



Coptic Orthodox Church  
Diocese of Melbourne and  
Affiliated Regions

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COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH • Diocese of Melbourne

## Our Fathers the Apostles

My Dear Beloved Congregation of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions,

May the blessings of the holy fast of our holy fathers the apostle's be with you all.

After the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ He commissioned His disciples saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20) In the Gospel of Saint Mark He says to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

The Lord also told His disciples, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

The Holy Spirit worked with great power in the lives of the apostles and in the life of the early Church. On the day of Pentecost through one sermon of Saint Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit, about three thousand people believed in Christ and were baptized. "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." (Acts 2:41)

Through the power of the Holy Spirit Who worked in the apostles many miracles and healings took place. "Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles." (Acts 2:43)

The apostles were not afraid to speak the truth and to preach with great boldness and eloquence even in front of the rulers, elders, and scribes. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4: 13)

When Saul met with the Lord on the road to Damascus and was converted and became a chosen vessel, his life changed completely. He became one of the greatest missionaries the world has known, the great Saint Paul the apostle. When King Agrippa was trying him, the power of the words Saint Paul spoke through the Holy Spirit led Agrippa to say, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." (Acts 26:28)

Indeed the preaching of the apostles spread throughout the whole world and as Saint Paul says,

**"Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." (Romans 10:18)**

Another feature in the lives of the apostles that is evident was their fervent, powerful and unified prayers that solved many problems and gave the community peace and hope. Their prayers literally shook the building due to its spiritual power. "And when they had prayed,



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the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31)

The Holy Spirit who worked through the Apostles and in the early Church continues to work in the Holy Church today. Let us rejoice my dear brethren during the holy fast of the Apostles and glorify God in all His works of righteousness that He is doing through each and every one of us who are His children.

Let us arise with diligence and hope and to do our part with great zeal and follow in the footsteps of our holy fathers the apostles and to continue their work in our Diocese. To be a light to the world and a salt to the earth and to be role models and examples for people to see and glorify our Father in Heaven. Let us arise and fulfill the divine command to preach to every creature and to all nations.

When we are united we are strong through God's grace and we will rejoice to hear the words of the Book of Acts saying, "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)

May the blessing of the Fast of the Apostles be with you all and strengthen you to renew your spirit.

Suriel  
Bishop of Melbourne and Its Affiliated Regions

18 June, 2009

COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH  
DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE