقباط في أمريكا الشمالية (الولايات المتحدة)، ومنحه مع السيدة ترينته سوزان كال يمقوب تأشيرة الخروج اللازمة لسفرهما في أقرب فرصة ممكنة الى مقرصله ، ومرفق بهذا التعبد اللازم في هذا الشأن .

وتفضلوا سيادتكم بقبول وانر أدميتنا ومزيد تقديرنا ،٠٠٠

كيرلسالسادس بانا الاسكندرية مطريرك الكرازة المرقسية





السيد مدير ادارة الجوازات

تحية طيبة معصادق الدماء

سبق أن وانقتم سيادتكم على سفر القريمرة ساليا ربعد المسيح الذي عنته البطريركية للقيام بالرعاية الروحية واقامة الشمائر الدينية للأقباط الموجودين بالولايات المتحدة وكندا ، كما انتدبته البطريركية لتمثيل الكيسة القبطية في مؤتمر الفاتيكان الثاني كمراقب .

ولما كان لبذا المرتمر أهمية خاصة حيث تثار مشكلة " وثيقة تبرئة اليبود من دم المسيح " ، نقد اضطر القسمرقس الى السفر وحد ، بغير زوجته حتى يلحق بالموتمر من بدايته ويقوم بدوره في التعبير عن رأى الكيسة القبطية ضد هذه الوثيقة الخطيرة .

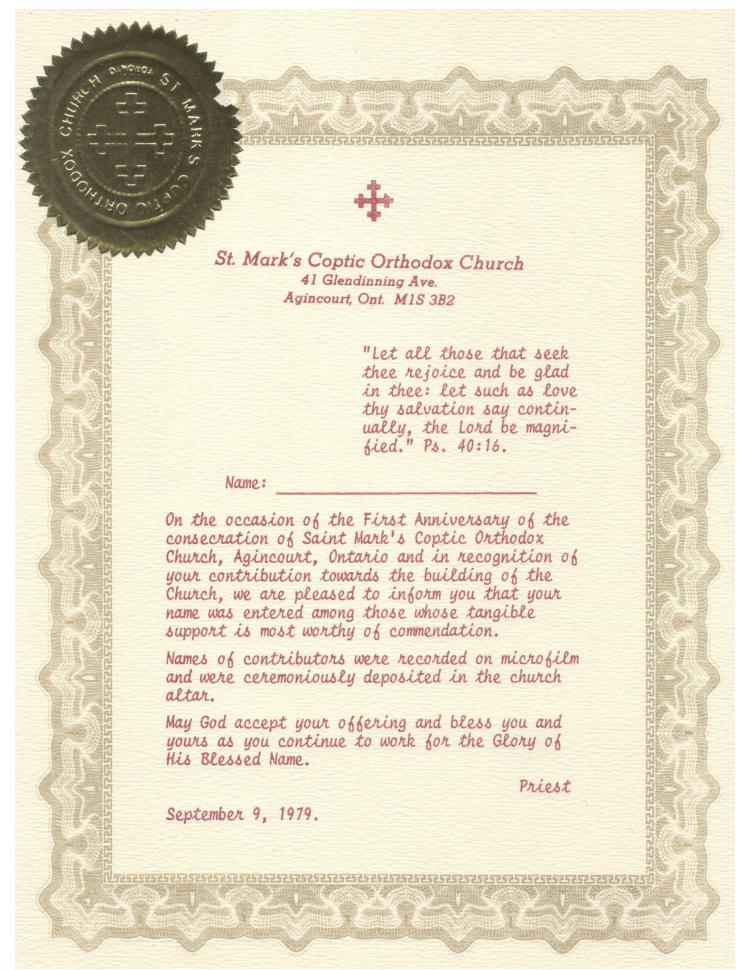
وقد تقدمت زوجته \_السيدة سوزان كمال يمقوب بطلب تأشيرة الخروج بتاريخ ١٩٦٤/١/١٦ ولنا أمل كبير في منحها تأشيرة الخروج وعدم تمطيل سفرها حيث أن العمل الذي يقوم به الزوج سوف لا تقل مدة فيابه فيه عن عامين قبل أن يمود الى أرض الوطن حيث أن لوظيفته صفة الدوام .

وقد كان واضحا في جميع المستندات التي قدمتها البطريركية أن هذا العمل الرعوى الذي كان يقوم به نيانة الآنيا صوئيل بصفة متقطمة في صيف كل عام ، قد مين له هذا الكاهن ليقوم بمهمة الرعاية الروحية واقامة الشطر الدينية بصفة دائمة ، ولذا قدمت البطريركية التعبدات الخاصة بضمان مرتبه .

لذلك درجو سيادتكم التكوم بعنع السيدة سوزان كمال يحقوب تأشيرة الخروج علما بأن زوجها القسموس يقوم الآن بدور وطنى في الدفاع عن وجهة نظر الكنيسة القبطية ووجهة النظم المربية ضد الوثيقة العزمومة ، وتغيد الآنها الواردة الينا أنه يقوم بجهد جبار في هذا السبيل ، ولملكم تقدرون لحاق زوجته به دون ابطا سوف يوفو له الظرف الملائمة للقيام بمهمته الشلاقة على خير وجه في جلسات المؤتمر التي سوف تستمر حتى منتصف شهو ديسمبر المقبل ، وسوف يشمره أن الوطن يقدر له ما يبذل من جهد في سبيله .

وتفضلوا سيادتكم بقبول فائق الشكر والاحترام مده

القص ميخائيل عد المسيح وكيل عام البطريوكية



# **INVITATION**

for

# The Official Opening

of

# St. Mark's Coptic Museum

41 Glendinning Ave., Scarborough, Ontario

- \* The First Coptic Museum in North America.
- \* The only museum that houses Christian Coptic Folkloric paintings.
- \* Compact, but comprises of a wide variety of genres: icons, woodwork, multiform and multicolor Coptic geometric designs, terra-cotta, textiles, manuscripts, Pharaonic and Pre-Coptic necklaces, coins and amulets.

# **Guests of Honor**

# Mr. Leslie Dan

President of Novopharm International and his wife

Mrs. Anna Dan

Saturday the Seventeenth of October, 1998 at 7:00 p.m.

(Admission by invitation only please)

# اجنفالات ترشين كنيسة مامرض الفيظمية الأرثوذكسية الجديلة بنورينو أيام الجمعة والسبت والأصر ١٦٩٨ بسبتمبر ١٩٧٨ ثلاثة أيام ما ريخية في صياة كنيستكم نيافة الحبرالجليل الأنبارونسيب يقوم بمراسيم الترشين. يشترك مع نيافته الاسقف جميع الآباء الكينية الأقباط فى أمريكا الشمالية. فرفة شمامسة روشستر تشترك مع فرقة شمامسة تونتو. السبرنامج:

الجمعة : ٢٠٠٠ – ١١,٠٠٠ م تدشين الهيكل وحجاب الهيكل والأيقونات وجدران الكنيســة والمعمودية ٠

السبب : ٢٠٠٨ - ٣٠ر١١ ص قدّ اس الهي يشترك فيه مع نيافة الأسقف جميع كهنة أمريكا

٠٠ر٦ \_ ٧,٠٠ م رفع بخور عشية وصلوات تدشين مذبح مار مرقس · الجميع مدعوون · يحضر الخدمة الرسميون ومندوبو الكنائس المختلفة

٠٠ر٧ ـ ١٠ر٠٠ م حفل عشاء بمناسبة الافتتاح بقاعة الكنيسة ، الدخــول بالدعاوى فقط ، يمكن الحجز عن طريق السيد محسن غبريــال بالكنيسـة أو تليفونيا ٣٨٥٨ـ٧٧٣ ، الأماكن محدودة جدا ،

الأحــد : ٢٠ر٨ص - ١٣ر١٢م القدّاس الاحتفالي وسيامة الشمامسة ، يرأس الخدمة نيافة الشمامسة ، يرأس الخدمة نيافة

٣٠ر١٢ م ٥٠٠٠٠٠ مائدة أغابي عـامة ٠



# COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE ST. MARK'S COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

41 Glendinning Ave., Toronto, ON, Canada MIW 3E2, (416) 494-4449

٩ بشنس ١٧٢٩ ش

تورنتو ۱۷ مايو ۲۰۱۳ م

#### قداسة البابا المعظم الأنبا تواضروس الثاني بابا الإسكندرية وبطريرك الكرازة المرقسية

ننحني مقبلين أيادي قداستكم طالبين أن يديمكم رب المجد لنا راعياً وأباً لسنين كثيرة وأزمنة سلامية مديدة

نحن كهنة أقدم كنيسة بالمهجرو الكنائس المولودة منها بمنطقة تورنتو - القمص مرقس إلياس مرقس وأو لاده كهنة هذه الكنائس – نتقدم بالتماس أن يكون إختيار غبطتكم لمقركم في كندا – أو في المهجر كله – هو الكاتدرائية الجديدة – أكبر كنيسة قبطية في أمريكا الشمالية على حد علمنا – والتي سميتموها قداستكم بكاتدرائية مارمرقس.

فإن كان لغبطة بطريرك الأقباط أن يكون له مقر في بلاد المهجر فيليق أن يكون هذا المقر في أول كنيسة في المهجر ولاسيما أن مبناها هو أكبر كاتدرائية قبطية في هذه القارة؛ وبهذا تكون هذه الكاتدرائية والكنائس المحيطة بها تابعة لقداسة البابا مباشرة ير عاها بأبوته.

وإذ نلح في سؤالنا بما في ذلك مساندة شعبنا لنا - تتبقى بعض كنائس قليلة في المنطقة مع مونتريال وأوتاوا وشرق كندا يمكنها أن تكون إيباشية يرعاها أسقف ممن يزكونه هم لدى غبطتكم.

حاللنا يا سيدنا و صلّ عنا ؟ ؟ ؟

#### أبناء قداستكم

القمص ابر آم كمال	القمص بيشوي عطالله مارمرقس - تورنتو الد	القمص يوحنا رمزي	القمص مرقس إلياس مرقس
مذراء والقديس يوسف- ريتشموند هيل		مارمرقس – تورنتو	مارمرقس – تورنتو
القس بولس أمين	القس ميصائيل عطاالله	القس موسى مطر	القس أمونيوس جرجس
مارمرقس – تورنتو	مار مرقس – تورنتو	الأنبا ابر آم - إجاكس	مارمرقس – تورنتو
القس شنوده ملیکة	القس يوسف إسكندر	القس دانيال بساده	القس يوحنا سركيس
رسف- ریتشموند هیل	العذراء والقديس يو	ماريوحنا - بيكرنج	الأنبا صموئيل - ماركهام

Fr. Marcos Marcos
Fr. John Ramzy
Fr. Pishoy Ataalla

Fr. Pishoy Ataalla

Fr. Marcos Marcos
Home: (416) 250-0670
Home: (647) 350-2451
Home: (905) 534-1049

Church: (416) 494-4449
E-mail: frmarcos@coptorthodox.ca
Church: (416) 494-4449
E-mail: abdmariam@gmail.com

Fr. Ammonius Guirguis Home: (416) 628-7071 Church: (416) 494-4449 E-mail: frammonius@coptorthodox.ca
Fr. Misael Ataalla Home: (416) 412-0954 Church: (416) 494-4449 E-mail: frmisael@coptorthodox.ca

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
H.H. Pope Tawadros II
Pope of Alexandria and
Patriarch of the See of St. Mark
The Papal Center

H A S A B B B A TAOYA A POC

بطريركية الأقباط الأرثوذكس قداسة البابا الأنبا تواضروس الثاني بابا الأسكندرية وبطريرك الكرازة المرقسية المقر البابوي

222 Ramses St., Abbaseya, Cairo, Egypt

Tel: 024822580

Fax: 0235365880

email: office@popetawadros.org

۲۲۲ شارع رميس ، العباسية ، القاهرة ، مصر تليفون: ۲۲۸۲۰۵۰ فاكس: ۲۲۵۳۲۰۸۰

Cairo, July 30, 2014 Ref:Pope\2014\07\29

St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church 41 Glendinning Ave., Toronto ON M1W 3E2

Dear Fr. Marcos Marcos,

Peace and grace be to you and all our churches in Canada.

I am writing to respond to your official invitation to visit Canada to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Canada. Please be informed that I will come to Canada from September 3<sup>rd</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> along with two bishops and two secretaries.

I will consecrate the new Cathedral in Markham, Ontario; I look forward to laying the cornerstone for a Papal Centre within its facilities. Along with my delegation, I will visit the majority of the Coptic parishes across Canada.

I trust that the Canadian Authorities will take the necessary measures to ensure a peaceful and fruitful visit.

Sincerely,

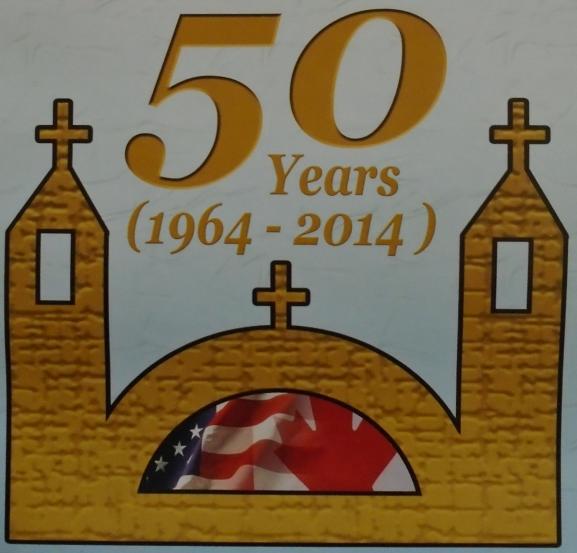
Pope Tawadros II = 2014 -7-30

Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark



The History of the Coptic Orthodox Church in North America

The First



By:

**Hegumen Marcos Marcos** 





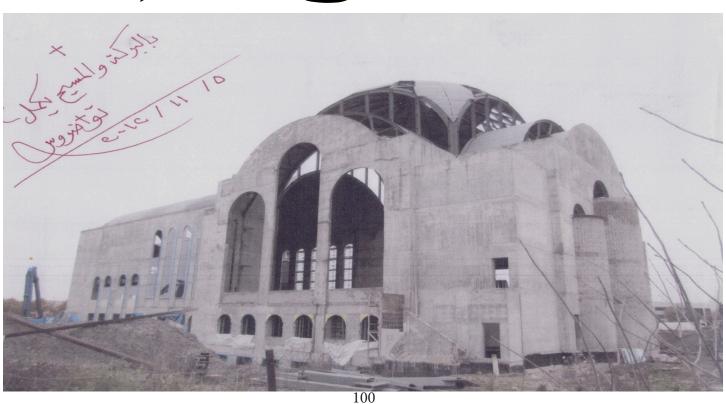








# thedral اللام































#### COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE

#### ST. MARK'S COPTIC MUSEUM

Scarborough, Ontario

On Wednesday, November 27, 1996 and on the memorable occasion of his

# SILVER JUBILEE His Holiness

### POPE SHENOUDA III

in a prayerful preview toured the museum

and gave his pontifical blessings, wishing it to always be a beacon of enlightenment
in the North American Continent



### **COPTIC MUSEUM OF CANADA**

Toronto, Ontario

In appreciation for his inspired leadership, on 22 September 2018

the Board of Directors voted to confer the title of

# Founder and President Emeritus upon Father Marcos A. Marcos

in recognition of his unwavering commitment to realize his vision for a

Coptic museum in Canada, in keeping with His Holiness Pope Shenouda III's

wish that the museum be a steward of the Coptic cultural heritage in North America



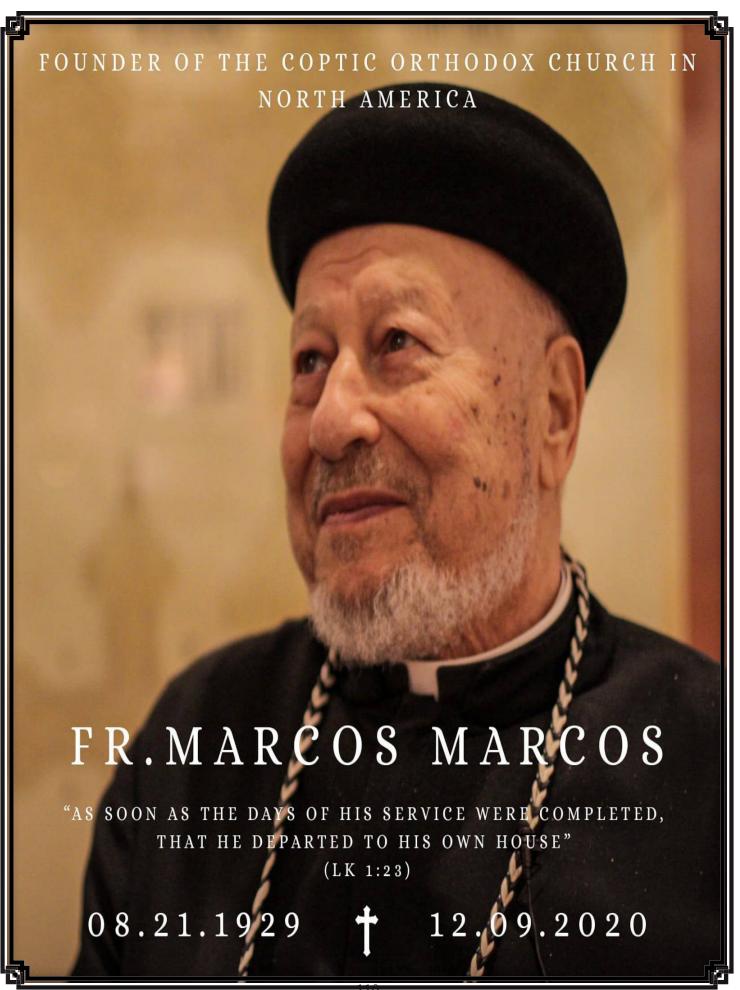


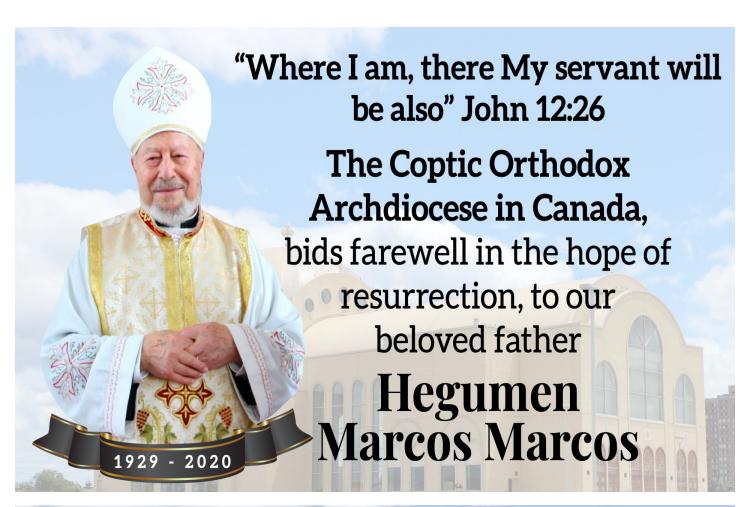




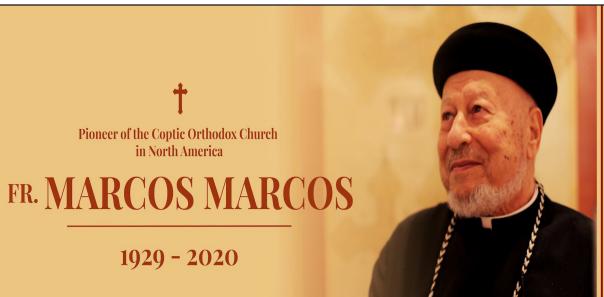








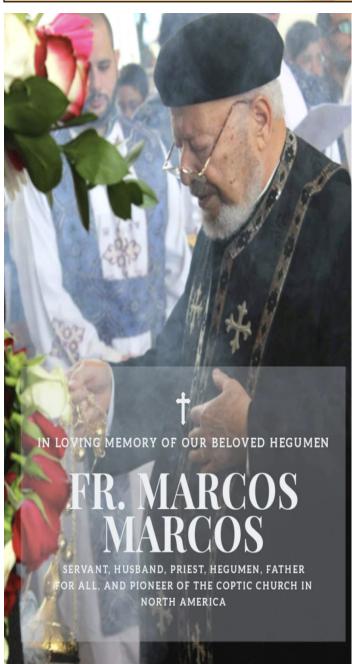


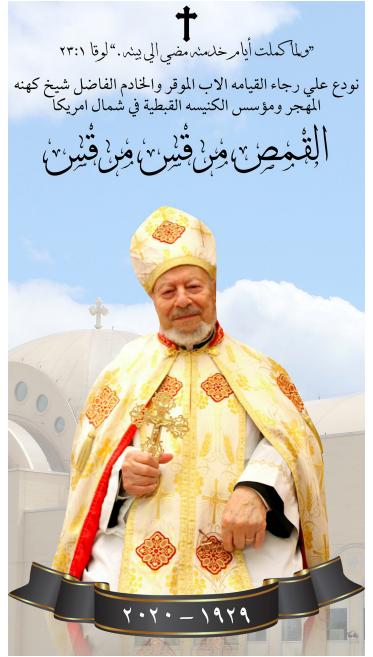




"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!

Matthew 25:23



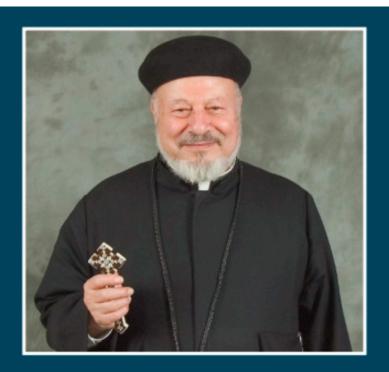








إِنْ كَانَ أَحَدُّ يَخْدِمُنِي فَلْيَتْبَعْنِي وَحَيْثُ أَكُونُ أَنَا هُنَاكَ أَيْضاً يَكُونُ خَادِمِي يوحنا ۲۱:۱۲



أسرة وكهنة ومجلس وشمامسة وشعب كنيسة وكاتدرائية مارمرقس

تورنتو - كندا

يودعون على رجاء القيامة أباهم وشيخ كهنة المهجر

القمص مرقس مرقس

الذي رقد في الرب يوم الأربعاء ٩ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٠ ويشكرون صاحب الغبطة

قداسة البابا تواضروس الثاني ونيافة الأنبامينا

أسقف مسيسوجا وفانكوفر وغرب كندا

ونيافة الأنبا مقار

رئيس مجلس الكنيسة

ونيافة الأنبا بولس

أسقف أوتاوا ومونتريال وشرق كندا

وكل أصحاب النيافة أعضاء المجمع المقدس وكل الآباء الكهنة والهيئات الدينية والمدنية وكافة أعضاء الكنيسة الجامعة الذين تفضلوا

بتقديم العزاء للكنيسة وللأسرة.

وسوف يُحتفل بالقداس الإلهي في تذكار الأربعين لنياحته

يوم الأحد ١٧ يناير ٢٠٢١ بكل من كنيسة وكاتدرائية مارمرقس بتورنتو وماركهام

وذلك حسب الإجراءات الاحترازية المطبقة في حينه

ذكر الصديق للبركة (أمثال ٧:١٠)



# Chapter Three

# Tributes by the 1970's congregation



#### Mr. Alfi Abdelmassih:

I arrived in Toronto Canada in April 1965, Fr. Marcos Marcos arrived in November 1964, six months before me. Before immigrating to Canada, I was studying in Austria and met with the late Bishop Samuel, Bishop of the Ecumenical services who was touring at the time and outreaching to the students in Europe. I asked HG Bishop Samuel to give me his blessings and pray for me because I was in the process of immigrating to Toronto, Canada. When he found out I was coming to Toronto, he told me we have a church there, meaning we have a priest there. He gave me the phone number and the name of the priest who is Fr. Marcos Marcos. After I arrived in Toronto and settled in, I phoned the number to ask about Fr. Marcos, and to my surprise, the lady who answered my call, assuming it is Tasony, had a very heavy German accent. I was wondering if Fr. Marcos was married to a German lady!! As it turns out, that lady was a German wife of the Egyptian Engineer by the name Kyrillos Elgohary. Her name was Renatia. Both are very devout Coptic Orthodox families. They were hosting Fr. Marcos at that time and, they were using their phone as a contact centre for Fr. Marcos. Finally, I met with Fr. Marcos, who struggled to establish a Coptic church in Toronto with a congregation of approximately 30 families who were mostly married to non-Egyptian wives. The struggling days of the church, the beginning days of the church, I call it the most blessed days of the church in Toronto. When we had to find a place every week to celebrate our liturgy, we borrowed church basements, school auditoriums...etc.

Fr. Palmar who is a great friend of Fr. Marcos was coming from the United Church of Canada. The United church of Canada got us a great deal. Because of Fr. Marcos' strong faith, unwavering determination, and most of all an always smiling face; God permitted us to build the first church in Toronto and North America in 1967. Also, a cathedral in 2012. Our family had the blessing to live and witness all these events in the last 55 years. Fr. Marcos, rest in peace and join the 24 priests in front of the Throne of Glory. Glory to God Amen.

#### Mr. Anis Milad and his wife Mrs. Wedad Milad:

Since we arrived in the United States, we have lived most of the time in the State of Michigan. After we had our two sons, we traveled to Egypt to baptize them.

In the year 1965, after we had our child, we knew about the presence of Father Marcos in the city of Toronto, Canada. That summer, His reverence came to Michigan to pray the Divine Liturgy and to baptize our third son, Mark. Since then, we have become friends with Father Marcos. Father Marcos performed his work in both the United States and Canada, Serving his immigrant people.

He did his best roaming around the different states of the United States and Canada to serve the Coptic People. This continued till other priests were ordained and sent to America to help him with his endeavours. Thanks to his efforts, the Church people in the United States and Canada grew in faith and beliefs. This power caused us to be attached to our Church and traditions. The work that started with the effort of one person prospered and became the effort of great multitudes of the Church people in North America.

Father Marcos was a source of inspiration for all of us. He was not just a church priest but a very dear friend. His letters to us supported our cherishing of our identity and traditions.

We wish for his pure soul to repose in the bosom of the Lord like all angels and saints. He shall remain in our hearts and our prayers.

# Dr. Ayman Matta:

Like many people what I remember most about Fr. Marcos is that he was always smiling, always cheerful, and encouraging. When we were in youth group back in the seventies, he supported us in having the English liturgy, which was something we were very appreciative of. He started the youth group in the basement of his house after church, and eventually moved to Friday evenings in the church's basement. For me personally he encouraged me to serve in youth group, something I enjoyed very much and very grateful for and always will me. Of course, we love Fr. Marcos, and we miss him dearly.

#### Mr. Ashraf Matta:

I have many precious memories with Father Marcos. It is hard to remember them without remembering my father. Father Marcos and his wife Tassoni Suzy used to visit us at home, not in his capacity as a priest but rather as a friend of my father. Among such memories is his permanent smile even in difficult moments. I also remember his nice way of encouraging us to participate in the Church activities. If my father were alive now, he would have thanked Father Marcos for involving him in building the Mother Church as well as the Cathedral.

During the Funeral prayers for Father Marcos, particularly during the procession of the cascade around the altar, I clearly remembered Father Marcos during the performance of the resurrection play on Easter Eve with my father carrying the Icon of the Resurrection.

I also remember the youths Meeting that we used to hold at his house when we were still teenagers. I remember quite well how he taught us comparative religion and made of it a condition to graduate from the Bible studies when we were in our 20s.

I shall not forget when others and myself went to Father Marcos house asking for an English Divine Liturgy which became a fact at the end of the 1980s. We are indebted to him because he listened to our request.

Father Marcos, we thank you for all what you did for us, and we pray that God would grant your soul peace in Paradise. We also ask you to continue praying for the Church and her people.

# Dr Atef Moawad and his wife Mrs. Ferial Moawad - Chicago:

In January 1972, we were moved from Edmonton Alberta to work at university of Chicago in Chicago. Low and behold, the priest who comes and does the liturgy for the 30-40 Egyptian people was Fr. Marcos Marcos. He used to come once a month, on the weekend, spends Friday and Saturday. He left to do liturgy somewhere else on Sunday. This was his life!

We started Sunday school, as well as Bible study, he encouraged us. We did that every week. In Dec 1972, we collected a collection for the poor in Egypt while he was officiating the liturgy In Christmas time, and I went to Pope Shenouda to tell him about how things in Chicago are running and how our spiritual activities and liturgies every month and we wanted a permanent priest for Chicago. Pope Shenouda, a few months later, sent us Fr. Marcos Bishay to become the first ordained priest for the church of Chicago.

Third episode was five to sixth years ago, when it was the 50th anniversary for the beginning of the church of north America, i.e the arrival of St. Marcos in 1964, when Pope Tawadros came. We went

to Toronto, my wife and I, and we stayed in his house with Tasony Suzy whom we know very well. It was a beautiful time where we saw the fruits of a man who consecrated his life for the service of the Lord and the Coptic church in North America. I had good time speaking with him at his home, he opened his heart and talked to me about what the Lord has done with him all these years, and how the service has become so blessed. In addition, so many also, non-Christians and non-Copts became adherent to our faith through the work of God and his efforts. And he was very happy to have reached to this stage. May God bless his soul, and may he remember us in his prayers in front of the Lord's throne.

#### Dr Ezzat Faris Abdelmassih:

I live in Regina, Saskatchewan and I arrived here on July 1st, 1969. Fr. Marcos Marcos, may God bless his soul, came to Regina to do a service for us every one to two years. We were only three or four families. His visit here was often in conjunction with a trip to go to Vancouver, Calgary, or Edmonton. He was a true shepherd for us here in Regina. His visit would keep and remind us of our roots as Coptic Orthodox. He would arrive here with his bag, ready to serve the liturgy. He brought all the communion vessels and the Korban with him.

One memorable visit, it was made known that a priest originally from Egypt was coming to Regina to do a service. That evening we had 20-30 people gather here at our house. There were students from the university, people from rural locations of Saskatchewan including some who were non-Coptic people, but they were Egyptian. He received them all equally; he was a father to all of us. Fr. Marcos was a true father to all of us. There is no doubt that Fr. Marcos Marcos was a history maker for our Coptic Orthodox churches in Canada and the USA. We in Saskatchewan were so grateful to Fr. Marcos, and the sacrifices his family made for the benefit of all of us. His memory will always be living with us. May his soul rest in Peace in Paradise. Thank you to Mr. Bolis for allowing me to say a few words in memory of this history-maker Fr. Marcos Marcos.

#### Mrs. Edith Tawfik:

Father Marcos welcomed the three German ladies married to Coptic Orthodox men, the three E's; Erika, Evelyn, and Edith, with a warm smile. Our Christmas 1964 was blessed with Father Marcos's presence. In 1989, I joined Father Marcos, the Toronto youth group, on the trip to Egypt, experiencing present life, ancient history, and the deep roots of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt. We celebrated Pope Shenouda's 35th Anniversary of Monastic life with His Holiness in St. Pishoy Monastery. Thank you, Father Marcos, for this blessed event. Father Marcos and his gracious wife, Suzy, always held out an inviting hand in love.

#### Mr. Emil Habib:

It is really with great sadness that we mourn the departure of Fr Marcos but in my case, Fr Marcos meant a lot to me ah he was the first priest that I knew and started to be the first youth in his Coptic Church. Please allow me to reflect on that a bit

As I am getting older and my memory is fading, I would like to give my thoughts of the early years in St Mark's Coptic Church from a youth point of view as we were in those days
After the ordination of Fr. Marcos he was summoned to serve in North America either in New York or in Toronto and as a young teenager living in London England in 1964 I was informed by my late father Deacon Edward Habib that the late Bishop Samuel called him to advice that Fr Marcos will

be stopping in London en route to Toronto and Suzy and Abouna were met by my parents and during their visit Fr Morcos asked my parents to consider immigrating to Canada Shortly afterward the decision was made and in early 1965 we were on the our way to Toronto. There were very few families and consequently few youth, and Fr Morcos stared the very first Coptic youth group in North America the small group consisted of less than 10, I remember some names like Shadia and Wafaa Basilious, Amir and Elham Sabongy, Beatris Morcos, my sister Olga and I.

By 1967 Abouna moved from his apartment on Avenue Rd to a house in High-park area by that time I had a very small old car (Fiat 600) that I used to give my youth friends a ride from Keele Subway station to Father Marcos residence in Windermere Ave for the weekly youth meeting I remember that the car that was only designed to hold 4 people we would jam 8 youth in it and as the road to the house had a steep hill I would summon all the kids to get out and push the car from the bottom of the street to the top of the hill and when the car reaches the top all the youth would get in and we would continue on our way to Fr Marcos house these were many laughing moments. Fr Marcos was very detected to develop strong religious youth and guide us into learning and practicing the Christian lifestyle his advice to us was how not to be distracted from the life with Christ

Approximately in 1968 we were joined by more youth some names I remember were the 3 Metias sisters Charles and Atef Hanna Ibrahim El Raheb.

# Mrs. Fawkia Guirguis:

After I got married to late deacon Mr. Murad Guirguis, I immigrated to Canada in 1968 since my husband was already there since 1963. Accordingly; he attended the arrival of Father Marcos and Mrs. Suzy in 1964. Upon my arrival, I noticed that the few families used to pray with Father Marcos in temporary place. However, there was a general feeling of satisfaction for having the Divine Liturgy and Communion. The deacons meeting used to take place at any of the Coptic congregation homes since we did not have a church then.

During one of those meetings, I was shocked when I saw one of the attendees making fun of Father Marcos in his presence and the presence of others. Yet, I must mention that this person continued attending and serving and became close to us for so many years. Undoubtedly, we all fall in many mistakes. Since I felt the meeting was not spiritual, I was about to leave. Yet, there came the real spiritual lesson we had through Father Marcos. He reacted calmly and with reservation. He acted as if nothing happened at all. "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake." [Mat: 5: II]. I shall never forget that silent sermon that Father Marcos gave us.

At the beginning of our marital life, there were many things that we had to get used to, especially that I was uprooted from Egypt and my family at the same time. Father Marcos and Tasoni Suzy became my new family. When Murad moved to Louisiana to have his Ma, I travelled with him. Of course, there was no Coptic church there. So, Father Marcos came to us there to pray the Divine Liturgy and give us Communion.

After Murad got his degree, it was suitable for us to remain there since my degree from Egypt allowed me to teach mathematics for secondary students, opposite to what happens in Canada. However, when I knew about my first pregnancy, we decided to return to Toronto so that our child might be able to grow in the Coptic Church. We had two daughters and they grew under the care

of Father Marcos. He was their father of confession and the mediator between them and us. They were a source for many blessings and were very close to Dina his daughter.

There are many stories that proved that Father Marcos would always give the priority to the spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional interests of the sheep. He did not have limits to help others. He would serve whether he was sick or not and whether he was tired or not. He did not allow circumstances to hinder his service.

We wish that he would continue his service through praying for us till we meet again.

#### Mr. Fred Azouz:

Abouna was truly a gift from God. Father Marcos was our first priest when we came to Canada. Over the years, he was our Sunday school leader, our Youth Counsellor mentor, our Chairman of the Board of Directors, a true visionary and so much more.

Father Marcos officiated my wedding, baptized my two kids, spoke at my mom's memorial and at my dad's funeral. He was family, and I will miss him immensely.

#### Some highlights of our Church:

- Our first church that we had rented out was in Trinity Square, it is located right by the Eaton Centre
- The second church that we rented was in the Caledonia Rd & St. Clair Ave area. Most families didn't live close by, but we were thankful that we had the use of a church. This was the first time as young teens we took the TTC to get together on Saturdays
- I will always remember his tears of joy when we celebrated the first liturgy at the "Mother Church" in Scarborough
- As a teen growing up, he met with a group of us at his home where we discussed the need of an English liturgy. Soon afterwards, we had an all-English mass that took place weekly on Saturday mornings.

On a lighter note, if you ever had the chance to be in the car with Abouna, it was always a thrilling ride experience. Needless to say, Abouna could have been an INDY 500 car driver.

He was an amazing man - smart, humble, with a wonderful sense of humour and embodied a true Christian. He was the first Coptic Orthodox priest in North America. There are now over several hundred churches throughout Canada and the USA.

May God rest his soul and may his legacy live on forever. God bless him.

# Mr. Hany Boctor:

What can I say about Abouna Marcos? My first father of confession, served with him for many years at the church of St. Mark. Attending his masses going all the way back to Sir John McDonald and Caledonia. Having him visit us in one of our first apartments in the early 70s on Don Mills Road. Coming with his family to celebrate my parents' 25th anniversary in 1981 at the very first house we bought in Canada. I had the chance to visit with him a couple of years ago, and he punched me in the arm like he used to when he called me "miss you" like he used to. I saw the oud in his apartment and that was another thing that we connected on, our love for music. I believe he is an angel in heaven right now interceding for all of us.

# Mrs. Magda Shehata:

We will never forget the love and care of Fr. Marcos and Tasony Suzy when we came to Canada in the middle of a cold winter in January 1981. It was Fr. Marcos who greeted us and invited us to stay in his home with his family. We thank Abouna, Suzy, Greg, and Dina for keeping us in their home sharing everything with us for a full week, now when I look back and think about it how can it be for a family of 4 to be with another family of 4 all this time. Father Marcos helped us find an apartment and signed as our guarantor for the rent as both of us were new to the city and did not start work.

We are so thankful for the many times Fr. Marcos listened to us and guided us and comforted us. We know he is in front of our Lord Jesus Christ praying for us now.

# Mr. Magdy Abdelmasih:

I remember how keen he always was with the youth and for the future of the church, how he accompanied us on those May long-weekend youth group trips up to insect country and did liturgies for us in the middle of the bush, in cottages. And it was around that time forty years ago, back when we were all young, that Abouna invited us into his home to discuss the need for an English liturgy. We had been asking for an all-English service for some time, and such a service was considered by some to be a major departure from the church's traditions. But Abouna saw it differently, and he heard our passionate voices. And beginning with that meeting he skillfully and caringly navigated the various camps, brought people together, and began to hold a second and all English mass. That was such a blessing for us, as well as for the many English-speaking spouses that were now increasingly coming to the church. We remember that wonderful day that we spent together at Abouna's house discussing the beginning of an English service.

#### Mrs. Mary Sorial:

My name is Mary Sorial, wife of the late Deacon Sorial Sorial. I arrived in Canada on January 26, 1969. For the first 2 weeks, I stayed with the late Uncle Lewis Tawfik. The first Sunday I went to church Abouna Marcos welcomed me and introduced me to the congregation that was about 20 families. The love that we all had for one another under Abouna Marcos' guidance made us all one big family. On February 08, 1969, Abouna Marcos performed Sorial and I's wedding ceremony with the attendance of this big family.

I always recall the days that Abouna Marcos was the Travelling Priest. He would perform Divine Liturgies every week across North America in the areas that allowed for car travel. He used to take either my husband Sorial or the late Micheal Morcos as a Deacon to serve with him. We were blessed as family to have Abouna Marcos in our house many times. I cannot forget that Abouna visited me in the hospital when I gave birth to my first son, Steven.

Abouna Marcos was a father to everyone and gave time to everyone.

Abouna we all love you and May God repose his soul in the Paradise of Joy.

# Mr. Mishrigi Guindi:

What shall I say about Fr. Marcos? To whom can I liken him? Is he the Father Abraham of this century who was told: "Go from your country and your family and your father's house to the land

that I will show you."? That was what happened with Father Marcos when he was ordained as a priest for North America. When he asked where he should reside, whether in Canada or USA, he was told "Just go and God will guide you." and, sure enough he did and ended up in Toronto where he spent the rest of his life.

Perhaps he is like St. Mark the disciple that was sent by Jesus to prepare the way for the Lord carrying no extra provisions, trusting God like Abouna trusting his Lord with the journey ahead arriving in Canada with little more than his and Suzy's suitcase. Or is he perhaps like St. Paul who travelled all over seeking, in every city, one or two Coptic families to serve them and establish a Coptic Orthodox Church in their city which became a beacon that attracted both Copts and all denominations, including non-Egyptians?!

Fr. Marcos was a disciple of the saint Pope Kyrillos VI who prayed for him, blessed him and assigned him to be the very first priest ordained to serve outside of Egypt. When Fr. Marcos asked Pope Kyrillos for advice before his departure from Egypt, he told him "Do not let your peace be affected by what people say or do to you." and as a blessed man and a humble and obedient servant, he followed this advice throughout all his life.

Father Marcos had the greatest smile; no matter what the circumstances were, he always had this amazing smile. Abouna (Father) Marcos had a heart of gold. His heart would carry the whole congregation. His house was always open for everyone, even for strangers who were always welcomed with open arms. Abouna never bore a grudge against anyone, even when there were different opinions; he always seemed to absorb all different opinions.

Fr. Marcos was the perfect Father of Confession. He was a very good listener, he was so understanding of people's problems, and made you so comfortable to confess or speak all your weaknesses without being shamed. Fr. Marcos was a great, wise man, very well respected and loved by government officials and heads of Canadian churches. Despite this, he was very humble and did not talk too much but when he did talk, all would listen. He represented the Coptic Orthodox Church in many meetings of the World Council of Churches.

Father Marcos was a great leader who was given Solomon's wisdom. He did not spare any effort to support the members of his congregation not only spiritually but also supported their material needs as newcomers such as finding suitable accommodations for them and driving them to Manpower to apply for jobs. He created a family atmosphere for the congregation to reduce the effect of the loneliness that immigrants feel; after the church service on Sunday (which was in a small Chapel on the second floor in a church behind the current Eaton Centre) he used to take us to a Greek cafeteria across the road on Yonge Street for a sandwich and a cup of coffee. In summertime, we used to go to public gardens, Niagara Falls or picking apples and pears from orchards on Mississauga Road (which was considered "out of town" at that time). In the winter, he rented a hall in the Church of Messiah on Avenue Road for the congregation to get together and in all these activities there was always a simple spiritual talk.

In the 1960s, Father Marcos, our "Flying Priest" used to serve the mass on Sundays in three main congregation centres which were Toronto, Montreal and New York and the rest of the weekdays in different cities throughout Canada and the US. Father Marcos, with his heart of gold, was so kind and noticed that some families drove three to four hours on Sunday in the middle of the winter to attend the service and would arrive some Sundays finding he was serving out of town; to avoid

them getting disappointed he encouraged the four of us deacons to open the church on the two Sundays that he was not there and recite all the hymns, the days readings and play the sermon he had recorded on a reel-to-reel recorder (which was the state of art those days) and end the service with prayers so that at least the people would not return to their homes without a prayer. Unfortunately, in those days there were no cell phones, faxes, or internet messages to inform the people about the service times and dates.

Father Marcos' telephone was open 24/7/365; he was always a telephone call away for whoever needs him. As an example, it is worth mentioning something that happened one Saturday night in the middle of the winter: a lady from a city about 200km away from Toronto called Father Marcos around Iopm in the middle of a snowstorm; the lady was screaming that she was fighting with her husband. Abouna tried to calm her down and he wanted to talk to her husband who refused to talk to him. He promised her to visit them after the next day's Sunday morning liturgy, but she told him "It will be too late when you come; one of us will already be killed." and she ended the call. After the call, Father Marcos was praying for the couple to have peace, and in the meantime because of his good heart, he called on our colleague, the late Deacon Michael Morcos who joined Father Marcos and started the journey in the middle of the snowstorm. It took them 6 hours of praying and driving at night to finally arrive at 4 in the morning to the house; to their surprise, they found the house lights off and which they thought might be bad sign but after 10-15 minutes of ringing the doorbell and praying, they finally saw a light come on and the lady came and talked to Aboung from behind the storm door and said "Thank you Aboung for coming but, we are okay and we went to bed." Father Marcos simply said to her "Thank God you are okay." and turned around and started the journey back to Toronto arriving at the church at 10:30 in the morning which was a half an hour late to start the Sunday service, but Abouna said nothing other than "Sorry for being late."

There is a lot to say about Father Marcos. Even before he came to Canada as a young student, he was teaching Sunday school in Sohag (in Upper Egypt) and university students in Giza, Cairo with the late Father Saleeb ...and so many other deeds.

If all his life were written it would fill many volumes. May God repose his soul in the Paradise of Joy in the bosom of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and accept his prayers on our behalf until we meet him again.

#### Mr. Nabil Tawfik:

I arrived in Toronto Canada in July 1964. My fiancé, Edith, arrived on November 7th. A week later we got married in a Catholic church. A couple of weeks later, I got a phone call and the caller said, "this is Abouna Morcos". We spent the first Christmas with Abouna Morcos, Dr. Nabil Morgan and his wife. Abouna Morcos married us Coptic, he also baptized our 2 children, Yvonne, and Ronald. My family was close with his family. We called him 'assis abu shanta' (priest with luggage), whenever a Copt called him anywhere in Canada or the United States, he would be there. We have a lot of memories with Abouna.

# Mrs. Olfat Guirgis:

In the early 1980's, when he was known as the Flying Priest, I was helping Abouna with doing office work at Church. One day he comes in with his Day-Timer and says to me: you are not going to believe this: next Saturday I have a wedding at 3pm in Toronto and one at 4pm in Cleveland. True story however I cannot remember how he resolved it.

#### Mrs. Sabah Iskander:

My name is Sabah Iskander, the late Moneer Iskander's wife. Moneer passed away in June 2020. He joined the Church as an already ordained Deacon upon his arrival to Canada in 1972. I have a lot of memories about Abouna Marcos. I arrived in Canada in October 1974 as a newlywed. I attended Church on my very first Sunday in Canada. After the Divine Liturgy, I found Abouna standing in the pulpit welcoming me by name and introducing me to the small congregation that was there at the time. This wonderful welcoming made me feel like I was at home and was accepted in this big family that I started to become a part of.

Abouna Marcos became my Father of Confession and got me out of my homesickness by encouraging me to serve at Church. Abouna and Suzy welcomed me into their home like a member of their family. Every time, Moneer would travel for work, Abouna never left me alone. He would always take me to his house to stay with his family until my husband returned from his business trips. I went to lots of places with Abouna Marcos. I still recall buying incense, candles, and small communion cups with him. Abouna Marcos was the person who introduced me to McDonald's and Big Mac combos with strawberry milkshakes. Abouna Marcos was not only my Father of Confession but became my father in Canada. In 1975, Abouna Marcos welcomed Cleveland, Ohio's very first Coptic Orthodox priest, Abouna Mikhail Edward, and his wife Seham to Toronto.

Abouna Marcos asked me to accompany Seham while he transferred his knowledge about his service in Cleveland to Abouna Mikhail Edward in several closed meetings. Later that year, Moneer and I were invited alongside Abouna Marcos, Suzy, Greg, and Dina to go to Cleveland to attend a banquet in honour of Abouna Marcos. We all travelled there together with the late Mr. Yohana El-Raheb in Mr. El-Raheb's station wagon. When Moneer and I bought our house, Abouna Marcos came to bless it for us. He baptized my sons, Mark, and John, and became their Father of Confession as well. In 1980, Abouna had such an intense amount of love and compassion for the Rochester, New York Coptic Orthodox community that was still without a regular priest or Church that he divided the Rochester Copts among the Toronto families so that the Rochester congregation could attend Holy Week and the Easter Divine Liturgy in Toronto. This is how Moneer and I became close friends with members of the Rochester community. I was extremely blessed to have Abouna Marcos as a dinner guest in my home many times. Abouna would sometimes arrive with a Bishop and my household would receive a wonderful double blessing. Abouna never turned anyone down when they asked him for advice or turned to him for guidance. He always offered all his time and all of himself to all his spiritual children.

Abouna, we all love you very, very much and you will never, ever be forgotten. You will be in our hearts forever.

#### Mr. Tom Azouz:

I've been blessed to know Father Marcos and his family my entire life. He was an amazing Father. Always approachable, always smiling, and always available to provide spiritual guidance. Father Marcos is a visionary. He engaged with the youth and genuinely wanted their insights and perspective. It was he who introduced the English service to help our youth feel connected with the Liturgy and our Church. It's amazing to see how the Churches across Toronto and all North America have grown firm roots through this one faithful servant who served with conviction and love.

One story I recall, is as a young boy of maybe 7 years of age. Father Marcos was going to be on a local TV channel, and he brought me and another child with him. He had us with him answering questions and explaining the story of how St. Mark brought Christianity to the people of Egypt. Father Marcos through his humility and love, including to the children, showed us through this one example how everyone in the church matters. I will always remember the great example he was as a caring, loving, and faithful servant. May we all remember and learn from his great example.

#### Mrs. Yvonne Tawfik-Mestre:

I was baptized in September 1967 by Abouna Marcos. My parents met Abouna at the end of November 1964, when he had just arrived in Toronto from Egypt. I have memories of Mass being celebrated in different churches we rented. But my most memorable memories are of the trip to Egypt with the Toronto youth group in July and August 1989. From Cairo to Alexandria to Mount Sinai to Luxor and Aswan and Abu Simbel. We visited the ancient sites and were blessed to visit many monasteries, most importantly, with Pope Shenouda III. Abouna will always have a special place in my heart.

# Chapter Four

# Tributes from the 1980's congregation



#### Mrs. Dina Marcos:

I was always astonished by how my father seemed to be a people-magnet wherever he went. I think it was his smile and sense of humour that immediately put people at ease. I remember one occasion that happened at my dental office. One morning, my father was coming to see me for a dental visit. At the same time, another patient showed up because she was having a dental emergency. So, I took care of the emergency, and my father had to wait a little. This delay caused my father to be running late for an appointment which he had at church. I remember that the lady looked at my father and wanted to apologize for making him late. However, it was obvious that she was uneasy speaking to a priest all dressed in a long black garment. She finally managed to go up to my father and say, "I'm so sorry for making you late for work." My father turned and looked at her with his big smile and said, "Oh don't worry...my Boss is very understanding," while making a gesture upwards. When she heard this, she let out this enormous laugh, and immediately any awkwardness disappeared. I remember anytime I saw her at my office after that, she always asked about my father.

My father was not someone to cast judgment on others as he knew that anyone, no matter what their situation, can come back to God. Although I'm sure that my father was instrumental in many people's journeys to God, I only know the few stories that he shared. This story he told to a small group of youth many years ago. Some may have already heard it. This took place probably in the early to mid-eighties. My father was visiting a city in the U. S., when he was called to come to the home of a family in distress. When he arrived at the home, he found out that their teenage girl had gotten mixed up with the wrong group of friends. She started rebelling and leaving home. The parents almost never knew her whereabouts. So as soon as she arrived at home, they immediately called my father to come quickly. The girl refused to see my father at first. However, I'm sure my father's love and encouraging manner helped her to open to him. Before long, my father learned that she had gotten involved with drugs and started trafficking drugs to support her habit. Instead of judgment, my father offered compassion and understanding. She cried and said that she wanted to change her ways and return to the Lord, but she couldn't. She explained that if she stopped trafficking, gang members will come after her and her family. My father didn't give up. After talking with the parents and making some phone calls, by the grace of God, my father was able to relocate the girl and her parents to another city in just a couple of days! After that, the girl totally changed her life around and grew up and eventually got married in the church.

#### Anonymous person

Going back over 30 years ago and remembering what Father Marcos did for us as an immigrant family (and for any immigrant family) coming from Egypt to a foreign country knowing very little about anything and everything he helped us with finding place to live, and families that don't know anyone he made sure there were servants from the church that can help with shopping, transportation to and from church and for any other service with lots of love and big welcoming smile on their faces! He was a true father and shepherd to everyone! I also remember him tirelessly encouraging us for confession especially as we left our fathers of confession in Egypt. One of his sayings: "sin is like grease on a plate if you clean it right away it will be easy to clean and the longer you leave it on the plate the harder to get it out".

And after we settled in, he made sure that each one had an effective role in serving at the church. Pray for us Abouna, until we meet again a ruler and a divine gentleman.

#### Dr. Amir Hanaa:

Father Marcos had a smile that seldom left his face, even at times when he was criticized by some members of the congregation.

He endured comments and complaints directed at his easy going and peaceful conduct.

To me, he emitted peace and love and endured criticism at times where he was carrying the burden of being responsible for the spiritual support of the Copts in Canada.

He seldom received praise! He remained the peaceful and sincere shepherd until the end, with his characteristic peaceful countenance until the last day of his life.

I will certainly miss him! I am sure that he is now enjoying paradise and receiving the crown of faithful service to thousands of Copts in North America.

#### Dr. Mohsen Asaad:

My name is Mohsen Asaad, a servant at Saint Mark's Church in Toronto. I write those words out of my great love for my dear beloved reposed father Marcos. We have dealt with him closely for almost 50 years through the multiple church services of Divine liturgies, meetings in addition to serving with him in the Church board for 35 years. He taught us through his words, calmness, humility and his great love for our God and Church, for the services and for us as individuals. I would like to recall some incidents and some properties that characterize Father Marcos that might not have been mentioned during what was said about his reverence at the time of his repose and funeral.

First, during the service with Father Marcos, as a servant under his care in different fields throughout years, as a deacon and as a board member, it never happened even once that there was a problem between Father Marcos and myself, as a servant for him and the church. He used to always accept any different opinion with open-mindedness and treated us as a father with understanding, correcting our understanding of things with humility. I learned from Father Marcos how to solve problems between two parties. He used to start by praying. He would ask each party to explain his point of view without interruption from the other arty whatever long this explanation might be. Father Marcos would listen with full attention and complete silence without interruption. The same would happen with the other party. In most cases, the truth and solution would be evident after each party wood open his heart. Father Marcos would give the solution and advice with sincere love and simplicity acceptable by both parties.

I learned from Father Marcos that his calmness, smile and patience would never stop his holy zeal for faith and the Church. I have seen him turning from being meek to being strict and in rejection of negotiation if someone lost his respect for the Church, the clergy or faith or promoted any kind of heresy. I have witnessed that myself.

I learned from Father Marcos not to worry at all about Church matters as he used to put all matters in God's hands. He, particularly, never worried one day about a deficit in the Church balance as if his reverence saw through faith that the Lord is the owner of the House and the giver and supporter of the Church. However, despite his not caring about financial matters, he always attempted to reduce expenses as much as possible. One time, the church had a book shipment from America. Father Marcos drove personally to the borders in Buffalo or Niagara. He spent all that time and drove this long distance to save the church \$250 at that time that would be paid for customs and delivery to the Church in Toronto. Father Marcos would never forget the labor of anyone for him or his family whatever that might be. One day, I was a Sunday School servant serving the class of

his daughter, Dina. One Sunday, Dina was absent from Sunday school. I called Father Marcos' house to ask about Dina. Father Marcos answered the phone, and he was astonished that a Sunday School servant would ask about the priest's daughter. Many times, he praised this incident during his sermons to the Sunday School servants saying: "Imagine, there is a sincere servant to the extent that he would visit my own daughter!! The priest's daughter!!"

Another thing that nobody would know but those who witnessed it was that his reverence Father Marcos was physically strong though his appearance did not give that impression. One time, we were in the mother Church and a man who was mentally unwell attacked him. The man was huge. To my astonishment by his physical strength, I saw Father Marcos hold him and restrain him from moving.

Last, though not least, during my service with his reverence throughout the years, I, personally as well as my family, felt the love, fatherhood, and care of Father Marcos. He held my matrimonial ceremony and that of my oldest son David and his wife Sheri. He also baptized my three sons. He was the first priest to take my confession. I felt during his last days before his illness that he got me closer and closer to him, entrusting me with all church related matters and even with his own personal matters too.

I have lost a father on earth but gained a saint in heaven to intercede for my weaknesses before the Throne of Grace. Glory be to our Lord forever and ever, Amen.

# Mrs. Gigi Soliman:

The first time I ever saw Fr. Marcos was when he and his family came to visit us in Kincardine. We were the only Coptic Orthodox family, and the only Egyptian family in an otherwise Scottish, small town. And yet he came just to visit us. I was too young to truly appreciate this sacrifice at the time it is something I would grow to understand later in my life.

Kincardine was a small town about three hours northwest of Toronto. My dad tried to take us to the church in Toronto as often as possible, until one winter it took us three days to return home. He quickly got on the phone to Fr. Marcos, asking for his permission for our family to attend the local Catholic Church regularly. My father told Abouna that otherwise his daughters would grow up far from God. Fr. Marcos gave his blessing immediately, having the foresight to know how to keep his children close to God. This was the best thing he could have done for us, as we grew up in the church, participating in mass, youth group, bazaars and all sorts of other activities organized by the church, and so we grew up rooted in Christ!

My next encounter with Abouna Marcos was not until I came to Toronto after high school. My parents still lived in Kincardine, and I had come to Toronto to go to university. I somehow found my way to St. Mark's. Abouna quickly sought me and arranged for someone to pick me up and take me to the youth meetings every Friday night. I began to form a bond with the other youth and attended regularly. Fr. Marcos always accompanied the youth on our weekend retreats, whenever we were able to organize them, always taking time to spend with the youth, no matter how busy his schedule was.

Eventually I was asked to assist in teaching Sunday School. So, bit by bit I began to grow in the Orthodox faith, thanks to my dear Fr. Marcos, who took interest in each one of his children! I first got a glimpse of the "travelling priest", as he was known, when I travelled with him to Rochester. We would leave on Friday after work. Wherever we were staying, Abouna would hear confessions on Friday night, then teach the hymns for the liturgy, then make the korban for the

liturgy the following morning. We would have the liturgy, he would listen to more confessions as I taught the kids in Sunday School, then we would drive back to Toronto so he could do similar things for his congregation there. I quickly discovered that he did this with other congregations across North America!

My relationship with Abouna grew as he gave sermons to the youth about confession. I found myself going to him whenever I had a problem, and he was always glad to see a youth member participate in this sacrament. He always had the right advice to offer, always with fatherly love as the base of his words of wisdom. It was very easy to speak openly to him, and he was always patient, never rushing through anything, but waiting until I was ready to leave, filled with peace!

Fr. Marcos has been an integral part of my life, and his words of wisdom, his unfailing smile and his warm fatherly hugs always kept me close to the church, no matter what was going on in my life. Although the church has grown in leaps and bounds, I will always remember that it was he who brought me to God!

Abouna, I pray that you remember me and all your children before our Lord always, until we meet again!

#### **Haidy Estefanos:**

Same thing happened with me, Abouna said to my parents let her go (to the dance), and then he turned to me and said I want you to take a date... I looked at him in surprise, thinking I would take my brothers or father. But he said I want you to take Jesus as your date and on Sunday, tell me that you and Him had fun. Of course, I went, but my mind was occupied with my date, who I'm sure was very disappointed. Abouna was very wise and loving.

I must tell you, I have bitten and punched and squeezed Abouna's hands so many times, and all that poor Abouna would do is leaving me to do so and just hug me.

On one occasion during a confession, I had with Abouna, I truly saw how humble he is. We usually discussed everything and without going into any detail, I needed his opinion, and he gave it to me, but I wasn't convinced. Abouna saw and felt that I thought he wasn't treating me as a daughter. Any other priest would have not thought twice about it... instead my HABIBI Abouna called me that evening and said to me "Haidy I'm sorry please accept this Matania". I was so shocked, because who am I that my father does or says this to me?

#### **Jean-Pierre Eskander:**

As a gifted storyteller, Father Marcos had a divinely inspired approach to encourage and influence others. I looked forward to every confession session as I knew that he would gently close his eyes while I talk and only respond with a story. Each story was deflecting the tension away from my weaknesses and encouraging me to learn from others. It is only recently, through my line of work, that I learned the power of storytelling to influence others and engage them in challenging transformation—Thank you, Fr. Marcos, for showing me how to win others gently through storytelling.

# **Deacon Magdy Mikhail:**

Honest to God, I attended and served during my time, since I was ordained as a deacon 48 years ago, many funerals and weddings. This was the first time in my life I attended a funeral and felt I am in a wedding despite the tears in everyone's eyes.

For this reason, I asked Dr. Kamel, "Please, please for my sake, I want to change the tradition and sing Eporo instead of Ari pamevi."

Later, when we were standing outside, having finished Eporo, I asked Dr. Kamel, "would you like me to start Kiryelison in the long tune?"

He told me, "No Magdy, let us keep it joyful," and we continue the Tamgeed tunes.

#### Margaret's (Guirguis) Hanna:

In the early the days, Abouna was facing many challenges with the new church, but he was an outof-the-box thinker and multi-tasker. As young kids, Abouna Marcos would have us make a line outside the small room by the men's communion room in the mother church during the readings of the Divine Liturgy. We would take turns going for quick confessions. It became a routine for us to confess before communion and perhaps because we anticipated it as our special two minutes with Abouna, we tried to be good.

#### Mrs. Mariam (Hanna Saleeb):

I was privileged to be one of Fr. Marcos' daughters in confession. He always told me, "You are my daughter," and indeed I felt it so much, especially after my dad's departure. I used to go to Abouna so often because I missed my father a lot and Abouna always welcomed me and tante Suzy god bless her heart.

Anyway, one day I told him, "Abouna, I was sitting with some family friends and unfortunately, someone was saying how can Abouna allow a girl wearing very short clothes to have communion?" Abouna listened to me and then smiled and told me, "Is it better to embarrass this girl in front of everyone and I will lose her from coming again to church? Or is it better that I give her communion and I tell her I want to see you later in my office and then tell her nicely that it's not appropriate to come to the house of the Lord with these clothes?" I felt how amazing, and loving is this father!!!

#### Marian Shehata:

Words fail to express the depth of my love and appreciation for Fr. Marcos Marcos, my spiritual father from the age of nine. Fr Marcos did not just guide, advice, counsel and love me, he FORMED me. I would not have a rich relationship with Christ, nor would I be the woman I am today if it were not for Fr. Marcos. I clearly remember his advice on how to have a quiet time and build a relationship with Christ. "Find a special place in your house and tell Jesus everything. There is nothing you ever need to hide from Jesus. He will be your faithful Friend and guide no matter what. He will always love you in ways no one else can. Make sure you spend time with Him every day." Fr. Marcos's advice often flowed out of his very rich relationship with the Trinity. He formed my own image of the Trinity- a sovereign, loving Father, Jesus, my Faithful Friend and Saviour who could sympathize with my every need, and the Holy Spirit, a Loving Guide. Fr. Marcos was clearly in awe of the Trinity. Often when Father Marcos prayed for you, it felt like he ascended to heaven and took a few moments to come back down to earth.

I was raised on his warm hugs, and beautiful smile that would light up the room. At the end of each appointment he would say, "I love you so much and you are so special to me. "I wonder if he said that to each person, but I think we each believed we were so special to him because his heart was that big. I think what was so unique about Fr. Marcos was that he understood the value of true discipleship. Our appointments would often last hours and as he heard my heart he would share so authentically about his own walk with the Lord. His advice was always in the context of very

rich stories about his experiences with Christ. I'll never forget when he shared his life verse with me, "...He is able." (2 Timothy I:12) He said this verse sustained him through so many hardships. To this day, this verse gives me the perseverance needed in life's struggles.

When Fr. Marcos would come to the church basement after celebrating liturgy, it would often take him at least 20 minutes to walk the short distance to his office because everyone would want to see him and hug or kiss him to receive his blessing. Then there would often be a long line up outside of his office to see him. I'll never forget the cute sign on his desk, "God bless this messy desk." For whatever reason this little sign always brought me comfort and peace. Years later when Fr. Marcos went into retirement and I would bring a new friend to church, I would always encourage them to go and meet him and receive his blessing. Simply by being around Fr. Marcos, you were blessed with the light and love of Christ.

I also appreciated that Fr. Marcos was ahead of his times. Fr. Marcos was a truly pioneering visionary. In addition to being the flying priest who established churches all over North America, building St. Mark's the Mother Church and the Cathedral, he had the foresight to establish the Coptic Museum which now flourishes. Our mutual love of art was another beautiful commonality. Lastly, I loved that Fr. Marcos modelled a genuine love for people regardless of their race, ethnicity, or nationality. He also modelled a truly ecumenical attitude while remaining strong in an Orthodox faith. I am so grateful for his example which has influenced countless others. Fr. Marcos-I can never ever thank you enough for the life-changing impact you have had on my life and anyone I encounter. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to be your spiritual daughter and be raised under you care and guidance. Words fail to convey how I truly feel about you and your contribution to Christendom. I also want to express my deep gratitude to Tante Suzy and the countless sacrifices she made on behalf of the global church. Thank You Tante Suzy, we love and salute you. Thank you also to Dina and Greg for sharing your dad with countless others. Fr. Marcos-please pray for us before the throne of Christ!

### **Anonymous:**

I have been blessed by having Father Marcos as my father of confession in the very early 90's. He was a true kind and lovable father. His office door was always open for us and he always had time when we needed him.

He blessed our marriage and gave us few pieces of advice to follow, to have a happy family life. I remember this like yesterday. He advised us to:

- 1. Have an open Bible at home; meaning, to read the Bible and pray together every night.
- 2. Never let the sun set upon our anger If upset from each other; sugar coat the words when confronting each other, just like medicine, bitter from inside but colourful from the outside.
- 3. Respect and being cheerful are the secret keys for happiness.

When we were blessed with our children, he always used to remind us that children need our time more than materials. He advised us to always say good things about them in front of others and encourage them and to pray together as a family every night and never let them go to bed sad or upset. He was a true father, a faithful servant until his last breath. He served the young and the old. He will truly be missed, but he's interceding on the behalf of all his children.

#### Monica (Guirgis) Iskander:

Having lived my entire lifetime in Fr. Marcos' care until now, it is impossible to tell all what he has done for me personally, or all that I've learned from him. I hope to capture a few elements of his essence with some small situations. When we were embarking on our youthhood, Fr. Marcos instilled in us a fervent desire to preserve our chastity. He told us contemporary stories of young ladies who accepted death over being forced to lose their virginity. I don't think I can make anyone comprehend how strongly we, collectively as young ladies, became so determined in this ourselves. Make no mistake, in our day, the mainstream behaviour was very liberal, like today.

During the early days, when Fr. Marcos was our only priest, and we shared him with many other cities, our Holy Week comprised of evening services, usually lead by deacons. However, when the service in Toronto grew and we had more priests, we started to have longer Holy Week services, morning, and night, every day with its long tunes. We so appreciated that Fr. Marcos was so kind to let younger servants come to his church and take over and make such changes, never for a moment thinking that this is not how we do things here, or that he is not available to oversee all these services. He was so happy to have people take responsibility, increasing the benefit to his flock.

Naturally, when you are learning more about the services of Holy Week and realize that the church is now open by day while you are at school, it is unbearable. It is as if your parents are hosting a party at your house while you are in school. But it was impossible to convince our parents to be excused from school for a whole week for any reason. The alternative came to us quite by chance. By this time, we were in high school, and we found out that there was a religious group who had a special room reserved for them to make their prayers throughout the day while in school. So, the idea occurred to us we could have a room for prayers for one week.

You can imagine, no one had ever heard of Christians needing to pray throughout the day, so Fr. Marcos himself came to our school to speak to the principal about providing us with a room for a week. Can you imagine the priest who is responsible for so many congregants in our own fast-growing church, as well as other congregations in other cities, would come to a high school to encourage a few teenagers to pray during our spare periods for one week? After all that effort, Fr. Marcos' request was denied. But this didn't mean the idea ended there. Fr. Marcos always showed us that any spiritual service of benefit would be tackled by the hater-of-good, so we couldn't give up that easily. We thought to sign out a room in our school library. Though it was a partially glass-walled room, Fr. Marcos encouraged us, and we signed it out for the week. Of course, we covered the glass walls with newspapers. Having placed a paschal book, some pictures, crosses, and candles in said room, each person on their spare would come and continue the prayers where the person before left off. This tradition continued for many years thereafter in this school, as many Copts attended there, up to 15 at the same time at some point.

Fr. Marcos even praised us for this effort, when in fact he was the driving force to find a means. It was how he lived in front of our eyes daily, to not give up on a service because things didn't work out as planned. He instilled in us a little bit of his nature, combined with his encouragement to, by any means, find a way.

It was somewhat a hobby of mine to write little poems on various occasions and to sing them to well know Coptic tunes, sometimes even in Arabic (mekassar), though my first language is English. Fr. Marcos used to always comment "min ta'leef we takhreef Monica", meaning something like "from Monica's creativity and insanity", I believe. He always joked with me like this, though there was much

truth in abouna's words! But in fact, Fr. Marcos was the first one to encourage me to develop this talent seriously. Specifically, he asked me to write new hymns with our Coptic ideology, and yet musically pleasing to the western ear. I began this mission for children hymns for a few years, but Fr. Marcos had his eyes set on a grander scale. He wanted a youth English choir with new such hymns. It must have taken about ten years of Fr. Marcos gently nudging me to do so before it materialized. I've been in choir as many of you were too, but I've never studied music nor had a talent for leading, so I considered that I was vastly unqualified. But Fr. Marcos had both the spiritual vision, and the spiritual support to bring God's grace to bless what we offer in our weakness. This youth choir now performs at least twice a year in the cathedral on special occasions, performs at the Scarborough homeless shelter, and even went to Fr. Marcos' nursing home to perform there on one occasion.

One time, Fr. Marcos came on a trip to Cleveland, Ohio with a bus load of congregants to visit H.H Pope Shenouda for, unknown to us then, the last time before his departure. After about five and a half hours of driving, with 30 minutes left to go, Fr. Marcos came to me on the bus to ask me to write something for HH and to gather 10 children on the bus to learn and sing it for him. By Fr. Marcos' prayers it was done. We had a hymn sung to the tune of "arepsaleen" from the third canticle of the midnight praises. It was 13 verses long, every line starting with the orderly letters of the alphabet in English (much like the original Coptic hymn does so with every verse). I can still remember Fr. Marcos sitting next to HH, having given him a handwritten copy of our hymn, pointing out to him the various details. Whereas H.H had been in obvious pain, having greeted many people continuously while in illness, we saw his face light up with a smile as Fr. Marcos was explaining. Oh, the joy it brought Fr. Marcos to see H.H smile for these few minutes.

There is an event that we must remember as having taken place during the era of Fr. Marcos' fatherhood of us. On the evening of Friday, September 23, 1988, we were gathered in the mother church for youth group as usual. I remember Dina and I were in grade 10 that year, and Margo and I had just returned from a month-long trip to Egypt with our family. When we came back, we saw the new iconostasis in the mother church for the first time. Of course, the old crimson veil (curtain) was hanging in the new and wider royal gate. Since it was too small for it, you could see through the sides into the sanctuary.

After the youth group meetings were ended, Fr. Marcos was in his office taking confessions. A few young ladies were drifting in and out of the church nave (which had no light turned on at all) for prayers. Particularly, two young ladies were coming out of the ladies' communicant room, while two others stood at the stairs several feet away from the front of the royal gate, peering through the side of the veil. The two at the stairs felt they could see some haze of light emanating from the head of our Lord Jesus in the niche icon. They called the other two young ladies over to see. They all observed this scene in awe, as the painting became three dimensional, seeming to come closer, and the light becoming brighter. Then, to solidify their observations as not being imaginary, the right arm of our Lord Jesus came down from the upright position in the painting, blessing the young ladies.

Just then, a fifth young lady came into the church to inform one of the four that her father had arrived to pick her up. This fifth young lady was unable to contain herself upon witnessing this apparition. She went running down to Fr. Marcos' office and in the midst of her anxiety, relayed what she saw. Fr. Marcos came running up to the church nave along with many members of the youth. They turned on the lights and many went into the sanctuary area. The details that followed are somewhat of a blur in my memory; however, I know Fr. Marcos took the words of the young ladies very seriously. That night Fr. Marcos and many young deacons remained in the church praising all night.

Fr. Marcos then met with every girl individually to compare their stories and draw a final overall summary of the events. He also, in his wisdom, requested of each girl to write her version of what she

saw in writing, for documentation and future reference. Fr. Marcos also wanted to be sure that what we described as light emitted from the icon was not some light in the church. He tested this by entering the church with all the lights turned off while it was dark outside, to recreate how the church was the evening of September 23, 1988. Sure enough, he told us that nothing at all was visible of the icon. This further confirmed that the light was not from any outside source, but indeed of God.

After this event, a light was set up above this icon, and for many years the veil was left slightly open for onlookers to be able to see the niche icon from outside the sanctuary.

Certainly, each girl took an individual blessing and perhaps an answer to a prayer or two in this apparition. However, Fr. Marcos believed it to be a blessing for all our church. Definitely, he was right, as this particular icon became the sight of many miraculous apparitions after this, for different congregants at different times. What a blessing we all had being part of our mother church, under Fr. Marcos' vigilant care.

In addition to having us line up for confession during the liturgy, Fr. Marcos had my younger sister (Margarete) come with me during my confession for her first time or two, to learn how to confess. Naturally, during my confession, Margarete helped set straight some of my confessions, clarifying the extent of my wrong doings. Looking back, though I was frustrated at the time, I know this taught me to confess more honestly. Meanwhile, Abouna taught Margarete that she was there to tell of her own sins not mine.

One year, we had a general graduation celebration, at a restaurant on the Scarborough bluffs. I believe we had a bishop and two priests attending, including Fr. Marcos of course. I was responsible for collecting money from everyone, a set fee that would also cover Sayedna's plate. Yet, we had not discussed dividing the cost of the priests' plates. You see, all our lives, Fr. Marcos treated us as his own children. On the way to or back from a trip, Fr. Marcos would be the one who would buy a meal for every one of us. That is all I ever knew, growing up here in Toronto. Although the Bible is clear about this matter, I never made the connection because I truly felt Abouna was my father and he made us feel he was the one so generously responsible for us. So, much to my embarrassment, I asked Fr. Marcos for his share for dinner, which he paid without question. Then I asked the other priest for his share, and he had no idea what I was saying. I completely shocked him and embarrassed myself. But thankfully, one of our youths was a real gentleman and stepped in to cover for my mistake and he paid that abouna's share. When I looked over to Fr. Marcos, I could see his quiet and gentle smile, saying that he felt my embarrassment, while also he knew he was the one who had raised us in the shelter of his wings like this. May Fr. Marcos' prayers for us shelter us from embarrassing situations in the future!

One of my early teen memories of Abouna was driving us home from youth group on Friday nights. He always spoke with us like a fellow teen, asking about boyfriends, crushes etc... While it may have been a means to know about our thoughts and spirituality, he also wanted to make sure we had fun on our Friday night, knowing that other youth our age were out having their own kind of fun, and that we may hear about it on Monday. Sometimes, Abouna even drove a little crazy on an empty Steeles Avenue at around midnight, imitating how a teen might drive, just to make sure we didn't feel like we were missing out on anything. That is how Abouna became our friend and confidant. That is how he made us love him and trust him unto obedience.

I remember when we were in junior high (grade 7&8), we (Dina Marcos and I) were introduced to school dances. At this point in our lives, the idea of dancing was quite foreign to us. You see, though we had no priest in our family, we acted like we did. Whenever we attended a wedding reception, as

soon as Fr. Marcos and his family rose to leave after dinner, before the dancing, that was our cue to leave as well. I should mention too, school dances in junior high were during school time (unlike in high school where it is usually on a Friday night). This meant, we either attend the dance or stay in class and do work. So, there was a definite dilemma, since our parents didn't want us attending a dance, and we didn't want to do class work if we didn't have to. For this reason, Fr. Marcos came to the compromise that we could attend the dance if we promised not to dance (neither fast dancing nor slow dancing with someone of the opposite gender). It was great that Abouna put so much trust in us, and we wanted to live up to his trust, so we were true to our promise. I should mention that we never did go to any school dances in high school after that. You see, allowing us to attend in junior high exposed us just enough to see and know that this was not our scene. I'm so thankful for Abouna's wisdom in giving us a little taste, a lot of trust, and his understanding that saying "no" is not a satisfying solution. May he pray for us to have wisdom with our children too.

# Mr. Nagy Ghobrial:

In 1989, as soon as it was announced that Dr. Mahfouz Awad will be ordained as a priest and that he will be establishing a new church to serve alongside our mother church, St. Mark in the GTA, I was approached by Abouna to support him with Sunday School and other activities within the church. Despite my attempts to excuse myself - since I had felt that I was too new, young, and inexperienced and there were many better candidates to take on the responsibility - he insisted and offered his unconditional support. He reminded me that God is ultimately responsible for the service of His own children. "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building," I Corinthians 3:9.

I recall, at the end of one of the Servants' meetings, I took the liberty to announce some proposed changes. His beloved wife Suzy, heard about the planned changes and she took me aside and in a very kind and loving way, she reminded me that I should have consulted with Abouna in advance of announcing such changes. I must admit that I felt so bad, and I was certain that I had overstepped my bounds. I couldn't wait to book a meeting with Abouna, and I started by profusely apologizing and asking for his forgiveness explaining the logic that I used to reach such changes.

Abouna, in his typical unbelievably kind and supportive way, kept assuring me that there is nothing wrong and that he knows where his lovely wife is coming from, but that that "doesn't apply to you". He said, "you have the responsibility/accountability and are entitled to make any changes that you deem appropriate, and you have my blessings to carry on." It was a lesson in true leadership: leadership that trusts, develops, empowers others, and instills confidence. We ended the discussion with a beautiful prayer for the service and for God's guidance to lead the way.

We all know how emotional and extremely compassionate Abouna Marcos was, but not sure how many of us have seen him tear-up during conversations. Back in 1989 and in advance of preparing for H.H. Pope Shenouda's visit to Canada for the silver jubilee of establishing the church, a song was written on behalf of the youth group to express our love and appreciation for His Holiness. I recall being in his office reading the song lyrics and he closed his eyes and tears started running down his cheeks and he kept saying "this song truly reflects the Pope that I know, every single word resonates with my experience during my discipleship at his feet". I had to stop a couple of times just to allow Abouna to wipe his teary eyes and listen to some of his personal experiences with His Holiness. I had a similar experience in 1993, when I went to get his blessings around the lyrics we used in the musical, "Evangelist Across the Ages", which represented the life and service of St. Mark the apostle. Once again, he was tearing-up on and off as I read, but the section that left me most astonished is

when I reached the part that talks about St. Mark's service in Egypt, followed by a more generalized song about the true meaning of following in our Lord's footsteps and being in God's service, modeled after the verse, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." - John 15:1. As Abouna listened to the reading of those words, he shed even more tears almost in an uncontrollable manner, and he asked me to repeat that song and finally said to me, "the words of this song will be judging us". In an unbelievably humble way and after his many years of service and the sacrifice, pain, and suffering that he endured, Abouna thought that the song somehow sets a framework that we're all falling short of fulfilling! It got me thinking, if someone like Abouna Marcos can think this way, what are we to do about how small and insignificant our service is?

#### Nahid Youssef:

I have read, with joy, all the beautiful memories that all of you mentioned and I have seen your lovely photos with Abouna Marcos. This reminded me of his love and concern about every single youth of the church. When we were in the youth conferences of the mid-west in the USA, (which we used to go every summer for a few years, in the presence of Bishop Rewis, Bishop Moosa, Bishop Thomas, Bishop Antonious Morcos and many priests), at night after the youth went to their rooms, Fr. Marcos was awake and walking on the campus alone. I asked to join him in walking around the student buildings in the university (where we stayed - but I forgot the name of the university - could be Michigan or Cleveland). We were talking about the service of the youth. Fr. Marcos was very happy to get them together in such a gathering and told me some points and responsibilities we had towards them. Specifically, how to know their needs and to fulfill them, reaching out to every one of them, especially those who didn't attend the conference. Fr. Marcos wanted the youth to make friends with other youth from the other churches attending the conference, emphasizing the benefits of such conferences, spiritually and socially. He also asked me about some youths by name, and I realized how he loved every single youth, keeping everyone in his heart and mind. Fr. Marcos I'll never forget that you sacrificed your sleep and rest for the love of your children, and you taught us by your example. Now you are a beautiful icon in front of our eyes and will be so until the end.

I saw Fr. Marcos in my dream about two weeks after he went to heaven. His face was very white with his big, beautiful smile but he didn't say anything to me. I said to him, "Abouna I wish I could have seen you & talked to you before you left us, but I could see that you have thousands of people behind you entering heaven and you saying here I am & my children that you gave me! I missed you already! Please keep praying for us all." Again, Abouna didn't say a word to me but was smiling all the time. I was very happy to see him.

### Nancy (Bishay) Bassily:

In his early days, Abouna was traveling a lot. One time, he was driving very tired and almost fell asleep and was veering out of his lane. A police officer stopped him and told him, "Father you have to be careful and never drive if you are this tired, you can get into a bad accident." Abouna replied, "Don't worry; God is always riding with me." The office said, "Father, the way you're driving, He is safer riding with me."

Same thing happened to me. I was crying to go to the first dance in high school and my dad said: "absolutely not". Abouna said let her go, my dad dropped me off and 20 minutes later I called him to pick me up because the music was way too loud. I never went to any school dances again except for prom. Abouna's democratic diplomatic approach always worked that time I felt someone really understood even more than my parents.

# **Sylvia Marcos:**

We were living in Malta for some time. Abouna and Tunt Suzy visited us several times. Abouna felt that since we were going to be there for the long term, he was going to start a Coptic church in Malta. So, on one of his visits, we all went and met the Egyptian ambassador to introduce ourselves and look for more Egyptians on the island to start a church. We also had meetings with the archbishop of the Catholic Church in Malta, and we were able to obtain space. Father Marcos was the first priest there too to hold a Coptic service and start a Coptic congregation in Malta. On another occasion he informed Bishop Pakhomious of our expeditions and state of affairs. This prompted his Grace to send a Coptic priest over to Malta on a regular basis to pray for the congregation there. This resulted in the priest and sayedna 'marrying' the Egyptians and baptising their children according to our church rites, as a lot of them had married locals from there in civil weddings. Abouna had also brought with him a full set of altar tools on one of his visits for us to use. So, he always thought and looked after the spiritual lives of people everywhere, even when he was just visiting family and taking some time off. This was his way of life.

Also, when we used to stay at Fr. Marcos' house during our summer visits (when we were living in Malta) I remember hearing him at 3 and 4 in the morning in his basement preparing for the Sunday sermons. Then he would be up and ready to go by six to go to church. I always admired his energy and zeal.

### Roushdy, Anetta Estafanos and family:

We are honoured to contribute to Abouna Marcos Ist year memorial book. Father Marcos served our family for over forty years in Canada in a most indescribable way. We came to Canada in late 1976, along with our four children (Hanaa, Haidy, Maged, and Asem). Abouna Marcos played a pivotal part in welcoming us to Canada and the upbringing of our children. In Abouna's wisdom he assigned a family (Mr. Youssef and Mrs. Fawzia Hanna) to take care of all our needs when we first came to Canada. This family helped us to get adjusted to the new culture and drove us to church each Sunday until we were able to get on our feet.

Abouna blessed us with constant visits to our home. When we bought our new house, he was the first person to enter and prayed for us. Over the years Abouna Marcos helped our children adjust to the Coptic church in Canada by starting Sunday school and Youth group at St, Mark's Church. Through Sunday school and Youth group our children grew closer and closer to the church and through Abouna's guidance grew spiritually.

We would often host the youth group in our home and Abouna would sit on the couch and the youth would be sitting on the floor hanging on his every word. I, Anetta, was making pizza for the youth in the kitchen serving in my own way as Abouna taught us. He was always there to guide the kids and enjoy blessed fellowship with all of them.

Abouna was there for us in all conditions. One year during the Christmas season of 1997, one of my daughters received a card that had St. Nicholas drawn on it. One day I was cleaning, and I found a residue on the card and on the floor below it. I called Abouna Marcos, and he came and told me that this is holy oil and something special is going to happen. A year later my daughter got married and all matters concerning the marriage went well. Abouna gave us a lot of wise advice over the years, and we truly thank him for that.

We are so thankful to have had the honour and blessing of Abouna Marcos in our lives. May the Lord repose his soul in paradise, and may he continue to pray for us as he always prayed for us on earth.

# Chapter Five

# Tributes from the 1990's and 2000's congregation



# Mrs. Audette (Didi) and Dr. Ashraf Awadalla:

My name is Didi, and I am one of the church secretaries. I want to tell you one story that happened to me involving Abouna Marcos. One evening I was called for a meeting to the church for the next day at 9:00 a.m. The next morning, I was late, Abouna Marcos got worried because he knows it is unlike me to be late. He started to ask around including asking the late Samir Nashid who ran the employment centre during that time. He said no, I did not see her at church but on my way, I recall seeing a big accident at the corner of Glendening and Pharmacy involving a truck and a van that looks like it may be Didis' van! Abouna dropped everything and rushed to the scene. Sure, enough it was me unconscious; police, ambulance and many people surrounding the accident. Nobody there knew me except Abouna. Talked to the police and gave them all my information. The ambulance was trying to wake me up to figure out what happened. Aboun approached the crowd speaking to them asking if anyone saw what happened. Very critically Abouna found several eyewitnesses. They saw everything, reporting that my van was driving to church through a green light and that the truck came from the north through a red light and totalled my car. The whole time they tried to get me out of the car and take me to the hospital Abouna never left my side. He came with me and in the ambulance car to the hospital until he handed me over to my husband Ashraf who arrived at the hospital. He was my guardian angel. He baptised and married all my children and my grandchildren. Abouna Marcos wasn't only a true father but also guidance, a giver with no limitation. We love him and will never forget him.

#### Dr Kamel Kamel:

# "The memory of the righteous is a blessing"

We will remember Abouna Marcos. For his enormous service and labor that reaped a hundred folds fruit for the glory of our Lord all over North America. For his vision building the cathedral of St. Mark in Toronto. We will also remember him as a big cathedral himself, a living church, we saw the grace, the love, and the peace of Christ in his life, a living gospel of the Lord read by everyone.

We will remember Abouna Marcos. A loving Father, with a big heart and a big smile. We remember his joyful greeting "Ahlan, Ahlan" when he meets a member of the congregation, and his hand rising in the air and warmly catching her/his hand. Abouna Marcos comforted others with the comfort and peace of Christ that filled his heart. We will remember the little kids running to get a hug from Abouna Marcos.

I will remember Abouna Marcos. I remember the first time he asked me to give the sermon during the Liturgy in the church. I said "Abouna, I cannot, I have not done this before". His answer was "just pray and trust that it is not us who speak but the Holy Spirit". It was the "usual" answer, but it truly felt different to me. I felt it was coming from someone who experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in his ministry, who have seen how the name of Lord is glorified through those who submit themselves to Him as jars of clay. I learned to say, "speak Lord, your servant is listening".

I will remember Abouna Marcos. I remember when he asked me, after the ordination of Father Rewis, to take on some responsibilities in the service of the Deacons. He said, "we include everybody, our God is a God of order, love is patient, love endures, love never fails".

"Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct".

#### Dr Ibrahim ElBeherey:

# Maintaining Peace and Harmony

Having been a member of the Board of Deacons of St. Mark's for some time and witnessing how taking decisions for complex and controversial issues could split the board into yes and no voters, thus threatening the peace and harmony of the Board, Fr. Marcos would then remind us of the importance of seeking consensus in our deliberations. For the Church is not a mere corporation (even when it is registered as such with the government) but it is the body of Christ. And the body of Christ cannot be divided. Therefore, he would urge us all to go back home, humble ourselves before God and pray for the Holy Spirit to enlighten us and guide us to the resolution that serves the will of God. Having done this we can come back with a different and fresh attitude that is ready to reach a consensus. Then, and only then, we can declare with one mind, following in the footsteps of the holy apostles of Christ, and say:

"For It seems good to the Holy Spirit, and us" (Acts 15:28)

#### Mr. Iskander Boulos:

The Saturday of our dear Abouna Morcos' funeral was a very hard time for me. Abouna was my spiritual father for about forty years. His love was clear to all the congregation. When we lacked the vision, his steadfast faith carried us every time. He forgave many unconditionally.

I learned many lessons from Abouna Marcos, not by words but by action. The most important one was the strong faith in the Lord and trusting Him.

When we started the design phase of the cathedral, many suggested to reduce the size with the excuse of reducing the cost of the new building. Abouna always said "oh you of little faith". He reminded us how the Lord provided the collection of \$800,000.00 in a very short time while we were few families and needed to expand the cultural center of the mother church.

We tried more than once to convince Abouna, but he always said the Lord will provide through the zeal of our generous church members.

I remember that we needed to pay in cash, 30% of every contractor's invoice during construction, for the work to continue and so that the bank would provide the loan for the rest of the 70%. Every time the Lord provided, and the miraculous work was completed through Abouna's strong faith in the Lord. I just did a quick estimate of procuring the land and building of the cathedral in 2020. It is about two to three times what we paid for the existing property. What we have is attributed to the wisdom, vision, and faith of our dear father Abouna Marcos.

Abouna, also gave the youth his utmost attention. He was with us in almost all the annual retreats. A special one was our first retreat in Minden, Ontario. Great memories of getting around with our dear father and learning from him.

# Magdi Barsoum:

Father Marcos supported our family as newcomers to Toronto in 1973; he was always available to us. He baptized my two daughters Suzi and Kristin in 1975 & 1983.

He was the father of confession of my late wife Cecile Barsoum. In 2012 in her last days of her battle with cancer, Father Marcos was not feeling well, and Cecile wanted to have confession, he didn't hesitate as it was always his nature to service his people, he asked her to come to his house. I drove her to his house where she met Father Marcos for the confession, he gave her the comfort and peace. She passed away two weeks after. God repose his soul in the paradise of joy.

#### Dr Mark Boulos:

My name is Mark Boulos, and I am a servant at St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church & Cathedral in Toronto, Canada. Words cannot express the impact our dearly beloved Fr. Marcos made on me, my service and family. Fr. Marcos was my first father of confession and I served closely with him for many years. Moreover, I had the blessing of close mentorship from this great father.

The first thing I remember is that Fr. Marcos always stressed the importance of fervent prayer. Every time I came for confession, he would ask me: "How high are your prayers going? Are they going to the ceiling of your room or to heaven?" Whenever there was a major decision point in my life, either related to my future service or career, he always instructed me to spend a few days in deep prayer and ask God to show me His will. This served to be invaluable advice and taught me the incredible power of heartfelt prayer.

Fr. Marcos also taught me how to trust God, no matter how challenging the situation was. For example, many people were doubtful that a cathedral could be built with the church's financial circumstances at the time a cathedral was being considered about 15-20 years ago. However, Fr. Marcos had a clear vision that a cathedral was necessary for the growth and expansion of the church's services. Today, it is hard to imagine how we would operate our current services without the Cathedral! Similarly, Fr. Marcos emphasized that we should not take our peace and comfort in other people, but rather in God. He taught me that if one was doing God's will in their life, they did not need to worry about what others thought of them.

Finally, Fr. Marcos had an incredibly kind personality that drew everyone around him to our Lord Jesus Christ. He was always so loving and peaceful, and everyone around him was drawn to the church. He was on good terms with everyone and could get along with anyone. Despite the challenging circumstances he faced, he never yelled or got angry. Just like our Lord Jesus Christ, Fr. Marcos was the type of individual who could make the common person feel special, the unbeliever believe, and the unrighteous desire righteousness.

Fr. Marcos was a huge blessing in my life, and he also touched the lives of so many other people in ways that are difficult to describe in words. We miss him dearly but know that heaven has gained a saint. We offer our most sincere condolences to Tasony Suzy Marcos, Greg and Dina, and Fr. Marcos' grandchildren; we also thank them for giving us Fr. Marcos to start the Coptic Orthodox Church in North America and serve as a truly beloved father for so many.

# Mona Bechai about history of Abouna Morcos' support to Arabic School:

Some history and reflections on Father Marcos's vision of a Heritage School This history involves several people who contributed to the creation of the Coptic Heritage and Arabic School and interaction with Father Marcos.

The very first school: 1975- An Arabic School

In 1975, Dr. Nabil Bechai had the idea of starting an Arabic language school in Toronto. He shared his idea with a group of Coptic friends who met at his and his wife's apartment. The group included, in addition to Mona and Nabil Bechai: Hela Khouzam (now Bikhit), late Sourial Sourial, late Anis Nasr, Mohsen Ghobrial, Jeannet Azer and late Philip Azer. The idea was to teach colloquial

(spoken) Egyptian-Arabic to non-Egyptian spouses of Egyptian immigrants and to youth of families with one non-Egyptian parent.

It was decided to go ahead and apply to the Toronto School Board for two classrooms on Saturday mornings. In the fall of 1975, two classes were started, one for the adult spouses, taught by Jeannet Azer, and one for the youth, taught by late Sourial initially then by Hela. The classes were held at Deer Park Public School at St Clair and Yonge. The adult class also attracted some Canadians in the diplomatic corps, assigned to work in the Middle East.

While this school was a group effort, not associated with the church, Father Marcos, with his typical open mindedness, supported it and even referred potential students to it.

After a couple of years, student numbers dwindled, and this school was eventually closed.

# 2. The Coptic Heritage and Arabic Language school: 1981

In 1981, Father Marcos, always a visionary, invited a few of us to a meeting in his office and proposed to start a school for Coptic children, focusing primarily on the Coptic heritage with the teaching of Arabic language. Present at this meeting were late Mourad Guirguis, Viviane Ashamalla, Hela Bikhit and Mona Bechai. It was decided to start with two classes, with late Mourad and Viviane as teachers and Hela as supervisor. At the time, the Toronto District School Board was the only school board supporting week-end heritage programs. Mona was asked to investigate and apply to TDSB for two classrooms. Teaching started in the fall of 1981 at North Toronto Collegiate near Yonge and Eglinton. It continued under the support and encouragement of Father Marcos and St Mark's Church until the late 90s. Personnel changed with time: Hela left in 1982 to have her first child. Mona took over as the supervisor and Board liaison, as well as transporting a few children back and forth in her van. The Church eventually rented a school minibus, which was driven initially by Viviane, then by Philip Boktor who joined as a teacher. Other teachers included Soheir Youssef, Magda El Beheiri, Jane Tewfik, Maggie Youssef, and others. In the late 80s, Gamal Badawi became the supervisor.

All who participated in the creation and early years of the Coptic Heritage and Arabic Language School vouch to the vision of Father Marcos and his leadership and support of the idea of sustaining the Coptic heritage among Coptic children in Canada. He strongly believed that the unique heritage of the Copts was a wealth to keep and transfer to the young. Even with limited fluency in the Arabic language, the new generations of Canadian Copts developed love and pride of their Coptic heritage and Coptic history.

Note: This summary is written by Mona Bechai after consulting with Hela Bikhit, Nabil Bechai, Viviane Ashamalla, Jeannet Azer and Philip Boktor.

#### **Nabil Tawfik:**

I arrived in Toronto Canada in July 1964. My fiancé, Edith, arrived on November 7th. A week later we got married in a Catholic church. A couple of weeks later, I got a phone call and the caller said, "this is Abouna Marcos". We spent the first x-mas with Abouna Marcos, Dr. Nabil Morgan and his wife. Abouna Marcos married us Coptic; he also baptized our 2 children, Yvonne, and Ronald. My family was close with his family. We called him 'assis abu shanta' (priest with luggage), whenever a Copt called him anywhere in Canada or the US, he is there. We have a lot of memories with Abouna.

#### Myrna and Ron:

Ron: I met Fr. Marcos about 20 years ago, before I was part of the Coptic church. I was a little nervous, not knowing what to expect. Fr. Marcos welcomed me with open arms with love and joy, like he had known me for years. I couldn't help but notice his huge smile and the twinkle in his eyes as he greeted me. Fr. Marcos went on to baptize me, marry me, and be my father of confession, always giving me wise and loving advice, and always with that smile that was pure Fr. Marcos.

Myrna: My memories of Fr. Marcos are of a man, priest, councillor, friend whose purpose was the unfailing task of building me up as a woman of Christ. With his words, he could open my heart and bring to life the gospel and light of Christ. He never pushed beyond what was possible for me at least, in certain circumstances that were challenging not only for him as a priest but also for my own family. Through his councillor and friendship, he showed us, Ron, and I the way to progressively build courage and faith. Fr. Marcos always saw in us not only the individuals, each with different needs, but also the couple and the family within the larger ethnic community in Canadian society. Him and his wife Suzy opened their home to us on many occasions, including vacation time, and that is a lot. They were both so generous and friendly and their example is imprinted in our hearts. Thank you, Fr. Marcos, for all what you gave us. We are now the branches you grafted to the solid and robust trunk of this Christ-centered church. We pray we never forget this was your vision. May you rest in peace in the heavenly kingdom.

# Fr. Marcos - Celebration of June 9, 2019 By: Selim ElRaheb

First, when given this podium I usually update you on finances, don't fret I'll get to that. Second, it is an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to reflect on my inspiration and a leader of generations. I will start with some historical moments that had a profound impact on Fr. Marcos life.

In the early 1960s when Elias Wagdy Abdel-Messih was a church servant dedicated to looking after his ailing parents, a group of clergies including Fr. Makary, who later became Bishop Samuel, Fr. Shenouda who became a bishop then a pope, and Fr. Salib my uncle cahooted together and approached Pope Kirollos. They asked for Elias Wagdy to be ordained a priest and sent to the neverland of North America. He put up valiant resistance using his parents as a reason and his status as a bachelor.

Fr. Salib put an end to his bachelorhood and married him to Ms. Suzan who was a resident at the university residence Fr. Salib was supervising. Fifteen years later Fr. Marcos struck back getting me married to queen Helen of Scarborough and the bluffs.

In the next few verses, I would like you to repeat with me the following refrain:
A leader with visions
No matter the conditions
He traveled and explored
North America wide and near
Bringing the word of his Lord
To Copts a true pioneer

A leader with visions
No matter the conditions
Everywhere he went
He threw a living seed
He never quit or relented
Until the fruit is treed
A leader with visions

No matter the conditions His calm and blessed honuor Made all give him a hand McLintock asked for a dollar For an acre of prime land

A leader with visions
No matter the conditions
Gave in abundance to the poor
Much more than he can
Sending millions offshore
To Egypt and Sudan

A leader with visions
No matter the conditions
St. Mina affordable housing
Studied planned and ready
Mike Harris politically changing
Cancelled the project unfairly

A leader with visions
No matter the conditions
He offered help and support
To Fathers of other churches
Without asking them to report
Or causing them great hurdles

A leader with visions
No matter the conditions
When planning to build the church

He assumed triple the congregation Through faith not research Despite the board reservation

A leader with visions
No matter the conditions
His vision of expanding Coptic presence
Gave us unprecedented property
12.6 acres at Markham entrance
Located on a major artery

A leader with visions
No matter the conditions
His dedication and vision
Gave us a great congregation
Assets a hundred million
And influence in the nation

A leader with visions No matter the conditions I promised financial talk, so, here it comes:

Fr. Marcos laid a great foundation, giving us about 100 million in assets. So now it's our turn to manage our difficulties with current cash flow. We do not want to sell any of our assets. St. Mark's congregation has always been generous, please donate with abundance to repay our debts and build more of the village fulfilling Fr. Marcos vision.

#### Mary and George Shehata:

"Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord." (Matthew 25:23)

May God repose your soul in Paradise Fr. Marcos, the father of all Copts in North America. We are so blessed to be able call ourselves your daughter and son and to have grown up with you as our teacher. As a child, every week you received us with a smile as we ran across the whole church to give you a big hug. And even as we grew older you always continued to welcome us with open arms (and a hug!). Thank you for everything.

# Documentation of Fr. Marcos' last hours- approved by an anonymous Coptic physician:

A Coptic doctor who works in the hospital where Fr. Marcos was transported, who also knew Fr. Marcos for many years, was informed that Fr. Marcos was brought to the hospital for a medical emergency.

This doctor had not wanted to see Fr. Marcos in his illness as he was very aware what illness does to people. He wanted to remember him as he knew him. Yet, when he received the call that Fr. Marcos had been transported to his hospital he went running. Mentally preparing for words of comfort as he usually did for his patients, he was in shock to find Fr. Marcos in complete peace and happiness (while sustaining a major heart attack). As he put it, Fr. Marcos was with his usual smile from ear to ear. In fact, he found Fr. Marcos was the one comforting him.

Fr. Marcos repeatedly told him not to worry, that he was fine. The Coptic doctor tried to spend every moment in that room with Fr. Marcos, watching him speaks with people he couldn't see, and joking as usual. Meanwhile, Fr. Marcos was holding onto and tapping the doctor's hands, just like the doctor himself would usually do for his own patients.

When the physician treating Fr. Marcos saw how peaceful he was, he asked the Coptic doctor, "Who is this man? He is no ordinary person". The Coptic doctor explained that he was the first Coptic priest in all North America, who dedicated his life to the service tirelessly. In fact, he mentioned, he is known among the Toronto Copts as St. Mark of North America. The physician immediately recognized the holiness of Fr. Marcos, later texting the Coptic doctor that it was an honour and blessing to be involved in treating this Holy Man.

Even the attending nurse, Fatma, who is not a Christian, questioned him about Fr. Marcos. She was amazed to learn of his great accomplishments. She looked after him with great respect and kindness.

Meanwhile, the Coptic doctor, who had been ignoring his pager for most of the day, finally decided he needed to check on another patient. He turned to Fr. Marcos to excuse himself for two minutes. Fr. Marcos held the doctor's hand tightly, tapping on it again before letting go and replied, "don't worry about me, I'm fine, I'm ready, I'm ready." The doctor went down the hall on the same floor to his other patient for his 2 minutes. When he finished checking on his patient, just as he exited that room, he was paged by the nurse Fatma, who was so stressed to tell him that Fr. Marcos has just departed.

The doctor truly felt that Fr. Marcos meant to spare him seeing the moment of his departure.

While waiting for the family to come, the Coptic doctor spent quality time talking to Fr. Marcos because he believed that Fr. Marcos' pious soul could still hear him.

The Coptic doctor now understood what the right-hand thief felt when he asked of the crucified Lord Jesus to remember him in paradise. This doctor kept asking Fr. Marcos repeatedly to remember his Church when he reaches Paradise.

When Fr. Marcos' family came to see him, the same nurse, Fatma, insisted she be the one to take them to him, making sure everyone had a chair and was comfortable.

When the family left, the doctor told Fatma to wait until he returns from escorting the family out so that he can help them in preparing Fr. Marcos' body to leave the room.

Fatma questioned why. The doctor replied that he wanted to take Fr. Marcos' blessing.

Upon his return, Fatma teased him with a big smile saying that she was the one who took his blessing. In reminiscence, the doctor contemplated about how Fr. Marcos was a small person in size, just like the tiny mustard seed that grows into a huge tree where many come to seek shelter. Also, that the seed that is buried does not die but sprouts into that tree which produces more and more seeds. Certainly, we shall see Fr. Marcos' tree flourish much more now.

His prayers be with us all, Amen.